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Angela East-Jaschen Highlights Compassionate Leadership, Launches Support Firm for Small Businesses

Speaking on “Live with Laura,” Angela East-Jaschen described her new business model helping small businesses access professional services affordably, and explained her belief in leading with empathy to build strong, motivated teams.

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Angela East-Jaschen shares her 30-year journey in St. Croix, spanning finance, healthcare, and entrepreneurship. By. WOMEN IN BUSINESS VI & CARIBBEAN INC.

Angela East-Jaschen’s journey is one of purpose, adaptability, and steady leadership shaped over three decades in St. Croix. Her career path—spanning roles in finance, rum production,

healthcare, and entrepreneurship—was the focus of a conversation with Laura Forbes during a special Women's History Month episode of “Live with Laura,” aired exclusively on VI Consortium platforms.

Thirty years ago, Ms. East-Jaschen graduated from college in Virginia Beach and almost immediately set off for St. Croix, in search of adventure. “I came here with \$250 that my great aunt slipped into my palm as I walked out the door,” she told Forbes.

In the three decades that has elapsed, Ms. East-Jaschen worked as a “rum runner,” as she termed it, ending up employed with the Cruzan Rum distiller as their financial controller for over a decade. “Then I went into healthcare, still utilizing my financial background because that's always been my strength.” Towards the end of her time in the medical field, she “became a vaccine runner during Covid.” Ms. East-Jaschen moved on to becoming “an oxygen runner,” managing the oxygen supply at Carib Supply.

Ms. East-Jaschen says her affinity for leadership roles began early. “I participated in 4H growing up, I became active in student government, went on to be student body president of my university.” She particularly enjoys “bringing people together, finding success, [and] moving towards an ultimate goal that you share.” This passion for leadership, Ms. East-Jaschen says, is what prompted her to seek a master's degree in Strategic Leadership. She also ascribes her success in various leadership positions throughout her career to the genuine enthusiasm she possesses.

Leadership to Ms. East-Jaschen does not mean barking orders and directing her human resources around like chess pieces on a board, however. “I found success leading teams with a compassionate, empathetic heart.” While success in any business often depends on the productivity of its employees, “you also need to take care of the people that are gathering every day to meet that goal,” she asserted. “Compassion has done me well as a leader, and particularly in times of struggles,” she said, referencing the difficult period post-2017 hurricanes, as well as during the Covid-19 pandemic. “I have found that during times like that, in particular, people are more willing to give if they feel that you care about them deeply.”

That feeling, she warned, cannot be artificially manufactured. “It needs to be something that comes from the heart. People need to really know that you care about their wellbeing.” With this kind of empathetic relationship established between leader and those lower in the organizational hierarchy, “there's no limit to how successful that type of leadership style can be,” Ms. East-Jaschen said.

Like Iveliz Petersen said [in her comments](#) during the same program, doing business in the territory is challenging. “Working in a geographically isolated area, your resources are limited,” Ms. East-Jaschen concurred. “Not only resources that we need to survive on a daily basis, but your human resources.” This is why compassionate, empathetic leadership is so crucial, she argued. “People feel valued, and they want to be here, they want to be part of your team.”

Now, Ms. East-Jaschen is running her own business, making various industry experts available to small business and medical practices that may not have the finances to hire someone with the needed skillset on a full-time basis. “I want to make this truly affordable for small business and medical practices,” she told Ms. Forbes, explaining the lack of pre-set consultancy fees for her services.

Ms. East-Jaschen has also poured her passion for leadership into organizing an event dubbed “Leaders who Lunch”. She describes it as “micro-learning in an hour and a half,” where guest

speakers deliver talks on various subjects as attendees dine.

The concept of leadership, she concluded, is often conflated and confused with occupying a position in a business or organization. “I don't believe that,” she rebutted. “Particularly with women, we want to lead our own lives and be leaders in our own lives and choose how we go about the day...how we reach our goals...and who we give our energy to,” she said.

“I like to call it the ripple effect – the way that you go into your day, is going to bring the same thing back to you.” Those who take good care of themselves, plan the day's activities, and move forward with that energy will receive the same positive energy from those they interact with throughout the day, Ms. East-Jaschen argued, as she encouraged women across the territory to fully step into leadership roles in their own lives.

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