Race and Oral History Project, UC San Diego

Narrator: Besma Coda

Interviewer: YiCheng Gu

Transcribed by: YiCheng Gu

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Length of Interview: 57:34

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YICHENG GU: Recording. So I'll start with the introduction, my name is YiCheng Gu and today is may 26th, 2022 and I'm interviewing Basma Coda through zoom for the University of California San Diego race and oral History project. Do you agree to grant the university permission to archive and publish this interview for educational purposes.

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Besma Coda: Yes.

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YICHENG GU: So I'm going to start with a little bit of your background and your hometown and how you were raised, something really general about yourself. So could you tell me a little bit about your hometown, and what is your favorite part of it?

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Besma Coda: So I was born and raised in this southern town of Iraq, which we call it basrah, and basrah is the porch of Iraq that faces the South of Iraq, and the north of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf, sometimes we call it the Arabian Gulf depending on which country uses it. So, the town is medium size and heterogenous, and it's very small, small to medium size I would say. There were a lot of different types of people, you know, ethnicities, in(at) the time. We were exposed to all these ethnicities, even though all of them speak Arabic, but a lot of people speak different languages such as Persian. Because it also borders Iran at the gulf of Iran, so people spoke different languages (such as): Persian, Arabic and different dialogues of Arabic, and, of course, a Caldean like me, who is a Christian of Iraq. They do speak other languages, which is the Aramaic or we call it Caldean, in general, but Aramaic and other languages also were

available. Not everybody speaks it but just certain ethnicities will speak those languages. And these languages are very ancient, just like the Aramaic it's an ancient language (that's) very old. Thousands of years old, there were others who call this Aramian and other languages, which are very, very old languages. So in nature it's a very hot and humid town, but the point about it (is) that we are close to the port then, (which) also was controlled by the British during the first time, of the 19th century, so we see people who speaks English because English was a second language as well and, and because of the port was (a part of) the stone and dirt (of) the British operation, we were exposed to a lot of British people coming to work at the port, so it was not scary to see Western society in this region more than when we moved to Baghdad, which is the capital. We missed seeing Western society in the capital, because mainly the Iraqi people live in the capital. So when we were raised in the town, all I have is the greatest memory, being a part of a large family and also the technology in that city in the south city was much better than the rest of the region in Iraq because we were close to the port (where) there was a lot of channels coming away from around from different countries. I think the streaming was easier in that city then other cities so that's what it is, and when I was about in the high school age 15 or 16 we the whole family during the war, my father had to leave the town and move to Baghdad to the capital, because there was a lot of problems coming from the party and the party affected people's lives. Hmm so I was, you know, living in that town and came from a large family. There were about seven people in this family and my mom had the youngest one in Baghdad. So that's all we call him Baghdadlian, and that's why we are Basrahlian, from the south. The language and dialogue of Arabic language has been affected by other dialogues or other languages. It has been affected by the Turkish (and) by the Arabian peninsula. So we see the dialogue. It's very southern, these days when we want to speak Basrali or from Basra, people don't understand. Even though we are speaking Arabic, there are a lot of words that we use as people from Basra from the South that other people in different regions of the 14 states in Iraq would not understand. It's hard for them to understand because it's very southern where you have a very southern accent. So these are the language, the town and we're very close to the desert, and then, of course, one day would be the Desert Storm and (then the other) would be starting to (inaudible). So it's a different climate, you know, we have our winter, it's not real winter. It's still warm but um we see days that have a heavy heavy rain, while other days that have a desert storm, which is (a) sand storm. And that really affected some people in the family, with asthma that they have. That's my town and then, when I moved to Bagdad I attended Baghdad university, I finished my high school in Baghdad. I attended Baghdad University and graduated from university for my bachelor degree. And then you know the rest of the family. (There was) trouble. You know we were refugees from one town to another during the Baath party that's why we had to leave our town. A lot of crying. Going from one town to another but, of course, you know, we did not understand, we were young, so we didn't understand what was my father doing at that point, why why suddenly in one day he's putting us in a car moving from one town to another so there's a lot of (confusion) in my life.

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YICHENG GU: Hearing what you said about your hometown in your upbringing, it seems like you were exposed to a lot of cultures, different people of different ethnicities, as well as different languages. How do you think that by exposing yourself to those different cultures at such a young age, and for such a long time, how did that affect you personally and the way you turned out?

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Besma Coda: Well, you know it really affects the whole family and especially me. I'm the oldest of the sisters. It does affect us greatly to be exposed to this beautiful culture that we had and learn about their language, and learn about their tradition. We love the inclusion that our parents teach us from the beginning of our life and the diversity in our Community was so great that we will learn how to be accepted, and kind of be frank with everyone, so we were kind of an inclusive community and I'm not talking only about my family, specifically, but everyone even (in) my neighbor. We see them without discrimination against a certain type of ethnicity, and we never learned that when we were growing up. We learn how to become inclusive, or love diversity. Like when my friends used to go to Iran and it was only across the river, so it's very easy to go and come back during the summer. When they used to go to their hometown. We used to cry when they came there, but the gifts, of course, we were very happy so even though I'm you know I'm of a different religion than them. I'm a Christian or (they are a) Muslim. Or maybe they are (something) different, they are probably not Muslims they're probably Jewish or other ethnicities and from Iran. But it really bores us with inclusion in our heart to have to other people as a child. We never knew that these people are different from us. We had a lot of African American with a black color. It was very familiar in our town. We do see Africans with their blood from Iraq but they're not black from Africa. So that's why we see people work(ing) in unity and trust(ing) each other and there are black (people). It's a collaboration between each other to build our Community and that shaped us a whole lot.

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YICHENG GU: Yeah so you say that even though you identify with the Chaldean community but in a way you're still mixing and you're still interacting with a lot of other communities and also accepting their diverse opinions and cultures so and I find that really inclusive.

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Besma Coda: Absolutely, the diversity was there, but we didn't understand that word of "diversity". Why? Because. We are one community, so you know now we call it "diversity" or "inclusion" and things like that, but in the beginning, we are one community. We just live as one

community, no separation or division. So you know there's one community, and the only separation was that they practice different religions than us.This person practices a different religion. We have like several other religions and the only difference between us is oh they go to their place to worship, and I go to my worship place. This was it and nothing else, it was not, it was not specified as inclusion on diversity. It was not because it was one community. And that's what we like about you know the old days when we say old days and my children would not understand it. Because they were born and raised in the United States, which is just different. So when we talk about the past sometimes they don't understand it.

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YICHENG GU: So coming from such a strongly tied community to the US where things seem to be segregated and often divided even upon racial or gender lines, what would you say that surprised you or what difficulties did you have to go through upon moving here?

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Besma Coda: Well I want to go back again. You brought the word gender, that's a good reminder. Thank you so much for saying that. The Middle East, and especially Iraq, are male dominant. So the gender difference was very big. Because we see the male work, you know male do the hard work, male that (go) out in the street, while females they're segregated at home. But mainly they (can) get an education, they can go and work is fine, but if they didn't have the education, they can (only) be the housewives at home, taking care of the children, so I just want to mention that. Now how did that affect me and when I came to the United States? It was 1980, and it was a great time in the United States. It was a great time. But coming from my hometown to here um I felt very different. um maybe the language barrier, I spoke English because remember, I graduated from Baghdad university. English was our second language, but we were not told the right grammar or pronunciation or you know the right phonics. Just like people study like my daughter, she studied Italian or Latin, and she forgot about them. So when we first (came to the) United States, they spoke different types of English, (and) we were taught a British dialogue. And language barrier, cultural barrier (existed). Our family was one of the first 75 Caldean families to move to the United States. So very few Caldean were in San Diego during (19)75 to (19)80 because most of the Caldean community arrived in Michigan to Chicago, Philadelphia and other areas. So California, we just started settling people in California. Okay, so you know I really felt not only myself but you know my siblings as well, we felt (we) were strangers, no matter how accepted we were, we are strangers so we have to sit down together, a lot of crying. We probably cried for two years. Because we want to go back home, as I told you, my siblings were young. They were six years old, (and another) 11 years old. They didn't understand why we are here, (and) we did not understand that my father had a long vision about what's going to happen in Iraq which we're very thankful for after that. Very thankful, because we avoided every single war every single torture every single genocide that happened in Iraq. Because my father has a good vision, you know, for that future. So when we arrived we kept asking my father let's

go back, let's go back home, and he was like this is your home, you will learn how to (live here), you have to be strong and persistent and practice for this place to be your home. We knew that we were not going back, which we're very thankful for. We started attending school, of course, my siblings (were) in school, we were older. We didn't have enough income for all of us to go to school because during the old days it's not like these days. College is not free, so we have to take turns. Some of us go to college, and some of us have to work to support and then the siblings when they are at the age of the College they also have to go to college, It was all paid, and there was no scholarship. So that's why I have to work to support my siblings in order for them to get to college. It was in the collaboration of family members for us to excel. It's easy, you know, for refugees these days. It's much easier for them or maybe they have only a language barrier. For us, it was not only a language barrier, there was a financial barrier. We never received public assistance, you know my father did not accept that, because he had a lot of humility and he wanted to depend on himself. And there was also the housing availability. We are living in a small condo that doesn't fit ten people in the condo. It's overcrowded, you know, some people studying in the room, the other people, they have to get out. So there were a lot of difficulties, and I don't see that difficulty happening now, thank you, Lord. What they are facing now probably is different, you know obstacles. Not the same obstacles that we faced during the 80s, it was completely different.

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YICHENG GU: Do you think the struggles that you faced when you first came here feeling like a stranger made you feel like you somehow had a mission, or like an obligation to find communities such as the Chaldean Middle Eastearn and social services to help future immigrant families. Even when they might have more support from the government, but at the same time, help them assimilate into the society better?

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Besma Coda: Very good question, because this is the promise that myself and my sister made for ourselves. We made a promise to ourselves and to our father that we will be working hard to help others. We both worked at the Catholic community services (and) they used to be Catholic churches in the old days. I worked as a supervisor for six months after my arrival. I worked as a supervisor at one of the programs. It was a new program for refugees and my sister also worked as a community health worker and we started kind of laying the foundation for all the refugees' arrival back then. A lot of Caldean and Iraqi refugees arrived during the 80s and the 90s. So we kinda built up the foundation. Since then for the past 40 years, this is exactly where we're working. We're working with refugees. Herself, my sister, and myself, so we all are still working with refugees, but different jobs and different channels. So that was the reason for me to continue working with refugees and with the foundation to open called the Caldean Middle Eastern social services. This was the reason that I work with the community members, so we can open the nonprofit organization, because at the beginning we work with all the refugees, when you work

at the Catholic Church, you will be working with many, many, many other communities. Because refugees are coming throughout the year back in the 80s. They were coming from Iraq, they were coming from Afghanistan, they were coming from Vietnam, Lao, and they were coming in from Eastern Europe from Romania because they were communist countries and other you know Eastern European so we were working with all of them. Our program is about helping every single person. In the end, I was like wait a minute, you know, even though i'm working with everyone, I want specifically to work with my community because there was a lot of torture. These refugees that had a lot of torture at the fall of Saddam in 2003. Hmm so and also before that, during the Gulf, there was a lot of torture in my community because they were Christians from Iraq. So I decided that the best thing to do is work, specifically with my community, because not only myself, but the team that I work with and collaborate with we have the linguistic and the cultural background that we can help our community (with). And this is how we have the idea. It started as an idea, but then of course we explored different options. How can we turn this idea into a project? Because every project starts with an idea. So we have this idea, and now it took us several years and people coming in from different states to really kind of shape it to become a project and that's how it came into a true project in 2005.

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YICHENG GU: Thank you and I'm going to move to some of the things that you did more recently with San Ysidro Health, can you elaborate on your role in San Ysidro health and what were some of the services that San Ysidro Health provides for the community?

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Besma Coda: Of course, you know when we started the Caldean and Middle Eastern social services, we called it the CMSS. In 2014, the focus was on behavioral health and social services. After that, we decided to open the clinic. But unfortunately it could not become a federally qualified clinic and, as you know, as everybody knows, when we are a non profit, we are a service, for you know without charge, we have to continue being a non-profit, so we searched for help from our community Council of clinics.

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Besma Coda: And San Ysidro accepted, so we were kind of moved to become one of their programs, and one of their clinics. So we went through an acquisition and after the acquisition of course we became completely part of San ysidro health. San Ysidro Health is a great center. We have about 50 clinics from the south border of San Diego all the way to the north.
And all the way to the other southeast (side) of San Diego. So we have central and other clinics all over the place. Oh my clinics, their focus is good, (such as) family practice, pediatric practice. We have dental practice, vision practice, and specialty (in) all different types, especially one of them is cardiology. We also have social services and we have behavioral health treatment. So

behavioral health, we have all different types of behavior health, some of them, they are federal(ly) funded and some of them are county funded. Social services, we have mailing, it is paid, we have a paid program for the elderly. We have a program with the children, and we also have a WIC program for all different types of social services. And (we are) definitely opening more clinics and we're becoming almost 2023 employees. So it's a big center. And it's really a great center that provides services to patients.

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YICHENG GU: Would you say that the reason why you picked San Ysidro Health as the clinic that you wanted the community to join, is because it sort of guarantees access for all people and for diverse communities and cultures as well, and with almost no charges. Would you say that it's the main reason?

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Besma Coda: You know all the big nonprofit or federally qualified clinics, all federally qualified clinics, they are supported by the Federal. So that's why we wanted to be a federally qualified clinic so they have to provide the services to the patient insured or uninsured, can afford or cannot afford. Okay, so all clinics, they have to have the same system. Their main services were the Spanish/Hispanic community. But they wanted to serve the other communities. And you know when we completed the acquisition, we were the first clinic in El Cajon to service the Arabic Community or the Middle Eastern community or the Caldean community. They were the first one to offer, and because they provide service to all just like you said. And because we wanted to be with a strong clinic. We want to be with them because we had the experience of not being federally qualified, so we wanted to have a strong clinic that has been there. San Ysidro has been there for 15 years and they are strong in their capacity, hiring, and diversity in their employees. And all that you know added are the reasons why we would like to join San Ysidro Health. Because of the other programs that they have, for example, a lot of clinics, (even though) they don't have dental. Several clinics in the community don’t have dental, but we do. A lot of people, a lot of clinics, they don't have behavioral (programs). When we joined San Ysidro health their behavioral health program was not strong. We kind of brought our strong behavioral health program and we showed them a kind of model for them and now they have a very strong behavioral health program.

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YICHENG GU: It is sort of like using a big organization as a platform. And then you can also contribute your strong side and also what you have to the community and to the clinic as well, so I feel like that is really useful and inspiring. I want to get more general questions, how has the pandemic affected yourself or your community?

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Besma Coda: Well, the COVID-19 pandemic really affected everyone in the world. Our community and El Cajon got hit hard by the pandemic. And I personally got hit hard, my husband. And not because of COVID, but because of the confusion in the hospital. When the pandemic hit not only the regular people got confused, the medical field got confused. The medical field had to receive so much when I was the clinic manager during the pandemic, we receive information on a daily basis, sometimes information changes from the morning to the afternoon. So there was a lot of confusion and a lot of messages that some of them are true and some of them not true. Hospitals there's a lot of confusion. We lost many community Members during the first several months of the pandemic. So the community got hit hard and many homes lost their loved ones because of the confusion that happened in the hospitals. People who had a heart attack passed away, which is very simple and easy you know these days. People going for blood pressure, like my husband (passed away). Confusion, there's a lot of confusion, a lot of errors happen during that which would not happen before. Those kinds of errors are very common to happen in hospitals during COVID pandemic. So the pandemic took a lot of good people and young people from my community. And it really affected our lives. You know my kids lost their dad. I lost the father of the House and the breadwinner. So it was very hard. Very hard.

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YICHENG GU: I feel like the pandemic might have not only disrupted the operation of things like the clinic but also could you say that it also like sort of disrupted and decreased the trust in the community because of all the false information going around that it might have disrupted the bond in the community as well?

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Besma Coda: San Ysidro Health during the pandemic (and) several clinics at the south side of the city of San Diego closed their clinics, fearing the pandemic. I was the clinic manager, and I decided to stay open. And I told San Ysidro that I'm going to continue to be open and we want the people to continue trusting us as a clinic (and) as a medical service (and) that we are here for them. If something happens to them, they will have a phone to call and someone will respond to say okay, you know you have this let's work on your treatments. That's the only way to stay open and (the consequence is to) expose the team to danger. It was my decision to take, because with all the information we got from the central disease control and also from San Ysidro. (From the) disease Control department, I follow the instructions in order for our team to be safe. Using their instruction, so my team, they continue to do the treatment and also be safe. That doesn't mean some of them were not exposed, everybody got exposed somehow somewhere sometime. Okay, but it was a decision that I made, and I have a huge concern in my heart when I come home that I

am bringing (the disease) home. I used to go every morning and say everybody's okay? Yes, everybody's okay. That was my happy moment. So building the trust in the community was not easy (and it takes a lot of effort) to (not) lose (that trust). When you have that trust I don't want the community to lose that trust because we're not going to get them back. It's going to take years because we built that trust for the last 40 years. We don't want to lose that trust. We don't want the community to say "Oh, when the pandemic came, they (inaudible)". True reality. So that's why. You know we've tried our best. It hit us really hard. San Ysidro moved really quickly like hiring a company to do sanitization, hiring the company to come in and wipe two or three times a day. Teaching the staff how to clean up after every single patient, how to put the entrance and exit for patients who have COVID, and what to do when COVID patients arrive. There were new policies and procedures built every single day to remove the confusion. And to continue servicing the people. That's what makes us successful you know just being there, and that doesn't mean that we did not lose a lot of people in the community, yes, we did lose and also there was just like you said there were all the myths when the vaccination came out. Should we or should we not take the vaccination? A lot of people thought the vaccinations were install(ing) a metal detector in their body or it has chemicals. Or other myths, like where did COVID-19 come from and what happened? Are we receiving the right information from the government or from the official or not? All that we run through in our clinic, and they come and ask questions. And that's why we have this new ground that we go into the community. And we're planning for them, you know all these questions that they have. We respond to remove the resistance toward the vaccination.

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YICHENG GU: So it's sort of like using your knowledge to minimize the impact on your team while also like helping the community during such a hectic time during Covid where no one seems to care and trying to initiate all these programs, and inform them on what to believe and what not to believe so. Would you say that the COVID program that you did for your community is essentially a way to foster that trust towards authority and towards what is right and to help them distinguish between what they should believe and what they should not believe.

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Besma Coda: All correct. You know, people have a decision they make for themselves, (which) could be a wrong decision, (or it) could be right. But if it is a decision for your health, then you need to increase your knowledge. Okay, so the plan was to take that clinical knowledge and give it to the people where they are and where they're comfortable. And when we take that knowledge to them, we don't dismiss all of (their knowledge), and we don't slam them with rejection. We give them the information and we help them make healthy decisions for their own lives. (Tell them the reasons why) that vaccination would be good, and also to gain trust in the medical field and not necessarily in the media. But at least to gain the trust in the system that we have.

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YICHENG GU: Yes, because I think you mentioned in our pre-interview session that the resources are there, but like sometimes their culture and language barriers stop them from getting it so you guys are sort of acting like a medium to help them get it, which is like such a helpful thing to have not only during COVID but in general for life.

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Besma Coda: Correct so you know when we take the packs, the appliers, the providers, the Q & A to where they are, and it's always culturally and linguistically appropriate. We go to the Afghan community. We have wires and we have people who speak the language. When we go to that Middle Eastern community, we have all the resources that they need to communicate in Arabic. We go to the Spanish community and we do the same thing so it's just like you know, wherever they are, and especially these communities, sometimes if we want, we don't want them (to be) isolated. You know they don't know. They don't necessarily go and listen to all the media that we have because they listen to their own. (But) in their own language, these media could be wrong. You know, so we bring them the right resources.

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YICHENG GU: Sort of like using their language to tell them about the resources that the country has, and respecting their culture and their language as well, which I find a really detailed thing that an organization can do for people. So despite COVID, can you tell me a little bit about in general with your work, what were some of the hardships that you have to overcome and are you able to overcome them and what are the methods that you used?

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You know hardship is there in every job and every work. It's up to you (to determine) how you take it and how you turn it in from negative to positive. Also what is your management skill, you know what kind of school you learn (from) and (what you) rely on to overcome those obstacles and challenges. Okay, so there were a lot of challenges during the acquisition, because I was the co-founder and I was the chief operation officer but when I go to San Ysidro Health, I’m a regular employee. It’s a big difference. Am I accepting that? You know I can sit and cry about my past and how well I did and how many successful programs I built , (but I didn’t). I bought all that and it's supporting the new job. All that knowledge will support my new job. So whatever knowledge for students or whatever knowledge they get from college and from university is to support their next step. Then if they get a job, a lot of students told me that I see my kids as well. My son never buys the book, because everything is online. And that surprised me because we

pay so much for his books. And I still use my books for my master degree from the old days, an actual book. Because yeah I'm the old school. But being there at home, I will never forget that oh, you know what I think I discussed this (concept) in school and let me see the name like if I wanted to report on total quality management what is that? How do you define the work? So the definition is, oh I got my books or you know, doing the survey, or whatever. There are hundreds of other types of surveys. If you remember all that in my age it is impossible. The best thing to do: open the book. For the newer generation is google. For me, (it is to) go to my scholarly book. The research that we did before and whatever you learn is to support the new job. That was a obstacles that I have to cross and I'm not telling you that I wasn't sad or I didn't have my cry days or I didn't have time that I didn't want to go to work, because I'm moving into a new company, but you know we have to accept the fact (that) we're moving on. Different sections of our life. And then, when I was the clinic manager and then moving on to become a project manager also was another hurdle, but because I have to accept the fact I had too many surgeries and I lost my husband and I needed time to grieve. I want to be working from home, and to get over my grievances. So it's a new chapter of our life. It doesn't mean oh, we're gonna have to forget about it, no, acknowledge it, I have to acknowledge. You know I lost this, because I have this problem. I mean so it's a new chapter of our and all the ways every experience we have is to support the new step that you are taking. Even in my position, and if I want to retire, which is going to be a long way to go (till I retire). Because I don't believe in retirement, I took it from my family because my father never believed in retirement work (either). It's gonna be also beneficial to learn how to manage my time. How many volunteers I would do after my retirement. So all that would help, and how much connection I did with people and which organization that would benefit from my experience, if I were to volunteer. All that is set.

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YICHENG GU: That makes so much sense, because I feel like sometimes, when I do things it feels like oh, is this useful for me to learn? Is it useful for me to like to put so much time on this but, like everything that you learned, no matter if it is book knowledge or is something that you experienced this is gonna be somehow a part of yourself that's going to shape the future you and your future experience in some way, and the fact that, like I should acknowledge that and just accept whatever is given to me, it's such a crucial part of making sense of life in general, so thank you for that advice.

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Besma Coda: Absolutely, and not only that. How much would this work affect the people around you? Okay, you know, sometimes we do something that we feel like it's not useful. Why am I doing it? But look how that action affects other people. Did I make any changes? Did my work change their life? Was it beneficial, even when it's not beneficial for me, but was it beneficial to

other people? And that's what we have to consider. Consider not all the time we take something for granted that would be beneficial for us. Because we have to think. We are a part of the community, is it beneficial to others? I'm a part of this whole and part of my community, part of the community at large. Would it be beneficial to other people? Can I be selfish? Or should I be selfless? That's a question that we have to think about all the time. Do I want to be selfish? I have been selfless all my life. Can I be selfish now? No. Okay I'm part of the community that even something would not benefit me, but it would benefit the community. So we continue doing it.

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YICHENG GU: That's about thinking about yourself more than just yourself and about connections and the people around you as well. And I have one last question. What are you planning for your future in terms of yourself and also your work as well?

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00:52:50.310 --> 00:52:54.330
Besma Coda: So, as far as my work. We just applied for two grants and we got them and I'll be very soon working with the smoking cessation. It's a huge problem in our community and I'm very lucky to get the chance to work in this grant. Hopefully, in several months, we will be working on that grant, and I am very lucky that I was the person to (get) pick(ed) to manage that grant. I love to do that, and of course we're still applying for more grants and, hopefully, I will be working more and more with different brands and different universities, because with this grant we work with the University of Minnesota, and the next grant would be working with UC Davis so that's the plan to continue and wait for what the lord's gonna bring me. After my husband passed away I've been living one day at a time. And it was always kind of my goal to live one day at a time. Sometimes you know I plan and plan, but these days I haven't because of my husband's death. It was a sudden death, he was young. But it was a sudden death. He didn't have the chance to tell us goodbye or to write his will or anything. So living one day at a time and doing the right thing one at a time is my goal now. What am I planning as a family? You know just being healthy is very important because you know if I do not take care of myself, then I won't be able to take care of others, so I realized that I have to take care of myself as well in order for me to continue doing the work and also be there for my children when they need me. I have two kids and I wish to see them graduate. And I wanted to be there for them, and if they need to be independent they know and don’t want to be taking any advice in their work or their schooling (from me), which is okay, which is better because I like them to learn things by themselves. But when they need me I'm there for them. And it's good that they learn and it's good that they fall and they get up and you know collect themselves and then get up and start again. And that's the goal, being there for them.

441
00:55:57.660 --> 00:56:11.460

YICHENG GU: yeah living one day at a time is such a relevant life advice, right now, with all the things that's going on, you don't know what's gonna happen next tomorrow if there's gonna be a tomorrow right yeah.

442
00:56:11.820 -->00:57:23.910
Besma Coda: So true it's so true because my husband and I had a plan to go to England to London. So we can do a documentary when he meet his Jewish friend who was in a Jewish community or genocide in Iraq and his friend of elementary school they got together several years ago by connecting on Facebook and we had a plan to go shoot a documentary. Also, there's a Jewish documentary and post on Facebook. We had a plan to do that and it never happened because that was the same year that my husband passed away and he couldn't do it with me and I just don't know what to do, because I lost my friends. That's why I told him I'm not planning anything if it happens that I will come. To London, (if i come) I will and I connect with you because I'm taking it one day at a time.

449
00:57:25.440 --> 00:57:31.020
YICHENG GU: Thank you so much for everything that you said. I'm gonna stop recording right now.