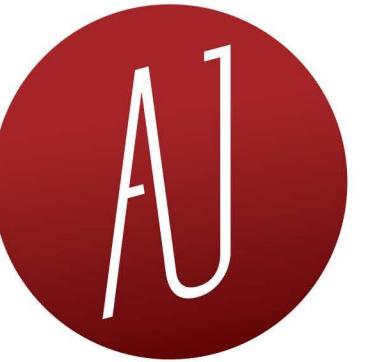


NO.1 MOST POWERFUL DIVA



Generally speaking, **AJ Lee** has overcome incredible odds to achieve not only her lifelong dream of WWE Divahood, but to become the Queen Bee of *Raw*. Here, the former National Honor Society Vice President announces her plans for the WWE Universe and espouses the benefits of skipping to work.

BY JOHN MIHALY PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARIUS BUGGE

Not since the days of Trish Stratus and Lita has a Diva been in the main-event spotlight so prominently as you. Do you feel like you've earned the spot you're in?

I definitely think I've earned it. It's been a long journey for me, as I decided that this was what I wanted to do when I was 12. So I feel like I worked really hard to get here. You can come from any background and earn it, too. I've literally come from rags to riches, and it's amazing to see how far you can go. I've overcome many obstacles, so to be mentioned anywhere near those two women is pretty amazing. I hope it continues and, even if it doesn't, I appreciate what I've already been able to accomplish.

If we were to ask you for your résumé, what's the highest position of power or leadership that you've held prior to being named Raw GM?

I think I was Vice President of the National Honor Society. I suppose that's the highest position I've ever been voted into, besides being the boss of my dogs. Obviously, it's a big career leap.

We didn't really get a good chance to see you establish yourself in the ring, but you've risen to power without having to throw too many dropkicks. Do you miss grappling?

I actually do miss the ring. I think the funny part is that I've always thought I would be wrestling in the ring and didn't believe I'd be useful in any other capacity. I just never saw myself in any different way. It's hilarious to me what I'm most known for these days! There are so many more layers to this business than just getting in the ring. I spent a year performing at live events, but I didn't get much time on television. I think I'll use it to my advantage. Hopefully, I'll have a very long career, and time for that—and I'll be able to surprise people.

So tell us, what's the best piece of advice you've been given regarding becoming a GM?

I think it's to realize that I'm the boss—and Stephanie McMahon actually told me that. She said, "You're in charge now, and no one can take that from you. You have to believe in that, within yourself, or no one else will." For her to say drink it up, you're in charge, and everybody has to deal with that—well, it really means a lot coming from Stephanie because I look up to her in so many ways.

This is a whole new look for you as Raw GM. What's it like going pants-suit shopping—you probably can't find those at Hot Topic...

Apparently, I'm one of the smallest people ever, and I was disappointed to discover that they don't really make power suits in a child's Medium. And no matter which store you go to, you get some strange looks. I do think it says a lot about the motivation behind today's youth. It's kind of hilarious trying to shop for that look, and I admit I had a lot of help from people who are really good at shopping and being girls in general. I was kind of clueless at first.

Will you accept "The Pants-Suit Princess" as a nickname? If not, got any suggestions for us?

No, I will not accept any nickname with the word "princess" in it! My fans on Twitter have nicknamed me "Geek Goddess," and I hope it's still applicable now that I'm running *Raw*. They might have to call me "Ms. Geek Goddess," though, because really, I am now forever married to my job.

And now that you're in power, can you repeal the business casual dress code in Titan Tower?

That's pretty low on my list of priorities, but I'll think about it. I kind of like the whole business casual look—or "biz-cas," for those in the know.

How good are you at conflict resolution? That skill seems necessary to become a quality GM.

I will say I'm not good at putting out fires, because my first day on the job the set literally caught on fire, which just set the tone for things to come in a way. My track record seems to be that I solve conflict by getting a little slaphappy. There's a long list of people whom I've done that to, and I clearly haven't handled some situations in the best ways.

You've not only brought skipping back, but somehow also managed to turn it into an art form. What are your tips for those of us who are hesitant to embrace our "inner skipper"?

Let me tell you something—skipping is dangerous, OK? You should always skip with caution—and skip responsibly. I've rolled my ankle at live events because I literally skipped over Chris Jericho and Kane. You have to commit to it in a dedicated way. The whole essence is that you don't care what people are thinking, and you're out there having a good time. It's a faster mode of transportation. It burns calories and releases endorphins. It's a practical mode of transportation. Clearly, I don't care about what anyone thinks about me.

Well, you might have to care about what the WWE Board of Directors thinks of you. So, when we look back at the AJ Lee regime, what would you like to be known for?

I love that people appreciate that I can be unpredictable, and I know that it's a bit of an oxymoron to be unpredictable in a power suit. It's different. Whether people contest my decisions, or they think I'm unstable or not, I hope they realize that it's more exciting to have someone who can keep you on the edge of your seat. It's fun to be the tiniest person on the roster with the most power.

STYLING BY VALISSA YOE; HAIR AND MAKEUP BY MARY ROCKWOOD-CRABTREE FOR ZENOBIA AGENCY



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