

The Extraordinary Rise of Emily Austin

NBA talk show
host irrepressibly
blazes a trail
of Proudly Jewish

By Ilan Herrmann



Some things stand out as simply remarkable. The Himalayas, the Victoria Falls, the Grand Canyon and ... Emily Austin. The difference is that the first three were carved into the universe through the Divine Act of creation, while Emily Austin, astonishingly, has accomplished a fleet of exceptional achievements in four years that many would be proud to accumulate in a lifetime, and she is only 21!

Speaking to her in late April after she took a vacation and was back in New York, she said: "I didn't want it to end, I forgot what it's like, it's been years since I had one!"

Emily has indeed been busy! She has her own NBA (Basketball) talk show. She covered the last Super Bowl for SiriusXM; works as an ambassador for the Puma brand; was a judge at the Miss Universe Beauty Pageant 2023 and, until recently, she was a media consultant for the Israel delegation to the UN (the youngest ever delegate at the UN), and is vocally outspoken on multiple platforms against anti-semitism — especially when it rears its ugly presence in her sports environment.

Emily has over 1 million followers on Instagram and half a million on TikTok. Emily is also Modern Orthodox, keeps fully kosher and davens every day.

It all started with New York-based Emily being a fanatical NBA follower, attending regular NY Knicks and Brooklyn Nets games right throughout High School where she established a connection with some of the players. Her knack for networking got her court-side seats and therefore closeup to players whom she saw regularly. With Emily always very active on social media and offering insightful comments, some players began, in turn, to follow her! Soon these connections would come in handy in a unique situation and an opportunity arose which Emily snatched up.

When the Covid-19 pandemic shut everything down and forced everyone to stay home, Emily, like most everyone else, spent her time binge-watching television until she "got sick of it". What to do? What to do? She had a few months ahead with no College and pretty much zero on the go. This was when she struck on an idea which would completely jump start her life in a new direction.

Emily reached out to the NBA players that she knew (who were also scratching their heads as to what to do with their time) and she started Instagram Live chats with Q&As to the players. Fans were able to tune in to these shows and were able to have their say. The feedback was so good that the audience expanded massively on what was called "Daily Vibes with Emily". The platform moved to the more efficient Zoom medium and more players came on board for shows. Emily began using an algorithm to plug in the questions that she was asking in order to fine-tune them. The show grew in its professionalism and in its viewership.

The sports broadcasting environment was abuzz, stirred by the new up-and-coming dynamic sports broadcaster. At only 18 years old, a celebrity surfaced and a career was quickly shaped out of a hobby that emerged out of the dark period of Covid-19.



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The spontaneity with which this all happened is quite startling. Emily had always envisioned that she would emulate either her mom, a lawyer, or her aunt, a surgeon - but it was her father and grandfather who had intuited the trajectory she would take while she was even younger. They had often stated: "You're gonna be on television one day Emily". How right they were!

A highlight experience was when Emily flew to Las Vegas for two weeks with her parents for the NBA Summer League. Here she interviewed a host of players: established superstars as well as rookies starting out for their first season in the NBA. In an interview with Shani Suissa of the Jewish Journal, Emily said, "They were such good quality interviews. I had a camera, microphone and an actual set. It was just amazing. It was so much fun. It's funny because I'm the same age as these players that are just starting out in the league. So I really feel like I'm having a true conversation and connecting with them, which makes the quality of the interview that much better."

A leading US-based youth entertainment brand reached out to Emily. She auditioned and got a gig with them to cover a full season of 'Music Lives On'. Soon after, she was invited to cover a massive celebrity boxing event called 'Battle of the Platforms' in Miami. The biggest sports platform of all in the USA - the Super Bowl - is watched by 113 million people. SiriusXM, a massive platform that covers the Super Bowl on Radio Row



approached Emily to do broadcasting at ... yes! The Super Bowl 2022!

New adventures lay ahead as a mutual friend introduced Emily to Israel's UN Ambassador, Gilad Erdan. Erdan immediately recognised in Emily an opportunity and asked her to join the Israeli Mission to the UN in September 2022 as an intern. Her main role was to manage communications and public relations in English. This lasted until very recently when Emily decided to step down, as being on the delegation would limit her in her talk show hosting career path. She kicks off her new NBA talk show in June called 'The Hoop Chat'.

Emily is a proponent of dialogue and engagement and she advocates not to put up barriers which emphasise a "you and them" stance. She firmly holds that by reaching out and talking to one another, we will realise that we're not that different and common threads will emerge to build stronger alliances and mutual visions.

While at one of the encounters at the UN, Emily got a call from Michelle Welch — a producer in the events industry. Welch asked her, "Would you consider being a judge for the Miss Universe Pageant?"

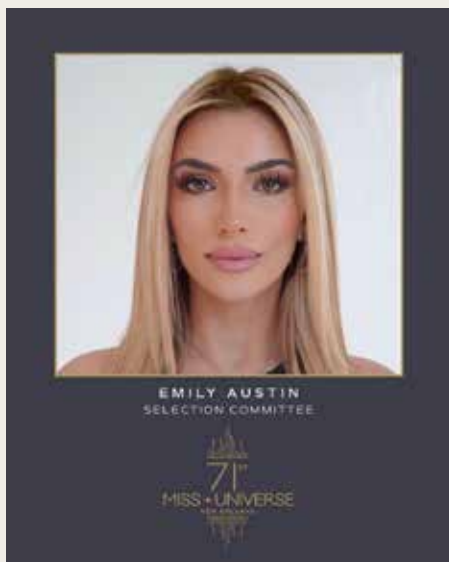
"You bet I would!" was Emily's response, and a glamorous and thrilling experience at the Miss Universe Pageant in New Orleans followed. Emily's versatility and vitality shone through again. To interview and evaluate the strengths of over 80 competitors in quick succession and to 'read' the right person for the role, requires astute discernment and intuitive prowess.

Is there anything Emily Austin can't do?! Well, it appears not! Emily added to her impressive diversity of engagements with a recent trip to Berlin, where she was a panel speaker at a leading conference on combatting anti-semitism. "I am fortunate in that I'm quite versatile and I manage to adapt quickly to foreign situations."

However, in case you think that Emily's ascending journey has been without effort or stress, Emily says: "Are you kidding? I used to and still get very nervous before a live interview. I have to process for an hour before it, looking in the mirror, psyching myself up and rehearsing. And at the UN — it's unnerving at times sitting in the company of 'important' people. My Dad helped me navigate this when he said, 'Emily, they invited you! You obviously are bringing value to them!' This shifted my thinking and I remind myself of this when I go in."

I was still intrigued by how Emily operates... she seems to get ahead so quickly, while others take far longer. Emily explains: "One thing about me is that I'm not embarrassed to admit I don't know something and to ask someone who knows that area of expertise and I listen and observe."

This humble while tenacious attitude struck me as a great approach towards reaching for success.



"We need to amplify our Jewish voice, individually and collectively! Don't be afraid!"

Emily's latest career move in April is a foray into entrepreneurship. She has bought a skin care line, People's Beauty. "I am drawn to this incredible brand particularly because the products are vegan, cruelty-free and non-toxic. It applies the EU standard which bans over 1300 toxins," says Emily.

Negotiating one's way through adolescence and being a teenager isn't easy for anyone — and particularly the traps commonly fallen into at College, namely, partying, clubbing, alcohol, drugs and unhealthy relationships. How did Emily get around these? "My parents were quite conservative and strict when it came to us on this front. Shabbat Friday night, which is 'party

night', we had to stay home and they (my parents) put their foot down and simply did not allow us to go clubbing, get involved with boys, do alcohol or smoke. They're amazing parents and never say no to us, so when they laid down the rules, albeit begrudgingly, I accepted them and today I'm so grateful for it!"

Emily became much more conscious of her Jewish identity when in Junior High school she went on a tour trip of the Holocaust concentration camps. The experience actually made her ill for days and "messed me up" she said. It also gave her a new realisation of what the Jewish people have been through and the dangers and evils of anti-semitism.

On social media and in the talks she gives, Emily always encourages young adults and teens: "The most important thing is not to shy away from being vocal. It might seem helpful at the time to be quiet, but inevitably, it escalates into a bigger problem. We need to amplify our Jewish voice, individually and collectively! Don't be afraid!" Emily is an inspirational, living example of this.

Defiantly and proudly Jewish Emily brandishes her Magen David, swiftly calls out anti-semitic rhetoric or behaviour, and strongly identifies as a Modern Orthodox Jewess. The NBA has had incidents of an anti-semitic nature, leading to social media becoming a hotbed of slurs and prejudice. But they now have someone fresh and formidable with whom to contend. There is a new NBA sheriff in town and 'no one's getting away with nothing no more'. Awesome Emily will make sure of that!

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