

# 01 - Amanda Acker - S2E14 David Shapiro

📅 Mon, 4/25 7:17AM ⏱ 40:31

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, work, criminal defense, life, clients, david, incarcerated, jail, chance, firm, talk, california, attorney, organizations, criminal record, good, programs, grow, recidivism, resources

## SPEAKERS

Amanda Acker, David Shapiro

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### **A** Amanda Acker 00:05

Welcome to the left good things in Show. I'm your host, Amanda Acker. I'm so happy you're here at the let good things in show we talk all about second chances resiliency, following your intuition and even music, listen to hear stories of hope and to be inspired. Remember, you are stronger than you think. Let's dive in. Hi my amazing humans. Thank you so much for tuning in today, I know that I've been away for about two weeks now new episodes. For those of you who don't follow me on social just to give you an update as to why I had gotten sick, I thought it was a cold had lost my voice and then find out that I had pneumonia. So needless to say, I was pretty much laid up all of last week. And it was it sucked. Yes, I was sick. But at the same time, looking back at it, I feel that that's what I needed, I needed to sit down and rest and relax, because I have been doing way too many things. And I'm sure a lot of you can relate to that. It's just like, Go Go, go, go go. And our bodies are telling us to slow down and we ignore it. And then all of a sudden, we're sick and we don't have a choice. So I made this commitment to myself that from here on out, I commit to not stretching myself too thin and really paying attention to what my body is telling me when it is telling me it and not ignoring it anymore. And I want you guys to do the same. I feel that we as human beings in general think that we have to constantly be doing things in order to be successful, or in order to feel like we're making a difference. But if we're not taking time to relax and rejuvenate and really take care of ourselves, we're not good for anyone and our bodies are going to tell us one way or another when it is you know, officially time to sit the fuck down. So listen to your body and be grateful for your health and just really take in what's going on. You know, one thing I'm doing is inventory what I'm how I'm spending my time and I suggest you do this too. And look at your calendar and see what things you know, oh, like why do I have five podcast interviews in one day, that's a little much. So just really pay attention to that and make sure that you're if you need to schedule time for yourself, put it on your calendar, make it a priority, because I'm going to be doing the same. So anyways into today's episode, I'm so so excited to be back. And you know, releasing episodes again for you all and soon to be recording new interviews as well. So I just am very grateful for my health. So before I dive into the episode, as always, if you're loving the show, please leave me a review over on Apple podcasts so more people can find it and hear these amazing stories and get all of the tips for letting the good things into their lives too. And another thing if you want to talk to me, please reach out to me send me an email. My email is Amanda at Amanda acker.com Acker is spelled AC K E. R, I would absolutely love to

hear from you. Any suggestions you have Or if you want to be a guest, please let me know. I'm looking for guests who specifically have been incarcerated, suffered with addiction and or mental illness. So if you fit into those categories, please reach out I'd love to have you on right now. I'm pretty booked out. But I would love to meet you and talk about the possibility of having you on the show. And if you want to remain anonymous, that is totally fine. We can definitely still do that because I feel that all stories need to be heard. And we all need a voice. And I know that sometimes it's scary. So if you're not comfortable putting your name and face out there, that's totally fine. We can definitely work around that. My pleasure. Thanks for having me. So, um, I've never interviewed a criminal defense attorney before. So this is the first one. And I'm so grateful that you agreed to do this. I've been following you on LinkedIn for a while now and just see all the amazing things that you're doing for your community in California. So thank you, again for being here. So the first question I want to ask you is what made you want to get into criminal defense? So on today's episode, I interviewed a criminal defense attorney in California. His name is David Shapiro. David was arrested for a crime he admittedly did commit in 2004. David experienced firsthand the same fear, uncertainty and concern for his future and freedom so many of his clients undergo when arrested or under investigation for allegedly committing a crime. That experience motivated David to dedicate his career to helping good people regain control of their future when charged with a crime in addition to his accolades and accomplishments for his clients inside the courtroom, you can go to his website if you'd like to review those at WWW dot David Shapiro law.com backslash results. David's greatest joy is the work he does for the San Diego community via fundraisers, donations of money and time, and simply helping out wherever and whenever there is a need. David's firm has historically been connected with such great organizations such as the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, Second Chance Genesis recovery, and San Diego's friendship Soccer League, Soccer League, and he has many awards, and he previously . He's practicing exclusively criminal defense in San Diego since 2007. David has built one of San Diego's most respective criminal defense firms Since opening its doors in 2010. So this interview was great. It was fun. David talked a lot about his personal experiences, why he went into criminal defense and other things sprinkled in there. So take a listen. And I'd love to know your thoughts. Like I said earlier, email me Amanda at Amanda acker.com. Or find me over on Instagram at the let good things in show. So Much love to all of you. And without further ado, let's dive into today's episode. Hi David, thank you so much for being here.

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#### David Shapiro 07:04

Sure. Well, first off, I appreciate the kind words and compliments what made me want to get into criminal defense. Well, I grew up in New York. And I had two brothers older brothers than me one was a pretty much a career as a as an assistant district attorney in Brooklyn. The other one started as as a cop in New York with the NYPD and then transitioned into being a fireman. So I sort of grew up in criminal law with my two brothers, who are a big part of that a big influence on me. So I always sort of knew that I was going down that route, despite starting college with Eastern European International Business concentration, which last year, wow. Yeah, that lasted about a semester. And then I got that I got back to my roots. And then it was just really the matter of whether I was going to do criminal defense or prosecution. And when I was in college, when I would go back to New York, where I would you know, during winter breaks and summer breaks, I started working with a firm that had to contract for indigent defense. So pretty much the public defender's office of Staten Island, New York, was the contract was awarded to a private firm who would handle those types of cases. And at that point, I was leaning more and more towards the defense, you know, despite the prosecutorial and cop backgrounds, in my family, and then what really solidified it was on April 26, of 2004. I

got arrested when I was in law school. And, you know, I went through, you know, a relatively easy experience compared to what most of my firm's clients who are most criminally accused go through, I had the blessings of a family with, you know, an upper middle class background where resources were really not an issue. I had a general background in the law. I mean, I was in law school at the time. Yeah. And I was at I was still scared. I was still, you know, didn't know how this was gonna affect everything. I didn't know how long I was going to be in jail. Didn't know if it was if I just thrown away my law school career and the aspirations of being an attorney. And that at that moment that really solidified okay, this is this is in law school to be a criminal defense, sir.

**A** Amanda Acker 09:09

Wow. So you were so you experienced it from both sides. So you know, what it's like to have that fear of, you know, is my life now over as I imagined it being and you also know it from the side of, you know, seeing your brothers and what they were doing and then also being in law school, that's pretty remarkable that you were able to, you know, go through that experience and still want to work in criminal defense. So did you spend any time in jail, or were you

**D** David Shapiro 09:40

I did I mean, minor, you know, a day and change or whatever it was 20 something hours, but as I as I look back on it, that was the best thing that could have happened, one to me, and selfishly, the best thing that could have happened to my career. Because we literally our trademark slogan is we help good people regain control their future when charged with a crime, and even beyond, you know, becoming an attorney in California in 2007, the good person who needed help regaining control their future was me in 2004. So you know that that arrest did not derail any progress, it fueled it. And he gave me a story, I think they certainly relate to a lot of clients, I wrote a book about it in part. And I think that's one of the key differentiators with with the firm. And the team that we've assembled is, pretty much everyone here has some connection to the criminal justice system, in one way or another.

**A** Amanda Acker 10:35

Okay, wow. Um, so now that you're working in criminal defense, like, what? I don't know how to word this question off the top of my head, but you know, what do you see as like a commonality with your clients? Like, is there something because I've been in jail, I spent eight months in jail. And, you know, in my experience, you know, being in jail, and then getting out of jail, kind of seeing how the world viewed me or as, so I thought they viewed me right, from being incarcerated. But no one ever took the time to hear my story. So would you say that there's any type of common ground with people who are charged with some more more serious crimes?

**D** David Shapiro 11:21

Sure. I mean, it all it all really depends, right? We sort of, you know, we're big on not necessarily grouping anyone into one designated space, right? Because we tell our clients, hey, that's what the cops may do. That's what the DA's may do. Unfortunately, that's what the

hey, that's what the cops may do. That's what the DA's may do. Unfortunately, that's what the judges may do. Even worse than that. That's what a jury may do. Right? It's believable. But, you know, there's really two types of we see, there's the impulse, like a law abiding life, and then something happened, that probably will never happen again. But it was catastrophic. Yeah, that's more of just impulse control, sometimes it's alcohol, fuel, sometimes it's emotionally, whatever the case may be. And then there's, then there's the others that really have arguably not had much of a chance from the get go. And not necessarily been exposed to how they grew up. And understanding that a lot of those skills that they may have, that may make them good on the street, are transferable to real life to legal work, that will keep them out of prison, they'll be able to make them clean money, that could that could transcend generational wealth. So you know, we do a lot of work here in San Diego, working with organizations dealing with, you know, kids, like teenagers, who who really grow up and all they want to be is a rapper, an athlete or a pimp. If you're if you're if you're young, if you're young male, right, but that skill set, right, that mindset, that hustle mentality, we need to get these people with these kids and their parents, if possible, to transition that and turn them into CEOs, and turn them into to have that background and a backdrop if the athlete thing doesn't work. And that's something we see is that they're, they're really not exposed to how they can use their skills, how they can use the good things, they contribute to society for something other than the generation before them. And that's, that's really sad. And you know, it's gonna take a lot more people than us to fix it.

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Amanda Acker 13:14

Yeah, well, thank you for your efforts there. Because that's, you know, so needed. And, you know, there's a lot of stigma around, you know, people who are, you know, impacted by being incarcerated. And, you know, so with what you're doing with the youth over there, like, do you see a lot of resistance? Or are the kids generally open to it? Or is it kind of just a mixed bag, if you will, for lack of a better term there?

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David Shapiro 13:41

Yeah. I mean, it really, it really depends, right? Because at a certain, at a certain point, it's sad to say, but at a certain point, there are individuals who sort of, you know, they know one way, and they're more resistant to change. And they may be accepting to change within a closed one on one conversation, right, which unfortunately, in my job happens a lot of times in jail. Right. But the temptation when you're out in sentation, when you go back and you have to see people you grew up with, and that you have, you know, a lot of loyalty to and a lot of love for is easier said than done, right? A lot of people look at, oh, why can't they just go live with an aunt out of state or and get out of that? That's all they know. You know, that's all they know, that's a generational thing that this is what they're expected to do. And that's difficult to break. But I think there's been a shift in the last 5 10 years. So at least my involvement in the community here in San Diego, where we've seen a lot of organizations go even younger, and not to, you know, obviously still pour resources into 16, 17,18, 19, 20 year olds, but even go younger, go to the 10 year old go to the 11 year old who may be negatively impacted by what they're seeing their brother or their sisters get involved in. And really, really in middle school, start talking about some of those transferable skills that I alluded to earlier.

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Amanda Acker 14:55

Yeah. I like that because in middle school, you know, I see somewhere middle school I hated it

Yeah, I like that because in middle school, you know, I can remember middle school I hated it. Um, but those are, you know, formidable years, right? That's when you're starting to feel that sense of freedom and kind of getting out of that kid mentality to where you're able to kind of navigate life differently. So I think that's a perfect time to kind of come in and intervene and show them that there is a better way, and they don't have to follow these generational paths that they've seen, you know, their whole lives. And that's amazing. So as far as you know, your clients, and have you seen a lot of return clients, like, is there a problem with recidivism? Am I saying that right, is there

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David Shapiro 15:37

you are, you are? And listen I mean, you know, we we do, we do see a fair number of returning clients. And, you know, from a business perspective, that's a good thing from a, from a citizen perspective, it's not a good thing. Because, you know, we tell, we tell our clients that we have, it's okay, let's, we never hope that you need us again, we'd much rather have a distant friend of yours that have ever needed us reaches out. But we do see it, you know, we do see it at a decent level. And, you know, despite our, you know, idealism at times thinking that, you know, the bad decisions are going to end once they once they hire a good firm to represent them. And the impulse and the poor impulse decisions are going to stop, you know, they do return, because there's that, because there's that environment, because there's that willingness to take shortcuts because there's that willingness, maybe of not knowing better, or forgetting about all the the learned and all they said they were not going to do what they were inside. So we do see a decent level of recidivism. However, you know, we've seen some real great success stories I've done a lot of work with, with an organization here in San Diego called Second Chance. Strive is what it's known more nationally, you know, people getting out of custody, who may have been in custody for an extended period of time. And they're just begging for resources, they're begging for job training, they're begging to work legitimate jobs. And you know, we need more organizations like that to give them the skill set that they so desperately need. Because otherwise, the easy way, is going to get them continuing to commit new crimes, allegedly committed crimes and continue to trend to recidivism, we have to break that if we can't break it, when to 13, 14, 15. We got to break it the first time they get out.

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Amanda Acker 17:14

I agree with that wholeheartedly. Yeah, that was my next question, too, was, you know, over here, I got in Pittsburgh. So I don't see I've been googling and trying to find resources for formerly and incarcerated people. And it's I found literally one organization. And that's really sad. There needs to be more options available and more organizations stepping up to help us because I interviewed this woman who was also formerly incarcerated. And she's really well versed in the statistics of how many people have with criminal records, and you know, the workforce. And she said, that it adds up to the entire population of the state of California and Texas combined. And so many people with criminal records are denied jobs where they can actually sustain and have a clean, you know, legal life. And that's a huge problem. And I feel like these, you know, there's defy ventures, I don't know if you know anything about them. But I know they're in California, they're not here. I would love to bring them here, but they're not here. So would you say that there are a lot of resources available where you are maybe as compared to where I am for people trying to, you know, get out and do good?

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David Shapiro 18:34

Yeah, it certainly sounds that way, based on what you're telling me the lack of the lack of organizations and the lack of community resources out of out of Pittsburgh in the Greater Pittsburgh area. But yeah, I mean, and California has been pretty progressive as relates to it on the front end with alternatives to custody or programming, or drug court, you know, veterans court, mental health behavioral court, you know, there's a mental health diversion statute in California that that could, that can in essence, where you wouldn't even have to plead guilty if you meet certain criteria, and have a treatment plan that you that you successfully complete. So you know, California has come a long way they're there at the front, probably of the nation, which is not necessarily saying a whole lot. But you know, there's a lot of resources out here the issue is so there are these resources, there are these programs, but how we affect how we, in essence, getting that message to the people that need to hear it, you know, are we doing enough to get into the jails before people come out so they have a plan, that's the most dangerous thing is to get out of jail and not have a plan because you're gonna go back into comfort, and what's comfortable is gonna get you in and out and in and out. And the next thing you know, a 22 year old can be 45 years old and with a 25 page criminal history, and they're never going to get hired by anybody. You know, these are people that are hesitant to hire anybody with a misdemeanor. You know, in reality, if you get the right people background or not, you know, they may be the best workers you ever have.

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Amanda Acker 19:59

So true. Oh, and, you know, in my experience, you know, when I was incarcerated I was in county jail. I didn't go to prison think, thank goodness I did not does that was a possibility for me. But I remember getting out and like, I was just out, like I had no, I had didn't even have \$1 in my pocket to make a phone call. I was just like, out like, Okay, what's next, you know, and eventually I did find a program, but it took me doing all the legwork to find it and make it happen. And being who I am, I'm very, if I want something, I get it type person. So like, but for someone who might be, you know, scared to even ask for help. And, you know, having this stigma like I lived in, in this shame bubble for 13 years of my life after being out because I felt like I was less than I didn't deserve, you know, to have a good job. I didn't deserve these good things that I now have once I let go of that. But what would you tell someone who may have just got out or is facing charges? Or just in general who has a criminal record? Like what would you tell them? You know, what would your advice be to somebody who might be living in this like fear of speaking up and telling their truth about what they've been through?

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David Shapiro 21:18

Sure. I mean, the first thing we first thing we tell everybody, right? And this is, this is personal advice, whether it involves criminal justice or not, is you can't control anything about that's already happened, right? Whatever has happened has happened. But you do have varying degrees of control over what happens today, what happens tomorrow, what happens next week, next month, next year. And that's a real differentiator. And what you can do that to differentiate yourself from everybody else, is how you get up. Right? There's a saying that we have, that a good friend of ours taught us about answering the bell, about getting up off the mat, and how quick you get up, how strong you get up, how much you're willing to stay up, is really going to differentiate you from everybody else. And you can undo a lot of that past, right, and you get people to see you for who you are, not what you have done, or what you've been

convicted of. So you know, there is opportunity out there. It's just a matter of staying with it. And you also to a degree, and this is easy for me to say right is the owner of a business is talking about, you know, failing to plan is planning to fail. Right. But we have to get that message into people who like you have to have some resemblance of structure. And that's the biggest thing that we see a lot too, right in jail. It's it's easy to the sense of you have structure, you're told what to do. Yeah, you're told to do it. Yeah. And then you get out. And it's like, what do I do, and I work, you know, varying degrees of mentorship with people who've maybe been in custody 20 years ago, and maybe people that got out 20 days ago, and the advice is the same. Get a calendar, stick to it, and tell people what you're planning to do. Because even if you're even if you're comfortable letting yourself down, you might not be comfortable letting somebody else down that you told you're gonna go to DMV and get your license next Monday, you're gonna reach out about possibly getting a conviction expunged on Tuesday, and then hold those meetings and you know, who's going to do what, by when, hold yourself accountable. And that's a pathway to success.

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Amanda Acker 23:08

Yeah, that's true. I love that, you know, and it also comes down to, you know, making these decisions and sticking to them to not let yourself down, you know, because that was my issue for a long time because I'd be like, okay, like, I'm going to apply for a pardon, which I have not done. But you know, I'm gonna do this, I'm gonna do that. And then just, just not out of that, that fear of well, what if you're all these what ifs that we tell ourselves? Well, what if it doesn't work? And what if this was a waste of my time and energy, but then you're only selling yourself short. Because we all make mistakes, Right? And I know, you see it all the time. Like you said earlier, some people it's an impulse, you know, something that they never I, I was an impulse, criminal, so to speak, you know, you just, you make these decisions without thinking them through. And you make a mistake that could derail your life, if you let it. You know, and I love your slogan for your firm, you know, because it's true. Like we're all there's another thing that I love, too, is that we're all just trying to survive the only way we know how, and sometimes the only way we know how is going to land us somewhere we don't actually want to be, but we can't continue to beat ourselves up over that. Because at the end of the day, we all deserve good things in our lives. And I think we're all innately good people, right? For the majority of us, I'm sure there might be some people out there who aren't. But you know, innately I want to believe that we're all good people that are just living and trying to get through and get by with what we know. That's why I love what you're doing within the communities too, because helping these kids to see that there's a different way, then what they've been shown their whole lives is so important. So with that, you know, what was another question? So what else also are you doing with in your community? I know you said you're helping the youth and you mentioned something about mentorship. So what are you working with people as well who've already been incarcerated to kind of help them navigate their lives going forward?

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David Shapiro 25:15

Sure. When I first when I first came out here to California a lot, a lot of what I was doing was, was second chance and strive and strive had a thing called VIP mentors. I mean, 15 years ago, probably or so, where, where they paired at the time I was a new attorney, and they pair a new attorney with a new parolee. So someone out of prison is paired with a new attorney, and you know, you got lunch, you go to a baseball game, you talk and whatnot, started doing stuff with

that. And obviously, the focus of what we do at my firm, is, it's not we don't do appellate stuff, you know, we don't do a ton of, you know, a ton of juvenile stuff, a lot of it is your 18 to let's say, you know, 50 year old client, male or female, that is an active investigation or an active court case. So initially, when I first became an attorney, I was doing a lot of after the fact that people getting out. And I did a lot of work with second chance, being class champion, which is sort of like an advisor to the, to the to the instructor, where you show up in classes and do a couple of presentations and, and really get to interact with the individuals and see the metamorphosis of, of shyness and uncertainty, and maybe not wanting to be there and week one, to less than a week to week three, the dress clothes come out with they're expected to dress like they're like to go out on a job interview every day. And then by the time of graduation, you see these personalities just overflowing, and pride. And some of these individuals that are graduating for the first time in their life, they stuck to it, even though it's only four to five weeks. But it really set up for a pathway to success. The last couple of years we've been working and again, it's I'm not necessarily spearheading a lot of the work with youth, but we're supporting a lot of organizations here in San Diego that are, you know, and raising funds for that there's a lot of work even even something along the lines of You know, reading rooms and libraries. You know, stuff along those lines working with kids about the transferable skills that we talked about, you know, hustling, smart, savvy, good at sales, opens up a lot more doors than just being a pimp, a drug dealer rapper. Right? Yeah, being able to, and it's going to be easy, and it's gonna be natural. And that's what I look for. When I look for someone, you know, who I think is going to be good at a role. I want someone who's well rounded right now, you know, admittedly right there, but my attorney pool is limited for people of serious or violent felonies. Unfortunately, not necessarily going to be an attorney, despite how good they may be at it. But in general, you know, whenever we're hiring somebody here at the firm or whatnot, whether an assistant role or even as an attorney, we look for people that have that connection to the justice system. So we've done some work with youth, a lot of organizations or play that we support, whether it's golf outings, fundraisings, you know, giving our time and and we want to do more and more of that, you know, as the years go on.

**A** Amanda Acker 28:02

Yeah, I love that. And thank you for doing that. And, you know, so another question that I thought of, I hope it makes sense to you. But I wanted to know, like, what would your definition of second chances be when it comes to people who have been justice impacted?

**D** David Shapiro 28:19

Well, I wouldn't, I wouldn't limit it to second being that you only get two or you only get one, right, some people may need more. And they are even there even a greater success stories. There is a second chance organization that you know, that there's people that are 20 that are graduating that that Job Readiness Training Program, and as people that are 65, and it's just as sweet if not even nicer to see the to see the 65 year old graduate than it is that it is a 20 year old who may still have their whole life ahead of you know, Second Chance can be anything could be it could be outside of criminal justice system. But the reality is that if someone wants to change, even if they're expressing hesitation about it, but if there's some interest in changing, somebody needs to do something to help them. Yeah. Right. Because that's the worst feeling in the world when someone tries, and all they need is someone to believe in them or all they need is someone to take some time out of their day to help them I'm not talking

about money. I'm not talking about you know, give someone a job on the spot. Just even simple as hey, we're gonna talk for one hour a week for the next two months to get yourself on your feet. Right and when your like as a mindset coach, you know, that's that's super valuable. I've seen it I've worked with a couple of people graduates of have programs like second chance. And you know, admittedly it may only last dynamic and that relationship may only last two, three months and they may go off into the sunset right and enjoy their life. And they don't need someone like me to keep them focused anymore, which is beautiful. Yeah. But it's when someone's ready. Doesn't necessarily mean their second time or whatnot. No one's perfect. I be hypocritical to say that. You know, the night I got arrested in the night I got in trouble was the only time I did something stupid that deserve to get locked up. And I think we need to check ourselves and understand that a lot of times a lot of people that society wants to shun or wants to turn their back to wants to just talk about helping but not putting the time the money or the effort to help. We've all sort of been there in varying degrees, and someone's given us a second chance, even if it's outside the criminal justice system. And we owe it back to those who need us most.

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Amanda Acker 30:26

I agree with that wholeheartedly. And the thing about, I like what you said about like, the kind of like a mindset coach, that's so true, because, you know, I can only talk from my own personal experience, but you know, that would have helped me tremendously. Like if somebody would have said, Hey, Amanda, simply just asking, are you okay? You know, just these simple things that when I know, from my experience, you know, I felt like, I didn't deserve it, because no one ever asked, no one ever showed me a different way, you know, so no, I didn't go to jail again, thank goodness, but I kept repeating the same behaviors, you know, it just was like a cycle, because you, you know, once something traumatic happens in your life, and, you know, it can stem from childhood, you know, you sort of have this repeat cycle in your mind, I'm not good enough, I only deserve this, and you find yourself in these dark places. But then you tell yourself, well, this is what I deserve. And then there's no one there to really show you the other way. Like I got interviewed the other day on a podcast. And one of the questions he asked me was, well, who was there? Who was your shining light? And I was like, no one. And if they were there, like, I didn't notice, you know, and I think we have to make more of an effort to, like you said to to help those who want it, there's a difference between someone who wants it and someone who doesn't, obviously, you know, because you can tell you what is that saying you can't lead, you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make them drink or something like that.

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David Shapiro 31:54

Exactly. We say we say it all the time to clients that are just not, you know, holding up their end of it. It's like, it's like, we can't want this more than you. Yeah, right. But at the same time, if they show an effort, we need we need to be there to help. Yeah. Right. And that's just part of being a good person. That's part of being a good citizen. You know, that's, that's the type of stuff that I talked to my six year old daughter about basic principles of being a good citizen, it's not a political thing. It's not a religious thing. It's not anything other than just being a decent human being.



**A** Amanda Acker 32:26

Exactly, yeah. And we need more of that in this world. Because there's so many good people out there who are stuck in that shame cycle and feel like they don't deserve anything, because society is telling them that right, like, when I got out of jail there, I didn't hear oh, Amanda, you're still worthy, you could still have nice things it was, don't tell anyone, you know, whether it was from someone who, you know, may have been saying that out of love for me or other criminals that I was living with in the three quarter house, you know, I was that was ingrained in me you don't, don't tell, you know, you keep if they asked you on a job application, just say, No, they won't find out, you know, like, things like that. And then you believe that, you know, and then you hide your truth. And I think the stories of people who have been incarcerated who even those who are still incarcerated, like they need to be heard, because we're human first. We all are human first.

**D** David Shapiro 33:21

What we what I've seen a lot of to even even through these job readiness training programs are people that are ashamed to, you know, even they may have had jobs in custody, in jail or in prison, and that they don't want to talk about that that work experience was as good if not better than anybody that's going to be applying to the jobs in the outside, and arguably, in a more difficult setting. So you know, someone, someone who's someone who's a trustee, at county jail, who's serving the deputy sheriff's dinner, or serving the sheriff's banquets or preparing food for hundreds of hundreds of people, right? Arguably, that's a more difficult job. Some of that's working with people who society wants to label felons, criminals, whatnot, arguably, is more difficult a working environment than if you work in a professional work environment where everyone knows, hey, this is how it's supposed to be. So and a lot of a lot of it too, is unfortunate, like you were talking about people get out, or they get ingrained a certain way of life. Whether you know, it's not their fault, whether it's part their fault, whether it's all their fault, and they get they get comfortable. And whether you know whether you're whether you're a justice involved individual, whether you're the owner of a gigantic corporation, or whether you're somewhere in between, the worst thing for you is when you're comfortable, yes, important to in a good way, you know, to embrace the uncomfot because uncomfot you have to be uncomfotable in order to grow. And we always want to be growing. We always want to be evolving no matter what your background is, no matter what do you think your limitations are, you know, being uncomfotable as it is in many instances is a good thing, because that means you're growing or at least setting the seeds to grow.

**A** Amanda Acker 34:55

I agree with that and fear you know that fear of Yeah, can you think of something like, oh, I want to do this? Oh, but I'm scared. You know that that's a sign that that's what you need to be doing. Right? Like, that's what I've learned through through my experience, you know, that fear is telling you something, it's not there for no reason. It's telling you like, you're scared, because what if it falls apart? But you'll never know if you don't try.

**D** David Shapiro 35:20

Right? And the present problem is to like you said, right, you someone asked you that question, which what was your who's your shining light? You know, if there's if there's no one there to

when what was your who's your shining light? You know, if there's, if there's no one there to pick you up, and there's no one there to say, okay, I get it, you're scared. But let me give you an example. Right, you have to come over, overcome this. And a lot of it too, is what we see, especially with with 18, 19 year olds, they just don't know how good it could be any other way. You know, Senator, like, I'm going to do all this, I'm going to be so uncomfortable for what a life they've never lived the life that their parents have never lived a life that their brothers or sisters or cousins have never lived. So it's almost like you're talking about this world they don't even know exists. And that's, you know, that's why these programs and investing money time and resources back into the community into these programs gives them a taste of what life could be. Yeah, you know, and then you could visualize it. And then you have a dream, you have a goal to be something other than what you're told you can or should be.

**A** Amanda Acker 36:14

Yeah, that's very true. Yeah, I like that, you know, because it's important that we have role models, right. That's why these organizations exist. But I think we have to also do a better job, like you said earlier of letting others know that they do exist, because maybe here in Pittsburgh, hey, maybe they do exist, but I can't find them. So how is anyone else supposed to find them? You know, I know we have drug court, we do have drug court. But you know, it has to be more accessible so that more people can benefit from it and not feel so alone, you know, coming out of jail with a felony record, like that's very, like, you feel like everybody knows, and you're like hiding from the world. But you know, when you open up and see the world, there's so many others just like you, but if you don't know about the resources, or the support groups, or whatever it is you're looking for even exists, you're never gonna find that. And that's part of why I started this podcast was to highlight that. And you know, even though I don't have the resources, like if someone listens to my show, like, they'll know, like, oh, Amanda was here, or her guest was where I was, and they won't feel alone anymore. And they'll be able to hear the other side, like, look, this is what you still can't have, despite that, right?

**D** David Shapiro 37:26

yeah, very, very important. Very, very important, what you're doing what what anyone's doing within that, within that, right, because you never know where you're going to get the motivation from, it doesn't always have to be an organized structure program doesn't have to be, you know, a probation or parole officer who actually invested the time to get to know you and suit your conditions that will maximize your chance of success. It could be just your clicking for a podcast and you hear something that opens a door and it's like that in life, it's it goes well beyond having a criminal record or anything along those lines. You never know what opportunity you're gonna do something good, could open up 35 other doors for you that are that much better. And that's all part of that willing to take that chance and believing in yourself and having that confidence. But that's got to come from somewhere. And you need a lot of people along the way. And you still need that support. And almost like a almost like a mindset coach almost at every level of your personal growth, to make sure that you're continuing to grow, and you're continuing to move forward.

**A** Amanda Acker 38:25

Yeah, I agree with that. Well, thank you, David. This has been a very enlightening conversation. But if you're interested in finding more resources, then find some social media, something like?

But if anyone wanted to find you, where could they find you on social media email website?

**D** David Shapiro 38:39

Sure website is [www.David P. Shapiro.law.com](http://www.DavidP.Shapiro.law.com). So it's D A V I D, the letter P is in Phillip sh a P IRL law, le w.com. On social media at Twitter, I am at DP Shapiro. And on Instagram, it's David P. Shapiro law, and our phone number at the office 619-295-3555.

**A** Amanda Acker 39:05

Well thank you, David, I just have one last question. I asked this to all of my guests. And I just want to know what your number one tip for our listeners would be to allow the good things into their lives?

**D** David Shapiro 39:19

Get comfortable being uncomfortable. That's the key. You have to you have to embrace it. Because if you're if you're stagnant, the good things may be around you, but they're always gonna seem out of reach. If you understand that in order to grow, you're going to feel uncomfortable, you're going to have to work through self doubt. You're going to have to hear other people as you jump them on the ladder, doesn't mean you're doing anything wrong. It just means you're growing at a different rate than they might and that may be uncomfortable. It's uncomfortable at every level of your life. But if you're comfortable being uncomfortable, the sky's the limit

**A** Amanda Acker 39:53

Love that. Well, thank you again, David for being here.

**D** David Shapiro 39:57

My pleasure.

**A** Amanda Acker 39:58

And as a reminder to everyone Listening remember you're stronger than you think and you can have the life you imagine regardless of your past. Make sure to hit that follow or subscribe button so you don't miss an episode of the show and I will talk to you all soon.