

EVE OLIMPO TRANSCRIPT

Segment 1 – Introduction and Her Work

>> EVE: I'm Eve Olimpo, I'm an interior designer and I specialize in sustainable design and construction. I'm from Montreal, Canada and I've been in the United States for about 12 years now. I work for [Inhabiture Home](#); we are an architectural firm that has years of experience in the field. I work in the store that provides sustainable products and furnishing that are selected for their environmental features. I help people through the store, also I meet clients at their homes and do design for them.

We expose the natural features and we restore the floor, we create bigger openings. We are in front of a park that brings in a lot natural light and this is a great environment to work in.

Segment 2 – Going to School in Another Country

>> EVE: It was scary to go back to school as an adult in a different country. I was scared. I went my first class and the instructor was fantastic, but I was worried I could not understand. My English was OK, but I didn't have the ability to follow an entire class, so that was frightening. What made it better is that community college is fantastic. People are going back for their second career. In interior design the average age was 35-40, I actually was not even the oldest. I didn't want to be with a bunch of kids. I was worried about that, not to be adequate and having a hard time to follow. I just stuck with it.

Going back to school with a family, I have four children, and it was how am I going to do that? Just taking one class at a time and being very organized, and the feeling that what I do is inspiring. It is inspiring to my kids to say it's important to me, I want to keep going, I want to get the proper education and get a good job. I want to make a difference.

When I went to interior design I didn't feel I was there to make a difference, but when I found the sustainable path, that was it. That's what I want to do; it's not just about aesthetics, but it's about functionality, providing the right product that is good for their health and good for the environment, that will be there for a long time and they are not going to be redoing it in five years because it was inadequate.

Segment 3 – Advice for People Changing Careers

>> **EVE:** It's never too late. There were some women who I met in my class who were in their sixties and their seventies. I was amazed to see what is the motivation behind that? For me I need to provide for myself, but also to be inspired, find something you love, thrive and keep going back for more. There are all those programs out there. I always go back. Right now I'm really busy. There is so much out there. It's accessible and really inexpensive as well. There is a lot of help out there to get those trainings and get people ready for the market.

Segment 4 – Explaining the Job

>> **EVE:** So each client comes in with a different idea for a construction project, a design project, and my job is to show them what the options are out there and to bring in some sustainable element. To explain why do we want low VOCs, {volatile organic compounds}, what they do to you? It is the why that is core to the principle of sustainable design. Why do we have those products? Why do we want to feature local artists? Those are all the things we can talk about with the clients, and ultimately it is their decision, and with some education why not do it better when you can.

Segment 5 – What Training Did You Need?

>> **EVE:** I studied interior design at West Valley College and very early on in my studies, the instructor bought on board the sustainable alternative. I was very fortunate. I started the **LEED Internship** in sustainability and the **Interior Design Certificate**. The program allows individuals who are already on the work market to get specific training, short training courses, it could be one, two or three units. The idea is to give people from the construction industry some knowledge about sustainable alternatives to market themselves better, get a better job and really keep up with what's going on.

There is a philosophy behind sustainability that has to do with social justice and doing better for people and the planet.

Segment 6 – What Options are There in This Field?

There are actually a lot of programs. I was surprised to see that. There is a lot of government training out there. If you look in your community college or PG & E there are a lot of short programs that allow you to get additional training to complement, for me it was interior design, but it can complement a general contractor, an architect, someone that already has some training. Some could be very easy courses. There are night classes. Or intense four or five or six week courses are available. You don't need a degree, what you need is specialized training in the area that you are interested in and then each course can develop you further.

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