[00:00:04]

[MUSIC] You are listening to tell me your story where we connect to HLS staff on a personal level. Hello everyone, this is Edgar Clay Philio from HLS human resources department. My pronouns are he, him, his. Today we're talking to Mirka Alexandra Cuji from faculty support services, who will you tell us about her life, how long she is in this position at HLS? and the work she does. Thank you for joining us Mika and please tell me your story.

[00:00:43]

Thanks for having me Edgar, my name is Mirka and I am a first generation American born Hispanic American. My pronouns are she, her hers.

[00:01:00]

I don't really want to get too much into that, I just want to ask what is your positioning in the faculty support services right now?

[00:01:06]

I'm a faculty assistant and I support amazing faculty and their work ranges from labor law to child protection laws, administrative law, so it's all good stuff, super interesting.

[00:01:25]

One thing that we usually do here, and I love these stories and now that you said that we were first gen, I would like to know more about your life if it's possible, where you came from or your family came from, are you from this New England area or somewhere else? So just let us know what you have in terms of history.

[00:01:49]

I'm first-gen American born so my parents are originally from Ecuador which is a very small country in South America, very well known for the Galapagos Islands and parts of the Andes mountains, so they immigrated here before I was born and I was born and raised in New York City. I'm very biased I think the best city ever [LAUGHTER] and super diverse, super great, and offers a lot of opportunity. Even though we were low income families, so it was difficult financially growing up, but the city had so much to offer and so it helped us bear the burden I think a little bit.

[00:02:43]

Have you been in Ecuador

[00:02:46]

To Ecuador?

[00:02:47]

To Ecuador do have relatively still living there, how is the relationship?

[00:02:52]

I went once when I was really small, I went and turned seven over there and I was like a really big culture shock [LAUGHTER] for me as a seven year old. I was just like what the heck everybody is speaking the language that I speak at home. It was interesting. I was raised the city girl and at seven I was very well aware of that and the part of Ecuador that my family's from is essentially the base of the Andes.

[00:03:22]

Wow it must be beautiful.

[00:03:24]

It's beautiful from what I remember, the little that I remember. I haven't gone back since. We still have family over there, but our nuclear family is all here [OVERLAPPING].

[00:03:41]

But you were able to learn the full Spanish language?

[00:03:46]

I did, technically Spanish is my first language because my parents didn't really speak English and I am the firstborn of four children.

[00:03:56]

This is fantastic.

[00:03:58]

It was great.

[00:04:01]

For [LAUGHTER] most of Americans, you speak a different language. I think that's amazing, when families come to live in this country and they are capable to keep that language. I understand that sometimes for necessity because they don't speak and the kids go to school younger, much easier way to learn and becomes a translator, a mediator in terms of our conversations until they can fully grasp it the language.

[00:04:30]

Exactly.

[00:04:31]

But either if they were before you're born, able to learn the language, giving you the chance to speak the language at home, I think it's a fantastic thing I think is wonderful.

[00:04:47]

Looking back like I'm really glad my parents, even after they did start learning English, I'm happy that they continued to speak to me and my siblings in the house in Spanish because I think it's really important to be bilingual.

[00:05:04]

I agree.

[00:05:05]

I know that not all Hispanic Americans can speak Spanish, I think it's an important aspect to the culture.

[00:05:14]

I do think.

[00:05:14]

It gives it a whole another, like a deeper meaning I think.

[00:05:20]

In terms of cultural tradition from Ecuador from the Latino world, you think that we still appreciate that your family kept with you or taught you, still matters.

[00:05:37]

I think the big one is the closeness of family although that is like a double edged sword sometimes [LAUGHTER].

[00:05:43]

Yes.

[00:05:45]

Sometimes people forget like boundaries are a thing and but I think overall in my experience, I think it's been good because during your hardships you have someone to lean back on and I'm super always there.

[00:06:03]

Who is always there.

[00:06:04]

They're always there no matter what and it's always great, it's reassuring it's good.

[00:06:09]

It's really interesting you're saying that because I talked about this with other folks that I have talked to here in a podcast before. I wouldn't say a burden, burdens sounds heavy, but there is a weight in a way for first born or first generation here, that has to be in between cultures. Because you are going to school, your friends here, completely different folks speaking different language that you speak at home sometimes, and then you have culture influence from the family. I think it is heavy for the kids, I think some big research in terms of the impact of that. What happened, you just mentioned one. I wouldn't say privacy, but independence in a way because Latino are very much okay, that is no space. [LAUGHTER]

[00:07:11]

Back home in New York like we all live essentially within a two block radius, like two blocks up I don't know like Seventh street or something, I have a pair aunt and uncles that live there. [OVERLAPPING] also another pair of aunts and uncles.

[00:07:26]

The family's always around, always watching, always talking always. That is one barbecue.

[00:07:33]

Everybody.

[00:07:35]

You meet people that you've never even heard of and your parents are like, don't you remember? This is your cousin from so and so, and I'm just like, okay.

[00:07:43]

It happens the same with you, happens in my family because then becomes when you have a party and say, hey, come for a barbecue on Sunday or Saturday or whatever day is. They say, okay, bring your mom and your son. But then the son brings a girlfriend, the girlfriend brings her sister, the neighbor, it becomes a huge thing. [LAUGHTER]

[00:08:04]

It's a whole thing. I'm just like, oh my gosh. Sometimes I think it's great.

[00:08:10]

Yeah.

[00:08:10]

Sometimes, [LAUGHTER] but not every time. But that's just the way of the culture too.

[00:08:16]

It is just the way, it depends on the moment, how we perceive anything. Because I agree with you, I'm there with you because I always felt like can we just have one Sunday or one Saturday that is just us? You don't need to invite the entire neighborhood to the party or something. But then in other scircunstance, I know that we joke about this, but when something bad happen, those are the folks that are going to have your back.

[00:08:48]

Always.

[00:08:49]

It doesn't matter what time of the day or night, you knock, they're there.

[00:08:53]

They're there, they open the door.

[00:08:56]

You mentioned that before. There is always a give and take there.

[00:09:00]

Always.

[00:09:01]

You have to balance that one.

[00:09:04]

Yeah, it's an interesting balance. It takes time to find that balance. I think not only for oneself, but in my experience, my own family because they grew up with a different culture. I'm Hispanic American, I have two different cultures, American culture, which is very much like individualistic and they're very.

[00:09:28]

Independent.

[00:09:30]

Yeah, they're very independent. They respect boundaries, which is great. But then my Hispanic heritage, which is more of that we are a unit.

[00:09:40]

Yeah, community.

[00:09:41]

Yeah, we're a community and so it's been tricky balancing both.

[00:09:48]

But there are special things about both sides, right?

[00:09:50]

Yeah. There are special things about both sides. It's just trying to navigate it all.

[00:09:54]

It's interesting that here as mentioned Ecuador because I think is for trivia here, I think Ecuador and Chile are the only South American countries that don't border with Brazil.

[00:10:04]

Oh, yeah.

[00:10:04]

These are the only two ones. Yeah. It's interesting. I don't know Ecuador. I know that's right on top of Amazon for us and also part of the Amazon forest as a complex. But right on top, the Amazon State, that's the northern part of Brazil too.

[00:10:20]

Yeah, it's great. In Ecuador, not only do we, we were talking about languages earlier. We speak Spanish, sure, but a lot of us also speak a little bit of indigenous languages. In my family we speak a tiny bit of Kichwa, it's mixed with the Spanish. I didn't realize this until I hit high school when I was speaking to other Spanish speakers in my classes. They were from different countries like Colombia, more like Mexico, etc. I would say certain words and they'd be like, what are you saying?

[00:10:55]

It's not part of. Yes. Your parents speak Kichwa?

[00:11:01]

They don't. They speak only a few words. But a great aunt of mine, she speaks fluently and several others. My grandmother, I think, spoke a little bit too.

[00:11:14]

One good example about the same thing that you are saying. Where I was born in Brazil, south of Brazil, but very west part of the Parana State, it borders with Paraguay and Argentina.

[00:11:27]

Yeah.

[00:11:28]

Paraguay has, I believe the first language is Guarani, more than the Spanish.

[00:11:34]

Oh, wow.

[00:11:34]

They speak both. Guarani is one of the biggest indigenous tribes in that entire region. That's sometimes when you say, oh, Brazil or Paraguay, I think for First Nations, that doesn't matter.

[00:11:48]

Yeah, it doesn't.

[00:11:49]

The entire region used to be there.

[00:11:51]

It used to be everything.

[00:11:52]

There were no borders. We had a very strong influence from the Guaranese tribe in that region that extends all the way. But as far as I remember, Paraguay is the only country that speaks the Guarani, pure Guaranias first language, which thinking about that later after I grew up and got more involved, I think is amazing. That is you speak the language from the first nation in that region. Because you'll have many different, then they have Guaranis Tupis, Kaoibas, and all many, many different indigenous groups there. But Paraguay is the one that makes me think more about how you're meaning Ecuador and Kichwa speaking language. I think that it is wonderful that they do. When I visited Mexico a couple of years ago, I never had and I was amazed by everything. My main reason going there, I went to Mexico City and ended up in the greater Peninsula. We stayed in Cancun, but that was not my thing. I went to visit the pyramids and see as many as I could there. We went to one called Koba, that's astute, in the middle of the jungle, not well-developed like Chichen Itza is. But the people living there, I saw the Mayans' descendants. She was speaking the language, which I thought, amazing by being there. Those reference makes me really happy. Anyways, so growing up in New York with Latino cultural influence. But you mentioned already that you have quite a few folks there because New York is a very big mix and very diverse.

[00:13:36]

I love it. Yeah.

[00:13:38]

How was school? Going to a school, going through high school.

[00:13:43]

Me, I had overall the best time in school. I know it's a weird thing to say, but one of my favorite times in my life ever was high school.

[00:13:54]

Really?

[00:13:55]

It was [LAUGHTER] such a good time for me.

[00:13:56]

Wow, that's amazing. Yeah.

[00:13:57]

Yeah, I know. A lot of people think that's odd. I've only encountered a few others who agree with that sentiment.

[00:14:05]

Because it's usually a trouble.

[00:14:06]

Yeah, it's usually the troubling times. [OVERLAPPING]

[00:14:06]

Everybody is like, oh my God.

[00:14:08]

Yeah, like what am I doing?

[00:14:08]

So far that I was bullied, everything was horrible and everything. For you it was not?

[00:14:13]

No, it wasn't. There were very few times that I think I was bullied, but I think.

[00:14:20]

You didn't care?

[00:14:21]

Yeah, I don't think I really cared. In New York and in the city where I grew up, it's such a melting pot. I grew up in the world borough in Queens.

[00:14:34]

Oh, wow.

[00:14:34]

Yeah. It's every day was always different. Everyone was aware that everyone comes from a different place.

[00:14:43]

I heard, I'm not sure if I'm saying this correctly. But one of the most diverse boroughs there in New York and I would say in America, very, very, from anywhere in the world, you are going to have all in Queens.

[00:14:56]

Yes, I think there was an article.

[00:14:58]

I feel like an article mentioning that

[00:14:59]

There was an article I think that had mentioned that Queens is the most diverse place in the country.

[00:15:05]

Oh wow. [LAUGHTER] That may be just far how lucky you are.

[00:15:09]

Yeah. Honestly, I was lucky. I'm really glad my parents were able to settle down there.

[00:15:14]

Nice.

[00:15:16]

Yeah, every day was different, like I said, and there was this unspoken rule that everybody was aware that everybody is different. Everybody comes from a different place. Who cares if you have an accent? Some people weren't very good about it.

[00:15:32]

Yes, sometimes you have, yeah?

[00:15:34]

But for the most part, everybody was just like, okay, you do your thing, I do my thing. Yeah.

[00:15:42]

I think I've been lucky in that regard where it's like I was used to everyone being different and everyone was aware.

[00:15:48]

That's lovely.

[00:15:49]

It was nice.

[00:15:50]

Did you have a chance to interact with many people from different cultures?

[00:15:56]

Yeah. Where I grew up, the part of Queens, it was mostly people from the Eastern side of South America so like Quinnies, people like Trinidadian people. It was very different culture than Ecuadorian is, and just Hispanics in general.

[00:16:14]

That's really nice.

[00:16:15]

Then in the city, you have to apply to high school. When you're in middle school, in eighth grade, you fill out this application. You can pick up the 12th programs all across any part of the fibros and you go through, some schools require that you take interviews or specialized test. Anyway, after I did all that, I ended up going to school in the North of Queens. There, in that school, it was predominantly Asian-American. Then having traveling to school every day, I was amongst now this whole different culture that I had never been exposed to before and that was really great and that was awesome and I think.

[00:16:59]

Also nice experience.

[00:17:00]

It was a good experience and I think that that is what really added to it because I met some of the best people ever [LAUGHTER] in high school, it was such a good time.

[00:17:11]

This is you think that's a good proof that diversity. If you have diversity and if you engage with diversity, your vision changes as well in terms of what you imagine a culture would be. Because sometimes I feel a lot of these misconception in terms of all this person is from here, from there.

[00:17:33]

They must be like this?

[00:17:34]

Yes. The stereotype. When you have a chance to experience that, when you have a chance to spend time with those groups, you are going to see, I don't think there's much difference here other than my mistakes.

[00:17:46]

I agree 100%. I think there needs to be a willingness to be open to experience other people and cultures and just in general, I think it's a good rule to follow in life.

[00:18:04]

When we can learn with them, when you can't interact with them, you're going to learn more, I think becomes richer. [OVERLAPPING]

[00:18:12]

It enriches your life. You open your eyes to the possibilities of, wow, this culture has a lot more in common with my culture than I thought or wow there are major differences or because I was exposed to Asian cultures while I was in high school after I finished undergrad. That was a hard time in my life. [OVERLAPPING] But after undergrad, when I wasn't sure what to do next, I ended up moving to South Korea and I taught English.

[00:18:49]

You did?

[00:18:50]

Part of it was because I was exposed to all these great Asian cultures and I thought, well, maybe this is something I should experience in my life and there was an opportunity to do so.

[00:19:03]

How was your experienced in South Korea? How long you stay there?

[00:19:06]

I only stayed for half a year.

[00:19:08]

But it is.

[00:19:09]

It was a long time and it was a big jump.

[00:19:12]

Yeah.

[00:19:12]

[LAUGHTER] I dropped everything and moved and it was interesting. Korean-Americans are different from Koreans just like how Hispanic Americans are different from Hispanic or Latino people that were raised in Latin America.

[00:19:30]

They don't have the influence culturally. They have everything that it isn't the place is different when you are leaving here. I don't think I can even call myself Brazilian in the sense of Brazilian. I have so much influence from here. Is something that in Brazil, when people, for example, I hear this since I was a kid and God, that's as being a while. When Carmen Miranda, and later on, Sonya Braga, it's a famous actress in Brazil. When they lived here for so long and went back to Brazil doing some projects there people would criticize saying, they are so Americanized.

[00:20:09]

Oh gosh.

[00:20:09]

They lost their Brazilian essence of some. That's exactly the point or whoever leaves here, embrace the culture here and the culture also changes your perspective and what do you see. I think it's interesting that you'll notice that that easily in terms of.

[00:20:26]

I think it was easier to notice because I'm not from that culture so when I was over there. I was the one outsider looking in.

[00:20:37]

What's good?

[00:20:38]

Overall, it was okay. I think because it's something that I always say to friends and colleagues when they find out that I lived over there for a little bit. I think when you grow up in the West, you're a Westerner so and it's completely different from having grown up in the East. Obviously, there are certain things that their culture prioritizes where it would conflict with what the West prioritizes. It really depends on what you're there for me, I wanted to experience a culture which is what I got and I learned from it and I even picked up the language a little bit. I can't really speak it anymore, but I can read it, but. [OVERLAPPING]

[00:21:26]

Nobody in six month I think he immersed there just for six months. If you pick up some things already are a good advance there.

[00:21:37]

I learned a lot about myself too, and I learned that being a teacher is not for me. [LAUGHTER] That's another thing I learned.

[00:21:48]

I guess that's not my best channel.

I can see having those doubt sometimes my feeling was always being a teacher is not for me either. But I am ended up, I don't know if you are already followed the same trail, but I always avoid the teaching aspect of everything. But I was always involved in something that's related to teaching.

[00:22:11]

You're like an educator. You're an educator.

[00:22:14]

You avoid teaching as much but where you work?

[00:22:17]

Exactly [OVERLAPPING].

[00:22:22]

Somehow I don't know there's a calling that they were trying to avoid.

[00:22:26]

I know they're just like maybe I should listen the universe.

[00:22:29]

Should I then take a little of this again. What am I going to do? Anyways, so after Korea, you're going to college?

[00:22:38]

No, so a Korea was after undergrad this gift. [LAUGHTER].

[00:22:42]

Now we're going back. [LAUGHTER]

[00:22:46]

Undergrad was a very difficult time in my life.

[00:22:49]

Why you say.

[00:22:50]

It was difficult because well, I was the first born in my family, first American born. A lot was riding on me at the time because all my life I was taught to be like, you should have success in academics. You should be an academic success. This is, you have to have A's, you have to do all the internships so leading up to undergrad, I actually I did a lot. I was on sports teams, mainly swimming. That was great and I did a lot of after-school programs at the Natural History Museum in New York.

[00:23:34]

Wow.

[00:23:35]

That was a great time, that was also another amazing time.

[00:23:42]

I even did a NASA internship when I was in high school.

[00:23:46]

I thought I've been waiting to see what's the bad part of this.

[00:23:48]

[LAUGHTER] This is leading up to undergrad. Basically, because of all this pressure that came at first from my family, but eventually it came from myself because it became so embedded in me, I started to near burnout and once I got into undergrad, it felt like I hit the wall because everything distracted me. From boys, parties. Trying to find your click.

[00:24:18]

Did you, right?

[00:24:19]

It's the common stuff. But for someone who was raised to be an academic success, it really hit really hard.

[00:24:27]

Conflict.

[00:24:28]

It conflicted. Everything just, it collapsed. It felt like a building collapsing and I burned out really bad. It wasn't a fun time. Thankfully I graduated [LAUGHTER] and I tried to pick up the pieces as best as I could. My original track was to, continue on to a PhD in astrophysics.

[00:24:58]

Astrophysics?

[00:24:59]

Yeah, it's what I had been building since the age of 12. That's what I was building towards. My undergrad is in applied math and stats.

[00:25:08]

Do you like math?

[00:25:09]

I love math. It's my favorite subject. But I burned out so bad that I was like, I can't do this anymore and I stopped caring. I was happy that I graduated. For me that was enough. I was like, thank goodness, at least I got that. But, even though burned out, the part of me that was always taught to be an academic success could not let go of that idea. Then that's what eventually led to me deciding to go to South Korea because I thought, well, let me give myself a break, let me try something that's completely different and see how that goes. Because if anything, I could always go back. I know what I'm good at. I did that, and when I came back, I felt a little refreshed, a little lost. When I came back, I decided, well, what's another time of my life where I was very happy? That was when I was a student at the Natural History Museum. When I was there, I realized that not only can you do science research, there's also many different jobs. You could be a conservator. You can work in collections. You can be a museum educator, which is a lot less formal than being a teacher in a public school. I decided that, you know what, let me work in a museum. I tried the science museum, let me try art, maybe there's opportunity there. I did it and I ended up really liking it. I enrolled in the extension school here and I got my museum studies master's degree here, and eventually led to me landing a job at a very big, well-known art institute in New York. There I hit another wall as in like, I was super eager to continue forward in my career and work as a team. But unfortunately, management didn't necessarily support those goals that I had. It's been a long ride. It's been a hard ride. Then eventually decided to come over here because I'm like, we're going to have to reset again. Right now I'm at a crossroads in life where trying to figure out what it is that I really want to do. Do I want to go back to the museum world, or is it time that I dust myself off and maybe try STEM again?

[00:28:04]

Re-evaluate everything?

[00:28:05]

Yeah, re-evaluate everything. Maybe try STEM again because I loved math and for a long time I really thought that I was going to build a career in that. Again, at a crossroads here, I decided to come here because I saw it as an opportunity to be surrounded by academia and research again. It's not a field that I know well at all, but it surrounds us every day in our life. I just thought it would be interesting and gain some new administrative skills, because it's something that I've never really done. In the long run, I think will help me out.

[00:28:44]

I have two questions based on what you said if you can touch those. One, during this entire process, so then you said that going to undergrad was a little difficult. That was a bumpy road because of everything that you were going through, growing up, being young and enjoying life, and now let's not forget that all this is happening in New York. I don't think New York is the best place for someone. Can be different, can be. It's the best place to have fun for someone young. But that's really the combination of having fun and going through school, New York is the place to be because I know, I can see. I don't know if I would be able to live in New York, but when you say Queens, that makes me feel like, I'm already outside in the yard, so that would be fun for me. Because being in Manhattan can be overwhelming just by being there because it's too much noise, too much movement, too many people. I love to go and visit and go to every side of the place and discover things. Not necessarily going there to spend money, or going to expensive places because the city has so much that you can see and just taking pictures and looking around and saying wow. The freedom of people to dress. I feel like I'm in a runaway in different ways. Not in terms of luxury, but art and beauty.

[00:30:14]

It's awesome, I love it.

[00:30:15]

Changed in terms of everything. It is a phenomenal place, you're right. I wonder if there's a lot of that is also because I imagine I can definitely be there with you on when you say the pressure. Because someone coming from a different country and having a hardship to acquire things and conquer things in a place that's so gif and all the sacrifices. Sometimes unconsciously they project that, do you know, how much we have?

[00:30:53]

They won't say it to your face, but the way that they act [OVERLAPPING]

[00:30:55]

Yes. The whole thing is there.

[00:30:57]

Yeah.

[00:30:58]

The expectation, those kids are there. It's hard to judge and blame because you can feel both ways.

[00:31:06]

A hundred percent.

[00:31:06]

How much you feel, how much they expect, all those things. Then also in a projection way you take that as, what am I doing? When you are supposed just to enjoy a little bit your life, instead of feeling guilty for not achieving what was expected of you.

[00:31:25]

Yeah. [LAUGHTER]

[00:31:25]

In this whole time, did you have people to help you? No, I'm not talking about friends. I'm talking about in the academic area, coaches or someone who could sit down with you to give some guidance or you didn't? You went on your own and try to figure out because you didn't have that support.

[00:31:48]

That's a really good question. I think that there were people there that were willing to speak with me about this to help me process it. But I think, again [OVERLAPPING] [LAUGHTER]

[00:32:03]

It's your mindset?

[00:32:04]

I think it was just myself. Even now sometimes I have trouble where it's like, if I feel like it's something that I need to take care of myself, I don't want to burden others with it, and it's something that I've had since I was a child, in high school. Also I think it's because growing up, maybe I don't know how true this is with all Hispanic or Latino cultures, but we're known to be the happy people, the loud people. There is always joy going around. Dirty laundry is dirty laundry, we don't talk about the bad stuff. We just let it be, we just leave it there. That's it. But if it comes to the forefront, we'll just yell about it, [LAUGHTER] and that's about it.

[00:33:00]

Suck it up and move on.

[00:33:01]

Yeah, suck it up and move on.

[00:33:02]

My other question. You love New York, you were born in New York. What happened in Boston?

[00:33:11]

As an adult, part of me it's like I see it again as in a way like some success again. I'm back here again, I'm doing things again here and it's great. I think it's because I felt like I missed out on the things that I really wanted when I was younger. I'm trying to let go of that idea.

[00:33:37]

You should not go for that idea. I'm saying, if it's not working, of course not.

[00:33:43]

Yeah.

[00:33:43]

But don't let go just for the let go. I think you are taking steps that I think is clever. I think you are doing the right thing. You are working here already. Working here is going to give you benefits and options to we study and go for whatever is that you're thinking, and try just for the sake of, what is this Harvard thing that was happening?

[00:34:07]

What's all the happening here?

[00:34:08]

Maybe I'm going back to my museum because that was more fun.

[00:34:11]

Yeah. Maybe that was my plan.

[00:34:12]

But until you really burned this whole idea or maybe build on it, I think you are doing the right thing.

[00:34:20]

Thank you.

[00:34:22]

I think you are [OVERLAPPING]

[00:34:24]

It's baby steps, I'm trying to figure it out.

[00:34:26]

Yeah, and you're here.

[00:34:27]

Yeah.

[00:34:28]

One thing that I would tell you, that I always tell all my students, when I was in the Dean of Students office, a lot of the students that come from different backgrounds, first generations, there is a lot of them that the main thing that they say, is like a mantra already among them, is, I don't feel like I belong here because I don't know if it's imposter syndrome that I have that I feel a lot, and no matter how hard you work and how much you do, you still feel like it's not good enough. I used to tell the students, make you belong, because if you are chosen to be here, if you are here, there is a reason for that. Don't waste asking if you belong or not. Make yourself belong. Make the best of all you can here. For them three years depends on what they're going to do. Just the JD program or six years, seven years for the PhD program that they choose depends on what it is. Do what you can, because after you are out of here, you are going with this brand and with all these achievements to do great things, whatever it is that you choose. I think for whoever work here it's the same. If you work, if you're dedicated to what you need to do and you take advantage because these institution offers a lot as well.

[00:35:49]

Yeah, it does.

[00:35:50]

If your research, if you go after everything that this university can, and we are talking about you are in law school, but if you think about the university in general, there are such great opportunities here.

[00:36:04]

You just have to be proactive, you have to look for it, and that's with any place.

[00:36:07]

Yeah. Then now that you are working here, take your time, look around, see what you can and cannot be taking the courses that are available around you. There are plans that are phenomenon that offer great opportunities. Please talk to a lot of people. I'm here. I almost founded this place with the John Harvard because I'm here that long. [LAUGHTER] Feel free to come and talk, and if I know other people, I will tell you where they are, who they are. You're in a department that has amazing people there.

[00:36:41]

Yes. I have met some of these amazing people and they're great.

[00:36:45]

I can tell you, truth from Ellen King that I love Daryl Muranaka who's another wonderful person.

[00:36:54]

Wonderful people. Yeah.

[00:36:55]

We start with those. Tara is a lovely person too who takes care of the entire department and has given them such a great support. Start talking with these people, getting to know more people, create a huge network as much as you can, and I think that will give you a better sense. Like you said, you give yourself time to figure out things that you want to do.

[00:37:23]

Sometimes I feel like I'm running out of time, so I'm just like, I got to give myself grace. [LAUGHTER]

[00:37:28]

Oh my God. No. I'm telling you. I came here when I was in my 30s, graduated 2008 after my 35, whatever, in college here because I wouldn't be able to do in Brazil.

[00:37:41]

Yeah.

[00:37:41]

I have achieved so much things here after my 35. You're way young, believe me. You have so much ground to try still and figure out. There is nothing around a burning time or whatever it is.

[00:37:58]

Yeah.

[00:37:59]

You have done quite a few things already at a young age. Going through all this, having your master's degree, going to South Korea, coming back, and now you are at Harvard. Hey, that's a lot of things that you have already done.

[00:38:14]

I've lived a life and a half.

[00:38:16]

Yeah. Maybe you are too much of a high achiever and you are just saying, I didn't do anything. [OVERLAPPING]

[00:38:20]

[LAUGHTER] Then I'm at the right place then I think.

[00:38:22]

It's like when started telling me that undergrad was horrible, and then you started, I don't know. [OVERLAPPING]

[00:38:30]

I think this is not. [LAUGHTER]

[00:38:32]

UC was amazing. I don't know what was amazing. Where is the part that was horrible? [LAUGHTER] Because I'm trying to wait until you tell me and you didn't. But sometimes our projection and whatever we expect also is a high bar; that we're not ready yet or we're getting there. Maybe that's where you are, but I think you'd be okay. But right now, you are in a good place.

[00:38:57]

Yes, I think so.

[00:38:57]

You have a good support environment.

[00:38:59]

I have good support system here, yeah. Everybody has been super great. But yeah, I'm not really complaining. It's not New York. Maybe that's the only complaint that I have. [LAUGHTER]

[00:39:11]

Well, we haven't changed your friends visions here, one in front of the other. Well, let's rephrase that. It's not queens.

[00:39:20]

Yes.

[00:39:20]

Of course, for New Yorkers everything there is New York.

[00:39:24]

New York, yeah.

[00:39:25]

Yeah. But I can see the difference. I think you took the right break, I think it's a good time to just figure out things. Whatever you need, Myrka, please come to talk to us if you need.

[00:39:42]

Thank you.

[00:39:43]

I know quite a few people. Let's chat or if you go for it. There is so many events happening here, take advantage of them as well. Get to know more people, it's a good way too. Thank you. I think it was lovely talking to you.

[00:39:58]

Thank you.

[00:39:58]

Thank you for accepting to come and talk to me.

[00:40:01]

Thank you for having me.

[00:40:02]

Which is lovely.

[00:40:02]

Hopefully I didn't [LAUGHTER] ramble on too much.

[00:40:05]

No, you didn't not. That was great. I think people appreciate everyone's stories. I think they are unique. They bring perspective, and I hope you will find resonance with other folks as well.

[00:40:19]

Oh yeah.

[00:40:19]

But again, thank you very much for staying here with us, chatting a little bit. Be proud of our humble project in terms of our podcasts that I don’t call podcast. [OVERLAPPING]

[00:40:32]

I decided to be part of this community, yeah.

[00:40:33]

Thank you.

[00:40:33]

Thank you.

[00:40:35]

For everybody out there, I will see you soon. Thank you very much. Bye-bye. [MUSIC]