

Shit We Don't Talk About

Episode 66 Transcript:

Mia Voss 0:04

Hey, welcome to episode 66 of Shit don't talk about powered by helix interactive. My guest today is Debbie Adams forced entrepreneur Renaissance woman in Darkhorse. Tune in as we discuss our experiences as women in male dominated fields. And how we can navigate the world, non traditional woman. Don't worry, it's not a male bashing sash, you're gonna learn it. As always, there's an accessibility transcript that can be found in the show notes at shit. We don't talk about podcast.com All right, strap in. It gets good. Here we go.

Boss. Hi, Debbie. Well, hello, Mia. Oh, I'm so excited to see your face. How are you?

Unknown Speaker 0:55

I'm just lovely and yourself.

Mia Voss 0:57

Same Same. Alright, folks. First of all, let's talk about your fabulous accent that comes out every time that you talk. You just your voice is just like, sweet nothings in my ear. So let's chat.

Unknown Speaker 1:11

Yes, yes. So I'm from Newfoundland. I'm surprised you like, picked up on that. People do but I'm from Newfoundland, which is and I love the east coast of Canada. Of course, we have a lot of dialects in Newfoundland. But I've lived away from there for 40 years. So I've picked up little pieces from here and there and

Mia Voss 1:31

yeah, which I love little patchwork quilt. Yeah, she's now now you're back there. You're coming to us from Nova Scotia. Is that right? I am. Oh, that place? Yeah, I'm gonna put a link in the show notes to my trip when I came out there to visit our darling friend, Adam Purcell and then went on a whole tour of all three provinces. I went to Nova Scotia, Pei and New Brunswick. Yeah, if you don't know about New Brunswick, you better find out. So go read my go read my blog post. But today we're going to talk about, oh, these just unusual women and how we got to where we are. I think this is such a timely topic with what's going on in the world right now of really celebrating everyone coming out of their shell and finding their space in the world. Yes, without a doubt. Tell me about you. Let's talk about Debbie. Tell me about your background.

Shit We Don't Talk About

Episode 67 Transcript:

Unknown Speaker 2:25

Yes. Yeah. I grew up in a pretty traditional type of household via my mother didn't work. Most of the mothers around at work, but they were like, they were like the buffer against everything that could possibly harm their children. So you know, they were powerful women are dad's work, there was no economy for women to work. I mean, some of them may have worked on the fish plant or it was tiny.

Mia Voss 2:54

Let me do a quick let's do an identifier. By the way, I forgot about this part and will love this. So I'm Mia vos. I'm a blond, Caucasian, 57 year old woman with a potty mouth. How about you, Debbie? What's your identifier?

Unknown Speaker 3:11

I am a 59 year old woman and I'm developing a decent potty mouth I'm take out of you. A page from your playbook.

Mia Voss 3:20

Scouting view. Yeah, excellent. Excellent. Tell us that tell us what you look like.

Unknown Speaker 3:27

Oh, I'm I'm a large body, which I'm quite proud of them and buxom and beautiful. That's all I can say. But

Mia Voss 3:35

you're gonna get a bunch of DMS? That is very true. And she's wearing glasses. Yep. Yes, I'm actually and I'm wearing a tiger print shirt. So how about you now? Alright, so the reason why I wanted to bring that identifier in is because of our age. And, you know, that is that is something that, you know, in some ways I was. In always I was talking to a friend of mine about what what are where the where we sit on the chart of where we where we sit in society. So, you know, the middle of the chart is let's just face it the SIS hat white, under 40 male, right? We're a couple steps out from that. And it mine is because of my age. So I'm about third on the rung of the of the, you know, where we sit of how we're receiving society and what our privilege can be. And so yours pops out a little bit more same thing for age, and then also with disability for vision, right?

Shit We Don't Talk About

Episode 67 Transcript:

Unknown Speaker 4:30

Yes, yes. And that's interesting. I've never really done this kind of analysis before but I like it. So I am definitely I definitely grew up in in working poor, you know, just not very privileged but quite proud not to be the poorest in town. Right. So there was that there was that thing going on. But women were very were very traditional, the gender roles inside you know, inside of the home the women were I'm tired and outside of the home that was meant to me. And then at 17, I leave there and I joined the military. And some people think, oh my god, she was always non traditional, and she decided to become a mechanic in the Canadian Army. And that's not the case, I finished high school. It was a chaotic upbringing, because of my mother had a traumatic brain injury. And it was a household where, remember that buffer, the women were the big buffer, we lost our buffer, you know, it became like a free for all for any, anyone that wanted to, you know,

Mia Voss 5:32

it doesn't it sort of bypasses that golden of wanting to be traditional, because let's face it being born, I was born in 65, you're born and 63. Right? So that is something that we strive for, that is ingrained into us to be that traditional woman because it's very comfortable. So what an interesting point that that took that buffer away. And so look what you did, you're like, alright,

Unknown Speaker 5:54

let's, let's go. Well, let's go. And I think like, you don't really know, sometimes when I talk about the rationale for the decisions I made, it's as if I was making those decision, like, you know, putting my hat on saying, I think I'll leave and do this. But you're running away from something, there's, let's not sugarcoat it. I run away from chaos. And I ran to the military. And when I went, they said, like, what would you like to be? And I said, admin or finance. I mean, I didn't have a model where there was this powerful woman that said, you can do anything, I didn't have that. So I said admin or finance. And they said, like the military always does when it's recruiting. Oh, they're closed right now. But if you wanted to be a weapons technician, or mechanic, you go right away. We'll go in right away for financial reasons. And other reasons was like, optimal. So okay, mechanic, I'll be a mechanic. So I entered the field of not just the army, but a train, I became a trades woman as a very traditional woman. So if you want to talk about spectrums, I was on that end of the spectrum, so I bought all of that. All of that stuff, including codependence into this environment where we're at risk.

Mia Voss 7:10

Oh, boy, that's deep talk more on that.

Shit We Don't Talk About

Episode 67 Transcript:

Unknown Speaker 7:14

Well, we knew how to get around men. We knew how to navigate around men or working at gasp. And we knew and when I say we, I mean, women like your identify are women of my generation and my geographical location, rural Newfoundland. You know, Northlands, and Island. Island dwellers are quirky by nature and rural Island dwellers are even quirker.

Mia Voss 7:41

Sure. So not an escape route, rarely forsake your captive audience.

Unknown Speaker 7:49

But me I wasn't showing up in the military, as someone who's really going to challenge a man about his role. So I really slid right into that with understanding my place. Not challenging, so I didn't have a very difficult time. In the military in like some of my, some of the women that came from Toronto, for example, that had role models, who were powerful women who understood themselves to be powerful women, and then, you know, came up against these traditional men and really had a hard time with it. not blaming anybody just telling it like it is. My journey was a little

Mia Voss 8:30

bit different. Interesting in your right to I could see that for us is it made it more comfortable to YES to slide very easily into, like you said, codependence. And we didn't even know what gaslighting was back then. And, you know, women in the military as a whole other discussion as well, but then you also add in the timing, so, but I do love and here's one thing, I think to non traditional women, and I certainly am, this is well, we just, I called myself an accidental entrepreneur, like how did you start building and swiping like, I don't know, you know, somebody asked me to come on this job site and do XYZ and then I just kept going and then it just and so I love the beauty of that though. So that's something I want to hang on to. So for us of being okay with being accidental at these things, even though it may not have started out from the best place.

Shit We Don't Talk About

Episode 67 Transcript:

Unknown Speaker 9:23

Right. Right. Right. But along the way I had, you know, I can look back now. I will let me back up a little in my 40s I went to university it was first time I was at university I'd lost my career because of the vision loss. And at university I developed tools to evaluate my earlier life. Now at university I met researchers who were researching women in trades. They were researching women in trades. They had never had boots on the ground or a tool in their hand they had they were looking in what a spotlight and and really discounting the information or the the rich information that can come from a community of practice. And I had said to them, like, you guys have no idea what goes on, like reading your research, which somebody probably has paid a lot of money for him, you know, you can imagine how well received was when I said, this is all shit. That's not like our day.

Unknown Speaker 10:25

It could just be you go you paid for this, you

Unknown Speaker 10:27

know, I'm like, did anybody talk to any of those women? Like, where did you get this stuff out? It wasn't like that. So

Mia Voss 10:37

that's saying attention to lived experiences is a huge gap. And in so many parts of research, I think.

Unknown Speaker 10:43

And in academics, it is and so that, you know, I was kind of mad about that at the time. But as I've evolved over 20 years of education, I'm going to be 60 soon. And I've stopped being mad about that. And I've learned to become a quasi academic, you know, as it comes to, as it relates to understanding my journey.

Mia Voss 11:10

I think that's the biggest piece for a lot of us too. And I was saying before we hit record, you know, as a sharing our, our experiences, I think, for many of us, again, born in the 60s and 70s. And and I'm not saying that to make this podcast only about just I don't want this podcast to be for for us, right? It's fun, but it's more like tune into you can see sort of our lived again lived experience. And what we're learning because a lot of it for us specifically in this age, we just could not face digest, break apart and make into something that makes sense. So that that we don't feel this regret. Until, until this age, I think menopause really brings you a lot of calmness, about shit. And you can just go like, okay, now I see it clearly. But I'm saying this. So that kind of

Shit We Don't Talk About

Episode 67 Transcript:

lending a hand to the younger generations to say you don't have to wait till this. You can you can take a look at it. But But to go back to then again, like so you're in you're in the military. So you really have led a lot of untraditional pieces to and then do you mind talking about then what with your your disability or what came about for you to all of a sudden, we that had to really change the trajectory in the path of your life to have a vision impairment?

Unknown Speaker 12:25

Yes, absolutely. I had I was in the military 11 years altogether. And I spent almost nine years of those as a mechanic, but then I had decided to switch over into a trade that would be more conducive to leadership. Because you know, in spite of that really naive, naive, young, 17 year old girl that joined the military. By the time I was 27, I understood a lot about myself, and my capacity, and my and you can imagine being welcomed and accepted into that environment where I had access to the resources and men have access to the resources and they allowed me the case of Kingdom.

Mia Voss 13:10

Wow, that's unusual.

Unknown Speaker 13:13

It was powerful. It was powerful. I Yeah. And I mean, you can imagine I was starting to recognize my own skill around building relationships, bridging those gaps, coming out of community practice as a cotton ball instead of a battering ram. All this stuff was happening. And then I think it was I was just in my 10th year, I had changed trade. So I went to Ottawa. And they told me I was going to be promoted. And moving to Germany, it was around the time of first Persian Gulf Wars 1990. And now I was excited to go to Germany with the army and I was all over it. I got a medical to go out of country and during that medical, I had to go back and get a second set of tests in my eyes. Mia honest to fuck I drove to the eye doctor and my brand new monte-carlo. And, and I like to of course, make a joke of everything now. But back then it was quite dramatic. The doctor wheels out from behind his desk and put sand on my knee. And, and I like to say, you know, jokingly that I'm 2827 at this time and I'm thinking to doctors be pretty good catch. You have a handle on my knee, you know, right? Say, but really, it was all this like empathy. I mean, he was just about ready to cry. As he said to me, you're Legally Blonde. You'll never drive again. You'll never drive again. I said. I was I could not believe it.

Shit We Don't Talk About

Episode 67 Transcript:

Mia Voss 14:49

Yeah. And no pun intended, Debbie, but you like did you not even realize that like maybe how things had been diminishing until he said that? Why? How I can see that up being like so focused again, y'all don't make fun of me. You see what I'm doing here on everything around you that you're you're not seeing that one thing oh my god, what a blow.

Unknown Speaker 15:11

But it was the disease that I have is called retinitis pigmentosa, retinitis pigmentosa and it takes away your peripheral vision. Now we are very the brain is so creative, you know, you don't know what your peripheral vision is. What we do is we look around, we compensate, we create a picture and I think I see the whole thing, but an actual fact that five degrees, which is like the bottom of a Styrofoam cup, that's all I see. But I could describe this whole room to you because I'm flicking and scanning. And honestly, that's how everybody works. If everybody went and had their peripheral vision tested, you know, some people might be surprised to find out they're legally blind. So that's what happened. Yeah, if you don't mind me talking about that, that way of being legally blind, because the other way is to lose your visual acuity, your central vision, I didn't lose that. But most people see around 200 degrees because of the curvature of the eye. I loved it, you know how technical the is. And so way out here, we have almost have high eyes in the back of her head. As you lose your peripheral vision, you know, and it gets down to 20 degrees, that's when you can drive a vehicle because you know, you can't see what's coming outside of the vehicle. Right,

Mia Voss 16:30

right. So

Unknown Speaker 16:32

a new vehicle.

Mia Voss 16:35

You did? Did you get to drive home? Get the drive? You know, you really touched on something? Man, I didn't I didn't see this one coming. See what I just did that. But because you're so right about perception. How did you know that that wasn't the norm. Right? That was your norm. And you're you're so right on so many different things. Boy, we could we could just apply this to every thing in the world of like, Oh, so that's how you see it. So that's how you perceive that. And that's it's absolutely that too. But oh my gosh, Debbie, that must have been because you were you were just getting ready to sail off into a new chapter of your life and, you know, go off to Germany and be this badass and leadership in the arm and the Canadian Army. Right. And

Shit We Don't Talk About

Episode 67 Transcript:

Unknown Speaker 17:19

I was I was going to be a badass. And you know, I didn't know that was the end of my career. That minute, they took my driver's license, I didn't really need a driver's license for the new role I was in, I would have needed as a mechanic. It was painful. You know, I had a little motorcycle and I used to fix that I used to help people with their cars and stuff. But I wasn't mechanic in my day to day anymore. So it wasn't as dramatic of a couple of months later, when they call me in to tell me that he didn't only say I couldn't drive vehicle he said I could not fire a weapon. Oh, oh, that triggered all different kinds of assessment.

Mia Voss 17:57

Mm hmm. Slowly eating away at everything that had become your identity.

Unknown Speaker 18:02

Correct. So that day when they call me in the office, now I've had a couple of months of not driving. It's not too bad. I have friends that are picking me up. I don't really need to care that much. They call me into the office and I'm just to position where I was in the military. They have a merit board and they pull from the merit board for promotions. I'm talking to my airport. I am an exemplary soldier. I am an exemplary leader today. I was like kickass target America or doing the best kind of work imaginable. They say camp fire weapon and we have a thing here in Canada. It's called universality of service for RCMP, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the military. If you can't fire a weapon you cannot serve.

Mia Voss 18:51

Oh, wow, that was that was a that's the final blow. That's the death knell right of it. Yeah. universality of service in the end, right. Did you you didn't expect that one, did you?

Unknown Speaker 19:04

Nobody had mentioned that to me. So I mean, I can still feel this like, but like, I'm not gonna cry. But I could fucking

Mia Voss 19:11

cry. Yeah, hi. It's 30 years later in this room.

Shit We Don't Talk About

Episode 67 Transcript:

Unknown Speaker 19:18

You Me I lost my driver's license and all I knew I was still going to Germany. Oh, so that brought it. The driver's license did not impact my job. That two months later, I'm still going to Germany. I'm still you know, getting promoted. They call me in and say the weapon thing. You're not going anywhere only out.

Mia Voss 19:39

So and that's I can see where we're a lot of us too. And this This always kind of, I loop everything into racism of like, of privilege of thinking I have and especially as women in women in unusual fields. I am the same of a woman being on a job site and I have been off and on for the last 20 Plus As years, we think that we have this safety, right? And that safety net of that privilege of like, well, not me, I can still do that. I'm sure it was quite abrupt, and I'm sure they probably weren't that great. And I'm sure they were very unceremonious, I'm guessing, on how abrupt that ended. So again, with non traditional women, that's one thing we're good at, you can blow us down like that. And it's still, again, 30 years later, very visceral, but I'm interested to hear then how you how you jumped back up from that, or what you did after that, I can't imagine

Unknown Speaker 20:35

I had this thing that I had developed as a child where I ran to the next thing, and I didn't process trauma. It was the, you know, new layer of trauma, I had already had trauma. I 12, when my mother suffered a traumatic brain injury, broken neck was never able to parent again, in the way that mom's parent, I ran and join the military. I mean, I didn't sit around being all broke up about that. Then I had this great career. And so I went to the next thing I got out of the military and trained as a steel worker in new on gas industry time. Wow. And as a legally blind woman,

Mia Voss 21:20

you know, it's interesting point, though, and this is very true. And I feel I I feel that that's me of, of the moving forward. And that is a piece Thank you for saying that to while we are adept at moving from thing to thing, the jumping from trauma to trauma without processing. That's a huge point. And it does catch up with you and caught up with us clearly for both of us. And we've processed it. But that is a good cautionary tale in a way to just say, hey, in between all of these, I know for myself of going through some big changes in the last year, it's been pretty messy and uncomfortable and sloppy to sit in process then say Oh, and so messy, like that. So that's a great point. You just made it you just moved and kind of just went right pass that trauma and move which I love it. So then you get into steel working right, as a legally blind woman. That's, that's amazing.

Shit We Don't Talk About

Episode 67 Transcript:

Unknown Speaker 22:14

Oh my goodness, oh, my goodness. But not to jump into the trophy. So we'll just like park that for a second butcher backer, the being a non traditional woman and I've done it now most of my life. I mean, I am, I am definitely not putting any of this back into you enough in the back into any kind of prescription of what a woman should look look like, at this age and stage. But we were I was one of the first cohorts of women to join the military and become a mechanic. So you know, they say the first one through the wall is the bloodiest. And we took all of that flak like this year, I am part of the class action lawsuit for the me to movement in the military in those early and I was early 80s. And what we were subjected to in there, there is a group of us of this age, who didn't want to put our names in the class because what was the big deal? Like, ya know what I mean? Like it there's an object description of what sexual assault or sexual abuse looks like. Just because subjectively I had been groomed from an earlier age,

Mia Voss 23:27

yes. And a talk about again, that perspective, that division, I will say, Let's dip into this for a second. women our age, and I've seen it and I for myself i i was able to push it, but there's a lot of women who went through it and then for us to say now like, Oh, that was some shit. There's also and I remember specifically, it was a gal who was cutting my hair and she's like, I'm so sick of she's about our age. I'm so sick of these, you know, girls like more that like we toughed it out, and I was like, wow, that's the shittiest shattered dude. And I saw it so boldly of how that looks when you don't want to face it. Because part of that, is that your own thing of like, I put up with that. There's a piece to that for us. There's so many things now I'm like, oh, boy, you know, and then you have to face it yourself. So I can see that of like, ah, we got through it, right. Yeah, yeah,

Unknown Speaker 24:19

but I'm the I have like, process and alias. thing that I love is EMDR and love EMDR for everything.

Mia Voss 24:29

Yes. If you haven't looked at EMDR Devi I have not had a deep dive into that yet. But I have friends who have so so the letters E M. D. E, like I word em like me. Do you like David or like Ruby. That is it's so powerful. It's so powerful. Thank you for bringing that. Game Changer.

Unknown Speaker 24:50

Game Changer but it also allowed me to go back and the way I processed my the young woman who wouldn't come home I mean, about anything that was going on where I was

Shit We Don't Talk About

Episode 67 Transcript:

Mia Voss 25:02

a badge of honor by the way, like how much shit we could put up with

Unknown Speaker 25:06

so much shit we could put up with but also sometimes me judging the other women are a little bit more thin skinned. You know, when I look back on that now that's not something I'm proud of, you know, and I tell women that like, tough person. So what am the DR has loved me to do is go back and embrace that young girl who thought she was strong because she wasn't complaining. And let her know that this. This was some tough shit.

Mia Voss 25:40

You feel that? I literally feel that and it's just an end being I bring this up a lot but but being an empath being a feeler someone who picks up on energies and picks up on emotion and I know everybody says that, but let's face it, I pretty feel I punished like, if you have if you were born, if you identify as a woman or born as a woman, you're almost kind of contractually obligated to be in that club, which is we we are we are prey animals as in we are the prey, we are preyed upon simply by being this gender or identifying as this gender, so why not? Why not face it? So I do, I do feel that. So talk about a battle to have being the strong woman, but then also having this innate sense of everything around you. It's, it's exhausting, but, but good for you, thank you for saying that of acknowledging what we did to, to get along to be as part of the cool kids club to be a part of the boys table, which is also to kind of shit on the people that weren't toeing the line as much. And I feel like we're here to talk about this today to also break that pattern. And normalize like, yeah, you went through some things too. So interesting. So you said you're part of this, some of the first people that come out and speak out against it? And can I just say, this was an interesting thing. The first time I went to, to Canada, and I believe this was in 2017. So this was right after Trump came into office. So traveling as an American to anywhere outside of the country, people were like, Oh, y'all fuck like I

Unknown Speaker 27:14

know, right?

Mia Voss 27:16

It's really common. A common comment to me when I was there, but but I also really did pick up on a lot of the sort of the hidden things that had been going on in Canada and you guys have this like sort of this whitewashed of of, you know, the politeness and all that type of thing. So even you coming out and being like, Yeah, we had our shit to and being a part of that movement at takes takes a lot of energy.

Shit We Don't Talk About

Episode 67 Transcript:

Unknown Speaker 27:43

Oh, yeah. 100% 100% Thanks for that. You're right. And there are there are regional facades you know, there are regional facades where I love that. Look at her writing. She's writing that down.

Mia Voss 27:58

I do if you're watching the when I finally eventually put this on here, you'll see I write I write I write down little Bon mots and I knew that you're going to have that. But yes, regional facades. I mean, that that's part of I think being a part of a non traditional woman is is knocking that shit off. Yeah.

Unknown Speaker 28:15

Yeah. And man, I am more proud of the woman I am today than the woman I was. And although I acknowledge I was a trendsetter, and I, you know, we blazed a little bit of a trail that needed to be maybe carved out a little bit differently later on. I'm proud of all of that. But I have become a truth teller. Not only about other people, but about me too. Which means taking responsibility, not doing that codependency thing, not giving away my power, understanding my role in some of the tough spaces that I've been in all of that stuff. Yeah. I have a feeling I'm going to have to come back and you and I are going to talk again, because

Mia Voss 29:02

Oh, yeah, this is part. This, this is part one, but thank you, I that is and that is leading by example. And leading by example doesn't mean perfection. Perfection actually is part of the patriarchy. And when I say patriarchy, we're all complicit in it, women as well as men. And so put that perfectionism of having to show that facade, breaking that apart is is absolutely part of the journey. We're gonna, we're gonna get out of here and wrap this up. Give me Give me a little bit more of where you have been. Then, as part of your third act. I feel like I'm on my sixth or seventh act at 57. But where are you at right now? And where did you land in the last, this last part of your, of your current journey?

Unknown Speaker 29:47

I did. I'm a forest entrepreneur. I went to university I got educated like blue collar worker, I thought that education would open all kinds of doors. It didn't. And you know, there came a time a very terrible, financially terrible time I was. I was homeless by the, you know, some definitions. And yeah, so entrepreneurship became the only option 12 years ago. Now I'm like a woman I was published three books and I'm a little outspoken and I love to teach other people to stop to fast track my journey literally, you know, like, how do you go from being a codependent young woman was very traditional to somebody who says, oh my god, I have so much power. It's amazing. So my little vision, I lost my vision but another vision opened up that allowed me to

Shit We Don't Talk About Episode 67 Transcript:

see I can see clearly now

Mia Voss 30:42

give me some Johnny Nash. I love that. That's fantastic. And you have a book coming out? Correct?

Unknown Speaker 30:49

I do love skeptic

Mia Voss 30:53

I'm gonna say that again, law of attraction for the skeptic, i You can't get any better than that, because it's not woowoo but you will. And it does give you access to these higher power things, whatever that may be. Because you know how I like to say my Jesus thinks you're an asshole not you. But you know, the collective emphasis on mine and my collective spirituality. So that that really feels to me to give me thanks for sharing your story today. This has been really fun to trade our trade our experiences as well and then celebrate being a non traditional woman identifying as a woman right.

Unknown Speaker 31:29

Thank you very much stuff.

Mia Voss 31:31

I appreciate you, honey. All right. Thanks for tuning in everyone. Make sure to connect with Debbie at peoplecanthis.com and all of her links will be in the show notes as well at shipping. Don't talk about podcast.com If you liked this episode, please subscribe and leave a review. Especially if it's if you really liked the podcast and you want to show it head on over to shit we don't talk about podcast.com Click on the patrons button and become a full time supporter of the podcast. And if you want your very own podcast, but you don't know where to start, go to helixdash.com Get yourself some and Tom sent you. Alright, thanks for tuning in. I'll see you next time. Bye bye

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