

**[Music]**

**Noelle:** What up!

**Miranda:** Welcome to The Unpacked Project.

**Noelle:** We're your hosts, I'm Noelle.

**Miranda:** And I'm Miranda.

**Noelle:** We're here to explore all things social justice. It's through casual conversations, interviews and storytelling that we hope to inspire others to take action towards a more compassionate and equitable world.

**Miranda:** Because honestly, it kind of sucks here sometimes.

**Noelle:** For real, we can do better people.

**Miranda:** Alright, let's start unpacking.

**[Music]**

**Noelle:** Hey, everyone. This week is throwback week, so super excited for this. You know, to be honest, we wanted to do this as a season one wrap up but, you know, life. So, we are bringing it back now, because well, life. Miranda and I are on vacation, trying to maintain that work-life balance, so, you know, we thought it would be fun to take it back to our first season which seems like it was so long ago. So, let us take it all the way back to season one, episode one, Miranda. We ended that episode by writing letters to ourselves in, you know, another activity. So, let us take a listen actually to our letters.

**Miranda:** Dear 'The Unpacked Project', I have poured myself into you over the past few months getting ready for this, to help create space for change in this world for myself and for others because I think we all deserve to know that our lives truly matter. We all deserve to be heard, to be seen and really to know that we belong. We all deserve to have the same rights and access to resources that allow us to flourish because, call me naïve, imagine a world where everyone flourished. It would be pretty amazing. But we have a lot of work to do to get there, you know.

So, I want change for our listeners, I want growth for our listeners and when I look back, I hope we can say that we did something here that helped make this world a better place. Hugs, hugs and more hugs. Miranda.

**Noelle:** Miranda loves her hugs.

**Miranda:** I do love hugs. Alright, your turn.

**Noelle:** Oh, that was beautiful. I liked it. Okay, here is mine. Dear 'The Unpacked Project', this is it. I cannot believe it. I wish I could hug you but since I cannot, now I just hug Miranda instead, which by the way, she loves.

**Miranda:** Exactly.

**Noelle:** No, but seriously, I literally cannot contain the excitement. I am so inspired by you. I feel this work in my soul and I am also terrified. Will people understand? Will they truly listen? Not just listen to respond but listen to learn. As Nancy Solomon says, 'you get in life what you have the courage to ask for' so I am asking you for this. Be unapologetic, be true, be outraged, be understanding, be the change that we want to see in the world. You are a force to be reckoned with and I will make sure of this. Noelle.

**Miranda:** So, I think the first thing that comes to mind, we were so cheesy.

**Noelle:** I love our letters!

**Miranda:** No, I do. I do. It was like, this ode to The Unpacked Project, you know, and so, I think that that was very special. And really, you know, a lot of that has held true. You know, all those same things are my wants now. Right? Really just, again, creating space for change in this world, and I think we are doing that, you know. We're building our social media, people are responding in such positive ways, they are so excited and thankful for resources, they appreciate that it's something that they can tune into at their own pace, that we provide

resources, that we do activities, you know. It's all just extended learning and people are really loving it, you know. Now, you know, my other hope is a world in which everyone can flourish and, you know, it's like, we have had some downfalls since we read our letters, you know, but I think that this work is never done. And so, you know. And I still love hugs. So, you know, nothing's changed there.

**Noelle:** Yeah, for me, I look back on it, you know, same sentiment, though I'm really proud of what we've done and, you know, I do think that the quote that was in there about, you know, the courage piece, I do think that, you know, that is a big piece of it. I still worry that people will not understand. You know, that is always as much as we want people to learn, right, we are here with the resources and the information, but we get feedback on social media from people challenging things that we post. You know, you wonder, will people stop listening?

[05:04 – 10:06]

**Noelle:** I know that was a big worry for us going into this season. Talking about extremism and this topic, you know, will it turn people off? Should we talk about it? How do we say it? You know, but I appreciate that at the end of the day, both of us are on that same page of like, we just... we need to talk about it and we need to be real, you know. We are fine and confident in having our opinions and having our standpoint and being unapologetic because these things need to be discussed and talked about, you know, so, that is... yeah, that is kind of what I think about it.

**Miranda:** Yeah. Well and I think just, you know, coming in and having our own voices, you know, so often, we talk about, you know, who is our audience? Who is our audience? And really, it is like any... that is so broad, because it is anybody that is seeking out this information, you know. And so, it's kinda hard to pinpoint that. But I think the more important thing for us has been finding our voices, speaking our truth, you know, and just being comfortable in this space, like, we are learning as we go too, you know. So, yeah. So, thinking back to the beginning of it all, I never thought that we would have all those interviews. So, we did... so, we had 14 scheduled last season, right? We ended up doing 13 total?

**Noelle:** Yeah.

**Miranda:** I know that like, so we kind of did mini-series, we did started with education and then we went into criminal justice reform, you know, a handful of other things. So, we had only planned on having three criminal justice episodes and then we got... we received so much

support, we like, booked them all because what, we were going to have 12 season or 12 show episode season?

**Noelle:** Yeah. We were looking at a 12 episode season and we were going to just do like, three on criminal justice and then go into like, LGBTQ and...

**Miranda:** Yeah.

**Noelle:** And then, got so much feedback and support that I think we wound up having what, 6 episodes maybe?

**Miranda:** Yeah.

**Noelle:** On criminal justice.

**Miranda:** But it was great though. I mean, I think, everything happens for a reason and really, season one I think played out and panned out the way that it was supposed to, you know. So, really just a lot of great content. So, if you had to pick a favorite episode or moment from season one, what would it be?

**Noelle:** So, when I think back to season one, for me, like, I always think of Noble. He was a favorite episode of mine. Really, Fernando too. I just appreciate people's experiences and stories. So, as much as... I mean, I loved all of our interviewees, we talk about this all the time, right? Like, when we hang up, we are like, 'oh, we love them' like...

**Miranda:** Yeah.

**Noelle:** There has been so much information, so knowledgeable. Everyone has been so nice, you know, and so welcoming like, into this field, just wanting to share all their expertise, so

really, I have loved the experience in general and all the interviews but when I think about really why we're doing this and, you know, people's... how people's experiences are shaped by their environments and then what that in turn means for their own lives, being a psychologist, right? Like, it's just super fascinating, like, hearing how the world has impacted people. When I think about Noble, just how he was willing to come on and be vulnerable and share his story and how he's using his experiences now to try to change the lives of others...

**Miranda:** Yeah.

**Noelle:** You know, I think of Fernando, whose life was completely derailed, like, this man was sitting in prison for 18 years. You know, like, I mean, his whole life just completely shattered and he has turned it around and used that as strength and not that he doesn't have, you know, we talked about post-traumatic stress disorder and all these things that he's dealing with as a result of what our system did to him, but just how he is now trying to, again, change the experiences for other people, change the systems, take their pain and turn it into something that's productive and is going to change the world, so I find that really empowering and I just love hearing people's stories, so for me, they're who I kind of default to when I think about season one. What about you?

**Miranda:** I mean, you know, we talked about this. It was so hard to pick in general because I completely agree with you, but just because I couldn't pick the same people she did, I would say, you know, Michelle from Cahoots. I just really... I think she was one of the first interviewees because, you know, we do our intake sessions and so, it is like, you know, a 30, 20-30 minute kind of meet and greet, talk about what we want to accomplish with the episode, things like that, and she just was so down to earth and just, you know, clearly, I mean, everybody cares about this work that they're doing, you know, in this realm of social justice and fighting for, you know, equity and racial justice as well but just kind of defunding the police and reallocating resources and learning so much from her from, you know, an organization that has been doing it for what, nearly 30 years, was amazing to hear.

[10:07 – 15:15]

**Miranda:** And she is just so passionate about what she does, you know. So, I think that that was one of my most memorable episodes, really at that time, you know, defunding the police, still is, but it was really much more talked about at the time. And so, I just also felt like that was such relevant information for people to hear as well. And then she was just down to earth and easy to talk to, you know? I mean, she is a west coast girl, you know, so of course I loved her, right? And then Keith from, you know, he spoke on restorative practices, right, from IIRP. You know, I... like, personal to me, I love restorative practices and had utilized that in schools when I was working with youth and so, that was also just near and dear to my heart, and to learn more

in depth about other ways that that work is being utilized and then applying that to like, Noble, right?

**Noelle:** Right.

**Miranda:** You know, just how full circle that work is seen, so... yeah, just really informative. And he was so, again, passionate. His demeanor, you know, just... at first, I was like, I don't know about him. Is he kind of like, dry or... but he ended up being such a sweetheart, you know, just so well prepared, really cares about the work that we do, so intentional and just, you know, just giving grace and being kind. Like, you can just hear it, you know, in our interview with him, so...

**Noelle:** I remember how like, excited he was about some of our questions.

**Miranda:** Yeah.

**Noelle:** He was like, you know, great question. I love talking about this. It was like, people that are just really passionate about the work, which I think we saw. I know at the beginning, we did not think we were going to get anyone to interview, right? We were like, we are asking these people to come on and do interviews.

**Miranda:** And not pay them.

**Noelle:** People are donating their time. And, you know, then we got such great feedback from these people that have so much experience and so much knowledge and they are here just wanting to get it all out, right? And let the world know about what's happening, so...

**Miranda:** Yeah.

**Noelle:** Yeah.

**Miranda:** So, and I think, you know, the idea of this community that we have created, it is like, we are doing this work because we care about it, you know, at this level, other people are doing it too and they just want to support and help and connect you with other folks that are doing this work and get you more interviews and it just feels good when you are talking about stuff that makes the world so dark.

**Noelle:** Right.

**Miranda:** So, I really appreciated that. So, you know, season one also became much bigger than we imagined, like we shared but it also did not come without its challenges. Lots and lots of challenges. So, what would you say was one of the biggest difficulties we faced or you faced?

**Noelle:** Well, for me, first...

**Miranda:** I know. I know what you're gonna say.

**Noelle:** Technology. I am just like...

**Miranda:** We hate technology, everyone, okay? Sorry.

**Noelle:** Who would have known that not all microphones are created equal apparently.

**Miranda:** Yeah.

**Noelle:** I am on now my third microphone. And that is the third one. And as you all listen to season one, some of those interviews, my audio was not good. You know, so we definitely dealt with that, just trial and error of the different platforms. Zoom failing on us. Fernando's episode, we had to completely reschedule because Zoom was not working or whatever was happening.

We could not hear someone or I do not know. So, the technology piece has definitely been a challenge and I think it is a continued challenge, you know, we are learning about different production platforms and different ways of recording and all the different logins for the hundred different things that, you know, we have just to keep the podcast going. It is just... it is a lot. So, I would say that that definitely was a big challenge but, you know, aside from that, for me, personally, I would probably just say the adjustment to it essentially becoming a third job for me. You know, I have work in the schools, I have a private practice and then this is a third unpaid, you know, job that I am doing because it is a passion and I love it and it is actually like, the one thing, not the one thing but, you know, one of the main things that I look forward to doing. Like, I love it, you know, I love the recording, I love the research, I love talking to these... to everybody and like you said, building the community, because a lot of times, honestly, with this work, you feel like maybe you are the only one that cares, in some situations.

**Miranda:** Yeah.

**Noelle:** Or you are living in this world with seeing everything about racism and discrimination and everything and you are just like, what do not people get? How are we even... how is this even a discussion? Like, so having that sense of community and having these conversations with people that are just as passionate about the work is what really pushes me to continue doing it but not without dealing with the stress of, you know, just how much time goes into it in addition to everything else that we have going on in our personal and work lives.

[15:16 – 20:05]

**Noelle:** Like, that was definitely an adjustment in the beginning. I mean, I had to make that decision, right? Like, doing less time in my private practice which really means I am bringing in less money and what, less income. I had to cut back. There was no way that I was able to do all of it to the same degree that I was, so that was difficult in the beginning.

**Miranda:** Yeah. I remember that. Sorry, I am just writing a note to myself. So, for me, you know, just to... well, I second technology but first, you know, meeting like-minded folks, because we have also met a lot of folks local to Florida as well, so meeting not only like-minded folks but like-minded folks in Florida has felt really great as well. Especially from being, you know, from the places that we are from. I also want to put a little plug in here, you know, as Noelle talks about this being her third job, another challenge is all the money that we have put in and we have not gotten anything in return. So, for those of you that do not know, I mean, ultimately, right, because this is a business and I think people do not under... actually understand like, we are a formed business, we have our LLC. You know, we give back to the community. We just did our book drive. You know, all the costs that go into hosting platforms, you know, social media planners, meeting with lawyers, you know, all those things and then just our time, we do take



donations and we would absolutely love if you would donate to the cost of the podcast just so we can continue this research and doing the work that we do. So, if that is something you are interested in, in supporting us, we would love for you to shoot on over to our website and there is a donate button on there and you can always give to us furthering this work. But I second technology. So, there has been multiple times I have wanted to throw my phone, my laptop, I just have to walk away from it. I mean, I never knew that it would take four hours to sign a legal document if you did not have DocuSign. Like, if you... I wish... I do not know if I took a snapshot of your signature. Like, Noelle got to the point, she is like 'Can I use this signature?' I am like 'Noelle, what the hell is that?' Like...

**Noelle:** I did not care.

**Miranda:** Was your hand cut off? Did you sign it with a knob? Like, you cannot do... No, Noelle, like, do it right. She is like 'I just cannot figure this out, I am so annoyed, I have spent so much time on it'. So, you know, sometimes it is the littlest things that you think would go quickly that take the longest amount of time. So, definitely, technology. You know, I was also diagnosed with anxiety, like, kind of right around the time that we started this podcast. So, let me tell you, working through that, because I always say, 'how do I deal with stressful situations? I just avoid them'. **[Inaudible 17:57 – 18:00]** you cannot avoid your business. So, you know, when I am dealing with challenges like learning new platforms that are super frustrating to me, you know, this has really caused me to just better my time management, you know, do a lot of research on how do I implement practices that can help me get through that, but I think the biggest challenge was really just interviewing, right? And like, keeping my voice calm, you know, like, I am having like, a racing heart. I have like... what are they called? You know, like, you squeeze on them like a fidget to help me. I am just like, I am freaking out right. Medication helps, let me tell y'all. So, right, I had started that after kind of like mid-season and so that really helped but actually our episode with Michelle was so embarrassing. So, our scripts are color-coded. So, I am blue and Noelle is green. And for whatever reason, I completely forgot. So, I was like, okay, so it is like, okay, five, four, three, two, one, alright and go. And she is like 'Miranda, it is you'. I am like 'oh, I am blue'. So, then I get super nervous, so we re-record and I am like, starting off and I am like, stumbling, speaking so quickly. So, we... finally, the interview ends, right? We are done recording, it is just us and she is like 'did you just snort a line of coke, Miranda? Like, what the hell was that?' I mean, I do not know, I was so nervous. Like, I had a coffee that day, I had taken my medication, I was just trying to...

**Noelle:** I'm on the other end like 'what is happening right now?'

**Miranda:** Oh, my God. I was like ‘please, we need to re-record the intro, like, I’m so embarrassed, you know’. So, just little things like that. Even just being nervous about, you know, your “UMs” and your “rights” and stumbling over your words and just, you know, learning to push through that and this is what normal conversation sounds like and you listen to other podcasts and that is what it sounds like as well, so...

**Noelle:** So, do you remember, you were doing the transcription for season one and like, the first two episodes when you were going through and transcribing, you had the count of how many times we said “right” or it was like, a hundred and ninety, so...

**Miranda:** I was like ‘we need to stop, okay? People are going to stop listening to us because they are sick of how many times we say “right” “like” “um” so...

[20:06 – 25:00]

**Noelle:** It was terrible. But umm...

**Miranda:** Yeah, exactly, right? So, you know, anyway but, you know, aside from that, we have learned so much through this process so far. You know, I can only imagine six months or a year from now when we get to look back and we are saying, you know, what we are saying about everything but in this moment, how do you feel like we have grown and we kind of touched on that but where do you also see this going over time?

**Noelle:** I talked a little bit in the beginning of, when we started talking, it was about that I am just proud of us, like, we had always talked about doing a podcast, although we never had any idea of what it was going to be about or what we were going to talk about. We just like shit talk a lot and we were like ‘we should do this live, so people can hear it’.

**Miranda:** You had like, 18 different ideas. They were all like...

**Noelle:** Then obviously, you know, after George Floyd, we kind of narrowed it down to this. But, you know, so I think we had so many visions, were not sure. Once we decided that social justice was going to be the route that we were going to go, still had so many visions, did not really

know who the audience was going to be and I think, you know, we are finding our voice, we are gaining confidence and talking about these issues and being willing to put ourselves out there to speak about these things. And, you know, really just trying to remain relevant and talking about the things that are happening in a truthful way but also having it be digestible for people, so that they can understand it and they are not turned off. But like I said earlier, you know, at the end of the day, we are not willing to like, water things down or abandon our beliefs or our values just so that it is easier for people to hear. Like, you know, this is what we are here to talk about, it is what it is, it is the reality. You know, and hopefully, having different ways that we do it, like, how we have our activities and we try to incorporate research and bring in interviewees that both have a lived experience and also have more, you know, knowledge from being out in the field, doing the work. They are trying to incorporate all these different pieces. So, I am proud of us that like, creatively and from a courageous perspective, we are growing, like, in that way. And, you know, obviously, hopefully, I get... hope we get to a point where we are creating, you know, more like educational content, courses people can take or content that people can use in their businesses or at their jobs or in their personal lives for self-growth or reflection. You know, creating materials and content that people can start using outside of the podcast is where I hope that we eventually go with this.

**Miranda:** Yeah, definitely. I mean, I agree with all of that, right? I think, you know, again, we are building a business, right? And it is not just a podcast and ideally, the podcast allows us to learn as we go, right? So, we are learning, you know, different platforms that we can utilize for, you know, hosting webinars, training, consulting, things like that. Information, you know, we are self-taught, right? So, the information that we are learning is information that we can then turn around and teach to others, you know, in groups like you said for businesses, organizations, things like that. You know, so I... and I really think the way that we have grown, well, what stands out to me the most is we are already friends, right? Best friends, starting a business with a best friend. You know, some people, you know, it can be great or it cannot be great. And just, you know, our growth in communication and working together and really filling in each other's gaps has been great, right? Like, I was just talking to someone at work who is going to venture off on his own and he is going to have a business partner and similarly, actually he is Black his friend is white and, you know, they both have dealt, you know, his... the white guy has supported the Black guy in, you know, in like, in racial justice, right? And that is true to who he is and that is also important to him because, you know, right now he is just dealing with some things where he just does not feel supported, you know, so support in that way for who you are just on a basic level and then, you know, the work that you care about is so important and then how you work together as well, so... And I think that we have grown a lot in that way, also just building a business, like I said, learning all these platforms, I am just continuing to get better, you know. So, I think even from season one to season two, you can hear a clear difference in our podcast in, you know, how we speak, so yeah, just, you know, continuing some of that. And then again, I would love to try and consult host webinars all that good stuff which we will get to, so...

**Noelle:** Yeah. I mean, I knew you as a friend but now, I like, know you.

**Miranda:** That is my friend. And she accepts me. Let me tell you, I really appreciate, so in addition to anxiety, I have... so, Noelle is not only a friend, best friend, she is like a semi therapist.

[25:01 – 26:50]

**Miranda:** You know, she really tries not to therapy me because that really goes against what she believes in but it just comes naturally, right? And so, she is like 'well, you know, Miranda, you know, anxiety and ADD really go hand in hand' and I am like 'yeah, I am pretty sure when I was a kid I had ADD' and she is like 'yeah, I think you might have it now as an adult too'. I am like... she is like 'I mean, I work with you, I am just saying. Like, I have noticed some things'. I am like 'okay, let me go get checked out' you know, so...

**Noelle:** I mean, I do not come without anxiety either.

**Miranda:** Also true. It is just very different.

**Noelle:** Yeah, exactly. We definitely have our moments where I am texting you like, 'I cannot deal with this right now, I need you to go handle this' like.

**Miranda:** I am like 'okay, here I go'.

**Noelle:** Yeah. So, like you said, it is just a good balance of kind of our own vulnerabilities, right? Like, being able to know what we don't know. You know, and just how we help each other through that, so... Alright. Well, thank you so much for taking this trip down memory lane with us. You know, like we always say, we appreciate you all so much and look forward to doing this work together for years to come. So, we will see you all next week.

[Music]

**Noelle:** Show 'The Unpacked Project' some love and be sure to like, subscribe and review our podcast. You can also check us out on Instagram @theUnpackProject.

**Miranda:** And if you enjoyed today's episode, visit our website at [theunpackedproject.com](http://theunpackedproject.com) where you can make a donation that supports the research, production and operating costs of this work.

**Noelle:** Shout out to all of our listeners who unpacked with us today.

**Miranda:** See you next week.

**Noelle:** Peace