MECHANIC SHOP FEMME

PRODUCER: KELLER

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**GROWING UP, CHAYA MILCHTEIN WAS NEVER DRIVEN TO LEARN ABOUT CARS.**

[03:42:48;00]I did not know anything about cars. In fact, I was in foster care at around 17 years old. And I told my foster parents that I wasn't interested in getting a driver's license.

**SHE TURNED 18 AND STRUGGLED TO LAND A JOB. AS FATE WOULD HAVE IT, SHE’D FIND ONE… AT AN AUTO REPAIR SHOP.**

[03:48:30;10] I just took this as this “sponge” experience, this learning experience where not only can I learn everything I need to know about cars, but I can also learn to work with people from all different cultures and backgrounds.

**SHE SPENT TIME AS A SERVICE ADVISOR AND IN COLLISION REPAIR, BUT EVENTUALLY HIT A FORK IN THE ROAD.**

[03:51:39;18] And I decided, you know what? I need to find another way to make money. This isn't happening fast enough for me.

**THAT’S WHEN THE LIGHT CAME ON. SHE’D START A BLOG.**

[03:53:07;17] And I started Mechanic Shop Femme. There was no deep thinking or comprehensive analysis. There was no branding. I was just thinking, “How could I put into one phrase what I am and what I do?”

**MECHANIC SHOP FEMME BECAME A SPACE FOR CHAYA TO WRITE ABOUT HER PASSIONS: CARS, FASHION AND EMPOWERMENT.**

[04:09:17;22]Taking control of what clothes I want to wear and where I want to wear it and how I want to be portrayed. As a automotive consumer, taking control of what services I want to do and understanding what my next steps are and budgeting for those things. And as a queer woman,

[04:09:36;09]holding my head high and being who I am fully at every given moment.

**THE BLOG LAUNCHED HER WRITING CAREER. CHAYA’S APPEARED IN NUMEROUS PUBLICATIONS. AFTER A WHILE, SHE DECIDED TO SHIFT GEARS.**

[03:53:58;10]I don't know what I should do next with this. Like, I'm writing this blog, people like it, what's the next step? And somebody is like, you should totally teach classes.

[CLASS NAT]

**NOW, SHE ALSO TEACHES BASIC AUTOMOTIVE EDUCATION.**

[04:12:29;25]So I'm not a mechanic.

[04:12:37;06]At the end of the day. I'm somebody who has taken a lot of time to ask a lot of questions of the professionals in this industry, and what I'm doing is I'm not teaching you how to fix your car. I'm giving you the tools to be an educated consumer.

**SHE HOPES TO HELP PEOPLE TAKE THE STRESS OUT OF BUYING OR REPAIRING A CAR.**

[04:08:12;20]They're entering a space where that centers queer people and women, and centers knowledge for people who don't understand. There's no such thing as a stupid question, whatever you ask. I might not know, but I'm going to find the answer for you because that's important.

**BETWEEN THE BLOG AND HER CLASSES, MECHANIC SHOP FEMME IS A HIT. CHAYA SAYS THERE’S A KEY FUELING HER SUCCESS.**

(04:16:29) People tell marginalized people to shrink themselves, to make themselves more palatable for general society thinking that that's the way that they can succeed, but I think they're wrong.

[04:16:42;00]You will find the people who will resonate with what you're doing if you remain true to yourself. And that's really the main thing. It's not the fact that I'm doing fashion or the fact that I'm doing cars. It's the fact that I bring my full self to my job. I'm passionate and I'm true to what I do every single day.

[END]