

Unmuted - Episode 2_v2

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SPEAKERS

Researcher

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Hi everybody, this is in hum and he and you're listening to unmuted the podcast that explores deep and intimate conversations, stories and moments that matter with inspirational people on equity, justice, and belonging in their everyday lives at work. If you're interested in unearthing unmuted topics, people and ideas, then welcome home. In today's episode, we talked over Neil Hampton, who is a principal equity strategist and local government in Los Angeles, California, where sales work focuses on digital divide, food security, and COVID-19 response, as well as supporting the development of a racial equity office. He's also the founder of Growing Greatness, an organization committed to social and environmental justice by providing consultation and customized training to small and mid sized organizations that include dei social justice policy, and personal development. Renault's passion, is rooted in developing infrastructure and resources to improve underserved and under representative communities outcomes. He's super excited to have you here. Welcome to the show, or no,

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thank you for having me. Oh, hi. I'm super excited to be here as well.

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I'd love for us to talk today on a ton of moments that matter in your life. And also topics that are very dear to your heart. We're going to touch on from Maslow's hierarchy of needs in terms of self actualization. We're also going to talk about today, permaculture design, and potentially even peacebuilding, and how you've pursued a culture of justice to get there. I want us to go back in time and experience who young ronelle was in childhood. So if you can paint a picture for me of what it was like to grow up in your neighborhood, in your community, and in your family, what was that

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like? Well, thank you so much, again, for allowing me to be here on the music podcasts. And just to go back, you know, those flashbacks are, can be very fun. So I'm born and raised in southeast San Diego, it's a community in San Diego, a Southern California city, beautiful, beautiful city, always the perfect weather, always a nice sea breeze, no matter like where you are in the city. And growing up in that environment was interesting, because my experience of that beauty was oftentimes the underbelly, I guess you could say it was the poverty side of the city. And coming from a beautiful city like San Diego, the underbelly is invisible. So a lot of folks who grew up in southeast San Diego, are such a small part of the economic engine of the city, that very little resources, or very little political capital exist in the southeast community as relates to the San Diego region as a whole. And so growing up in that environment, that was reflected in the academic, economic and health experience, my family and I experienced. And so growing up as a child, I experienced the impacts of that, that lack of access to quality academic economics and health, my siblings and I experienced foster care. As a result of my parents dealing with the socio economic impacts of the 1980s crack epidemic and gang violence that was very persistent in our community. There are stories of my father and my mom, fighting back drug dealers from forcing themselves into our apartment to set up shop. Right. So that was like the environment my siblings, and I were like born into, and the consequences of that, again, were my siblings, and I haven't experienced foster care at a very young age. And that was a very traumatic experience specifically for myself. And one of the things that came from that is how I was matriculated through the foster care system. You know, one of the differences of like, my experience compared to my siblings is, as I remember it, like because when you're a child going through that time seems to stand still. And a lifetime can happen in a month. And so as I reflect on the time I was in foster care was like a duration of three years, right. But as a child, that was a lifetime, away from my mom, away from our siblings. And during my experience of foster care, I had experience moving from home to home with what I feel was like a behavior reaction to be this place removed from the care of my mom. I had a behavior reaction to it, and a lot of times, it was met with consequences versus empathy, or resources. There's so many elements to this, that I'm crying this process even as I talk about it, but yeah, that experience of foster care, I think was very foundational, because it really put me in a space of isolation as I existed in the world as it relates to how I like to relate to people. What I felt I cannot depend on from people, it was always this, I didn't have it. Like I had to go inside myself for it, and kind of manifest it, I guess. And so during that time, I really became very prayerful. I was always somehow connected to church. My mom went to church, right, but like, it wasn't consistent. However, she would always make sure we were in church, if it was not with her, it was with the neighbor, right. So we were always in church. And because I was in church, I had this beautiful, strong foundation of God in my life. And my relationship with God was so personal. I would experience God in church. But I would go to God personally and experience God on my own. And that is really what has always carried me through my whole life, is the personal relationship I have with that. And so going through the foster care experience, we were reading it with my mom, when I was turning eight years old, it was like that Christmas, I was praying for Christmas, I want to be back home, my mom, and I got back home, my mom. And it was beautiful, right? That's one of the first experiences I have with like God responding to my prayers. But it definitely hadn't been the last. And it really became my sustenance, right, like when the world around me was falling apart, or I didn't feel safe. Or I didn't feel like I belonged. I was always with God. And I always knew that because the relationship I had with God was very much so asked in response. So I would ask for these things that I needed from God, and they would manifest around me in the real world. And they wouldn't necessarily come from the spaces I thought they should come from, it would come from a stranger or a teacher, or community member, that we always had everything we needed as children, growing up my oldest brother, where he would teach us how to make money, right, and why we made money, we would go and help people mow their lawns, or we would carry groceries from the grocery store to their cars, or pump people's gas. So when we were young, we always had money. And this is like,

when we were like 910 11 years old, we're making money. And my mom, she had six of us, four boys and two, two girls. And her boys are bringing in money. It's about us, right? And so we were, you know,

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\$10 each, you're entrepreneurs, as kids from

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the young age, right? single digits. And it was an experience that was more of a necessity than it was a hobby, right? It was a burden placed on us at a very young age where we weren't able to just be kids, not only in the way that we needed to generate an income to keep our household, okay, but also in the way we have to show up in the world, right, we didn't have the ability to just be reckless with our behavior. But when I go back to this academic, economic and health conversation, the dynamics, my family experience, were very disproportionate, right, like, academically speaking, I needed wraparound service support, because I had a neuro divergence, but I was high functioning. So a lot of times, there wasn't any support given to me. I had a brother who has special needs, but he was also high functioning. And he struggled with being identified especially. So he always wanted to show up as high function, and was really, you know, that idea of needing help being the not a good thing.

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Let me play back something to you that you said was really pivotal. You're always too much, you're never enough in your childhood. And you inherited intergenerational trauma and active trauma as a child. And you went through like a whole paradigm shift to become an adult as a child, and out of necessity and out of force to survive, not even thrive, just to survive. And you talk about these moments where you had with inner workings and inner conversations with God. And he talked about how it really helped you transpired a sense of safety and security in yourself but also to give you some form of command of the environment that you are put in and forced upon. And I know a lot of these stories have become really important precipice into your journey of working in in various fields of social movements and social impact from digital divide to food security to COVID-19 Crisis Response and more recently to racial equity. And it seems to me that safety as we know it from Maslow's hierarchy of needs, it's, you know, level one, you know, which is at the pyramid, the most basic principle they can ever get. And as you funnel through the top, and you get more of the most complex needs, so you start first with like physiological needs, and then you have safety, love and belonging. And then finally, you get to esteem and self actualization, as you're reflecting back on your childhood, you've had to Winkle yourself through the spaces in which you've not been heard, you haven't been acknowledged, you've been sometimes dismissed. And I'm curious as, as you're thinking about, you know, young renown, and who you are today, as a person, as an adult, you know, you've gone through this process, through growing up and seeing the world as he is. And you've mentioned the, you've gotten to the point where you might have actually touched on self actualization, you might actually have, like, knocked on its door and says, like, I might actually have gotten to the point where I know who I am, and I know what my needs are, but tell me what does for know, self actualized gonna look like today?

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Well, I wouldn't go as far to say that I have self actualized. But I'm pretty sure on the journey, because I think self actualization is a moving target. And I feel that we learn things about ourselves every day, that we then have to choose to show up for, right. And so I think what self actualization is the commitment to learning more about ourselves, and the commitment to showing up for ourselves. And that's what I'm committed to. So I'm committed to self actualization. With that being said, I do think that knowing myself has been an interesting experience, because you're really matching that up against what the world tells you to be. And that oftentimes isn't collaborative. It doesn't work together, it's like the opposites of each other. And really navigating that to where you feel comfortable and secure. And safe being your true self. And safety doesn't mean that you are living without threat. It's just that the threat doesn't push you into complacency. The threat doesn't push you into being stagnant. The threat doesn't push you into deep depression and anxiety. Right? I think one of the things about self actualization, again, is being committed to show up for yourself, going back to like my family's experience, one of the things that really secures what I experienced in there, and why it's so important is that what my family went through was not isolated. It was

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one of millions of families story with similar outcomes. My family struggled academically, economically, as well as health. And that's because those resources, those infrastructures are not in the environment. Now, for myself, I think being self actualized allows you to go for it, even if you don't see it. But most people are, like, they say I'm a product of my environment. That is the situation for most people, you don't have to be, but most people are because the environment really dictates to you are to be self actualized and saying, Is this who I am? Should I be someone else and then working towards that? Investigating that questioning that? Most people don't want to question who they are. They don't want to question their environment. They don't want to question the values that their family gave them. They don't want to question the laws, right? But in order to make any type of improvement, you have to question. And so when it goes back to who I am, I recognize that as a child, it wasn't that people didn't like me. They were overwhelmed with the response they had to give to me. And they didn't really always have the capacity. Right. And so when I go back to the work that I do, when the system is not working effectively, academically economic and health wise, oftentimes is based off of the incentives that the system has, and for whom those incentives are for. And for people who had the lived experience like myself, those incentives are very much so hard to access, right? Like we live in a white male patriarchal society, right. And so the highest incentive goes to white male patriarchy who you know are cisgender heteronormative, right. And so For me, large black, from inner city. So my position in a lot of these spaces is already in hypocrisy to the incentive, the most the highest incentive that the spaces are allowed to get. Right. So my position is space requires me to advocate for more space, right. And not only that God made me to demand more space on accident, right, because of how aware I am I ask questions. And by me being in the space, I'm showing up with my lived experience. And so my expertise and my lived experience, as well as my academic and professional expertise sets me apart from a lot of my colleagues, because many of my colleagues have the academic and professional, but in certain areas, they don't have to live. And likewise to myself, there's certain areas, I don't have to expense. So let's say my approach to doing any type of movement work is in collaboration. Because I feel in collaboration, if I'm doing it alone, I can't see everything. But if you and I do it together at home, your lived experience gives you a lens of expertise that I could never have, because I have not lived in your life. But if I make assumptions, like I'm the man, so my expertise is at a higher level than yours, right? Or, you know, I know that you're good at digital media and all of that, right. But if I'm saying, Oh, I am a man, so I need to lead the digital media stuff, and you need to call our potential times. It's like, that's not the role. But because

I've created this incentive around gender, that automatically puts me in a hierarchy above you, it doesn't even consider your skill or expertise in relation to mine as being more suitable for the position. And so when I think about collaboration, it's important to have like an even playing field, with any issue that we're trying to accomplish, and really do a critical analysis of the landscape to understand who are the impacted people, not only in regards to the outcome of let's say, service delivery, but who's providing the service to address the issue? Are they people who are from the experiencing? Or do they have a disconnect, where they're just, you know, our theory,

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that's where we're going to spend most of our time together today, because you touched on it a few times, and you use the word infrastructure, and systems that can set up the conditions for you to prosper. And it also stems from your childhood, you know, lack of academic and economic opportunities, and the infrastructure that was forced upon you, you know, positioned you in paths, you know, as a child that no child should ever go through. But it also motivated you to question the status quo. And I want us to talk about a term that you introduced me for the first time that I didn't realize it was like, I didn't realize it was true, until I Googled it. And I learned about it, which is organizational self actualization. And we've talked about it often past organizations, in your own current work right now of how do you help organization achieve a culture of justice, but also to dismantle power structures that perpetuate the same traumas that you've experienced as a child? Can you walk me through what does what does it mean for an organization to self actualize?

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I think it's similar to what I mentioned about personal self actualization like it's a moving target. And it has to be responsive to the environment. And if we are doing things the right way, it should move right towards shooting for doing things, right. What we're addressing today should not be an issue tomorrow. So we have to move our targets. When I think about organizational actualization, I really think of understanding the impact that an organization wants to make with their key resources and capacities are in relation to the impact that they want to make, and really prioritizing right, their inputs and outputs as it relates to their expertise. And I think that's critical, because a lot of times, organizations want to do everything. And it's like, you don't have to do everything, you have to do one thing really, really, really, really good. And if you can do that, then you can measure that impact very much so effectively, and within an ecosystem. Shout out to my alma mater, Antioch University. I received my master's in urban sustainability. And one of the courses we took was ecosystems thinking and so that's really how I think about how do we exist in an ecosystem so an organization NASA really think of themselves as existing within an ecosystem? And what part? And what role do they play? What responsibilities do they have in that ecosystem to ensure that the ecosystem is operating properly. So we're talking about equity in my areas of economics, economics and health. within that ecosystem, there are multiple organizations that exist. And there are multiple issue areas that can be addressed. And within the ecosystem, and all of the machines are working together, then the scale of impact can be measured within the ecosystems reach versus just one organization. And then also, you can maximize your reach and collaboration. So again, I think with identifying what an organization needs to self actualize, it's really clear mission and vision for the impact that they want to make. And then I also think data is critical in the work of actualization because you can have a mission to achieve or make an impact. But it's important to collect the data that's necessary to understand how you're achieving that impact. So target demographic information, if, say, for example, you're trying to address impacted demographics that are experiencing overcrowded

housing, that you would want to have data to understand what your baseline point is, as where you're starting from, and then measure your progress over time, so that you can communicate to yourselves what you're doing well, what you need to improve, what you want to do more of, and what you want to decrease data will help you inform that.

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If you think about, like looking back into your like childhood, and if you're thinking about like these infrastructures that have supported you and your siblings and your parents to thrive not survive, but thrive really as as human beings. And you're thinking about, like the conditions of an organization that truly has self actualized and built up the pillars that you have been mentioning, from data to leverage informed decisions. Tell me what does that space look like, for instance, it could be an example of what an academic institution or whatever institution may be, that could have supported you to becoming the best version of yourself as a kid and eventually into adulthood? Who would the people be in that space in that

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institution? So when I think about the experience I had, or who has the experience that I am seeing being developed, what I experienced was a piecemeal of services, right? Like I had to go to multiple locations, in spaces, to access my whole person, I had to go one place for academic support. And that place only engaged my academic needs to go to another place to deal with my socio economic impact trauma from like, what I was going through, I mean, oftentimes those were like nonprofit organization, it wasn't like a therapist, or, you know, any type of grief support, right? mental health support, it wasn't anything like that. It was like a community based organization that was hanging on by the threads getting very minimum funding. And then it was going eventually, and so the needs that was being met was now not being right. And so that was my experience. But going back to like, why I'm so passionate about the work that I do now, I believe that it's important to create an ecosystem that acknowledges that there are parts of our society that need wraparound services, we have a one size fits all approach to academics, economics, and how that is killing people. I literally have lost family members, two of my siblings are not here anymore. Because the inequity that exists in the system, the lack of access to mental health care support, the lack of intentional, individualized health care, right, there's this standard of care approach that does not meet the needs of black people, black women, right. My youngest sister was 19 years old when she passed away. And the response was, she received the standard of care. There were things that they could have done, but she received the standard of care that allowed them to not be liable, right. And so when we're talking about that experience in our society, those are the things that we need to start to address more effectively, where we understand that there are certain impacted demographics within our society that needs a different standard of care. We understand that when you're giving a child Academic Support, you're also giving the whole family academic support. I produce a podcast for a client and one of the guests on the podcast talked about a family of children going to school and the school of giving one laptop, right for that one child. But there's a family of five in every one laptop. So how do we address the whole family, the whole person, the whole student, the whole child, do the systems and resources and support that we offer. And I think that that goes back to collaboration, we need cross agency collaboration, unique cross organizational collaboration, so that families or individuals, when in need of services don't have to go to multiple locations across the city. With resources, they're already struggling to access, right? Systems, navigation is a critical area of opportunity to to address, right, because eligibility becomes a barrier to accessibility, when there's all of these documents need

to be completed and all of these questions that need to be answered right in order to qualify, and people do not know how to answer the question. So when they're being asked the question, they answered wrong, and now that's put on a document, they're now forever associated with their response to it. And they will forever be challenged with access,

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like you said, with eligibility precludes access accessibility. That's, wow, that's powerful when we see that permeated in every single part of specific us systems and institutions, access to unemployment, insurance, childcare, whatnot. Wow, that's really powerful. And I think it also touches on the other side of the spectrum, which is what I've been trying to reconcile my life is, you know, Nazism, navigations, which is a really important factor for organizations to self actualize. And to reach that level, that their employees can feel not only safe, but also achieve a certain level of purpose in their work. But it's self actualization, a privilege that only organizations and people with social and financial capital can achieve, or is it something that you know, everybody can do because we have access to collaboration with other sectors and industries and teams and companies that will if we work together as an ecosystem, like he said, then perhaps we can touch on it. But I'm just curious if that's a luxury?

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Well, I think it depends on the society and how it allows it or creates barriers to let's say, this thing, I feel that self actualization can be something that is expected, right? It can be operationalized through systems. But as these systems currently exist, I would agree with you it is constructed as a privilege, as if not everyone deserves to self actualize. Not everyone has the privilege to self actualize. That's a value assessment of a society that we inherited, not necessarily something that is absolute. It's something that can be facilitated as a change to a culture shift. And I feel like that's something that I'm committed to, because I really think that not only is it important to the individual to self actualize, but it's important to the society as a whole. For every individual, that self actualized, the society will be better for it. And if we have so many people in our society, as a result of their environment, operating out of low vibration, they don't have the ability to self actualize the capacity to self actualize. That is dangerous for our society, we are dealing with the low vibration energy as a reaction or outcome of COVID. Right? We've been isolated for so long, we've been fair to ourselves. And you see the difference in the way that we're now coming back and interacting with each other people are on edge. That is because of this disconnect, right? This idea of self actualization comes through engagement, you have to engage with people to self actualize. When you are alone, you only have yourself to bounce your ideas off, to be your control, for your testing and your theories and your thinking. But when you engage with folks, you get to see not only if you're testing and your thinking works, but how others people testing and thinking works. And when we're isolated in community or an individual space. Our ability to comprehend other people's positions, or even be willing to analyze or consider other people's position is a really funny thing.

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irrespective whether you want to collaborate or not. You cannot one working in silos. And number two, it will always happen No matter where you start in life, this type of collaboration, whether you want to start the conversation, it will eventually land at some sphere of vibration or at some point in your life. And I want us to, to continue that thread, but also still pivot into something that you

specialize in. And you also work in actively in the built environment, and how do we create those spaces for people to thrive. And you lean heavily into a number of frameworks from your from your background and expertise from conflict resolution, peacebuilding. But I'm particularly interested in one that you introduced me, which is permaculture design. And from my understanding about it, it's essentially a tool that's holistic enough where we can learn from interactions that's happening naturally in the environment and its processes. Like it's Earth, its cycles, even regenerative ecology is one of them. And it defines certain elements and functions in a system. And how do we create that ecosystem? In terms of what do we learn from it? And how can we reflect it back into human behavior and behavioral change in general? Can you tell me a little bit more? What got you interested in this type of framework? And how do you use it in your everyday life in your work? And how does it reflect back into your your principles?

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I really feel that theories of change are really really awesome tools to move not only conversations for but work for right now. I think that they are what I what I like to call roadmaps to our processes, roadmaps that allow us to follow a track towards a destination, and really understand where we are on that roadmap, and do check ins, right, are we accomplishing what we intended to accomplish at this point? And should we move on or take a step back and recalibrate, right. And so when we're talking about permaculture design, it usually is an agriculture tool, right. And it's a sustainability framework that allows like, let's say a farm, leverage different existing infrastructure to improve sustainability and function. For example, instead of putting pesticides down, they may use ducks, right to not only weed their gardens, but also keep the bugs down, right. And so not only do they have ducks that they can eat for sustenance, but they also now can use those for agricultural needs, right, and to keep their harvesting on a positive, right. And so another thing is not wasting things. So composting, right? In that space, they would have waste from the ducts that also fertilizers they have composting from the food that they eat from a garden that they can create soil out of. And so this ecosystem is really important because it allows the ecosystem to support itself. And that's really where we want to be where the ecosystem can support itself, right. And, like, there's this idea of codependency right, and it's oftentimes a negative term, where, you know, two people who are talking for each other, are detached at the hip, right. But we want to have healthy codependency, which is what I feel like Permaculture Design represents is where within an ecosystem, we are dependent on each other. Right. But we understand our role and responsibility, and we operate in that. So when I think about the work that I do, I think that Permaculture Design is a very strong framework, because it allows that check point, that checklist of considerations have we considered the environment? Have we considered the individual permaculture design? Right, a harvest is a yield. That's profit, right. And so with profit being one of the things of permaculture design, we can speak to the folks that are really passionate about profit, right, like so that's a federation. But it can't just be about profit, it also has to be about the lived experience of the individual, it has to be about how the environment is impacted, right? Because we're stewards of this space and in the way that our current system operates. It's very much so in an extractive abusive relationship, not only with people, but also the environment. And I always like to think of the world being fully dependent on the individual, every single individual as well as the environment and the way our systems currently work. They've detached us from that right. But every single thing that we experience, even us talking through this Wi Fi connection, this computer, all the speakers this desk, right? It came from the natural environment you have to extend Back resources from a natural environment and manufacture them into goods that we then purchase and buy. But who manufactures those goods, the individual, that's manpower. So the only way that we get everything that we get is from the natural environment, and manpower. And we are the people who built the machines, and build the tools and things of that nature. But we pull it from nature. And I think a lot of times that connect is not met. And we

oftentimes minimize the contributions of the individual and the manufacturing and selling of goods to where their hourly wages, for example, are not substantial. And the way that they're actually reflected in the actualization of this business being a billion dollar business, right? That money was given to the higher ups versus the individuals who are actually on the front lines.

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One of the things that you said is, you know, creating systems that are self sustaining, but still acknowledging healthy codependency relationships. And the second thing is that you mentioned, you know, with wages is just a clear example, minimum wages is a company's path to self actualization is through its employees, and through its staff, and the health of the function of a staff. And I want to play you a clip that depicts self sustaining systems, that still honors the health of so called employees. But I'm going to play you a clip from what can ants teach us, and this is where Dr. Barbara Gordon who's a professor of biology at Stanford's, she explains what we can learn from ants and their ecosystem. What's amazing about ants is that in the aggregate, all of these inept creatures accomplish amazing feats as colonies.

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And according to Deborah Gordon, professor of biology at Stanford, they do it all. Without a boss,

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and an ant colony, there's nobody in charge, there are no bureaucrats, there are no foreman,

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there's there are no managers. There's nobody telling anybody what to do. We put a lot of effort into thinking through how to organize some of the things that we try to do as groups. ants don't put in any effort at all. They're pretty messy about it, and it works really well. Most ants, it turns out, simply follow the crowd. I'm curious, what do you think of that clip, and in relation to our conversation on self sustaining systems, and being able to be independent, but also codependent in that kind of relationship?

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I really love watching nature function, because sometimes it looks chaotic, right, and looks like chaos. But it really is order because what I see in this example is one collaboration was very much so evident in the way that the ants operate. But it looks really intense, right? But it looks very, you can see how everyone has assigned roles and responsibilities. Certain people were moving over here, certain people grabbing things, certain people were like moving leaves. It was like, okay, everybody's doing their thing. And it's just interesting, because you think like, Do they even know what the ultimate goal is? And there's this end goal that's happening from their work, like whether that's building a nest or feeding the cleaner, whatever their function is, but everybody's moving towards that. But in the moment is just that specific activity, that one step that comes to mind. Another thing that makes me

think, and it's kind of building on what we were discussing earlier, is, I feel that within our society, we make people fit systems, or systems that fit people. I don't know who made the answer system, right. But it's working, right, and they don't have any complaints, their needs are being met. And, you know, it's just really interesting to kind of see that organizational movement and organizational structure, and something that from a distance looks like chaos. Right. And I think it goes back to some of the ways that we've adapted Western thinking to like, indigenous practices, right. And so, a lot of times we're discovering our indigenous practices throughout the world were more sustainable, more aligned with what the environment needed, and they really centered stewardship of the environment as their practices and a lot, right. But, but you also see this experience if you look at history of the dependency of the environment and why they would feel that necessary relationship to be a steward because when the water dries up, you don't have any water. Right? And so you got to be kind to the water. You have to respect it. You got to be replenishing not to ensure that it's there. And water is a very timely issue because the water reserves in California are at all time glorious. And so when we're thinking about our dependency on the environment and our need to steward it, we haven't done our due diligence in California. In the Los Angeles area, we have Los Angeles River, right, and it's not used for sustenance, a lot of our water reserves are polluted as a result of extractive economic practices. And so as we deal with the encroaching issues of climate change, and environmental justice issues, this then becomes this idea of how are we going to develop systems like dance right like that not only function well, towards the end goal of building the necessary infrastructure that we need to survive in our regions, in our communities, in our cities and our states in our country. But it also has the ability for from that the individual filling purpose by feeling like they're going towards their position of self actualization. Yeah, right now, we are dealing with mass unemployment, because the existing system is no longer satiating the individual. And we're having to do the culture shift, we're having to change the way corporate and employee relationships exist, I do see a lot of conversation around equity, and proving higher pay equity and promotion. And I do see a lot of starts to, with that can look like, but so much in our society, the cyclical, and it doesn't really create a space for long term, anything with the cyclical nature of our election cycles, and the cyclical nature of our attention span. It's like a trend. But the issue that is universal, is still there, right? But we deal with it, in our human experience, as a social phenomenon versus like a universal law or universal need. So we're talking about health care, are our human rights, those then become something that can be dictated by a small group of individuals versus something that needs to be understood at a universal level.

42:29

And want us to end with a couple of questions. Let's bring it home. I'm one person, I'm listening to this podcast. And I'm really fascinated by how products is process how self organizes systems can happen. What can I get out of your frameworks in permaculture design in organizational self actualization and equity? And how can I bring that to my day to day life, and apply it so that I can reach the highest level as the best person that in version of myself and still deliver a culture of justice is just one person? What can I do today?

43:08

Well, one, I think reading is fundamental. I think there are some really great books. So I would start by recommending some books, the history books, and the school books that we read, they have a very specific narrative and agenda that, you know, have us understand. And that's critical to so I'm not saying don't read those books, read those and understand that language very well. But with that being said, there are authors like Toni Morrison, James Baldwin, who really paint this very dynamic

picture of lived experience, specifically in America. And the challenges that have been born out of the race based practices of white supremacy, and the impact that they have had on the most marginalized in our society, but also the ones that benefit the most. There's another book called *The Some of Us* by having the geek and that is a really great book because it talks about how whiteness is a barrier to progress for white people, and how they are adversaries to their own progress in the name of whiteness. And so it was a really interesting take on how poverty is experienced and who gets to experience poverty and why. So that is where I was started. The other thing is *Growing Greatness* now shameless plug. I'm the founder of *Growing Greatness*. Now an organization that is committed to social and environmental justice, and we are a policy and urban design consulting firm. We work with individuals because we've seen a lot of folks go into these diversity, equity inclusion positions and really have challenges with really manifesting the vision, right or operationalizing, their roles in the space that's so large, but also so entrenched and practices that aren't aligned with diversity, equity and inclusion, and then having the challenge right of managing that through this position. So we have some really amazing tools that we've developed and are earmarked towards individuals. We have some really dynamic workshops that we'll be launching starting in the summertime, that will be groupspaces for practitioners to come together. And not only learn best practices from *Growing Greatness* now swear, but also learn pure education, right? What did there anything in their spaces, and we really want to create a safe space for these practitioners, because this work is heavy, it's exhausting. It's challenging to manage emotionally sometimes. And I think sometimes what has helped me is just having folks that get it, right, and being in a space with folks that understand the complexity of dynamics that are at play. But folks that are also committed to the work, right? These aren't easy spaces to be in, but you need to be in. So going braveness wants to kind of create that space where practitioners can grow together.

46:21

Where can people connect with you or know like on the website?

46:24

Yeah, feel free to check us out on our website, GrowingGreatnessNow.com, we are going through a rebrand that I'm really excited about so pretty soon, you'll see some changes on our website, and even on our social media, but you can find us on Facebook and Instagram by searching for *Growing Greatness now*, and follow us there on our handles. And if you'd like to connect, reach out via email, we can just add GrowingGreatness.now@gmail.com

46:53

Thank you so much for now and thank you for being on the podcast. Appreciate it.

46:58

Thank you for having me.

47:00

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