

Episode 3: Gathering Your People Transcript

Val Brown:

Welcome. We are so excited to present to you CARE's four-part Antiracist Educator web series.

Val Brown:

In order to reach our goal of an antiracist educator in every classroom, we need to be able to talk. So, we invited 16 different educators, from around the country, to discuss what it means to be an antiracist educator.

Val Brown:

Our hope is that you will be inspired to have similar conversations in their own communities. We even created discussion guides to help. Let's get started. At CARE, we firmly believe educators should work in community, especially in our antiracism efforts. We'll talk about community and how to build your own during this episode. I'm joined by another four phenomenal guests. Please welcome Dr. Sarah-SoonLing Blackburn, Professional Development Manager for Learning for Justice, always representing Mississippi. James Ford, Executive Director for the Center for Racial Equity in Education in North Carolina. Christie Nold, a sixth-grade teacher from Vermont. And Daniella Suarez-Boyd, a high school math teacher and instructional coach from Florida.

Val Brown:

I'm Val Brown, Principal Academic Officer for CARE. I'm so ready for this conversation. Let's get started.

Val Brown:

We are here with our panelists tonight to have a conversation about gathering your antiracist and not so antiracist colleagues. So, really this is a conversation about how to work with other people in your school community when it comes to doing antiracist education work.

Val Brown:

So, I'm just gonna get started. Um, have you all worked in isolation as antiracist educators? Can you talk a little bit about that? Or finding community in this space? Um, who would like to start?

Daniella Suárez-Boyd:

I have found myself in a lot of isolation lately. A lot of that, of course, is due to the nature of this school year. Um, and just how it began. So, here in South Florida, our schools basically have been open since school started. Um, but school is not the same, right? Our interactions are not the same, um, the relationships that we used to hold with our colleagues and even with our students are not the same. Um, but I think this year more than ever, I have felt like I am (chuckles) working in isolation simply because, um, this summer, right, there was a lot of talk, a lot of conversation, especially like in my district, and in my school about, um, what changes we were gonna make, and all these equity initiatives, and how we were gonna push equity at the forefront and have these conversations.

Daniella Suárez-Boyd:

And it... um, this entire year has felt very performative. It has felt very much like a checklist. It has felt very safe. And, um, we know that when we are trying to, um, be an antiracist educator and encourage other educators to be antiracist educators that playing it safe is, is not the way to go. That these conversations need to be bold. These conversations need to be fierce, unapologetic, and uncomfortable, um, in order for true, true change to happen.

James Ford:

Yeah, you know, I have to say, uh you know, if you asked me that question two, three years ago the answer would've been absolutely. Um, in North Carolina, I gotta say, I've been really fortunate, um, to not feel as isolated because we've built community here. There are so many folks, so many moving pieces that were introducing this language, this work, and doing it kind of compartmentalized. And what's happened is, um... and I can probably say that I think some momentum has gotten built.

James Ford:

But, to be clear, like we were doin' this work before it became popular, right? Before it was en vogue, before there was a, a resurgence of Black Lives and an increased focus on racial equity or terrorist attacks that, uh, deliberately ca- you know focused in on folks of color. We were already calling, uh, for justice, uh, in, in the school system. And so, there are players who are strewn about the state, and North Carolina's big. Um, but we've been able to build community with each other.

James Ford:

And I, I really consider ourselves, uh, fortunate in that regard that we no longer feel that sense of longing, that sense of isolation that we maybe felt, uh, two, three years ago because we've decided to, you know, lock arms and be in solidarity with folks who really understand and do this work, doin' it for the right reasons and have... you know, who are worth their weight in salt.

Dr. Sarah-SoonLing Blackburn:

I really relate to what you said, James, here in Mississippi. Um, sometimes I go to national conferences about equity or antiracism and, you know, I run into people who are like, "How can you live in Mississippi, it's so racist there?" And it always really hits me the wrong way because, yeah, that's true. And also, (chuckles) alongside that there has been this long-standing historical resistance that is here that, you know, we are just the next, you know, group, generation, whatever linking arms with people who've been doing this for a very long time. And that is meaningful.

Dr. Sarah-SoonLing Blackburn:

But, for myself, even with all of that, personally I still feel that isolation, oftentimes, because of my own identity, my own racial background being an Asian identifying person in a state that is characterized as being kind of in this Black and white racial binary, really makes it hard sometimes because we can't... I don't believe we can do good, meaningful antiracist work unless we are also, understanding ourselves, feeling ourselves nourished and cared for in spaces.

Christie Nold:

I was really fortunate when I joined the faculty at Tuttle Middle School in South Burlington that we had, at that time, an incredible administrator, colleague, friend, mentor, um, named Paul Yoon, who is just a phenomenal active antiracist in our state, who is now leading incredible efforts at the local university.

Christie Nold:

But, at the time, I was coming in as my first year in a new middle school. And working for an administrator who I knew understood this work and was a leader in the work. And that gave me an incredible amount of confidence and bravery to come into my classroom ready to go. And because of that, though, I will say that I made some assumptions about where our school and district might be that were not necessarily accurate. And so, I found myself coming in and moving at a pace that ended up creating isolation because I had imagined or anticipated that the work might be in a different place.

Christie Nold:

And so, I've since learned (chuckles) from that experience a bit, um, not slow down my own process, but to really consider what it looks like to join in partnership with others, in particular, in partnership with other educators in a way that really welcomes folks into the work and then, doesn't isolate me and, hopefully, doesn't, um, further splinter the work and push folks away.

Christie Nold:

And I'll... I think to add to that something that feels really important is that from the beginning it felt like my students and their families were my co-conspirators in this work. And so, there have been moments and times when I have felt isolated in my district, in my state, and in the field of education. But I haven't felt isolated when working alongside our students and alongside their families.

Val Brown:

You all alluded to this in your first answers, but can you talk about the importance of community in antiracist work?

Daniella Suárez-Boyd:

So, something that, um, Christie said really resonates with me, um, in that, our students are like our co-conspirators and they're part of our community as well. Like I don't know where I would be without my kids in all honesty. Um, and, and this year like we've been having such critical conversations and I, I, I feel so nourished every single time.

Daniella Suárez-Boyd:

And the other thing I would say in order to build community because I have felt so isolated this year, um, one thing that has definitely helped is, uh, Twitter, um, to co-, to connect to, to other educators. Um, and then, with that a lot of us are connected, uh, in the virtual, um, professional learning networks, and, and whatnot. Um, but I have been able to connect with educators across my county, across my district via Twitter, um, and have these conversations like on the side if... because if our schools aren't having these conversations, and our district is not having these conversations we still need to find a way to have these conversations and encourage each other, and motivate, um, this work, and to support one another, uh, because this work is difficult., because this work is long-haul.

James Ford:

Can I just co-sign that real quick and just give a plus one to social media? I felt like that meme, that GIF where it's like, "Guys, look at us..." like, you know, look at us. Who woulda thunk, who woulda thought? Uh, literally Val, uh, you know (chuckles), we met all of probably three times, but I feel like you're my sister. Why? Because, you know, we have connected for a number of years now, right? Professionally. Like the development we were seeking, uh, whether we were in the classroom or whether we were doing this work of antiracism was found in this space, right? This- this dangerous space, if we're being honest, called, uh, the internet, right? And called Twitter. And Twitter streets are real, but at the same time, it's a lot of heads out there. A lot of people who help grow you,

challenge you, develop your knowledge level. And so I look at all of us, and I think the exact same thing. Like, Christie, this is my first time seeing you for real for real, but it's like, oh, yeah, I know that. Christie? Oh, yeah, I know Christie.

James Ford:

So the community, uh, built on the internet cannot be understated. In addition to that, in our organization creed, uh, you know, we utilize the internet to, you know, kind of aggregate other players throughout the state who, you know, were interested in this work but didn't have a place to go, didn't have a place to interact, to sharpen each other, right? And that led to us, like, kind of building coalition on the ground with other people. So literally, like, turning our direction toward education stakeholders, like the parents, the teachers, and at the students. And saying, like, "All right, like, there's the education outlook on this, but then it's like, for the stakeholders, it's like what do y'all want for educa- what do you want, right?" So building community through coalition-building at the state level has been our approach so that it's not just educators but it's also, like, the parents, the students who literally are part of the education community, are the recipients of what- of- of the service that we're charged with delivering, and- and being locked in tandem and building a social movement, right?

Christie Nold:

I am thinking back to something that author/activist/educator Carla Shalaby said in a conversation about the need for community. When asked, she responded, "You need at least three. You ca- you cannot go it alone." And I think as we've been describing who those three are can depend on your situation. It could be other educators, it could be students, it could be family, it could be members of coalition. So as a white person in this work, I often am asking myself who am I accountable to, and, you know, my first answer is- is certainly my students and their families, and also I look back to the members of that coalition to really kind of find my compass point and figure out, am I truly heading in the right direction?

Christie Nold:

One of the other things that comes up for me when thinking about this work is how often white supremacy culture has white folks like myself thinking about being, like, the individual. Like, I'm gonna make this happen. I'm gonna go it alone. I- I can do this. And how easily that can slide into white savior complex, how easily that can reinforce, uh, system- individual systems instead of collective, and how easily that can just slide right back into status quo. And so, for me, being in community together with others in this work is essential to make sure that I'm really doing the work of disrupting systems and transforming systems, and that also includes thinking about the work I'm doing with myself to disrupt those systems within myself, and within my classroom as well.

Dr. Sarah-SoonLing Blackburn:

I've been thinking about how important it's been for me to both have really diverse communities, diverse in terms of race but also in terms of gender, social class, education background, um, position in- in a community, or in a- in a context. Um, and because that richness of perspective matters, so having a diverse community really allows me to see, wow, these are perspectives I had never considered myself, because I can only see the world through my lived experiences, through my lenses.

Dr. Sarah-SoonLing Blackburn:

But at the same time, it's also been really important to have community that does mirror my lived experiences, my background. Um, because, you know, I already talked about the isolation that comes with place from where I live, but there are lots of other ways that that exists as well. Um, this past couple weeks have been really, really tough in the Asian-American community, and if I didn't already have connections to other people, other AAPI people but specifically other Asian-American women, um, it would've been much harder because the things that have really been healing recently have been the conversations I've gotten to have with other people who are feeling it really

similar to how I'm feeling it, and not having to spend the time explaining necessarily, and not having to do all the educating.

Dr. Sarah-SoonLing Blackburn:

And that has, you know, at the same time, we are also educators, so I'm also getting a lot of re- requests saying, "Hey, can you come and talk, can you come and educate?" And I want to do it. Like, if people are listening, I- I hate that this is why, but if people are listening, I want to- to go and do that, and help in whatever way I can. But I would not have any of the emotional, mental, whatever capacity to give into others if I didn't already have my people, like, here with me, and feel that, you know, we together have collective strength, collective power, and that has been so hugely helpful.

Val Brown:

How have you tried connecting with educators who are at different levels of readiness and willingness to engage in antiracism work? What is that like? What do you do? What- what words of advice do you have for folks who are trying to do that work?

Dr. Sarah-SoonLing Blackburn:

So I'll- I'll tell a quick anecdote, which we can use or I'll not use. (laughs). Um, I walked into a school once, and the title of the workshop ... So I had never been there before. Um, the title of the workshop was like, "Social justice teaching 101." And, um, what- at the beginning, we would have people write down kind of what they were expecting out of the day, just to get a sense of the room, because I do believe you have to really understand your audience.

Dr. Sarah-SoonLing Blackburn:

So I had- I got these back, and most people were like, "I'm really looking for, um, language I can use," or "I'm really looking for actionable steps that I can take in my practice to improve." And then I had ones that were, (laughs) "I really hope that you keep your far left-wing propaganda out of here."

Dr. Sarah-SoonLing Blackburn:

So I go through the day, and it- this day is pretty straightforward. We talk about what this looks like in practice. How do we in our instruction, in the culture we create in our classrooms, you know, make sure that we have representation for all students. Make sure that all students feel safe, feel belonging, all of that. We talked about what this can look like, what are some things we can do, you know, initial practices. How do we improve on what we're already doing? Et cetera.

Dr. Sarah-SoonLing Blackburn:

So at the end of the day, this person comes up to me, and identifies himself as somebody who had written one of those statements on the paper at the beginning of the day. And he said to me, and I quote, "You know, that wasn't that bad." And, honestly, that was the best feedback I'd ever gotten because what I realized was when we actually broke it down to what do we mean by these things, what does it look like, it's pretty hard to argue against. I want kids to feel safe at school. I want kids to feel belonging at school. You know, all of that is- takes away some of the rhetoric that I think has been spun up for good and bad reasons with the work that we do.

Dr. Sarah-SoonLing Blackburn:

Um, I'm not saying that that works for everyone. You know, kind of opening the door, right? Like, this person needed to be willing to at least sit and listen, um, a little bit with an open mind, but what it made me be much more intentional about in my practice is just generally being really clear and really specific with the language that I

use, and always bringing it back to the experience of students. Because I think that, as educators, is where we can find the most common ground.

Dr. Sarah-SoonLing Blackburn:

Um, I think we're gonna have a lot more people who are like, you know what? Actually, it's not that bad. You know, maybe- maybe there's something to this, and that is a baby step. But we gotta get to the baby steps, because that ... Baby steps can add up over time.

Christie Nold:

One of the things that, um, that has me thinking about is where folks are in their journeys, and a wonderful friend and mentor of mine, Shandiin Garcia, in a moment of my own exasperation mentioned to me that I should- I should walk in the direction of people walking toward me. And I think that what she was noticing was that I was pouring energy into folks who were actively resisting the work, and a- a big reason for that was because I felt accountable. I felt as though they have kids in their classrooms, it is my role, um ... As white folks, I think we're regularly told, like, go collect your people, and I- I get that, and I also have come to understand over time that capacity is limited, and where do I spend my energy for greatest result?

Christie Nold:

And so, in that moment, what I found was Shandiin's wisdom was really permission granting to start spending my energy and investment in educators who were willing to move alongside me in the journey, versus those who were only potentially ever gonna be moving farther and farther away, and really deleting what resources I had, which then left me exhausted and unable to be my best self with my students in my classroom and in my school.

Val Brown:

Who would like to connect to Christie? And also I want you all to think, are there people in the middle? Is that a thing? Just love to hear your thoughts.

Daniella Suárez-Boyd:

From what I have heard, most people think that by not being actively racist, that you are doing just fine. And, and those are the people that we really want to impact, um, as, um, antiracist educators who try to model what it i- truly is to be an antiracist educator to build, um, an environment that supports students, um, across all walks of life, but that is actively antiracist. Um, and so th- that I feel like is where I try and spend the majority of my time, is, is kind of hearing those people out, right. So, um, you know, asking questions without assumptions.

Daniella Suárez-Boyd:

And, um, also connecting to my personal experiences when it, when it makes sense. Like I grew up in a conservative South American immigrant household, and there were a lot of things that I had to u- unlearn or that I didn't know were damaging messages that were, were given to me, um, that I listened to and that I, um, internalized, I guess you could say, for many years until, um, I was confronted with my own whiteness, with my own, um, privilege that I, my own naivety. Like you know, so um, there are ways that I try to find to connect to those educators that are kind of in the middle, um, and, and, and see if they're willing to engage, right, because some are, some are not.

Daniella Suárez-Boyd:

And, and um, something that Christie said really resonated with me, especially lately, like um, our energy, our time, our effort is, is just so precious, especially in this day and age, in this year, and a lot of that, just because it is my community that I need to call in, I do focus on, um, white Latinx folks, um, because it's a lot of anti-Blackness, um, anti-Asian sentiment, and so forth in the, the Latinx community. Um, and that is my community, so it is my

responsibility directly to, to challenge assumptions and to challenge educators that identify similarly to how I do, um, and, and then start from there building coalition and, and building hopefully for more future Antiracist educators.

James Ford:

Val, can I jump in on, just, uh, on this? I just had to. I think this, this is probably for me the most profitable portion of this conversation. You know, I have really tried to argue in ground, the work of antiracism, not from a, uh, a, a partisan, which you're right, Sarah, is often what people mean when they say political. And so when I anchor down, I, I try to ride the partisan nature and say, "No, that's about democratic humanism. This is about shared power, right." Everybody, no matter who you are, have an equal share in this enterprise. And it's about humanism, people making their full development as, as human beings.

James Ford:

Uh, but in addition to that, y'all, I'll be honest. Um, you know, the point at which I detect that it's bad faith, um, then I kind of, I, I engage, I engage in defense of the work, right. And that's something I think we need to be a little more forthright. We gotta be able to stand up, and when it's clear that folks ain't on our side or it, they're, they have a mission and, you know, that they're on the attack, we need to be able to defend ourselves and say, "No, actually like this is what this is about." Right. And if you would, if you want to engage, right, if you want to call this, you know, um, anti-American hateful, this, that and the third, then like let's, let's, let's, let's debate that, but we're gonna do it on the merit, uh, of, of our arguments and on the basis of facts. We're not gonna engage in name calling and what have you.

James Ford:

Because I feel like, you know, people are kind of taking advantage of, you know, the perception, right, that we're just out here, you know, we're nice folk. We really, I, we all believe this stuff, right. And, and, and it's, um, it is a matter of morality, right. And we're talking about kids being able to make full human development. This ain't about like what your party identification is, right. This is something we think should be made available to everybody else.

Christie Nold:

To me, what you're talking about, James, really speaks to the students as co-conspirators in that for, in my experience, um, adult, adults often have constructed this wall over time, especially white adults. And I find that for my students, those walls aren't yet that thick. They're still porous enough that they're willing to engage in conversation and have their minds changed, um, when presented with the truth, when given our true history, when given the facts of what's happening in our world today, when being allowed to confront current events and not feel shielded from what's happening. And then when given the space to have an honest conversation together, um, and when we as educators can create the containers for those conversations, to me like that's a beautiful thing because we can then hopefully avoid the creation of those adults with these big deeply built walls that it really takes time to deconstruct.

Christie Nold:

And for myself at least, the deconstruction of that wall is so filled with my own shame around where I haven't been in the journey and how long it took me to get here. And so, so much of the work that I hope to do with my students is to ensure that they're not later in their lives going on that deconstructive journey and recognizing all of the time that they've lost to be able to build authentic relationships, to be able to, um, live in a way that is more, uh, more humane and more just. And I think there is so much for white folks around, um, the way we dehumanize ourselves when we dehumanize others.

Daniella Suárez-Boyd:

And, and something along those lines as well, um, these conversations are hard to have, and, and they do take a lot of our energy. And oftentimes it's, it's easier to walk away at a certain point than to engage, but if we don't have these conversations, then, you know, internalized oppression is just so real in BIPOC also. You know, if these conversations are not had, if these ideas are not explored, if the adults having these conversations are not empowering students and are not fully prepared, kind of like what you said, James, like hitting them with the facts, like you gotta know the facts, um, then even our BIPOC students can become the oppressors. And that is a scary thought.

Daniella Suárez-Boyd:

I need to do the work within me myself first in order to meet my students where they are and make sure that they do not internalize that oppression to the point where they themselves become the oppressors.

Dr. Sarah-SoonLing Blackburn:

Um, and, you know, in the case of Asian-Americans, that is these like dual competing stereotypes of both yellow peril and the model minority mix, which like don't make sense with each other, but also both exist at the same time. Um, and I was thinking about that in terms of Asian educators who I've been talking to recently, and you know, and, and for a while now, um, because it kind of breaks my heart. I often will hear ... I talk to with, I talk a lot with, um, affinity groups of Asian educators. And inevitably, there will be somebody in the group who asks, are we even people of color? And I think that is because of these, these stereotypes, these historic erasures that we don't know. We often don't know the histories, the stories, the experiences, both of longstanding hatred and discrimination, but also of longstanding resistance that exists.

Dr. Sarah-SoonLing Blackburn:

And you know, back to what Daniella was saying about like gathering our own people and helping us see ourselves, um, and recognizing that oftentimes when we do erase ourselves from a conversation, we just perpetuate the status quo. And the status quo is white supremacist. The status quo is anti-Black, and those things continue to go on within our own communities. Um, and that is something that I've been wrestling with a lot, especially these past couple weeks.

Dr. Sarah-SoonLing Blackburn:

Christie said, you know, how do we put the truth in front of them when their walls, when their walls are porous? That is such a great metaphor. Um, 'cause I think we, then we, if we see ourselves in each other across all of these different lines of difference and experience and blah, blah, blah, all of that, then the phrases that we say all the time, our liberation is bound up with one another. Those become not just, like, nice phrases, those become real. And that is when, I think, we actually bring people in towards action.

Val Brown:

Um, we know the term woke, and we know that, um, there are people who have assumptions about people who they consider woke. Is, is there something that we need to do, um, as antiracist educators who are public and active in, in this space, in, in calling people in and calling people out. Are there things that we need to do to make sure that we are being open to folks, wherever they are on their journey?

Val Brown:

I don't want it to become, we reduce our values or our purpose or, you know, like, we cut back on our mission, and I know sometimes that's a barrier for folks who are trying to, to get in, to trying to understand. So just love your thoughts, and we can just grapple with it for a little bit.

James Ford:

So mine is, I just want to, uh, acknowledge what Sarah just said. Um, and so yes. Not only is there something we can do so that we don't fall into the narrative of wokeness, but it's acknowledging that we ain't reached the summit either, okay? Um, and I want to talk about Black folks here, right? That's actually what I know, right?

James Ford:

Um, just being Black in and of itself does not give one a critical consciousness. There's work we have to do, right? You got some experiential knowledge in most cases, but to deeply understand the histories and how these things operate, that stuff takes effort. And so all of us have our entry point, so that's one thing we can do.

James Ford:

The other thing is being intellectually honest and curious, and that's being willing to hear opposing arguments. All right? Literally engage that, make sure your stuff is sound, make sure you know what you're talking about and it makes sense. And then often, like, you can also understand perhaps where folks are coming from, but, uh, but no matter what we do, there's a way in which terms get plastered onto an effort pejor-, and they get turned into pejoratives, and those pejoratives become those words that I heard Sarah, uh, talking about before. They get lobbed out, and their, their only function is to elicit a response. And so literally everything we do will do that. And so that's just part of the game. We have to continue to engage in earnest with folk, um, to make sure that one, there might be critiques and stuff in, you know, in our approach and stuff and, and, and when we mess up we gotta be willing to say, "Yeah, like, you know, I don't know everything, or maybe I do need to grow in this particular area."

James Ford:

Being, I guess, who we want, uh, the rest of the world to be. That sounds corny. I think it's the best way to kinda bring folks along. If I could use a preaching metaphor here, like, the greatest, um, you know, sermon ever preached was the one never preached, right? It's literally about how we live. It's literally about how we, um, uh, embody the virtues that we're talking about, the lib folks. And like, all right, like I may not agree with that cat, you know, and, but he's not, he or she is not so aloof that they can't be reached.

Christie Nold:

Collective liberation means, uh, everybody (laughs), including those folks who are actively resisting and, and aren't showing up, and are acting in ways that seem really counter to the type of world that so many folks are trying to radically imagine. Then I think about Carla Shalaby, who says there are no throwaway people, and I think about the incredible work of abolitionist Mariame Kaba, who asks us to really dream of worlds away from, um, carceral punishment, which means away from separating people from society.

Christie Nold:

And so I think, James, when I hear you talking about how it's not just what we do, but it's who we are, I think, "What does it really mean to live into that radical vision for the future in which every single person has a place?" And now, I'm not suggesting that that is without accountability, and I'm not suggesting that it's without a commitment to trying to come together toward a healthy collective, but it does really mean that there are no throwaway people, and it does really mean that we are all in this together.

Daniella Suárez-Boyd:

So Christie, I've seen you and others do a really good job of modeling this on social media, on Twitter, where, um, you will ask people if they're willing to engage in a conversation, and, um, I think that that is just so powerful. Especially, um, for me, someone who it's, gets, is, is, my emotions ... I wear my emotions on my sleeve. It's just so obvious. Um, and it's ... Sometimes that's what makes this work so difficult for me is just an em-, deep emotional

investment that I have. And, um, seeing you and others just model that for me is just so impactful for me as to where I want to be, um, and what I can do as well, so that I just don't leave a conversation there, or that I don't at least try and engage, and, and c-, and see what others, um, within my own community, and maybe even outside of my community, um, might be thinking.

Dr. Sarah-SoonLing Blackburn:

I think that it is helpful and important that there is not just one way of going about this work, even though we might all have a shared vision for what this work will achieve in the end. That we all have our different roles, our different, um, positions that we play, and that also there's nuance in when we do and don't choose to expend certain types of energy or, you know, hear things, especially if we are target in a moment, right? Um, when we take that or don't. Like, there are things that I will tolerate in a workshop, and try to educate, and question, and really dig into, that if I hear the same thing on the street I'm just gonna turn around and walk the other way. Because I'm an educator, so I, I, like, make that covenant to myself when I enter an educational space that I am willing to expend that energy, because I do believe that, you know, everyone can and will eventually, you know, wanna do the right thing. I have to have that belief in order to do this work well.

Dr. Sarah-SoonLing Blackburn:

And at the same time, like, if I'm just walking down the street, trying to get, like, a smoothie or something, I don't need to hear you, you know, throw out a racial slur or whatever, and be like, "What do you mean by that? Can you tell me more?" Because I really just want to drink my smoothie so that I can energize for the next time I'm in a workshop and somebody says that thing.

Dr. Sarah-SoonLing Blackburn:

So I think we also do have to recognize our own humanity as well, that part of that is that imperfection, is that, you know, we're not all the way there ourselves, and also we have finite resources, energies, whatever, that sometimes we're making choices based on the position that we play in this fight, which is as educators specifically. That, you know, that is where we have the most impact. That is where we hold power. And so we're going to use that position with all of our, all of our energy, and then hold the rest with love, and care, and safety for ourselves and for each other, so that this work can go as far forward as we can.

Val:

It's such an honor to share my community with you all. We need each other. Find your community and bring them with you next time. Thanks for being here.