# Decarbonizing Campus Design and Mentoring the Next Generation with Allison Wilson | Transcript

**00:02**
Speaker 1
Welcome to Green Building Matters, the original and most popular podcast focused on the green building movement. Your host is Charlie Cicchetti, one of the most credentialed experts in the green building industry and one of the few to be honored as a lead fellow. Each week, Charlie welcomes a green building professional from around the globe to share their war stories, career advice, and unique insight into how sustainability is shaping the built environment. So settle in, grab a fresh cup of coffee, and get ready to find out why. Green building. Green Building Matters. Hey, everybody. Welcome to the next episode of the Green Building Matters podcast. I've got the easy job. I just show up and get to talk to amazing people around the world that are doing green building work, healthy building work, technology around buildings and even sometimes just outside of our buildings.

**00:48**
Speaker 1
But today I've got a new lead fellow. I've got Allison with us. How you doing today, Allison?

**00:54**
Speaker 2
Doing all right, thank you.

**00:55**
Speaker 1
Well, I love Austin, Texas, so hopefully we'll talk about that too. But for our listeners, take us back. Where did you grow up and go to school?

**01:03**
Speaker 2
Sure. So I grew up in New Jersey, and when I was in high school, I was taking drafted classes, which happened to be the first period of the day. And pretty quickly I figured out like, huh, I'm leaving my friends, you know, the most important group of people in my life earlier and earlier each day because I'm really enjoying this class that I'm taking. And so that was sort of an eye opener moment for me. And I decided I wanted to study architecture. And so that would have been probably my junior year, let's say, and I started looking at architecture programs. And I walked into a guidance counselor's office for, you

know, the standard issue meeting of like, where do you want to go to school? What do you want to study? I was like, I think I wanted to study architecture.

**01:43**
Speaker 2
So my guidance counsel expands like, huh, architecture. That's really interesting. And then proceeds to hand me the list of, like, however many hundreds of accredited architecture programs there are in the country, which was somewhat less than hopeful. And gratefully between me and my parents, we sort of, you know, navigated through that of like, cool. What is this thing to study Architecture. I had no idea what the difference between a 4 plus 2 program was versus a 5 year. I had no idea. And it's fine. But I ended up at the University of Maryland for undergrad, and then I had such a good experience that I stayed and I did my graduate school work there as well. And yeah, it's been an awesome education and I can. I knew I was in the right place there as well, where, you know, you just.

**02:26**
Speaker 2
There's such a community of people in architecture school and you get to know your colleagues and your classmates so well. And for me, it was the perfect fit between being in. In a smaller program. You know, there are probably about 60 people in my graduating class from college, but being in a small program, but part of a giant university, and that was really sort of the perfect fit for me at the time.

**02:45**
Speaker 1
Oh, I love that. And hopefully some listening are like, maybe having those questions right now. Where should I go? What should I do? And you ended up sticking around for the graduate work. I understand you did some TA work there too. Sustainability, though, was it in some of the programming there at University of Maryland? Did you already just know, hey, I think what I want to do maybe needs to have something to do with green buildings. I don't know. When did it start showing up for you?

**03:11**
Speaker 2
Yeah, I don't think I would have assigned that vocabulary to it probably until I was around graduate school. I think it was always what we did. Right. Like, I grew up in a household that fixed all of the things and kept things forever and bought the last one first and, you know, maintained things. And so I think sort of as a culture, it's probably something that's always been with me. But I think

that vocabulary for me really probably popped up when I was in grad school and working on our solar decathlon house. So one of the reasons I stayed at Maryland was the opportunity to work on our solar decathlon project, which was a building called Watershed, but still exists in Maryland. You can go visit it.

**03:48**
Speaker 2
But we designed the house, we built the house, we took it out on the National Mall to compete with it. And in that process, I absolutely fell in love with talking about sustainability to people. And there are some really epic photographs from back in the day of, you know, were the home team, right? Nation's capital University. Maryland's like eight miles, you know, like, we are the home team, right? And so everybody wants to come see your house. We ended up winning, which also, that makes a lot of people want to come see your house. But there are these really epic photographs of me standing out in this middle of the grass field with, you know, a line that stretches around the block in the village, talking about like, hey, have you heard the story about watershed? Let me tell you all about it.

**04:27**
Speaker 2
What questions do you have? And then, you know, kind of on like a five or six minute loop of essentially the same script over and over again. And I think for me, that really what galvanized my passion for doing this was just I loved having those conversations, and I loved talking with people, and I loved the questions that they came with, and I. I liked being able to answer them or to point them to other resources. So it was probably around then that I. This was like, decided. This is what you're doing the rest of your life.

**04:53**
Speaker 1
It has been decided. I'm working on our tech startup schema, and it's similar. You got to have just a convicting story. It could be 60 seconds, no more than four minutes, and you can kind of almost pull it out of your pocket and just deliver it to everybody. And you never know, they might tell it to someone else because they know that thing you're passionate about, and there's just these layers and layers, and that's exciting. So that's when you knew, okay, sustainability. You know, I like to ask about mentors, too, for some of my podcast guests. Alison, a mentor someone, they read their material, they see them from stage. Sometimes it's someone that maybe you have lunch with or breakfast, and they challenge you. Maybe they open a door. I don't know. Have you any mentors along the way?

**05:33**
Speaker 2
Yeah, my first one is honestly, inside my own family. My grandfather. My grandfather was not an architect. He was a draftsman for General Motors in the way, way back machine and, you know, worked on, like, seat belts and stuff like that. But he built things, right? So he built model boats when I was a kid, he built model airplanes, that kind of stuff. And whenever we would go to visit, I was so curious, and I really fell in love with this idea of making stuff. And, you know, he indulged me. And we made birdhouses in little cities with all scraps of wood. And Stu became sort of part of how I got here, right?

**06:08**
Speaker 1
Of.

**06:08**
Speaker 2
Of just sort of that love of making things. And then when I got to grad school again, you know, our. Our faculty advisors, particularly Amy Gardner, she was the. The kind of the primary faculty advisor for. For our solar decathlon work. You know, just watching her lead us and watching her teach us was really powerful. And then I think more broadly, that entire solar decathlon team, like, were peer mentors in that way, right? Where, like, there's something very powerful about being, you know, a graduate architecture student and sitting down with, at the time, an undergraduate engineering student, and me being like, hey, explain this to me, right?

**06:45**
Speaker 2
And all of a sudden, us being able to become fluent in our different disciplines where, you know, all of a Sudden, I became this emerging architect who could lightly speak engineer or ask enough questions to be useful and meaningful. And on the other side, my colleagues in engineering or in landscape architecture or whatever are becoming, you know, conversant enough in architecture for us to be really collaborative. And so I think that kind of peer to peer men experience was incredibly formative for me. And a lot of those people remain, you know, my friends, like, we've all been in each other's weddings, we've all like kept in touch, we all send holiday cards, that sort of piece.

**07:18**
Speaker 2
And so I think like, there's both the mentorship up and down the experience

spectrum, but there's also the mentorship across that where, you know, you have your peer group and being able to ask that group of people safely and with confidence, like, I don't know what I'm doing. Can you please help me figure this out? I think is really important.

**07:37**
Speaker 1
Well, it's formative, right? And now it's so cool you've all kept together and you're right, mentored each other there too. So. And big shout out there to your grandpa. I love that. So let's look at the highlight reel. I love to ask my guests kind of give permission to you, my guest here on my podcast, what's on the highlight reel? What are some of your proudest accomplishments?

**07:58**
Speaker 2
Yeah, I would love to say projects. And I am incredibly proud of all of the projects I've had the opportunity to work on. But it's actually the people I've gotten to, you know, I've been really fortunate. I've had probably eight or nine folks who have reported to me in one way or another, either as interns or as permanent hires. And they do things that absolutely astound me. I love working with them. I love mentoring them, I love coaching them. I love building opportunities with, for and by them. And both the things that we do together while they're, you know, in collaboration with me directly. And then, you know, when some of them have chosen to move on to other adventures, the things that they do are, they're sort of post working with me experience are awesome. And that really, I'm proud of them.

**08:42**
Speaker 2
I'm proud of the things that they have achieved, I'm proud of the work that they have done because at the end of the day, none of us is going to achieve the outcomes we're looking for, the green building movement on our own. And so you better get really good at building coalitions and teams and cultivating the next generation of talent. To replace yourself as part of that process. And so I think, you know, there are many projects I'm incredibly proud of, but it is. It is those people I have gotten to work with over time and all the awesome things that they have done that probably stand out the most for me and are the most memorable.

**09:16**
Speaker 1
Okay, well, let's talk about credentials. And now the high honor of lead fellows. So, you know, you've gotten some credentials along the way. Any tips on even

how you went about studying for those different exams and credentials? And then, you know, what's it mean to be a lead fellow?

**09:32**
Speaker 2
Yeah, so I did my lead exams before I did my architectural exams. Part of that was just it's logistically easier to become a LEED AP than it is to become an architect. But I did those exams. And we continue to encourage everyone in our firm to do, at minimum, the lead GA exam. You know, truly, it is a good baseline piece if you are a student and you want to stand out on your resume, take the lead GA exam. If you are an emerging professional and you want to try to, you know, advance yourself in your career. And as it is a marker of distinction, I think for people to have that entry level credential. And then for the kind of work that I do, the BDC credential made the most sense. We do primarily college and university work all over the country.

**10:17**
Speaker 2
And I mostly focus on either whole buildings or major renovations to existing buildings. And so that credential made sense. And so having gone through that, you get a set of credentials. I became licensed as an architect. And then it's sort of like, what's next? Right. And I think what's really useful about all of the different credentialing programs, whether it's well or living Future or all flavors of the lead credential or whatnot, they are organized courses of study that are objective driven, where at the end of the day, you can demonstrate a certain amount of expertise and knowledge base on a subject. And that in itself is a saleable skill set. I think that organizes thinking as well, where instead of sort of scattershot, you can learn a lot of that information at random as well.

**11:02**
Speaker 2
But I think having it as that sort of formalized course of study is useful for a lot of people, myself included. And so, you know, I haven't gone through that. And then I had worked on lead projects for quite a long time, you know, and I'd been thinking about the lead fellow application. It is not an easy application, but several Years ago, in 2022, I was recognized as one of the AIA's Young Architects Award winners. And you know, having put that application together several years ago, sort of, I, I had a sense of my story and I knew, you know, I had a starting point for that.

**11:35**
Speaker 2
It's a little bit different applying for lead fellow, adapting that information, both

to update it with three more years of the things that I've done, but also with a much stronger emphasis and focus on the lean related aspects of that work. And it's a lot. It's hard to consolidate your story into something that's concise that way. And I think, you know, the honor is huge and well appreciated. I appreciate the rigor of the application itself. Even if I hadn't been recognized, the rigor of putting together the package itself was a useful exercise to put together. And I think I would encourage folks to do it, to get the application materials together to submit to try and receive that distinction. The distinction itself is valuable in its own right.

**12:20**
Speaker 2
But I think more importantly, the experience of assembling your story in that format has legs beyond the credential that goes with your name.

**12:29**
Speaker 1
It is a process. But for those that are coming up on the 10 years of being at least a lead credential holder and, you know, hopefully advocating along the way. Right, because there's different categories, you have to have peer nominated letters and it's almost like a lead review or hey, duh, and you get personally critiqued by reviewers. It's like, oh, really? Okay, but the highlight for me too, Allison, was creating a timeline, right? Wow. Look at, look at what I did kind of by year over this period of time. And I really am proud of what overcome post each year, stack it together and hopefully I can get this honor. So congrats and welcome to the club.

**13:09**
Speaker 2
If I can add in that too, because you were talking about timelines. That's also one of my bigger pieces of advocacy with folks at our own firm. As soon as you start working, start keeping that list. It doesn't have to be anything formal. It can be a really ugly word document. Mine is a really ugly Google Doc that I just dump things in by year. And over time it's gotten categories and more complicated or whatever. But if you at some point think you might want to do something like that, it's a heck of a lot easier to apply for something like that if you don't have to recreate the past 10 or 15 or 20 or 25 years of your life across multiple jobs, perhaps across multiple organizations, perhaps so Write things down. Write things down.

**13:51**
Speaker 2

Starting early because it does eventually become useful in one way or another and it makes the lift a lot easier. If you're not trying to recreate from scratch.

**14:00**
Speaker 1
Yeah, just start by a year. I mean, you have to. That's a great piece of advice for those that want to consider this. So let's talk about today. Tell us about your firm. As I understand it may have been there about 15 years and so tell us. Yeah, tell us about your company, your role, and some things you're working on.

**14:18**
Speaker 2
Sure. So I work for AIR Saint Gross. We are a national design firm that focuses primarily on higher education institutions and other mission driven clients. So that would be other kinds of institutional work primarily. We do a number of sort of campus edge environments as well, which is where the majority of our developer focused work occurs. And so we work coast to coast, you know, north to south, east to west. We are headquartered in Baltimore, Maryland and we have physical offices in Washington, D.C. and in Tempe, Arizona as well. And then we have probably about 12 or 15 or so folks that live and work full time remotely like me. So I physically sit in Austin, Texas and I've been here about 10 years or so at this point.

**15:00**
Speaker 2
And you know, we have really leaned into the kind of a hybridized operations of our firm. A lot of the folks who are long term remote employees like myself are people who started in one of our primary offices and then for one reason or another, life was going to take them to other places. And you know, when we find people we love, we have a hard time letting them go. So we do our best when that happens to find ways of making it work. And fortunately for me, that has been the case. So like I said, we work primarily for colleges and universities across the country. That work takes a number of different typologies. We do a ton of student housing work. We also do a lot of health sciences and sort of lab focused facilities. We have an incredible lab planner.

**15:41**
Speaker 2
I love her. She's a lot of fun to work with. We do a lot of work with classroom spaces as well, and learning spaces more broadly of sort of how you design classrooms that are conducive to learning and education. And yeah, we're really about the holistic student experience and how we help students to have the

greatest opportunity to grow and learn and evolve themselves through their higher education experiences.

**16:03**
Speaker 1
That's exciting work. So how about the sustainability? Do your clients already have a mandate and you show them, hey, let's take that mandate. And for not much more. We can do this and this. Or do you really have to have a menu of options lead well, fit? Well, I don't know. How did the sustainability conversations go with some of your clients?

**16:24**
Speaker 2
Yeah, it's different for every single client. You know, there are a number of institutions that either have adopted policy of their own volition or because of legislation in their particular states to achieve some minimum level of certification that's typically silver under lead or two great globes under green globes or whatnot. And then we also find a number of our clients that are less interested in putting a sticker on a building and just want to do the best dam building that they could do. And we like doing that too. I think there are lots of values within the LEAD program for how you measure, how you codify, how you get the third party repeat. There's lots of pieces of that have strong alignment with higher education and, you know, getting grades as part of the educational system. Like, there's a lot of synergy there.

**17:09**
Speaker 2
But I also think it's incredibly possible and practical to do a great, you know, largely or entirely decarbonized project, whether you put a sticker on it or not. And so there are many instances in which we are leveraging lead as a calculation methodology to do the right thing whether or not a client is formally certifying that project or not. And so, yeah, like you were saying, there's sort of the menu of options. And I would say, you know, over the last 15 years that's become more. More information and knowledge to manage. And so I think we find ourselves a little bit more, as, you know, wayfinders with our clients of trying to investigate with them, like, what are your values? What do you care most about in this building?

**17:56**
Speaker 2
Is there a set of rating system or systems that make sense or that codifies that in some particular way? Or do we need something that is more bespoke to your particular effort? And so, you know, on the books right now, I'm working on,

well, projects, lead projects. I've got a lead zero carbon effort. I've got a couple of IGCC projects. I've got a couple of green globes projects. So it really runs the gamble. We have a fit well project going on. It really runs the gamut of that. And helping our clients align either formal or informal frameworks to the objectives they're trying to achieve, I think has become a bigger part of what I do in navigating with clients.

**18:37**
Speaker 1
Wow. A venue of great programs. And I would agree you don't have to have the sticker or the plaque to do this work. But you know, these programs, these frameworks, leads been good to you? It's been good to me. It's a common language. It's a, hey, some smart people put this together and it's a guidebook. And you know, some know we really should still do that as even lead v5. Right. Big change happening now and our projects will be forced to be following V5 very soon. So let's get segue to kind of the future. So I love to ask my podcast guest, Allison, hey, what's next? What are you reading up on? What's next in the green building movement?

**19:16**
Speaker 2
Yeah, I think we are going to kind of, I think this has been happening for a while anyway. I think we're going to kind of continue doubling down on health and sort of a comprehensive focus on materials. I think across our industry in particular, you know, the materials pledge has existed for a long time. And for a long time that was more or less a virtue signaling piece to the market that designers and others cared about these topics. With the advent of annual reporting, I think that changes the game because now we have real quantifiable, trackable data that talks about what the tone of the industry is and where we focus our attentions. And so I think there is this intersection between health of all flavors, whether that's environmental, human, whatever, and the materials with which we construct our environments.

**20:04**
Speaker 2
And so I think that's where we'll see and continue to see a lot of evolution and growth over the next handful of years. There's just, it's one of those where like once you start asking questions, you realize how much more there is to know and then you want to know. Right. And so we keep asking questions and moving forward, further forward in those dialogues.

**20:23**
Speaker 1

That's a good point. You know, I think the pandemic hit the healthy buildings programs kind of, they change form, but now they're back. You know, I'd love to see more green walls. I'd love to see more stand up desks, active furnishings, the best of the lighting and not just, hey, let's make sure we're cleaning well and have good filtration. So I think we're seeing more of that come back. I'm going to assume maybe in some of your client building types that typology. Right. Maybe that still stayed prominent. But I hope we can get back to all of our building types. It's not just green buildings, but healthy buildings too. You know, to our Listeners, two words I'm kind of seeing are the new safe words in how you do green buildings are decarbonization and impact.

**21:03**
Speaker 1
I don't know, are those two umbrellas you're seeing too, Allison, or is it still green building sustainability? I don't. What's the coverall phrase that's still working for you?

**21:13**
Speaker 2
Great question. I don't think there is one, to be honest. You know, there was a great session at Greenville this year led by some of my colleagues over at UBC Texas, where they were basically playing Taboo, right? Where, like, how do you get somebody to talk about sustainability without saying the word sustainability? Or how do you get somebody to say some of those vocabulary words that have historically connected the green building movement without saying those words? And I think in a climate where, you know, words are. Words are really powerful, right? They're how we find our people. They're how we connect with each other. They're how we communicate and share ideas. And, you know, for better or for worse, like, people have associations with lots of different words for all kinds of different reasons, and some of them for better or for worse.

**21:55**
Speaker 2
And I think that the era of blunt instruments of like one giant catch all term is gone. I think it makes a lot more sense of being as specific and articulate as you can with your diction to match the question that's being set and to respond to it and as targeted and specific a way as possible and to stay curious about, you know, if someone offers up a poor reaction to a statement or a phrase or a vocabulary, like why like is, you know, they may not be arguing with the idea, they may be arguing with the way the idea is framed. Right. And that's, that's a different conversation then where finding our common ground to move some of these ideas forward might just be recalibrating how we're talking about them.

**22:42**
Speaker 2
So I honestly don't know that there is a comprehensive, like one size fits all word out there right now.

**22:49**
Speaker 1
No. Well, well said. Well said. Okay, so let's get to know you more. Kind of the rapid fire part of our interview. What would you say is your specialty or gift?

**22:58**
Speaker 2
Yeah, that's hard. You know, again, I think it stems back from Florida Cathlon. It was a whole bunch of like 20 somethings building a house. It never dawned on us that we couldn't do that or that we wouldn't figure it out. And I think that has stayed with me that it's never quite dawned on me that I wouldn't figure it out or that I couldn't figure it out. And as a result, you know, I get frustrated when things don't work the first time. But I also then tend to pivot and think laterally about what other lanes are available to me to move that same topic forward. So I think that remains the sort of resilience and the special gift maybe that I bring to this work.

**23:36**
Speaker 1
Yeah, you're resilient. I think just sometimes human nature, we go too much to the how and who's going to pay for that. And I compare it to, I'm fundraising for our tech startup schema right now, an AI tool for architects and developers. And if we can all agree this is where the industry is going no matter what, inevitably, whether we do something better or not. But you know what, here's what we've got in place and here's kind of how I think we should meet that. And then you can figure out the how later. So that's what I heard there too is if you can honestly answer, who better to do that than me or us? That's a pretty powerful thing. It's good. Okay, cool. All right. So do you have any good habits or routines?

**24:18**
Speaker 2
I try, I think as most people do. No, we have two small kids in our family. I have a six year old, a three year old, and so my husband and I thrive on routine. It's the way two working parents get from one day to the next. Taco Tuesday is a hit in our house because all four of us will eat it and very happily once a week. So Taco Tuesday is a big deal tradition in our family. I walk our dog pretty much

every morning while my husband is doing the drop off loop. And that has been a really impactful time for me to listen to audiobooks. And sometimes those are fiction, sometimes they're nonfiction. But that's been a really helpful routine for me to just learn.

**24:54**
Speaker 2
It's also an exercise thing of moving my body and getting outside and you know, all those happy little endorphins are a good way to start the day for me. I also sleep. Sleep is important. Sleep is an important ritual in my life. I value it. And so I think, you know, there, if you're going to have the stamina to fight the good fight on the green building movement for your entire career, you don't do that through consistent all nighters. That, that just does not. It's incompatible with this life. It's not sustainable. And so I think sort of that. But remembering to rest, peace is Incredibly important to keep the good fight going.

**25:25**
Speaker 1
Well, that's. I've got three boys, they're a little older, 17, 14 and 12. And. And you're right, you gotta have some routines or. It's crazy. One of our hacks is if we don't buy groceries on a Sunday and actually have somewhat of some meals planned, if it's Monday and like, we don't know what the family's gonna be eating, it's gonna be a chaotic.

**25:47**
Speaker 2
It's game over. Yeah.

**25:48**
Speaker 1
A little hack for us. So for those, that's what we do.

**25:51**
Speaker 2
That in my husband and I, we have it as a standing meeting on our calendar. But Friday afternoon, like the last hour before we go pick the kids up is family meeting. And like our kids are small, so they're not involved yet, but we have the family meeting of like sitting down and being like, okay, what are we doing this weekend? What are we eating over the next week? And we switch it. Who's doing the meal plan or whatever. And yeah, that like, logistical moment. And I think it's really important for like our relationship, our family, where it's just like, you know, if you're not careful, your whole life becomes logistics.

**26:20**
Speaker 2
And so like having one dedicated hour to sit down and just like figure it out for the week to come has been very helpful for us because then you can just free your brain up. You're not as decision fatigued the rest of the time because you've already set a framework that empowers you to be successful.

**26:35**
Speaker 1
You're right. You trust that simple system. And I love it. One of my favorite productivity books is Atomic Habits, James Clear. And he says, like, you don't rise to the level of your goals. You fall to the level of your systems and habits. And so that will catch us right there. Let's get stuff. All right. I'm a fan, Allison, of the bucket list. I ask all my guests, hey, what's on the bucket list? Is it some travel adventure? Maybe you want to write a book?

**26:59**
Speaker 2
I don't know.

**26:59**
Speaker 1
What are a couple things on your bucket list?

**27:01**
Speaker 2
Yeah, so I was thinking about this question. I actually can't do bucket lists. Hear me out. So I love making lists. I'm kind of compulsive about it. I probably have. I've got a notebook, I've got a handful of post it notes over there. There's the list of lists of where they all are living. And I love crossing things off lists. Makes me feel accomplished, makes me feel good. And I Can't do a bucket list as a result of that. Right. Because for me, like the focus shifts to the wrong thing that I want to cross the thing off, not that I am focused on doing the thing. And so I actually don't keep one because it shifts my focus in a way that isn't useful for my brain.

**27:40**
Speaker 2
There are lots of things that I like to do that I want to do that are out there, but I actually don't write them down because it freaks me out too much. And then I get too focused on crossing them off.

**27:49**
Speaker 1
That's okay. So my wife and I watched this, I think it was on Netflix, called Life List. So if you don't call it a bucket list, some might call it lifeless. To me it's just, hey, what are those? What are those things that might be fun and. But I get your stance on it. It's interesting. Some I, I interview have five or ten things, some don't, but it's, hey, I'm a more real time with it. That's okay. You know, I think life's about seasons. So there might be a season where you're like, you know what? All right, let me write that bucket list.

**28:16**
Speaker 2
And for sure, I think there's definitely a season where a bucket list sense and it won't work. But like right now, in the chaos, it just isn't gonna happen.

**28:26**
Speaker 1
All right, so is there a book you'd recommend to our listeners? It doesn't have to be about buildings.

**28:33**
Speaker 2
Yeah, so the audiobook, I'm just about done with it now. But the audiobook I'm listening to right now, I actually really would recommend. It's Daniel Pink's To Sell is Human. And I. What I really appreciate about the book a, it has a whole bunch of practical, applicable things that you can go out and do. But I think at some point, you know, whether you're in green building or not, everybo is selling something at some point in time. Whether you're trying to convince your toddler to put their shoes on, or you're trying to convince somebody to make a $50 million investment in a brand new building or whatever, at some point we are all selling something, whether it's your ideas or yourself or whatever. And I really am enjoying this book because it talks about the sort of human aspects of it.

**29:13**
Speaker 2
You know, like none of us wants to be sleazy. Right. I think a lot of people have this image of like this lazy salesman and so nobody wants to be that. That kind of character in their brain and by good reason. Right. But at the same time, like, we also are all trying to convince other people of various things at different points and need to for various reasons. And so I. What I really appreciate about the book is that it's talking about, like, the sort of the human underpinning part

of that and the relational underpinning part of that sales conversation and some strategies and tactics and, you know, things to think about or try or questions to ask. And I. I think it's always useful to have a bigger toolkit for how to have different kinds of conversations.

**29:56**
Speaker 2
And for me, listening to this book has really broadened that toolkit of just the myriad options that are out there reminded me of some things that I'd forgotten and that sort of thing.

**30:04**
Speaker 1
Well, fan of Daniel Pink, I've not read that book yet, so to sell as human, I'll put a link in the podcast, Show Notes. That sounds fantastic. We're always selling in some form. You're right.

**30:14**
Speaker 2
We're always selling in some form.

**30:17**
Speaker 1
And it's just conversations I tell people, just it's about how you have the conversation. So a couple more things as we start to wrap up here. As you look back on your career, is there anything you wish you'd have learned earlier?

**30:30**
Speaker 2
Anything I wish I would have learned earlier? I don't know. I don't think so, honestly. You know, I think there are lots of lessons I've learned along the way so far. I don't know if I would have been prepared to learn any of them earlier than when they got to me. And so maybe that's the takeaway piece of it is appropriately so. Right. Like, the earth is on fire. Everything is burning down. It's kind of a hot mess. And it's easy to get caught in that chaos and to feel the very real and intense pressures of that. And that is very real and very valid. And yet we also still can't do all of the things before their time or before our time.

**31:11**
Speaker 2
And so I think there's something to be said for that balance between urgency and patience and figuring out how to do that. I don't think there's anything I wished I would have learned earlier. I'm grateful for all the things that I have

learned to this point, and I know I will keep learning them. And I hope both that I can continue to pass them on and that I can continue to stay open to all of the other things that have remained for me to learn. I don't think I'll ever stop Being a student and I'll ever stop learning.

**31:40**
Speaker 1
Solid. Yeah. Because I don't ask about regrets. I ask about just wisdom. Hey, if you'd have known that at some other point, like, what would that have meant? What would that have done? Oh, this is awesome conversation. So, all right, let's say there's someone's. Someone's listening right now and they're getting really inspired by your story and they're just now jumping into the green building movement. It's been good to you. It's been good to me. Any words of encouragement to them, Allison, as we come to a close?

**32:04**
Speaker 2
Yeah. This is by far the group of people on the planet who are having the most fun. And I seriously maintain that, like, there's nobody who has fun. Like, sustainability people have fun. We enjoy each other's company. We all share a bind purpose that's bigger than any of us, ourselves. For myself as an architect, I love being part of a large firm round table. I love being part of the Great and Commons peer network. I love being part of the USGBC activities that I've been a part of. I love being part of the AIA things I've engaged with. And because sustainability people just share. Right. Like, it's in our nature where, you know, like I was saying before, like, we all know that, like, I may, you know, my sticker might say I'm from Air St. Gross.

**32:45**
Speaker 2
My building might say it's a lead building or whatever, but, like, we have to do it together. And so I think sustainability people are more transparent about their lessons learned than some chunks of the industry. And because there's that sort of higher purpose, that higher goal. And I think with that higher goal, there's sort of a high level of trust and connectivity and community in that as we work toward those shared objectives. So it's a fun party. Welcome. Join us, please. It's fun. Like, we, you know, people in this industry and in this space will be very happy to have conversations to try to help you figure out where you're at and where you want to go. And, you know, please just reach out. Like you're not going to get a poor reception. People are always excited to pass down knowledge.

**33:30**

Speaker 2
I know that can be super intimidating too, to like cold call or cold email or cold LinkedIn connect with somebody you don't know maybe or you haven't met. But, like, do it right. Like, we want to. We want to build the movement. We want to build the connections and the community of people that are advoc for this and start wherever you are. You know, that could be your parents, that could be your siblings, that could be your neighbors, that could be your friends, whatever. But you know, the best time to start is now.

**33:53**
Speaker 1
Well, jump on in. We're going to welcome you. This has been an amazing conversation. Now we're going to know each other in the lead fellow community. I just love hearing about your story. So to our listeners, make sure you do go on LinkedIn and connect with Allison. Let her know what you thought of the podcast interview. And Allison, just say, I know I'll see you with the lead fellow work, but if you need anything, reach out to me. And I just want to say thanks for being on the podcast today. This was awesome. Awesome.

**34:16**
Speaker 2
Yeah, no problem. Thanks so much for having me. I appreciate it.

**34:20**
Speaker 1
Thank you for listening to this episode of the Green Building matters podcast@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 are already been recorded with our amazing guests. 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.