

Wellness Real Estate Professional Amy D'Angelo | 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 WELL 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 GPS 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](#)):

Everybody welcome to the next episode of the Green Building Matters Podcast. I'm your host, Charlie Cichetti. Today we're going to talk a lot about health and wellness. Got a special guest on I've got Amy D'Angelo. She's the chief executive officer at Sustainable Green Spaces and she's based in Venice, Florida. Amy, how are you doing today?

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

I'm doing great, Charlie, thank you so much for having me on how are you doing today?

Charlie ([01:25](#)):

Fantastic. All things considered as we come out of the pandemic and I hope everyone listening is doing well. I think there's confidence building. I know we're going to get into it and talk about healthy buildings, wellness, personal wellness, and some of the things you're doing with your company and I can't wait. When I think of you, Amy, I think of holistic living and early adopter of wellness, best practices. I've seen how you and Dean have raised your family. I can't wait to get some nuggets in this interview today. I'm very excited. I like to ask my podcast guests. Amy, take us back, where'd you grow up and where'd you go to school?

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

Absolutely. I am a Florida girl. I've recently moved my family back to Florida from Atlanta, but I grew up in Florida, right in central Florida in a small town called Ocala. Anytime you drive through the state, you drive right through it. I think you either know it because you've driven through it or it is horse country, but that's where I grew up. I went to college at the University of Florida. It was 45 minutes up the road, but a really great education and what really started me down the path of trying to figure out what I wanted to do with life and what I wanted my impact in the world to be.

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

That's great. I know a little bit. I think your daughter's going to the University of Florida coming up. I'm sure you're a proud Gator fan. I'm in the ACC, Georgia Tech. It doesn't matter to me, but I know you're really proud there. A lot of fun getting the family to go into your Alma Mater. We're going to talk about sustainability, we're going to talk about healthy buildings, but where do you think you first got introduced to going green or in your case, maybe even overall wellness?

Amy ([03:08](#)):

Yeah, absolutely. It really happened after I had kids. I didn't grow up in a home that was particularly sustainable. My mom always put healthy food on the table to her standards and it was great. When you have kids you start looking at the world differently. Our second child had a food sensitivity that really made us start paying attention to ingredients in food and that's where it started for me. You can't stop there. When you start seeing some of the ingredients in food, and you're trying to keep your kids healthy, you naturally turn and say, "Well, what else am I bringing into the home that could be making them sick?" My son is 15 now, so about 15 years ago is where we really took stock of the food we were bringing into our home and the cleaning products we were using in our home. We really had to say, "We've got to make a change here because our children aren't as healthy as maybe they can be."

Charlie ([04:14](#)):

Definitely. In aha moments you feel, "I gotta do something here." Tell us about the parts of your career. Where'd you start out after college and then maybe an entrepreneurial stretch there and then even some nonprofit work? Tell us a little bit about some positions you took and how'd you get to

where you are, which is all in this wellness movement. Tell us about some of the early careers first.

Amy ([04:41](#)):

I'm probably like a lot of your listeners where I have a lot of different things that I've done in my career. I didn't graduate from college and say, "Okay, there's this one thing." When I graduated from college, we moved to Atlanta and I went to work for a fundraising consulting firm. I helped nonprofits raise money for buildings and endowments, strategic planning, feasibility studies in this capital fundraising world. I did that for a long time until my son started to get sick with food and that really led us on a path of looking for better food options out there, quick and easy things to make. We could not find that on the market. From there, my husband and I actually launched a healthy food company and we made foods that our child could eat, but that were really healthy and wholesome to put out there.

Amy ([05:42](#)):

We lived in the food world for about 10 years and at that point we were still in Atlanta. We were in Atlanta for about 17 years, total. It was really time for me to get back to my roots. I needed to be warm and in the sunshine more days. I wasn't finding that in Atlanta. We made the move to Florida and I went to work for a national non-profit managing facilities and employees. Looking at how we can create wellness in the workspace is really where that started along the way. One of the things I realized is that my personal "why" is to inspire positive change in the people around me. I really had an aha moment about a year and a half ago where I realized there's not one thing that I do that does that. It's the culmination of everything I've done and in every different place I've found myself in, I can still find a way to make that positive change and to aspire to that positive change. For the last year and a half, I've been really focusing on this wellness movement. How we take this wellness initiative that's happening in commercial real estate, and really pull it back and apply those principles and best practices to our homes.

Charlie ([07:08](#)):

Fantastic. You did a good job of showing us the different pieces from the organic food business and your family for 10 years. I got to witness some of that and it was amazing. How'd you transition from all things, food wellness to air quality. We've had you as a guest at GBS. You've done a fantastic job talking about wellness at home. We have a whole series around it. Have you

had to go out and learn a lot about it or is it stuff you've been practicing? How do you go from being the expert on the food side to now all these other pieces of wellness?

Amy ([07:45](#)):

That's kind of a combination of both when COVID-19 hit and we all found out we had a lot more time on our hands because we were home. All of those activities stopped. I'm not a person that sits at home with nothing to do, I'm not. My husband was familiar with the WELL AP and he kept telling me, "Amy, this is something that I think you would really enjoy. Why don't you go through the materials and take the test?" I had been saying, "No, I'm busy. I'm managing this facility right now. I don't have time." Well, I didn't have that excuse anymore when COVID-19 hit. I started going through the GBEs study program and the exam prep.

Amy ([08:38](#)):

Very quickly I realized two things. My husband was right. He'll like to hear that. That this is something that really interests me, but it interests me because these are things that we had been doing in our home all along. Not connecting it back to, "Oh, that's gonna be good for our indoor air, or that's going to be good for this." These holistic practices that we've been doing like removing air fresheners, buying less toxic cleaning products and now I had a standard to go with that and that really developed within me. You and I talked very early in this process and that really developed this passion in me to say, "Other people need to do this for themselves at home." This shouldn't be contained to these buildings where you spend maybe 25% of your time. We really need to see how we can share what we do in our homes with people. It's been a combination of understanding all of the best practices I'm doing and putting them in the box and saying, "Okay, this is indoor air quality. This is ``Comfort In Mind" and kind of figuring that out.

Charlie ([09:50](#)):

It's very validating too, as you study for those credentials in those programs. I'm proud of you for learning the commercial real estate, the commercial building, big building side of this wellness healthy building movement that I've been doing for six plus years. Saying, "Hey, what of this does still apply to our personal lives. In our homes." You and I both agree on this, the future is going to be some at home, some at work. Where are you working is an interesting hybrid now. Those listening Amy, about the two credentials Fitwell ambassador, which you have and your WELL AP,

which you did breeze through. Pretty amazing, obviously two different tests. WELL AP closed book at this time, 100 questions, multiple choice, a lot of medical statistics. Fitwell ambassador, a great program. A great credential online open book course and then 50 question quiz. Can you tell us about those two, if someone listening is like, "I got to get a credential in this wellness."

Amy ([10:48](#)):

I would say of the two they're both really valid. I think if you're going into this healthy building movement, looking at both of them because they approach things slightly differently. It gives you a really good approach for the WELL AP. I absolutely recommend spending time studying for that. I did the GBEs, WELL AP study exam prep. I did the live training plus the practice tests and the flashcards. I honestly spent about six weeks studying every single day for this. It had been a long time since I had taken a test. When I sat for that credential that was definitely a larger commitment to studying and knowing the material. I took the test remotely, which is an interesting experience all on its own for the Fitwell ambassador.

Amy ([11:47](#)):

It's a little bit, I don't want to say it's a little bit easier, but it is a little bit easier of an exam because it is open book. You watch a video and then you go through the 50 questions and it's definitely a little bit easier, but that doesn't make it any less valid. It is a great standard. I'm constantly pulling information from it when I'm going through and trying to create these best practices to use at home. For anyone out there listening, who's interested in either of these credentials. They are going to set you in a good way.

Charlie ([12:22](#)):

Thank you for showing everybody. I know there's some listening right now that maybe has a LEED professional credential and is like, "I need to do something." You gave great advice there. Let's talk about mentors and then we'll go to proudest accomplishments. Mentors, have you had anyone that you looked up to along the way or you'd call a mentor? Maybe somebody you followed and they inspired you as you kind of built your career?

Amy ([12:44](#)):

Absolutely. I've been really fortunate in my life to work for some really amazing people. It started really back when I was in college. I worked for the city of Ocala and I worked in the city manager's office. We had an

assistant city manager, her name's Janet Tut. I still am connected with her today and she really taught me how to be a professional in this world. What does that look like? How do you treat people? How do you talk to people? How do you respond to disgruntled citizens? She was a very positive source that really helped me understand that connection which has served me well my entire career. Along the way, I've had really great colleagues and bosses that have all imparted their wisdom with me as we've gone. I've been really fortunate in that regard.

Charlie ([13:52](#)):

It's important to give those shout outs that have helped you, influenced you and open the door. It's amazing. Let's look back for a minute. What are some of your proudest accomplishments?

Amy ([14:02](#)):

I think first and foremost, my kids. My daughter is about to embark on her college career and I have a son who is in high school. They're both really kind, compassionate, productive citizens and that definitely is my proudest accomplishment. From there I think I'm really proud of my ability to consistently move forward. To not get stuck in anyone's space. To constantly look for how I can, not only improve myself, but how can I make a greater impact in the world around me and that's something that I do every day. It's a conscious thought of how do we make a bigger impact today?

Charlie ([14:51](#)):

Good kids, great family. I'm happy I got to get to know all of you. Following your passion, you and Dean, 10 years in the organic food business, and you've got a heart for helping others. All the nonprofit work over the years. Now another entrepreneurial journey here. I can't wait to kind of help you get the word out about what you've got going on. Good segue to Amy, tell us, what's keeping you busy today?

Amy ([15:14](#)):

I have launched The Home Wellness Project, which is really my opportunity to help people create wellness in their homes and expand it beyond diet and exercise. Often when we think about wellness at home, we think about, "Oh, I should eat better and I need to exercise more." Those things are important, but there are so many other things that go into how we can improve your indoor air quality? How can we make sure the water that

you're drinking is the safest source? How can we bring nature in? How can we really connect with nature so that it helps you naturally reduce stress? Of course, how can we look at the way you're lighting your home and make sure that your circadian rhythm is really being recharged every day, because we're on the correct cycle of lighting our homes? How do we develop good sleep policies at home? So that's what I'm doing right now. I'm developing best practices in all of these areas, taking some from the wellness real estate initiatives and some from what I know works in our homes with our families. Ultimately, all we want is for our families to be well and healthy and this is one more way that we can do that.

Charlie ([16:40](#)):

Absolutely. I know you're doing this work with organizations, you and I have had some talks and presentations with Fortune 100 companies, so they can cast it out to their employees down to small businesses or individuals. I know you're willing to share, "Hey, here's what I do. Here's what I've tried and tested: and "this might work for you" because a lot of the time it's education first. I didn't know all that about candles and diffusers and all these synthetics. The simple things that now we really want to pay a little closer attention to.

Amy ([17:11](#)):

One of the things that I've done most recently is an indoor air quality course for dorms, for families of other kids, and going to the University of Florida that I've connected with through a Facebook group. It's really how we can get the information out there to more people so we can really impact the health and wellbeing of students and our families.

Charlie ([17:37](#)):

If you had a crystal ball what's next, what's next in this wellness?

Amy ([17:45](#)):

I think it's really this connection of a wellness home. I think one thing that COVID-19 has done is it's made us all really kind of take stock. If we know we're walking into a wealth certified building every day for work, and now we're not doing that because we're working more at home. I think there's a natural inclination to say, "Well, how do I extend some of these best practices of some of the things that my office is doing, in my home?" I really see the healthy building initiative, absolutely continuing on the commercial

side and really bleeding a little bit more into the residential and the individual homes.

Charlie ([18:26](#)):

I think you're absolutely right. That's a good point. We've had some webinars on this for those listening, we'll put links to some webinars where we've had Amy come on as a guest on GBEs monthly webinars. You can check out some more of her best practices and where to start. Anything else with wellness before we kind of focus a little more here on you, Amy? Anything that you're trending, you're researching or any other kind of projects you want to highlight now?

Amy ([18:56](#)):

We are launching our indoor air quality online course here pretty soon and that's super exciting. It's focusing on indoor air quality in your home, but a way to really take that first step in improving the wellness in your home.

Charlie ([19:12](#)):

Good. That's exciting. There's a need for that. Everybody checked that out as well. We'll put a link in the podcast show notes. Here on the podcast as I interviewed green building and healthy building wellness professionals like you. Some rapid fire questions. What would you say is your specialty or gift?

Amy ([19:31](#)):

I think inspiring positive change in the world around me. Having the ability to understand some of these big topics and then share them in a way that makes sense for somebody else to do in their home.

Charlie ([19:47](#)):

Unpack that a little bit for us. Do you thoroughly research it or do you put it in a kind of layman's terms walk us through what's in your mind when you're going through that.

Amy ([19:58](#)):

Yeah, absolutely. It starts with research. It starts looking at the building standards. It might start looking at some other articles and then figuring out, "Okay, so the average person isn't going to take the time to read this 14

page document. How can I break that down and create some really simple strategies that still will have a big impact on their indoor air," for example.

Charlie ([20:25](#)):

Good. Thanks for showing us that. Do you have any good routines, rituals or habits?

Amy ([20:31](#)):

I have a morning routine that really sets me up for the day. We get outside so we have that connection to nature that lights the sunlight immediately. We walk our dogs so we have that little bit of time and then that really will set the tone of my day. If that walk goes, well, then we have a really fantastic rest of the day, but that is crucial for us to be kind of the first thing we do in the mornings.

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

So this is a good habit. I know you've got several others. Would you mind giving us a little peek into the D'Angelo household? What are one or two other things that holistic living that you really know help keep your family having a great week?

Amy ([21:17](#)):

Yeah, absolutely. One of the other things I do kind of weekly that changes that makes our life a whole lot easier is meal planning. Taking that time to really sit down and plan out the meals we're going to eat with Dean and I both working from home and then the kids in and out that's really helpful. Everyone knows what's for dinner and what's in the fridge for leftovers. The other thing that I do personally, that really helps set me for the day is my morning food routine. Drinking some lemon water and having a smoothie that really sets me up for making good choices throughout the rest of my day. Those would be the three big things I would say.

Charlie ([22:01](#)):

Thanks for giving us those pro tips, those best practices, Amy. I'm a fan of the bucket list. What are one or two things maybe on your bucket list, maybe some adventure travel, write a book who knows? What are the one or two things on your bucket List?

Amy ([22:16](#)):

Yeah, I think the number one thing would be a trip to the Galapagos. I am all about connecting to nature and seeing the king of the amazing things that are out there in the world. I think number two for me would be hiking to Machu Picchu. Those are my two, their big trip. There are big things, but those are definitely on my bucket list.

Charlie ([22:39](#)):

Those are a great bucket side of this. I haven't done either of those yet. Those towns are amazing. I wanted to also say the meal planning for our family too. We plan our meals on Sunday and get groceries that day. Our week is a better week.

Amy ([22:54](#)):

It's amazing how much that simple thing can really positively impact your week.

Charlie ([23:02](#)):

How about books? I'm not sure if you like to pick up a hard copy and hold it in your hands and read it, or you may be listening to books. Is there a book you'd recommend?

Amy ([23:12](#)):

Yeah, I think the last really great book I've read was The Atomic Habits. The way we can kind of do this habit stacking. I think it's fantastic. I think we all kind of have this idea of how we develop habits, but I don't know that we've ever put as much thought into it. So kind of getting back to the basics of that was really helpful for me, especially through the pandemic when I found myself at home all the time, that was really helpful.

Charlie ([23:44](#)):

That's a fantastic book, James Clear. I'm a big fan of it here at my home office. We're recording this. I'll have one of the printouts on how to change a habit, but the opposite, how to break a habit. The cue, the reward so everyone checks it out. We'll put a link in the podcast, show notes, if you haven't, make sure you get Atomic Habits. As we come to a close two final questions. One, is there any advice you wish you'd have received earlier in your career?

Amy ([24:11](#)):

I think I would have liked someone to tell me to celebrate the failures. That risk taking is important and if you're not failing, you're not trying.

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

I was listening to you there. I'm like, wow, I don't know if I've really honestly heard that. I would wholeheartedly agree. That's actually really good. It's making us stronger. We're learning and that with the entrepreneurial streak. It's important that there's some encouragement along the way, but also, "Hey, we're learning, trying to figure it out, taking some risks." I applaud that great, great career advice. As we come to a close or the sort of importance is encouragement. Let's say there's someone listening right now. Maybe they're early in their career or maybe they've had a career and they're going to make a pivot. They're wellness, healthy buildings. I'm going all in. What words of encouragement do you have for them right now?

Amy ([25:04](#)):

I would say always move forward. This is a great industry to be in right now, whether you're coming into it or you've been in it for a long time, things are really looking up for wellness. People are really paying attention to it. I had a company reach out to me after one of the webinars we did and wanted to talk about creating a wellness initiative for their company. Companies that have never done this before are starting to understand the importance of this. Always move forward because there is a lot of opportunity here.

Charlie ([25:41](#)):

Great encouragement. I love seeing how your career has gone all in on something you've been passionate about for so many years, everyone, this has been Amy D'Angelo, please connect with her on LinkedIn, reach out, let her know what you thought of the podcast. If you need anything, check out her course. We'll put all those links again in the show notes. Amy, thanks for sharing your story today.

Charlie ([26:03](#)):

I 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 were stoked and glad to continue to listen every Wednesday morning to a new interview with a green building professional here in this

industry, or some pro tips that we want to make sure that you are getting straight from us straight to you.

Charlie ([26:28](#)):

Thank you for listening to this episode of the Green Building Matters Podcast at gbs.com. Our mission is to advance the green building movement to invest in class education and encouragement. Remember, you can go to gbes.com/ 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 a positive review on iTunes. Thank you so much. And we'll see you next week.