

Interviewer: Juwan Rohan

Interviewee: Amanda Udis-Kessler

[Read Consent/Receives Consent] *Can you please start off with your last name story?* Okay so my last name now is Udis-kessler. that's not the name I was born with, at birth it was Kessler (father's last name). And Udis (mother's name) was middle name. When I was about 7 years old, it somehow occurred to me that I wanted to represent both my parents. I don't remember how I came up with the order of how I wanted my last names to be when hyphenated. I made this decision out of a proto-feminist sense that my name should represent both parents. I was writing for publication at a young age, and all of it has my hyphenated name, and especially when I was writing any academic things, I knew that my name would stay stable, so whoever I partnered up with in life had to know that I wasn't changing my name.

*Do you have any children?* No but, If we had children, I probably would have let the kid have my partner's last name, instead of mine. I don't think it's really good to inflict a hyphenated name to a kid because it's a hassle to change or revert back to one name. I don't have a middle name now; it's just Amanda Udis-kessler. I think for people who have a reasonable short and last name. In a case like that a middle name to me, is not overly complicated. For me, having a hyphenated name means I already has 3 names. So I don't think I would elect to have a middle name. Not having a middle name anymore doesn't really bother me.

*Were there any role models in your family?* Olivia Newton-John, was a pop singer, I remember seeing her name, but not sure if that is why I did it. Mom and dad already separated, and after I hyphenated my name, my mother hyphenated her name also, which I'm not sure why because my parents were separated. I was her role model! There are only two people in the world who share this particular last name: my mother and I. She had no love for my father at that time, so choosing to go from her own last name to a hyphenated name that would forever include his, seems a little funny to me, I don't judge her but I am curious.

*Have there been any unforeseen consequences for the last name change?* Yes this is a lifelong annoyance. Airlines print my boarding pass, and their machines are not equipped to hyphenate names so I have found myself in small running's with airport security who look at my airport pass and I.D and see that my names are 99% identical and I have to wait like 5-10 more minutes than other people because of that reason. Some places can't read hyphenated names so that bugs me, and just takes more time. Having people not being able to ever pronounce my last name on the first try bugs me. Emails don't accept the long names to add for my email extension. Because my names are both long I'm some times in position where I can't add my both names.

*How would you feel if someone just called you by one of your last names?* It would feel if I have gotten married and someone was using my birth name. there's something that feels a little erased when both names aren't used.

Would you make the same choice again, to keep your name? [Always felt like my name was under my control The feminist thing about it is because it was my decision, my decision to change it, I did it., but that doesn't answer the question but it's a unique name so it looks good on Facebook and its very interesting to hear and read for publication, so I probably would do it again because it outweighs the negatives. And I'm proud that my mom took my last name, but it still feels weird because of the order.

What do you think the generation of children with hyphenated names should do as they marry and have children? [I feel bad about giving a kid a hyphenated name, but also it's unfair to give the kid just one name. I do feel that there is some value to the kid for having the same last name as at least one of their parents. I think the other thing parents owe their children is to try and not give their kids names that won't open up for teasing.

Just as sexism hurts men even when it oppresses women, and just as racism hurts whites even when it oppresses people of color, and so on, the naming traditions limit men as well as women, and traditionally men have benefited because it's nice to the men that they don't expect to change their name when they marry.