**Fearless Leaders by Wet Cement: Holly Stiel and Jennifer Willey Transcript**

Jennifer Willey: I am so excited that our next fearless leaders interview is here with the incredible Holly Stiel. So, Holly. Thank you so much for being here with me.

Holly Stiel: Well, thank you for having me. I'm delighted to be here at home with you.

Jennifer Willey: We've got New Jersey and California in the midst of a hurricane. So glad it all works now. Holly and I had the good fortune to get to know each other through the National Speakers Association last year. Holly is really a legend in the industry when it comes to customer service. She is the author of “Neon Signs of Service” and so many other things, which is why I chose Holly… since Holly, you to me are the essence of fearlessness… and you were the first female concierge in the US, correct?

Holly Stiel: I was, yes.

Jennifer Willey: What was it for you growing up that got you to this point of just saying, “I'm going for it. I'm not gonna let anything internally or externally slow me down?”

Holly Stiel: What a great question. You know, I don't know if there is like one thing, but when you have fire in the belly and you have a desire and you have a passion, you just have to do it. You sound like you say, Gee, I'm going to do it, even though you know it's really hard. Yeah, everything's hard! You just do it. You know that I really live by the expression ‘successful people are afraid and do it anyway.’ I don't know that you know that I'm fearless--I just do it anyway. I graduated from the school that said if you don't ask, the answer is always ‘no.’ You need to put yourself out there. If you don't, if you're an artist--and I really think of myself as an artist more than a businesswoman, even though I have a business--If the art is vulnerable and art means opening up your heart and putting your heart on the outside so that someone else can have an experience. But when you come from that deeper place of heart and you put yourself out there, something can happen. If you don't ever do that then for sure nothing is going to happen.

Even now in my life, I go through that exact same process. What if I put this out and no one likes it? All right. Well, then I'll do something else—and then you just do something else. Because if you're an artist, you just keep on creating what you do.

Jennifer Willey: I love that. And actually, when we teach our courses on fearlessness, one of the things that we talk about in the section around courage. It is about understanding your fears and then once you recognize it's a fear, you can do whatever you want with it. Just like you can read a news story and say, okay, either I'm going to cry in a corner all day, or I'm just going to take it and put it over here and move about my day. And so I always like to say, ask yourself three questions whenever you know something gives you that sense of fear. Like you said, ‘What if nobody likes it?’

1. Well, what's the worst thing that can happen?
2. What's the best thing that can happen?
3. What is most likely to happen?

And if that worst thing you can tolerate… then, go for it. And just like you said, put it out there in the world.

Now one thing I know you are very passionate abou is that you just created this beautiful new piece of spoken poetry - that we will be sharing as well - is around kindness to those in customer service. Talk to me a little bit about that journey for you.

Holly Stiel: I was a hotel concierge for 17 years and got a lot of accolades in that job.But being on the service side of things gave me an understanding and a compassion that is bottomless for people who do the kind of work where all day long, you are saying ‘hello’ and ‘may I help you,’ and ‘how can I help?’… and ‘at your service’ and ‘who's next?’ And really knowing what it feels like to be that person, I actually loved being that person and I also noticed how many times, being the person who says ‘how may I help you,’ You're invisible. And one of my big passions, is to help people to let go of that in visibility and actually pay attention and see the people who are serving them. And especially to people who do menial jobs people who clean bathrooms in a public place that's just that's I always stop. I say thank you to them. I appreciate them. People who are in your airport. What time did they have to get up in the morning, so that you could get that coffee?! I really think about them. And I think about that and people ask me all the time. What do you miss about the hotel, because I I've had my business for 28, 29 years already. And I haven't been a hotel concierge in that long. But what I still miss are the housekeepers, the lobby porters, the people who I would have never had a chance to meet. The salt of the earth people – I used to go sit with them at lunch so I could know them. And that is an aspect that I think people just take for granted. So it's a passion of mine. And during this time I think of it as perhaps a silver lining that people will pay attention to the people who make their lives possible

Jennifer Willey: I love that. And it is so important and I feel that. I hear you and I get it. And now, if someone delivers something to my house, I feel so grateful for them because that means they were taking the risk, and that I didn't need to take the risk to go into a grocery store. And it's those little things that-- I will be honest--I took it for granted for much of my life that other people were helping make our lives just go. And I think you're absolutely right--it's more important now than ever to really show that gratitude to those people who are helping making all of our lives better now.

Okay, so one more question for you. If you could go back and have a conversation with the 13 year old version of yourself… Or if you were talking to a 13 year old young woman or man today, is there anything that when you think back that stands out for you, perhaps an Issue or you wish that you would have either done differently or had that aha moment at a much younger age, rather than maybe waiting until the age of 40 or 50 or 60 to have that light bulb go off for you?

Holly Stiel: Well, well, I think it's twofold because I, I'll tell you, on a personal level for me. I never knew I was smart until I was in my 40s. In the years that I went to elementary school, they used to divide up the kids, either by IQ, or God only knows and there was the smart class and the not so smart class. And my best friend was in the smart class for years and years. I mean, it was always like I wasn't smart enough until I was a hotel concierge and I realized how smart you have to be to really do all those things at once and take care of all those people and handle different things. That was when I learned that I was smart. So I didn't know that, even though I have a master's degree. I didn't know that. I just, you know, did all of those things. It didn't happen until later. I think on a on a bigger picture for all women especially, is that whole bit about ‘not good enough.’ Let it go. That is torture for us. I have become someone that I would like to be friends, and that has been such a gift, to become a woman that is not only good enough. But I really like her. That is such a gift to be a woman that you like. That's how to live your life and none of the rest of it matters at all.

Jennifer Willey: And that is why I was so drawn to you when we first had the opportunity to meet last year… where there were thousands of people there and you just shone through the crowd and I am so grateful to have a woman like you in my life inspiring me and hopefully those words of wisdom will inspire many others as well. So thank you, Holly so much for being our leader or our ‘fearless leader’ that we're highlighting this week.

Holly Stiel: Thank you so much and back at you to have a woman who is so involved in helping other people—it is mutual, it always is. And it always needs to be. So thank you so much.

Jennifer Willey: Thank you.