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2019 Women in Construction: Becky Rupel, Landscape Architect at Copley Wolff Design Group

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How many years have you been in your current field? 7

What are you doing differently in 2019 that has had a positive impact on your career? So far this year, I've made an effort to do more things completely unrelated to my workload at the office – reading for fun, trying new group fitness classes, working on projects around the house. I've found that I'm more focused and energized, and have more diverse creative inspiration.

What was your first job and what did you learn from it? My very first job was scooping ice cream and singing for tips at a Cold Stone Creamery. It seems simple, but one of the most important things I learned was to acknowledge every customer that came in the door even when we were crazy busy. I still try to use that approach with clients because I know that the waiting can be stressful, especially when you're not feeling seen or heard.

Who are three women – living or dead – that you would like to have drinks with and why? Rachel Carson, Alice Waters, and Rosalind Franklin. Their bodies of work inspire me, period. The fact that they were in the gender minority of their respective fields is kind of icing on the cake. I would be interested to hear all three talk about their work and its cultural context, because it seems like they each homed in on these somewhat subversive topics that were way ahead of their time.

What were your biggest fears when you started out in your profession? When I first started practicing, my fears tended to be inwardly focused. I was afraid of being reprimanded for mistakes, or that a poorly executed deliverable or project would reflect badly on me. Over the past seven years, I've leaned in to the idea of serving and supporting my clients and colleagues, and rooting for the project and the end users, taking ego out of the equation as much as possible. That shift in perspective also helped me realize the importance of building relationships and working effectively with the incredibly talented teams around me.

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