

## **Elevate Live Episode 11 Transcript | June 17, 2020**

### **Racism in Tech: from Conversation to Action**

Razor Suleman, CEO & CoFounder of Elevate  
Jodi Kovitz, CEO & Founder of Move The Dial  
Claudette McGowan, Global Executive Officer, TD Bank  
Karlyn Percil, CEO & Founder of KDPM Consulting Group INC

Razor - Welcome to episode 11 of Elevate Live. My name is Razor Suleman and I am your host on today's show. Today, we have a very important topic. As we discussed last week, we rescheduled our regularly scheduled program for this week to have this important conversation, which is about racism in tech. We don't also want to end with just a conversation. We think it's important to inspire action and many of us, as I discussed last week, I know stand with the black community. Many of us want to do more. We just want to know how we want to know what us as individuals, our families, our teams, our companies, our community can all do. And so today's is not just a conversation. We really want to talk about tangible action items that we can all do to deal with the issue of systemic racism that has been hundreds of years in the making, but we all need to help change.

We all need to be a part of the progress in moving our society forward and standing by the members of our black community, particularly in the tech sector, we all know we are greatly underrepresented. We chatted last week about how black entrepreneurs receive 1% of all venture capital funding, and that's just not acceptable. So I'm, I'm looking forward to having this important conversation with the Elevate community. We've got an incredible lineup of thought leaders as guests today. And so we're going to talk about how we can all act. Today's show is broken up into three segments. First, we're going to talk about the role that leadership and companies have in our community around dealing with the issues of systemic racism. We are then going to talk about looking at some of the other organizations that have made public statements. And we're going to ask our guests today, or whether that was enough, kind of a pass that we've been doing the last few weeks.

And then third, we're going to take and leave with actionable tactical examples that our panelists are going to share with you around what you can do today, what you could do tomorrow and what you can commit to doing every day to help make progress on this important issue. Okay. We have an incredible lineup of guests today. We, as we mentioned, we started from scratch. We scrubbed and we thought, who do we want to see on today's show? And I'm so grateful that all three of these incredible humans said yes to our invitation. We have Claudette McGowan. We have Karlyn Percil, and we have Jodi Kovitz on the show today. I'm going to start with my introduction of Claudette. Claudette McGowan is the global executive officer of cybersecurity at TD Canada. She is a champion of tech and diversity in the Canadian ecosystem.

She is the founder of the Black Arts Innovation Expo, an organization that Elevate has been proud to support for a number of years. She has also been recognized as one of Canada's most hundred most powerful women in 2018, as well as one of the 50 most powerful women in FinTech in Canada. She is a very valued member of the Elevate board of directors. And you may have caught Claudette McGowan, who last appeared on the Elevate main stage next to Michelle Obama, right? To interview the first lady on a, to a sold out crowd. And what was such a memorable conversation, Claudette. We're so excited to have you back on the show.

Claudette - Thank you, Razor. It's a pleasure to be here.

Razor - Thank you. Nice to see you. Okay. Next step. We have Karlyn Percil. Karlyn is the CEO and Founder of KDPM Consulting Group INC. That's focused on equity, diversity, inclusion and wellness in the workplace. She is a certified emotional intelligence and neuroscience coach, as well as a serial and wildly successful founder. Her companies have included SisterTalk Group. She's also founder of Amplify Her. We're so excited that she's joining us. She is the community ambassador of Coopera on the world's largest open social innovation platform for social change. She's leading the charge here in Canada, Karlyn. Good to see you again, welcome to the show.

Karlyn - Thanks for having me here.

Razor - Welcome. Okay, next up. We have Jodi Kovitz. You know, when we were talking about who we wanted to have wanted to make sure that we had a well rounded group of thought leaders, Jodi has experienced racism more as an ally. She is a white woman of privilege, but has been supporting diversity and inclusion and the advancement of women in technology. And so it was so important for Jodi to share her perspective and what we or other allies can do that want to be a part of this movement. Jodi is a connector. She is an innovator. She is a builder of the Canadian tech and innovation ecosystem. She was also recognized by WXN as one of the hundred, most powerful women in 2017, in 2018. She also co-chaired mayor Tory's reelection campaign in 2018 and is on the sick kids foundation capital campaign cabinet raising a one point \$3 billion to transform pediatric health in Canada. She is a cofounder of elevate, Jodi. Good to see you. Welcome to today's show.

Jodi - Thank you, Razor. I'm delighted to be here.

Razor - Okay. So we are also going to go to our audience. So this is a live conversation that we're having. We're gonna do an AMA (ask me anything) at the end. So get your questions into zoom, go into the Q and a tab, share your questions. And or more importantly, to upvote your questions. We will definitely get to the most upvoted questions. We have an incredible lineup of thought leaders. We want to make sure you can ask your questions directly. I'm going to start with our first topic and the role that leaders have as well as organizations, particularly in the tech community, the role they need to play around, making progress around the systemic issues that we have in our ecosystem, in our country and in our planet. Karlyn, I'm going to start with you. You read a very, you wrote a really compelling article around race, racism and equality, making black lives matter in the workplace ([Article Link](#)). Tell me about what you think, what actions leaders, and organizations can take around making change.

Karlyn - I think we need to move beyond performative inclusive leadership. And by that, I mean we have the research, we have the reports, you know, the latest Marquez tech for all reports stated that over 66% of black employees face racism in the workplace, Race Relations Canada just last year released a report again. But I have to say that the tech fall report talked to talked about bias, right? And the risk relations report did talk about racism that employees face in the workplace as well. And we have had so many reports and research for years and nothing is being done to change the policies that can now change the next report that will be coming out. So I think we have been through centuries of performative leadership where leaders are a skirting around the issue, the stats by here, but they haven't addressed, you know, the, the various dimensions of racism, which includes, you know, structural racism, institutional racism.

And of course there is the interpersonal, which it contributes towards unconscious racial bias. So in this article I shared, you know, just five things that organizations can do because until we actually address the elephant in the race room, in that we tended to put everything in a basket around implicit bias or we were trying to be more inclusive. We have a DNI leader. We have, you know, all those different

committees in place, but who are the committees serving, right? What are the, the, the committee is dismantling because a key ingredient of inclusion is racial justice. So if you are not looking at your DNI, you know, an equity strategy through the lens of racial justice, if you're not collecting risk based data within your organization, if you do not understand the black experience, if you're not using a human centered design that also looks at white complicity, right?

What is the role of white? I call it white SPF, white superiority privilege and fragility. What role is a playing towards, contributed towards a culture of anti-black racism. If we don't have that data, then how do you know which policies to change? How do you know, you know, what, what part of your system needs to change? And, but we're knowing it's changing. And, you know, I often say that segregation for schools happened like, you know, in 1960s and in the US, for Canada in 1977. And I believe that, you know, just outside of Hamilton in 1984 was the last, the closure of a segregated school. I was born in 1977, I'm 43 years old. So it wasn't that long ago. Right? So when we say that black people were born into, you know, an empty black racism culture, this is what I'm talking about.

And part of it is, you know, really understanding how can we change the system? How can we change? And we do that by the policy. We do that by changing the structural systems. But as we look at the text space, you talked about it, raise a 1%, goes out to the black founders. You look at your senior leadership, you know, in corporate, what do you see a grown up version of school segregation that has not existed in the tech space and in corporate Canada? So what needs to be done is really, you know, the leader has been comfortable talking about racism, talking about racial justice, talking about, you know, anti black racism, let's address the elephant in the room, because if we don't do that, we'll continue to perpetuate the system. As we can see today, this is why there is a global outcry.

It's time to stop dehumanizing black lives, not only from a police brutality or as we have seen through COVID with the health pandemic, right? We have to fight and lobby for race-based data, incorporate it also exists in the tech space. It exists as there. So I challenge every leader who's watching this. And if you're uncomfortable with a lot of the terms and things that I'm saying you're on the right path to really begin the journey of looking at what are my policies, where in my, in my, in my practices, where in my systems do I have systemic barriers that are affecting the lives of black people inside the work with, but also outside the workplace as well.

Razor - Yeah. Karlyn I couldn't agree with you more, you know, we need, I mean, while the reports are important and the data is irrefutable, we need policy change, right? We've seen how policy has created racism in our institutions, in our society. And until we get to the top and change the policies that have been holding and oppressing the black community and other underrepresented community things won't change. We have reached out to Minister Chagger, the Canadian Cabinet Minister that's leading up diversity and inclusion. And so we look to hear back from her office to talk about where those policies can happen at the top. I'm going to go over to you Claudette. Claudette has been championing around diversity in the recruitment, in the promotion process within corporate Canada. You've been championing women in technology at BMO launching the first platform at BMO. Claudette, what can leaders do in the tech community to effect change.

Claudette - Yeah. Razor. I think the first thing I'd ask to do is to take the temperature. We know for every project, we start with, look at our baseline. And so what does home look like? What does my office look like instead of looking anybody else let's start at home first. And if you think you're looking at your organization, do you see the level of inclusivity that reflects the world? Do you see the level of inclusivity that reflect customers, everyone to start within their organization to understand what their starting

point is. I remember growing up in a very homogenous Ironman everybody in the household was black. So when we sat at the dinner table, I had people look like me and over the years of people.

And I talk to leaders today. Okay. Does your boardroom, or does your executive table look like that homogenous table back at home in the day? Or does it look like a diverse table? And we know that with diversity comes better solutions, different perspectives and, and, and bottom line results. So I encourage you folks to start at home. They can do, and then once you get that right. Cause it's so hard to go tell everybody else what to do, if you don't do it yourself, people are spending a lot of time right now, looking at websites and say, Hmm, does this match the Instagram statement? Does this match the Twitter statement? And you're being called out. I think that's okay too. This is where we're starting. And here's where we're going.

And we're not firing people because it's a box to check, because we're trying to hit a target or a number. We need to cast wide nets and look for the best and the brightest. And one thing we learned about people can from anywhere. So when you're looking for an engineer here, or when you're looking for a developer, when you're looking for a designer, you're looking for a size bird. It doesn't all have to be in Toronto. It doesn't all have to be in Canada. It doesn't mean we have many, many opportunities to cast wide nets. And the last thing I would say is let's take a multigenerational lens at what we're doing. Let's look in the schools and see how we can help as businesses because the young children's minds are going to be the leaders of tomorrow. Let's talk to our elderly population and say, how can we encourage people in the tech sector that can add tremendous value? We have to take a look, look at everybody on earth because everybody adds value.

Razor - Yeah. I agree. When a corporations put out these statements on Instagram and saying that they stand with the black community, and then you put their board of directors up and it's like, but that doesn't actually seem like it matches your words really feel empty. And we're going to go through some examples of companies and organizations that we think are getting it right. And maybe ones that are need to do more, because I do agree your, your external representation of the words you say need to be truly aligned to your values. And those values need to be demonstrated every day. Not because it's just topical today. Okay. Jodi, you have been a huge supporter of diversity and inclusion in the tech sector. You stand by your statement. If you don't measure it, it won't get done. Jodie talk to me about what leaders and other individuals in the tech sector can do to help deal with the issues we have with race in our community.

Jodi - Yeah. I mean, building on what Karlyn and Claudette have said, I think I'd like to share the perspective that, you know, I've been standing and talking about this for a long time and it was, you know, an intellectual understanding. And I think the call to action right now to leaders that I would share, before you can have your company and your team design a marathon approach to how we build an environment that seriously conveys black lives matter because you have programs that strategically recruit black professionals and advanced black professionals and hire black professionals on your board. And at your design tables. Like I think it actually starts with leaders moving from an intellectual understanding to a deep, a much more emotional connection to our own privileges that we bring to the table. So I just want to share in a really raw sense that, you know, we are on an allied journey forever.

I will never understand. And any non-black leader will never understand ever how it feels for you, any black employee to feel unsafe. Like they don't belong. Like they're an only, and the trauma and exhaustion that's going on right now. So I think, you know, I would encourage, I'm not going to spit off some, you know, a process of strategies. I think it really starts with the leader to understand and listen extremely deeply that you will never understand if you are not black, that we're going to be on this journey for absolutely ever. If you get called in, we're called out, that's a gift because you actually have a

chance to wake up and listen more deeply. If someone calls you in, it's like a magical favor because you get to say, thank you for caring enough about me to listen. And so, you know, for me in the last few weeks, all I've learned is how much more I have to do and how much more deeply I have to listen and how actually any long term strategy has to start with a deep awakening and awareness to all of the privileges that those of us that are in leadership roles with privileged to lend.

You know, we have to understand, we have to understand black racism and anti-black racism and what has happened for many, many, many, many years to the absolute, best of our ability to be able to thoughtfully design any meaningful strategy that we'll be able to back up the words and understand people are on a journey. And some people are saying things because they don't know what to say. And those companies and individuals like myself need to just listen, listen, listen, before we can actually do much that's meaningful and impactful over the long game.

Razor - That's pretty consistent with my experience over the last couple of weeks that there are th that this time feels different. Obviously this is not a new issue. It's been hundreds of years, but there are many people that I think are on the sideline that, that have been called in, some have been called out, but there's a sense that this is not a black problem. This is a societal problem. We don't want to live in a country and in a community, in a world where we are seeing members of our communities being oppressed, because let's be honest, it can be any community being oppressed. And so what do we need to do? And I think there's some hesitation, but there's definitely a force that I'm feeling that people are looking to join and be on the right side of history.

So I would encourage those people to reach out, have those conversations, listen, but do make a point of acting and making a difference. Because again, I think your silence is advocating for the side of the oppressor and that can no longer stand silence. Doesn't do anyone any good. We all need to move forward.

Okay. I'm going to pick three companies and three organizations that have gotten a lot of press around their commitment, or maybe their lack thereof commitment. I actually would love to go to our panelists. We know where we're going to position this as sort of pass or fail of whether they made it or not, but more so, what are they doing well, what could they do better? I'd love to get our, our thought leaders to weigh in on these three examples. First, we're going to go to the NFL and the NFL led by commissioner Roger Goodell made actually two statements. One we're showing on the screen here. They made with both on their Instagram video. What kind of felt like, you know, empty words around standing by the black community, but also having a long standing relationship of progressing some of the visual signs. I mean, they banned kneeling, they effectively banned Colin Kaepernick. And they made another statement saying, okay, we're listening. We didn't do enough. And they committed \$250 million to help solve some of the challenges around systemic racism in our community and lending their platform to their cause. Okay. So two parts, I'm going to start with you Claudette. I'm going to go to Karlyn and then I'm going to end with Jodi on all three of them, call that pass or fail on the NFL over the year.

Claudette - Yeah. I'm going to give them a pass. And the reason I'm giving them a pass is because they're doing something. A lot of us are not getting it right. We're trying our best and we're learning. So I, I see that they came out with a statement. They're saying that they are trying to be better, their putting money where their mouth is, and that I hope they will continue down that path.

Karlyn - I just want to preface my grading with the understanding that I believe everyone is doing the best, the best. It's not a perfection race. And I expect a lot of messing up as we move forward. And with

that, I'm saying I'm giving them a fail. Because part of systemic racism is the erasure of black experiences. They put out a statement, yes, they put up some money. Okay. They should have done that regardless, but they still haven't addressed how to treat it and Colin, they still didn't have a conversation with him. There is a whole lot more they could have done. And for me, what they did is simply performative allyship. Oh, let's say something before people get mad. I expected more.

Jodi - Yeah. I mean, I have to say on this one, it's a fail for me from the perspective of, you know, I've read a very powerful article and I will share it. It was shared with me by my friend, Sarah Saska. Who's been a tremendous teacher to me over the years. And where, you know, like there was something in that article that rang true for me around like, don't expect people to pat you on the back for like demonstrating some allyship. And from my perspective just with, from what I've read, and I can not understand in any way, shape or form the lived experience of the players and all of the other members of the NFL who have been oppressed. But my understanding is that it is such a long standing significant experience of racism on so many levels that this is perhaps a first step in their journey. And yeah. Feels to me from the way it was presented, it was very you know, pat us on the back cause we took a first step. Like we're never gonna pat anyone on the back, we're taking any steps. And that is a huge insight that I've had over the last few weeks in particular. It doesn't matter what you do. It's never enough. So that's a fail for me.

Razor - Snapchat had been previously profiling Donald's Trump's account and its discover platform. He was using that platform to inspire violence racist comments pretty much what Donald Trump just does. He was just doing it on Snapchat. Snapchat responded by first, not only demoting him off the discover platform, but CEO Evan Spiegel deleted president Trump's voice on the Snapchat discover platform. Obviously the Trump campaign pushed back. They said you are interfering and rigging the 2020 election and voter suppression. Was Snapchat pass or fail? Over to you Claudette.

I believe that if there is anyone socializing or promoting hatred, we should do everything possible to shut that down. I agree with the decision that they made.

Karlyn - Same. I agree with Claudette. And again, if you're looking at the dimensions of racism, social media is such a huge weapon. Cause, cause this is what happens when we look at unconscious racial bias, what information are we consuming? So if you're consuming that hate, that message, that blacks are inferior or we're again, he's used language, I'm not going to say the language, but he also used language to call us a certain, you've never seen those words associated for a white person. So if you understand how you know, hate and racism is embedded in the different, the media, the social media, what is said, what we give power to, then you understand how you know, that complicity actually upholds systemic barrier and what we hold true to be a value in society. So that's definitely a pass for me.

Okay. Next up we have Apple, one of the most valuable companies on the planet today Apple has made a name for itself in. Apple music has been a thread throughout its existence. It used its platform and made a statement. It dedicated a lot of that platform to the black community to promote artists and others in that industry and trying to get them more visibility and taking it stood by the black community. It had a number of people who had sort of said, well, here's your board of directors and it looks pretty homogeneous and it looks pretty white. So walk the walk before you tweet the tweet was the sentiment over to you. You know, I'm gonna start with Karlyn, did Apple do enough?

Karlyn - No Apple, that's a fail. And I don't know if you saw the 10 actions from McKinsey. And again, I know everyone's doing the best. This is the first time they were addressing anti-black racism. They were

addressing anti racism and you cannot change your board overnight, but an example of what Apple could have added to that statement, and as part of McKinsey's 10 actions, they committed over the next four years to double the black leadership in the workplace. So, so even something as simple as that, we're not saying you, you have to fix it tonight. We're not saying your board of directors we'll look, you know, not like, you know, sex school segregation from back in the sixties, but what is your commitment to actually changing that? Even adding to the statement, saying that we commit to diversifying our board right, over the next year or two years, that to me would have added a whole lot more meaning to their statement.

Razor - I agree. You know, you are what you are whenever you join this conversation and you're not going to change your board, but a statement without action and a commitment around, you know, doubling the number of black leaders. I mean, you know, next year with this or whatever, this becomes topical, they're going to have the same board and they're going to not fully understand that there'll be no difference or no change. Claudette, Apple pass or fail?

Claudette - So I, I would say that Apple again, like the NFL is trying. And so I, my, my viewpoint is that if you are making steps. Yeah. Remember that there are companies who are doing nothing. So I think they're going to get a pass with a warning. I'm hoping they're going to pick up the pace and we're going to see that, that table of leaders become diverse, especially with the right skills set. So that's my thoughts.

Razor - Okay. So it's a pass for the effort, but we all expect more from Apple. So we'll give them a chance and we'll keep watching and the actions that they take Jodi over to you.

Jodi - Yeah. I mean, for me, it's a fail because I, you know, like a company like Apple, we talk about the problem of having, you know, black voices at our design leadership and design tables at companies that are scaling up and, and you know, all the reasons and excuses that all those moving too fast. It's so hard. All the things we're using are like, Apple has no excuse. I'm sorry for anybody that works at Apple, that's listening, but like, there's just truly no excuse when you're as well resourced of a company like Apple to not actually significantly make it a strategic business priority and moral imperative to make sure that you have a company that reflects the population at all levels. And so for me, I actually have very little patience for a company as big as Apple being so late to the conversation, the light Claudette, of course, I always appreciate and celebrate, you know, a step because a step is better than no step. And everybody's in a journey and there's lots of companies that are taking their first steps now. And hopefully this is the first step of many, many, many serious steps. But I think it's like a really important example of looking at well-resourced technology companies that just have not prioritized building employee basis and leadership teams and boards that reflect the entire population. It's just like, we're in 2020, and it's really time. So fail. Pick it up.

Razor - Okay. you know, Jodi, you chatted a little bit about how, if it, you know, if you can't measure it, you can't fix it. And I think diversity metrics are important so that we can see what a company's recruiting process, promoting process, who they have on their board. And so I'm going to put a call out of action to those leaders in the tech community. We've seen some great companies like borrow, well, we've seen Wattpad share their diversity metrics. So I'm gonna encourage all startups, all, scale-ups all growth companies in the tech sector to share with us where you're at today, even if it's not where you want to be. And especially if it's not where you want to be, but share those numbers and tell us where you'd like to be a year from now. And we will follow up and Elevate will join those other companies.

We will share within a week where we are today at every level of the organization in terms of diversity. Because if you can't measure it, you can't manage it, it's not a priority. So just like any other KPI in the

organization, I think diversity metrics are important and that'll be our commitment as an organization around the action we are going to take from today's conversation. Okay. Now let's move into the individual level. We know we've talked about leadership and we talked about companies, but what can people do? Because we all have a role. What is the, what can our viewers, we have thousands of viewers who want to hear from our, our thought leaders around, what can they do? Karlyn, I'm going to go over to you. What is something that our viewers can do today to make a difference, to be on the right side of history to join the movement?

Karlyn - I think the first thing is to if I'm speaking to white people is to confront or address your white SP. I, you know, I often say that systems don't dismantle themselves, people do, but if the people who are upholding the system, are responsible for the system, if they're not aware of the role, systemic racism or anti black racism plays into and how it's embedded into the systems, they won't have the foresight to change it. Right? And this is what we call unconscious racial bias, because racism is systemic. It's structural, it's institutional. And it's also a part of our, our own mental systems. You have to ensure that you, as the individual, you're doing the work to understand how were the systems embedded into my values, into my belief system? Do I know my own history? You know, Dr. Diangelo, author of White Fragility, she talks about white people don't know the history, like, did your, did your forefathers or your ancestors, did they have slaves, right?

What is the belief system your bringing into the workplace? Because as a leader, if you're an inclusive leader, you're bringing all of you to work, you're bringing your history to work. And a lot of that might be unconscious. So I say, start with, and when we look at our social structures, we look at work and, you know, I call it, I talked about it earlier, taking a look at, you know, your home life, work home, and the communities that we are all a part of, like your school system. Right. are you advocating for more inclusion at the school in the health system, or also just in your workplace where you are right now? If you're, if your, your senior leadership team looks like you, you know, you as a white person, how are you using your voice? How are you using what I call your white P's? Your white privilege, your white position privilege, your power privilege and your pay privilege, and think of don't think of allyship as a badge or an identity. Think about what can I do as a good human and an Austin Channing Brown, as she has this quote she's a racial justice teacher. She's based in U S and she said that the work of anti racism is becoming a better person so that you can be a better human to other humans. That's it?

Razor - Yeah. I like that line. That systems don't change systems, people change systems, it's people that created those systems. And now we need to change those systems. Claudette over to you. What can individuals do today to make a difference?

Claudette - Yeah, it's important. Okay. I look around and say, who are we spending our time with? So if I want to be part of the indigenous community, I couldn't do it with never speaking to an indigenous person, never defending someone, never ask about their experience and doing, and investing the time, listen, and learn. And so I would say the same thing for anyone interested in understanding the black experience is to make sure that you, you surround yourself with people who can give you that context, that understanding because I think it's important that we spend a lot of time listening and understanding what that experience is, and also doing the work internally to say, why? What's so different? What can I personally do to make a difference in this relationship, in the community? In this organization? I am one for advocating for small, right? Measuring, having a little bit of a plan and then executing, no different than how we do our work, where we have key performance indicators that tell us that we're on the right track, but, but the number one thing is if you have no expo community, there's no way you can add value if you've never even had those conversations. So, so I think individuals

have to, you know, go out there and meet people and learn from them because the learning works both ways.

Razor - Yeah. I think having that exposure to people that are different than yourselves to hear their stories, learn their perspectives, learn from each other, I think, is the first step around understanding some of the challenges that each of us have a Jodi over to you, what can the individual do today? How can they act?

Jodi - Yeah. I mean, I'm going to talk to my white friends right now, and white leaders and non-black leaders, because that is the lived experience that I can share. Take this really seriously. This moment in time, this is a wake up call for all of us to get very serious, that we are not going to allow anti black racism in the future of our ecosystem. And what that means is that every single one of us who does not have the black lived experience, it needs to do some very, very hard work. It is not reading one book. Although the one that I would recommend, which was recommended to, by again, my friend, Sarah, Me and White Supremacy, read it a hundred times. It's a workbook. You have to get in and understand that the work is like really hard and not pretty. And you're going to get called out and you're going to get called in.

I have many times I watch and invite that conversation because that is how we grow and not be defensive and not think that just because you did some things that were in allyship, that you're a good enough ally. You're never, we are never going to be good enough allies. So this is the moment where we have to go deep and do the hard work and have courageous conversations about race with our black friends and our black community and our black employees, and educate ourselves and own it as our own responsibility to do that. And then we need to really make a choice to go out of our way to lend our privilege meaningfully and always, and that it is a marathon for the rest of our lives. Once we've had a shift in our journey to understand it as our own responsibility to fill the different future and never, ever stop. And that does not mean that any of us will ever get it right, right. It is really a massive wake up call in our community right now to do our part and join our black friends in our black community in an all in way. That's all I have to say about that.

Razor - Thank you, Jodi. And thank you for sharing that book reference. You actually shared it with me earlier as well, too. So I appreciate you sharing with everybody. We're going to go now to our audience. So we're going to go and hear from our community. We have Aliyah off first, she has a question for Claudette. How can I affect change in my workplace where the executives are a vast majority white, and there is no diversity programs or even conversations that this is an important topic. What can Aliyah do?

Claudette - I have an example of, at my previous employer, we had younger black employees join. And when they joined the organization, they asked where is the support? Where's the, the resource group. And they didn't exist. And they got together, worked with a team, created the strawman of what this could be. And a year later it was launched. And I want to say, you know, on day three, over 500 employees signed up. So sometimes you're waiting for things to come up from top down. And really there's a lot we can do, working together and pulling things together and raising the awareness. So I think there has to be a demonstrated need. So I would, I would strongly encourage you to just find some like-minded folks and it's so pull it together and it can be formal. We had formal committees for pride. There's nowhere there shouldn't be a committee that addresses the needs that you are interested in moving forward. So please don't wait for anybody, pull it together and find an executive sponsor because sometimes again, if they don't know what's needed and no one says that they want it, then they won't move it forward. So we need a champion at the executive level, and we need champions at the working group too.

Razor - Yeah. I really liked the grass roots approach and was in those bottom up, you know, every movement started with a few dedicated individuals that rose up right. And made a change. And so find those people who feel the way you do in your workplace and, and start a great bottoms up movement. Okay. Our next question, our next viewer wanted to be anonymous. It's a question to each of our panelists. How can I be the best ally?

Jodi - I mean, frankly, if it's all right, Razor, I'd rather start with Claudette or Karlyn on this and listen to what their thoughts are. But I, you know, I feel like from me, I just say, I just shared my perspective on that, which was take it really f\*\*\*king seriously. Excuse my French. I listened to our friends. So I'm going to step down on this. Sorry.

Karlyn - Yes, I and I have two viewpoints on the word ally, because I feel like ally makes it sound like white people are doing us a favor, but I also understand because the, you know, understanding anti black racism and all of that, it's such a a huge undertaking because it wasn't a part of the culture of a lot of white people growing up. I would offer start by, I call it LEAP. So I created this program cause I realized a lot of people didn't know where to go, what to say. So I created this program called LEAP and LEAP stands for how to shift from performative allyship or what I call performative leadership to inclusive leadership. Cause no racial justice should be a part of inclusion. You should care about the entire human race, right?

And LEAP stands for L is listen, learn so that you can unlearn. So it starts by meeting self first East ends for embody and body, all the data, the history, all the things, understand your own history, your own white SPF, and then examine the various social structures that you're a part of your home, your workplace, your community school, et cetera, et cetera. And A is for action to connection, but it's action activity that causes transformation. We give an example on the individual side, start the conversation, grab a book, start a book club, read to all your friends, talk about it.

And then you can ask after you've taken action, then you can ask black leaders, where is my time probably most effectively spent? Is there a policy that you're trying to move forward? How can I use my voice? And P stands for prioritizing equity, make equity, a part of every single thing you do. For example, we know language can hold you know, covert acts of racism is socially acceptable. We talked about emotional tax and discrimination and saying the wrong things. So even just looking at what you say and how you say it can be a place to start in terms of understanding how you can start deconstructing anti black racism and anti racism in our society, so LEAP.

Claudette - Yeah, absolutely. Would love to add to Karlyn's great data and what she shared with us. We have this phenomenal opportunity in front of us to take action, to talk about. Some of the action that I seen is we're helping out the nonprofits. That's a nice thing. That's wonderful. There are some right now, if you think about Jean Augustine and what she's doing with her center for empowerment for girls, if you think about some work that Tamar Huggins is doing with Tech Spark, okay. We also have for profit organizations, Amoye Henry and the work that she's doing on Pitch Better. Like there's so many out there where you can lend your support, not only in, in time and resources, but in being a customer and helping folks to grow what they've pulling together. So I'd love to see people you know, the time, the energy, a little investment can help and helping non-profit and profit black owned organizations.

Jodi - What I will now add after listening to my friends share their perspectives, which were very helpful for me to hear are like, sometimes those really small things are just as important as the very big ones. And I think for those people that are at the beginning of the journey, just making a commitment, you

know, a very dear friend of mine, Yvonne Donna Kerr, who has been with me for years, teaching me, educating me, advising me, learning from each other, who, you know, even in recent weeks has taught me an enormous amount. Held a courageous conversation between black folks and white folks in leadership roles. And it was a massively important conversation and she challenged each of us to take three commitments. And sometimes the commitment can be as small as if you do mentoring or impactful coaching, choose to go out of your way to support black founders or your black friends or black employees with intentionality and even something that's small that even you'll never talk about it, you know, you're just doing it and living the value of your journey. That those little commitments are an opportunity for you to practice showing up and listening deeply and learning and advancing don't. So don't think that your small actions of standing in solidarity and, or intentionally going out of your way to be equity-based and how you use your energy, you make no difference because they do, just as important as some of the much bigger actions that Karlyn was talking about that you also have to do.

Razor - Right. Jodi, thank you for sharing. And even with that question, you took a moment to listen first. So I'm grateful because I think for those of us that are thinking around what to do, listening is important. You made space for our other panelists to lead the conversation. It reminded me of you know, in a, in a different context, but even Alexis Ohanian, the co founder of Reddit married to Serina Williams, gave up his seat on the Reddit board after 15 years and asked the Reddit board to give that seat to a leader of the black community. So that again, that Reddit itself could be slightly more diverse and start that conversation. And then Claudette couldn't agree more, revenue, revenue, revenue vote with your dollars. Every single person is gonna make a decision around where they shop, where they eat, what they buy, right.

Does Amazon need to get more powerful, does Jeff Bezos need to become even more of a multi-billionaire, or do the black lead restaurants and hair salons and shops in your own backyard, vote with your dollars, right. Be a customer and support those communities. The Media has done a pretty good job of highlighting a number of black businesses. But again, nothing is more powerful than voting with your dollars and being a customer. Okay, we're going to go to another anonymous question to any panelist. How do we include the voices of the indigenous community in this very important conversation around race?

Karlyn - It's it's by, and, you know, as Claudette mentioned, it's about building those relationships. And, and even with myself, you know, resist to talk which is my women's leadership network, we actually, you know, have built relationships last year. In collaboration with Parliament Hill, we held a discussion of what it means to be a woman in today's society and in Canadian society. And we partnered with you know, Gabrielle who was actually from Ottawa and a few other indigenous organizations, even through my work with the success planner. We have Jace Meyer who actually works for Shopify. She's a head of indigenous entrepreneurship. So it's about building relationships with all those different groups. And we do have relationships with them. And even in the work that we do with the LEAP program, where we are actively helping organizations and leaders to not only get training in anti-black racism, we're also helping them to, to really take, you know, a racial equity lens through their own systems to ensure that they are not perpetuating a culture of anti-black racism.

Even through this, we have relationships with other groups. And, and when I'm speaking to companies, I tell them when you hire me, you're not just hiring me. I'm bringing in other groups as well to represent the voices of other communities, and also working with other black leaders, the black experiences, as it's not a linear experience, there are many different experiences. And I don't speak for all black people, but I can speak based on my experience and where I am today. But we add that value. And that's the power of higher end, you know, black and indigenous leaders and paying them as well. What is being paid to white people, because then when you do that we talked about revenue. We talked about really

uplifting these communities, not as a handout, but because we actually do really amazing work, some of my favorite brands, I'm not wearing it right now.

This is a black owned brand lipstick called Jama Face, but another favorite brand of mine is called Cheekbone Beauty. And they do amazing makeup as well as indigenous brand, their Sage sisters as well. So again, it's, it's a, you know, as Claudette mentioned, I think people tend to overcomplicate it really look at your circle, meet people, meet humans. Yeah some of these humans you know may happen to be black, happen to be indigenous, but really opened up your circle. And if everyone you're seeing, if your wedding album looks like the people in your immediate family, then it's time to open up the circle, start where you are.

Razor - Thank you, Karlyn. Okay. That is all the time that we have on today's show. But that is not all the questions we got asked. So we are going to continue the conversation on our blog. We're going to address every question that got submitted or get submitted before one o'clock. Ladies I am going to go to you. You are my tribe, my circle of trust to help us thoughtfully answer those questions. And we will address every single question following the show. And so you will be heard because again, the more action we can inspire. I just want to be mindful of our people's lunch hours and time. Also instead of our normal sort of recognition of Trees Canada, I actually wanted to take a moment because we do have Claudette here. She's the founder of the Black Arts and Innovation Expo, an that

We are very passionate about here at Elevate. We have made a \$25,000 donation, not donation sorry, we are a customer. We are a customer to this organization that provides much needed scholarships and mentorships and helping more members of the black community access the tech community. Claudette Tell us a little bit, I know you're a little humble, but I'm not going to let you be humble. Tell us about this incredible youth and maybe a couple of others, because I do know that there are people who do want to be able to support a black organization. Over to you, Claudette.

Claudette - Yeah, thanks for what I will say is that for the 10 years of my career, I sat in many meeting rooms. I was the only person of color, definitely the only black female in the room. And it is, it is lonely and disillusioning at times. And and I knew a lot of people who had skills that could be there sitting beside me, but for whatever reason they weren't invited to the party. And so I asked different companies in the tech sector, you know, what do they think the issues are? And I talk about not having the pipeline, not having the reach. And so really when I created the Black Arts and Innovation Expo, it was to open everyone's eyes to just the wonderful opportunities that are, that exist in technology to bring students, you know, from very young ages into this this new realm of possibilities and to connect them with companies.

And I'm really pleased to say that we've given scholarships. So this is, it's not a for profit. This is definitely something that goes right back to the kids. And what we have done, we have given over a hundred scholarships. I've seen kids graduate, get jobs at IBM, at Microsoft, and it's just phenomenal to see how, how that's all come together. So I think, you know, the tech sector for really showing their support and really opening the eyes to so many young people in the black community, you know, the art of what is possible. And I would just say like companies, for instance, like Facebook, when there was only 100 people at the first event, they were there at the very beginning at a time when the company was led by a gentlemen named Jordan Banks. Thanks. And Jordan came and he brought people because he wanted them to see what happens in our community but also to support. And so I thought it was phenomenal that he was a model for everybody, not only that Facebook came and they invested in the youth, but they also made sure that they brought their children, because that's how things grow. We do

it by generation and by showing people everyone's experience. So that's really what the Black Arts and Expo Innovation is all about. Arts and opportunity.

Razor - Okay. Thank you so much Claudette, a wonderful story. Keep doing the amazing work you are doing. Thank you, Claudette, Karlyn, Jodi very much appreciate your time and lending your voice in this important conversation. Next week, we are going to return to our regular schedule program around cybersecurity.

We are all working from home, which introduces a whole bunch of new cybersecurity risks. You're going to see Claudette back on today's show. She's leading the charge at TD bank around global cybersecurity, as well as the one and only Robert Herjavec. Who's been a champion of the Herjavec Group in his company. As an entrepreneur, you may have seen him on both Dragon's Den and Shark Tank. Now a media personality, joining us next week on Elevate Live, talking about cybersecurity and what we all need to do to stay safe. A special thanks to my team at Elevate who all played a part in this important conversation, as we wanted to discuss the actions we wanted to take as an organization. So thank you for each of you. I did a walk and talk with the 20 people we have in our organization. So I'm very grateful for the insight that you've shared with me and know that you, we are continuing to be supportive of all marginalized individuals and organizations. Special thanks to our executive producer, our co founder at Elevate Lisa Zarzeczny for her amazing work. And again, stay healthy, stay safe. And thanks everybody at home for tuning in. We'll see you next week on the next show, take care. Bye.