

CSO at University of Calgary - Joanne Perdue | 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 on the limited exam prep for any of the professional credential exams you're tackling next, as well as putting your continuing 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. Hi everyone. Welcome to the next episode of the green building matters podcast, where I get to interview green building professionals from all over the world. And today with us from Calgary, Alberta, Canada is Joanne Purdue.

Joanne ([01:13](#)):

She's the associate vice president of sustainability at the University of Calgary. Can't wait to learn more about Joanne, how are you doing today? I'm doing great. Charlie. It's really beautiful. Late summer day here in Calgary, the sun is shining and of course we're welcoming our students back to campus. We have remote learning, but nonetheless, it's a really exciting time of the year for us.

Charlie ([01:35](#)):

I bet that fall semester and can't wait to learn a little more about the curriculum you've been working on for so many years, but I always like to say, take us back, where'd you grow up and where'd you go to school?

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

Yeah, that's a great opening question, Charlie. I grew up in a small town in the heart of the Boreal Forest in North central British Columbia. To give

some context for your listeners, that's about 600 miles North of Seattle and about 500 miles inland from the West coast. So growing up there influenced me and my connection to sustainability in really important ways that have stuck with me throughout my life. The first is I spent a lot of time on the land, all kinds of activities and in all four seasons of the year for me, my favorite season is the winter. And there's nothing more spectacular than being in that pure white landscape, blue sky. It's striking the quiet. And then when it hits about minus 25, the ice crystals fill the air and it's like diamonds everywhere. It's beautiful. So I fell in love with the vast beauty of nature, and this instilled in me a really strong ethic of care and connection to the land, as we would call it, to nature or to the land.

Charlie ([02:44](#)):

Wow, those are some cold winters, but that's how you grow up and you know it better than any of us. So if you had the influence of just sustainability, even just growing up, I mean, how did you really start putting into practice? Going way back even before maybe schooling and before your career. So how'd you put that into practice?

Joanne ([03:07](#)):

Well, there's a second piece I wanted to touch on that is a really important influence. And that is that this North Central Region was, and still is a resource based economy, primarily forestry and mining. And so spending a lot of time on the land, I also saw the really significant impact that resource extractive industries have on the natural environment. Later in my career, I have a really strong sense of the life cycle impacts and that sometimes really vast reshaping the landscape comes with the materials that we build our cities, right? Concrete wood, copper, aluminum, et cetera. For me then it's, how do we connect design with that ethic of care, other land thinking about not just the land that we're building on, but that much broader environment that we depended on. So

Charlie ([03:57](#)):

Big influence on your rights, seeing that resource extraction, that mining that timber, it was, it was all around you.

Joanne ([04:04](#)):

I did get to kind of go traveling. I fell in love with architecture. I went to architecture school, I went to University of Oregon, which is a great design school and a school with a really long and strong history of focus in sustainability. So that just continued to expand my understanding of sustainability and how to connect that into an architectural profession. I worked for a little bit in Boston and then I eventually ended up in Vancouver, British Columbia, which is part of that Cascadia region and a really fertile ground for sustainability.

Charlie ([04:40](#)):

Growing up there in Cascadia, we know the Cascadia green building council, that's where the living building challenge came from. You were really around, especially if you were getting into architecture, probably some green buildings early in your career, but before we go there, tell us about anyone that influenced you along the way. Was there someone you looked up to or maybe someone that opened a door for you? Did you have any mentors along the way?

Joanne ([05:05](#)):

Yeah. Can I stop you Charlie? Can I tell you about a couple of points and projects along the way that will be inspiring? So if you ask me about some of those early projects or pivotal changes, something like that. And I can introduce a couple of project, I think will be exciting and maybe helpful context for someone that's going through their career,

Charlie ([05:30](#)):

Joanne being in Cascadia and part of just for sustainability has big roots in green buildings, its roots. Can you tell us about a few of those early projects?

Joanne ([05:44](#)):

In the early 1990s and I'm really dating myself here, but I had the great privilege to be the project architect for the CK Choi building at the University of British Columbia. UBC is really well known for their leadership in sustainability, but this was like the first green building that they were undertaking. We were challenged to set this new precedent for sustainable design and construction. And putting that into a context that this project kind

of precedes the release of LEED. There was no framework on what it meant to do a sustainable building. The AIA was just developing their environmental resource guide and the sections just weren't coming out fast enough for what we needed to. But anyways, so the Choi building was a really seminal project because at a time when a lot of projects were thinking about energy efficiency and that was green, this project gave us an opportunity to really explore a more holistic approach to sustainability in a, we use bio climatic, design, daylighting, passive innovation, things that we think of a common today.

Joanne ([06:42](#)):

We use circular materials strategy with salvaging timbers for the post-tensioning structural system. We use bricks from the region. We even had an onsite wastewater management system. So these were really progressive things at that time. And so this project really broke, I'm going to say new ground and kind of open doors for projects to follow, but another really powerful aspect of this project was in the team itself. And I really wanted to share this story with listeners because I think it may resonate maybe with some of them. So up to that point in my career, I was genuinely consistently the only female on project teams. It was male client groups, male engineers, male construction managers, and contractors. So our team for Choi was female client lead. Frida Ken from the University of British Columbia and the full primary design team with exception to the electrical engineer was all women. So this was a cool Ninja-bust disciplinary team, largely of women. And we engaged in what we call the co-design process. It was a precursor to IDP. We had a lot of fun together and I would say I've never had a project quite like that. Even today when I'm on project teams, it's still predominantly men.

Charlie ([08:02](#)):

To that group. Now, if the LEED reference guides were maybe seven, eight years down the road, you're probably just brainstorming, okay, what can we do to really make this a sustainable building? That's really cool.

Joanne ([08:16](#)):

So this kind of project just accelerated my career because I had to do such a deep dive into that. And from there, I got involved in lots of different

volunteer opportunities and that's kind of volunteerism just as kind of a theme that has been consistent throughout my career. There's probably one other kind of pivot or shift in my career that I like to share because I had kind of had this first kind of long haul as an architect focusing on sustainability, but then kind of mid career. I did this next pivot and I stepped out of private practice to join University of Calgary as their first director of sustainability. And of course it was a much bigger field if you will, to plan, I mean, a community of 40,000 people, 150 buildings and much bigger scope than just looking at the building. So anyway, five years later I became the CSL. I lead a team now of about 20 really talented sustainability professionals. And I get to work every day with amazing people doing really amazing projects. It's just been such an amazing kind of arc of my career. I guess my message is like, it's such a great space to work in and especially, when you can tie it back and always be working in a way that's tied to your personal values.

Charlie ([09:34](#)):

It almost sounds entrepreneurial even within the university system there. So what was the catalyst to make that change to go to academia where you guest lectured, did you find yourself just teaching from time to time? What was the catalyst?

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

I don't actually teach? I'm that kind of a change enabler that works inside of the organization to help build capacity to get things done. What pulled me out of private practice into the public sector really was okay, I could continue to do another great green building but this is an opportunity to really look at sustainability in kind of, I'm going to say like an equal district context. The campus was a learning lab where you could really look at a much more integrated way of thinking about sustainability at a community scale, plus all of the kinds of opportunities pertaining to teaching, learning and research.

Charlie ([10:33](#)):

Oh, that makes sense. Thanks for clearing that up, Joanne. You're right. Almost like the chief sustainability officer, you mentioned all the buildings, all the people, all the impact and the influence. It really is a big reach, bigger than one building at a time, so I can see what attracted you there. Let's talk a

little bit about just that career. If you look back on the highlight reel, what stands out? What are you really proud of?

Joanne ([10:58](#)):

I think probably two things come to mind. The first would be that I would highlight kind of the University of Calgary's growth in sustainability. University has become one of the top rank universities in Canada for sustainability based on a framework called STARS. It's a rating system, it's kind of like what LEED is to building STARS is to university campuses. Earlier this year we were ranked 29th globally from about 800 schools for our progress and invite dance in the United Nations, sustainable development goals. And this is through the Times Higher Education University Impact Ranking. So what I'm inspired about is, is that growth in the confidence of the many people that it takes to contribute to those kinds of outcomes, to see the extent of collaboration and partnerships that are occurring both on campus and with community, and then kind of special.

Joanne ([11:50](#)):

My heart is also just to see the students that we work with and have kind of ongoing connections with and just to see great things that they're going to do. That inspires you to kind of keep working and keep going. But the second one would be, I would have to point to kind of the overall growth in the Canadian green building movement and kind of my contributions towards this. I was very involved in the Canada Green Building Council rate from the early, early years. I helped establish the Alberta chapter when I moved to Alberta and actually just finished a six year term on the national board. Over the years I've probably been on, I don't know, 10, 12 different committees, projects, all kinds of things. Right. Kind of having contributed to that growth and feeling like I'm a part of that movement that it takes so many people. It's a community that makes this happen. I'm very proud of that kind of body, kind of work you'd call it.

Charlie ([12:53](#)):

Yeah. I think sometimes we don't realize the US Green Building Council and LEED. Canada is the next biggest user of this tool, this program that came out in the year 2000 and you were there really helping grow the organization across the border. So it's amazing. So let's talk about today and

let's talk more about you and your team and the University of Calgary. So what are some exciting things you're working on?

Joanne ([13:17](#)):

I was thinking about this question and of course there's this long list, but maybe I'll just highlight a bit of a sampling of the kinds of things that we're working on. The first would be a couple of initiatives under our climate action plan. Our goal to become a carbon neutral campus. The first is our zero carbon buildings initiative. So we have three buildings registered under the CAGBC, Canada, green building council under the zero carbon building framework. The first of those projects finished last year, which was our McKinney Tower. I find this one super exciting because it's not a new build. It's actually a retrofit of an existing 15 story library tower. So the project just recently received the zero carbon building excellence awards for 2020 from the CAGBC and bringing some new technology and new kind of design in. It's got a double skin facade with some active sheeting and both active and passive ventilation. When we finish phase two of this project will generate about 600 kilowatts of renewable energy from photovoltaic tech. So that's the first step of three that we have on the go.

Charlie ([14:29](#)):

That's a big renewable rating, first of all. But now do you find that your team needs to stay involved with the project? Some of it's pretty advanced technology and maybe the contractor needs training or here's how you source that. Can you just unpack that for a minute?

Joanne ([14:45](#)):

Oh, I'd love to unpack that one of the departments that's in my unit is the energy planning and innovation team and we work like a set of internal sustainability consultants. All the league of carbon building pieces for the project team. We have our engineering and our project management group and then the external consultants. We are kind of really instrumental in the facilitation of the process for example, getting IDP really embedded in how we do projects. A really important part of the success of this project. I'm going to say maybe one of the most important pieces is the integration of the facilities management operator representatives in the project, like right from the beginning. And in fact, we had some representatives from the

project team go to Germany to look at some projects that had already been done there.

Joanne ([15:39](#)):

We took the operators because they needed to say this will work. We can make that work and they're bought in. And in fact, we actually have a two year kind of commissioning and handoff phase. It's under contract. We have our operators now working hand in hand with people that have kind of, I'm going to say deliberate the facility so that we make sure that not just that we deliver this zero carbon concept, but that actually we can operate in and for it to be in an ongoing

Charlie ([16:11](#)):

I applaud you there. I've heard horror stories, Joanne about net zero buildings. The next thing you know is you build a Tesla building and it's run just terrible. They don't really know how to run it. So kudos to you for getting the operations team and involved early. Fascinating.

Joanne ([16:28](#)):

Yeah. So maybe a couple of other items under the climate action plan is that we're working on a study. That's looking at the decarbonization of our district energy system, which is currently fueled by NASA, natural gas fired cogeneration, but you can't get to carbon neutral from there. So it's, it's a really big study and it's going to be quite transformative in terms of moving it into different types of energy sources. We have to go from a high temperature system to a low temperature system. It's very technical, but very exciting. And again, sort of some new ground there. And then we have a ton going on in existing buildings and just in the last phase of a \$35 million program to an existing building retrofits, which is going to give us about another 30,000 tons of emission reductions.

Joanne ([17:10](#)):

So again, this is all kind of led out of this energy planning and innovation team that I LEED. And then maybe I just want to highlight two other really quick things to show the diversity in some of the work that we do, one is that we are just putting the finishing touches on a new landscape master plan, which I find a super exciting project because it brings together our

indigenous strategy with our institutional sustainability strategy. So the document is written from the perspective of integrating indigenous perspectives on how we live on the land and understanding of ourselves as a part of nature with a regenerative design ecosystem, health and resiliency. So that's a project that's led by our facilities development group. We're in there as kind of the experts in the area to bring the regenerative design piece into. Yeah. And then the other one I have to highlight is our campus as a learning platform, which is so important for students to grow their sustainability leadership competencies. And it's a program that provides experiential learning opportunities on big questions that we have on sustainability on campus. Last year, we had almost 800 students that were participating in this and they touched on a project spending almost all of the United Nations sustainable development goals. So that's kind of just this kind of snapshot of some of the diversity of what we work on.

Charlie ([18:29](#)):

You're working on all the right things. I've got to ask a lot about climate and high performance buildings. Now, the landscape of what, what about healthy buildings? Is that also under your umbrella? Is that something that's now more than ever very important? Is this a healthy classroom? Is this a healthy building? What are you and your team doing on the?

Joanne ([18:50](#)):

Yeah, yeah, absolutely. The term that we use is healthy high performance buildings, right? You can't let high performance come at the cost of health and that's built in a very holistic perspective. If you think about the cog X study out of Harvard, it's a cognitive function and how that ties to learning outcomes in the classroom. We can talk about productivity, but more critical for us is that learning outcomes and having our campus community be providing an environment that helps them to bring their very best to what they do. And of course COVID-19 is creating some new challenges with that. And that's a whole another great big topic, right.

Joanne ([19:35](#)):

Of course there's this sense one of the great things about green buildings is you have really good filtration. You have really good air and the kind of thing that, to say that the ventilation system as a whole, in terms of the movement

of air and then the filtration. And so that has set us up really well, but , there are unknowns right now about COVID. And so, , you take that precautionary principle and we're putting a lot of outdoor air through all of our buildings right now,

Charlie ([20:02](#)):

Lets say the humidity levels. I think sometimes when we hear high performance buildings, we might think just energy efficient, but I know from even just this conversation, Joanne, no, a high performance building has great ventilation and gear this and great that, it's not just energy. I'm sure a lot of that you already do, but you're right with COVID and the pandemic anytime I build high touch surfaces and green cleaning and more fresh air and better filtration. So it's all right in front of us. I know you're doing a lot of that. I love to ask what's next, what's around the corner. What should we be reading up on?

Joanne ([20:38](#)):

Well, that's a big topic. I think we could almost do a whole interview on that because it's such an interesting time because of this pandemic, you know, we've got this uncomfortable paradox of seeing these substantive improvements in environmental health, coming at the expense of this crisis and environment or in human health, right. And then the associate economic crisis, this really highlights how fragmented we've become and then our social environmental and economic systems. And of course, some of the inequities really substandard that inequities and kind of social and economic systems and so forth. So kind of moving increasingly into more and more uncertain and complex times. And I'm thinking a lot about leadership competencies that we need to move forward in a positive way and a good way given where we are. So we always need that technical knowledge to kind of bring building practitioners or sustainability leaders, but it needs to go hand in hand with this kind of deep standing. I think of how to listen really well, how to have strong engagement and partnership building competencies.

Joanne ([21:45](#)):

We need more collaboration with disciplines that haven't historically, I'm going to say been part of the design teams health and social science

professionals, ecologists, appliance, climate scientists, et cetera. So this is a big piece. Another thing I'm thinking a lot about is whether our current green building tools or putting us onto the trajectory that we need for the sustainable future that we're striving for and whether we might be inadvertently creating kind of a false sense of what we're striving for a few years ago, I saw this great presentation by Dr. Kate Rawer out of the UK. She's an economist actually, and she's developed a framework called Doughnut Economics. I don't know if you've heard this term. It's a tool to look at how we put together Leeds and planetary boundaries. So kind of drawing on the work out at the Stockholm resilience center and also, , social dimensions, the United nations, sustainable development goals.

Joanne ([22:44](#)):

So then she looked at this model, so if you look at a city like Chicago, Vancouver, BC, or Portland that we think of, wow, these are bottles for great green sustainable cities and they're doing a good job at kind of those social dimensions. But if we scale that approach across many, many cities, we would far out way, the pace, the planetary boundaries in earth, carrying capacity. In contrast, you'd look at some of the Latin American cities that are actually doing almost a similar job from the social dimensions, but they're kind of ecological footprint, if you will, is so much smaller. So I think this is a really important thing is that our current tools, LEED and SITES and so forth have done a really good job of kind of setting us kind of a stepping stone towards, I think something that we, we ultimately need, you need to evolve too, in terms of developing tools that take us farther in terms of those kind of, really kind of healthy, just sustainable kind of one planet, planet living. To kind of talk a little bit more about some of the tools that might help us there, but that's kind of, what's on my mind right now.

Charlie ([23:53](#)):

That's exciting and you're right. You even listed off some job titles that probably weren't around a year ago, right. There was this need for the climate risk side of it and just those that are really thinking ahead about that alone. You've said it a few times in the UNSDGs, it seems like that has been your guidebook. It's like that's where we need to line up and I really applaud that. I think for those listening that are familiar with the LEED, it's a wonderful rating system. It's a great set of tools, but kind of think if there were a LEED

book for the globe it'd definitely take a look at the 17 SDGs, right. That's what we need to wind up with. So did you drive that, is that a Canadian push? I know a lot of fortune 100 companies here in the United States are aligned with the STG. How did you choose that guide store.

Joanne ([24:44](#)):

I would say for the University of Calgary, it's not our guiding star. We have our five vision and our academic research plan and we have some institutional scale strategies like sustainability, indigenous international, and so forth. I think what these guideposts do for us is that they allow us to have a significant impact on the SDGs. The SDGs are they're global goals. Government is lined up behind them. Private sector has lined up for them more than NGOs. And I'd say increasingly the external frameworks are lining up on them. So if you are looking at how your your rankings awards and so forth, then those external frameworks are looking at your contributions to the STGs, is that I'm going to say many of the funding groups that like there's a lot of external funding that is being put behind driving the STGs forward. So that also becomes a mechanism to actually help move sustainability forward. Right.

Charlie ([25:44](#)):

All of your different frameworks, you just are conscious of how you're helping, how you're contributing, what the STGs a little bit. Well, let's talk a little more about you. What would you say is your specialty or gift?

Joanne ([25:55](#)):

Well, I don't know that I have some kind of inherent kind of unique gift to me, but I would say I probably have kind of four strengths that are leadership strings that have really helped me in my career. The first is that I'm not afraid of big, complex challenges. I think I come from a family that has a long line of people who have kind of taken on big challenges because they thought it was the right thing to do. So I probably kind of have a little bit of that in my family characteristics. I also have an ability, I think, to find clarity and complexity where sometimes she would say, Oh, I have such a big problem. There's so many issues. I kind of had an ability to kind of cut through, and see that.

Joanne ([26:35](#)):

And I think part of that comes from being an architect and design thinking. And just also having that diverse disciplinary knowledge, I can look outside of the box if you will, and sort of see potential opportunities. The third is I have what I would term grit and you're familiar with Angela Duckworth's book, entitled Grit, it's that kind of passion and perseverance than a put together. Lastly, I think I have quite a strong what I would characterize as kind of emotional intelligence. So I'm quite out of attuned to the, to the human dynamic in the room. And this is so important for people who are working on sustainability and changing leadership. You can have the most brilliant ideas but they can fall really flat if you don't have that attention to the human dynamic. Right.

Charlie ([27:21](#)):

A hundred percent agree. Just that EQ just, so you can't carry that message and that vision, unless you're really good at emotional intelligence. I really think that's a great trait that I'm glad you have. So, I mean, you've accomplished a lot. Those are some really cool strengths. I'm really impressed. Everything I've learned so far. Let's talk a little bit about some routines and rituals. Do you have any just really good habits you could share?

Joanne ([27:45](#)):

Yeah, all the really busy lives. How do you find your focus when life's really busy with work and family and all kinds of things? So for me, it's yoga every morning and journaling and your five minute journal in the morning to set an intention for the day. And I do a five minute reflection at the end of the day. I schedule time for strategic thinking and working on big questions because otherwise all that endless list of seemingly urgent tasks, some of it just takes over. And next thing you, haven't got to the things that are important to you. And the last is just kind of to keep going back to reviewing what my personal mission statement is. And that helps me to keep what's most important to me front of mind, and to close that gap between how am I showing up versus my aspirations and where am I spending my time versus my aspirations. As set that is what works for me.

Charlie ([28:39](#)):

That's inspiring. You heard it here. You have to be intentional. You have to make time to think sometimes that's counterintuitive, but you do. I'm really happy to hear you do that strategic thinking. I'm a fan of the bucket lists. What would be one or two things on your bucket list? Is there any adventure travel? Do you want to write a book about what's on the bucket?

Joanne ([29:02](#)):

My bucket list is always way too long, but anyway, a deep dive into regenerative design, I think you're hearing this term showing up, but I don't think it's really well understood and we need to generate resources to help people to understand and engage in recent regenerative design. So we can move regenerative design more into the main street. I think in the same way that kind of LEED mainstream green buildings, I think we're going to need such tools to kind of take us to that next level. And I'm interested to really kind of get in and unpack that I'm also interested, not kind of, I'm very interested in this concept of 1.5 degree lifestyle. We're this really consumer oriented society, particularly in North America. And I think most people have a really low understanding of their impact.

Joanne ([29:52](#)):

A few years ago I saw this great tool that was developed out of Citron Finland. And it's kind of like bringing kind of gamification to helping people to kind of say, well, what, what is your carbon footprint? And then what steps would you take? It helps people to get a sense of, well, how big is the impact of recycling versus I dunno, , traveling to the other side of the world for vacations or commuting to work every day. It helps people actually kind of then build their pathway to that a 1.5 to revive sell. So I think this is up, it's a really, it's not green building, but it actually is really important stuff

Charlie ([30:32](#)):

And we have to make it personal and our circle of influence and see if it can take off for us, and amongst my farm, we did a carbon weight loss challenge a few years ago. We all did our carbon footprint and we saw who can lose the most carbon impact. And you're right. Sometimes I travel on a jet and obviously that's hurting my score. But it's the purchases. And one might argue right now that a lot of us work from home while the planet is healing in some places and others, a lot of Amazon deliveries that are happening. So

it's you're right. Well, let's show everyone the magnitude of just their lifestyle. So I don't know if that's a link we could share, but I'd love to put some information in the podcast.

Joanne ([31:13](#)):

I can share a link with you for that. And you can go and look, they've got an actual book and it's pretty cool. And I don't know if they have some of their games up there, but yeah, it was, it was a lot of fun to just kind of tabletop the games and yeah,

Charlie ([31:26](#)):

I think it's great that your bucket list is aligned with sustainability. That just shows that there's your true passion. Just a few more questions here. Joanne, let's talk about books. I don't know if you'd like to listen to books or pick up a good, hard copy, but is there a local to you directly?

Joanne ([31:41](#)):

Yeah. I recently read a book called *Breathing the Wilderness* by dr. Brene Brown and it's not a book about sustainability or green buildings, but I think it's a really interesting read for people working in sustainability. And I can't really summarize the whole of the book but I can do a couple of things that maybe resonated for me. And like from a sustainability perspective Dr. Brown talks about this idea how as a society we become increasingly sorted into groups that are either for or against these really polarizing issues. And I mean, you could just look at climate change as one of those. Right. Great, great examples. So, but when you're working in sustainability, the challenges we face is that you've got to find that way to come into the space between the polar ends, because we are only going to find the solutions to move forward by kind of finding that common ground. And so Dr. Brown kind of shares in her research, her thoughts on how we can work more effectively in between those polar ends.

Charlie ([32:45](#)):

Oh, cool. Yeah, she's very popular. I haven't read that book, but I'll put a link in the podcast show notes.

Joanne ([32:51](#)):

Another piece of that, that I think is also really important for sustainability leaders is , from the name of the book itself, braving the wilderness. When we're working in sustainability, we often need to find our voice to come and read and talk about a climate emergency or other significant social or environmental issues. And this can be kind of this vulnerable and uncertain space sometimes. And she calls that braving the wilderness kind of stepping out and she kind of gives some really inspiring ways about thinking about how you step into that space and kind of how you can thrive in the wilderness. Right. So I think that's a cool book I'm reading right now that I'm in front of only, probably about third through right now, but I'd like to highlight it.

Joanne ([33:40](#)):

It's called *White Fragility* by Robin D'Angelo. Yeah. And I think this is a great book for anyone, but particularly for people who are in leadership roles that are leading groups of people or that are working with big teams on, on projects. So for me, this is kind of generating a much deeper reflection on some of that kind of pervasive. I'm going to say cultural forces that shape racism and sort of giving me a new language for talking about and thinking about racism in the context of it would be like,

Charlie ([34:14](#)):

I've read that one and you're right. Just the perspective on privilege and, and not even just white and black, but so many other angles that you might not have thought about. So now thank you for sharing that at all. I'll be sure to put that in the show notes too well, as we come to a close two questions. Is there anything you wish you'd known earlier in your career?

Joanne ([34:35](#)):

I think as a young female trying to kind of find my way there and I kind of had, I fought, I had to do a lot of things on my own, and I didn't want to show that maybe I needed help because I was always felt like I was trying to, like, I always felt I had to prove myself more than I'm going to say some of my peers, what I would say is messages. You don't have to do this alone. Reach out, find mentors, find sponsors. There's lots of people that are willing to help you and can help you to kind of get over some of those, maybe those hurdles or those, those questions you have. So that would be one of them

I'd say get involved in volunteer work outside of the project work you're doing go find at least two committees, right? Reach out, get involved. You're gonna meet really great people. You're going to learn from people. And, , there's people I work with today through a volunteer work I've known for like 25 years. And so it's not just about the work you do. It's about the community that you're a part of. And yeah, it's bigger than the project. Right?

Charlie ([35:46](#)):

Fantastic advice there. Yeah. To make friendships out of it, to lifelong friendships. So, all right. Well, as we do come to a close, let's say, there's someone listening right now, Joanne, that is listening to this podcast. They're getting some encouragement, but , we're in the pandemic and maybe their industry has been impacted, but green buildings they hear are actually going strong. What words of encouragement would you give to them? If maybe they're thinking of just now jumping into the green building movement,

Joanne ([36:11](#)):

I'd say, just jump in and do it. We need your leadership, we need your brilliant ideas, we need your contributions. There's tons of work to be done. Yeah. Do it, just do it.

Charlie ([36:26](#)):

You go forward and don't do it alone. This has been Joanne Perdue, at the University of Calgary, I'm just blown away. I really enjoyed our chat today and kept up the great work. Thank you, Joanne.

Joanne ([36:38](#)):

Thank you. Thanks for having me. It's been an honor to have a conversation with you today.

Charlie ([36:44](#)):

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 were stoked. And just so glad to 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 to 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 accorded 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 on next week's episode.