

Interviewee: Amy Dounay

Interviewer: Juwan Rohan

*Please describe your Last Name Story...* I don't know if my story qualifies as "interesting," but this is a subject my husband and I have struggled with, particularly with making the decision on naming our children. I kept my family name (Dounay) when I married, in part because it's a unique (i.e. made-up at Ellis Island) family name and only women in our family are in my generation (i.e. the name will disappear if we follow the traditional patriarchal naming conventions). Also, as a publishing professional, it's simpler to keep my original family name, and furthermore, it's just always been my name, so it felt unnatural to change it when I married. When my husband (family name Atwood) and I had children, we agreed to hyphenate their names so they will carry, as long as they choose to, both family names, but we chose the non-traditional order (my children are Audrey and Avery Atwood-Dounay), with the idea that if they choose to drop half to simplify their names at some point, it might be easier to drop the harder to pronounce and spell part (mine) and keep the simpler name (Atwood).

*Effects on children?* I can't yet assess the effects of our naming decisions on our children, ages 4 and 7, but my son has noticed that several children in his class have hyphenated names too. *Did you have role models for your decision (family, friends, etc.)?* I didn't have role models in the naming decision.

*Have there been any unforeseen consequences with the name you've chosen your kids to have, or keeping your last name? Would you make the same choice again?* There is some hassle and frequent confusion associated with explaining Our family members' names to new acquaintances, filling out paperwork for kids (school registration, pediatrician offices) and getting their names straight, so sometimes, for practical reasons, it seems that it would have been simpler if all of our family had the same name, but I still don't regret any of our naming decisions.

*What do you think the generation of children with hyphenated names should do as they marry and have children?* I assume our children will find ways to simplify their names when they marry.