

Interviewee: Laura Lee Pease
Interviewer: Yakaira B. Gonzalez
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Abstract: Laura Lee Pease was born in North Brookfield, Massachusetts in 1957. In this interview, Laura touches upon the ability to reinvent herself throughout the years. Growing up in a very equal family, Laura's father, an experienced hunter, wanted his children, regardless of gender, to know how to hunt. These skills ended up being useful in her future as an Animal Control Officer. An Animal Control Officer is typically a man's job, but Laura's skills landed her the position. While Laura was in college, she met and married her husband and they decided to open a restaurant together. Laura knew how to cook, but her husband taught her the skills to cook for masses of people. Thanks to his lessons, Laura managed to succeed as a Chef at Worcester Polytechnic Institution, although the Chef's position was typically a male job. Laura discusses the benefits and disadvantages of her jobs, and what obstacles she encountered on her way to success. She elaborates upon the importance of family, female support in her life, and passes advice along to all women.

Transcript:

YG: What's your full maiden name?

LP: My full name is Laura Lee Pease. Dimare was my maiden name, but I don't use it anymore.

YG: Where were you born?

LP: October [] 1957. My poor mother was expecting one of us. I have a twin. I was born first. I was 6 minutes earlier than my sister and her doctor said to her, "Either you have another child or a very large placenta," and out popped my sister Leona.

YG: Do you have any children?

LP: I do not. I have two stepchildren. They are in their thirties now. They came into my life when I married my husband. I am marginally in contact with them through Facebook. Facebook is pretty amazing. When I divorced my husband I did say to the children that I loved them. They will always be part of my life if they choose to. It's their choice because they were young adults when I divorced Dominic.

YG: How old were your stepsons when you divorced your husband?

LP: They were both in their mid-late twenties.

YG: Why did you decide to divorce your husband?

LP: My husband is a good person, but he is a heroin addict and he went back to heroin and he basically lost his soul and I made the decision that I wanted a whole person not a hollow shell so I decided to divorce because of that, not because he was a bad person, no because he wasn't ever abusive or anything like that. He just wasn't the person I married any longer.

YG: What cultures/ethnicities do you identify with?

LP: I would say English and French-Canadian, my main background. I consider myself basically a New England Yankee. [Laughs]

YG: Can you tell me about your parents? Did they support you? Did they go to college?

LP: My parents are beautiful people. They both are still alive. They are both still doing quite well. My dad is eighty-seven and my mom is eighty. They supported us. They were wonderful parents. My mom was a schoolteacher. She was the only one in her generation that went to college. My dad worked in factories. He was an inspector in factories. He was an avid hunter. We grew up eating wild life. What he hunted is what he ate. I grew up very rural, kind of a farm life. I raised rabbits commercially. I had chickens and goats. I think farm life really gives you something. It gives you a wonderful work ethic because it doesn't matter what the weather is, it doesn't matter how your feel, you still have to take care of the animals. So you learned a good work ethic.

YG: Where have you lived during your life?

LP: I grew up in North Brookfield which is two towns over. I lived pretty much in this area whole of my life. I lived in Worcester for about ten years, big city for me. I do like the rural life much more.

YG: When did you arrive in Worcester? How old were you?

LP: I was in my early twenties. I was probably about twenty-three and lived in the city through thirty-two, thirty-four somewhere in that neighborhood. I moved right after college. I went to Worcester State College; graduated in 1983.

YG: What did you study?

LP: I have a base in psychology, minor in communication disorders.

YG: Do other family members live in this area? In where you live now?

LP: My sister lives with my parents. My parents really don't need her there at this point, but really enjoy having her there. My brother who has chosen not to be part of the family, he's living in West Virginia now. It is sad when someone decides to divorce the family, but those things happen sometimes and I just hope he is happy wherever he lives and whatever he is up to.

YG: You don't talk to him at all?

LP: He won't talk to us. We reached out to him, but he chooses not to have communication with us.

YG: What do you think of women's experiences in Worcester?

LP: You know for me, living in Worcester was a good experience. I felt safe when I lived in Worcester. I don't know... I left Worcester in around 1990, 1991, so it has been quite a while since I lived in Worcester and I don't know if things have changed since I lived there, but when I lived there it was a fairly vital city and it was a good experience.

YG: Is that where you met your husband, in Worcester?

LP: A friend of mine set my husband and I up and yes, he lived in Worcester. He was from [?] Boston originally, but by the time I met him, he was clean of the drugs at the time I met him by six years and was living in Worcester in a pretty supportive community of people that were free of drugs and alcohol. He was sober 23 years somewhere in that neighborhood because he had been married for 16 years. It is one of the sad things about addiction, you can manage it, but you can't get over it.

YG: So, now we are going to move to education.

LP: Sure.

YG: Where did you attend school?

LP: I went to Grove Street Elementary School in North Brookfield, Massachusetts, Worcester State College, and I also—I guess you can consider it schooling—I put myself into the Animal Control Association. It's a ten-week academy. Eighty hours of education. You can come out with a certificate in Animal Control.

YG: You didn't pursue any programs such as beauty school?

LP: I did not.

YG: When did you graduate from college?

LP: It was 1982 or 1983. I want to say it was 1982. I graduated high school in 1976.

YG: What did you do after college?

LP: I started by working at Worcester State Hospital. It was an eye opening experience. I was expecting I had been taught anything I needed to know in college. I hadn't. It was a good stepping out point. I worked there for about five or six years and then went to running group homes and ran group homes for close to ten years. Then, when I met my husband we opened restaurants. I owned two different delis and managed the restaurant for a friend. When we sold my second deli I went to work at Worcester Polytechnic [Institute] in their kitchen, in their catering department.

YG: How was that experience?

LP: Oh, I loved it. There is something really wonderful about the comradery you get in the kitchen. It is interesting because it is a very dominated field still. When I went in had my interview, the person that was interviewing me—I was just starting in their snack bar, but he knew that I owned a restaurant and he asked me about uniforms and when I walked into the kitchen I kind of looked around. I realized that the people that were getting the respect were the people in the chef's jackets, so when he asked me about uniforms, I looked straight at him and I said "I only work in whites." So I walked in working in the upper echelon of the kitchen because of the uniform I chose.

YG: That was smart

LP: You know, it's something you have to do. You kind of have to look at the whole, you decide where you need to be, and you create the possibility of being there. Sort of grabbing the bull by the horns.

YG: Because you know if you might—say you know to choose the white uniform, then maybe you wouldn't have the chance to be seen as the other men chefs.

LP: That's right you wouldn't been. You would be just another worker and the chances of going from a worker into the chef position were probably not an option.

YG: Yeah that's what I meant.

LP: So it's important to look at the whole, know where you want to be, and let people know that that's what you are. You can learn the skill when you get there. As long as you can fake it a little bit until you lean the skills.

YG: Yes, you just want to look strong and let them know that you can do this.

LP: So that's a good thing to take with you in life.

YG: Definitely. What were your challenges in education?

LP: [Laughs] I think my biggest challenge was that I'm a little bit lazy. I was bright enough not to do it. I was pretty much known to squeak in at the very end with the reports and things because I did not manage my time well. Time management is something I had learned, but I did not have when I was going to school.

YG: Yeah, I need to manage my time very well because my classes, they like give me a lot of homework to do, research papers, essays, and I can't. Sometimes I leave things to the end and then I'm like rushing. I need to read this and I don't go to sleep until I finish everything and then, the next day I'm like, I feel like a zombie.

LP: And you know, the sooner you can learn time management, the easier your life becomes. I am still not the best at it, believe me, but I got lot better at it.

YG: Upon finishing your formal education what did you see as your options? You go to work to Worcester State Hospital

LP: I did and the reason I did that I probably—a BS [Bachelor of Science] in Psychology is a wonderful thing, but is pretty much like a BS in English or a BS in math. It is a stepping out point. So I probably should go on to a master's or doctorate, but I didn't and so Worcester State was an easy step in, and from there I actually stepped on to my next jobs because running group homes—because they were removing people out from Worcester State Hospital and there was a group home that came in looking at some of the clients and I started working for them before they started taking the clients from the state hospital. Timing's important for leaving for your next jobs.

YG: Did you like it?

LP: You know, I did. I am very good caretaker and caregiver. I enjoyed watching people blossom. You do burn out, I mean you're are going into teaching and that is something you might have to watch for. You are going to have to watch yourself a little for burn out because it is something that just happens when you're are giving an awful lot not much is coming out. Find joy somewhere else.

YG: Why did you decide to leave group homes?

LP: I actually got pushed out, they consolidated group homes and I lost my management position and so I was unemployed for a little while. It was when I was in the process of meeting and marrying my husband and so we ended up opening restaurants. I took everything I had. I closed out a retirement, we bought our first restaurant.

YG: And that went well?

LP: It went well. I sold it about four years later for three times what we bought it. Bought it for about twenty-six grand and sold it for seventy-five grand. By that point we owned a four-family home. Was between that and my first restaurant that I managed someone else's bar and restaurants for a summer and then we've got another restaurant in Worcester. You know where Memorial Hospital is?

YG: Yes.

LP: Across the street there is a Brazilian bakery now. It is that little complex with the liquor store and the Quick Market—whatever is called now—we owned that. Where the Brazilian store is now was my second deli.

YG: Did you know how to cook or did your husband teach you?

LP: My husband was a chef and I learned the trade owning the restaurants. It is amazing how well you learn something when you don't have a choice. You know when this is what you do you learn it and I walked in not having the skill of working. I knew how to cook, but I didn't have the skills to be feeding the numbers of people. We were averaging six hundred to eight hundred dollars a day worth of sales and if they were delis, we were making a lot of sandwiches, but we also sold meals as well. And so, I learned to cook for larger quantities. I made a really good jelly (laughs).

YG: That's interesting, like he taught you the skill you needed.

LP: Yes, that's right.

YG: Because my dad doesn't know how to cook. My mom tried to teach him, but he can't do anything.

LP: If it is allowed, it will happen. So, when you marry don't allow it. Right from the start you are equals and in some cultures it's harder to get that, but set your goals high, make it an expectation.

YG: Definitely, I want my husband to cook. It's a good thing.

LP: I mean even if you share the skills, he's the grill man, but they should be able to take care of themselves if you are not there. They should be able to do a decent meal for themselves and the kids when you're are not there. My dad knows how to cook for himself. He may not make the most healthy food in the world, but he can take care of himself if he has to.

YG: What support networks and mentoring had been important to you?

LP: I think all women should have older supportive women in their lives. It is vital. Now work mentors are great, but elder adult women in your life, the sooner latched onto a good supportive honest person, the more enriched your life will be.

YG: An elder person was the one that helped you?

LP: Absolutely. I've got many of them. I've got Nancy, Claudia, and I've got probably four or five of them that I can count on, and I can call about anything. You don't want the catty ones, you want the down to earth wonderful supportive and you need to be one too. You need to give that back in order to keep it. You know it's kind of an unconditional love that you only can get from another woman. They also give you the bitch slap when you need it.

YG: And you didn't have any male mentors?

LP: I've got wonderful male friends. One of the chefs I worked with on and off for close to twenty years. Dear friend of mine, good mentor, but I think that women ones are the ones that you are going to get the most from.

YG: And did he treat you like equal, men and women?

LP: He did. I didn't give him any option. [Laughs]

YG: Good.

LP: Yes.

YG: Never give them the option to treat you unequally.

LP: Yeah, that's right and I love my boss that I'm working for now. He is the Chief of Police in Rutland, but I don't know if I would consider a friend. You know, he is a wonderful mentor, he is a wonderful boss to have, I don't really think we are friends. I think if I left we probably wouldn't be in contact, but I think you are going to find more with female friends even if you got a female boss, even if you leave they will probably still be a friend in your life and I don't find that quite so much with males, yet I've got a lot of wonderful male friends.

YG: Okay, so we are now shifting to work.

LP: Okay.

YG: So, you do work outside home?

LP: Oh yes. I work for Rutland Regional Animal Control as an Animal Control Officer and a lot of the joy of that job is having no idea what's coming next. I also work at the UMass Medical Center in their standardized patient program which is a program which they teach people specific skills and we teach medical students. Work with and teach medical students. I teach the female exams (pelvic exams) and they pay me well.

YG: Well and that's the best part. Well the best part is that you enjoy it.

LP: Well the best part is working with the students and seeing their sense of wonder when they get it. I was working with physician assistants this week and I have two students that have a little bit of a language barrier and it was harder for them so, I slowed it down a little bit and we really appeared to what they needed to know and took out some of the fluff for them to. Once we really got into the whole situation, they were so thankful and it was just such a wonderful experience for them and they were just like beside themselves when they found the ovary. They were like "There it is!" and I was like "Yes." [Laughs]

YG: Yeah. You were like "Yeah, I know how it feels." [Laughs]

LP: And you know, it was wonderful to see they came in really with a lot of anxiety and they walked out having learned a lot and really comfortable with themselves and their skills and that was really wonderful to see.

YG: How did you come to this work? The Animal Control one.

LP: It was interesting. My sister is an Animal Control Officer and I think she has been doing it for twelve to fourteen years now, and she said to me, "Why don't you go take the course? It is a fun course and you're going to learn a lot." She said, "I don't know if there are any openings, but it's a fun course." So, I went to get my degree and so I started part time there and part time working as a chef and my aunt, she is my dad's older sister, was diagnosed with cancer and overnight, she went into the hospital. My uncle her husband had Parkinson, diabetes, and low-level dementia. So overnight I moved him out of his house and moved him into my house and I became their primary caregivers. So I needed a job that was a part time job and so left my chef job and just worked the animal control job while I took care of them. I took care of the two of them by the time my uncle had died I had taken care of them for three and a half years. My aunt survived just over a year with her cancer.

YG: And that's how you...

LP: That's how I became Animal Control Officer. I've been part of the UMass program for on and off for the last thirty years. A friend of mine was an actor at Fort Tale Theater actually in Worcester. I don't know Fort Tale is no longer around and it was probably closed before your time, but it was a very active live theater for years and years in Worcester and he was part of the program. He said it was great, fun, and I [should] come join. So he was the one that got me

involved in it. And they always start by teaching you the interview skills, and you teach interviews, and they'll ask you if you want to go any further and if you do, the next part was to teach me the physical exams. So I could teach physical exams too and evaluate physical exams, and then, they were looking for people to do the pelvic exams. So, I started doing pelvic exams and that's pretty much what I do with them now and from September through about March I work two or three times a week for them and is a four hour section we see four students and we do UMass, we do all the Mass Pharmacy Health and Science, we do all the second and third year of our Harvard students, we do a lot of different programs.

YG: And did you find it easy? Learning all about this?

LP: I'm pretty comfortable with myself. I am a pretty fast learner, so yes. And it's something that the wonderment is just so great when I see them get it and to be able to... because it is an exam that could be uncomfortable for both the patient and the examiner. So, to be able to get the examiner comfortable with his or her skills, but also comfortable with the exam itself, so they can do it comfortable, but also with a comfortable level, is just a wonderful thing to be able to do.

YG: Is there something you are not good at?

LP: Oh, I'm sure there is.

YG: Like me, I'm not good at math or science.

LP: I love the sciences. I don't even balance my checkbook, which is awful. So, my skills around math and things like that, if I don't enjoy it, then I don't pursue it, which is not always the best thing, but it is what it is.

YG: I think you have to enjoy things to be good at what you are going to do.

LP: I think so too. You know, I think you can learn any skills, but I think if you are going to do something long-term you really need to enjoy it or it's just a chore and yes you can get paid really well for doing something that's just a chore, but it's kind of saps your energy and it kinds of saps your soul. If you are not doing something you love.

YG: What has this work meant to you?

LP: I think the UMass [work] is so rewarding. I will probably be doing it forever. The Animal Control, I feel I make a difference and for me that is very rewarding, making a difference and making life better. Everyone thinks I save animals. I primarily work with people, and educate people, and help people do a better job with their animals. Once in a while, I save animals, but it's the exception to the rule. I am more dealing with people and getting them to understand that their dogs are barking, are annoying the neighbors and how to keep their dogs safe, so that they

are not running on the road and getting hit by cars and things like that. So, it's education. I think I like education.

YG: Yeah, you should study that.

LP: You know, it is interesting, I might have had my mom not to be a teacher. I watched her come home from school and had to work hours and hours just to keep up with everything that needed to be done. I also worked with her in the classroom, helped her out in the classrooms and don't get me wrong when I say this; I don't like children that much. [Laughs] I like educating adults a lot more than I did children. [Laughs]

YG: Yeah, kids can be obnoxious and they are...

LP: You know, it's a real calling. If you can do it, and you love children, and you love education, I say God bless you, you are going to be a wonderful teacher, but I just, dealing with other people's children just didn't do it for me.

YG: So, she teaches. Taught?

LP: She taught kindergarten and third grade.

YG: Oh, that's why.

LP: And she did it for I think twenty years in the North Brookfield school system and she taught home economics a couple years before we were born.

YG: How would you characterize the personal and professional cost of your chosen path? How about benefits?

LP: [Laughs] Alright, for the animal control the costs are what they pay. The pay is exceeding poorly. I make gross nineteen grand a year. I can't live on nineteen grand a year, not in this day and age. I am called 24/7 as you can see. So, it can interrupt my life at any time. Benefits, I love dealing with the situations. Overall even when it is interrupting my life, I love it enough that is okay. There's really no down side in UMass. They pay well, I love working with students, I am comfortable enough with my body that doing the exams are not a problem at all. So, I just love that job. The only downside is that it is seasonal. There is not enough work to make a living on it. I make about ten grand a year from them.

YG: So, it seems like you have worked in so many areas, so many jobs, so which one... do you have any in particular that you prefer? The chef one, the group homes, or UMass? Which one is your favorite and why?

LP: I don't know if there's a favorite. I love the fact that I have been able to reinvent myself throughout my life. It is really empowering to know that you can change if you find something that you want to do different. Then you can actually just go and create the possibility of doing it. A lot of people get sick and they do something even when they don't like doing it anymore because they are so afraid of not having the income or not being able to make the change that they do something they don't love. I have been able throughout my life to do what I love. Now I am looking into Seven Hills which is an agency in Worcester that works with developmentally challenged people. They have a program that's called the Chair Living Program, where somebody comes and lives in your house and you are their primary care giver and they pay you to take care of the person in your house and I'm looking at that. I might be very well part of that program as well. And one of the things that it really does do, is allow me to do the caregiving which I love doing. It pays better than any of my other jobs and I will still be able to do my other jobs because they go to day program, so I just have to fit my other jobs into the time frame.

YG: Well that's good, that you can actually do everything and you don't have to give up something.

LP: I might give up the Animal Control because they pay me part time. I am only being paid for twenty-four hours a week and I'm averaging forty to forty five hours a week so if they are going to be putting that in front of the town in a special town meeting asking if they would like to bring it up to full time. If they do not bring it to full time, I'm leaving because they are expecting more work of me that I am being paid for, and you can do that just for a short period of time in my life. I'm expecting to be paid what I'm worth and what I do. In other words never let people take advantage of you for an extended period of time. You can negotiate with them, if things are going well, but don't stay anywhere where someone is taking advantage of you for a long period of time.

YG: Oh, I need to ask this. What was considered fashionable when you were a young woman?
[Laughs]

LP: You know I never fit in that role. Miniskirts were big in high school, the maxi skirts actually started in college. I was kind of a free spirit. I wore what I liked. I think that things kind of cycle. I wasn't involved at the time, but I liked the look of it.

YG: You know, fashion comes and goes.

LP: It definitely does. The beautiful big jewelry you see now, it's very [reminiscent] of the jewelry of the sixties.

YG: I like that kind of jewelry.

LP: But it is very [reminiscent] of the sixties' jewelry.

YG: And the hairstyle they are doing now, what was the hairstyle back then?

LP: The hairstyle back then was kind of long. When you get into the eighties you got puffy, but in the 1970s was pretty much at least in where I was at which is in the hippie side of it. I was the long kind straight hair. I wish I could talk more about fashion, but I just did my own thing and either it worked or it didn't. I've been always kind of a free spirit I guess.

YG: So, were girls treated equally when you were in school?

LP: It is interesting because I think we were kind of equal except if you look at things like the sports. My high school had a very active, very strong basketball team, they made the finals every year. There was a female basketball team, but they were not supported by the school. There was a pretty active track team for the men, there wasn't one for the women, but the only thing that they offered sports for women was a female basketball team, or you could do cheerleading of course, but that was a very small team and it was a very elite group. So, I think that was an area where it wasn't very well supportive when I went to school. I was right at the end of the tracking of women into secretaries and things like that. There was no problem with going into the college track, but there still was a definite secretary track going on in my high school when I was in it. We had a lot of female teachers. So, there was a lot of equalness there and so the college track you were probably being drifting towards that way.

YG: Towards the secretary?

LP: No, towards the—probably if you were going to college, probably in my day you came out a teacher. I didn't feel any discrimination in the sciences, but I don't recall ever being pushed towards the sciences. That was pretty much computers you know. The secretary was still on typewriters.

YG: What did you think about the secretary path?

LP: You know, I didn't really in those days because it was kind of just the way it was. My sister went to the secretary path and I went to college path. I think some of that was the fact that you could get a job easily in the secretary path. I also think that some of that was us just trying to find our own identity because being twins right through the elementary school and actually into high school, we were considered the Lee Pease twins and that's something that if you have either siblings in your same class or if you have twins, twins even more so, you need to be very aware of because it is much easier to fall into the Lee Pease twins that it is to get to know each person individually.

YG: So you found yourself when you went to college?

LP: I found myself when I went to college absolutely. I was also a very shy child and teenager. So, I kind of came into my own in college. I know you'd never know I was shy.

YG: No, I don't think you are shy. You don't look shy. You look very sociable and yeah!

LP: That's Kit Cat, she is my old lady. She is sixteen.

YG: She's so cute.

LP: She's a Japanese bob tale.

YG: I've never seen a cat with short tail. Okay so, How you get through tough times? What kind of thoughts keep you going?

LP: I think the support of the family is very important in tough times. Be able to—I learned very early that you reinvent yourself. So, I didn't feel stuck as people might feel. I think, I'm no way saying that I haven't had tough times, but I think that knowing that you can get through it, will allow you to deal with the tough times a little bit more rationally.

YG: That's how you get through tough times?

LP: Yes.

YG: Yeah, I think so too, that family support is very important.

LP: Oh yes. You know, a person that's got a good family system around them I don't think are likely to get as deeply into a bad place as someone that doesn't have support, but family does not have to be family. Family can be good friends too. Not everyone has a family close by. You are blessed if you do, but you don't always. So, again it goes back to developing a good support system of strong women around you. You'll be amazed, absolutely amazed that the support they'll give you. I have a friend, her name is Nancy, I'll call her and I can talk to her about anything and sometimes all they do is listen. It's important for your friends to just listen and not tell you what to do, let you take the time to figure it out and to have those people around you is so important.

YG: So, you told me that you have a brother and a twin sister. So back then, did your dad have same restrictions for you that your brother or were you were treated equal?

LP: We were lucky. The family treated us equally. My grandfather was a doctor. I think that that may have helped because I think that it made my dad—I think my dad may have seen a little bit more broadly life which may help him to understand that women could go as far as men. There were never any restrictions on us. There were expectations. Expectations are very important. When we got our first car, my sister and I shared a car until my sister got her car, and my brother had a truck. That vehicle, we were told right from the beginning, that vehicle got you the next vehicle. So, if you went out drinking, crashed your vehicle, you weren't getting another

one. Drinking age was eighteen. When I reached drinking age it was lower than it is now and again I think I was blessed that I grew up country. I am not saying that there weren't drinking parties; I didn't get involved in them. So, I never had really any alcohol, drug addiction, issues in my life because I didn't get exposed to them really bad as a teenager. So, I kind of had my head in above me by the time I get involved in them. I can remember sitting with people while they held the toilet because they were so sick with drinking too much, but I did not join in it.

YG: That was smart.

LP: Yes, but a lot of it was I lived in the country, I went to school in the city and I had to commute, and if I didn't have a car I wasn't commuting. So, took care pretty good care of my car.

YG: And you also told me that your dad taught you how to shoot and hunt.

LP: Yes, we went hunting with dad absolutely and that's what I'm saying, we were very much equal and my brother learned how to cook. You know, I think is important to raise your children well rounded; they will choose what to keep and choose not to keep as they get older, but to expose them is so important. We were exposed to all kinds of people too and I was very blessed because my family was not a prejudiced family, that doesn't always happen, but I think that that is something that as parents you make a choice and I think it is an important choice to make. Allow your children to have as many opportunities as possible, meet as many people as possible because I think it makes them more rounded adults. I don't hunt now, but I know how to use a gun and that's part of what I have to do as an Animal Control Officer because I have to be able to use a gun because if there is a raccoon that's in the road I have to put it down.

YG: What is the wildest animal you captured?

LP: I had a few interesting ones. I had the fox that I showed you. Couple years ago, we had a baby fisher cat that I think someone probably was hand raising and then let loose. It was following teenagers down the road and I was able to pick it up and put it in a cage and the thing hung on the cage crying like it wanted to be held. So, that's why I think that it probably had been hand raised. I was involved, not real actively involved, but I got to watch natural wild life to watch catching a baby bear once. That was really cool. This year I've gotten to handle a number of hawks and owls that were hit by cars and I took them down to Tufts [veterinary school]. So, got them to rehab. I love my wild life and that's part of what I love about the job, is not knowing when that phone goes off, what your next assignment is going to be.

YG: Did you regret any of the choices you have made?

LP: I don't. I mean and that includes my marriage. I don't regret it at all. Also it is sad to say I don't regret getting divorced, but it was what I was and the choices I had to make. I have a very, very, very blessed life, but I've also—you know, in life you get to make choices, you also get to

choose how you are looking at life. You can go through life enduring what comes or you can go through life finding joy and I go through life finding joy. I am also blessed with a lot of friends and again that's a choice.

YG: So, to end up, based on your life experience what advice would you give to women?

LP: Okay, know they can do anything they want to do. Never settle for something that isn't the best for you and that means sometimes you have to move on and leave people behind. Be worthy of your work, so don't let anyone else underrate you, and know that you are a wonderful person because choose one level or another. Don't let society tell you where you should be. Make your own choices and live into them.

YG: Thank you.

LP: Absolutely.