Corey Andrew Powell:

Hello everyone. I am Corey Andrew Powell. And welcome to another episode of Motivational Mondays, presented by the NSLS, where we are now impacting over 2 million members nationwide. Now, today we're also excited to be joined by Nikki Holmes, also known as NL Holmes, a prolific novelist with 13 published books, including the Lord Hanni Mysteries, and the Empire at Twilight Series. And she's had a fascinating life overall before becoming a writer. She spent two decades as a nun, then pursued careers in archeology and education. Think he's also lived in places as diverse as Greece in Israel and northern France. In her background, in ancient history, greatly influences her storytelling. Nikki, welcome to Motivational Mondays.

N.L. Holmes:

Thank you, glad to be here.

Corey Andrew Powell:

It's my pleasure. And I do wanna clarify, because you do go by NL as an author. Uh, may I refer to you as Nikki, or do you prefer

N.L. Holmes:

Oh, please, yeah. Yeah, that's my name though.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Okay, wonderful. Wonderful. Well, um, first, also a really quick shout out to Northern France. Um, I love Northern France as well. Oh, <laugh>. Everyone goes to Paris, but yeah, you know,

N.L. Holmes:

We're about 55 minutes by high speed trains.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Not too far. Oh, wonderful. Oh, that's beautiful. Yeah, my first time in Europe was, uh, actually Paris, and I thought it was great, but then when I went to Samo and San Michelle, I was like, oh my gosh, this is amazing. So anyway, I share that love of that territory with you. So let's begin with your, uh, interesting career. As I said before we started recording, like, actually, you know, to me your life almost seems like a novel, <laugh>. It is like a, you know, it's like got all the elements there, you know. So I'd just love to just start with the be the beginning with your career shifts, if you will. So can you share what led you to leave the convent after two decades to then pursue archeology?

N.L. Holmes:

Well, it's, it's a little hard to, uh, to describe, but it, it had been, um, a difficult time. And then I, I sort of perceived that, um, I was no longer in the place where I should be, that it had served its purpose for my, for me, and I had served my purpose for the community and for the church. So there was something else waiting for me. And, uh, I went through all the official channels, waited, you know, months and over a year and, uh, got an official dispensation and everything legal. Mm-hmm.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Wow. I didn't realize that there is a, I mean, I, I guess many people don't realize that there is a process, right.

N.L. Holmes:

Which it's, it's a legal process because you've changed state. It's, it's like a divorce in the sense that you actually, your status changes when you leave.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Hmm.

N.L. Holmes:

Wow. And then there's a kind of a probationary period once you've left, too, just to be sure you're serious about it.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Okay. And that, that period would allow you then basically to say, Hey, I, I've changed my mind, or, yes,

N.L. Holmes:

Exactly.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Okay. Well, it's fascinating too, thinking about the trajectory. Well, let me just first say when it comes to, we're a leadership podcast, and one component I don't wanna skip over is the, what you just said, the admission of knowing when something for you feels like it's served, its, it's, it's run its course, or, you know, it's served its purpose. And having that honest conversation with yourself about, you know, am I happy? What's next for me? That's a really important component.

N.L. Holmes:

Yeah. And, and as you say, this is about leadership. So what kind of precipitated my departure was the fact that I could see for the latest vote for the prior, as every few years we had an election to, to choose the, the leader of the community. And I could see that I was going to get elected soon, you know, it was moving in that direction. So, uh, I didn't feel that would've been an honest choice on my part to accept leadership when I, I had, was already, you know, taking off in my mind mm-hmm <affirmative>. So that, um, that had to be considered, to be honest,

Corey Andrew Powell:

Actually. Yeah. Yep. That's another great point. Because you can't lead anyone with clarity if you are yourself in some sort of like, conflict of, you know, where you're supposed to be. So, another great, another great point. Now, I also think on some hands, what's interesting is some people may think, you know, wow, from none to archeologists to novelist, but when you look at, I guess, the origin, of course, of the Bible, let's just say, and all the sort of ancient biblical books or, or, or religious books, I mean, it seems to me really logical <laugh> that

N.L. Holmes:

Someone I felt like it was too.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Yeah. I mean, from all the, the learnings and teachings that go with the Bible, I mean, it's, it's this ancient mystery filled book that's somewhat cryptic and has all the entities and the spirits, and it's got all the things that are sort of just really, uh, just almost seemingly like they are themselves in conflict. People argue fictitious. I mean, that's always one of the big arguments people make about religious books. But, uh, the components are there for the interest you would take on.

N.L. Holmes:

Absolutely. It's, uh, and, and actually biblical archeology, it was part of my focus. Uh, it was Greece and the, the Near East to Lavan, so I excavated in Israel and everything, and that was very much in my mind. And it was actually real historical events that sparked my interest in writing fiction, because as you say, the the elements are all there, the drama and the, the, the bigger than life characters and mm-hmm <affirmative>. Just, you know, a histori can't take it beyond the few little clues that we have, but Yeah. Yeah. But a, a novelist can

Corey Andrew Powell:

Mm-hmm <affirmative>. Well, exactly. And it's almost like, um, if I look at that sort of this, that golden age in Hollywood where it was basically the biblical films that were Yeah. That were brought to the big screen, and, you know, and they brought them epically from the, the Red Sea splitting to <laugh> everything, Samson, Delilah, and the hair growing back. And I mean, you know, it, those books, uh, those stories are just so rich with all those textures. So for me, I just also figured, um, there's a sort of a disconnect though. I'm wondering how did it go from being the arch archeological, uh, presence to then saying, I wanna write about this stuff and then make your own sort of variations of those stories, if you will.

N.L. Holmes:

Well, um, when I was teaching, uh, for one thing, I taught a class in ancient Egypt, so that, that was lurking in the back of my mind. But what really sort of pushed me over was I had a, a course, uh, called Ancient Near Eastern Empires. And in it we discussed the Hitite Empire and, uh, their vassal states in Syria, one of which was, uh, the city state of Ugarit, which is now in modern Syria. And there were a few documents there that found, that had, uh, talked about a certain royal divorce in the 13th century BC and we had just a few little snippets, one from the king himself and one from the brother of the wife. And, and they just, each one told a little piece of a story and, but not filling in anything. And so just as an exercise in reading ancient documents, I gave these things to my students and said, reconstruct what happened? And, uh, it was fascinating what they came up with. But, you know, it was quite clear that almost anything you could say that was a coherent account was as much fiction as historiography. So I thought to myself, when I retire, I'm going to turn this into a novel. And that's, that's how my first story got got going.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Wow. Yeah. And that's also great too, because it's another trajectory for you. You know, people think, well, what am I gonna do now in retirement? You're like, no, I have a whole other thing I'm gonna do in retirement.

N.L. Holmes:

There was no problem thinking of things to do in my retirement. <laugh>

Corey Andrew Powell:

<laugh>. Yeah, I can imagine. Because you had done so much, you're like, this is my time now, I'm gonna figure this out. Um, so, and that's what you would say sparked that whole sort of experience. Is that what sparked your, your interest in the ancient civilizations as sort of like the, the, the crux of a lot of the stuff you write about?

N.L. Holmes:

Yes. Uh, my first, my earliest series was taking a historical figure from the Hittite Empire and kind of taking each generation, uh, in which he figured, so his childhood, but taken from the point of view of another character, a fictional character, well, he wasn't fictional, but, um, a minor character mm-hmm <affirmative>. And then talking more about the, the person, the king himself, and then, and another one, uh, one of his children, and then somewhere else, something that happened in, uh, you know, a vassal state 500 miles away, but during his reign and just so they're, they're not really a coherent story, but they're linked by the time and place, a kind of a, a, a joined world. Mm-hmm <affirmative>. Uh, the other stories have been more directly sparked, uh, by an arc, a historical arc. Um, and that was the Lord Hani series, which you mentioned, because Hani himself was a, a real life character. He was a diplomat whose name occurs in a number of, um, references in what we call the Amarna letters. That's a, a set of ancient, uh, correspondence, diplomatic correspondence that were found that cover the reigns of Alman A and his father. Mm-hmm <affirmative>. Ii mm-hmm. Mm-hmm <affirmative>. So, you know, I took each little mention of, and tried to work them into a set of stories, so different adventures you might say, of this, uh, diplomat, this real life diplomat.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Hmm. So, I was wondering too, if you think like there is a core correlation between what you're writing and what you're sort of, I mean, you're, in essence, you're filling in the gap, so to speak, creatively for these stories where there's holes in them. And so how much are you drawing from actual fantasy or, uh, versus the references for how things are today politically, socially, like those constructs? Are you sort of weaving those in?

N.L. Holmes:

Yeah. Not deliberately, but you can't avoid the, the parallels, let's put it that way.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Mm-hmm

N.L. Holmes:

<affirmative>. Right. When I was writing, um, the book, my book about Syrian refugees, it was the moment when there were Syrian refugees pouring out of the country after the fall of, uh, Asad there. And I was writing about a plague in Egypt, and there was covid happening in our own country. And, uh, the Lord Hani series deal largely with the, the, uh, agos of conscience of a, a man employed by a corrupt government, and how he had to deal with the split loyalty between his conscience, on the one hand, his, his religious values, and on the other hand, his, uh, his loyalty to the king and, and his oath to serve the country. So I guess you just can't get away from the, the modern politics, and it just, uh, it repeats itself over and over.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Yeah, that's a great point, too. It's not like it's, it is not like it's unlikely to have happened originally. No.

N.L. Holmes:

<laugh>. No, it's,

Corey Andrew Powell:

Yeah, we're just like on the fifth repeat of all of the same things,

N.L. Holmes:

Different costumes, that's a mm-hmm

Corey Andrew Powell:

<affirmative>. Yeah. Apparently we just, uh, haven't learned our lesson sometimes throughout history we try, but I'm not sure if it always works. Yeah. Now, um, I know for my own personal experience when it comes to the idea of being an archeologist, when I was like, about 10 or 11 years old, and my family first got cable TV and I, you know, snuck up one night watching something, I was supposed to be sleeping, not watching, and there was a film called Summer Lovers about these kids who go to Greece, and they, they were doing, they'd be an archeologist. Oh. And I was fascinated. The film was a little provocative, um, but I was fascinated by the archeology story. I was always watching the digs and the beautiful scenery, because they would be all in different parts of Greece. And I had never seen anything like that from Trenton, New Jersey. So,

N.L. Holmes:

<laugh>,

Corey Andrew Powell:

I think it's an early, for me, oddly enough, it, it sparked an interest in like, I wanna see the world. So you got to do that, obviously. And you also, you also recovered artifacts, like you actually found actual

N.L. Holmes:

Things. Yeah. Um, and, and everyone asked what was the most interesting or exciting thing you found? And it's, it's a kind of a humble thing, really. But I, I found it very moving. Uh, when I was excavating on the island of Crete, we, uh, it was a manoan town, a port town, and we found, um, a large pot that was broken into 250 some odd pieces. Hmm. And, uh, when we put it back together, you could see that there were hand prints all over it. Someone's stubby little hand had made black prints all over this pot, and you could actually see the fingerprints on it. And it was just so personal. You, you knew it could only have been one person in the history of the universe who could have made those prints mm-hmm <affirmative>. Yeah. And it was as if they were reaching up out of the past to say, remember me. It was just, uh, it was better for me than all the architectural wonders or the, you know, whatever, gold or somehow Yeah.

Corey Andrew Powell:

<laugh>. Right. I know. Yeah. 'cause people would think something, oh, something big and grandiose, you know? Yeah. Found the silver chalice of

N.L. Holmes:

This personal thing. Yeah. This person actually

Corey Andrew Powell:

Mm-hmm <affirmative>. Yeah. That is fascinating, because you do get to see that. Um, I think that's the, that's that correlation between realizing that although we sort of distance ourselves from these things in museums and, um, archeological digs, but, you know, we forget that they're, that's an actual representation of real folks. <laugh> who walked the planet, they walked the planet before we got here. Yeah. Hmm. And in your empire, uh, Twilight series. And so that's a bit of a, a different approach, but also it has historical accuracy, right. And creative storytelling. So, um, I just wonder, like, what is another realm, I guess, of that genre that you might want to explore? Or is it just basically always sort of, you know, your books are gonna be pretty much in this ancient civilization place?

N.L. Holmes:

Well, uh, I've considered maybe someday writing a of fantasy because the wor the idea of world building is so similar to historical fiction mm-hmm <affirmative>. Uh, but I haven't yet done that. Really. Yeah. I figured that anyone who can write can write a book, a modern book, but only someone with, you know, some, uh, interest or knowledge of the past can, can do a convincing job of writing a, a historical fiction. So for the time being, I guess I'm satisfied where I'm, yeah. I may change, uh, civilizations mm-hmm

Corey Andrew Powell:

<affirmative>. Yeah. I mean, they say stick with what works. So as well as that's working, <laugh>,

N.L. Holmes:

Well, seems like

Corey Andrew Powell:

It's doing pretty good.

N.L. Holmes:

Not everybody is interested in the deep past, uh, the Bronze Age where I, I live mm-hmm <affirmative>. But, um, they are interested in Egypt by and large. So I thought that would be a, a good place to settle. Mm-hmm

Corey Andrew Powell:

<affirmative>. Yeah. That does seem like that's never waned, like Egypt as an interest, you know, for Yeah. Um, all humanity. And I guess it's just because of how it's positioned as far as like, being really the, the cradle of civilization or Africa, the whole continent in general. But yeah, I, I think that's, that's always going to be a rich area where fiction and truth can sort of like coexist and there's a whole lot of great content

N.L. Holmes:

That

Corey Andrew Powell:

Can be made.

N.L. Holmes:

It is, it is a wonderful, uh, rich and amazingly advanced civilization for its time. Mm-hmm

Corey Andrew Powell:

<affirmative>. I know we see a lot of those documentaries about how they build those pyramids and, you know, and there's still, there's no definitive answer, but we do know that it would've seemingly be impossible with that level of accuracy. And so, I don't know, do you subscribe to any theories like Aliens helped?

N.L. Holmes:

No, I, I don't think we need to go that far afield. I think humans are perfectly capable of doing amazing things. Mm. Uh, if it, it's coordination and, you know, mobilization of vast labor forces. Right. And, uh, just patience and skill. And they made beautiful jewelry too, but I, I haven't heard anyone say that. It must have been extraterrestrials who made their wool. It's <laugh>, right?

Corey Andrew Powell:

Yeah. I know. It's always, um, I had a really good friend, um, who was, he's Egyptian kid named Nader, and he was so annoyed at this idea that, you know, uh, Egyptians had help from, from, you know, extraterrestrials. He said, you know, it's kind of offensive 'cause we are a really, we were a brilliant society, and, you know, that's who we were. And, um, and one day, um, at work, I said to him, I asked him something, I said, oh, did you get that item from the desk? He goes, yes, I took one of my eight arms and I got it

N.L. Holmes:

<laugh>. And I

Corey Andrew Powell:

Was like, oh, okay. I get it. I'm sorry Nader <laugh>. But he was, but we know, we don't realize that, you know, things like that can actually be a bit of a reductive.

N.L. Holmes:

Well, yeah. And when you think about it as if humans couldn't do that, or as if, uh, you know, Egyptians or Africans or whatever couldn't do it.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Yeah. That's fascinating. I love that because, um, it makes you look at it, it makes you, it makes you actually like, sort of abandon this idea that there was like a flying spaceship, and think about the ingenuity of humanity. Like, everything that we've done to this point is from that level of invention, really. Right.

N.L. Holmes:

So you stood on the shoulders of those who went before us.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Hmm. Yeah. That's, that's terrific. And, um, when it comes to sort of like the historical aspect of, of the real stories that you're telling and then bringing the, the, the ancient history, then bringing the fantasy together, I wonder how do you sort of balance making it approachable and digestible for readers? Because there's a point where if it's too far one way or the other, you don't know if it's isolating or too deep or too complex. So how do you find that balance?

N.L. Holmes:

Yeah. That, that is a tricky thing. And I guess every author solves it at a different line. Mm-hmm <affirmative>. Uh, I, I've tried to be rigorously authentic. Uh, if I ever deviate from any known fact, I've, I've let readers know that in my historical preface, but on the other hand, you don't want it to be just clotted with his historicity, you know, too many details or forcing stuff down people's throats. And I've read books like that where they, you just feel like, okay, I know you're learn it, or you've studied this, or whatever. Uh, so I want it to be, first of all, a good novel, a good story. Mm-hmm. And I want the, the human nature, the characters to be authentic as, as human beings, first of all. And as Egyptians and the secondary, you know, level. Mm-hmm. I think if people can, can identify with the characters as humans and see how much we share with people of any age and any society that, uh, that, that will make it approachable. Mm-hmm. Uh, for example, you know, the, all the battles and treaties and things we study in history, well, those battles were fought in the midst of real people and families suffered. They had to flee. They were, had people killed. It was, it was something that we as a, as a race are familiar with today too. So I don't think it should be remote if it's well handled, you know? Mm-hmm <affirmative>. If it isn't overdone on the authenticity side.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Yeah. And when you just said how, you know, when you're reading a book that seems overly complicated or, or almost authentically, like ose Yes. Yeah. You're almost saying to the author like, okay, I get it. You know, you went to Harvard, but can you bring me into <laugh>? Can you make it easier for me? It's like, they're almost like showing off and they're not. Yeah,

N.L. Holmes:

Exactly. I, I have that feeling sometimes.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Hmm. Interesting. So your background, and, well, on that same token then, your background as a teacher and scholar, um, I imagine that sort of informs almost the way that you write. Do you find that you're sort of like that component of your personality, of knowing that you are there to instruct and inform? Is that shaping the way in which you're telling these stories?

N.L. Holmes:

I would say so. I, as a, as a teacher, my goal was always to present in a simple, comprehensible way, something that was perhaps complicated. Um, so that's sort of just as you were saying is, is also the goal of a, of a good historical novelist. So I, I try to take complex political in trees or what have you, and present them in a, a humanly accessible way. Mm-hmm <affirmative>. Uh, my goal as a, a novelist is pretty much the same as my goal as a teacher, and that, and that was to, to make people understand that the people of the past were human beings just like us. Mm-hmm. And, and so comprehensible.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Mm-hmm. Yeah. And I think that's a really important part too, because we need to always, we said, we kind of talked about it a little earlier, but, you know, just making sure we have that connection to the past. Yeah. You know, much more informed that way, and less likely to make mistakes of the past if we are aware.

N.L. Holmes:

And if we don't have that human connection, then, then the, the past its history can seem boring, and then we don't pay attention to it. So mm-hmm <affirmative>. I think bringing out the human dimension is what makes it gripping and, and important.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Yeah. When it comes to the career of being arch, an archeologist. 'cause a lot of our audience, um, they are college age students, and, um, we have, uh, and it's a wide range of non-traditional students who are older, maybe forties and fifties, and then of course, college age. Right. So we're speaking to our demographic there. And then, um, you know, of course then we've got the actual like, sort of traditional college age kids that are 19 to 25 ish. Um, and we don't really talk, I don't think I've ever talked about archeology as a career here, um, and the careers that we've discussed. So this is a great opportunity. What would someone do if they're interested in being an archeologist? Like what is the first step for them?

N.L. Holmes:

Uh, well, to find a program, not every university has a program in archeology. And, um, my, I went to the University of Texas, um, when I was young and was beginning to do archeology down there, but I didn't know what, you know, what, uh, culture I wanted to study. So it was sort of scattershot. Um, then I left school, and when I went back after the convent, I, I went to the University of Texas in Arlington, which had no program in archeology, but they did have a program in classical studies. So I went into that and there was an archeologist on the staff, uh, and I studied with, uh, like general archeology in the anthropology department. So there are several ways to get into archeology as a career, and one is through anthropology. It's a branch of anthropology. One would be through classical studies or, uh, near eastern studies or African studies, depending on what area you want to study.

N.L. Holmes:

And, and I would say, uh, include languages, ancient languages. That's almost, uh, because you really have to understand in depth the culture you're going to be excavating. Um, what else? Study history, study, the history of that area, and, uh, by the time you've sort of gotten through your undergraduate studies, uh, if you go my route, it was a, a very, uh, mixed preparation. By the time I had my degree and started into graduate school in a, in a classical and near eastern archeology department, I had an extremely good preparation. Even though my school was not as, uh, prestigious as, say Harvard or Yale. I had a better preparation for my coursework than a lot of those students because I hadn't specialized, I had gone broad. And, and so that's just something to keep in mind if you don't have the luxury of going, uh, Harvard or Yale as an undergraduate.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Yeah. Yep. Another great, uh, point to make too, because very often we do, well, I don't wanna say we, but I guess society, we get wrapped up in like the name of an institution on a resume and where you went versus the actual hands-on experience. And I, I tell friends all the time who are doing like, their, uh, liberal arts at Columbia, and I'm like, well, you know, algebra is pretty much algebra. So that same algebra you just paid a hundred grand for, I learned for like 8,000 in community college. Yeah. <laugh>. So it's sort of one of those things that you really have to specialize your interest and look at the schools that make sense. Uh, right. For that particular interest, not the school name.

N.L. Holmes:

And I can, I can say this too, uh, when I was looking at graduate schools, I, I happened to have a big scholarship going with me, so mm-hmm <affirmative>. A lot of schools made over to hers, and one of those was Princeton. Hmm. And, you know, I went up there on their nickel to look them over, and they didn't have the exact components of the program that I wanted. Hmm. They weren't, they weren't deep diving into the geographical regions that I wanted to study. So I, uh, I preferred to go somewhere else. Hmm.

Corey Andrew Powell:

That's fascinating. Wow.

N.L. Holmes:

You know, I, Brynmore College was also very well known for its archeology department, but they just, they happen to have the, the exact mix of coursework that I wanted. And, you know, Princeton, which was better known, did not, so that's something to keep in mind if, you know, when you're thinking about going into it.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Yeah. No, that's great advice. Thank you for sharing that. And then I guess the next component of that question, and I don't mean like to make you into an HR rep right now, but <laugh>, but, but what are, like, what are the, the, after that jobs that are possible? Do you work for museums potentially, or do you maybe work at a university or like, what are some of the areas where you'd actually work and for your livelihood, if you have a degree in that background?

N.L. Holmes:

In a, a degree in archeology, um, I don't want to be discouraging, but there aren't many positions. Mm-hmm. So a lot of my classmates ended up doing other things. Mm-hmm <affirmative>. Uh, one of them, which is archeological, was to go into state, uh, archeology programs. I know there's one in, uh, New Jersey, because I used to take my students to their sites where they go in ahead of a road work or something and, and examine, you know, uh, what shall I say, a a, uh, colonial site of some sort mm-hmm <affirmative>. And in Civil War encampment or something like that. Right. So every state has a state archeology, um, department, and that's something they're always looking for, you know, archeologically trained people to do. Hmm. Um, of course, the traditional thing is to go into teaching university level teaching, but you may not find yourself teaching archeology. You may be teaching hi ancient history or ancient languages. So here's where your broad background comes in handy.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Mm. Yeah. With, with like specialty learning and specialty

N.L. Holmes:

Information, you can, you can specialize too much, you know? Mm. Uh, museum work is, is also out there. There are, um, quite a number of museums in the country that have classical or near Eastern collections. Um, so that's one of my classmates is now at the Met in that regard. Mm-hmm. Yeah. So that's, that's something to, to keep in mind as well. And of course, art history as well as archeology would help you there. Mm-hmm <affirmative>. Uh, so I, I would say be ready to jump in a number of, uh, directions and don't be too proud to teach high school history or something like that, you know, at least temporarily. Mm-hmm <affirmative>. Yeah. Um, the, the, uh, my theory is the earlier you can catch people and in infect them with the, the love of learning and, and learning history in archeology, the better. So by the time they're in the university, it may be too late. Mm. If you can catch 'em earlier, that's even better.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Mm.

N.L. Holmes:

Yeah. So that's, that is not a step down in my mind. It's, it's, um, maybe striking where the iron is hottest.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Sure, sure. And again, that's great advice for people who are considering what they wanna do in life. I know for me, I thought about it as just a place, if I could work in that field when I was younger, I thought I, at least at the very minimal, be able to see the world and be a part of maybe archeological digs. And if I wanted to travel, that might be a way to even incorporate that into my life. And

N.L. Holmes:

Through the American, uh, Institute of Archeology, there are a lot of digs that take volunteers. So you don't even have to be, you know, a, a professional or, or student in the profession and take part in those excavations all around the world. They always list a bunch of digs that are looking for volunteers, and it's a wonderful experience. Hmm.

Corey Andrew Powell:

I had no idea. That's great. Thank you for sharing that as well. Now you've had this, well, we say unconventional path, but I just say it's non-linear. We'll call it, because I Yeah, yeah. <laugh>. Well, you had a non-linear path to where you are today. Um, and so when it comes to people hearing your own story and reading your books as well, but maybe more aligned with your own personal story, what do you hope maybe people will take away from your own journey in general?

N.L. Holmes:

Well, uh, one would be, of course, it's, it's never too late to, to find your niche. I mean, I've, I've had many different jobs, not just a few you enumerated, uh, but as a child, archeology was my, my goal. And I got off track, you might say, um, frequently, in fact, <laugh>. But eventually, I, I found my way back there, and it was, you are speaking of non-traditional students. I was 40 when I went back to get my ba. So, um, you know, it's never too late. You just keep that dream burning bright ahead of you.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Wow. Well, we're happy that you found this path to being the fabulous NL Holmes that has found her way in these great novels and books. And this has been a wonderful conversation. I really appreciate you being here today, sharing your, your wisdom, your story, your journey with us. And, uh, it's just been an, an absolute honor in El Holmes. That's my pleasure. Yes. Well, thank you so much. Um, well, your latest, we'll, we'll make sure everyone has links to the books to check out everything. But your most recent one is the, among

N.L. Holmes:

The Wheel of Evil, but I have to do with, with coming out at the end of this month.

Corey Andrew Powell:

Oh, okay.

N.L. Holmes:

Yeah. That's the, the melody of evil.

Corey Andrew Powell:

The melody of evil. Yes. Yes. We'll make sure that everyone, uh, can find that as well once this, uh, podcast publishes. And we really appreciate you being here today, uh, in El Holmes, prolific novelist with 13 published books and just a wonderful, remarkable life. Thanks for being here today on Motivational Mondays.

N.L. Holmes:

Thanks.

Speaker 3:

Thank you for listening to Motivational Mondays, presented by the National Society of Leadership and Success, and available wherever you listen to your favorite podcasts. I'm Cory Andrew Powell, and I'll see you again here next week.