

Transcript of Interview with Analucía Lopezrevoredo by Kit Heintzman

Interviewee: Analucía Lopezrevoredo

Interviewer: Kit Heintzman

Date: 07/11/2021

Location (Interviewee): Venice, California

Location (Interviewer):

Transcribed By: Angelica S Ramos

Some of the things we discussed include:

Hearing about COVID-19 at a dinner party from someone who was already thinking about isolation. Celebrating Purim in Israel in March 2020 before curfews and shutdowns began. Travel in Israel, Oman and Qatar early in the pandemic, and then remained in Israel for 9 months as a result of the pandemic. Goal was to spend 2020-2023 visiting the rest of the countries I hadn't been to (pre-lockdown I had traveled to 123) but the pandemic shifted plans. Still managed to spend most of the pandemic traveling but was only able to visit 6 new countries (that I had never been to before). Also started a nonprofit for Latin Jews at the beginning of the pandemic. Planning the first in-person retreat in January 2022 and moving into a hybrid model due to Omicron. Flexibility in scheduling and program design as a part of safety. Resisting panicking. Spending a lot of time apart from husband for work pre-pandemic; spending much more time together during the pandemic. Husband visiting Israel for an intended 9 days but staying for 7 months with flight interruptions and lockdown. Having a miscarriage in 2021, unable to have husband in the ER. A successful pregnancy carried to term in 2022; husband accompaniment to medical appointments dependent on the state of Omicron; having a doula. Yoga as a form of self care that had to change when studios shutdown. Preparing to live in an endemic. The shaming and blaming that happens when someone tests positive for COVID-19.

Analucía Lopezrevoredo 00:00

Hi, my name is Analucía Lopezrevoredo. It is Monday, July 11. And it's 11:30am. And I'm in Venice, California.

Kit Heintzman 00:16

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Analucía Lopezrevoredo 00:25

Yes.

Kit Heintzman 00:27

Thank you so much. Would you please start by just introducing yourself to anyone who might find themselves listening to this.

Analucía Lopezrevoredo 00:34

Yes. Hi, everyone. My name is Analucía Lopezrevoredo. I am the founder and executive director of Jewtina y Co., which is a Jewish and Latino organization on a mission to nurture Latin Jewish community, identity, leadership and resiliency.

Kit Heintzman 00:57

Tell me a story about what your life has been like during the pandemic.

Analucía Lopezrevoredo 01:03

I think the greatest way to describe the pandemic or the last couple of years has been flexible. And I don't just mean flexible in the sense that things change in the outside world. But me by myself, I've had to really remain flexible with so many things. With, you know, when it is that we're going to having to switch the day of a program having to do take something that was meant to be in person online, having to, to make quick decisions, because there is a spike when it comes to COVID. And so in order to keep the safety of our community, there is, you know, series plans, B, C, and D that we need to look at. So I really think that in order to, to have made it through the past two years into it with a level of sanity and joy, to remain flexible.

Kit Heintzman 02:01

Would you give an example of one of the events that had to get moved around or changed as you were watching the numbers?

Analucía Lopezrevoredo 02:08

Yeah, so actually, this past February, we had our first in person retreat. So it was a full weekend retreat for members of our Fuentes Fellowship, which is a fellowship, specifically for Latin Jewish changemakers. And the fellowship was going to be our first overnight event since the launch of our organization. And in that process, we had moved forward with having an in person retreat. And then really Omicron spike just felt like we had just sunset with Delta all of the sudden Omicron was rearing its little head. And we ended up moving into a hybrid experience in which we still were able, after consulting with a number of different people, to have an in person experience, but to also extend the opportunity of have a virtual experience for those that were immunocompromised, or whose families partners are immunocompromised, and felt better staying at home. And we really felt that other than just calling it all off and making it virtual, that at this point, you know, almost two years into the pandemic, that the hybrid was the best way in which to move forward and to find a way in which to not still feel fully paralyzed by the pandemic, but to just be think creatively and, and not necessarily shoot for the same ideal of success or perfection as we had previously.

Kit Heintzman 03:40

Tell me when you first heard about COVID-19?

Analucía Lopezrevoredo 03:47

Yes, I do. I was I was getting ready. Actually, this is really funny I've had was just launching up. I had just launched in April. And I was at dinner with my husband and his friend and his friend's wife who I was meeting for the first time and we were having a wonderful gathering. And I was sharing with them actually, my plans for 2020, which was going to include a lot of travel, capturing stories and documenting a number of different things. And the COVID came up Corona, you know, we didn't call it COVID. It was Corona. And we were all laughing about it at dinner. And I remember my my husband's friends saying if it comes here to the Bay Area, because that's where we were living at the time in San Francisco. If it comes here, then I'm going to I'm going to move to the East Bay and I'm going to lock myself in a house until it's for a month until it's over. And I remember explicitly him saying I'm going to move to the East Bay. I'm going to be locked up for a month until it's over.

Well, we know All of us laughing and thinking, haha, it's not going to be that big of a deal. I mean, I still think about it today because that was really the first conversation I had about what could potentially happen. And, and here and it was the first time I heard someone tell me that they were going to leave their daily life and go somewhere else to, to not have to deal with it. Because in my mind, I thought, well, if it does come this way, it will be something that won't have that big of an impact. But for someone to move, I remember walking away and thinking, oh my gosh, like what a, what a wild. What a wild thought. Like, that's so much. There's so much fear there. And I mean, now we are here we are two and a half years in.

Kit Heintzman 05:41

When did the severity of the pandemic start to hit you?

Analucía Lopezrevoredo 05:45

So in 2020, I was in, I left San Francisco for Israel. And when I was in, so I was meant to be in Israel for two months. And actually, I was splitting up my two months, with a two week trip to Oman, and to Qatar with a friend. And when we got to Oman. I remember meeting a couple people and we were all laughing how Corona Coronavirus wasn't there yet, there was no cases. And actually, by the time we left Oman, there was a case but we still didn't think it was that big of a thing. We just thought, okay, like that's fine. But on my way back from Qat, so I went from Tel Aviv, to Oman, Oman, to Qatar, Qatar back to Tel Aviv, when I was in Qatar, something switched on the way back to Tel Aviv. And the panic at the airport was when I had never seen before. I was used to seeing some people wear masks while traveling. I was never one of those people. But to go into a big of an airport as Qatar was or as Qatar's airport is and see. I mean, so many people wearing masks, I remember thinking and I was with my friend like, should I be wearing a mask? Or is that really, you know, it's wild like that, I started to think there was this panic that was being set in and and I was and I wasn't going to be a part of that panic. I remember thinking to myself, yeah, but it was, but I did. I think deep down inside, I was alarmed by how many people had begun taking the precautions. And not only that people were like looking at each other. And you know, somebody would cough or sneeze and people were you could tell the fear and a lot of people's eyes. And I remember thinking like, oh, like it's, this is funny. But wow, this is real also. Yeah, I probably took another two more weeks until I until it really until I hit me at a deeper level.

Kit Heintzman 07:52

I'd love to hear more about what you witnessed happening with the pandemic while you're in Israel.

Analucía Lopezrevoredo 07:57

Yeah. So I think the world really shifted around the middle of March. I can't remember the date. I feel like March 15 was the date. But my husband, he was still living in San Francisco. And he was meeting me in Israel in March. And he arrived to Israel on March 9. And he was actually only coming to visit me for nine days before returning to San Francisco to finish a couple of other things. But during that time, from March from when he arrived till I whenever it was that his flight was its flight was was first delayed, and then they said you're gonna have to get another flight. So at first we're like, yeah, we've got more time in Tel Aviv, you know, we love we love being in Tel Aviv. And right around that same time Purim, which is a very important holiday within the Jewish community. It's a holiday in which all over the world but especially in Israel, it's kind of seemed like, I don't want to compare it to Halloween, but people in terms of like dressing up and really the whole country kind of committing to that. That's what it was. It was like one of the busiest weekends. And it's and it's also a holiday so people were I remember being out I remember going to this underground, like this dance party where there was

hundreds of people were listening to music and I remember thinking like, you know, it's March at this point, March 15, or something like that. No, maybe a little bit earlier March 12. And just being like, this is incredible. This is so much fun. Corona like I wasn't even thinking about Coronavirus. But I really think that that weekend probably was probably one of the most like super spreader weekend in all of Israel. And a couple days after that. Things started to close down. I started seeing the yoga studio that I would always go to start not requiring for people to RSVP. And then I started noticing more people wearing masks and in Israel. It takes a long time. Are people to kind of take those measures to heart but you started to slowly not everyone was going on, but slowly start to see them. You started hearing Corona, because that's how you call it in Israel. They don't call it COVID-19. They call Coronavirus, Corona. And everyone's talking about it. Like, there wasn't a day that would go by where people weren't talking about Corona. And I think what really hit me was when there was a Shabbat, and generally, it was a Friday. And in Tel Aviv Fridays, a very vibrant city doesn't shut down like Jerusalem, and everything was shut down. And I was just like, Oh, my goodness, like this is, this is something we've arrived to whatever it is, we've arrived, here we are. And I think that at first, Israel was very on it, like, didn't waste any time, as soon as they decided, okay, we're going to move forward with some measures, we're going to move forward. So people, there was a curfew, there was at first limitations on how far you can travel. And then those limitations got smaller, like you weren't allowed to be in public unless you were going to the pharmacy, or to get groceries. But you weren't allowed to go to the beach, you weren't allowed to go to, to be. Technically, you're not allowed to be on our on a run doing different things. And so people I think, felt really, it was very uncomfortable. It was not like, the culture that you would see there it was you were asking people who are generally out and in a beach city like Tel Aviv to stay home from, you now, being out. And it was amazing to just kind of see how the resistance but quickly the just like, well, this is the way it's going to be. And I remember the apartment that we were staying, I had a balcony, which is where I would do my exercise, I was just I went from doing yoga every day to doing yoga on line. And I would go on to my balcony to just kind of get some fresh air. And I would see all of the balconies with people, they're either doing their workouts or having like with their family, having coffee, and maybe talking to their neighbors and just trying to make sense of it all. But, and even then I thought this is going to probably last two weeks great, you know, my husband is going to be here with me for an extra two weeks. And we ended up staying, I ended up staying in Israel for a total of nine months and him for a total of seven. So the time went by really fast. And when come May, after about a month and a half to two months of strict lockdown or stay at home orders were really locked in, but like stay at home orders. And things started to open up again. And think restaurants were like at 50% capacity. But it felt like people were really pushing the limits. But I have to say, as someone who's primarily let me know in the 20 plus times that I've been to Israel in my life, it's always super busy, especially in the summer with a lot of tourists to be there for the time that I spent there. And to have just because the they only allowed Israeli citizens in what Israeli passports I myself, if I had decided to leave I wasn't gonna be allowed back in because I was there on a on a visa but they weren't going to allow me back in with. So it was also a joy to be able to experience this place that I know so well. In a capacity, I felt so much more personal because of the pandemic.

Kit Heintzman 13:47

I'd love to hear more about what marriage was like for you during the pandemic.

Analucía Lopezrevoredo 13:52

I think the pandemic in many ways I don't want to say saved my marriage because my marriage wasn't wasn't about to break. But it like I was one of the lucky ones I have to say because I know for a lot of people it was tough, but for my husband and I it really like it took our relationship to a whole different level. We had at that

point of the pandemic starting we had been married for three years, just under three years. And we have spent a lot of time apart as a married couple because of work. So I was traveling, he was traveling, it worked for us. But we spent a lot of time apart like that was part of our story. And with the pandemic we spent, especially when we were in Israel, we spent every day together. I mean, and since the pandemic actually, I think we haven't gone more than five days being apart from one another and the number of times that that's taken place has been maybe less than five times. I really brought us together in a way that neither of us knew that it could be like we found out that we really loved spending time with one another that we enjoyed. We enjoyed hanging out with one another because we really like each other, we only saw each other especially for the first two months, it was just him and me. So I feel really lucky in that regard. And it was during the pandemic that we started talking about, are we ready to have children, and I just had my first son three months ago. So I feel very lucky. I know it's really wonderful to, to celebrate, be able to talk about it now because I think it was independent during the pandemic that as a result of us spending so much time together and just realizing like, oh my gosh, we just want to take our relationship to the next level and begin this other journey of parenthood, perhaps that we would have continued to spend as much time as we had a part that maybe would have taken longer. Maybe I would just now be thinking about that. So yeah.

Kit Heintzman 16:00

Congratulations, I'd love to hear anything you're willing to share about the pregnancy, giving birth, what like, has any of that felt different still at this stage in the pandemic?

Analucía Lopezvoredó 16:11

Yeah. Yes. So I'll share that I actually was pregnant. Prior to this birth, I had a miscarriage. So I got pregnant in March of 2021. And the [inaudible] things I have to say about the pandemic is that my partner and I have been nomadic since the pandemic. So already, we were, for the last six years, had been traveling a lot, we had San Francisco as our base. But now we have been just living in different parts of the world. And so I got pregnant in Hawaii. And it was pregnant for the two months that we were in Hawaii. And on the two days before we left Hawaii, I had a miscarriage and I went to the ER. And while I was in the ER it was really difficult because my husband wasn't allowed into the ER. So I was experiencing something that was I think, heartbreaking, shocking, physically painful. And my partner wasn't able to be there with me, even though he had been with me the entire journey. And so that was really complex. And it was also hard because during the pandemic as well, my sister gave birth. And I also wasn't able, like her husband wasn't able to go with her to do a number of the visits. And I knew this, but I really thought that my experience would be different by the time I got pregnant. And so when I got pregnant when I had when I found my second like positive pregnancy test, and which went to term, and I didn't know what that was going to mean, I didn't know if I was going to have the same experience as my sister, or if things were going to be better. And it was up and down the pregnancy, that I was just that I just had. There was months all having to do with Delta with Delta and Omicron, in which Kevin, my partner could go with me to the ultrasound or go with me to talk to the doctor. And there were times where he had to wait outside. He wasn't allowed in. He was really upset by all of that, because he really wanted to be he also had questions that he wanted to ask. And he really wanted to be involved. And I think he took it a lot more personally, obviously, because I was the one still going into all of the meetings. But that was fortunately when it came to the birth, the delivery, he was able to be there, I was able to have a doula. And I was able to have the delivery that I think I would have wanted out of the pandemic. So I feel very thankful for that. But again, it was all with weights when Omicron was at its height. I don't even think he was allowed. They were trying to minimize traffic outside of the hospital. So I think he had to stay at home. So it really went up and down. Yeah.

Kit Heintzman 19:04

What are some of the ways that you've been taking care of yourself over the last couple of years?

Analucía Lopezrevoredo 19:11

So I exercise really was my saving force. I think when I was in Israel, I would have been moving to Israel, right before going to Israel and then which ended up being like a move. Sorry, that was a flush. Right before Israel. I started doing yoga and that's when I moved to Israel. I signed up for a yoga class and for about the two months in which we were in a lockdown. I wasn't able to practice at the yoga studio and it was hot yoga. And so I was I just did a lot of YouTube videos and YouTube really I think I really discovered YouTube during the pandemic because there was so much content so much exercise that really wherever it was that you were you If you could do so and then once things started open up in Israel went back to the in person studios. And you know, I think all of us there, we knew that catching COVID was a possibility because it was pre and that if we caught it, it was, you know, there was no vaccine then um that it can be tough, but we all would still do it. And then once I left that heat, that hot weather, after Israel, we went to France. I started running again, and running and yoga, were really kind of those pieces that got me through it all. And still do to this day. I mean, I ran up until I was six and a half months pregnant. And then I just kept walking and never taking just being outside, I never took it for granted, I was okay, just going outside and being able to walk, even if it's just through the streets doesn't necessarily have to be the most beautiful sight the most beautiful hike, but just the ability to move and to do so freely felt really important.

Kit Heintzman 20:59

How are you feeling about the immediate future?

Analucía Lopezrevoredo 21:03

Yeah, I think, right now I'm feeling really ready to start thinking about the way we're going to live in an endemic. Like, I think that the the days in which I thought we were going to get over COVID, or see it pass, my mind has really shifted my thoughts around that have really shifted, I no longer am like seeking an end to COVID I'm seeking a way in which to manage COVID and to reduce fear and to increase safety as to how we deal with it. And I also recognized I actually had COVID, a couple of weeks ago. And I recognize how much shame there is still for people who have COVID people like not wanting to share that they have COVID because they feel that they're going to be you know, what's the word I guess, like crucified for like, what it is that they put up potentially done. And right, like, Were you out? Were you so much that people could be blamed for but at this point, you know, we're two and a half years in like we're gonna get it. And it's just a matter of like, when you do how you work through it. You know how okay, you test, you know, how do we test ourselves? How do we make a plan for being at home and seeing as as part of our journey and continuously to move forward not really seeing it as penance or something that we're just never going to get over. Because I don't really know if we are and I don't necessarily think that in order for us to look towards the future, which I think it's bright, we need to look at ways in which we're going to continue to be solution oriented.

Kit Heintzman 22:43

I want to thank you so much for your time. At this point, I just want to ask if there's anything you want to say about your experiences in the last two years that my questions haven't made room for, please, space to say so.

Analucía Lopezrevoredo 22:54

Sure. I'll say that starting an organization, on the eve of the pandemic has been one of the most challenging, and also transformative experiences of my life. I started Jewtina my organization with so much like gusto and excitement. And when the pandemic started, I really again, I was one of those thinkers that maybe would last two months, like, enter the year tops, right. But it really challenged me to think creatively about different ways in which to build community. And it allowed me as a result of it as well allowed the community that was building of Latin Jews to kind of extend beyond the local experience and really think Glocal, right, that global local, so someone who's living in LA can really connect with someone in New York via one of the programs I was hosting. And we were hosting, that someone in domestically living in the States could connect with someone putting in Colombia or in Israel, who had a very similar experience, just a different migration pattern. So it was It wasn't what I was expecting programmatically, but our offerings shifted to still bring about something that I would have never imagined had it not been for COVID. So I'm not saying that I would do it all over again. But I am saying that I can't deny the learnings that came from having to be creative when trying to figure out how you're going to grow your organization, how you're going to raise funds for an organization that has been I can't even say it's been paralyzed by the pandemic because it hasn't really hadn't really kind of sprouted yet. And so sprouting in that dystopia was was, I think, a skill that I developed and that now two and a half years in I feel like we've really, we've really mastered it.

Kit Heintzman 24:45

Thank you so much.

Analucía Lopezrevoredo 24:47

Thanks, Kit.