

ANTIONETTE: Hi, Nike. How are you?

NIKE: Antionette, I'm happy to see you. It's a pleasure to be reconnected, even if just virtually.

ANTIONETTE: I know. It's been a while since we've seen each other in person. But I'm excited on how we're just able to continue to connect virtually and honestly in different cities. And people will learn a little bit about our history as we have a conversation today.

But I wanted to welcome you to the Reimagining & Redesigning podcast. The point of this podcast is to really talk about what are different opportunities we see to reimagine the world? And really understand what's the power of equity and justice through a more kind of what's happening today but also a futuristic lens. I tend to tell people a lot all systems are by design, and that includes our systems of oppression, inequality, advantage, inequities. But that also means they can be redesigned.

And so, we're here to talk about how do we redesign? And particularly through your lens—the work you do around philanthropy, and the work you do around, you know, community convening and building a Civil Society, and fellowships, and more, right? And so, I'm excited to talk to you more about that.

NIKE: I'm excited to talk with you about all of that.

ANTIONETTE: Perfect. You know, I know you, but a lot of people may want to know who is Nike, right? So, can you tell people a little bit about yourself and what systems you are working to reimagine and redesign?

NIKE: Well, let's get started with the basics. I am sitting in my hometown of Los Angeles, California. I was born here, actually born in South Los Angeles. I like to say that I'm an only girl of an only girl.

Antionette, when you ask about systems, I often buy into the James Brown aphorism of, this is a man's world. We tend to design systems in and around men and male heirs. Patriarchies were built to support men. You know, women are...I believe I'm biased in this way as an only girl. We have all the tools to thrive in a society like this, even if it is one that's designed around our men and boys.

And I guess to tell you a little bit more about me, my life's focus in the social sector...I like to call it that, as opposed to the nonprofit sector, another kind of systemic framing.

ANTIONETTE: Right. Right.

NIKE: And I've run charitable foundations, and I've run nonprofits. And for the past five years, I've had the pleasure of running the Civil Society Fellowship, which you know is a partnership of the Anti-Defamation League and the Aspen Institute. Our goal is to build civil discourse across difference; however, you measure difference: ideology, geography, age, gender, religion, race.

ANTIONETTE: I love it. And, you know, we're going to talk a little bit more about the Civil Society Fellowship because that's how we met, with me actually being a part of the inaugural cohort and having that honor and being able to work with you through that moment of transition and tension and growth in my own life. And really looking at, like, the dynamics of how do I learn with folks that not only have a backing similar as mine, but also folks that have different lived experiences and different ideologies? And how do we kind of grow together?

So, I'm excited to dive into Civil Society a little bit more. But first, I want to keep going a little bit more with you. As a leader and influencer in the civil society sector...and I love that you called it, like, social impact and not nonprofit because there's this mentality that nonprofits only exist to not make money, and removes the actual idea that nonprofits and social impact, and social good organizations are here to make our world better for all of us.

And so, as a leader and influencer in this space and really pushing it to the world of being more civil, you know, what opportunities and what role do you believe equity and, I would even say, even design plays in really building more sustainable and meaningful change? And instead of change, I'll say redesigning, meaningful redesigning at both an individual and a systemic level.

NIKE: Yeah, I really appreciate that Antionette, because the very existence of something like a Civil Society Fellowship challenges the way leadership development has been designed historically. And we believe that it's important to design to include and actually center difference.

So, as you know, in your inaugural cohort, we have people who voted differently in the 2016 and 2020 elections, and some of them talk about that openly. We design for geographical

difference. You know, one of your classmates is from Appalachia. And this is a part of the country that is generally not included in leadership development. And it was important for us to find people who are coming from all different parts of this country, different parts of the economic spectrum.

Because the design of this country, consciously and unconsciously, has been generally around privilege has been generally around wealth. And privilege and wealth give people voice. We believe voice is important for people of varying parts of the economic, geographic income spectrum, and that's why we work really hard to be inclusive. I know that's one of your important values in redesigning. But for us, it's not just a word. It is an active practice and one of our values.

ANTIONETTE: Yeah. It's interesting you talking about, like, the understanding of privilege. And, you know, I had this great training that I went through with Groundwater Institute. And they talk a lot about, you know, just this idea of advantage but how that also shows up with you and leadership. I gave myself this mantra a few years ago where I said, "Antionette, overcome your poverty of mind and poverty of spirit."

The reason I started to give myself that mantra is I realized that even though I had started to transition economically, I still had those barriers mentally on, how I can show up in spaces? Did I have permission? Instead of asking, "Why do I need permission?" Whereas when you have been centered in a more privileged situation, whether we're talking about race, gender identity, sexual orientation, et cetera, you don't question those things. You show up as you are.

And I love that you kind of spoke about, like, for us to really get to the idea of redesigning, that inclusivity also is very rooted in, you know, us being able to be us, and also still looking at the history and the systems that tell us that we shouldn't be or we can't be, right?

NIKE: Yes. The very notion of permission. We talk about impostor syndrome sometimes, Antionette, right? Some of our fellows feel like they haven't yet earned permission to be in a place like Aspen, or Amsterdam, or Jerusalem, or Montgomery. These are the places where Civil Society Fellows go to have civil discourse.

And one of the things that's important to us is that everyone feels like not only are they invited, but they belong. This sense of belongingness is not...it's not like a fairy godmother has to come and grant you, you know, wave a wand over your head. No. The invitation to become a fellow, implicit in that, is our sense and expectation that you belong and that you continue

to invest in this experience, right? It's not just arrive and kick your legs up. As you know, this fellowship business involves work.

ANTIONETTE: It does. Let's dive into that a little bit more. So, you are obviously one of the architects, one of the designers of the Civil Society Fellowship experience. There's power in that. There's opportunity to really think about how do I challenge the different forms of leadership trainings and methodologies that had come before us that created greater divisions? Like, the idea of a Civil Society is to really have people work across these differences, not to ignore them but acknowledge them and also see how can we actually collaboratively and co-creatively challenge these systems that impact us all?

And so, as one of the designers, as one of the architects of change, you know, how were you conscious around how you can design a program engagement and experience that will allow civil discourse but also center diversity, inclusion, and equity in the kind of fabric of the experience itself?

NIKE: What a great question because I feel like that's at the center of the center. The decisions about which text will be read which leaders will we engage it has been a collaborative and a co-creative process, and not without differences of opinion, which shouldn't surprise anyone. So, for example, you know, the Aspen canon is something that goes back to the mid-century, the middle 20th century. And, naturally, that was informed by things like World War I and II.

But when you look at that canon through the eyes of the early 21st century, you might go, mmm, where are the voices of people who may not have been centered in the middle of the 20th century? Where are they in this? And so, I've worked closely with Aspen, with ADL, and even gotten input from some of our fellows and our advisory committee to inform how we build our readers how we decide which voices will be included.

So, to give you a really concrete example, there are, like, 13 fellowships that are part of the Aspen Global Leadership Network. And up until your class, and even I think through your inaugural seminar, there were no women of color in that initial binder of readings. And we realized after your class went through it, you know, that's a gap for us. So, we went back and said, "Let's do better next time to include women of color." And so, now, classes two, three, and onward, go through their readings, and the reader includes Audre Lorde.

And I think as you've seen, you know, when we went to the Middle East earlier this year, we had Jewish voices; we had Arab voices; we had female voices; we had LGBTQ voices; we had

male voices, older voices; we had younger voices. It's a constant iterative process for us to design and redesign to include the voices of the places where we're visiting.

ANTIONETTE: I love the idea of the voices, but I also want to put...because, you know, I'm usually the one in the experience that once we get to the arts area, I'm like, "All right, [laughs] let's unpack this visual piece of exploration." It's like my classmates and cohort members start hiding, like, oh, here we go. And then, I let them have their moment. And then I'm like, "Well, the color scheme, blah, blah, blah." [laughter]

But, you know, because I think it's the voices. But I love that; also, you think about different modes of learning and different modes of digesting, you know, us looking at a partial component of the film with Gandhi, and us looking at pieces of art, reading poetry, having a place as the actual learning experience. I think all of that really, in my mind, as you are redesigning what does it mean to be a leader, it also is helping people look at, oh, well, I learn differently.

When I engage with my staff, or when I engage with my community members, when I engage with my partners, how do I create experiences and designs where they can also engage differently as well? And so, I think that's an example of you leading by example of really co-curating it but also be willing to take feedback to modify it to actually allow for the redesigning itself, right?

NIKE: Definitely. We are on a learning journey. And we're so clear to tell you and classes two, three, and even four, when we name it later this year, hey, we're early test pilots. And we realize sometimes we're going to soar, sometimes we might crash. Nothing will be fatal.

ANTIONETTE: [laughs]

NIKE: But, you know, we're definitely learning. And I, you know, when you talked about the arts, Antionette, I'm reminded of a very fond memory of when we were in Jaffa in January together. Do you remember the day we were outside with the musical group System Ali?

ANTIONETTE: Yeah.

NIKE: And there was a Palestinian gay woman and a...I want to say hetero, Jewish male. He was the guitarist. And he was playing music, and she was singing. As a Palestinian woman, she was singing a song in Hebrew, like a mournful, sad song. And people were walking by us

hearing what was obviously a woman of Arab Muslim background singing in Hebrew, and it blew everybody away. And so, using the arts to redesign and have a different impact, and that was something, you know, we were feeling and experiencing real-time.

ANTIONETTE: I love also you talked about the geographic diversity of the experience that you designed, right? Like, there is the integration of the arts, the integration of the different people and their lived experience. But also, there's a power of place. When you think about how you've designed this experience with us having an experience in Aspen, we've gone to Amsterdam; we've gone to Israel, Palestine; we, you know, we're going to the south, what was the intentionality of using geography as a way to allow for civil discourse amongst the group, and also really thinking about the power of the intersection of justice when we look at these different spaces as well?

NIKE: Yeah. I find that something about leaving home, leaving our comfort zone really takes learning to another level. When we're away from the comforts, when we're away from what's predictable, all of our senses are heightened. You know, our sense of hearing, our sense of touch, our sense of...all of even the extra sensory part of our being are engaged.

And, Antoinette, I remember watching you and the rest of the fellas when we went to the Bahá'í Gardens in Haifa, where you heard the water, and you smelled the roses. And this is a place of great religious importance. But it's also nature, these gardens that inspire you to think about leadership in a new way. And one of the things we learned from the Bahá'í was when there's a duality between beauty and practicality; they believe beauty should win. Beauty inspires, and beauty calls us to our highest selves.

And so, when I think about justice, I think about getting our human selves as far away from scarcity and scarcity-mindedness as possible. Because it's when we believe that there's not enough of something or we believe that something's mine and not yours that we're driven to great moments of divide and conquering and injustice and inequity. And so, I was struck by that feeling in the Bahá'í Gardens of being called into a higher level of thinking through our senses.

ANTIONETTE: What I also love that we learned about the Bahá'í Garden was the intentionality of the design of that space, right? Because you talked about beauty. You talked about practicality. There was two points that really stuck with me: one, the garden itself was completely volunteer-created and run. And a part of that experience of being in Bahá'í was

folks will literally come there to manage the beauty of that space. It was part of their own journey.

But also, when they intentionally designed the space, they were intentional about all of the plants, all of the materials, so that they showed diversity, even in the plant choice, even in the natural element because they wanted the natural diversity to symbolize the actual human diversity, as well as animal diversity we have in the world. And there was so much power in that.

And I think, as you stated, when we talk about justice, it is giving folks this ability to live in their diversity, and not have to continually live in scarcity but have liberation, to really be able to be who they are, to have that kind of outcome of, I mean, there's no code-switching. There's no I have to change who I am for you to be comfortable. And I could still be a beautiful tree in that garden. And so, I think there was a lot of power there.

So, I'm going to get back to liberation in a second because I think that leads to this quick activity I want to do with you. But before we do, we're across seas, right? When we think across sectors when we think across geographies, I think there's also great examples of what we can do, what we can learn from. You know, I think you were talking about the Bahá'í Garden was a good example. And I wonder if you have any other good examples of what you believe equity being applied has looked like. Like, what inspires you to really want to redesign more towards an equitable lens?

NIKE: I'm going to go back to our trip from this past January, Antoinette. And not to lean too heavily on our time in Israel Palestine, but you'll recall the day we were in the West Bank. And we met with a Jewish settler and a Palestinian activist who were working as partners from an organization called Roots. And I felt that there was a moment there where equity was on display, was in action, that they both spoke from their heart, recognizing that at any given time, they could be each other's enemy.

The settler acknowledged that he has brought his family, and they're living on land that was once occupied by Palestinian families. And the Palestinian activist talked about how enraged he was at one point with that settlement and how he's working to bring his Palestinian family members into contact with these settlers so that they can engage and hear each other in ways. So, I think that's one example.

Another example, perhaps even more poignant, was when we met with the Parents Circle. There was a Palestinian father and a Jewish mother who had each lost a child to the conflict. And they talked about how it would be easy for them to both be angry, mad, and unwilling to engage. But yet, they realized they were more powerful and more capable of dealing with their own grief by working in partnership. For me, those were human examples of equity in action, even after tragedy, even after true immeasurable loss.

ANTIONETTE: What's so powerful about the last example is that, to me, they also showcase how they were reimagining and redesigning the grieving process.

NIKE: Yes.

ANTIONETTE: You know when we think about equity, and I talk about the definition a lot, equity is when outcomes are not predictable based on someone's identity. In this situation, they had one of their identities being grieving parents. The typical outcome you would expect would sometimes be anger or they're not talking to each other. But they decided to really look at, how do we change this narrative so we don't continue to have other parents grieving, other sisters grieving, other, you know, like, family members, and friends, and communities? How do we actually come together to think about how do we reimagine our actual community together, as opposed to only thinking about it separately?

NIKE: Yes. They were so effective. And you could tell they were really deeply listening to one another, almost finishing each other's sentences. But yes, that was a redesign.

ANTIONETTE: For sure.

NIKE: Absolutely.

ANTIONETTE: So, I want to take a pause a bit. So, I have some colleagues that do great work in this new field that I'm a part of called Equity Design. They created a process called an equity pause, which was really looking at how do we provide space of reflection and humility building while building out interventions to address social issues? Like, working in equity and justice, whether it's race-based, whether it's religious-based, it is heavy. There's an emotional toll. There's tensions that arise because we're human.

And so, we have to take an equity pause, but I'm going to spin it a bit. And I want to do what I call a liberation pause, right? [laughs] Because it's easy to talk about the heavy work, but I

also want to center liberation in these conversations. So, I'm going to give you different categories. And this is going to be a rapid response thing, whatever comes first to mind for you. What comes first to mind for you when you think of liberation and that topic of focus? So, the first one, what song comes to mind for you when you think of liberation?

NIKE: The first thing that comes to mind is actually We Shall Overcome, the old spiritual.

ANTIONETTE: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. What film?

NIKE: Glory, Denzel Washington, you know, the 54th Regiment, men who were enslaved fighting for a country that didn't yet recognize them. Liberation [inaudible 22:56]

ANTIONETTE: I love that. What about book?

NIKE: The one that comes to mind first is a book by a shaman called The Four Agreements, four simple agreements. Don Miguel Ruiz is his name. And the first agreement is be impeccable with your word. The second is don't take anything personally. The third is don't make any assumptions. And the fourth is always do your best. These sound incredibly easy, but when it comes down to it, they can be very challenging. But I find liberation in applying them.

ANTIONETTE: I love that. I actually do. What season?

NIKE: As in summer?

ANTIONETTE: Is that the one for you?

NIKE: Always, always.

ANTIONETTE: [laughs] [inaudible 23:43].

NIKE: The longest day, the most daylight, the warmest temps.

ANTIONETTE: [laughs]

NIKE: I got a whole summer music playlist. Oh yeah.

ANTIONETTE: I love it. Okay, a couple more, what color?

NIKE: Orange.

ANTIONETTE: Orange. Tell me why. Why orange?

NIKE: Probably because I'm Californian, and oranges represent the juice: sweetness. Also, maybe because it's top of mind. And orange is the national color of the Netherlands. And we were there for King's Day, and everybody's wearing orange. Everybody's out in the streets. But besides that, I just love the color. It's an energizing color.

ANTIONETTE: You know, it's funny, orange is also the color that is for gun violence alleviation as well.

NIKE: I love it. I love orange even more now.

ANTIONETTE: [laughs] Exactly. Piece of art. I'm going to push you in the art world. I'm going to work...I'm getting you there, Nike.

NIKE: I love that. I love that. I love that. There's a quilt in the Smithsonian. And it's the images of Harriet Tubman. I want to say the artist is Bisa...is it Bisa Barnes?

ANTIONETTE: Bisa Butler.

NIKE: Thank you. It's right across this beautiful quilt of Harriet Tubman. I'm seeing it in my mind's eye. It's right across from an image by Amy Sherald of—I can't say her name without getting emotional—Breonna Taylor. And Breonna and Harriet Tubman are facing each other as if they are talking to one another through time.

ANTIONETTE: Oh.

NIKE: And these two pieces of art, for me, are, like, you want to stand between them and just feel the power. They both made such sacrifices.

ANTIONETTE: They very much did. And then the last one is open choice. What comes to mind for you if you just think of liberation? And you could pick anything.

NIKE: What comes to mind, really, first of all, is the ocean. I'm drawn to the ocean; my earliest, earliest memories as a little girl smelling the ocean, running towards the waves. But I'm also mindful of the ocean as a place, you know, of the great crossing, you know, the Middle Passage and coming to the land that we had no idea what was in store for us as a people, ways to squeeze freedom and liberation out of the bleakest and most oppressive conditions. Making a way out of no way.

ANTIONETTE: Powerful: making a way out of no way. Exactly. Thank you.

NIKE: Thank you.

ANTIONETTE: So, now I want to jump a little bit more into your background. So, we've talked about Civil Society, which is your world now. Like, you are the queen of [laughs] [inaudible 26:20]. At Aspen, we adore you. And I don't think a lot of people know about your previous work. Like, I remember going and looking at your bio and like, I'm sorry, say what now? [laughter]

Because, you know, I've known Nike, like, fellowship, like, boom. And then, it's like, oh, Nike was philanthropy queen and really also pushing for American truth and justice. And some of the work you still do, right? But in a different positionality. Right now, as a former foundation lead, a current trustee for multiple organization. You also was on the transition team for the new mayor. How have you been using that power to kind of influence equitable decision-making and making sure unrepresented and underinvested communities are heard and, ultimately, represented?

NIKE: Thanks for that question, Antionette. With our mayor, Karen Bass, our new mayor, first female mayor of the city of Los Angeles, we're super proud of her. In the earliest stages of her administration, the first 100 days, our Transition Advisory Committee was meeting actively. One of the things that we noted...I volunteered for the Small Business Committee. Because actually, as a small business owner, ZWN Incorporated (named for my late grandmothers), it's through my small business that I act as a leader for the Civil Society Fellowship. And that's really important to me.

And I'm grateful to ADL and Aspen for allowing me to structure my work, you know, which pulls, you know, just about every waking hour out of me for our 55 soon-to-be, hopefully, 75, 80 fellows within this fellowship that, you know, leadership for me is certainly things that we've learned in school.

But I've learned through the years, through my time in philanthropy running The Riordan Foundation, or being a leader at the California Community Foundation, or even now as Managing Director of the Civil Society Fellowship, that leadership is not inevitable. In other words, the act of leading and, making decisions, and applying wisdom it's not something that we should assume just happens. I believe we have to wake up and make concrete and clear decisions about the outcomes we wish to generate. Fortunately, I've had lots of places to learn, certainly in school but in work as a fellow. I'm a Henry Crown Fellow of the Aspen Institute.

For me, Antoinette, I guess what I would wind up saying is that leadership is often uncomfortable, which is maybe one reason why we need to have boards of directors to help give us guidance or friendly kitchen cabinets to save us, you know, from poor decision-making. But, you know, I'm grateful to be in a place in my life where I'm leading but also still learning.

One of my favorite things to say is, if I'm the smartest person in the room, I'm in the wrong room. I need to constantly be stretching myself, and that's what fellowship does. It is a voluntary act that you and others have taken on to stretch ourselves in this leadership quest, in this journey, to be more effective stewards of resources, whether that's human resources, financial resources, ideas. We are here to make our communities better.

ANTIONETTE: And do you see that showing up a bit in the role as trustees? You know, some of us have never had that opportunity to even be in that positionality. What does that actually mean for you?

NIKE: Being a trustee, being a board member, being a governor means acting on behalf of an institution, an idea to help it lift off if it's in a startup. I still think the Civil Society Fellowship is in its startup years. We're five years old, but we're, you know, we see a long road ahead.

The notion of being a trustee and being a board member is, for me, about making a conscious decision to...there's a little paradox here because, in some ways, you're supposed to be selfless and not act on behalf of yourself. You're not doing this for yourself. You're doing this for a broader cause, or institution, or community. But I have to apply the lessons I have learned that I've acquired, so, in that way, it is sometimes a little bit of a selfish act. But I'm always driven to try and give an example to be concrete.

I'm on a new-ish board. The institution is not new, but I'm new. And we've just hired a new executive director. That search was one where we all brought our interests to the table. But at the same time, we had to sit back and ask, what is best for the greater good? Who is the person that's going to embody that most selflessness/selfishness kind of intersect?

ANTIONETTE: Especially growing up in the communities that I did, you know, I grew up in a family that making \$19,000 a year was the goal, right? And so, now, because of the privileged rooms that I'm in, I also think about the legacy, and my ancestors, and the folks that are still here in my community that I'm bringing along with me.

And as someone that also has had to think about the selection of a new leader, there's a power in that that unless you've been in that seat, I'm not sure you fully understand. Depending on how you choose, determines the direction, and the impact, and the scale of that work, in some cases, across generations. There's some folks that when they're selected, they may stay for 15 to 20 years. That's a huge, huge responsibility.

I remember I was on the Smithsonian's Cooper Hewitt Design selection committee for their executive director. Most people don't know that because I'm not good at --

NIKE: Wow.

ANTIONETTE: Updating my LinkedIn. [laughter] I tend to do a lot of work behind the scenes. And then it's like, oh yeah, yeah, I did that. But I remember us having this real conversation of, do we need someone that's going to keep design the way it is? Do we need someone that's going to reimagine what the world of design looks like across the next, you know, 50 years? That was a tension point, and, of course, we had a conversation of diversity of identities. You know, previous leaders had either been White or they'd been White men, right?

And so, we were like, how do we also understand the power of an actual anchor like a Smithsonian that also is a representation of an entire field that's continually evolving, and put someone in that role that's going to be able to work with the staff and also take it to a place that had never been done before [laughs], right?

NIKE: Yeah. I mean, these are big decisions.

ANTIONETTE: They are big decisions. They are.

NIKE: These are big decisions. And humans, by nature, we can be risk averse that, you know, the very moment when you need to redesign, sometimes we default to what we know. And that's the moment where you really have to push through it and think about, hey, what are we here to do for our, you know, not just with our ancestors in mind, of course, they're important, but with our children and their children and their great-grandchildren?

ANTIONETTE: That liberation, right? Because we think about liberation sometimes only through what is impacting me. But as a mother of twin sons, I am thinking about what will liberation mean for them in 50 years, in 100 years when it comes to their children and their children, right? It's like the two L's I love: liberation and legacy. [laughter]

NIKE: Ah-ha.

ANTOINETTE: The two Ls that I love.

NIKE: There you are.

ANTIONETTE: I think it's important, especially when we think about the other L that you love, which is leadership, [laughs] to really think about the ripple effect of the design in itself. Because some people they think about the field of design, you know, graphic design, experience design, fashion design, et cetera. But, the actual act of design is the intent and impact behind an outcome. That means everything is designed. That means when we are putting folks in these positional roles, they also have to be the ones that's going to work with their teams and work with communities to share power to allow them be in positional roles, to then ultimately redesign through the lens of all of us. [inaudible 35:06]

NIKE: Yes.

ANTIONETTE: So, with that, you know, I want to kind of start wrapping us up a bit. I want to get us to the imagination part. You talked a little bit around what you've done, you know, some work around redesigning, some things that are inspiring you. But I want to think about the future because the future is where, to be very candid, equity and liberation, and justice lives.

And I say liberation through the lens of collective systemic liberation. Everyone can have their individual liberation. They control that. But when we talk about scale of community liberation, that is a futuristic mindset. When we talk about equity, that is, ultimately, the lens of being a futurist [laughs], right? I'm going to have you put on your futurist hat. Okay? [laughs]

The first thing I want you to do I want you to imagine that there were no barriers. There were no barriers. There were no limitation. And you could wave a magic, liberatory, equitable wand. What's one way you will transform your sector to be more inclusive and equitable?

NIKE: I would start to ask all the right-handed people to spend a day writing with their left hand.

ANTIONETTE: Or a week or a month [laughs], right?

NIKE: Or a week. You know, the point is, take the most basic given in our lives and use that as a forcing mechanism to remind ourselves that there are certain habits and norms that we don't question. You know, I have three brothers. One of them is left-handed. And I'm closest in age to him. So, I remember him having to adapt to a world that was not designed for him.

So, I think the first thing we do with the magic wand is to go through the act of well, there's certain unquestioned things that are just done because they've always been done that way. In the Middle Ages, I'm told that people, left-handed people, their hands were tied behind their backs, and they were forced to write with their right hand. So, there are things we can learn, and there are things we can unlearn. Sometimes, it's not comfortable, but humans are an adaptive species. So, that would be the first act.

And then, I think on a more serious basis, Antionette, I would say that we should actively engage in imagination, and writing, and journaling, and drawing to bring the arts into it about what this future looks like. And to engage, again, the senses, not just the brain but the heart, you know, the touch. And what does this smell like? What does it feel like, and what does it call up in us?

We could take some things that we know very well now and, like, write an alternative ending for that future. You know, what ending would you write...we talked about Breonna Taylor. What ending could we write that would not have involved a loss of life? We can write that with tools we have today. That's equitable. I would call on our imagination. I would study what we've been through. And I would out-picture what we want and use that as the roadmap working backwards.

ANTIONETTE: So, for all the listeners right now, you just received two great things that you can do right now. Because what I love is that usually, when we talk about empathy building, we

always go to another city across the globe. And it's like, unless I have that economic privilege, that's really hard for me to do, you know, or go to a neighborhood you hadn't been to before, go to a religious service that you haven't gone to. And I think all of those are really good examples.

And the first one of writing, if you're right-handed, write with your left hand; anyone can do that. If you are opposite, do the opposite. [inaudible 38:57] also want to be able-bodied, right? Finding a different way, even if you are disabled, to actually also engage with folks that have different experiences. Because I think for all of us, we can always learn from other people's experiences.

I'll use an example. We used to do these immersive...we call it Equity by Design Immersives. And I remember we did one in Seattle, and we had...it was intergenerational. We were looking at different topics such as mass incarceration, such as gentrification, health equity, not primarily but at least have White privileged folks in the room, right? But then we also were intentional of having youth of color, namely Black and Latinx youth, in the room. And we were, of course, facilitating and managing how do we avoid harm in this situation?

But I remember going to the table because there's an activity we have called Paseo Protocol. And one of the things we had them do was talk about their privileges. And I went to the table with these young, Black men, and they were, like, "I don't have any privileges," right? And there's so much to unpack around that because there's also the sadness that, you know, you have this reality in your life that you don't see the opportunities that you do have. I think it's important to note the ones that are targeted or taken from [inaudible 40:18], right?

But to have to live in this state of everyone's against me is harmful in itself. But I think, also, there's this reality that we, as you said, are so rooted in what we consider normal or common sense and never asking, "According to whom? According to what?" That we don't see the privileges [inaudible 40:39] afforded. And so, even now, I was like, you know, "Are any of you disabled?" And they were like, "Oh well, no." And I was like, "Well, that in itself is a privilege."

You know, the world has been designed for able-bodied folks. My grandmother is immobile. Prior to that, she had rheumatoid arthritis. We couldn't take her down steps. And I always noticed when there was no elevator available, right? Again, that first example was so powerful and something that we all can do. But then, what does it look like to retell a story? What does it look like to imagine a different ending?

So, I'm going to ask you, as our final question and my final question for you, imagine we're in 2123. So, I gave you 100 years, you know, you're at Walt Disney, and somehow you survived. [laughter] What's different about the world? And I want to even bring in...because you were talking about the different senses of even the ocean for you. What smells differently? What looks differently? What sounds differently? What tastes differently? What's different about the world? How has it been reimagined and redesigned that gave you a space for joy and liberation?

NIKE: We have learned to defy the limits of the environment in a way that we can transport ourselves even more instantaneously. You have Jetsons or Star Trek that we can time travel in ways that allow us (I'm channeling one of my favorite authors, Octavia Butler, the late sci-fi writer.) that we can go forward, and we can go backward. We can go backward, and we can go forward in time to be better students, leaders, and informants in how we do design systems.

You know, I was riveted by the story of the submersible that went down to see the Titanic, probably because, you know, like I told you, I love the ocean. I'm also a scuba diver. You know, under current conditions, I have no desire to be three miles down with a rusted old shipwreck, but I do value the notion of curiosity, and learning, and science.

And so, what I hope will be different 100 years from now is that we will be a more curious species, that we will be wanting to visit people in faraway places on the planet and beyond the planet and learn and listen, and that we will not have a monotheism or a mono...mono in any way. We'll truly learn to live and love the multiple, the plural, that we can't live without it. That, as some people suggested, diversity and equity are superpowers, not, like, nice-to-haves.

ANTIONETTE: I love that. Curiosity. And I will also add curiosity without harm, right? Curiosity without harm.

NIKE: Yeah, yeah. We're not going to, like, be curious and torture anything or hurt anyone.

ANTIONETTE: [laughs] I hope not.

NIKE: Yeah, it's not like, you know, get the magnifying glass and, like, burn things up, not that. But get the magnifying glass to, like, see things more clearly and to bring things into focus. I mean, you mentioned empathy earlier. And there's a fellow in the third cohort of Civil Society

whose venture, his community project, is to build empathy between humans more readily. And I would hope that, in 100 years, we've learned that and then some.

ANTIONETTE: Well, thank you, Nike, for joining me on the Reimagining & Redesigning podcast. And I also wanted to say thank you for actually reimagining and redesigning with me because this is an ongoing journey, and it has truly been an honor.

NIKE: Well, it's been my honor to be on this journey with you. It's so far from over. It will never be over.