

Shayla Rivera

The Funny Rocket Scientist

Please contact a GDA agent for information.

Topics

- Comedian/Funny
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Hispanic/Latino/Chicano/Xicano
- Inspiration / Achievement
- Moderator / Facilitator

About Shayla Rivera

Shayla Rivera is an Aerospace Engineer and former Rocket Scientist with NASA turned salesperson, corporate trainer, and now Int'l Keynote Speaker, TV & Radio host, Emcee/Host, Comedian, Actor, Writer, Producer, Awareness Expert, Seminar Facilitator and Panel Moderator. And as of 2017, Shayla is Director of the ENGR[x] program and Professor of Practice for the College of Engineering at Texas A&M University.



However, none of these labels tells you much about her. She best describes herself as a spiritually irreverent Mystic and Awareness Expert. What many would call a Renaissance Woman.

Keynotes include subjects that span Inspiration, Motivation, Leadership, Diversity, Education, STEM Education, Awareness, Stress Management, Communication, and Self Growth, always using the power of humor and her life story.

Born and raised in Puerto Rico, Rivera grew up with an avid interest in science, machinery and fixing things. Her family always encouraged her to go to college and have a professional career. Rivera attended Texas A&M University, earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Aerospace Engineering with a minor in Psychology. She joined McDonnell Douglas Space Systems Division at NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston, to on the Space Shuttle and Space Station programs for five years.

Rivera left NASA following her abiding interest in psychology, always trying to figure out what makes people tick. Her career took her through several years in Technical Sales of environmental systems and water treatment chemicals finally becoming a corporate trainer on the very important subject of Stress Management. Rivera began facilitating life-changing seminars on stress management for executives at companies around the country. Shortly there after, she began being asked to give motivational speeches. She applies her life story and expertise as a speaker to help many organizations, corporations, as well as charitable and educational programs. She speaks to clients across the country from elementary school students to colleges, non-profits to major corporations. Rivera has been speaking and performing comedy for over 25 years and has a broad appeal to men and women of all backgrounds.

It was while she was conducting seminars that she kept being encouraged to give standup comedy a shot. She signed up for a comedy weekend workshop in which she had to do five minutes of material and this was a personal turning point. "I knew I'd found what I was looking for," Rivera recalled.

Almost immediately, Rivera became a regular at Comedy Clubs nationwide. She used her experiences to create the hit one woman show "Rocket Science and Salsa," directed by Debbie Allen for which Rivera earned a "Best Lead Actress" nomination by the NAACP Theater Awards, as well as a nomination for "Best Choreography" for Allen. Rivera hosted the 13 episode TV series "You're Not The Man I Married" for Lifetime Real Women Network.

She has appeared on television in "Comics Unleashed," "Extreme Fakeover," "National Lampoon's Funny Money," "Funny is Funny" and others. She was a guest on "The Dennis Miller Show," "The Roseanne Show" and "The Martin Short Show." Rivera was featured in the "Paul Rodriguez Latin All Stars" and was part of the Comedy Central special, "Comedy Rehab" with Paul Rodriguez. She has also headlined on entertainment programs for Univision, Galavision and on "The Latino Comedy Jam" for Telemundo. Rivera was named "Funniest Latina Comedian" by the organization "Latin 2015."

In 2004, Rivera received the "Mario Moreno Cantinflas Award" presented by the city of Los Angeles in recognition of entertainers who "represent the Latino Community with the same humor as the great Cantinflas did" and for her involvement in the community. In 2007, Rivera received the President's Volunteer Service Award from the President's Council on Service Participation. In 2010, Rivera received the Award for Excellence in Public Speaking by the Latino Speakers Bureau.

Rivera delivers keynotes and performs live stand-up comedy nationwide. She is very proud of her tours to entertain U.S. troops in Iraq and around the world. In recent years, Rivera has served as host/emcee for many events, such as award shows, gala's, fundraisers and festivals. Shayla says, "My number one goal is to inspire, through laughter whether while doing comedy or my keynotes." Shayla has seen, first-hand, the impact the Latino population and culture has had in all levels of American corporations, organizations and education and is focused on helping make this merge occur as smooth as possible. She jokes, "We are all the same only different...once we understand this, we will be able to seize the opportunities that lie in our seeming differences."

Shayla was thrilled to accept faculty and staff positions at her alma mater, Texas A&M University. Shayla, who is a true Aggie, is very excited to bring her expertise in self-development and awareness to the engineering students at Texas A&M as a Professor of Practice and as Director of ENGR[x], a new program with the objective of providing undergraduate engineering students with professional skills and experiences beyond their engineering degree requirements, making them more attractive to employers. Helping students become better prepared for life, not just as an engineer but as an individual, which is her greatest purpose.

Shayla Rivera is not easily placed in just one category or class, she defines her own. She finally remarks, "Now I even can add Breast Cancer Survivor to my resume. I am grateful."

"I Offer my presentations in both English and Spanish"

"Ofrezco mis presentaciones en Inglés y Español"

Select Keynotes

- **ABC - Awareness Begins Change**

Speaker Shayla Rivera believes, indeed knows, that anyone can accomplish anything they would like to. "In fact, they already are" she says. Her knowledge springs from the evidence she has found through her own life experiences. There is only one wonderful requirement for living unlimited possibilities and that is, **know what you believe**. "The one thing I have learned is that it is the external sources in our lives, namely our upbringing and conditioning, that continues to determine and influence our lives and our achievements," she says. The biggest impediment to positive change is our lack of clarity about what we truly believe. What we have to do is realize that we are on auto pilot about what we continually choose to do and believe. Indeed, our beliefs are not ours at all, they are simply a result of our conditioning. They stay around because we have decided to agree to keep them. Once we become aware that we are in control we can begin to change our direction. Then make choices that aim at the desired results for our lives." Shayla uses her own life story to help her audiences laugh their way to inspiration.

- **Education / STEM Education***

This keynote speaks on the importance of education remembering at all times that an Education is not something that can ever be completed, education never ends. The secret is to be excited about this instead of fearful. Getting excited about learning new things - no matter your age or level in life- is the best way to live and to feel alive. When speaking about STEM, I use examples for everyone to see that we all use STEM no in everything we do. * I prefer to discuss this topic with client in order to understand and achieve their specific diversity goal.

- **Leadership**

Like everything else, Leadership begins with the individual. A leader is not defined by a title or a position of leadership but by their ability to inspire others to work towards a common goal. Traits of leadership such as having a vision, setting goals, charisma, communication skills, character, intelligence, and many more, can be found within every person. I focus on helping individuals recognize and strengthen these traits, first within themselves then give tools that will help them do the same for others.

- **Diversity**

Through my experience of growing up in a completely different place and culture then moving to this great country I have come to understand that, even though 'Diversity' is a Hot Button subject right now, we simply don't have the correct perspective on it and call it an 'issue'. We often approach this subject with fear because we don't realize that our differences are the very thing that we all have in common. Only when we attain the right perspective, and begin getting excited about our differences, instead of fearing them, then the possibilities for growth will be exponential. At the end of the day we all want the same thing, a happy and fruitful country with great possibilities and opportunities for us and our loved ones.

Select Articles

- [From NASA to Laughter](#)

Have you ever met a rocket scientist? If not, when you picture one you probably don't see Shayla Rivera, who often stands in front of a crowd, not only talking to them but making them laugh as well.

- [Shayla Rivera Took Long Way to Vocation](#)

Shayla Rivera's Puerto Rican parents, when they heard she was leaving aerospace engineering to become a comedian and motivational speaker, probably thought, "Houston, we have a problem ..."

- [Ex-engineer and Texas A&M grad finds new life in comedy](#)

Shayla Rivera said she got choked up driving around the Texas A&M campus the night before she would deliver Sunday's keynote address at the Student Conference on Latino Affairs.

- [Former Student Shayla Rivera On Her Journey From NASA To Stand-up Comedy](#)

What do you get when you cross a Puerto Rican mother, a rocket scientist, a stand-up comedian and an Aggie? You get former Texas A&M student Shayla Rivera, who shares her funny and fascinating journey from NASA to stand-up comedy, and gives insights into her life as a Latina.

- [Engineer-turned-comedian Shayla Rivera opens Raytheon's MathMovesU day](#)

Shayla Rivera, an engineer-turned-comedian, was the keynote speaker Monday at the annual MathMovesU Day put on for students by Raytheon Space and Airborne Systems in El Segundo.

Select Testimonials

Hello Shayla, I just wanted to thank you for presenting here at Freddie Mac and at the Women of ALPFA! And thank you for being so flexible. You were awesome! I have received a lot of positive feedback from both events! I am already thinking about the Women of ALPFA for next year! I have a lot of things in mind, one of them being what you mentioned about the Women of comedy. I love it! I will be in touch to start planning that! Abrazos, Marie J. Ruiz, CPA, MBA

– *Freddie Mac / Women of ALPFA (Association of Latino Professionals For America)*

It was my absolute pleasure to have worked with Shayla Rivera at HISPA's annual youth conference in San Antonio, Texas. Shayla shared her incredible personal stories of success, failure, hard work, and the events that changed her life with a sense of humor that engaged students, staff and special guests. In addition, motivating a group of over 200 students from at-risk neighborhoods is quite a challenge. However, from feedback received, she was rated the most interesting/favorite speaker of the day. HISPA fully supports Shayla Rivera. We are looking forward to having her join us at our annual kick-offs and youth conferences. Aixa Acevedo Program Director

– *HISPA- Hispanics Inspiring Students' Performance and Achievement*

On Behalf of the Mt. San Jacinto College STEM program, we would like to thank you for your outstanding Keynote Address to our STEM students, faculty and community members. You were everything that we hoped for in a keynote speaker. Your energy, motivation, past experiences and humor were overall amazing and beneficial for our students. I think you were able to capture the essence of what it takes to be a STEM student: hard work, dedication, motivation and a little bit of fun. We were also honored that you took the time to return and present a hands-on workshop on Stress Management. The feedback that we received on your presentation was phenomenal. We hope to have you back in the future. Thanks for making our Summer Institute a Success! Sincerely, Mt. San Jacinto College STEM Program

– *Mt. San Jacinto College STEM Program*

"Shayla Rivera is Hilarious..."

– *Paul Rodriguez - "The" Latin King of Comedy*

On behalf of the Siouxland Chapter of SHRM, I would like to express our sincerest appreciation for the riveting presentation delivered to our members. We were inspired and motivated by Shayla's entertaining anecdotes to move forward and lead with sensitivity. We couldn't get enough! Thank you! Rachel Porter Recruitment Advertising Manager Sioux City Journal

– *SHRM - Society of Human Resource Management*

First, I would like to thank you for speaking at our 7th Annual At-Risk Hispanic Youth Summit. Your unique and fascinating background in science, engineering and entertainment makes you a truly original and engaging speaker. Your blend of inspiration and humor was well received by everyone in attendance. We immediately received a great positive feedback from everyone. We will happily recommend you to every organization, corporation and school we work with. Thank you again Margie Gonzalez Executive Director State of Idaho Idaho Commission on Hispanic Affairs

– *State of Idaho*

My name is Megan Tull, I'm the Program Director for Texas Women in Business. We had Shayla Rivera as one of our Keynote Speakers at our Beyond 50 Event this past May, where we had more than 300 professional women in attendance. I highly recommend Shayla. She brought the house down with her incredible presentation. She had everyone laughing, crying and thoroughly entertained! One of Shayla's greatest qualities is that she has a strong charisma and connection with her audience. We received amazing feedback from our attendees regarding Shayla's presentation.

— *TWIB - Texas Women in Business*