

Tracy Walder

Former CIA Officer, FBI Special Agent, Educator, and Author

The Unexpected Spy: An Empowering Journey from Sorority to Special Operations. Based on her upcoming memoir, Walder shares her riveting life story of a young woman who went straight from her college sorority to the CIA and, later, the FBI. She offers her unique perspective as one of the few females working in these male-dominated fields – assuming aliases, thwarting terrorist attacks, and debriefing terrorists at black sites. Taking audiences behind-the-scenes of two of America’s major intelligence agencies during the era of 9/11, Walder details insider stories including watching al-Qaeda members with drones as President Bush looked over her shoulder, searching the world for Weapons of Mass Destruction, hiding in the trunks of cars throughout the Middle East, and interrogating suicide bombers. Keeping groups on the edge of their seats, she details her transition from special operations to educator, sharing her inspiring message: don't try to change who you are to fit what you think the job wants you to be.

Why Not? Achieve Your Full Potential by Rethinking the Question: Why? Why do we have to have a reason for the path we choose in life? We often get so caught up in trying to answer the question “why?” that an opportunity passes us by. In this talk, former CIA officer and FBI agent, Tracy Walder, uses her own unique life experience to demonstrate how embracing the question “why not?” can lead to life-changing opportunities. Relying on gut instincts, she shares how she went from a history major at USC to the CIA counterterrorism center, from taking down a Chinese spy ring as a special agent in the FBI to becoming a history teacher at an all-girls school. Through using her own unconventional journey, Walder inspires audiences to embody this “why not” approach and not let the question of “why” dictate how they lead their lives.

A Behind-the-Scenes Look at Terrorism. Spending four years in the CIA’s Counterterrorism Center Weapons of Mass Destruction Group during the era of 9/11, Tracy Walder draws on her experience tracking terrorists worldwide, interrogating suicide bombers, and gathering life-saving intelligence to help audiences better understand the current threat landscape. With a candid insider’s perspective, she breaks down the issues of today, the players new and old who are keeping the intelligence community up at night, and what this means for the United States and international response.

Counterintelligence: Protecting America in the 21st Century. As a Special Agent in the FBI, Tracy Walder specialized in Chinese counterintelligence operations, where in a single year she worked on cases involving cyber-crime, fraud, and helped take down one of the most notorious foreign spies ever caught on American soil. In this talk, she takes audiences through the current security environment and how intelligence is really being used by the government. She also discusses Chinese espionage in particular, how they are engaging in cyber-attacks, and provides her insights on how organizations can protect themselves against the theft of intellectual property.

The Role of Women in Law Enforcement. As one of the few women to work on the operations side of both the CIA and FBI, Tracy Walder offers her unique perspective of a woman in the male-dominated field of law enforcement. In this speech, she draws on her experience to emphasize the importance of a female voice, recognizing the value of the female perspective in thinking differently and solving unique challenges. Using her own career path as an example, Walder also shares with audiences tips, tricks, and insights for women who want to break into any male-dominated industry and succeed.

The Power of Education. Throughout Tracy Walder's unconventional journey from her college sorority to special operations, she always knew she was one day meant to enter the world of education. Following her time at the CIA and FBI, Tracy enrolled in both a master's and a teaching credential program, and currently teaches history at one of the largest all-girls schools in the U.S. In this talk, Walder discusses the important role that education has on shaping our future generations. Drawing from experiences in her own classroom, she encourages audiences to use the power of teaching to inspire today's youth to make a difference and even change the world.

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