

John Boccacino:

Hello and welcome back to the 'Cuse Conversations Podcast. I'm John Boccacino, Senior Internal Communications Specialist at Syracuse University.

Lorna Rose:

It's connection to something that I didn't even realize I had as strongly as I did, until the unfortunate passing of my big sister in 2020. It wasn't until I went to her funeral and I saw all of these women around that looked like me, that looked like older versions

you've spoken

It was true then, and it's still true now. One in four college women will be sexually assaulted. Now think of how very few Indigenous women we have amongst us in our communities. The representation is 1 to 2% maybe, and how very rampant Indigenous women get murdered and go missing, it's highly disproportionate to the amount of us that are still here. So that's something that's extremely important. I'm very lucky. I'm very lucky to have survived some of the domestic and intimate partner and sexual acts of violence that have been committed against me. I'm very lucky to have survived them. So many of

that, you can get rid of the individual. Community is still thriving and we are still here. It's unfortunate that it has to be through resilience.

Lorna Rose:

I always say resilience is not a compliment because it simply means you just won't die. The truth is no, we won't. We just won't, because we're here for a reason. Native men and women and two spirit people, Native people, we're here for a reason. We have the power of the earth in our bodies, in our blood, in our veins, and as long as we are here, we're going to continue to make as much of a difference as we can because that's just who we are as people. So continuing to refer to months like this, dedication months, remembrance months, memorial months, educational opportunities as heritage and not history, it's to make sure people remember that, no, we are in fact still here.

John Boccacino:

I want to make a segue into something that might be a little difficult to talk about, but it's really pertinent to your story for our audience here. If you don't know, Lorna bleeds orange. She loves our football, our basketball, all of our sports teams, rabid Syracuse fan. You're also someone who went through a lot of struggles yourself. You were talking to me off-air about some of the mental health issues you were going through, recently in the last year. To the point that you're comfortable disclosing and sharing with our audience, can you talk a little bit about some of those mental health issues and what role the Syracuse University community played in pulling you out from the depths of depression?

Lorna Rose:

No, absolutely. Thank you for giving me the opportunity and the space to talk about this. It is heavy stuff. It's very difficult to consume this kind of content, even in passing, scrolling down your social media feed. So to everybody listening, I preface this part of our episode with a thank you for tuning in and holding the space and listening. At the very beginning of 2022, I was taking my third and final attempt at the Texas Bar exam. Shortly after that happened, I got a phone call from someone in my family regarding one of my nephews and one of my nieces, two of my sister's youngest kiddos. The scariest situation, is always one of my worst nightmares, having grown up family that I did, substance abuse and mental health abuse was very rampant in my family. When I got this phone call, those fight or flight... But flight wasn't an option.

Lorna Rose:

Well, the flight was from Texas back up to New York to solve the problem as best I could, and catalyst for just a landslide of everything else that could possibly go wrong, began to go wrong. As somebody who had always managed to overcome and to find a way, when I suddenly found myself in a position that I could not seem to find solutions for these problems, I didn't know what to do, never been solutionless. I had always managed to get out of something or get over something or get through something, but suddenly I didn't have the resources to do what I needed to do. It was a blow to my spirit I was unprepared for. It affected me in ways that I don't think I could have ever anticipated. So when it happened, I fell apart harder than I ever realized I was capable of falling apart, because I never fell apart, because I was so strong.

Lorna Rose:

So I was at my darkest moments, and this is how dark, John, this part's important. I still don't know, I don't know who won NCAA March Madness tournament game last year or the year before. I don't

Lorna Rose:

So it was with her guidance, she's an intuitive development coach, and I just knew she would get me. I just knew she would get me, because she got me from the moment we sat next to each other on a plane. That's why I reached out to her for help. She had an extremely successful career in corporate for over 20 years. So I just thought she'd be an incredible resource. But no, she said, "You need to get back in touch with your authentic self." she knew the situation. My living situation was not ideal in Rochester. She's like, you know what? Why don't you just come stay with us out in Columbus? We have plenty of space. Bring Otto and Mila, my dogs. She said, "Bring the dogs."

Lorna Rose:

We'll get you a fresh, a soft launchpad, a soft landing pad for you to launch from next. So I've been in Columbus ever since May, and it was through Brenda's helping guidance that she said, "Why don't you establish consulting..." She said, "Stop freelancing." She said, "This is what you do. You are a communication strategist. You don't need to call yourself a freelancer. This is what you can do full-time." So she helped me just go through the steps, set it up officially as an LLC, registered in the state of Ohio. When it came to thinking of a name, I always liked that resilient... The s in resilience sounds like a z and R-E-Z, res, it's a big cultural staple of the Native community because we're relegated to reservations. I thought, wow, Res Communications, because it's not just about being resilient, it's about... It's going from resilient to resolute, not just having to fight for yourself, but knowing that in your communications and when you show up and how you represent yourself, you have conviction in that. You're resolute in that, because that's the kind of voice that I have. That's how I communicate.

John Boccacino:

Was it as simple of a slam dunk for you deciding where to go for school? It must've been a no-brainer, right? That Syracuse was going to be where you wanted to study.

Lorna Rose:

I grew up in Rochester, New York. I grew up a Syracuse fan. I remember exactly where I was when we won the National Championship. There was an ice storm in Rochester that week, so we were stuck, in April... We were stuck in a hotel, and that was where I watched, and all the electricity in that hotel restaurant with everybody watching was just amazing. So I always knew I wanted to end up at Syracuse, even before I was a hundred percent sure that I would do social work as an undergraduate degree, or that...

Lorna Rose:

I did not initially decide to pursue communications. In between my Master's and my Bachelor's at Syracuse, I did get my law degree at New England Law Boston. I did think at one point I wanted to be a lawyer, but I would much rather the freedom and flexibility outside of such a heavily regulated industry, to be able to serve people with my gifts, my gifts of communication, to be able to serve people and work with people in the ways that honor me the most. I just don't think being restricted and confined by the legal industry is where I'm meant to end up.

John Boccacino:

Do you ever take a moment to give yourself the levity of taking stock of just how far you came? Or is it a little bit too dicey to kind of look back and acknowledge all the pitfalls you had to endure?

Lorna Rose:
It's a lot easier

Lorna Rose:

I'm uncomfortable saying it now. The statute of limitations must have passed at this point. I crashed the student section and got to meet Joe Biden there as well. But I remember when we were up in the stands and we were waiting for them to flip the court over from the Oklahoma and Villanova game, I remember becoming so overwhelmed with emotion, and my body just felt so alive, and I almost got tears in my eyes. I remember thinking, my wedding day will not be this exciting.

Lorna Rose:

There's no feeling like that. It is the community, because community, whether I'm at the Dome, whether I'm home at Syracuse, and I always attribute to being home as that feeling that I have, that aliveness is due to being back on my ancestral lands, right? That's a big part of it as well. But I travel... I've traveled to so many away games for Syracuse, whether it was football or basketball, and the sense of community when you're surrounded by orange, there's literally nothing like it. So it is everything to me. It is the family that I am choosing for myself, because I did not get to choose the ones I'm related to.

John Boccacino:

It's been empowering too, and I hope our audience feels the same way of hearing Lorna talk about her story. It's not easy to open up at all about a low point in life, depression, feeling overwhelmed, mental health issues. We tend to sweep those under the rug. But I think we're getting more adapt at paying attention to our mental wellness and our mental wellbeing. Hopefully if d 60ntal or b

The Syracuse community,

to help each other out. I want

Res Communications, with your Syracuse