

Transcribed Interview with Michelle Strurino Former Host on Sirius XM

00:00

Q1: So can you please tell me your name? how long you've been working in sports radio, and what your current position is?

0:06

MS: My name is Michelle Sturino. Um, I've been working, I guess, does account for, like internships and stuff, too? I mean, I've been in and out of the Sports Radio industry for 15 years. Um, but I'm currently a host on NFL Network Radio, and it's--I'm in my seventh year there. I also hosted another radio station, which isn't sports centric, so--um, but we do focus a lot on sports as well. And I've been there it's called a Sauga 960 AM. Um, It's more of a talk radio station, I've been there for about just over a year.

0:48

Q2: Um, so to get started, we looked at all of the women on air in sports radio, in major markets in Canada and we found 13 women, or 4.5% on air host.

0:59

MS: Woah! (Surprised)

0:59

Q2: Why do you think so few women in-- on air in sports radio?

1:03

MS: You know what, I--I don't know if it's, a matter of maybe the voice in radio since it is such a big, big thing. And when a woman's voice has too much of a high pitch, I don't think she's taken as seriously. Um, regardless of what she's talking about, and especially if it's such a male dominated industry, like sports is, where the majority of your listeners will probably be men. I think that's a big-- I think that's a big underlying issue that people really don't get. Um, or don't really think about that often. And I know like when I first got into the industry, that was like, a huge clue that was about me was that I had this almost like androgynous voice. So I did kind of sound masculine. So because I did have that masculine kind of sound or at least androgynous, I was more credible because of that, right? You could take me a little bit more seriously if I'm talking about any kind of stats or anything like that, right? Um, I think that is a really big, big thing when it comes to... men listening to women and the the credibility they got that goes along with knowing your stuff, right?

1:03

Q3: Yeah, credibility is huge, um, does it matter if they're women on air-- in on air roles in sports radio? Why or why not?

2:37

MS: Does it matter? Oh, of course it does. Oh, yeah! Um, the reason why it matters is because I.. I stereotyped at the beginning there saying that, majority of your listenership on sports radio are men. However, that's their target audience, that's why I said that. The target audience is men between like 18 and 50 and then depending on, I guess, the type of show it's between like 30 and 50, that kind of thing. The age range has changed. However, those men have families... right? And those men are in the car a lot of the time with their families. So I've actually, um, been encountered with some fans of NHL network radio. And they always say to me, especially the females, they say, like, "Why aren't you on during the day? We want to hear you during the day." because I'm on in the evening, right now. And that's the only thing I've ever worked on is being in the evening. And for them, the reason why it's important, what the biggest thing for me and it really opened my eyes too, is that when you do have these families in the car, these young girls are growing up only hearing men talk about sports over and over and over again. And if they're not hearing a woman, then they're thinking that they're not worthy to do that job either. And they don't even consider it as something that they want to do, when they grow up, right? And that was something that was really brought to light, um, with me, and that's why they wanted to hear me during the day. Because it's like, I want to make sure that my daughter knows that there are women who can do this. And the more you talk during the day during times in which my daughter can hear you, the more hope she has, right? So yeah, that's why I think it's super important especially like I said, getting us off of like the night shift. Um, I know there's women on like ESPN and that gets-- ends up getting like simulcasted or like ABC Sports. And that will get simulcast across different networks around Canada, and they're also on during the evenings, right? evenings or weekend, unfortunately.

4:52

Q3 (Aside) : So the time slots of that women on on air in sports radio are occupying are evening shifts?

4:59

MS: Yeah, well, I, I've only occupied evenings or weekends. That's it. I haven't done anything during the day. And I've been there for seven years. That's not like I haven't put in my time, right? There's always this idea, especially I think, in radio, where it's like "You need to put in your time!" You need to--you know? wear-- I'm not new to this. I've been in sports media for 15 years. I'm definitely not new to this. So that's the thing, and I'm clearly opinionated, we could tell that! (Laughs) So, that's, that's definitely not the issue. I'm opinionated, I like to think I'm well spoken, and I know my stuff. So... and I think a lot of women that are on Sports Radio around Canada, like they're all in the same position, they all have those same qualities. If you've made it in sports broadcasting in Canada, you definitely have those qualities, right? So that's why to me, I just, I don't know... I...I don't get it.

6:00

Q4: And did you ever experience sexism in your job? If you can, please explain.

6:05

MS: Ooh... Yep. (Laughs) Um, so the sexism that, it's, um, what are they-- I guess it's, they try to make it seem like it's inadvertent, right? Uh, were it's really underlying. But, how I see it is always like, well, if you're doing this protocol for everybody else, then why don't I get that same privilege, right? So I talked earlier about, you know, working your way up and all that kind of stuff getting your experience. Well, there are times when there are shifts that open up that people need filling during the day, but yet, a guy will get that shift, and I won't, and he has been here like for a shorter amount of time. So I've been here, getting the crappy shifts, excuse the language, getting the you know, shifts in the evening, or shifts along the weekends. And I say yes to everything because I don't want to seem like that difficult person. And I'm there and I'd like to think that I have informed opinions, I do my research... yet, someone else gets that opportunity. Like, okay, well if we're going by something in terms of pecking order and having your time, you know, like you working up towards something, then there is no reward for me working up to it, right? Like there's zero reward me working my butt off. Um, so honestly...with that, like that's happened a lot of times... things like, Um, promotion of my stuff, where, you know, on on Twitter or social media or something, what will happen is, "Oh, make sure to tune in!" And like you'll-- so if I want to promote my own things, I'll tweet it out. Um, especially because I'm in hockey, so hockey, Twitter is huge! In sports, right? Um, so if I promote my own thing, I expect it to be promoted by the station or by others. Or I find that when the males promote things, then like the station manager, or other people also promote it, as well as the station, like, I have to physically ask for my things to be promoted, It's not an automatic, where that's BS, sorry, but that's BS. And then things like, yeah, it's just a lot of a lot of my angst, I guess you can tell in my voice comes from the lack of acknowledgement, like it's just you do not feel appreciated. And...you know what? Like, I take pride, I've taken so much pride in knowing more or just as much as my male counterparts. And that was my big thing getting into this industry, whether it was on television or on radio. My biggest thing for sports is because I knew that bias was there. That to make sure I always knew just as much if not more than my male counterparts. And, to me, I always thought information was key. Because if I could be informative, then, it shouldn't matter what I look like, because I could put up a conversation and an argument better than anybody else or just as good as anybody else out there. Um, so, yeah, these are some of my feelings and angsty-- I know, you could tell, right? Like, I have a lot of reservations about the industry.

9:35

Q4 (Aside): With that, um, because you mentioned, having-- having to kind of have a certain level of credibility and knowing your information. Do you find that that's it is the same-- that you're experiencing with your colleagues with like fans and those who are like viewing-- or sorry listening to sports radio, like you get some of those comments...

9:54

MS: To be honest, I, I have to say I've been incredibly lucky and I'm gonna say the word lucky only because I feel you have to be good to be lucky too. So it's like, I know, I know my stuff. Um, but I have been called out by fans, if they're like, What are you talking about? It's such and such? Well, for something where I'm supposed to know about all 31 teams in the NHL, like the

back of my hand, it's a lot of information at times, right? I can't know things, really quick. You know, if certain trends are happening, I can know as much as possible, and I can look things up clearly while I'm talking. But if I'm doing something at the top of my head, right, or just trying to think of a fact at the top of my head, um, sometimes you tend to screw up, right? Um, I would say like, 99% of my social interactions-- or my social media interactions with fans have all been very positive. And they're all like, "Oh my god! I love listening to you because you know what you're--" They always say they're like, "You're so entertaining, you're funny, like, and you actually know what you're talking about. It's so refreshing to hear you know what you're talking about."--And I'll just kind of go off that to sorry for rambling. Um, but between radio and television, that's the biggest thing, and you can stick any pretty face on TV, because he or she is scripted. So you technically don't even have to know the specific sport or sports in general, to a T. Because you're always reading someone else's work, other than your on cameras. Um, and even at that, your producer helps you with your own cams, right? They give you the articles to read, they give you all this information. When you're on radio, I produce my own shows, I find my own guests, I do my own research, and I have to be able to come up with conversation topics and carry the conversation the entire time. Right. So I have to know all of these things. And it's a, it's a much bigger workload, um, because if you see something wrong or whatever, that's all on you, and you know that no one else is scripting anything for you, you have to be able to-- like you're backing up, you know? like you're backing up your word, right? You have to know what's going on in order to have like, a fun and informative show, right? And any kind of fun and informative type of interview as well. So that's the that's the beauty of sports radio that I think, which is why-- can you can I ask you a question? What are the Do you know what the numbers are like, between women and radio versus women in television?

12:36

Interviewer: Oh, Lori, I know Lori has the answer. (Laughs)

12:39

MS: Oh, does she? okay.

12:39

LB: So we haven't actually run those numbers the way we have with radio. So we know the actual numbers in radio to the best of our knowledge, but, I'm in my gut feeling is you can turn on a sports station and you'll see women participating, right?

12:52

MS: Yes.

12:53

LB: So--and that's why we maybe chose to look at sports radio like what the hell is going on here? (Laughs)

12:59

MS: And that's what--I just mentioned is 100% why. Like, you have to be like on it and you got to be able to like-- most shows, you're never going to find a show that's going to be like half an hour long, right? Like you have to be able to know what you're talking about, and go on and on and on about a specific topic or whatever the case may be, right? So, for instance, like, I'm always going to give you the example of where I work and NHL, all I gotta be able to talk about the Montreal Canadiens for at least 20-15 minutes straight. Because that's the length of a segment right? Um, and depending on what kind of a show I'm doing that day, I got to be able to do that. So, a lot of the time I'm the opposite where I run out of time because I'm a jabber jaws and I love, I'm passionate about hockey, and it shows, right? like and like I said you have to, you got to be on it as women no one is no one is giving you anything in radio, and that's the thing, and I'm not it's not putting down women and television, but you're just not getting a handout and radio, you got to be able to do everything yourself. And it's almost as if you get tested that way. And what I mean is like, "Oh, okay, so you want to be able to host a show? Alright, well, we don't really have the money because it's a weekend show or it's an evening show to have-- for you to have your own producer. So you got to find yourself some guests and then you got to come up with your topics." And literally like thrown into the fire. That's how I've learned and that's literally everything that I've ever done is just like "Okay go" So the beauty of that, is you have full control over your own creativity, what you talk about, but at the same time you don't get help.

14:46

Q5: That, that leads perfectly into the next question which is, do you feel women have a harder time getting on air jobs in sports radio?

14:56

MS: To be honest, I feel like I'm so so far out of it. Like in terms of how the process works now, honestly, I... I do feel-- because how it happened with me, I'll give you a bit of a backstory. So I started with the fan 590. And I want it to be now it's called Sportsnet, whatever. But, uh, I wanted to be on there and I wanted to be an intern. That's all I wanted to do. And I gave the example before where it's like those men have families. That was my dad. We all listened to sports radio, in the car wherever we were going. And that's how I would get my information and I would continuously like to that bank, you know, up top right? With that information. They had, this was... I can't even remember how many years ago It must have been 15 years ago now. They did the fan 590 dream job, where they-- It was a contest open to anybody. And you had to go and talk about sports, you didn't know the topic. Um, there were 10, there were 10 potential topics and they would give you the topic once you got there. And then you had to go and talk in front of a panel of judges. And then they told you if you were moving on to the next round and all that kind of stuff. So I went as a 19 year old. I was the youngest female there. And I was only one of, I believe, a handful of women, period, out of like, for the first year, I think there were between, uh, like, I think 120 people went, and I was literally one of like four or five women who went for it back then. And I was the youngest person. I was 19, the youngest female. Uh, I made it to the top 36. And... because, so what happened was, because I wanted this internship at The Fan 590 they said, "Well, we were full for interns right now." But, when I went for that contest,

they were impressed, by the gumption I had, uh, by the, you know, sorry I'm gonna by the balls that I had skews the vulgarity, but I did it I'm saying this on purpose they were impressed by the balls that I had, uh, for going because of the fact of I was so young. And there was only a handful of us, period. I was talking about-- this gives you an indication, I was talking about the 1983 NFL Draft with men who are double my age, I was born in 1983. Just as a that's a point, like I was born in 1983, that gives-- and I was talking to men twice my age above draft. Um, while waiting for my opportunity to go and so they were impressed by that I got an internship. That's all my radio career started. So now it's like, I'm assuming this process like still happens where you have to work up, right? and get your internship and all that kind of stuff. But at the same token, if you're not given that chance, you could stay an intern and then leave. So they have to have that confidence in you, and you have to be okay, and you have to go out of your way to kind of do things and prove yourself in order to kind of get those chances. Sorry for rambling again.

18:23

Interviewer: No, no, Uh, And--

18:24

LB: And sorry Anna, I was just going to clarify. I mean, So ultimately, are you saying that you do think it is, um, more difficult for...

18:33

MS: Oh, yeah.

18:33

LB: For women to get on-air?

18:34

MS: Yeah. Oh, yeah. Like, I don't, uh, definitely. Because, if you, if you're an intern, you still have to stick out amongst the other interns. So you have to do things, you know, like, if you're given the opportunity to use the equipment, then that was what I did. I literally use the equipment to show them that I could be good and I could be trained to be better. Um, and then that was it. But like, I don't know how many other women actually went through those doors with me, and who ended up staying on-air In radio. They might have tried television, and it might have worked out for them and TV. But in radio, I saw other girls with me there, none of-- I don't know any of them that are in radio at all. So... that's the thing, right? You have to do-- I'm just thinking you must have to do something and have to prove yourself to... a certain point and level in order to get that opportunity for them to take that chance, on you doing something right? Uh, so yeah, and now I think it's, it could be easier because of the fact that you can do it from home. Right? like maybe, you know, like someone can create something at home and then they could you can send it somewhere and hear it and it's different. But back in my day, that wasn't the possibility, right?

19:08

Q6: Wow. Um, and have you or other women, you know, uh, ever been paid less than a man doing the same or similar work that you know of?

20:19

MS: I mean...the pay in radio is very different than the pay and TV pay and TV is much better. I don't know, I don't...I can only speak from my experience and I've been paid the same crappy wage, unfortunately, as my male counterparts. So, uh, it's just you still have less opportunity. Opportunity is less, like I mentioned, where, "Oh okay, so when so was on vacation, and there's an opening during the day." They'll give it to a guy instead of me and it doesn't really matter what his background is and how long or it doesn't matter how long he's been with the company. Even though I've been with the company for a certain amount of time, that doesn't matter. I've never been asked to host or to be a lead host of a daytime program. If I've hosted a daytime program, it's been as a co-host, because the main host wants me as their co-host. And they make the decision. It's not someone else above them making the decision. Which is sad.

21:30

Q6 (Aside): Yeah, with that, do you find that women who are in sports radio in Canada, they're occupying-- Are they able to occupy spaces as an actual host? Or is it just as a co-host? Do you find.

21:41

MS: I don't-- You know what? Like, I'm not sure about that. Because I guess it, I guess it depends on the station and all that kind of-- I think they, women can, can be hosts. I love hosting by myself. To be honest, I relish it. I look forward to not having a co-host because I don't get to talk by myself. Like, I look forward to it! Um, and I almost feel bad. Like, that's the thing where it's like, I have this ingrained thought of like, "Well, I should be leaning on my other person more so." Because of, you know, conditioning or whatever, or training, but no, why why do I have to feel that way? I shouldn't be in the limelight. Like I've worked for this and if I feel comfortable enough to talk tonight, right? Um, so yeah, I guess--and the other thing is, too, is that... I kind of feel like, there, there could be a bias. I've experienced bias in terms of style. So... how I was taught in medium is that, you should be informative, entertaining, or both. Most. Like the best way is to be both, right? Especially in radio. You have to, you should be both. Because if you're boring and informative, people will probably end up tuning you out. I love to have fun. Um, and I don't take my job seriously in terms of the sports, it's not life and death. we're privileged to be talking about this. Like that's a privilege. Um, and it's a positive thing that we're talking about. So I feel that because I have that perspective, that also is a detractor. Because, "Oh, you know, guys in their fantasy pools! This is all really big stuff, Because they're probably gambling on it." or whatever, okay, well, then listen to, listen to a gambling show, right? I want to be that breath of fresh air. I want to show you that perspective of life. That this is, you know, at the end of the day, a game that we are privileged to talk about and be fans of and enjoy, right? So I think that is also a big deterrent, In terms of potentially why I haven't gotten certain opportunities and I don't know if others women in sports radio are like that, but I love to have

fun. And I don't talk about those things like, uh, like gambling as often or fantasy sports as often as other, um, male hosts might do.

24:13

Interviewer: The nature of the game.

24:15

MS: Yeah! Like, I just, honestly, I have so much respect for all these, like for athletes and everything. And I love the nitty gritty like I love breaking down--so for instance, perfect example, in hockey. When I talk about like a goal happening, I love breaking down how the goal happens. So it's not like I'm not being analytical. I still have those, I'm still going to talk about informative analytical things, but I'm just not going to do it in the way that you want me to do it, right? Or I'm not going to do it when you want me to do it. But why should I have to? That's the creativity of the host, right?

24:49

Interviewer: Yeah, It's your show! (Laughs)

24:51

MS: Yeah, Yeah! (Chuckles)

24:53

Q7: Do you feel that the Sports Radio industry is a fair and equitable place for women today, why or why not?

24:59

MS: (Sighs)...Yeah, I'm like (Chuckles) just through my experience, it's not. Um, unfortunately, just because of like I said, um, the opportunities, um, may not be there, um, or they may be there, but they may not be there for you. Um, and that's why it's unfair because it's like someone else my size--Um, my age, excuse me, in the industry, as long as I've been in would probably get that opportunity before me and a story. Like, and that's just really how it is. And it's hilarious because, like I just laugh at it now, because I'm still spoken to at times like I'm an amateur. Like I've only done this for like a handful of years. Do you want me to send you my resume? Like I've been doing this for a long time. Like, you know, please Like, you know, you feel like really like that's... insulting. And if there's something that, the other thing that I also find is that if you have a male who is your boss, they have a hard time giving you criticism. They don't, they don't give you criticism unless you ask for it, right? If it's constructive criticism, I want to know why I'm not getting this opportunity. You need to tell me so I can fix it, and I want to get that opportunity, right? But they don't feel like open, they're not very open to telling you...what you need to fix or what you want to improve on. Which is unfair to right? if you don't like something that I'm doing, or if you want me to promote certain shows more if you want me to, you know have a certain tagline or whatever the case may be if I have a hiccup or something that I automatically-- a hitch, I call it a hitch where you know, you say "You know" A lot or you "Um and Uh" if there are

certain things in my speech that need, you know, rectifying, please tell me. This is going to better your programming and better me as a broadcaster. It's a win win situation we can we can do this as adults and get things done, right? So that's the other thing where it's like, I've had to beg for constructive criticism, because I want to move forward, and I feel like you're not moving forward, right?

27:28

Q8: With that, um, what advice do you have then for radio owners and managers with respect to women working in, uh, sports radio.

27:41

MS: Don't be scared of change. That's a big one. Because, I mentioned earlier that--I don't present my programming, or I, you know, I may not deliver my information the same way other people do in terms of I like to have fun, I like To be silly. And, this is a YouTube world now. This is a world where it's like, you know, things happen really fast, people are looking for that stimulus in so many different ways. You have to bring them some sort of entertainment with, you know, your information. Um, and I've always been a big one with that. So don't be scared of change, um, would be one thing. And if you say you're going to do things with protocol, right? Where it's like, "Oh, you have to work your way up." And this and that, you should probably stick to those things. Don't just say em, and then all of a sudden, give someone else opportunities that, you know, belong to someone like me, who's been there working, right? Um don't be, don't be afraid to have open conversation. That's another really big one, because that's where the, that's where the constructive criticism comes from. And that's where, um, the improvement will come from. Because at the end of the day, that constructive criticism, like I said, helps everybody. But it also shows that you're listening! That you're listening to my program, and you're finding things, right? That's, that's a big one for me where I feel like... like, this guy doesn't even care because he clearly is not even listening to my program. He doesn't, you know? Like, not even listening to what I do what I put out there. And then the more and more underappreciated you feel, the less heart, the less work you put into things. And I've literally, that's been my steady decline. In the last like, two years, maybe? Two or three years--I'm super open, I'm telling you everything. But it's so disheartening, honestly, because you just feel so underappreciated, and it's like...if I feel like saying, if you knew how rare I was, if you actually understood how rare I was, then you wouldn't be ignoring me. Then you would be putting me in, in situations to succeed, or having situations for change, or giving me that constructive criticism or giving me any kind of criticism for that matter positive, anything, you know? Positive reinforcement. So, that's where I'm at right now, unfortunately, where it's like, I, I feel like I don't even... I don't even put in half the amount of work that I used to because I don't care, right? You've you've, you've come-- You've got into a situation where--And whenever you get to that point, it's bad news and anything in life. When you get to the point of indifference? Oou! that is bad news, right? Like you don't want to be in that situation. And like, I'll be completely open and honest. I may not be in the industry for that much longer, because I'm tired of being under appreciated. It gets to you, it weighs to you. It weighs on you. And then it creates this resentment and like negativity and I'm not that person, right? So why do I have to keep

harboring these negative feelings and energies and emotions? When I know I'm not that person? And I know I'm good at what I do. So these are the harsh realities where it's like, I kind of want to give up because I'm tired of fighting. You know? Sorry, I didn't mean to end off on a bad note.

31:27

LB: Don't be sorry. I'm sorry. That that's how you feel. I mean, it's, you know, and, and I really thank you for being so candid about that, because it's really important in terms of, you know, studying this and understanding, you know, what are the barriers for women in sports radio, I mean, this is clearly one of them.

31:42

MS: Yeah.

31:42

LB (Aside): May I just ask for quick clarification. You mentioned if, if they understood how rare you are-- can you just clarify in what regard? You mean, rare?

31:51

MS: Well, so you taught you said that there's only 13 women in all of Canada. I remember looking into that. Uh, and looking into how many women hosted on different radio stations. And, I, when I looked, I looked that up years ago! Because, I was the first female to host, um a program, like an hour program on my own before Andy Petrillo did Leafs Lunch, before she got hired, it was me. I did I worked on NHL network before she got hired. Because there were there was nobody out there that had a consistent daily or weekly radio show, like a female out there. So that's why I say that. And, I remember because the I I'm pretty sure they had to change that um...sorry, the PR when they came out when she came out to be that host. They had to change that because I was the first one not her. So it's like that's why it's like if you knew and understood, like how rare...this is, like yes you've given me the opportunity, and if I could, you know, like hold my own in this realm, in this hockey realm--Like and I think I believed I only, I only looked up in like hockey, right? Um, sorry, I should have clarified that. Um, but yeah, it's like if you only realize that like not very many women could carry on in intelligent, entertaining conversations about hockey by themselves for an hour or more, because I've done longer shows I've done like two hour shows, then I wouldn't get treated like that. You would, you know? I kind of feel like... females and television get put on a pedestal. And, like you said, there's way more women and they get put on a little bit more of a pedestal, especially when their hosts have like the big time time slots and half the stuff is written for them, at least half. right? That's the nature of television. I've been a sports anchor on TV too, I know it is. I've read, I've read, I used I used to rewrite all my stuff just because I wanted my own stamp on everything, and I wanted to make sure, like, the wording and all that kind of stuff. So I used to rewrite my own things. Um, but I know the industry I know what it's like, and I know all that. So yeah, that's, that's why I say like, if you actually knew how, like important I am to fill that need, right? This obviously very small niche, then I'd probably get appreciated a little bit more, you know? But that's cool. Thank

you for giving me that information. Because I have no problem tweeting that out and being like, Yo, I'm one of 13! Maybe we should, you know, rethink how we, uh, utilize me. So here's an example. The virus right now, everybody else at the station is still hosting a show. At some point, of some leverage. Me? No, I'm the only one not. I'm the only one without work. So that shows you the bias.

35:09

LB: So why do you think that is?

35:10

MS: Oh, that's 100% that bias 100% I have no, I-- Please, because he would, he would be... in order to kind of keep me in the loop in terms of like, having my voice continuously heard a little bit, um, wouldn't you suggest me calling into a show or something? There's been zero suggestion of that nothing. Like I don't even exist, okay. That's why it's like, I have no problem just hanging it up at this point where it's like, I'm so sick and tired of... of it and like, the, the unfortunate thing is that my, like fan base...obviously, they like me, you know? So it's like, you don't want to disappoint those people and you don't want to disappoint. that little girl in the car with their families, so it's a real thing to weigh, you know? it's tough. (Pause) You're rep-- I understand that It represents more, like, you know? Like I represent more than just, you know, a voice obviously, I think that but, whatever. I don't know I think it's making me a little bit emotional because it's like, like I said years of, you know, like resentment and stuff like that where you're just so angry at the whole process but anyways, yeah.

36:34

Interviewer: Wow--

36:35

MS: Well hopefully I answered everything, I know. Sorry, guys. it sucks.

36:40

Interviewer (Aside): It does. It does. Do you feel--Um, just because you mentioned that if you if you do choose to move away from from Sports Radio, um, would you move into your own platform like is like what would that what would that look like? Would that be like podcasting or...

36:56

MS: Um, so here, here's a difference of what I feel in terms of like...,um, being appreciated. So I do work at this other radio station, that's not sports, even though we do talk-- we talk to everything sports, entertainment, weather and stuff. And, the differences is that my co-host is a male and he was 25 years or 30 years, um, working for Sportsnet my co host, and he's the lead host of this show, okay? Um, but they have said to me numerous times, "Okay, listen, if he leaves, we have no problem keeping you and you choose your co-host." That's the difference. That is the difference. They always tell me they're like, "You make the show funny." Like, "You make you make the show what it is because you guys go back and forth and you create this."

Like they know and understand and they feel like-- And they appreciate me to the point where it's like, "Okay, if he left we'd be fine. with you, and you, we would choose, we could find someone else to have you talk with." And they have no problem with that. They have no problem when he's not there if he's on vacation or whatever. If I asked to host by myself, instead of trying to get a co host, they're like, "Okay." No problems, nothing. Like it's such a-- such a difference. such a difference. So there's that. And then, unfortunately, like, fortunately, but unfortunately, I'm also in a different realm in terms um, work. So I worked as a teacher and a personal trainer. Um, so I teach like martial arts and I teach meditation and stuff like that. So I do a lot of health and wellness. So at least I could use my vocal chops for something right, to getting people through meditation. Um, and that's, you know, I think about reasons for doing things in life, and sometimes you feel like a failure if you don't get to a certain level of what you want to peek and accomplish at. But then, I think to myself, well, I've got this trained voice that I've trained for 15 years, or more than 15 years now, um, I can put it to good use and help people with their mental health. You know? like, if that's the, the direction of my life is going to go in and that's a good direction I'm, I'm helping people, you know? So--

39:24

Q9: Absolutely. And with that, um, what advice do you have for women seeking to build a career in the sports radio industry?

39:32

MS: Oou! Okay. The number one thing, fix skin. Have thick skin. Um, because as you can tell, like, you're gonna go through a lot of ups and downs. In terms of being passed over and, you know, having to put your time in and all that kind of stuff, being compared, uh, probably to other men in industry. So, that would be the first thing how thick skin. Um, because you were like I said, you're going to get knocked down, you have to get back up every single time. Um. be prepared. There's no such thing as being over prepared, especially in radio, no such thing. So that's one of my gifts. I think I do extreme amounts of research. And I make sure that I always have something to talk about. So I'm never reading off a screen, don't get like, that's definitely not me or my style. But I do put in my research and I do tons of reading and take notes. And I know what I'm going to talk about in each segment, all that kind of stuff. So do your research. Because the more prepared you are, the more confident you are and the more confident you sound. And then you can kind of go from there.

40:49

MS: Um, the other thing maybe would be just like...Um, any kind of criticism that you do get take it and go with it. And just work on it always. If you know that you have certain glitches or hitches, in your speech, nothing wrong with that. Always come with like, you know, energy, informative entertaining, and that's pretty much it just, you know, like, work hard, because at the end of the day to like, that's your own, that's you out there! Right? That's the thing about radio, like I said earlier, that's the great part about radio is that you were out on this ledge, kind of thing. Because it's like if you screw up if it's if it's an audio screw up like a mixer or something like that, then they know that's, that could be a technical malfunction. But everything else is on

you. Like, right? You screwing up (Chuckles) set stats or this or that or whatever like that's on you. So I don't know I relish that. Um, I think that's it really, I don't know.

42:02

Q10: That's awesome. Um, are there any other stories examples that you want to share on the topic of women in sports radio?

42:10

MS: Like, positive negative, what are we looking at here?

42:14

Interviewer: Whatever your heart is, is destined to tell.

42:18

MS: Oh, okay. Like, honestly, part of me doesn't want-- I love, hockey was one thing that I thought to myself, okay I'm either gonna end up hating this sport because I'm going to have to talk about it all the time. Or I'm going to love it even more. Because I came from, a general sports background. I mean, I started in hockey, but then worked in like as an anchor in all different, and you had to know everything, and then super specialized again just in hockey. Um, so I was at the NHL draft in... Florida, I think it was, and a former hockey player, Jiří Fischer, who unfortunately he's not well known for having the heart attack on the bench, which is why we have defibrillators on the bench. So that's Jiří Fischer, right? He came up to me--so I've had people come up to me, all men, at at those kinds of functions, uh, like the NHL draft being like, "I listened to you all the time on my way home." Cuz they're driving at weird times, like on the way home from hockey games and stuff. And they're like, "It's so nice for me to be able to meet you and actually put a face to a name." And just like...but there's-- When they come up to you and they're like, "I love listening to you" and like, "You, you get me home so many times." Like, you know, "Thank God I listened to you because that's how I get home." Kind of thing, when they say stuff like that to me, and it's like I said, former hockey players like Jiří Fischer came up to me and said that to me, and like a lot of NHL scouts because they are in different parts and driving everywhere. I've had them come up to me and say that, that's really cool. That was a-- those are like yes! okay! if a former hockey player is telling me that I'm good at what I do, and I'm entertaining enough for him, and they enjoy listening to me, and they could tell, I know what I'm talking about, like, why can't other people see that? Right? Like, that's what gets you even more angry, where it's like, I'm getting people in the industry who played the game, tell me I'm good. So why don't you see that? Right? Like that's--

44:30

LB: And by you, you're kind of referring to like your managers?

44:33

MS: Yeah! Managing, yeah. Anybody in the upper echelon, anybody upper echelon. Why don't you see that? If other people-- right? And the thing is maybe this has been part of, why I haven't

been as successful maybe, Um, I don't toot my own horn enough. So maybe that's more advice for women um, in the industry. I honestly don't toot my own horn enough because I always, I'd rather be humble. I'm always about... I don't know, that's just how I was raised. I was raised, like my family had nothing and came here from Italy. And, you know, so it's like, I'm not into self promotion, but I know you have to self promote a lot. Um, so maybe if I told more of those stories more often maybe would be a bit of a different story. Who knows? But that's not in my nature, either. So, it's kind of getting me out of my own comfort zone. But now, like 15 years later or, 17 years later, in the industry I'm understanding, unfortunately, kind of too late that I should have probably done that a little bit more. I think this younger, younger generation has no problem doing that.(Laughs) Where they like record themselves all the time or whatever, right? So self promotion is always a good thing. Anyways.

45:53

LB: But Michelle, thank you for this. Like, um, I know it's been emotional because it's um, it's tough to talk about a lot of these issues. Um, and, you know, you talked about how you weren't brought up to toot your own horn. And I think that, um, you know, while that may also be a family thing and a cultural thing, possibly, it's also a way that women and girls are brought up, you know? To be humble and to not rock the boat. And um, so that's, you know, that may be, that may be part of it, too. But um--

46:20

MS: You're right, you're right!

46:21

LB: I totally hear your frustration and I think, you know, being acknowledged, and uh, especially when you feel like you're working for a lot of men who don't understand what the barriers are for women doing this kind of job. Uh, I totally understand how frustrating that is, but your real, uh, your real inspiration, you know, the fact that you are one of these few women who are doing that I think you are providing that opportunity for the-- as you say 'The girls in the, in the cars with their families listening to this radio,.' You know, they're, they're hearing you and they're thinking maybe I can do that too, right? So...

46:54

MS: That's awesome. Thank you. Oh my gosh!