

Mexico City's LEED Pioneer - Alicia Silva | Transcript

Introduction ([00:02](#)):

Welcome to Green Building Matters. The podcast that matters for green building professionals learn insight in green buildings. As we interview today's experts in LEED and WELL. We'll learn from their career paths, war stories and all things green because green building matters and now our host and yes, he has every LEED and weld credential. Here's Charlie Cichetti.

Charlie ([00:33](#)):

Be sure to check out the green building matters community where you can have unlimited exam prep for any of the professional credential exams. You're tackling next as well as putting your continued education on autopilot, saving time with GBS reporting your hours on your behalf. Check it out. Gbes.Com/Join. Now enjoy this episode of the Green Building Matters podcast.

Charlie ([01:01](#)):

Hi everyone. Welcome to the next episode of the Green Building Matters podcast. I'm your host, Charlie Cichetti and today coming to us from Mexico City, I've got Alicia Silva . She is a LEED Fellow. We've known each other for a while on the education front of the green building movement. I can't wait to hear her story. Alicia, how are you doing today?

Alicia ([01:20](#)):

Hi, I am very excited to be here. Thank you for connecting with me to do this podcast. I'm really, really excited to share thoughts and conversations with you. I think we've been in this industry for a while and we've known each other and this is just exciting to be here.

Charlie ([01:38](#)):

I know you have great energy every time I see you. So, let's just learn more about you. Where did you grow up and where'd you go to school?

Alicia ([01:45](#)):

I grew up in Mexico City and I went to college in the University of Las Americas, which is like two hours West of Mexico City and it used to be called the Mexico City College. It's a very international college and I studied architecture there. What made you want to study architecture and what influenced you along the way? Buildings, architecture? My family, they're all mathematicians, so I really want to branch out and I've always been a very sensitive person and the environments were really something that affected me a lot. My parents moved a lot and they got divorced and every house was so different for me. I really felt that the environment was affecting the way you developed in life. So I really wanted to find out how and why, and if the environment and the houses and where you live can really make a difference. I think that was kind of my main goal for going for architecture, but it's just a whole world. I was always intrigued with the vernacular architecture and the Stawell Houses and just the places where energy was better for flourishing and having a better quality of life. I think there was a very important link with the quality of life and the environment that you live that has accompanied me through all my life.

Charlie ([03:19](#)):

Alicia, I agree. It's just a common theme where quality of life is so tied to the work we do in sustainability. So tell me about, when did you first become sustainability minded, maybe career-wise. When did you say, "I'm going to do great things in sustainability?"

Alicia ([03:35](#)):

It started with my thesis for graduating, for architecture, it's called spaces for human development. I did a lot of research in terms of this interaction that we were talking about, but it wasn't until I moved to Seattle and I started a business called Greener Lifestyles and then got involved with the whole community in Seattle of ecopreneurs and all these green movements. I've heard people say that that region is called almost ecoTopia. I remember really well. We really wanted to go out in the mountains and be with biophilia around us and we purchased, we've made the mistake of purchasing a Land Rover, a very bad car for the environment and just driving in the streets of Seattle and people really screaming at us "gas suckers" and we're like, Oh my God, what are we doing? We're not being honest to what

we believe and changing the car for a biodiesel and really putting our bikes as a forefront of our mode of transportation.

Alicia ([04:37](#)):

And so I think Seattle really hit us in many ways to convert to a super green life. Seattle was a great teacher in terms of getting to know the community, understanding the relationship with the ecosystems. 11 years ago, I came back to Mexico city with a very renewed approach to the environment and it has been great. I did develop a lot in Seattle. I did the sustainable building consultant path there and got involved with scallops, the Northwest Eco building Guild, Cascadia, and all those folks that are really at the forefront of these. I was just so inspired and so touched and I was really committed. I started working on all these LEED projects at that time while in Seattle. So it was something that I had, since college, but that was completely fueled by living in Seattle. And then with all that fuel accumulated I came back to Mexico City and founded my company. But, it was really like I had a huge community and a huge energy behind me that knew that this is working and is the best we can do to move the whole world.

Charlie ([06:01](#)):

There's that excitement. I love that. That's a great word fuel right there when you were just in the right place to just see how to do it and some accountability there on the eco front. I love that ecopreneur. I'm going to tag that. That's really good. Let's talk about mentors or just someone that you looked up to. Is there anyone along the way, Alicia, that you just really would consider a mentor or someone that influenced you?

Alicia ([06:25](#)):

The first mentor in this LEED world was Marnie Evans. She's now working with the US GBC. She's also a LEED Fellow. When I moved to Seattle, I started a company called Greener Lifestyle, which was more like a retail store. I remember her entering, she only wanted organic towels, but we became really good friends and she enticed me to do the sustainable building program, the sustainable building advisor program. She helped me to put my company up and running when I came back to Mexico. She was just a very fundamental part of my career development on green building. Also, I really have the honor to work with Philippa Flores, which is the

director and manager of one of the highest buildings in Mexico that have been my clients for a long time. He knows building operations in and out and he's being recognized, but he's always taught me how to do the business part, but also understand the tenant mentality and approach.

Alicia ([07:33](#)):

He is such a professional that has always been like my go-to person to increase my level of everything. So I would say my two mentors have been those two people. Of course, I've been inspired by a lot of other people in the green building industry, because just hearing the speeches of all these people in this industry is very inspiring. Most of the people here are because of a reason and because of that commitment. So I can say that I've been inspired by lots of people, Rick FedRizzi and Mahesh Ramanujam, the people at the US GBC yourself Alessandro that was also a LEED Fellow with me. We gave a talk together, but just listening to why people are in this industry is really inspiring. I can almost say that going to Greenbuild and being among the people that are doing this change is kind of having multiple mentors because you also hear about how they develop their business and how they're managing to transform the industry and the different sectors. It's been very inspiring.

Charlie ([08:47](#)):

I'm inspired just talking to you, tell me more about moving back to Mexico City and starting your business, 11 plus years ago and tell us about your green building consultant.

Alicia ([09:00](#)):

Sure. When I came back to Mexico, there was not much about LEED. Of course, there's these people that have been in business forever and that have movement(inaudible) , but in reality, the industry was really small. After living in Seattle and having consistent work and really assurance on how this movement worked, I started blogging and I started to give conferences in green buildings because there were very few people doing that. I got invited to a symposium in the Caribbean where I met amazing architects and I met Philippa Flores who became my mentor, and I met several other people from those lectures and those bloggings and just got excited about rebuilding. I started to get very good projects because there were not a lot of people

doing this. I really had the backup of my community in Seattle, people that have worked in LEED for a long time that worked for Palomino and company. It was not just me, but when something is great, it always has a community behind. So I felt very strong to develop my business, even though I was starting myself, I really had a community behind that would support me. We had very complicated projects, but I was always able to call my colleagues and feel the support in very special and technical areas. I had people in Seattle, most of my colleagues that were helping me were in Seattle. Of course, I had personal relationships with them and things like that. So it was, it was really good because once you start with a big project and then you're successful, people start trusting you. And I really like cities, especially in Mexico.

Alicia ([10:51](#)):

If you're in the big city, you just have to prove that you do good work and people will start hiring you more because you demonstrate that you do a good job. So it was really good. There's always a gender bias in my country and in my industry, but I was doing such good work that it didn't really matter. People were acknowledging the fact that we were doing a good job and really the standard for everything was really high because I learned in Seattle to raise the standard. I mean, all the graphic design for our precipitation is perfect and mint. We have designers on staff and it's just like, get rid of the average, go for better things. People started realizing that and also we started a lot of education.

Alicia ([11:40](#)):

That's how we met, through the education partner network. I thought I really needed to get people excited and get to know more in depth and really fall in love with green building. So I think the education part was always something that was very important because at the end of the day, we don't only want to do a green building. We want to transform the market. And so we did form a lot of education. I can say today that in most of the projects that we work, we have a student or a former student of ours that is kind of our ally. Those allies have been crucial in the development of our portfolio of projects. We started developing and getting the complicated projects with the data centers, we're doing data centers and we're doing hospitals and we're doing factories.

Alicia ([12:35](#)):

We have been able to work in Peru in Spain and Costa Rica and Columbia in a lot of things. And because of the background that I brought from Seattle, I was able to do the cross-culture thing and really explain how and why. My Latin American background was very important. So we can be the translation of cultural things. So that was really good and we have been recognized throughout Latin America, but it's because we're really committed. We don't only get there and do the green building, but we also educate people and really inspire them. I had the opportunity to go to El Salvador and give a keynote in one of their things and then come two or three years later and saying that really inspires someone and now they're doing something more. It's really what education is,

Charlie ([13:33](#)):

So smart to make sure that's a big part of what you do. I love that.

Alicia ([13:38](#)):

Yes. I think the other part is that because of all these, now I get invited to be a part of the council for the green stock market in Mexico. We're helping with big portfolios to make decisions, but we come from a different perspective on the environmental side, because we have seen all the mistakes that are done. For example, I would say that people think that they can go green just by changing your light bulbs and that's across the board. They do it in restaurants and they do it in big factories and they think that's green and then get there and tell them that that's not exactly that easy, that there's a system and that there's a lot of low hanging fruit and it doesn't necessarily have to be to change the bulbs. You will get surprised that big funds just think, Oh, we're going to go green. And we're just going to become, , change the bulbs. Like, no, no, no, no. I think there's a lot of confidence when you have been in the industry for a long time, and you have seen a lot of the issues and a lot of the problems and a lot of the challenges that people have, and you can propose better ways of action and people are really grateful for that.

Charlie ([14:52](#)):

That's just greenwashing now, when that used to be the thing to start with, but let's go back to when you came to the United States. Seattle again,

inspired relationships is what I heard ,tools, confidence came back, and you really did it in Mexico City and branched out to all these other countries before LEED really was kind of getting more popular in your region. Was it about energy efficiency? Was it about, 'Hey, let's do a little better.' Were you having to convince the clients or the clients saying, we know we need to do better. We want better buildings, go back 10, 11 years when you were starting your business, what kind of green buildings were you working?

Alicia ([15:32](#)):

So people didn't really know what green building was. We had a lot of people, for example, big developers going to the US and then realizing that they're in LEED buildings and then not knowing exactly what the was a lot of our clients and international corporations that have like a mandate to go for for LEED, like Coca Cola or Nestlé, or like different people. But I think we had to do a lot of teaching the benefits that green buildings have because people were not convinced. When all the markets start going green, most of the people just start with energy and water without thinking that this is a big system and the impact that you can have. It's way deeper. So they just wanted energy and water and we had to present a lot, on LEED and the benefits of LEED.

Alicia ([16:31](#)):

When you're in an underdeveloped country, in a developed country where everything is cheap and the money is the most important thing, you have to make a lot of business cases for green buildings. I decided to do a green MBA because of that reason. So we can really present the ROI in a more formal way and really make the business case for green buildings and that was a great way to approach that because we started doing ROI on most of the proposals and really make the case for green buildings. Today it's not only the case, the business case, but also the health case, the survival case if your building is not green, it might not have a future because people will not want to go back to your building because they will not be able to be safe there.

Alicia ([17:30](#)):

There's a lot of cases that you have to make, and it's not that you're convincing people. I think you really have to put things in perspective and

change where they're coming from, and then think midterm and long term. And I think most of the people in this world are good, but they just don't know how to make better decisions or how to make good decisions. And the role of a green building consultant has always been to put the facts in front of the people and demonstrate that there's a business case, a health case, a better world case for every building that we work in.

Charlie ([18:09](#)):

That's pretty inspiring how you worded that. Let's look back on the highlight reel. When I interview a green building consultant, a green building expert, like you, I'm sure there's a lot of amazing projects that stand out some other accomplishments, but when you look back, what's on the highlight reel for you.?

Alicia ([18:27](#)):

I would say the thing that inspired me the most is to transform people and to make them think differently. It can only be my staff, which I have seen grow all over all of this year. Most of the staff that I hired come in with no credentials or with very green associate credentials and they're millennials, most of them. So when they leave after five or seven years, I have a very good record for millennials. They have so much more experience. They have become a better person for this world. We really want to be the best for the world, not the best of the world, the best for the world. And that transformation that happens in people when they get touched by green buildings and by a better way of living this life and have the responsibility to leave a better world.

Alicia ([19:23](#)):

I think that transformation is my highlight and my goal in general, going through a process and seeing the team of people. That is one when we started the process. And it's another one. When we finished the process, looking at the teams, becoming advocates for green building, when at the beginning they were Grinch. They were complaining and whatnot and then once we're celebrating the plaque or the certification, they're completely different and even their approach is different. I mean, we have seen them change from styrofoam cups at the beginning of the project to everybody having their own reusable cup and that seems like nothing, but it's a huge

step in transforming their mentality. I have had directors of hotel chains go through our classes, and then all of a sudden you're in that chain of hotels and they no longer have carpets, that's a huge thing and you need an even certified hotel, but they have understood that there's a connection between the dust and the inner quality. And they made sure that what they've learned gets action in what they're doing. So I think that is a highlight. See how when you have information, you can make better decisions and can transform the world into a better place. I think that is very inspiring for me, even more than the iconic projects.

Charlie ([20:57](#)):

Is there something you're working on today that you're really excited?

Alicia ([21:03](#)):

I think to start working on investment portfolios and having a bigger impact, it's kind of the next step in my career and it's what is really inspiring me today. I'm very confident that we can add value to a large scale, not only one by one, we're working with this client that now has 250 properties. So our influence is going to be in the whole portfolio, and it's not going to be about changing bulbs but it's really about strategizing how to make the whole portfolio better. One of the things that COVID has brought is that there is a lot more emphasis on the environment, the social and governance aspect. So I was almost in tears when I was in one meeting and hearing that all the portfolios and all the investment and the huge investors in Latin America were now really concerned about the environment and that they were going to put certifications at the forefront because they really wanted third party validation.

Alicia ([22:14](#)):

I was like, Oh my God, all these work that we all have been doing throughout these years is finally hitting the right minds where the money is. I'm really excited that these huge investors are finally realizing because I think we will have a faster impact. We need that faster impact with all these things that are hot, all the things that are happening in the world. When you are very close to the climate change reality, there are some planes where you feel completely hopeless and Oh my God, we're gonna die. We're really not doing what we're supposed to be doing and listening to these years and

how people have transformed their mentality. I'm very hopeful. I'm very, very optimistic that finally we're understanding that we need to change the way we think and that green building used to be a second thought and now it has to be at the forefront. And that is very inspiring. I think that is what is inspiring me, people for ages. We wanted to say it's so important to have good air quality and to renew air. And they were like, no, that's too expensive. We lost a lot of projects because they didn't want it to emphasize the health of the people there. I'm very happy to say that the people that follow through and now have good quality buildings because they invested in the right things. I'm really excited for that shift of the minds of the people, the shifts of the investors and the projects that we're getting because I think we finally have some answers in terms of this climate emergency, that people are really taking serious and the sustainable development goals and things like that are really catching on many governments and many more companies that are committing and pledging for a better future. I think the green building has been preparing for this moment. So we have the tools and the actions and the programs that can solve those problems.

Charlie ([24:31](#)):

Yes. ESG, you're right just that corporate sustainability. I'm excited that your firm's going that way. You personally, in your career doing more with portfolios and ESG and how do we even report on it? Where are we at? Where do we improve our social skills? Right. Some of that's hard to measure. It's so important right now. It's a lot of upfront work leading indicators. Tell us more about your company and the size because as I've gotten to know you, I mean, you do the education, you do consulting, you do a commissioning to do some energy model. Like you really can do everything in a building, but it sounds like this kind of bigger portfolio and company work is where you're going next. Is that right?

Alicia ([25:10](#)):

We were still in love with buildings and we're doing a lot of sustainable sites. We have expanded and shrunked depending on how big the projects we have. We were working for the New Mexico City Airport that got canceled and we were almost like 50 people and now we're back to 25. I think the way I feel as an owner, I want to be a leader that is in contact with my people and with my team. I really like the 25 Mark because I think that way I

can inspire and coach and mentor my team better than when we're 50 and I really don't have that capacity. I also think that it's inevitable that this industry will keep growing, so we're building our offices in the next year. We're hoping to finish that with four certifications that are going to be living in the future and live positive and WELL and SITES and everything that we know that we can make a statement for a better kind of building we're putting in our offices.

Alicia ([26:19](#)):

We didn't know how many because of COVID you go, but you don't go. All these paradigms that are changing, but we inevitably think that we're going to grow, but there's limits to grow because we still want to have that thing because of our trajectory, we're now being able to help the clients that want to commit the, so now we're like looking for people that want to do LEED platinum or positive or living future or SITES, or we're getting into LEED for communities or LEED for cities. We have some challenges with working with the government because of the maintenance and operation, but we're very excited that we can offer a broader range. We have protocols for every kind of project that we do so we can make sure that they have a good,ugood service.

Alicia ([27:15](#)):

And for us, it's just so much easier to do LEED and we have done this for many, many years that we have all the systems in place. We really want people to see that this is not difficult because for Latin America, the level of astringency that LEED brought was very, very far from business as usual. Right now we want to make that normal and I think we have helped normalize those standards in our countries, which is a huge step for everybody. Once that becomes more normal, contractors are used to do that. Architects are used to design for those standards. Then we can go to the next step and keep raising the bar. So I think my team of 25, I always say, Oh, I just want 25, but then we kept growing. So I just hope that we can develop leadership in our team so we can offer more services.

Charlie ([28:17](#)):

You will, or I can't wait to see that office. It sounds amazing. First of all, and one follow up question Alicia, which parts of LEED are harder to do in

Mexico city, is it the materials? Is it the energy efficiency or are you saying the new normal has finally caught up? It's pretty even playing field, but are there certain parts that are still harder to do?

Alicia ([28:40](#)):

At the beginning it was very expensive to do energy efficiency. I think the technology and the human capacities that we have here, have caught up with that. I think we are now working a lot harder with the supply chain and materials. It depends where you are in Mexico. It's not the same being in Mexico City with everybody, you have everything and every option. Then to being in Cancun in the Caribbean, that it's basically far away from everything. So it really depends. I think the biggest challenge, even in Latin America, we're used to importing technology. So we're, that's normalized, but the materials, we don't put an emphasis and LEED before the, with the materials EPDs and HPDs, and all these things have made things complicated. Our industry has had a lot of challenges catching up with the new standards. We are right now helping a lot of industries develop their standards to comply with LEED 4.1 and have declared labels and HPD and life cycle analysis.

Alicia ([29:44](#)):

It's been hard because it's a huge jump from business as usual to get rid of the toxins and really think of regenerative design. I think materials are the one that is more challenging. I am in a community for a lead building challenge. The material part is always the most challenging we can get to net zero energy and that sort of water, no problem. But the material is, is, is really our challenge because our industries are way behind in the infrastructure and the technology. And it's not that we don't have the people because I've worked with a lot of companies to develop. Is that the data? No, the standards. So they don't know any better. So once you teach them that there's better substitutions for the toxic chemicals that they put in, like, Oh, I can do that. And they move forward, but we need more education in the material supply chain

Charlie ([30:43](#)):

You're right. You're a bachelor and it all comes back to that education, in my opinion, and yours too, at least to confidence, right? It's like, okay, this is the

new way to do business. We're going to have to do it. Here's how we do it. We don't have to just do it the old way. My next question is what's around the corner? What are you reading up on now that it's coming up? Green buildings, healthy buildings, just what do you think's coming around the corner in our movement?

Alicia ([31:09](#)):

I think there is going to be a huge combination of double certifications between WELL and LEED or EDGE and FITWEL, depending on where you are in the scale of the building demanding standards. I am seeing more interest in WELL, but LEED interest is not decaying in the sense that all the buildings that want to go for WELL certification, they also want to go for LEED certification. So it's not one versus the other, but they're complimenting each other. So a lot of the people that started with LEED are now, WELL APS, but they're still continuing to do LEED certifications. I think we're going to see a lot more things that compliment the LEED core; it can either be WELL or sites. For example, I think sites are also a very important thing in terms of relaxing people, calming people, getting biophilia, getting rid of stress, things like that.

Alicia ([32:11](#)):

And then understanding that our connection with nature is such an important part of being human and being healthy. That there's going to be a complementation, all these systems together. I see our industry moving forward several certifications at a time. I see people committing to LEED and WELL or LEED and SITES. I see a lot more people doing LEED for communities and then doing SITES within the community and then looking for places where they can do WELL. For example, our residential industry in Mexico was very kind, especially for middle and high income. The social housing was in Mexico. There are very strong programs for social high housing that have to become green. However, the housing and residential market was really behind. I see that developed a lot more in Mexico and Latin America in general. Housing is a place where we are back now, people are realizing that they need more plans, better lighting, better in their equality, all those things that you didn't pay attention to because you were at your office. And now because we have to do home office, I think that is another industry that is going to take off because people are realizing they

need better quality of life within their house. They will have to reprioritize. So I see our industry moving in, just getting deeper on what makes us have a better quality of life, all around

Charlie ([33:51](#)):

Work from home, healthy buildings, the dual certification. So we keep coming back to that, that quality of life. All right. A few more quick questions for you. Let's learn more about you. You think you're best at what's your specialty. What are you really good at?

Alicia ([34:05](#)):

I think I'm good at inspiring people and telling the story of how to do things. I always say to my staff, okay, but how can we make it? The, no we already have, but how can we transform that No, Into a yes. So it's a little bit of a strategy. It's a little bit of inspiration and it's about being almost like a hacker, a trickster understanding the rules and really being a trickster in the sense of how can we make this work no matter how overwhelming. And as a mentor of people in the consultancy work, we have to be a trickster of the system in many ways, because we always have to find how we can make this happen? And so I think that's kind of my super power. Like how can we change that?

Alicia ([35:04](#)):

No, to, yes. How can we make people commit? But how do we tell the story? Because we don't want to convince them we want to inspire them. The other day we were talking about what are the most important things to have quality of life. And I think the first one is self development. So it's really being aware of where people are an honor, that they also have answers and then work with them to empower those answers. Because at the end of the day, we all want to be a good person. We all want to have health. We all want to have good relationships. We all want to have better quality of life. So just tapping into that and getting, , things moving forward that inspire them and demonstrate that it can be done. You can have a better place. You, you can have a better life. You can have better health that can be done. You just have to have a beer choose life, and it's not a bad thing or a boring thing. It's actually a very amazing and enjoyable thing to be in a place where you feel well.

Charlie ([36:09](#)):

So great. We have a lot in common about knowing the rules, not taking no for an answer and just you're right. Sometimes you think there's this path or this path, but you're showing here's this other path and you've got to kind of, especially maybe with the younger team, show them how to exhaust all efforts. There's still a way to do this. And that's one of my sayings exhaust all efforts. Let's talk about habits. Do you have any good habits?

Alicia ([36:36](#)):

Yes. And I think I have emphasized those good habits and healthy habits during this pandemic because there is a lot less space for not being healthy. I would say there's a concept in Chinese medicine that it's about having regular habits every day so you don't lose your rhythm. We have been very strict during this pandemic of waking up at the same time. We're now taking cold showers in the morning. We are taking good supplements. We're being a lot more strict with the food that we eat and regular exercise and everything, but also I've become like a crazy fanatic of the plant lady. Now I have way more plans during this pandemic. I have increased the amount of plants that I have and really put an emphasis on mindfulness and really having more time to meditate.

Alicia ([37:40](#)):

We have developed even programs for our staff to be aware to have mindfulness and that's all derived from the WELL building standard and the research that they have done on those things. The nutrition, wellness mutation, we put a lot of emphasis on mental health and things like that. We have tried to do things so people are healthy mentally as well. I have been emphasizing a lot more like my kids are gone. It's only my husband and myself so it's easier in that regard when you don't have to take care of the little ones. I have more time for myself and my husband. I just have to say that my husband thinks that I'm like a dog that loves to take care of all the sheep. I try to emphasize that people have a healthy life and drive like how the program works because again it's more like this concept of eudemonia where you go to wellness because there's a path of (inaudible).

Alicia ([38:48](#)):

I mean, if you just want hedonistic and just do things because they feel good at the end of the day, you're not going to end up with a good result because eating bread feels really good, but it does have consequences. Eating sugar is the same thing and taking care of yourself, it's a little bit harder, but at the end of the day has better results. Taking care of your environment is the same thing. We take care of the earth, but at the end of the day, we will have a home for everybody. It's really a path of virtue and virtue doesn't have to be a boring thing or a moral thing. It's just doing the right thing. We have understand once and every time that you've make a little effort, but then the reward is so much bigger than if you just let yourself go into only pleasure. I don't know.

Charlie ([39:42](#)):

I understand what you're saying. You're very good at your storytelling and good visuals. Thanks for sharing all that. It just comes back to a lot of that. You've studied because one of my next questions is books. You and I were talking before the podcast about books a little bit. Is there a book you'd recommend and just how you like to learn?

Alicia ([40:02](#)):

I read a lot of books as we were talking. I just read The Miracle Morning. It's very simple, straightforward to just have a practical thing for the morning and you just go on with your day. I just read that. But for example, I read about the sacred rest. There's like seven types of rests that you can do and you kind of forget, and if you're rested, then you work better. I'm all about being efficient and it's very important. I love Carol Sanford, the responsible visitors, the responsible entrepreneur, the regenerative business, the regenerator entrepreneur. I love her podcast and non-business as usual, I love everything about functional medicine. So Dave Asprey, biohacking, and all those kinds of things are really good. And all these books about business.

Alicia ([41:03](#)):

One of my favorites is Let my people go Surfing by Yvon Chouinard, the founder of Patagonia. And because of him, we decided to become a B Corp. But I think let my people go surfing, summarize most of the eco preneurs ideals if you want a good community, but you also want to make an impact in the world. Patagonia is another company that it's such an inspiration for us

in many, many ways. I think that, but I even read like Brené Brown, like there to Lead, I think leadership is something that we need to develop all the time in ourselves and in our colleagues. So, There to Lead is one of my go-to that I love. I also lead like a lot of gender equity, like how women negotiate. Of course leading is a must for every woman.

Alicia ([41:55](#)):

I read the Bestival women to really understand why and how to deal with the things. And really, I think reading is so important because it gives you a lot more vocabulary on how to describe what's happening. And then when you can make people see the thing, then they become your allies and help you move forward. The other one that we just read, and it was a book club within my Latin American community was All We Can Save. It's about climate change and climate action and all these activists, mainly women that are doing things for the environment and it's so enticing. You want to do more activism towards climate change and understand how important it is that we commit to all these things. So definitely books are such an important thing in developing as a person, as a mentor, as an entrepreneur, as a boss, as a leader, as a human being, as a partner. I think we should all be reading all day. I mean, just a fanatic of reading.

Charlie ([43:05](#)):

I can tell you gave me like 10 amazing books and I'm going to list them all out in the podcast show notes. So when everybody's listening to this, they'll be able to link over and check out all those great books thank you. Let's talk about a bucket list. Is there a certain place you'd want to travel to, or some adventures or something else you really want to get done? What are one or two things maybe on your bucket?

Alicia ([43:26](#)):

I'm definitely in love with Japan and that was one of the things that I wanted to do. I have already gone, but it's a culture that I really love and admire, especially their connection with nature. I think it's very inspirational to me. When you have become so specialized in one area, then you realize that. And being of my age, I'm 50. I also realized that there are places like I would like to explore a little bit more and we have a plan for a hundred year living. So I'm only half way. I want to be prepared for the hundred-year Olympics,

like what is going to happen if we end up achieving that quality of life that we're working towards and what is it that you'd need to do to maintain your capacity of being independent?

Alicia ([44:20](#)):

So in my bucket list is how do I take care of myself and my body and my goals and my inspiration to just keep giving, keep having ideas today. I just talked to one of my clients. He is an entrepreneur and innovator and he's 86, he's super successful. We were talking and he invited me to a project and he was like, what have you been doing during this pandemic? He's like, okay, last eight months I've been innovating and he's 86. I created all these things and all these materials, and I want you to take a look at them and he was such an inspiration. I want to be like that. That's kind of my bucket list. I want to be an 86 innovator with a lot of knowledge that I accumulated over the years and just keep giving, keep giving because he was gonna present a project that will help low-income housing and could be assembled in five days. It could be part of the response to a major problem. That's kind of my goal, how can we keep innovating? How can we keep giving, keep learning, keep solving problems. Of course traveling, it's always inspirational, but to places of culture that give you more energy to keep taking care of this world.

Charlie ([45:44](#)):

I can tell you love life and you want to travel a little bit more too and he sounds like quite the inspiration, 86 or more. My last question here, as we wrap up, let's say, someone's listening to this podcast right now, but they're just now jumping into green buildings. What words of encouragement do you have for them?

Alicia ([46:03](#)):

I'm so happy for them. I think once you discover a green building, you discover a new world and a world of possibilities and a world that is very open and has so many paths. So it doesn't matter what exactly you love. It can either be more social or more technical. Green building is a tool to help the world. I think being of service is something important for people to feel happy in their life, to get rid of anxiety, get, get rid of depression. When you serve, you serve, it's a great finding when you get into green building,

because then you realize there's a better way of doing things and a better way that works within a system of things and you become part of a system of a community. You understand the world from a different perspective because everything is linked.

Alicia ([47:01](#)):

All of a sudden, you're not isolated. You're part of a community, you're part of a system and your pattern of the answer moving forward, I think that's very important. I have two sons and at the beginning, raising kids is very hard, but once you see that they have owned that knowledge and own that green building mentality, we traveled with them. They were living in Europe and they had us carry garbage throughout the city because we couldn't find a recycle bin and things like that. We were so happy that they say, no, we're not going to be part of the problem. We're going to be part of the solution. And that is something that when you enter a green building, you realize you can be part of the solution. We joke about people carrying rocks. One of them was building a Cathedral and the other one is just carrying rocks. I want you to have that idea that you're being part of a bigger thing. Once you enter the building, you realize you've been part of a bigger solution than just an isolating work that just gives you money.

Charlie ([48:05](#)):

I totally agree if you're jumping in right now, you are part of the solution. What a fantastic interview here, I'm inspired and for everyone be sure to connect with Alicia on LinkedIn. I know that you've inspired everyone listening so congrats on all your successes, keep doing the great work you're doing. Thank you for your time today.

Alicia ([48:25](#)):

Likewise, I'm so inspired by GBS, the quality of your educational platforms, the quality of your program is always an inspiration for us. And thank you as well for doing all what you do.

Charlie ([48:43](#)):

I just want to say thank you to our loyal listeners. We actually are celebrating over one year here on the Green Building Matters podcast. Me and the entire team we're stoked and just so glad you continue to listen every

Wednesday morning to a new interview with a green building professional here in this industry, or just some pro tips that we want to make sure that you are getting straight from us straight to you. Thank you for listening to this episode of the Green Building Matters projects@gbes.com. Our mission is to advance the green building movement through best in class education and encouragement. Remember, you can go to gbes.com/podcast for any notes and links that we mentioned in today's episode. And you can actually see the other episodes that have already been recorded with our amazing, yes. Please tell your friends about this podcast, tell your colleagues, and if you really enjoyed it, leave on positive review on iTunes. Thank you so much. And we'll see you on next week's episode.