

Welcome to this episode of Timely Topics, an educational program of Lotus Network. Lotus Network believes it's never too late to rediscover your potential, and make the next chapter of your life the very best. And now, here's your host.

Leslie Heins

Welcome welcome can you, all, everybody can you hear me? Everybody hear me?

Okay, I hope, good. Morning. And well, actually, good afternoon. My name is Leslie Heins.

And I want to welcome you to our very special Timely Topic Featuring Sky Bergmann, so a couple of Reminders, a little bit of homework before we begin Sky's presentation. I have so much to tell you guys about you're, you're gonna be so proud of lotus, we are first first and

Foremost, we are over the moon excited about our upcoming signature experience, I don't those of you who have been with this since the beginning in 2019. We had Margit Cox Henderson at Seawell Ballroom, and we had a sellout.

It was unbelievable 730 women since then, with Covid we had to go virtual.

We are coming back on April 23rd live and in-person back at Seawell Ballroom. We've Hired Sheri Salata to be our keynote speaker, she started out, as a Clerk, at 7/11 and has then worked her Way up the

Ladder, and became the executive producer of the Oprah Winfrey Show.

So on Sunday morning she's going to share her story of trials and tribulations and all the transformation that she's done to help her reimagine, her Life and Dream big and it's really Going to be a special Morning so look look for soon all the Collateral Material is going

To be coming. If you want to put a table together, you're welcome to; we only have 73 tables, and we're not quite half way. There.

We haven't even really started advertising, so right as call as Texas,

Let us know whatever you want, if you wanna join us, for that amazing Sunday morning, the next opportunity to get in person well, before that is Saturday, December, seventeenth and we're doing one of our conversation, Salons at Kobe, Library from 2 to 4 P M these Salons, are a

Comfortable place where small groups get together and they share stories.

They listen. They're listened to. They are listening to what other people have to say. It's really informal fun.

Conversation, and Everybody exchanges new ideas, Glenn Crawford, who is our board member.

She is amazing, and she is facilitating this with a couple, others.

And it's just a wonderful way to get together in person.

Which we all are wanting to do in January. As I said before, Dr. Lynn Hellerstein is our timely topic speaker for January. Lynn is an expert on all things vision. It's a free talk open to all Lynn is gonna teach us how to expand our creativity, with strategies for moving forward when I'm messing up my my thing here, for removing the blocks in our brain, that most of this encounter she's going to help us break, free of anxiety that stops, athletes, musicians, and entertainers from achieving their peak performance.

So, that invitation will be going out soon. So watch your email, and then I know, there's so much you guys so hang in with me, we as you probably know, we teamed up with Rosemary's, hospital, we're producing, 4, events there in person again, part one was on breast cancer. It was extremely successful. Part 2 is going to be on heart health, and mark your calendars. It's February 8th at Rose Women's Hospital. It is going to coincide with American heart month. We actually are partnering with the American Heart Association to put this on. So our goal is to help us as women take control of our heart health, as you all know that heart disease is a huge killer in women. Our speakers are gonna present the latest clinical information and scientific research, while offering suggestions for Better health. So mark your calendar for that and hopefully, we'll see you in person, and then without going on anymore.

Check out our website. Thanks to Terry, and our amazing programming committee, we've got an entire lineup for 2023. That's really exciting. So just keep watching the website.

And then of course, I need to talk about trying to help us sustain ourselves. We are bringing you all these amazing events and programming and we need different kinds of levels, to help us, support our mission. So if you want to be involved and join our Circle of Friendship, we would love to have you join the donor program. That's all it is, it's not a membership. All it does is help us sustain these programs, so that we can continue to bring all of this amazing information to everybody so please help us out and join our Friends of Lotus Program. It is really a wonderful way to help us maintain and sustain our mission.

So now on to our presentation, I bet, you guys are glad that's over I am Sky Bergmann is an accomplished, Award-winning Photographer, and as she's an award-winning filmmaker, whose work has been shown all over even in France her directional debut was this amazing documentary Lives well, list, will you guys show me raise your Hands and let me know if you were able to watch the movie. Wasn't it fantastic?

Sky, thank you so much for allowing us to preview this movie, and thank you for taking the time to share this talk.

So without further ado, please welcome Sky Bergman.

Sky Bergman

Oh, thank you so much, and thank I'm so excited to be here today. It's so much fun, and thank you all for watching the film.

It's really, it's just heartwarming to me so I'm gonna share my screen and kinda just walk you through a little bit of the Process of Making the Film and then What I've done with the Film, Since and I know many of you have Participated with Senior Planet

And I did the Intergenerational Projects and I'm going to talk a little bit about that as well, so I wanted to start out with this image of my Grandmother.

This is me and my grandma, and she was an amazing cook, and as you might have gathered those of you that saw the film and really my first foray into filmmaking came as a result of my Grandmother.

And her cooking, she came out to visit me when she was 96 from Florida, I Live in California, and I realized I was so lucky to have her but and she I was such a great cook, but she never wrote a recipe, down and so the only way that I could really Calculate these recipes.

Was to film her, and so, I spent the next 4 summers filming her in the Kitchen, and her giving me the ingredients that she would use to make all these wonderful dishes and what a Great Legacy, that she left but it was not just about us Cooking in the kitchen, but it was

Also, I realized that I grew up with my grandparents, and even my great grandmother.

I grew up in a four-generational household, which was a remarkable but when we were in the Kitchen together, that was also where my grandmother passed on wisdom and Knowledge and all these great stories, came out as we were together, making Food and so that was really one of

the kind of a real, delight bulb that went off that there were these things that we were sharing together. It wasn't just about the food. It was about passing on this wisdom.

And when my grandmother was getting ready to turn a 100, I went back with her to Florida, to celebrate her birthday. And she was working out at the gym, and I thought oh, my goodness nobody's gonna believe that she's still working out of the Gym at at almost a 100, and so I thinkfully, I had a mic on her and I just as A Throwaway comment said hey Grandma can you give me some words Of wisdom, and she said things like, "Live life to the limits. Be kind."

I came back from that trip, and I was looking at approaching 50, and looking at what the next half of my life was gonna look like and really trying to find positive role models of Aging and really not seeing it, in the media and this was 10, years, ago, so it's, changed a bit I'm really heartened by the fact that things are really starting to change.

But at that point it was all the negative side of aging that was being shown and nothing positive. And so I decided that I wanted to find other people out there, like my grandmother who were living full lives who could be my role models for aging, and so I did this quest.

I found 40 people, and spent the next 4 years interviewing 40 people who were 75 and older, with a collective life experience of 3,000 years. And ask them a series of questions, and then really it it was just so amazing to hear their answers and also, the gift of taking the time, to slow down enough to do a Project like that we were talking before we got on about everybody's on their cell phones and texting, and we don't really take the time.

A lot of the time. Now to communicate and to really get to know each other on a deeper level, and a few of these Amazing people, who let me into their lives, who answered these questions who allowed me, to ask Lots, of follow-up Questions, really Personal questions and to collect their Stories, and they knew that I was creating a Film I Didn't know I Was going to do, a film actually I should say, I started thinking off thinking that it was going to be maybe a web series, and then I interviewed this woman, Mary and Wolfe who was a woman that came over on the very first kinder transport, out of Vienna Austria and

For those of you that Haven't seen the film. The Kindergarten transport that this was during war right before World War II in the Uk, the Quakers in the Uk were trying to save as many

Jewish children as they could in Germany, and Austria. They ended up saving 10,000 children, and they brought them over to the UK and placed them in Foster Homes, and Marian was on the very first Kinder Transport, out of Vienna, Austria and when they would get on the Transport, they would put this Cardboard number around their neck and to identify them, and she still had that cardboard number.

And I realized that that moment, there are moments in our life, that are real pivot moments, and that was it. For me where I thought, wow! This started out as wanting to collect the wisdom of all these people. But it also is about their stories, and these stories are going to be lost unless they're collected and I really changed the dynamic of what I was doing.

Because I'm, I realized, I did want to create a feature film. And This is her husband, Paul, where it could really highlight their stories, and the stories of their resilience.

I mean, really, when you look at their stories, each and every one of them has overcome something, and that and that resilience that they have is really what resonates a lot with people, and and that that be something that was super important to me, and I should say that I am friends, with all of

these wonderful people. So I feel like I have 40 new grandparents. My grandmother left me the greatest gift ever and I was lucky enough that my film premiered at the Santa Barbara International Film Festival in 2,000 and 17 when we were still doing things, in person. So I got to travel all around the country and all over Canada.

I went to the Girl Scout Convention with Rosa Bono Biastero. This is Rosa over here. She talked about for those of you who haven't seen it being the only Latino and her Girl Scout Troop.

And how important the Girl Scouts was to her, and it was so wonderful to be able to have to present her story and have her speak to the at the Annual Girl Scout Convention and then this, is me at the our local Theater, called the Palm Theater, with not unbelieving the fact that all these amazing films are on Marquee and Silica's Lives.

Well lived, and I, just I never. Made the film thinking I was gonna get it into theaters.

I just knew I had to I did it because of the passion, and not because I thought anything other than I just needed to do it it screamed as part of movies, for grown-ups with a Rp, but really like I said before the best thing, that I got out of it wasn't, all the accolades

Or any that's, not why I did the film. It was really the relationships that I developed and the people that I met along the way, who have since become very dear close friends to me.

And so as a result, I started working on a project where I was connecting older adults and students.

I worked with a Professor Sarah Bartlett, who teaches here at my university, Cal Poly State University, and we would show the film to older adults, and to students, and then they they would use the questions that I had put together for my Interviews as a starting point to start the conversation in the Dialogue and they would spend the next quarter talking Questions back and forth and Getting to know each other, and then at the very end of the quarter, we would do a big rap party where the students talked about what they learned, and we did kind of this Rapid fire, like One-minute Powerpoint presentations but it was much more about you can see in these Photos they really get to know each Other, in such a deep level, and such a short

period of Time and of course the end result is that in both there's agism, that goes on in both sets of groups of people young adults, and and Older adults, and really what they what people realize It's, we have Far more in common than our differences, and really the difference is just the age and it's so heartwarming, to see these connections being made across generations.

And I always feel like what we're doing is combating the stereotypes of Ageism, one story and one connection, at a time.

And so we, when we, the pandemic hit, as some of you, are, are, have been part of We Work, with Senior Planet, to Continue, this Project in a Virtual Way, and We're gonna do that again this Coming, winter, Quarter, so any of you that are interested in wanting to participate and

Doing that again, I'm gonna share the link where you can sign up for that.

And this is just a small group of the many partners that have developed as a result of this project which I love and we also the film is on Pbs now, but also on their Pbs, learning media, site there is a place where educators k through 12 Educators, can go and their eclipse of the film.

And there's a project called generational Connections through Storytelling, where they can actually bring this into their classroom and meets all the core Standards, and Not's been wonderful and then as a Result of what I've been Doing I'm Part of a Group of 15 Fellows, this Year, as part of Co-generate which you used to be on core org, where We're doing work with intergenerational connections, and so I and I'll stop sharing there but I really feel like, my life is totally transformed out as a Result, of doing this Film and then also the Intergenerational work that has come, as a result of that.

And so I just feel so lucky every time that I do a q, a and I see everybody that's so enthusiastic about the film, or I get an email about it. It warms my heart, and it makes me think that my grandmother must be looking down and be very proud, and and that's just the best feeling ever so with that i'm gonna turn it over to Terry she's got some questions and for those of you that want to put Questions in the chat, I'm totally open and very happy to answer any questions

Terry Rubin

Sky. I just adore you, thank you so much. This film I have watched 3 times, I just can't quite get enough of it. I am so taken with the all of the dear ones that you've interviewed and filmed

It's so appreciated, and for those of you who haven't seen it yet.

The link is going to be available for you to go back.

If you're on this call, and on this zoom, right, now you'll be getting a follow up email and you'll be able and it'll probably be in the Chat Leslie will put this in the Chat, by how you can access this Film for the next week so

Don't miss it, please don't miss it. You will be inspired.

There are some questions I have. And I don't wanna monopolize this. But I would like to, maybe I can just kick this off with

What are some of the customers in the stories of the 40 people, ages 7,300, that you interview? What kind of commonality did you see?

Sky Bergman

me the most. And again, I was looking at it from a very personal perspective, because I wanted to learn from all these people, so the biggest thing that I learned really was that no matter your age you need to have a sense of purpose, and that sense of purpose was actually more important than diet, or exercise, or anything else.

Having that sense of purpose was really vital to feeling like you were living a fulfilling life and also the reality, that your sense of purpose can change over time, that you might have one sense of purpose in your twenties, and your thirties in a very different sense of purpose when you're in your seventies and eighties and to allow for that flexibility.

And to allow for that that sense of purpose to change, the other thing, and this came from my friend Evie Justin who read Victor Frankl's book, man, search for meaning and what she got out of Reading that book, was that there are many times in our Life when we can't, Change What's happening around. Us but what we can change is our attitude about how we deal with those things.

And I will tell you that for me personally, that has been a real game changer, because we all had to deal with the pandemic, and we all dealt with it in different ways and really attitude had a big played a big part and how we how we got through it and I

Think the third thing for me is their stories of resilience, the common thread, for all of them was this resilience that they went through things like about marion's story and her being sent off when she was 8 years old and oh, my goodness, what was I doing at 8 years old how would I have handled that? How would my life have been so different!

If I had that experience at that age and there's stories of resilience, really resonate and give me at least a sense of hope that I can get through just about anything, and come out the other end and I so those were the things that were really things that I learned and that were Common for everyone in the film.

Terry Rubin

Yeah, and one of the women said that she was eternally optimistic. Did you feel like being optimistic was a part of this?

Sky Bergman

I mean, and that was Rachel Winon, who said that and I love this that she knew that something great was gonna happen every day and it might be postponed until the next Day of the Day, inevitably something good was gonna happen and that goes back to your attitude about things. So really, having that positive attitude.

And it's not like the people in the film Thought life was going to be rosy. They knew they were going to be trials and tribulations. And certainly in terms of physicality, people's physicality changes as we age.

We can't really avoid that. But it's just a matter of how you deal with that I mean, I would ask lucky, Louie, when he was 97 and well, how are you doing i'm one he said oh, it's not like, when I was 95 and and he

he knew that he, as he aged, his body, was going to age, but it was he still didn't keep that let that keep him from doing the things that he loved doing and I think, sometimes it's A matter of rethinking how you can do still do the things that you want to do, or looking at what are some other things that you might be able to do that will make you equally happy, and content and so all these people really figured, out that path for themselves

Terry Rubin

Yeah, I could see that each one had a little spin, a different take.

But that they brought to the table something that, and and then this during the pandemic, there's got to be some takeaways here for us, as we watched the film, about our own results, during a time that's been very isolating and lonely, and preventing yeah, I I

Feel like one of the Things, that Lotus Network wants to do is help to eliminate and reduce isolation and loneliness.

And I feel like you're interviewing all of these people, they Spoke to that they didn't allow themselves to become isolated or lonely. They they stayed, involved with their purposefulness

Sky Bergman

Absolutely and they are all still doing things that keep some engaged and involved Paul Wolfe is still going into high schools, and talking about discrimination, and because he lived through it as a somebody who was Jewish and in Germany and had to Flee and what does that mean? And how can we make the world a better place?

And how are we discriminated against as well and what what that means and so, and he's constantly reworking his powerpoint presentation like It's never good enough he's always thinking about the next new news, item, that he can put in and how he can connect that and so that's again, it's that sense of purpose that's, his sense of purpose.

Everyone is different because Lucky Louie was Making Mozzarella every day for his daughter's Deli. It's really such a wide variety of different reasons. Where we have that sense of purpose, but that's really what keeps people going.

And in a positive way you can sit in front of a TV, and not do anything, and not have no sense of purpose, but is that really living and it's sort of like I go back to my friend, Dr. Roger Landry has a statement he says, "Live long, die short." like really live life to the limits basically and and do as much as you can, while you can.

And that's a good philosophy.

Terry Rubin

Yeah, we just got a question in the chat from Jerry Rubin, Who's in the other room, cause that's my husband.

But he was asking. He was curious, if most everybody saw your film. You had 27 of the 40, as that right they came to the Sneak Preview.

Sky Bergman

I had 27 of the 40. People were able to make it for the Sneak Preview, which was amazing, including my grandmother, which was amazing.

Terry Rubin

Yeah, tell us a little bit about what their reactions were.

What did they say? How did they know? How did they feel, seeing themselves like that?

Sky Bergman

Yeah, well it was funny, because like, Mary and Wolf people would recognize her and Trader Joe's and she gotta get a little. Oh, she didn't think of herself as having this great story, and she would always say, well, I didn't really do anything.

And I said, no, you did. you saved your mom and you lived through this experience and by sharing that experience with others. Hopefully it will help to have that never happen again. And some of them would chuckle.

They were. It was just kind of funny for them, because they were just ordinary people.

And that was the idea was that when I first set out about interviewing people, I wanted it to be everyday, ordinary people. I didn't want it to be any superstars.

I didn't want to know. I wanted to be somebody that we everyone could relate to and but the people in the Film have really enjoyed their success, and it's really especially now that it's on Pbs, it's really been fun for them to have that Ride and more importantly, I was part of a panel discussion with think, there were 5 or 6 of the Film Stars.

There this, is one it was in theaters, and I was saying how grateful I was to all the people that I interviewed because of course without them there would be no film and they opened up their hearts, and their stories and really was it was remarkable to me that they were willing to do that and Paul Wolfe stood up and said, "No, we are grateful to you for caring enough to collect our stories and for having our legacy, live on."

That reframed it for me in a very different way, that I hadn't realized what that meant to them so the reaction was one of Being very grateful, that their stories were going to be Preserved and and passed on for future generations

that's just such an important point that you're making that can be something We all take away which is we we might be curious, but what we're doing for someone else to be hearing their stories and to preserving it, and and and just, to carry that kind, of history, I, for you personally, tell me, a little bit about what what were some of your most

Important takeaways for you that have just stuck with you that have really resonated, that you can't stop thinking about some of the things. They may have said Well, one of them came from Blanche Brown, who just said, "Live in the moment," and I feel like again, when we're different Stages of our lives I remember being department chair, of the art and Design Department, and teaching and doing it I just couldn't even Breathe I was doing so much, and I didn't take the time to really enjoy living in the moment.

And by doing this film and slowing down, and really, taking the time to connect with people in a very different way, I wasn't trying to think I wasn't connecting with somebody and thinking about the next thing, I had to do I was just connecting with somebody and boy does that

change your perspective and you're really living in the moment when you're doing that, and I have found that I just am more grateful, like I will be outside and it's a beautiful day, and I'll just take a moment like last night the sun the moon was like full and Bright and beautiful and I find that I take the time to really appreciate those moments more than I did before when I felt like I had a zoom from one thing to the next, and never really took that time.

The other thing that I have learned and this, is maybe a bit from my grandmother, her philosophy was always to be kind and there are so many ways to be kind, but one thing, that I try and do is just try, and always say a kind word to people, so if I'm somebody's helping me with something I always compliment, them or say how is your day going I hope I mean, just those little things those little more personal connections. It really makes a big difference. I mean, I know it does to me.

When somebody does that to me, I really feel it. And so to me, personally, those are just slowing down enough, to do those things to experience those moments that's been the biggest impact on that

Terry Rubin

Oh, I wonder if it would be okay, if I would share my favorite thing, that I I've told you this, but this is and you can speak to the woman that said this, it was from her Sunday school teacher and she said there's so much good in the worst of us, and so much bad in the best of us it. Hardly behooves any of us to talk about the rest of us.

Sky Bergman

Yeah, that was Barbara. Yeah sums it up really nicely, right there.

Terry Rubin

I just yeah to me, I took that. Away and I went. "Oh, my gosh!" These are words to live by, and I feel like, I want to well, can you tell us I want to.

I want to talk about your grandmother, but I want to save that for just a few more minutes.

And I want to invite anybody. If you guys have anything whether you want to put it in the chat, or maybe, if you want to raise your hand I don't know if that's a possibility for Jeff to be able to unmute you and then we you could speak but I we probably all would love to know a little bit of what you're working on, and what's next.

What's getting your engine revved right now?

Sky Bergman

Well, I have 2 short films that have been on the film festival circuit. One is called Mochi Suki, and it's about the Japanese tradition, of making Mochi to bring in the New year, and I Love the Connection, between Food and Passing Down of Wisdom again like I mentioned earlier I that was what happened with my Grandmother And me in the Kitchen, and it's going to be part of a bigger series, called Past, the Fork, and It's sort of like passed down on the Nose, through Cooking and so i'm working on that for Pbs, Right now It's like a 5 min Short but It's gonna be a half an hour, short for pbs, and then the other film that I worked on a couple of years Ago.

But is kind of having a resurgence is called forever voters, and it's about the League of Woman Voters, going into High Schools and talking about the students about why, their Vote really

Matters why one vote is really important and Trying to get them to Register and pre-register to vote and I love this connection of the older adults is not just women. It's Men and Women as Part of the League of Women, Voters, that goes in and talks to these high school students, and the students are just beaming when they get that that Piece of Paper, to Sign and Register to vote and it's, like the first time, for many of them that they are Taken Seriously, as an adult, by someone other than their parents or a teacher.

It really is so remarkable to see their big smiles when they sign to register a pre registered vote and there's a really great statistic that I found when I was doing the research for that Film. Which is that if a person votes in 3 out of their first 4 Elections, they're more likely to become a lifetime Voter, and so what a great way to set them up on that Path is to have this group, come in and really talk to them about the importance of voting

And so those are the things that are really getting me going right.

Now I'm starting a Foundation called Forever Voters. That hopefully will launch this on a national level, we're doing it. And we're locally here, in San Luis Obispo but we're hoping to do it a little More on a national, Level, at this point

Well, even that speaks to purposefulness. These kids then feel like they matter and that there's purposefulness, and it, and maybe instilling that it's such a vulnerable young ages just is something that they can grow with and do for the forever, from then on and it's

Terry Rubin

Joyce, in the chat, said. "I don't know about anyone else, but I often think about the legacy I will leave behind that will make an impact On others. This helps steer my sense of purpose in the present."

Thank you, Joyce, that's like just that's so right isn't it that we just have yeah, that we that purpose becomes something that helps us to age well, and keeps us Really vital. And did you feel like that was really true for your grandmother, and for your mom as well.

Sky Bergman

Yeah. My grandfather passed away 10 years before my grandmother did.

And up until then, her sense of purpose was, keeping my grandfather Healthy and doing what she could and they went to the Gym together, and they had that. And then it was very interesting that they were married for over 65 years.

I think, and then my grandmother Kind of Blossomed after that, and her sense of purpose was just like being an inspiration to other people, and just she never thought she was but just she really was amazing, she would go out and do things and was fearless and and so By being just who she was she was really an inspiration, to a lot of people.

And her her real sense of purpose was to bring kindness to the world, and to in many ways she did that through her food through bring because food brings, people to together, and so she was I like to think that I do the same thing, think hopefully, Grandma that that I bring people together, in Different ways, and she was able to do that through her food and through bringing people together, for dinners, for meals. But whatever that was kind of her way, or of doing that, that was her sense of purpose.

Terry Rubin

Let me ask you, is Lucky Louis still making mozzarella?

Sky Bergman

No, unfortunately he passed away, but he made the Mozarellas right up until the day before he passed away. And I would go visit him during the pandemic.

I would stay outside of his door, and have a mask on the whole thing, and just hang out, because I would hang out with him. I would make sure I get went over there like at least once a Week if not more and and like Man do I Miss that Freshman what's, Thearella I'm I Miss Louis was one of what I know You're not supposed to have favorites but he was definitely my fave and and he I went over there, and he was supervising, and I knew that he that he would never have supervised.

Unless he really wasn't feeling. Well, and so I went back the next day, and his kids were all older than me, but his kids were there. And they said you need to come in and you know. So I was. They were very sweet. They let me say my goodbyes to him.

I mean, I didn't say goodbye, but I knew it was the last time I was going to see him, and and he passed away within 24 h, and but he was still supervising still supervising, the Mosarella, making that Morning.

Terry Rubin

And it was amazing. Yes, if that isn't enough of a Hint for why people should wanna go watch this movie, just to know about who this man was, and what he was doing with Mozzarella.

He also gave an incredible piece of advice for new parents, and I don't want to say it right Now, because I want everybody to go watch the film and see and find this piece of advice that Lucky Louis, said he he has the voice of expertise in it and so please go watch and see what that is I

Leslie Heins asked how many of the stars in the video are still alive today.

Sky Bergman

There's about half of them that are still alive. So I'm in touch with all the ones who are still alive. The film was made in 2017.

So that's been 5 years, and people are certainly aging out, but interestingly enough, the first person that passed away was actually one of the youngest people that I interviewed for the film and so you just never know I mean, she died of cancer and it just it happened very quickly but the important thing is that it's not about quantity. It's about questions, and this is true for any age.

It's like what kind of quality of life are you living? And our our health certainly plays a part of that a big part of that, but it's also about how we live our lives, and how we're moving through the world and the connections and the people, that we, affect and those are part of that quality of life, is really being engaged and and active in whatever, ways, that we can.

Terry Rubin

Did you ever imagine when you were in high school or younger, that this is where you would be today?

Sky Bergman

No, so I was a business major as an undergraduate, and I took a photo class for fun, my last semester and I fell in love with the dark room and the magic of the Image Appearing in the Developer. I don't know any of you if any of you have ever done that it is just a magic moment. When the image all of a sudden appears, and I at that moment decided that not just that I wanted to be a photographer, but that I wanted to be a Photo teacher, at a university and I graduated I have a Bs in finance, but then I went on to get my masters in in photography, and realized my dream and never let money be an obstacle.

That was not, because obviously, if I'd gone into finance, I probably would have made more money but I would have been so unhappy. It was not just because I was good at it did not mean that that's what I should be doing. And I loved my career. I love teaching, being a university professor, and filmmaking.

I fell in by accident because of my grandmother cooking with her. And wanting to document. That so what I have found in life is that like even photography, I kind of fell into by accident, because I happen to take a photo class for fun, and but I find that if I follow my curiosity if I Follow my Passion, I don't put money, first put your Passion first put what you really feel like, you meet you have

To be doing like if you're dreaming about it, then that is something that you should follow right, and so for me, that's always been the case, I instead of saying why I say why not and I just follow that sense of curiosity. And I am amazed at how far it's gotten me.

Because most people say you're going to be an artist, or a filmmaker, a photographer, that's like good luck. How are you going to possibly make money? I just never thought about that.

I thought about that this is what I needed to do to feed my soul, and that I could be soulless and make a lot of money, or I could feed my soul and be very happy and money is not the most important thing as long as you have enough, money, to live and I should say I. I retired from teaching and a lot of people said, "Why are you retiring? You're so young." Well, because I want to do other things. And I work really hard to get my teaching job, but I did it for 30 years. And I knew it was time to let that go and to move on to something else.

So the other part is that it would have been really comfortable to stay teaching. Because I was making a lot of money, doing it. But I knew that that was not the right decision for me. I needed to do something else. So again, I took that leap off the cliff and I'm doing something totally different. And loving every minute of it.

Terry Rubin

Absolutely. It's that old saying, "Leap, and the net will appear." I love that, and also from the film one of the Dear Men said, "Make less, spend less, but enjoy life more."

Sky Bergman

Absolutely, and it's so true you know. No matter how much money you make. It seems like you can spend that much money but if you're making less, you figure out a way to spend less.

It's never been about owning things, it's about having experiences. And the experiences in my life, the memories that I've created, that's far more important than anything that I could own.

So Maybe that has helped.

Terry Rubin

you are a very, very wise woman, but I'm gonna read another one from Dayle Shames that's in the chat and she said.

"I love the ripple effect that your curiosity and love of your grandmother has fueled the connections, the friendships, the programs, the impact is the world one Person, at a time that this has brought."

Thank you, Dayle.

And the voices of those incredible people show everyone how important learning, moving and connecting are to living a well lived life. Nancy Alderman says, "Thank you for your wisdom."

I mean, what a testament that when you spend time being in the here and now with the people that you are with, especially the elderly and paying attention to their stories and just like really being there with them. Oh, my gosh. Time changes and we can really gain something and I can see that what's happened it's transformed you.

Okay, Lisa says, I love how you listened to yourself, took the risk, followed your passion, and found your purpose. It's so inspirational. Love what you were doing. It is food for the soul."

And what this, you, what you are speaking of is truly food for our soul.

I know it's been food for your soul. You are helping this to become food for our soul.

The music that starts the movie off was so exciting to me and Engaging and reminiscent of a different time in my life, that I couldn't help but Watch. Seeing your Grandmother Right there on the Screen with you, you just are adorable with her.

Can you tell a little bit about your grandmother, what happened to her at the end of you filming and her getting a chance to see this?

Sky Bergman

Yeah, sure, yeah, so, I feel really lucky that my grandmother lived long enough to see the film on the big screen and that was amazing to me.

And I I really I was lucky enough that the sound most of us will Film Festival was willing to do a sneak preview of the film I knew it wasn't really done and I still needed to do some Ironing Out but they were willing to do that because I really wanted as many people who were

In the film, their families are able to see it.

And we showed it as a sneak preview. They were, as Terry mentioned, 27 of the 40 people that were in the film, were there, Lou, and his family, which was like 150 people because he had 9 kids, and all their grandkids, is like so we had an 850-person Theater that was sold out and my grandmother, sat at the entrance to the Theater, and Greeted Everyone, that came in it, was without a doubt, the best night of my life.

My cheeks were hurting from smiling so much because just to be able to share that evening with her was beyond anything that I could ever imagine. I mean, it really was just such a gift. And she had the best time ever, and then she passed away. 6 weeks later she stopped eating and drinking and she said, "I'm done." And She was gone in 2 days, and that was really tough.

It was, we don't talk about the end of life. We just don't talk about it, but We I, had some several discussions, my desk, was a geriatric physician, and I called him and he said well, maybe you want to she was in a assisted living facility At that time, and well, do maybe you want to take her to the hospital, and and I said, she was very clear on what she wanted.

And if I took her to the hospital, it would have been for me and not for her, and sometimes we really have to honor what even though it may be her hard for us we really have to honor, what that other person, wants, and she was very clear that she was was done i'd like to say that as stubborn and wonderful. She was in her life.

She was the same in her passing, that she just had been determined that she was ready, and she had had a dream about my grandfather, and she was kind of talking about him and I just knew it was time it was okay and actually when my grandfather passed away.

I was there when he passed away, and I will never forget this. My grandmother went in to talk to him, and he was, as many people do, hanging on and she said, "John, we've had a wonderful life together. This is the one journey we can't take together, and it's okay. You can let go." And he was gone within an hour.

I believe that there is this power of giving people that permission to let go. I stayed with my grandmother for those 2 days, I played guitar, I was playing her guitar, I was talking to her the whole time and that was also a gift to be able to do that, and to fully let go.

And so not to end on a sad note, because in some ways, it's not sad. It was probably the best possible ending. We all have to go at some point, and that was probably the best possible way for both of us really was that I was able to be with her, and to know she was at peace, and that that's what she really wanted, it wasn't because something that happened to her. It was her decision, and was really a blessing

Terry Rubin

Thank you for sharing that. This could not be more timely, because as Lotus Network is preparing for next Year's Timely topic Events one of the potential and very strong possibilities is that we will have somebody speaking about how It's Never Too Late to Shine a Light on Your Own Death. While it could sound morbid at the onset it really is about just maybe part of lives well lived and taking it to that next step. Maybe there's something here for your future filmmaking.

Sky Bergman

Well, one of the questions that I did ask everyone was what do you think of your own mortality, and again, that's not a question that we tend to ask people, and one of the people.

That I interviewed was my dad, who as the geriatric physician, dealt with death all the time, but we have never had a conversation about it and he'd had several strokes and actually was practicing from a Wheelchair because He the last stroke left him with his left side, not very strong, and we we had some very candid conversations about what would happen if he had

another stroke, and he, said, if I can't speak I don't, want to that's it that's a that was a big thing for him.

And he unfortunately had a severe stroke in May, and he passed away, but for me, because we had that conversation it made it much easier. It's a profound loss, but it's a lesson in having those conversations, so that when that moment happens it's not a moment. Where that's when you're first starting to figure out what the person's wishes are.

I mean, because I knew that it made it a lot easier and still sad, but a lot easier to deal with and to go through and what a gift my dad gave me that we had that conversation. But again, I wouldn't have had that conversation if I wasn't interviewing him for the film.

So that's why all the questions that I asked everyone for the film are on the website.

You can go to our take action, part of the Webinar and if you download our discussion, guide this questions, are there use those questions even if you don't have your kids or Grandkids, Or somebody, ask you, those questions, maybe just answer those questions, yourself, so you have them somewhere, where people, Can can read them when

they're ready, because not everybody's ready to have those conversations. But it's really nice to find those things and have them. In the moments when you need them.

Terry Rubin

Oh, thank you so much for sharing that, it is very important and profound and helpful, for all of us and I hope all of us will be able to take advantage of it.

You speak so wisely and I just want to thank you from the bottom of all of Lotus Networks, heart from all of us, on today, from Lisa and Leslie the whole team everybody for me, thank you very much for your Availability from Sharing, from your just so much from your Authentic Self, and

for bringing this movie to us to see. We are all the better for knowing about this, and having watched thank you Sky.

I can't tell you that we wish you so much in your family, just well, throughout the holiday season, and just thank you I want to tell the rest of the the group to that if you want to have more conversations about this we are doing a follow up an overtime next tuesday december

The third at Noon, Janice plus and Ellen Keckler will be leading Let's Talk About It and you can sign up. There'll be a link in the chat. There'll be an email that you'll get. But you can feel free please to just continue this really incredible conversation about Lives Well Lived and the Secrets, Wit and Wisdom, that these folks, ages 75 through 100, have. I can't recommend this Film highly enough.

I want to thank all of you today. So much for joining us at Timely topics. You have been incredible. It is so nice to have gotten to know everybody through this Format of Zoom.

I look forward to it so much. I hope that when we get to see each other especially at the April 23rd Signature Experience. We are just gonna be just so joyful at an opportunity like that there's probably going to be many more that will be able to have maybe even in between but staying connected, and staying really involved in sharing our stories is just half of it.

Leslie, you spoke to our circle of friendship, the Friends of Lotus Network, this all of this programming like this is free but if you felt like you wanted to become a part of Lotus Network's Friends, get on our website, take a look at what this program offers and see if this inspires you or speaks to you. I can't thank you enough for being a part of Lotus Network.

I know, I get so much from all of this, and I just hope you do too, and I want to wish everybody a happy holiday season. I want you all to stay safe out there, and stay connected, stay connected to us, reach out to us if you have any ideas or thoughts, but we just adore you guys and we adore doing this with you. It's been really a lot of fun.

So thank you very much. And There will be a follow-up email that goes out. My email address will be in that. So please feel free to reach out. It's just such a pleasure to thank you so much, to Lotus Network for doing this and thank you to Jerry and Leslie.

Terry Rubin

Yeah, Sky, we have one quick question that just came through on the chat. That I would love to ask, and it's a great question from our friend, our good friend and supporter Andrea Hyatt. She wants to know how you got your name.

Sky Bergman

Oh, that's a good question, so that was a nickname that my grand my mom used to call me and when I moved out to California I decided to change my name legally so that I would actually use it.

And then so that's my legal name is Sky and but that was my mom's nickname for me.

So I was born in the sixties. So might maybe explains it

You are beautiful, from the inside, out and we and we all.

Oh! We

Just have fallen in love with you. So thank you Sky very very much.

Hey!

A wonderful, wonderful, wonderful gift to Lotus Network and Terry.

As usual. you just you just knock it out of the Park every time so, and to all of you, that joined us we're we're just so happy that you're part of Loadus and We we just stay connected stay well, have a great Holiday, Season, and We'll, Look forward to

Seeing you all with Lynn Hellerstein, in January. So check our website, www.lotusnetwork.org. Thank you, everyone.