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[00:00:16] This is The Root, a special edition podcast series discussing the decolonization of the sustainable fashion agenda. I'm Dominique Drakeford, the founder of Melanin and Sustainable Style.

[00:00:30] And I'm Kestrel Jenkins, the host of Conscious Chatter. The music for this special Edition five part series was written and performed by Mel Chanté. We hope you will join us for these mandatory conversations.

[00:00:46] It's time to reclaim our power. Rewrite our paths, rebuild our future, for Black lives will last long. Well, Patty, the.

[00:00:59] Freedom, our flag. Freedom. Where freedom. Our love, freedom ahead. Freedom, our peace. Freedom. No fear. Freedom. We're two minutes a mile. We got it going on from afros and white tooth combs and hand me down clothes. The unmistakable gold down in our souls.

[00:01:23] We can be our last decolonize. White laws eliminated Black bodies traced by white outlines. Recognize our troops. Value our youth. See the humanity. Looking back at you as we heal our wounds, we heal the nation. No negotiation for Black and Brown liberation. Just we'll take the reparations and credit which is doomed. We'll use our voice to teach history. They and teachers and school. We've had the patients and doctors to fix our crowd so they can no longer be removed. Cotton field hands built the land on which we stand, planted the trees that give breath to every man. Summon the spirits and never break but bend and do it all stitched up. How we're back together again.

[00:02:13] Together. Just to give.

[00:02:35] This bonus episode is sponsored by Red Carpet Green Dress. Red Carpet Green Dress is a women-led global change making organization, working from moment to movement, bringing sustainability to the forefront of conversation and action within the fashion and apparel industry.

[00:02:55] Yes, I am such a fan of Red Carpet Green Dress' work. I've actually had their CEO, Samata on Conscious Chatter two separate times over the years now, and I just deeply admire the work that they're doing.

[00:03:09] I mean, from their red carpet design initiative, an exclusive partnership with the annual Academy Awards across to their ongoing collaborations with global brands such as Tencel Luxe and to deliver sustainable products to the market even. They're really part of the change that we want to see in the world. I mean, red carpet, green dress pushes to have sustainable conversations on mainstream, highly visible platforms to make sustainability the talking point. It should be with a fully representative and intersectional lens.

[00:03:47] Yeah. I really love Red Carpet Green Dress as well. And I appreciate how they identify and support sustainable projects in global communities in need of support and development with their most recent NGO partners, including the Awaj Foundation in Bangladesh and the fifth pillar in Myanmar to support garment workers impacted by COVID-19. And I'm actually super excited to chat with CEO Samata a little later in this episode.

[00:04:14] For those of you listening, if you want to learn more, you can check out w. W. W. Dot. R.

[00:04:21] C. G. D. Global dot com. And we'll also include a link in the show notes.

[00:04:48] This is The Root. Episode six, The New Standard. So in this episode, the new standard, it's going to be broken down into a few parts. Kestrel and I are going to be interviewing each other to get a brief feeling of how this project has impacted us individually. Then we'll be sharing interviews with our sponsors from The Root Project. And lastly, we'll be sharing more with you on what we're calling the new standard. What that really means to us. The pillars it was built upon and what questions we all need to be asking moving forward. But first, it looks like I'm going to need to pass the mic back to Kestrel for this. And honestly, we both need a mic. I think it's really important that she has a mic and I'm grabbing my own mic because I think that represents agency and stakeholdership and moves past the relics of old school power, dynamic methodologies. So Kestrel has a mic. I have a mic and we're gonna move this thing forward.

[00:05:53] Definitely. Thanks so much. I love that explanation. And I guess for me now, I have an even heightened responsibility to use this mike very wisely and to shut the fuck up and listen often. Yes.

[00:06:11] No, I like. I agree.

[00:06:13] I think it's super important for Black and Brown Indigenous folks to also have a mic, because the work that we're doing, although we collaborate and we work in tandem. But in order for us to really challenged the system, we need to be able to have the agency to do our own work at the same time to really create a rhythmic harmony of of justice and forward thinking momentum.

[00:06:40] Definitely. There you go. With that like poetic, beautiful word smithing.

[00:06:46] Thank you. Thank you. So for this special bonus episode of The Root. We interviewed four of our sponsors to learn more about how this project has impacted them and their businesses. But before we even get into those, we just want to ask ourselves some questions that we asked them and sort of bring in more internal before we we look at the project from microcosm and to marinate on what we think about the process and the outcome of building this special edition podcast series. So Kestrel, question number one. What is your general feeling about this project?

[00:07:25] OK. So I would say, first of all, I have so much gratitude for having the opportunity to co-produced this project with you. It's been a really beautiful adventure thus far. And I feel like I'm getting, like, emotional. And like I've said to you before. Not in the white women tears sort of way. Like I'm just getting emotional because I feel so much joy for being able to kind of work through this with you, I guess. And it's been such an honor to learn from and to collaborate with you throughout this process. But I guess when I think about the actual project, I feel a little bit in awe of how strategically and intricately your vision came to life. I remember like how this all started with, like a Google spreadsheet a few years ago, and it was just like a brain dump in there. And now what it has become is just really powerful. And there was something I was thinking about when we were, you know, exploring these questions. And. And it has to do with the way that your mind works because it's very unique. And like you have this ability to almost like, funnel conversations or ideas through this big picture, macro level systems thinking framework. It's like you get all of these details and then you're able to zoom out and envision how they're all going to fit together. But at the same time, generate an overview to help explain those inner workings. And I guess I'm going into all of this to say that by putting together our 17 guests for this project alongside the music by Mel Shauntay, your vision, just like manifested into this majestic, wise and deep yet future reaching tree of just wisdom and knowledge.

[00:09:24] I mean, I know I have children. I know talk about this.

[00:09:31] I mean, this project is groundbreaking. And these conversations, of course, have been going on before the route was launched. But I don't think they've ever been put together to tell this larger intentional story, complete with historical, experiential and futures thinking all stitched together with this common thread of the fashion industry. Right. I mean, really dumb. You are freaking ingenious.

[00:09:59] Thanks. Thank you. No, we were definitely a team. You have infused genius into this project. Just the same in your execution is beyond it's beyond words. So I'm hearing that. Thanks. Back to you as well.

[00:10:18] Thank you. Thank you. Been inspired by you a great deal.

[00:10:21] But if I get I get back to myself. I feel like while I handed the mike to you, I got the F. off the stage for this series, which was so important until this episode. Now I feel like this work, these last five episodes of The Root hosted unconscious chatter in collaboration with you and melanin and sustainable style are 100 percent my proudest work I've ever been a part of. And so thank you.

[00:10:49] Oh, thank you. Thank you. Yeah. I'm gonna put this in in my top category of projects that I'm most proud of. Without without a doubt. OK, so my next question, which may be a little bit more challenging to answer, is, is there something new that you learned Kestral from this project?

[00:11:15] Absolutely. There were so many things that I learned, I guess, when it comes to anecdotal stories and, you know, more in-depth historical knowledge on various topics that touch the fashion space. But I think what has stuck with me the most thus far, and obviously I'm going to continue listening to this project and continue processing it for you. But thus far, it's how it has more directly reframed my understanding of what true lasting sustainability actually means. I feel like I've never been someone to want to put a final definition on sustainability because I feel like in doing so, it could lead to stagnation or somehow thinking that we've arrived at a final destination. When sustainability is a never ending and always evolving journey from my perspective, absolutely. But I guess well, I have had some familiarity with the need to look to Indigenous knowledge and BiPAP communities in order to move forward more sustainably. Before this project, as dumb as you said, an episode one BIPAC knowledge is currency. I 100 percent agree, but I feel like it never clicked as profoundly as it has now. After hearing the layers of wisdom shared across all of the episodes. So again, I guess the way you framed the story across these episodes has made a lasting impact on me. And it will continue to inform the way I ask questions about sustainability moving forward. Always. I've actually already. Observed this happening. It's almost like sometimes one of the guests from the episodes is in the back of my mind, like reminding me. Make sure you ask about this or did you dove into this layer or it's like I, I think about something that you would remind me of. And I'm like, oh, check yourself. You need to ask this now. Oh, there's a lot more to unpack and a lot more to learn. But I, I feel like the most important thing for me is that reframing and truly understanding that. BIPAC, communities of Black and Brown, Indigenous people of color have the knowledge and we need to just shut up and listen.

[00:13:40] Speak on it. And my final question for you, and this is more focus on your brain as conscious. Chater Has this project changed your brain, eco's philosophy or your business model at all in any small or no big way?

[00:13:56] Mm hmm. For sure. I would say absolutely 100 percent going into this project. I had no idea what to expect. You know, I feel like we had several kind of mini conversations. And then, like I mentioned earlier, that that Google doc with a lot of different ideas in there. And then we'd have, you know, these large segments in between and tell this year in 2020, it seemed like, you know, we picked up speed and everything snowballed and everything kind of started becoming alive. But. It's become so much more than it ever could have imagined. And I am forever transformed. Like, the way I think about my business is entirely different. After building such intentional equity into the route in collaboration with you, I can't do anything moving forward without questioning how to bring more depth and equity into what I'm doing. Like, I absolutely do not have all the answers and I don't know entirely, I guess, what this looks like moving forward for conscious chatter. But I know that I will continue to do the internal work and ask myself the hard questions and explore ways to get creative with what a podcast business can look like today, because I think that there are like certain standards out there that people just assume that that's how a podcast works. But I guess I will resist the privilege, comfort of accepting the, quote unquote, ways of the industry. And I'll push to reimagine a business model that also strives to hold equity at its core.

[00:15:41] Oh, thank you. Thank you for that symphony of reflections.

[00:15:47] I don't know if my analysis is going to be that in-depth, but I appreciate and it's beautiful to hearing it from the folks who are on the back end of production who are behind closed doors. And this was new.

[00:16:03] I love just how you articulated your perspective and the shifts in in your paradigm of understanding, sustainability and production. As a producer of a narrative driven podcast. So this was beautiful.

[00:16:21] Well, thank you. Thank you. Oh, of course.

[00:16:25] Right now we get to turn the tables. I'm back in my comfort zone where I get to ask the questions here. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes.

[00:16:33] So dumb when you think about this project. What is your general feeling?

[00:16:40] So I think my feeling has shifted throughout the course of the project. I think initially when we were working on the project, it just felt like, oh, this is a cool project. It's exciting. It felt a little chaotic. It felt like a little bit of organized chaos. But I knew we were doing something special. But it wasn't until sort of the ending of the project and the closure of the project that I realized that having navigated mainstream sustainability for so long, that this felt like the first intentional step. Where we are actually talking about sustainability and sustainable fashion. I know this sounds crazy because, you know, none of these are new concepts, but it just felt like the first time that there has been a project in this space with a collective of voices where there's a marriage between resisting and building and revolutionizing sustainability in a way that's going to create restorative justice. Like, I just I. And I, you know, I could be. I haven't sat in a space where I tutored my own horn, but in this episode I and really sitting with it and listening to the feedback, absorbing the shock waves of of what narratives were shared. I really, really feel like this project planted a seed that has never been planted before in one of the most toxic. Industries that we have. So I'm very happy with how it turned out. Very and just honored to be along so many really, really adult voices across the globe. And I just feel like the impact incentive for what we created is so fucking majestic and holistic on so many different fronts. So that's that's my organic feeling.

[00:18:57] Yeah. I love how you said like a combination of resistance and building. Like that duality. I really love how you kind of framed that. Of course. It's like, you know, you're beautiful, poetic words. Just I think that that is a lot of what made this project what it is. You helping tell that beautiful story. Thank you. Thank you. So my next question.

[00:19:25] This is really interesting to ask you during that you are like the brain in this whole project.

[00:19:34] So is there something, anything that you learned?

[00:19:40] So as a Black woman in America, I'm always going to be unlearning and re learning something new, I'm always gonna be unlearning, you know, my favorite phrase, the colonial thuggery.

[00:19:55] And I'm always going to be read learning Indigenous knowledge from so many other beautiful educators and advocates and community leaders. So I in every episode, I learn something new from a story that one of the one of our guests were sharing. But I think what's more important, especially since, like you said, I'm a systems thinker. I think one of the more important things I learned. Or rather, reinforce is just the power of Black and Brown Indigenous folks needing to take leadership roles in in the sustainability of movement across every industry, across every access point. And just the importance of reclaiming our power through creation and collaboration. I think it's less about what I learned and more about what was reinforced through this project. And it's just how unparallel it is for us to take pride in our agency and in retail our stories and create new avenues for truth telling.

[00:21:09] That would be what I learned. I learned to not forget that. Never forget that. Yeah. Yeah.

[00:21:18] Beautiful. I love it. I guess if you think about this project and your. Business model or your, you know, brand ethos or philosophy, has the root in any way impacted the way you think about your business?

[00:21:40] That is a really.

[00:21:43] Good question.

[00:21:47] Has this project changed my brand? Eat those. It's, I think, in alignment with the previous question, it's definitely elevated my thirst for equitable partnerships for sure.

[00:22:04] I would also say that.

[00:22:07] I have I guess I have multiple business models working simultaneously. But when it comes to the business model that's focused on creating partnerships. And forgive me for how raw this sounds, but having a successful partnership with a white woman in this space and you are my friend, so perhaps it is a little different. But having a successful partnership with a white woman in this space where you were the partner listens, where the partner absorbs information, challenges, nuances, accepts critiques, where the white person who I'm speaking with, who are partnering with, who I'm really building a relationship with. Is open to rich reflection and really challenging paradigm shifts. Who is open to passing the fucking mike, stepping the fuck off the stage and really honing in on a potential seed planting project that may be uncomfortable for them? Not necessarily a combo for me, but. But really just disrupts.

[00:23:27] What?

[00:23:29] A partnership looks like for me that changed my brand. That changed that side of my business model when it comes to partnerships, because I haven't had those types of partnerships, positive partnerships in the past. And so. How I value what can be in terms of partnering with white women in this space who historically in present day have been very toxic, I think was a beautiful thing. And it's something that I learned and it's something that I can speak to and it's something that I'm, quite frankly, proud to say that I've accomplished with you.

[00:24:07] So, yeah, I'm speechless. Thank you. Seriously, thank you. You did not need to say all those kind words. Thank you.

[00:24:20] Of course. Of course. I think I think it's important. I have aspects of my brand that are solely focused on Black liberation in building intercommunity within my community. And then I have other aspects of my brand and business model where I do want to work on toxic systems. And that will require, you know, equitable partnerships. And sometimes those are very hard to achieve in in, you know, colonial models where the white folks who are quote unquote stakeholders in this space are taking up all the fucking space. So I. I just want to emphasize how beautiful this collaboration was. And I am. Happy and grateful that my integrity was able to stay intact throughout the trajectory of this project.

[00:25:13] Mm hmm. That means so much. I'm so happy to hear that.

[00:25:18] Yes, yes. Yes. Was that all questions, Kestral?

[00:25:25] Oh, God. I like writing. Seems a little more.

[00:25:29] I know we do.

[00:25:30] But, you know, after listening back to this project over and over again, we've uncovered a framework that we would like to share with all of you listening. And we are calling this the new standard.

[00:25:47] So what does the new standard mean for us? The new standard is a rubric or a tool for holding ourselves accountable. Exploring opportunities for equitable partnerships and taking ownership of our own responsibilities in order to propel actions forward. The new standard is the baseline for any conversation or activation in sustainability. So basically, you're not sustainable unless you're being intentional in your work and you're exploring some of these questions.

[00:26:22] Yeah, absolutely. I mean, for us and the world we live in, it's really important to make this type of criteria palatable for folks because we're in the game of redefining. And that takes a lot of mental capacity, a lot of mental work. And so we want to make it very easily digestible and palatable. So from this project, we've derived three pillars that represent the new standard. They are education, which translates to accountability, equitable partnerships, which translates to opportunity and action, which translates to responsibility. And all three of those are interwoven in a Venn diagram. But at separate pillars, they are a mandatory priority for how we move forward in this industry.

[00:27:14] Definitely. Definitely. And we believe when it comes to redefining, one of the most important aspects of that process is asking difficult questions. So for each pillar, we wanted to share some of the questions that you can begin asking in your personal life, in your work, in your community, in your corporation, because after this project, the most important thing that we can all be doing is going into a self assessment stage, scrutinized dove self.

[00:27:46] So we think we would like to acknowledge that whether you're coming at this from the vantage point of a white person or with a great deal of privilege or from the perspective of a BIPAC person or and or with a great deal of privilege. The nuances are absolutely going to be different. But this is just a starting point. So we want folks to be mindful of that as we share these questions within these pillars. So the first pillar, again, is education, which translates to accountability. So some questions that we're thinking about within this pillar are how are you building on learning re learning into your daily life when it comes to historical context to inform the work that you're doing today?

[00:28:35] Definitely. So much of that going on all the time. Right. Another one is like, how are you acknowledging and getting in tune with and getting uncomfortable with your own privileges and biases?

[00:28:48] Another one, my personal favorite is what books, blogs, writers, etc. Are you reading what podcasts and radio shows are you listening to? What documentaries and films and YouTube channels? Are you watching? Who are you following on Instagram? Who is producing all of this content? These questions create. A perspective of how you're framing your understanding of sustainability.

[00:29:19] I love that question, too. Yeah, I mean, there's so many opportunities with that to just explore. And there's so much content out there, just like keep discovering more. I mean, that's just that's one of my favorite things to be doing right now. Absolutely. I guess another one that's really important is who is benefiting from your business model and your work?

[00:29:44] Yeah. And so those are just a few questions that we came up with, a new can, of course, come up with a whole host of other questions to add onto that rubric.

[00:29:54] So before we dove into the second pillar, which is equitable partnerships and what that means to us, we thought it would be important to actually hear from four of our sponsors from this project together just to give.

[00:30:28] Red Carpet Green Dress. CEO Samata.

[00:30:33] Samata, I am so honored to have you. Thank you for sharing a bit of time with us.

[00:30:41] Thank you for having me. I'm equally as honored to be speaking with you. Obviously, having followed not just the podcast series, but just, you know, what you both do respectively in our industry and beyond. So I'm happy to be here.

[00:30:55] Thank you. Thank you. Appreciate that. So we'll start with question number one is just what is your general feeling about the project? The root.

[00:31:05] I think what it's done for me is really just re ignite or reinspire why we do what we do.

[00:31:15] I kind of listen to it with a mixture of feelings, of trepidation in terms of not knowing what was to come, because it's such heavy content in the sense that this hasn't been done before. These are big topics that are basically being kind of taken apart and scrutinized and discussed. But also, there was a feeling of excitement. This was finally happening. And then there was, I guess, just looking forward to learning as well as an individual and as a representative in an organization. To me, knowledge is just one of the richest experiences that we can have. We're lucky to be able to learn. So I had all of these feelings going into it. And I think my general feeling is that they were really more than they were more than surpassed. I feel happy that this has been done. I think it's a crucial time that it has been done and it's woken up a few needs for me. I listened to it through to the end my thought. What do we need off to this? What needs to happen after this content's been pulled together? And it made me think about the need for investment. Because you're talking about rebuilding systems. You're talking about redistributing wealth, and that requires wealth. That requires funding and investment, people putting their money where their amounts are. It brought up to me the need for legislation, the fact that you're talking about the problems we're facing within this industry in your showcasing and giving fine examples of people who are combating this in their own way. And it made me think that the work that's being done needs to be supported by legislation so that we can go from goals to actuality. And also, it brought up the need for curriculum, a new curriculum, because this is, I think, the beginning of one of them.

[00:32:54] You say that it's mandatory listening to say the least.

[00:32:59] And I was I just thought. Yes, it's mandatory listening to the point where it should be curriculum. And I always advocate for, like, you know, teaching people about how close to made that they come from trees and farms and rivers and lakes and they come from hands. But I think the other part is that we need to educate people about the systems that exist within the industry, not just the products and how they're made. So it really pulled up all of these needs within me of what needs to happen so that this work you've done can become this kind of long lasting legacy type tree within an industry. You know, so, yeah, I'm sorry if that was a lot, but it just it brought up a lot.

[00:33:40] Go stretch. Such rich commentary. Mandatory curriculum. Hell yes. Little hell yes. All the way around. So something you mention reigniting and re inspiring.

[00:33:53] And I know for for some people that what we've spoken about has been ingrained in their DNA and their advocacy work. And I know this is part of some of the work that you're doing, a recovery green dress. But is there anything new that you learned from this project?

[00:34:11] Definitely. I would say, first of all, I discovered new people through this project and through new people. You get to experience new worlds. You get to experience new lenses, new perspectives, new dialog, new language. And to me, people all kind of the best form of education. I would rather sit and listen to somebody tell me their story and what they did than even sometimes read a book. You know, I want to listen to that wisdom. So, first of all, I discovered people and their worlds through this project. And that was beautiful to me. And I also learned more about the differences between experiences for people within the Black community. You know, I'm a Black I'm a Black British born Ghanaian. And so my upbringing was in the U.K. and the United Kingdom in Cambridge. I've moved obviously across to Los Angeles from my work. But hearing about the Black American experience was right. And I it's not something I'm not unaware of, but hearing about that from people within the industry that I work in was really, really important to me, because I say, you know, it is critical in my early years. I just I didn't have in the British fashion industry. I didn't have access to that side of the story. And so that episode, especially when we talked about the history of denim, I had goose bumps pretty much for the night.

[00:35:30] Yeah. Hi.

[00:35:33] Oh, it was emotional. It was emotional. Because what you what you've done with these is you've kind of reconnected people with the importance of understanding where you come from and the importance of having a foundation rooted in where you come from to understand who your community is and how how important it is to nurture, give back to and elevate your community. So I learned kind of some of the principles I think that I have always we have as an organization. But then I was also swept away down kind of new new lines. And I thought that some of the other. It brought up to me was about the danger of a single story and not getting too comfortable, even as a Black person speaking to fellow Black people, not getting too comfortable in how shared our experiences are. There are so many that are shared. But I think like one of your guests said, Kimberly Jenkins. I think it was a she's a Black people in a monolith. And I just will speciate tip.

[00:36:25] Yeah, definitely. So let's burials.

[00:36:28] These are so layered and so, so dynamic and creative storytelling just among the Black diaspora is is filled with so many angles.

[00:36:39] And, you know, we enter so many different spaces from so many different backgrounds and experiences. So, yeah. Kimberly hit the hit the nail on the head with that.

[00:36:49] Exactly. And then therefore it was just a celebration of our uniqueness. And I also learned that we all have kind of the irritation around certain language and the words that we're still using to describe our community. And we fight against using these words, but they seem to be the only ones that can be applied like the word diversity, which I really loathe. But again, I wouldn't mind it being pulled out because, you know, we haven't kind of unified around certain terms and it's just a common understanding. But even that, it reminded me of the need to push language further so that it doesn't offend. The second you've heard it like the words, we need more words that they don't in our hearts. Yeah. If it that connotation. So it was just a really important journey. And I was really proud listening to it. That was kind of one of my feelings I wanted to share at the beginning. I was immensely proud for the labor that you did to construct these episodes and to tackle everything from racism as a system cause to the power of privilege, the future of fashion. Where do we go from here? All of this. It was just very systematically and intelligently done.

[00:37:57] Yes. Thank you. I have it up to my eyeballs.

[00:38:02] I really I really, really, really appreciate that. That means the world to myself and Kestral. Thank you for that feedback. It's important. It's true, though.

[00:38:12] And you know, one of your guests, D.J., was a deejay. Yeah. Whose voice I loved, by the way.

[00:38:18] Oh, yes. His voice over deejay.

[00:38:22] Yes. Deejays voices is rhythmic in so many ways. Oh, he's. He literally spits intellectual and creative poetry, shouting anything, doesn't he?

[00:38:33] That is the rhythm to his voice is very enjoyable to listen to. But that's what he said about being featured on your platform and how he celebrated that as much as if he were featured on any other platform. And that spoke to me as well, because it reinforced the fact that not only of I spoken to you guys before about who we choose to be, the bearers of the message of sustainability and how right now that's got a very strong white lens to it. So these prairies, all the winners of the awards, the ambassadors for the message, and I take issue with the fact that that doesn't tend to represent a global population, let alone the Black community. But I loved that he recognized that part of what needs to happen is that as a community and as individuals, we have to recognize and celebrate the platforms that our community has built in the same way, if not more, because we've definitely encountered we have an uphill struggle to create those platforms, then I'll be a little afraid. We're being featured in one of them, Italian Vogue. So I loved when he said how much being featured on your platform meant to him. And I think there's a lesson there for all of us. You know, about who whose platforms we celebrate and how we can kind of pay more honor and march to the platforms built within our community knowing the struggle to do that.

[00:39:47] Absolutely. Absolutely. I agree with you wholeheartedly. It was my final question for you, Smarties. Has this project change your brand's ethos, philosophy, your business model in in any way, shape or form, small or large?

[00:40:05] Yes, I actually can say that, like, unequivocally, yes. And I didn't expect that. Not that I didn't expect to learn anything, because, like I said, the second someone starts speaking. Does that look to me in Sydney? Does knowledge what they're saying and what they're not saying? So I anticipated that I would go on a journey and I really did go on a journey with these beautiful people that you pull together. But I think, first of all, when I finished the series, I felt this pressing need to accelerate what we were doing because it really hit home. How long some of these conversations have been going on for and how deep rooted. Yes, we know the issue is deep rooted, long seated, and it's historic. And so it made me feel that in my lifetime, I want to see the kind of accelerated record breaking change in speed for this industry that I know is capable. I was listening to someone talk the other day and they said, look, NASA sent space X, whatever it was, they sent something out in like, you know, within 10 years we have these really long four lofty goals. But, you know, if scientists can achieve those feats within a decade, we shouldn't still be sitting in the same position. We were 10, 20, 30, 40. Precisely. It's ridiculous. I get weighed by it. I feel like the reason we're moving quickly is because not enough of the quote unquote decision makers care. And it's as simple as that doesn't affect their bottom line enough. They don't care enough. It's not affecting them. And so at the end of the series, really, I just felt we need to accelerate what we're doing. And with red carpet, green dress, I'm able to do that because we're small and agile company. So we're able to focus and say, look, we need to amplify the route. We need to amplify the work that and Kestral have done by doing this. We need to direct from. So we're able to do that. So first of all, I felt a fire underneath me that encouraged me to speed up what I'm doing. Not hasty, but just recognize that there are people we're losing because the opportunities aren't there for them. And that may not. I felt sad about that. And then also, it made me think about the focus on education, because, like you said, it's mandatory listing. And I thought about the colleges that we've worked with over time, you know, across the world, whether it's in Paris or London or in the states who are parts of West African Ghana. And I thought about how we need to amplify or focus on education because I was like 10 years from now, that kind of generation that's now 10 years younger to only now be learning about this stuff. You know, I want to learn about it now. So it was kind of, again, that whole idea of acceleration, just what we need to be focused on. And part of our work, you know, we started as a design contest for young designers. So, you know, we've always very much cared about the younger generation. And even when we watched the global climate strikes and you, like, knew that four million protesters with you, many of them schoolchildren, we've known for a long time how important this generation is for what we do. And so it just made me feel like I need to be really extending the work that we're doing with the programs we're doing to introduce this to this kind of listening to some of those colleges. And the last thing I would say that it did, it was kind of it helped, too. It was almost like sometimes you need something to come out that is part of your business case for doing something, you know.

[00:43:24] So it's almost like being able to say to a potential investor or to a potential partner. This is what you need to listen to. This is this is way what you need to listen to to get yourself up to speed about where we are as an industry.

[00:43:39] And I think before that wasn't really available. But because you've put these episodes together, it's easy link to send to somebody and say, stop, start here.

[00:43:49] Start. Exactly. Go that route. Start with the route snow planted you. I'm due to work. Good work.

[00:44:00] No, that's really not. And I think you just beautifully articulated how intentional an action oriented acceleration is.

[00:44:09] Sort of what we hope that everybody, whoever is listening sort of gains from this podcast. Because, like you said, the time is now that the time was yesterday should go. So I'm I'm I'm so glad you said that acceleration. And we were driver here.

[00:44:30] Yes. And what I also loved and I think this is why I can't think of a more ideal, perfect example of why. And I'm I'm not using the words I said before that I just find this is why that representation and that intersectionality is so important, because nobody else. And I'm saying this as a fact, as in that is that on that nobody else would have curated these guests. But you because of your lens so little. Exactly. Why, when we talk about maybe when we complain about the lack of representation within this industry and how narrow that lens is and how monolithic those faces are, and we see we seem to keep getting the same regurgitated results. Absolutely no kind of nuances to them. It's because we are lacking these exact lenses. That's why. So this is why this was important, because this is an example of what you get when you have this insight. And no, you can't replicate this. You simply need to ensure that these people are represented. Simple. We aren't all to include us because that implies that you are the table that we need to be included in. That's not saying, hey, we're saying we need to be represented in the conversation, which could be where we're standing, which is where we want to be. Right. Exactly. So it was just phenomenal. And even Niki Sanchez, I love the kind of she was such an interesting cultural blend as well. I think she was. Oh, yes. I'm moving Irish Scottish economy. She was just fascinating background. But that lens of global sustainability, that was the last thing I really wanted to say, which I found your podcast series was drenched in. And it was that lens of global sustainability and the idea that the voices that need to be in this conversation don't all come from one place on the map. They aren't one pin drop. And I thought that was really, really important. Red carpet, green dress. It was so passionate about bringing in citizens from as many countries as possible because we feel like it's a more interesting journey. It's a more exciting journey. We're going to learn more. And I feel that you really endeavor to do that with this series.

[00:46:45] You it thankyous. That was energizing. Thank you for this beautiful commentary. Yeah. Everything. Literally everything you said. Couldn't agree more. Couldn't agree more.

[00:47:02] Oh, well, thank you for this refreshing and very necessary perspective, and Kesha and I are definitely looking forward to connecting with you either individually or collectively to continue this conversation and to continue this work. So I'm excited to just be in alignment with with you in red carpet, green dress. Thank you so much for everything that you're doing.

[00:47:25] No, thank you. Right. Know, I'm not just set. I'm very I'm just not in the least condescending way. I don't mean it like that when someone's icon proud of you because obviously I'm not your parent. I just mean I just mean it in the sense that I'm proud that you did this. I'm proud of the way that you did it. I'm so happy that this is out there. I'm going to push it and champion it. And I just think it's something to be so proud of. And, you know, it's a legacy. And that's what we should be here to do. We should be here to create legacies for ourselves and for future generations. And that's what this is.

[00:47:58] So do. I love it. OK, we're done. We're done. Before I start booing on here.

[00:48:31] Fiber shed founder Rebecca Burgess.

[00:48:36] Thank you so much, Rebecca, for tuning into this project and sharing some of your feedback. We're really excited to have you.

[00:48:45] Thank you for being a friend to to reflect and talk. Thank you.

[00:48:53] Absolutely. So my first question for you is just getting a general sense of how you felt about this project, whatever episode you were able to to tune into.

[00:49:04] Well, so far, I have experienced this project as I am, I am in process of deep listening to each to each of the episodes, but my experience has been that it's felt like this unearthing of depth of story and experience that I'm just so grateful to have had an opportunity to listen to voices within such a Steve held container. The comfort level that people carry in their storytelling is noticeable and remarkable. And I think that. That is rare, and I just haven't I've even heard it before.

[00:49:48] I mean, just having people get to talk about their creative expression candidly.

[00:49:55] You know, the word is Yiddish word like kvetch a little bit like the deep sigh of their own experience together and being able to listen and experience that and just get that.

[00:50:09] It's kind of like getting to be a fly on the wall. You're like, cool. This is very powerful. And keep it.

[00:50:17] Thank you. Yes. Your feedback is I love it. So dynamic and so much breadth to just how you're explaining the experience of deep listening to storytelling. That's creative, historical, but also experience shows. So thank you for that feedback. Really appreciate it. I'm sure, as most of us have learned a lot from listening to this project, is there something that you learned in particular that you'd like to share?

[00:50:47] Well, I learned so many things cause I know such a open into question, top of mind.

[00:50:56] I was reflecting on the interview with Damien. There was some there are some interesting things I learned within me that were.

[00:51:06] Around the representation of the depth of a culture like I think Mickey said something like, it hurts when people go to Coachella wearing feather headdresses.

[00:51:18] It's that's not that's not just like a slight or a dis.

[00:51:25] That's like there's some kind of it's painful. It's like taking something so sacred and displaying it in a way that has no systemic meaning.

[00:51:36] Those words rang very deep for me about kind of our culture writ large as well, and how we just kind of take symbols and we.

[00:51:47] We put them in different spaces and they take on different meaning.

[00:51:52] And while we've made many things in our culture, so I guess you could say accessible. But at the same time, we've made things where they've lost a lot of the depth of meaning and interconnectedness that I once had.

[00:52:08] And that was her words were a reminder of that. And Damien's work, I love.

[00:52:15] I loved hearing the cross reference between. You know, you have this diversity of ethnic experience in the conversation, but then you also have a socioeconomic set of variations of experience and likes.

[00:52:31] I appreciated about Daming and I think he was speaking about an entire action and design work he was doing with the Guohua the Gulag Ichi Garlock ichi Nation.

[00:52:42] Yeah.

[00:52:42] Like a nation, which again is a community with such depth and such a sacred, beautiful part of what we call the United States.

[00:52:53] They even have a culture of community holding that tradition and the language and the relationship with the land.

[00:53:00] I think he mentioned something about designing something that had a threadbare quality to it and how there's a desire not. When you talk to the community that they not have some of that representation, like there was desire to kind of think about the textile as a way to have it be intact, like there's no right. Threadbare about that experience, like there isn't dignity in an exchange that he was very open about.

[00:53:28] Yeah, I think that was really cool of him to be so open about it. But it also showed the depth between our cultures, just like so superficial right now around the conversations around race.

[00:53:42] And I think with the root did is it really it like literally rooted in the variances between, you know, there's there's those of us who've been in migration patterns that just keep going. There's those of us who've been more rooted in place. There's experiences of socio economic variation. There's there's just so much involved that so intersectional.

[00:54:05] I liked that you gave space for those intersections a lot. So I learned that.

[00:54:11] Yeah, absolutely. And I mean, everything that you touched on in terms of just the dynamic of the storytelling, just.

[00:54:22] It just became so important to share these untold ecosystems of what sustainability means from all of these different perspectives and vantage points that have been intentionally absent from our understanding of. And when I say our just mainstream understanding of of sustainability and in how to derive solutions around that. And so. Yeah. Beautiful that you mention the ways in which we hold sacred space for different conversations to be had. And yeah, I love it. I appreciate that feedback.

[00:55:00] You are a brand or you represent a brand who sponsored an episode. But you're one of the if I'm not mistaken, you're the only brand that's a not for profit. And so you're your operating outside the guise of being a physical.

[00:55:19] What am I trying to say? Like, we're not product oriented. Like you're not a product. Exactly. Exactly.

[00:55:25] You operate more in the educational space, in the community building space and the systems building space.

[00:55:31] So I'd love to understand or even just unearth some of the ways that this project changed fiber, shared fiber, shed's philosophy or even their business models and how they want to move forward in the sustainability space. I mean, you guys are already doing amazing work as it is.

[00:55:50] You know, we're doing we're on a journey with it. I mean, we're not. Right. We we are. I think how this this is a representation of some changing of our DNA and in that in a sponsorship of something like the root, which is so powerful, the first of its kind that I know of. To me, it was just like, oh, my gosh, this is where from a business model perspective where instead of I ever said myself experiencing, you know, the descendant of white settler culture to have my voice carrying a conversation around race and equity and inclusion is is kind of like old hat.

[00:56:31] You're ridiculous. And I feel like this whole this whole experience is about like what truly diversity is like giving space, as Kestral did in the very introduction to the first.

[00:56:45] And I really relate to a Kestral said, like, we just need to pass the mike and get out of the way. And so that requires reappropriating funding. It means reappropriating the space. And so it's really kind of you to take time today to ask how I felt about it. But, you know, for me, it's more like just keep. We need to keep crafting more of the spaces that you created. And so that requires finances. That requires time, talent. How do we.

[00:57:14] How does how do I foster those conditions to create that sacred space?

[00:57:20] Because I can play a role, but my role is not as the direct educator or not as the facilitator, not as the interviewer. My role is as like. Here, here's a part of our general fund. Here's what I do.

[00:57:34] So that's it's a change in our business model, which I'm I'm really excited about. And thank you for the opportunity for us to even get to do that.

[00:57:42] And that. Absolutely. Yeah, it's really good.

[00:57:46] I mean, there's actually been my issue for years is like, you know, in agriculture, it's been very especially out here in California. Agriculture is got a lot of problems.

[00:57:58] So it's who's represented in agriculture.

[00:58:02] And and so it's been challenging for for us as an org, too, because there's just there's just so much entrenched economic reality around some of the work we do, like land access.

[00:58:17] And, you know, I feel like we just have a lot of education to do before some of these deeper systemic. I mean, we just have layers. Right. And so it layers to unpeel, layers to unfold. We need systemic policy change. We need systemic change. And so this is like laying the intellectual foundation. I think what you're doing is you're laying intellectual foundations.

[00:58:43] You're laying out the representation so that more young people also can see themselves in fashion. That is so frigging important.

[00:58:53] Absolutely.

[00:58:56] But how it changed our philosophy. I think it's just more like.

[00:59:01] I just feel like the philosophy is now that the philosophy is for us, it's always been about foster more space.

[00:59:10] But like I said in the past, we weren't even given opportunities to invest in something like the route. It just wasn't around the philosophy. Maybe is just more like, oh, now we can really operationalize a few more of our values because we we can see and experience. Well, Dominique, you've just done so much work to elevate and move yourself into spaces with so much courage that it's it's like, no. I feel like an org like mine can actually say, yeah, this oh, I can see you and you're out there doing this amazing work. Let me help.

[00:59:47] Yeah. Yeah.

[00:59:49] I mean, absolutely. I mean, I feel like for me a lot of this is and a lot of folks may not frame it this way, but planting the seeds for eco reparations and that is going to include wealth redistribution.

[01:00:04] It's going to include organizations to challenge the way that they see and understand the agency and stakeholder ship and really begin to transform a lot of their methodologies and approaches to sustainability work. And so I'm elated at the fact that you've gathered this information and you are putting activations around what you've learned and experience and felt. And you are definitely a person that I admire in this space and truly somebody who creates action behind their words. From what I've learned and an experience with you in past partnerships.

[01:00:46] So I appreciate you, Rebecca, for sure. I appreciate you, Dominique, much.

[01:00:55] Well, thank you. Thank you so much for just sharing a few words with us.

[01:01:00] And I'm excited to continue to cross pollinate with you in the near future.

[01:01:06] We are so excited. Do know what I mean?

[01:01:10] That with every fiber, no pun intended, every fiber inside me. Do you watch every fiber?

[01:01:18] Right. Exactly. Yeah. Thank you. Thank you. And we will stay connected. We will. Awesome. Thank you.

[01:01:50] As we mentioned earlier on, this bonus episode is sponsored by red carpet, green dress and ongoing theme in these conversations around sustainability is education. And Red Carpet Green Dresses campaign started as a design contest for emerging designers. But what I think is most profound is that they work with local and international communities, including artisan textile producers, seamstresses, global design experts, and introducing them to global business opportunities and creating knowledge share platforms through their collaborations. They do talks and workshops and community building events. And I really just love how Red Carpet Green Dress takes the conversation from the red carpet to homes around the world to discuss sustainability as a topic which affects us all. And an area where we all truly have an impact.

[01:02:47] So true. I mean, I feel like I always remember watching the Academy Awards and waiting to see the Red Carpet Green Dress looks there, but continuing on their work and education. This October, Red Carpet Green Dress launch a monthly virtual workshop series for beginners to discuss pertinent topics relevant to a sustainable fashion and to educate in a non condescending and a welcoming space. Leading experts, including their CEO, Samata and Suzy Amos Cameron, will cover key content affecting the fashion landscape and is super important to note that their education and collaborative efforts are global.

[01:03:29] Red carpet, green dress champions, cultural global sustainability and is truly committed to shifting the lens to include a more representative and intersectional landscape. I think to date the organization has worked with brands and talent from all over the world, up to 21 countries and counting. So the global LINDZE has has always been such an important facet of their business model. Again, if you're interested, you can learn more at w. W. W. R. C. G.

[01:04:00] D. Global dot com. And we will most definitely include a link in the show notes.

[01:04:28] Mate Marketing Manager of sustainability Kelsey Sabot.

[01:04:33] Yes. I'm so excited to have you on Episode six. Welcome.

[01:04:42] Thank you. Thank you. I'm excited to be here.

[01:04:44] Yes. So my first question is, what is your general feeling about this project? No pressure.

[01:04:55] I mean, I'm through the moon. Like, so in love with it. And I just wish that it could have even come sooner. So I am so happy that it happened when it did.

[01:05:05] And just overall feeling, I to be very honest, I think across the board, I was very listening to it. It's a it's a hard conversation to listen to. There are a lot of really hard, deep moments. So I think overall as the product, as I look at the project itself, it's so impactful and so needed not only for our world, but specifically within the sustainability conversations and fashion conversations as we move to the future and reflect on the past. But yeah, I definitely would say in complete honesty and transparency. There are moments where it was hard just because it was so raw. It was so I was really getting to the root of the issues and the conversations that we need to be having. And I just I'm grateful for this work and all the work that you do.

[01:05:49] Yes. Thank you. Whenever somebody says getting to the root in this answer, it's so beautiful because I think that's exactly what it was intended to do. And I'm really excited that we're able to dig deeper and and really extract some emotion, some historical relevancy extract in just a really important new-Found perspective on sustainability and fashion and what the future of fashion needs and should look like. All right. So. I'm sure you learned a lot during this podcast because Kestral and I were both learning while we were working on this project. So I'm sure you've learned a tremendous amount. But is there something new that you learned or share one new aspect or tidbit that you learned from this project?

[01:06:43] Well, when I began, I actually did when I was listening to Episode one, I was like, oh, I can listen to this while I'm walking.

[01:06:51] And then ten minutes. And I just decided, like, this is a sit down and listen with a notebook type thing. Get the tea. Get ready to go. But one thing I learned, I mean, specifically, I found episode. I think it was our episode, Episode four, where the two guests were speaking more about education and education within. It was Whitney and Kim, I believe. Am I correct on the right. They were speaking about even just how they were speaking in a context of the fashion, the fashion school and fashion institutes in the curriculum with them and how whitewashed and just ineffective this curriculum is. And in a grander picture of things and while I haven't gone to fashion school, so I don't have that context specifically looking at just our country as a whole and in the curriculum, in the education system and how colonialism is just ingrained in every single aspect of that. Traditionally it's in my mom's a teacher, which is why it's so personal to me. And we have these conversations all the time, but it starts from the youngest generation. It starts these conversations. Needs begin when we're walking out of the womb. And if they don't, that's how we get to the society that we currently live in. And I think that the biggest thing that, you know, the newest passion and the conversations that the route has really inspired me to continue to have with colleagues and friends and family is evaluating our curriculum and what is what is ingrained with us from the youngest, most impressionable of ages, even just in pictures and media and how history is told in a complete fictional way. And it's not accurate. So I think you even said, like, how did we not just go to the textbooks and rip them up and get the board room all together and say, let's let's rewrite this and let's bring in the proper people to be rewriting this instead of, you know, a white group just getting together and saying this is how we're gonna tell this story. I think really, just like that episode of the podcast was extremely Eye-Opening for me. And I learned so much from both of those guys.

[01:08:56] Yeah. Both of those guests are incredible. And I agree wholeheartedly. Value systems have to be instilled in the home space and the community space at such an early age. And I'm really excited for this podcast in particular to live on for the next generation of young leaders, of young folks, both in traditional and nontraditional spaces of education, but also in the home and in just various localized environments. So I love I love this response. And let me just say, when you were talking about episode one, literally. I felt the same way re listening to all the episodes. I have to listen, even though, you know, I helped produce this, I have to listen when my whole being is at deep of a podcast. I have to listen with every fiber of my body to really absorb this information and really absorb it has a very spiritual context as well. It's not just you're not just hearing it. You're really you're really taking it in to your soul, is what I what I like to say with this podcast. So I hear you in person. You can't just, you know, do whatever you want while you're listening early. I don't think so now.

[01:10:13] Yeah, that's not real listening. So I think you're right and itself.

[01:10:17] This podcast is teaching us like you need. You can't just hear. You need to listen. You have to assess. And you need to act.

[01:10:25] Absolutely. And speaking of act, especially at a small, sustainable brand, I'd like to know if this project in any way has changed your brand.

[01:10:36] Eat those or philosophy or business model or or anything relating to being a small business, a small, sustainable business in a large marketplace.

[01:10:47] Absolutely. That's a really great question and it's actually fun to have. It was almost like Mates founder Katie and I almost had like a book club, but it was a podcast club and the debrief after each episode. And it just and we shared it with everyone on our team. And it's been really impactful. And I would say that we aren't even done yet with how it's impacted us in the grand scheme of things. But just I think our biggest key takeaways and what was discussed and even prior to this was really realizing that the participation is like a whitewash narrative. That is so dominant in the sustainability space is like getting a better having a better idea of how that whitewash narrative has been, not getting to the reality that sustainability, you know, at its core has been advocated for by the BiPAP community since far before any white people were even talking about it. But it's only now getting the platform and the the hype that it is because a bunch of affluent white people are talking about it. And that's where I think, you know, colonialism has taken away from from the practices that have been good for the planet. And we've got to get back to the roots. And sustainability is is not this new thing. Like everyone thinks it is just because people are posting on Instagram about it. It's been around forever. And when we talk about protecting our planet and we talk about protecting our forests and our lands, we've got to remember whose lands they really are. Right. I start having those conversations and I think as a brand, more so specifically like our dress clean mission, which is what we've been talking about from the start. Dress clean. It's it's focused on both health for people and what we put on our skin and for the planet. And what in toxicology and environmental toxins that we're exposed to. But I think the missing part of this that we've really reflected on is that, you know, before the protests and before these conversations really started happening. It's owning the fact that when we look at health impacts of things, it's impacting Black and Brown communities disproportionately in far more than white communities. So, you know, it's troubling in a way to really to really process this, because BIPAC communities tend to be creating less of an impact, the least amount of impact than affluent white communities. But they're the most impacted by it. So it's us as a brand being able to have those conversations and strategize how we can how we can affect change and really start to take informed action and learn more and continue having conversations like that is because I feel like too often. People listen and they hear and then immediately they need to be like, I've got to find a solution. But we are not we're not the ones that find the solution. We just need to create a space to bring all perspectives around our table and through our advocate program. We've been able to do that, but be able to. We've talked about this in the past, Don. But, you know, we launched our advocate program in July. And, you know, a lot of brands call them ambassador programs and brand ambassador programs and all. It really looks like, I'll say out in the field or on social media are people just posting pictures and hugging these discount codes and there's no real meat in bones to that. And that was the exact opposite from what we wanted to build and create. So that's why we have a very intimate community of dress clean advocates who not only are associated with me, but they're extensions of our brand. So not just talking about our clothing, but they're talking about our core values. They're talking about environmental justice. They're talking about intersectional environmentalism. They're even dedicating posts to intersectional environmentalism and to a different partner that we're fundraising for right now called Raheen dot org, which is an independent reporting tool for reporting police violence, which is more accessible to all Americans, not just people who have time off during the day from 9:00 to 5:00 to go Monday through Friday to go stand in the police center. Why can't I think of that word?

[01:15:03] The precinct precinct. Yeah.

[01:15:07] But just like rewind to our advocate program, like really just being able to use them as as ripple ripple effects.

[01:15:16] And just last month, our reach from their post, because obviously we're calculating all of this was over a million. So in our meeting with them and I get to connect with them once a month, face to face, well, face to face during a pandemic. So. Right, right. Right. And we were just talking about how, you know, it's so easy to think like I'm just one person. What I do can't affect change. But really, when you look at the community, who's doing it with you and even just our advocate group alone, these eighty three passionate, informed women going out there and talking about the things that not enough people are talking about, they reached over a million people. So as we continue to intentionally grow out with the issues that are talked about in this podcast. We're able to spread that spread that conversation far and wide, and that's something that after listening to this podcast and really just processing it and debriefing on it, we're able to kind of. Moves to move the needle and move some things around so that it's really working towards our greater picture of, you know, being not just sustainable clothing brand, but being a leading brand. That's advocating for people on the planet. And yeah, we make great clothes, too. But our top priority are the people on the planet.

[01:16:36] Yeah, no, that that's really, really beautiful. And I mean, a lot of what you're saying sounds like internally based off the podcast and other work that you're doing at a community level, it's a lot of redefinition happening. Mm hmm. And the redefinition is really needed in order to reimagine what impact solutions can look like in a small brain. And as you said, create those ripple effects. And it's crazy that I've being being a person who's been advocating for this for five, six, seven, eight plus years in a space where these conversations were not openly had in, you know, mainstream, sustainable fashion spaces is very for me, heart-warming to. Just have this type of engagement and know that. Getting emotional and just know that that that people are finally listening, because at the end of the day, like you said, this disproportionately affects our community and Black around Indigenous folks can advocate all damn day, all day long, all night long. But a lot of impact. Work has to happen at various business levels and very institutional know. At institutional levels. At different levels.

[01:17:58] For. A certain type of change to take place, and that's environmental, social, that's economic. And so when when I hear that brands are really challenging their framework and brands are openly and actively learning how to mitigate racial focused sustainability or lack thereof detriment that that, you know, pushes into the larger environmental conversation. I'm here for it. I'm here for it.

[01:18:30] And I'm here for the fact that you and I've spoken to you outside of this project as well.

[01:18:37] I'm just elated to know that brands are taking the necessary baby steps in an equitable fashion and really taking what we're saying seriously, because this is some real shit that we're discussing on this podcast. And we, you know, it's 20, 20 and things need to move.

[01:18:54] ASEP So I'm I'm happy that that there was that this project impacted you the way that it did.

[01:19:02] Yeah, absolutely. And I think so. Last thing is that we've been able to reflect on, you know, so many brands and people just want to be perfect. You know, you want to do it right. And we strive for that. And what we've been able to own is that everything is a work in progress. You just got to start. And we don't want to just say, like, oh, here it is. This is good enough. Yeah. Here's our DGI accountability plan. Here's our A.B.C..

[01:19:27] So we've been going for far too long and it hasn't worked, actually.

[01:19:31] Exactly.

[01:19:31] So it's it it's being able to accept that this is a long journey and ever needs to challenge themselves to be comfortable being uncomfortable and encouraging each other to do the same. And we can't shy away from these conversations anymore. Absolutely. If we if we want to say that, you know, we're sustainable and we're passionate about sustainability, then we equally need to balance our passion for environmental justice and social justice and racial justice. And it's all interwoven. So I'm so happy that we got to work with you and sponsored his podcast and get to do the work and continue doing the work. And I just really appreciate you guys reaching out to.

[01:20:09] Thank you. No, I appreciate it. At this stage, brands have brands. I've always had a responsibility. But now brands for real have a responsibility. Yeah. I'm so happy and excited and thank you for sharing this commentary and feedback on the podcast. And we look forward to working with you sometime in the near future.

[01:20:28] Of course. Thank you. Yeah. And I appreciate being able to connect with you on this, too.

[01:20:33] Of course. Of course.

[01:20:36] It's just.

[01:20:58] Me solo CEO Patrick Woodyard and Sustainability Lead Matt Stock AMP.

[01:21:06] Patrick and Matt, I'm so excited to have you both joining us. How are you?

[01:21:12] Doing great. Thank you for having us this morning. Of course. Good. Yeah, doing great. Thank you so much. I'm really excited to be on the podcast with you.

[01:21:20] Excited to have you. So my first question is, what is your general feeling about the root?

[01:21:30] Yeah, I'll jump in first. I think. To share how I feel about it.

[01:21:35] Some context is helpful. I grew up in the South. Originally from New Orleans. Spent some time in Arkansas, Mississippi, Tennessee. Now I live in Nashville. Went to school at the University of Mississippi, which has a history of racial issues and tension. And you know these. What's happened this year relating to racial justice? Some of this goes back pretty far to me is when I was in school and very involved in racial reconciliation and helping unify the campus there.

[01:22:12] And I think, you know, that combined with the fact that I started these solo really based on a passion for social justice in thinking about those two realities. Yet when I listen to this podcast and there's theories, so much of the information shared was new to me, I find that to be a bit tragic. Perhaps the right word.

[01:22:43] I've been, you know, front and center working in sustainable fashion now for almost 10 years. And I think the fact that I learned more from one podcast about inequity of Black Indigenous people of color in the fashion industry than I have from years of go into conferences and reading sustainability articles from the top editors in the United States covering sustainability. You know, that reality, I think, reveals not only my own blindspots, but certainly the disgraceful blindspots of the of the industry as a whole right now.

[01:23:21] I think you all did an amazing job of bringing forth so many experts with very diverse vantage points, which I thought was really wise and and how this took place within fashion and did it in such a uniform manner that offers, I think, listeners like me a chance to gain exposure to really critical perspectives in a manner that I think is both effective and efficient. Right. You know, I think. My general feeling is that the series's is extremely important.

[01:23:59] I think it should be required listening for fashion executives. And honestly, I'm just really excited. I don't know where you guys are going with it from here, but I'm really excited for whatever is next. It also another, I think, feeling about it. Is it it? It's created a lot of hope, I think, for me. I think I can see the way it's helping me. And certainly Matt and some of the other people on our team listen to it break through some pretty critical thoughts, feelings, which, of course, I think is is obviously paramount to any sort of progress that we want to see, you know, within racial justice and equity.

[01:24:36] Yeah, absolutely.

[01:24:38] I, too, have been in the industry somewhere between 10 to 15 years and have been working against so many of the sustainability norms that have pissed me off for lack of a better word. So I was also very excited to finally be able to curate a project like this that I believe is required listening for everyone from students to corporate. Like it has. I believe it should be part of corporate curriculum. I agree wholeheartedly. Is there something I mean, you said that there was a lot of new information for you. What would be one thing that you learn from this podcast?

[01:25:23] Yeah, so I think one of the things that that really was helpful to me is the recognition that.

[01:25:33] Inequity in fashion really dates back hundreds of years, I think a lot of the kind of the background and history that was shared was really helpful for me. And learning about, you know, Indigo and just being reminded of the reality that that this industry in large part, certainly the United States was was built and launched on within slavery as a whole. I think that that for me, it just was very helpful to to be reminded that, look, this industry wouldn't be what it is if it weren't for Black people and people of color. And and I think that it just I think it just creates so much more responsibility for the industry when that when when we're starting with that baseline of here root of where this came from and also from the, you know, the design element, the design perspective and some of what was mentioned about Indigenous communities and their contributions. It's like we are totally missing the mark. If if this is just an industry that, you know, continues in the direction that that it's gone in the last several, several decades, I think that historical context was. And the learning there was really helpful for me. And I think the way that this really creates a baseline understanding to really demonstrate the role that Black, Indigenous and people of color played in fashion historically, it really helps, I think, arm ourselves and everyone that's working in the industry or interested in industry with truth, which is, in my mind, a prerequisite to rewriting a better future.

[01:27:15] Absolutely. Absolutely. And Matt. Is there anything that you specifically learn from the podcast?

[01:27:22] Yeah, I absolutely loved the motto from Votto, it did when she shared any system produces what it is designed to produce. So I need to ask ourselves, how did we get here? I got you guys. It's such a great job of just painting the historical context and not just that, but also marrying it with the current context, as I said, came on and talked about so many of the issues with wages and inequality in the industry that we're facing today. I was just fascinated, too, I think for the first time really combined the knowledge of the to the history and then the president. I think I've been in the sustainability space for about five years now and a lot more familiar with what's been going on currently and insufficient wages, that it was just a joy and really impactful.

[01:28:11] So really, for the first time, where and how did we actually get here? Sounds like what was really rich for me.

[01:28:20] Absolutely, absolutely, like when I listened to this podcast and I listened to it over and over and over again, and it just reminds me that history is the foundation of sustainability, literacy, and that's what's been missing in any type of activations around sustainable development. And so I'm just overjoyed that other people are.

[01:28:42] Aligned with that philosophy as well. So that's that's beautiful. So specifically for new solo.

[01:28:50] Has this project changed your brand? Eat those or philosophy or business model in any small or large way.

[01:28:59] Yeah.

[01:29:01] So, you know, I think 20/20 has been such a difficult year on so many levels for everyone, and certainly that's true for any solo tunes is the way our business has been challenged. How the industry has been challenged and everything we've learned about the injustice that exists within our country and within the fashion industry at large. And I think one of the things I'm most grateful for is the way you know, as I mentioned earlier, my blind spots have been revealed relating to racial injustice and the way I've been forced in a very, very humbling manner as the CEO and to rethinking the way new solo needs to address racial inequity within our industry and within our own supply chains and customer bases at large. And, you know, embarrassingly enough, we historically categorize kind of our role in racial justice or combating racial injustice under the banner of diversity and inclusion within policy and recruitment, which is, you know, obviously incredibly insufficient and oversimplified. And 20/20 in this series in particular, I think has opened our eyes, my eyes, to what it means to be actively anti-racist, which has meant, you know, inevitably having to rewrite our entire approach. The way we address this within our team moving forward not only includes, you know, some of the things we've done historically around the internal process policy in recruitment, but also team learning and education as a critical starting point that I think we really missed the mark on historically as well as your local community involvement, which is something that was overlooked, which is, you know, really not OK. We're actually headquartered in a historically Black neighborhood in Nashville, and we certainly have good relationships in the neighborhood of hosted events and things like that in the past. But we're not nearly as engaged as we should be on the local level within our staff and team. And nor have we historically used our platforms to promote Black owned businesses. And when we talk about how to strengthen our content strategy, historically, that's really been about, you know, diversity of skin tone. And it's kind of been left there. Not about, you know, what does it look like to, you know, what experts come on to our platforms and talk about these things and and really tell. Continue to tell a story that that I think so many people are just completely unaware of, which, again, I use that word tragic earlier, but it is a tragic reality. And so we want to do that in a way that's a.. And also in a way that really celebrates Black and Indigenous and people of color who we know have had such a risk, rich history within fashion and are facing great inequity within it today. And I think the piece that specifically this project also really further elevated in my mind, is kind of spoke to is that concept of team learning and education. I think it has to start there. You know, a lot of people just jump straight into action and sometimes on our team we're all so upset about. You know what's happened this year and and and we want to immediately take action. But it's it's we have so much to learn. And that's what this podcast, of course, further taught us. And I think just like with any opponent to use that kind of analogy, any opponent I think you face in this case, racial inequity, you have to study your opponent ahead of the battle, understand their historical behavior, strengths, weaknesses. If we go out and we try to fight as a team for racial justice within our own, you know, walls and within our own supply chain or beyond that, and we try to do that with without a strong baseline understanding of root issues within our industry, then I think we're fighting an uphill battle and we're left largely vulnerable to any legitimate form of effectiveness. So elements of this podcast and this project certainly are going to be required listening for our team so that we can strengthen our starting point on this journey.

[01:33:35] Thank you. Thank you for your transparency.

[01:33:39] I greatly appreciate that. And just bringing it home to understanding the necessity to redefine sustainability, to encompass a more 360 degree approach to justice and understanding that justice is sustainability.

[01:33:58] And, you know, and that has to be part of the DNA of your brand. So, again, I appreciate the transparency.

[01:34:06] As a small to mid level ethical brand, that's what's up.

[01:34:12] Are there any final thoughts, Patrick or Matt, that you want to add?

[01:34:19] Yes, I'll jump in real quick. I just wanted to share just how much gratitude we have for each of you, Dom and Kestral, and then to all of the 17 experts as well for just the time that they've given to this project.

[01:34:32] The impact is going to just continue to go throughout the years as more and more people learn from this platform. And we're really excited to build relationships with each of them moving forward as well.

[01:34:43] So thank you for all of your time and identifying them in, bringing their voice to this really important conversation. And just for what you guys are doing everyday or so appreciative.

[01:34:56] Thank you. Thank you so much. I'm definitely looking forward to cross pollinating in the near future, in the far future and supporting the work that you're doing. And thank you again for sponsoring slash partnering with us on this project. Thank you. It's been a pleasure.

[01:35:16] Thank you. Thank you.

[01:35:18] Together. Just to kill again.

[01:35:40] So after hearing directly from our sponsors, what does equitable partnerships mean in practice for us? It was super, super, super important to not only pay our guests, obviously, for their labor knowledge and time, but also bring our sponsors more directly into this work, which is what led us to welcome their voices to this episode again. Redefining what equitable partnerships means and bringing in a very 360 holistic approach to how we are working with brands and businesses.

[01:36:14] I mean, here we go again. This is like the brilliance of your systems thinking approach to things like we are like living it. I guess when it comes to equitable partnerships, here are some of the questions that we need to be asking ourselves. This is a starting place again. So for equitable partnerships. And as Dom mentioned earlier, this is something that can translate to opportunity. A question I have is, are you being transparent about the funders of your project and what they're invested role is within the work?

[01:36:51] That's a powerful question. One other question is, who is benefiting from your partnerships?

[01:36:58] Yes. Yes. Yes.

[01:37:03] Another one is what does financial equity mean for you and your business?

[01:37:09] Right. Who is getting paid within your business model? And that's the entirety of your business model. Who is getting paid at each stage of your value chain?

[01:37:23] Such a good question. And that makes me think about something I've been asking myself a lot lately as I'm trying to, you know, expand and have a more equitable business model within conscious chatter. But I keep questioning, like, how do I pay or when do I pay guests for their time and labor knowledge? Like, I was all about paying our guests in The Root project. There was no question about it. We were going to make that happen. But then moving forward, I guess it becomes challenging because I am one person like producing the entire show generally, and I'm doing it all by myself. I'm editing everything. I'm doing all the interviews. I'm a I'm a one woman show right now. And then as far as, like the finances go, I'm getting sponsors.

[01:38:18] Not super consistently. It can be inconsistent.

[01:38:22] And those sponsorships are currently aligned with an amount to compensate me for my work. So I'm able to that's basically like my only stream of income from the podcast right now. So then I get into this thing about. OK. So can I differentiate between educators and brand owners? That's one thing that I've explored. So if you're an educator, I figure out how to find the funds in order to pay you for that labor and that knowledge and that time. But then, like you reminded me today, in today's world, anybody can be an educator. So that's not necessarily there's not like a line in the sand. So it just becomes really complicated because I want to do better. And I need to do better. But I'm not exactly sure like what the exact steps are forward when it comes to this financial element.

[01:39:18] Right. I mean, can I interject here quickly? Daly It's first of all, it's important that you want and need to do better, because especially during this pandemic, a lot of my work prior to the pandemic hitting, we're going to be global speaking engagements. And so, of course, pandemic hits. And a lot of those gigs and projects come to a halt. So what I found that started to take place were just this influx of podcasts and IG live requests asking, you know, asking me to be featured. And so I'm like, OK. Is there an honorarium for traditionally honorariums aren't part of the podcast model. But what I'm finding is certain organizations, certain large, especially large scale businesses and brands I felt were taking advantage of Black and Brown educators and activists and advocates and community organizers by, you know, integrating that like, you know, asking them to be part of a podcast model but not paying them, when in actuality they would be in real time, you know, speaking at a panel or speaking at some forum about sustainability or anti-racism or some sort of sovereignty based dialog. So I was like, OK, I know we're all maneuvering and shifting with. You know, everything that's happening in the world, but. I do believe that business models such as pod cars need to adjust to accommodate those advocates and activists and educators who otherwise would be in paid positions. And that's where I think equitable partnerships. This is an opportunity for folks to look at their personal business model and come up with creative solutions so that we can get paid. I don't even consider myself an educator, activist or anything like that. But so many folks who are leaders in this space need to be getting paid, especially when they're on large scale platforms like that. I if I understand the sort of the the way that podcasts originally were where. But I also think that we have to transform and and mold ourselves to new standards.

[01:41:49] Mm hmm. Yeah. One hundred percent. It's like I think I mentioned this to you when I was doing some research, but I was exploring and trying to, you know, discover if anyone pays podcast guests out there. So I was doing some research and just doing lots of Googling and diving into some deep holes. And I ended up discovering that some podcasts that have like really, really massive listenership numbers who so actually the guests have to pay podcast to be on the podcast.

[01:42:22] That's interesting. And I was like, wait, what? That's so. Yeah.

[01:42:29] So there's yeah. There's a lot of work to do, I think, in this in this specific, like, niche industry and kind of like redefining how this business model can really work. And one thing that again, damn, I feel like you kind of reinforce this for me in a past conversation was like the importance of scaling. Right. And I think for me, I'm always like I've always been like the little guy. And like, I just do it by myself, like over in this corner. And hopefully it will grow gradually and organically.

[01:42:59] But so I was not I was not thinking, like, scaling is the thing.

[01:43:04] But now I'm like, wait, if I can scale, I have more of an opportunity to build, you know, collaboration's, I can open the door to higher funding, which can then open the door to having, you know, the guests and the collaborators on the show that that I can compensate. And I think that that is so key in building a more equitable podcast business.

[01:43:33] Right. No Conscious Chatter is too important, Kestrel. And you've been a G in this game for way too long. You've been a pioneer in this space. So, yes, scaling should definitely be on the radar, but also making sure to keep it accessible. I think is a important aspect to figuring out how to creatively scale.

[01:43:58] Mm hmm. Yeah. And I think that is one of the things with podcasts that gets challenging as some people make their podcasts, kind of like you can only access them if you pay. But that's really important to me to not do that. It's so important that this show can be accessible to anyone if they have access to a computer or a phone. You know, I just think that's really key. So, yeah, it's a I guess it's a tricky balance.

[01:44:22] It is. It is. But I think an important step is understanding that it's a tricky balance. What you've done, knowing that you want to at least take some sort of baby step in that direction towards equity. I think that's just a really, really important first step. As a podcast or so. Yeah, that's really great. Honestly, in my opinion.

[01:44:48] Yes. I feel like that gets into, you know, the questions around financial sustainability, which I think is another layer to equitable partnerships. That's really key to be asking, like what is financial sustainability really mean for your business?

[01:45:07] Talk about it. I don't even think. I don't even think that phrase is widely used in the sustainability space.

[01:45:16] We don't talk about the financials like we talk about capitalism, but we don't talk about the finances needed to sustain you and your community and the work that you're doing. And so financial sustainability absolutely needs to be part of that equation when talking about equitable partnerships. Absolutely.

[01:45:36] Yeah. Thank you about it.

[01:45:37] And thanks to Akilah and Ibada in episode four, but yeah.

[01:45:43] So thanks for bringing that up, Kestrel and just sharing your vulnerability about your challenges with having a podcast platform and how to integrate more equity into your space. So it's great that you're challenging the status quo and taking those steps forward. Now let's move on to the final pillar and explore more of what we need to be asking around. Action and responsibility. Education is important. Equitable partnerships are important. But action is is the heartbeat of what sustainable development needs right now. So one question I would ax folks within this pillar are whose voices are being sintered within your business model and the business model you're working within.

[01:46:36] Definitely, definitely. And like, based on the answer, make changes.

[01:46:47] Right.

[01:46:47] Don't just ask it and then let that sit on the table and then do something. Yeah.

[01:46:57] Another one would be who are the decision makers within your business and are there diverse voices seated at that table?

[01:47:04] Mm hmm. And even possibly who built that table? Let's talk about that table in the first fucking place anyways. Who are stakeholders within your work in business? And is their agency equitable?

[01:47:19] Mm hmm. Mm hmm. Yeah. So, again, these are just of you planting the seeds. These are just a few questions that folks should be or can be thinking about within this pillar of action.

[01:47:33] And please come up with a host of of more questions. This is just a starting point.

[01:47:41] So, again, these are our three pillars that we've come up with, education, which translates to accountability, equitable partnerships, which translates to opportunity and action, which translates to responsibility. And this is sort of how we redefine the framework of of a new standard in sustainability and most importantly, in sustainable fashion. And again, the questions that we act within these three pillars are just a starting place and a collection of questions to begin with. We are leaving it up to all of you to build up on those questions.

[01:48:20] We are simply planting the seed.

[01:48:25] All of us have a responsibility to nourish those seeds. So in closing question, I just want to give a massive, massive thank you to everyone who has been part of this project. All 17 of our esteemed guests, our five sponsors, Fibershed, Levi's, Nisolo and Red Carpet Green Dress, and a special thank you to Mel Chanté for writing and performing the music, which which to me was the heart beat for this project. And y'all, this is this is the new standard.

[01:49:00] No if ands or buts about it. We welcome you to begin redefining, reimagining and transforming alongside us.

[01:49:08] Yeah. I mean, well, Dom has been doing this work and telling these stories for years. Now it's time for the sustainable fashion industry to catch the fuck up so we can truly build lasting, equitable, sustainable change within this industry and beyond.

[01:49:26] Yeah. The time was yesterday. Real talk, but all we have is today. So let's get to work.

[01:49:34] It's time to reclaim our power. Rewrite our paths, rebuild our future, for Black lives will last longer than trends and more and hashtags.

[01:49:47] Freedom of let freedom are where freedom, our love, freedom are here. Freedom, peace. Freedom, not fear. Freedom. Faith. Where to newness and mold? We got it going on from afros and white tooth combs and hand me down clothes. The unmistakable gold down in our souls.

[01:50:11] We can't be our last decolonize. White lies eliminate Black bodies traced by white outlines. Recognize our troops. Value our youth. See the humanity lookin back at you as we heal our wounds, we heal the nation. No negotiation for Black and Brown liberation. Just we'll take the reparations and credit which is doomed. We'll use our voice to teach history. They teach us in school. We've had the patients and doctors to fix our crowd so they can no longer be removed. And field hands build the land on which we stand planted the trees that give breath to every man. Summon the spirits and never break but bend and do it all stitched up. Power back together again.

[01:51:01] Together.