**Interview Transcript**

**Participant 4**

Interviewer: Okay, so I want to begin with just asking you a little bit of background, um if you can tell me just kind of basic introduction stuff like who you are, where you're from, a little bit about your education and your employment history, yeah.

Participant 4: Okay yeah so just to begin with, where I am from, I was uh primarily I was raised in Nigeria. Because my dad worked in Nigeria and he lived there, most of his life really, so my brother and I were raised there and then we went to India for a few years for like high school middle school to high school and then I came here to do my masters. To Pennsylvania, to get a business administration degree and once I completed that I was honestly clueless just trying to figure out what would fit.

You know you never know I mean yeah you have a degree, but then what's the next step, where do I want to go? I didn't have much of a clue, so I did know that I was inclined to kind of the marketing part of it, and maybe more so because my dad, he started in marketing, and uh so I used to as a kid, I remember traveling a lot with him in Africa, just you know throughout Africa, to see you know with the marketing piece of it and then um. So maybe that's where my initial interest was so. I also did go, like take interviews to like do, you know, like be on like just marketing calls and stuff because I really didn't know what I wanted to do—and thank God I didn't do that because I would have been terrible at, that's not for me.

But I didn't know so I tried that out, and then, finally, I decided to uh try IT because a lot of people were like you know, you have a master's degree, why don't you make use of it, you've got the computer science piece. I was like okay I like computer science, I think I can do this, but then I'm not sure if I'd really like it. So, I decided to go the consulting route because if I didn't like it, I could pivot, and I'm like okay, this is not for me, or you know. So, I started in testing, which is where I met your aunt actually. So I started in that and I enjoyed it a lot, because with testing, with an IT, I think from just from a technical standpoint, it teaches you like you go to the base of the core, so you understand it from down-up, right you're not looking at it from this, you're going like all the way to the bottom. So kind of helped me build that technical expertise, if you will.

But, as I was working in the testing space I realized that I was really driven towards product management and solutioning. So that's where my interest was so in the workspace is when I discovered, like so to speak, my interest. Like ‘Oh, I see I like this more,’ so while I was working a couple of years down the line I was working one of the projects, I spoke to one of the directors at Macy's actually and asked her, because I was so curious about the product management side of it, so I asked her if I could—and I was a consultant at Macy’s, so I was in a full time employee—but I asked her if I could create use cases for her and uh for this project that she was working on. And you know pretty much I said, like you know I'm not gonna bill you guys I'll work on it on my after hours, but I really want to understand. And if it's valuable, if it’s of use to you, then you could use it, but all I ask is some time and some you know mentorship like am I doing the right thing and what do I need to look for and stuff like that.

So her name was [name] too so [name] and she pretty much took me under her wing because I think—she says that she liked the fact that I was inquisitive and I took the initiative and you know she liked that. So, she helped me out and I started writing use cases like I would work and then come back home and then get on my laptop and get the documents and try to create requirement documents and I then got into—I really, really enjoyed that so I got into a product management training, which I started working on, like I will train from like 7 to 10. Those were my class our 7 to 10:30 something like that at night uh to get my product management certificate. And uh once I did that, since I was working with you know with [name] at Macy's as well on the side, she recognized my efforts and she felt that I was good in that space and so she recommended to get me on the product management side of it from the testing side of it. And for me it really helped, the testing background helped, because I knew the intricate details and not just the high-level requirements. I could tie both together. So, that really helped me defining those requirements and understanding this challenge from a development standpoint as well. That okay this looks good on paper but it's going to take us much more time to deliver because of X, Y and Z. So that really that took me to this full solution in piece of it which I enjoyed where I was like I understand it from here and I get it all the way down to here, like how to build that full connection, so to speak, the interaction. And that's honestly when I felt like okay, this is the space I really like, this is my niche. Because I get the product and business side of it and I get the technical side of it. Unfortunately at that—most of them, even now, you don't see a lot of those roles merge: you have product teams, you have business teams, and you have development teams. And I like, you know, I like to understand the holistic piece of it, the solution part of it, so, then I got offered a full time job at Macy's for uh solutions manager and the role was very similar to what I've been looking for; it's almost like you think of it, you manifest it because that's exactly what I wanted to do, I wanted to be part of all of that I wanted to bring my learned skill to see, hey I could do this, I could actually build something from top to bottom and facilitate that.

So that's how I got into solutions management, which was basically that was the role and then um now I manage about 4-5 people under me, and we are responsible for pretty much omnichannel marketing digital use cases, um any personalization tactics within Macy's for email, SMS channels, push channels, so that's what we do so here I am years later.

Interviewer: Awesome, yeah so you work um okay, so I don't completely understand with Macy's there's a like a tech side, and there are multiple buildings and groups that people are in, so you're in one of those buildings like out in John's Creek area?

Participant 4: right, uh I mean now everybody's remote, so we don't really meet in the building. So my team actually is uh I have a couple of people in New York, one in Texas, and couple in Atlanta.

Interviewer: Oh okay, so you're working with people from all over, okay.

Participant 4: Right yes.

Interviewer: Got it. How frequently do you like interact with other people and um how long have you guys been remote also?

Participant 4: Well it's about like two years since the COVID situation so.

Interviewer: Since COVID, okay, so it wasn't before then, okay. And you think that it will stay that way for a while yeah?

Participant 4: Yes. I think um what you know a lot of companies have realized is that we are able to be productive, even in a remote environment there's a lot of cost savings that comes along with it. You have to switch the lights on in a building and keep it on for, you know, the whole day, so they have remodeled all our offices to be like a hotel in concept. Nobody has desks anymore over there, you want to go you reserve space, and you can use it.

So I would go like the last time I went, I had my team come in, whoever is in Atlanta, we reserve space, we reserve conference rooms and we spent a day working together, collaborating and I will probably do the same going forward. Just require my team to come once a month. Because one of the things that you know as a manager I've realized also, and as a mother, there's a lot of flexibility, and when you work from home at the same time you're now, you know, there are you know, people reporting under me who have children, and they are able to go pick up their little one from the bus stop bring them back and continue to work. So they have that little bit of flexibility they never had when they have you know, walk in to work, and I want to be cognizant of that and I want to also be uh very aware of the fact that I think everybody's able to get the job done despite of being remote. And so I don't think it's as important, other than the fact that I do believe in collaboration and some face-to-face time for you to build that trust and familiarity, so to speak, which I do currently—I work like, you know because we're all remote and, as I said, one is in New York, one is in Texas, I make sure we have like virtual happy hours every quarter.

Interviewer: oh Nice.

Participant 4: To get the team together we're not talking about work we are disconnecting and we are only talking about you know our personal lives and just having fun with each other. And in fact we even have a group with my team on text and one of my friends, I call—they're like my team members—my friends, they closed on a house, so you know we're like congratulating him and he’s sending us pictures like it's done. So, even though we have never met face to face we've been able to you know build that friendship, that trust, that collaboration and, most importantly, I think for a team that trust is very important because, knowing that somebody else has your back. Like I should be able to say that hey when one person is going on vacation or she's unexpectedly sick, the other person should be like hey I got you don't worry, they should feel okay to be sick, they shouldn't feel like ‘Oh my God I'm sick no... My manager’s gonna say well what can I deliver.’ It's fine we have people to back you up—I will back you up in spite, you know—but that should be a culture across the team it shouldn't be, it can’t just be me, but it should be driven by me, because if I don't encourage it and if I don't act it, that's never going to work so.

Interviewer: sure, yeah.

Participant 4: So that's something that um I think that to your question, remote works I believe it works, but you have to put in the work uh it's just different kind of work, different kind of effort, that's it. It’s still effort like you would do, you’d still make an effort to go to the cafeteria and talk to somebody, instead you do this on, you know, online.

Interviewer: Sure yeah so you would consider your coworkers and the people that are on your team your friends, then right.

Participant 4: Absolutely, yes.

Interviewer: yeah do you feel like with them, because you have that friendship, that you're able to just be yourself, or do you sometimes find like because it's a work environment that you have to act a certain way.

Participant 4: Both ways... There is a fine line, so for me as a manager, I think we are everybody contributes something, right, I'm here to contribute, I'm here to support them and they are here to support me. It's a mutual thing, there is nobody you know there's not one bigger than the other or nothing like that, everybody has a role to play. But because I am in the role where I have to provide a review for your work, I got to also remember that there has to be that sense of we got to get this done—it's all fun and games—but we got to get this done. And it's not *you* got to get this done, *we* got to get this done. When you kind of step back from the you and put it to the we, it helps because nobody should feel like, they're not working for me, they're working for Macy's, I'm looking for Macy's too. So the team like, you know, I don't believe in that hierarchal stuff I, because it really doesn't make sense to me, it's very old school, but at the same time, we need to make sure that... you should have that friendship, you should have the collaboration, like if I'm friendly with you right, for example, let's just take you and me. This interview uh the minute [name] sent me an email, it was it was a no brainer, it's for [name] I'm going to do it. *Because* of the friendship, because I know like you know she's somebody who has had my back in the past, she's someone you know who's helped me in the past, absolutely there's no doubt, like I wouldn't even think about it twice. And same way if it was somebody that I don't know very well, I would ask the questions ‘Oh what is this about?’ here I didn't even care what it was about, I'm like I'm doing it, just tell me when to be there.

So that's the difference, you know when you build that trusting relationship it's so important, but at the same time, when you're working, you’re in a work environment, and you also have to understand things got to be done. So they, you know, set that expectations, you just have to set firm expectations and as long as we meet, collaborate—and I meet with my team multiple times a week and once a week specifically to talk about projects. That's the time you know we're talking, focus, okay where are we, what do you need, how can we move this along. So that's very, you know, very matter of fact, let's get this done, and you have any issues, come to me, how can I help, done, and we get them moving.

Interviewer: yeah no that sounds great. In terms of your team and the people that you work with most regularly, can you tell me a little bit about their, you know, like demographics or the composition of the people on your team. Like are they like male/female, like around what ages, like racial/ethnic background, yeah.

Participant 4: So I have—we have—I have... a couple in their 30s and they're male, White American. Then there is Indian uh late 30s early 40s. Mothers, so we've got two of that. And then now there's another American again male mid 30s, I would think I don't know exactly his age, but probably mid 30s. That’s just my team.

Interviewer: That’s your team.

Participant 4: I mean my team is my core team, then, if you look at the bigger or under—like I'm on the product side uh solutioning side and the other side is the operation side—very similar setup as well on, you know, the operations managers team is also pretty similar.

Interviewer: gotcha so you would say it’s mostly like White and Indian background people working.

Participant 4: And a lot of Asians too.

Interviewer: Okay yeah yeah.

Participant 4: In IT, I mean what else do you expect. [laugh]

Interviewer: that’s fair, that's fair, yeah, yeah.

Participant 4: I mean you can’t even if you tried, that’s what you get.

Interviewer: Is it mostly men or is that pretty even?

Participant 4: it's pretty even, yeah. Earlier it used to be mostly men but now its pretty even.

I can’t see where a trend, you know—I have some African American uh female counterparts as well and leadership roles that I work with very close to on the M tech side so it's yeah pretty even.

Interviewer: it's fairly diverse

Participant 4: yeah, fairly diverse I would say, yes.

Interviewer: cool and you said there were like five or six people on your team.

Participant 4: Yes.

Interviewer: got it um. In terms of your immediate coworkers, do you guys hang out outside of work ever?

Participant 4: We have, in the past, and I do with the ones who are in Atlanta, but obviously because of COVID I can’t travel. And uh my past coworkers, I hang out a lot with them outside of work, I mean they're like friends from previous— the new team that I have, I haven't even met them in person.

Interviewer: right.

Participant 4: doesn't you know because of COVID, I haven't had a chance to travel to New York or have the team come together. Travel is just opening up, so I really hope to meet them and you know see them, but then my older coworkers who were there at Macy's with me, I have a lot of friends from Macy's who are friends outside of work. Uh yeah a lot of people.

Interviewer: that's great yeah yeah. So in this study I'm particularly interested in how people feel and express their emotions in workplaces. Um and so I'm wondering, first of all, would you consider yourself an emotional person, are you someone who like expresses their feelings and like wears their emotions on their sleeve, or are you more of a reserved person who's kind of private about what you're feeling?

Participant 4: a mix of both. I don't think I'm a person who wears my emotions on my sleeve per se in a professional setting. I’m very aware of that, like you know, because it's more like my mindset is it doesn't matter what it is, or... you got to take yourself out of that situation, because this is not personal. I'm only emotional when it comes to my family, or I wear my emotions on my sleeve and in front of my husband, he gets the brunt of it [laugh] he’s the one who sees everything. But other that, I do tend to be very aware at work, you know, that okay you got to separate yourself from that, like even if you get frustrated. And very uh funny you should ask this there have been only three times I've been extremely frustrated at work in a work setting, and yesterday was one of those days.

Interviewer: oh no

Participant 4: yeah, like to a point where like my face is getting hot and my voice is starting to quaver because I'm so mad, and I'm just like... But even then, at that point of time, in my mind I'm like, ‘Reel it back. Bring it down, let's handle this,’ you know let's not get into this. You know whatever’s going on, let's push it back and let's figure it out in a much, much better way. So if I want to say something, the way I would think it is different, but what I would say, it would be very tactfully, so, but I will get my point across.

Interviewer: Is that something that you feel like it's part of your personal code, like you just do that because you feel like that how you are as a professional, or is that something you feel like is encouraged um by the company or by the environment, like you feel like you have to abide by certain rules?

Participant 4: I think that I feel it is... I feel it's me. It's me because it's me who I am after these many years; it wasn't me six years ago. So, six years ago I probably would have been... I do remember the second time when I was really frustrated—that I said three times—that second time I was in my manager's office and it was just overwhelming, there was a lot of work, and you know, just they were not getting it and I was fed up. So I had to just look at him and be like, ‘I am going to have to get out of here, because this isn't good right now. I need to get out and I need to take a walk.’ And now I wouldn't have to do that, I would have been, I’d just be like, ‘I got this,’ you know, I’ll calm myself down and I know how to handle. But then, I couldn't, but that was because I was so frustrated and I needed to just [deep exhale] before I said something stupid at work, because that's not something... it's just common knowledge, you care about your work, you care about the job you do, don't mess it up by being unprofessional. And I think that's important that you can *still* get your point across. That is something I have to learn through the years, that I can still get my point across without being rude or brash about it or without, you know, not being mature about it. There's a sense of professional maturity that you need to have when you’re at work, and that's also part of growth, that's also part of me being a mom versus me being pre-mom before kids. Because that changes your mindset, so much, so when I approach things as a mom today, I approach it in a much different way as, you know, then I used to approach it when I didn't have kids and it was all about me-me-me. Now I have that growth, so to speak, to understand that it is not you, take yourself out of the situation, look at the situation as it is and then address it, because a two year old doesn't give two craps about what you think, he’s gonna do whatever he wants to do, right. How do you handle that situation, that's just how it is sometimes. You gotta figure it out, okay take yourself out of it, and now let's think. How do I communicate with him? How I communicate with him is not the same way I communicate with my nine year old or how I communicate with you.

So that maturity comes, I think certainly in my opinion, I think it comes with age, your experience, and certain your professional uh setting. I'm sure no company would encourage you having an outburst, like that’s... but nobody comes and tells you that, you just you know it's just...

Interviewer: you just know it.

Participant 4: Know it, you don't do stuff like that and people have done stuff like that, in spite of knowing it. But you know I think for me personally it's just a personal growth as a human being and just...

Interviewer: what are the repercussions when people do stuff like that? Are there are consequences, do you think or...

Participant 4: I mean, I would, I think there are, I know for a fact I think there was one guy who was—I mean he was already let go by them, so I don't know what the consequence would be— but I think he slammed the door or something because he was so frustrated uh—hearsay at Macy's—and it's what happened and there’s security officers outside after that, you know, making sure that he doesn't... But that's the thing: you can be mad, you don't like punch doors or stuff, like that’s... you don’t do that at home either, for me. In a professional setting you'd only be more aware, you don't even do it in your comfort zone because that just to me is crazy right for you to get to that level. You're a grown adult but you're not able to control those emotions, where you won't slam you know the door or the wall, that's a problem.

And the consequence should be there because I don't know what you're going to do if that's your mindset and as a company I'm responsible, not just for you, I'm responsible for every other person walking into the door of this building, so if there isn't a consequence then I would question the company, more than anything else.

Interviewer: Fair, yeah. Um, can you tell me a little bit more about what happened yesterday that made you so frustrated at work.

Participant 4: So we're working on this big migration project, we're migrating our whole mobile platform from one vendor to another vendor. And my whole team has been working like a lot of hours and I've been on all those meetings trying to get this moving and the vendor keeps changing the timelines it can deliver, which is all part of, I know it's part of the job. But you have this very high visibility project where we are slipping timelines, we are doing a daily stand up, which is what I want to jump on 10 o'clock what I was telling you like we're monitoring at such a, you know, minute level. And we are collaborating and doing everything to facilitate, we have multiple teams at Macy's that my team works with, that I personally have to lead and get their timelines handled, *and* work with this new vendor and since we were slipping timelines, we had a leadership call. Like my leadership was like... they put their leadership on the call and like, ‘What's going on?’ And what they did in that call was completely throw that back at Macy's, and *that* I didn't appreciate and I had a talk with my boss and I spoke up and I said, ‘Hey let's not, you know, it's not a one-sided, thing let's talk about this and let's put this on, you know, let's put pen to paper and talk about the dates. Let's go by facts, not by feelings, because what you just expressed right now is your opinion, but here are the facts.’ and I gave them the facts.

But why I got frustrated was because I truly believe, regardless of what you're doing today, tomorrow I can deploy projects that are, you know, give million dollars in revenue—nobody cares, nobody remembers. But if I worked with ethics and I do the right thing, people will remember, no matter what, and what they did was wrong. They threw people under the bus that they shouldn't have when it was not their fault at all, we have been collaborating providing them whatever they need and going above and beyond to support them and just to save their behinds. They made it sound like these guys were at fault, and I did not appreciate that and I was like... to me I think that's what I'm more, personally for me, I'm very passionate about that, so I do not like... if you're wrong, you're wrong. It's fine, I'm wrong too, everybody can be wrong. But to save, you know, this thing before leadership, because you have big contract with them, don't spin it in a way that it's not right, because other people are working, equally working hard, there are so many people working in this project, day and night to accommodate you guys. You don't want appreciate them, that's fine, but don't look make them look bad in front of their own leaders. To me that's a no and I was just fired up because of that [laugh]. I just, personally I can't handle that, so.

Interviewer: yeah no that's that seems like a good thing. That seems like a good treat, so. Um do you ever feel like at work um the race or gender or age of people matters, and do you ever get a sense that people are treated differently or stereotyped or anything because of that?

Participant 4: um I have not had that experience recently and for the past few years, but I did initially when I—I did have that experience, personally I did have um... Somebody openly telling me—and this was the most ridiculous thing because I don't even know if she understands how much people are paid, or does she even understand that—but she pretty much in a room made an announcement saying, ‘Oh, you know they just hire,’ and this is, I mean that I can't even—I don't know how she would say it, but she said, ‘They just hired Indians, because they’re cheap.’ And I was like shocked. So my really bad experience has been early on, with that one person. Um ultimately, she did get fired but

Interviewer: good

Participant 4: it's just shocking, you know, like how people can get away with saying certain things or putting people in a bracket. And that's not because... it's the ignorance in one part and it's also the insecurity, I truly believe that's what it is, it's ignorance and insecurity.

Interviewer: Sure. And that person was I'm assuming not Indian.

Participant 4: She is African American.

Interviewer: oh, okay yeah. Um what about like other people at work, have you seen anybody else getting like you know discriminated against or ever having like comments made sort of similar to that?

Participant 4: Not really, not much. I don’t think so.

Interviewer: that's good. Yeah, I mean partly it could be just you have a very diverse organization so that’s good.

Participant 4: yeah, and I think as I said, early on er I don’t remember but I've had uh you know people, another Russian lady was in front of my eyes when I first started, it's almost like for lack of better words, we are adults, but was being bullied in front of me. So there was like these two people—that lady, but that lady that’s what I’m saying the lady that I'm talking about, she's crazy, that's what she would do to anybody, so I think she didn't discriminate when it came to being mean or stupid—but there was another lady too, whom they were very, very rude to this girl. And uh every time she talks, they would roll their eyes and like in front of a vendor, which I thought was extremely disrespectful, because I'm like they're watching you and you're making her look stupid by doing [rolls eyes] and doing all of that. You're uh you’re at work, what are you guys doing? One—so I have experienced that, not anymore—the two ladies that I talked about, one was fired because I don't think we can fix that, this other one, she's changed. She has had HR intervention, she has had her own I think, you know, realizations of certain things and how she behaves and she has changed. Right now, she is wonderful, and she understands and acknowledges that that's not okay and shouldn't be doing that so that's a good thing, right.

Interviewer: Sure, yeah, yeah. Can you think of any other times at work when you felt particularly emotional, and this could be frustrated, but it could also be like worried or anxious or even happy or excited.

Participant 4: Oh happy or excited I've had many, many, many, many, many moments at Macy's happy or excited. Macy's is a wonderful place to work with, more than anything else there are wonderful people that I get to work with in the company. So I am I think one of the lucky few to have a very good um work setting. From an anxious standpoint um yes, when we had to shut down our San Francisco offices and dreading being let go just before COVID, so the whole office was like on standby and people were being called into the manager's office and one by one let go. That was a very, very you know disheartening, very sad feeling because these are your friends, these are your coworkers and they are crying and you know this... it was very hard to watch. That was one of the saddest days, I would say, for me uh at work.

Interviewer: Sure yeah um in terms of—so that was around COVID time, um have other things in addition to like being remote changed during the pandemic?

Participant 4: Um uh, as in?

Interviewer: Like at work have like has the environment changed a lot or has like there been lot of...

Participant 4: yeah there’s more flexibility.

Interviewer: okay.

Participant 4: Yeah I think the mindset of the whole work culture has changed because of this whole remote and understanding that people are, they are much more respectful to people’s um personal lives. Like I remember once when I was on a call with my leadership, and this was a late call at 6:37 I think, and my little one, he was just a baby and he started crying, he just wanted me, so I just grabbed him you know and kept him right here, and I was talking. And they were totally, it didn't faze them, they were just like, ‘Hi baby!’ and they were everyone was, you know, smiling and trying to get him not cry and that's something that's become a norm and like it doesn't faze us anymore. Even me if I want to call and somebody is talking like it's fine, they're at home, would do you expect, we are in their environment, they're not in our environment. We have the laptop at their house, so we all have to understand that and we, you know, just respectful of that.

Interviewer: sure yeah, no.

Participant 4: and this change is for the better.

Interviewer: that's good. Yeah, no that's good to hear. Um what about you know—there's been a lot more violence on the news against Asian American and Pacific Islander people and there's been like some campaigns over the last couple of years about stopping AAPI hate, um has that impacted you at all and is that something that anyone has talked about in the company?

Participant 4: Yes, in the company wide, we they do talk about it, we do have like you know even resources to help support our colleagues to like you know if you want to talk about this there's a lot, you know, HR will provide the support that we need. Um at the same time, I think uh that the Asian you know specific to that it's been more prevalent in the San Francisco area, which is where most of my colleagues from my San Francisco offices are from. And I do talk to them, even though they are not at Macy's anymore, they're still friends, you know we still keep in touch and even yesterday, one of my friends, I think she's from China, and she said that she moved from Macy’s to Rakuten and she said that she started stop Asian hate campaign and awareness in her company and because she was so vocal about it, they made her the president, so I was very proud to hear that and I told her that this is amazing. And I'm very happy to see that my friends and my colleagues are doing something, and not I mean I’m—as you said, all this needs to stop uh I'm very passionate about those things, the gun violence all of that, and being a mom obviously um it hasn't been a very easy week for me mother or father out there. Um not been easy for me. Uh so it's something about what do we do now, I mean we got to do something about it, we can’t just sit here and feel bad because I shouldn't be feeling guilty about picking my child up from this bus stop or I shouldn't feel guilty about my mother or father who's Asian. They're healthy and safe and not getting beaten on the street, that is not okay.

Interviewer: Sure. Does that ever affect you like you know, in terms of when you bring yourself to work is that something that's ever like on your mind, or is it more just like in the background.

Participant 4: Well it's uh... So, specifically, if I can talk about the school shooting that happened this week. That is something that's on my mind, I think, because as a mom that never leaves it doesn’t go when I'm working, it doesn't go when I am talking to you, it doesn't go—it's always on my mind, at the back of my mind. I know on Thursday or on Wednesday when I put my son on the school bus, I barely could put them on the school—I was like every inch of my body was telling me no, keep them back and then, once I you know there's... Don't be crazy. Live your life, put one foot in front of the other, you cannot do that because where is that, where do you stop where does it go from total panic to this? And the same time, even when this whole issue happened in San Francisco where so many elderly Asians were being attacked. When my parents were here, and we were there, I was like you're not going, like you're just not going by yourself anywhere. I can’t, I won't allow it like it's become such an—you're so aware and the world we live in, we shouldn't be looking at exit signs at a grocery store. But that's the first thing I look at when I walked in on any given day and that is sad that shouldn't be the case, but that's... So yes, work helps because you're focused on something so you're like... but that concern, that fear, it never really leaves you.

Interviewer: Sure, yeah yeah um. Okay so back to the work stuff, it sounds like you really liked your job um. If you could rate it from 1 to 10, with 10 being the best and 1 being the worst what rating would you give your job satisfaction?

Participant 4: I would give my job satisfaction solid 8 and a half.

Interviewer: pretty good.

Participant 4: An 8 because I really, really do enjoy my job, and I have been, again as I said, it's not just about my work, I've been extremely lucky to have a wonderful group of people who work with me uh I think that's why I give it a solid 8 and a half. The two points I don't give it is just because work is crazy, there's just so much going on, so I would like to just... a little bit less of it would be great, but you know uh that's the only thing, it's just too much going on. But other than that, the work environment, the people who actually work with me, I've got a great team like they’re golden, so working with them is always a pleasure and we get to accomplish these wonderful projects, wonderful initiatives. And we're able to do it as a team and we're able to do it, we’re able to enjoy it. There are times, frustrating times like how I explained it's never like you know, always it's not glitterati but, even those things are worth it, because that's bound to happen, right. You just, it's another learning, it's another data point in your world—the way I look at it that's another data point for learning. How do I handle that in the future? Add it, plug it in figure out how to, next time this happens that won't frustrate me either because I've learned how to deal with that so.

Interviewer: Sure, is there anything else about your workplace that we haven't discussed that you would want to talk about?

Participant 4: Nothing much other than the fact that I feel, just from a Macy’s standpoint, from my corporate standpoint, they have made significant changes to what it was 10 years ago to what we have today. It's like working in a new company almost.

Interviewer: what kind of changes do you mean.

Participant 4: It used to be extremely conservative uh when I started working at Macy's. And I was not one for that, so I don't think I, like you know, somebody made a comment like you couldn't even email your CEO and I thought that was the most ridiculous thing I've heard. I'm like, ‘Why? Why I mean he works for the company too?’ like me, like we're all looking for Macy’s like why wouldn’t I, like you know. The comment was made from one of the old timers and we had this company meeting where our current CEO like he was presenting and he talked actually about diversity. And I enjoyed his speech a lot, and he talked about not just diversity, he said this line where he said it's not just about diversity, it's about inclusion. And that really resonated with me, like for me it's like it's not enough if you just you know have a team and say, you know, ‘I'm going to consciously hire diverse,’ you know, ‘resources and colleagues too,’ but if you're not including them and their thoughts, it doesn't matter how many diverse people you know hire you still need to, you know, have that inclusively. And that really resonated with me, so I emailed him and I said, ‘Hey, thank you for that, I think that resonated me and I will keep that in mind, and that's a good learning point to you know move forward.’ But that's it, so I had mentioned this to one of the old timers and they’re like, ‘You can’t email him directly!’ I said ‘Why not?’ I don't know like you should email the secretary or something, and then...

And while she was telling me why she was talking to me, I got a response back from him, saying, ‘[Participant 4] thank you so much, I really enjoyed the feedback, this is why I do this, because I do want our colleagues to provide that feedback, so I understand that hey, yes we're going in the right part, people understand that, people are, you know, they're aware and they agree with it, so we can go, we can track on the right path.’ So when I said that she was shocked that he would even email back. But that's what I'm saying, like this is not the same Macy’s it was 10 years ago when she started, or 20 years ago when she started—she's been an old timer 25 years. So, made leaps and bounds, but if they didn't make those changes I don't think people would... not care to be in the company anymore, so.

Interviewer: Sure

Participant 4: So those changes are being made.

Interviewer: And can you remind me again how long have you been at Macy’s.

Participant 4: I've been at Macy's for, since 12 years, 13 years I think now.

Interviewer: 12/13 years. Got it.

Participant 4: Like 2000, no maybe more. What is it 2022. Nine. yeah 2009 so it's been a long time but full time Macy's I've been for—I started 2015.

Interviewer: Full time. I see.

Participant 4: Yeah so been contractor, then I left and then you know stuff like you know... full time Macy’s 2015.

Interviewer: And can I ask you how old you are.

Participant 4: Sure I’m 41 golden years.

Interviewer: Perfect okay. Um well that's pretty much all of my questions, and I know you have to go real soon, so I just wanted to say thank you again so much and.