

Alexis Robertson:

Welcome to The Path & The Practice, a podcast dedicated to sharing the professional origin stories of the attorneys at Foley & Lardner LLP, a full-service law firm with over 1,000 lawyers across the US and abroad. I'm your host, Alexis Robertson, director of diversity and inclusion at Foley. In each episode of this podcast, you'll hear me in conversation with a different Foley attorney. You'll learn about each guest's unique backgrounds, path to law school, and path to Foley & Lardner. Essentially, you'll hear the stories you won't find on their professional bios, and of course, you'll learn a bit about their practice. Now, let's get to the episode.

Alexis Robertson:

Welcome to a bonus edition of The Path & The Practice. It's a bonus because I'm speaking with a special guest., Michelle Silverthorn. Michelle is a diversity and inclusion expert who we were fortunate to welcome to Foley & Lardner this summer for discussion on how to build a racially just workplace. Michelle recently released her first book titled Authentic Diversity, and I thought it was a great excuse to get her on the show. But of course, before talking about Michelle's book or her tips for building an inclusive workplace, I get Michelle to walk us through her professional path, which begins with her growing up in Jamaica and Trinidad attending Princeton University for undergrad and the University of Michigan for law school, working a number of years in large law firms before leaving practice to become a diversity and inclusion professional. Michelle shares a lot about that. She shares observations, what she learned along the way, and then we transition to talking about her new book.

Alexis Robertson:

I get her to break down some of the old rules and the new rules of D&I, and I also do a rapid fire round with Michelle, where I have her share the top questions she's asked by people trying to navigate the current environment and the new racial justice movement. She provides some succinct and really actionable advice. Also, before we dive in, I do want to say that while this podcast will largely remain dedicated to sharing the stories of the attorneys from Foley & Lardner, I may occasionally weave in bonus episodes like this with special guests who are notable members of the legal community. It's a real privilege to have a platform to have these types of conversations, and I hope you enjoy my discussion with Michelle. Michelle Silverthorn, welcome to the podcast.

Michelle Silverthorn:

Thank you so much, Alexis. Thank you for having me on your fantastic podcast.

Alexis Robertson:

This is really exciting because you are my first special guest. You are the first non Foley attorney guest on the show. It's a big deal. We have a lot to talk about. So let's go. All right. So Michelle, give me your intro. How do you introduce yourself these days?

Michelle Silverthorn:

So yesterday, I was actually at a big pharmaceutical company, and they introduced me, and it was the legal department, and they introduced me as Dr. Silverthorn because it was like the inside joke from all the lawyers like, "No one ever calls us doctor." So there you go. Dr. Michelle's looking... I'm not. I am Michelle Silverthorn. I am the founder and CEO of Inclusion Nation. If you are at Foley or any of the many companies I have spoken at over the past three and a half months of, you're very familiar with me. So I founded Inclusion Nation. I went to law school. I went to Michigan Law. So go blue for me and Alexis here. I do a lot of things. I am a consultant. I am a writer. My new book, *Authentic Diversity* just came out. I am so excited for it. As Alexis and I were just talking about, we are both also remote school teachers, which is not as fun to talk about as talking about diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Alexis Robertson:

So we won't talk about it, but maybe we will towards the end [inaudible 00:03:38] depending where this goes. But okay. So before you were, I don't know, Michelle. You're getting kind of big. I almost feel like you're becoming this celebrity, at least in the legal world consultant. Before you were that, you were not born a D&I professional. Let's start off. Where were you born? Where are you from?

Michelle Silverthorn:

No, it wasn't my journey. I like it. A celebrity legal world DEI consultant. That is how I should introduce myself. Thank you, everybody.

Alexis Robertson:

It's very specific.

Michelle Silverthorn:

This is good. So I grew up in the Caribbean. I grew up in Jamaica. I grew up in Trinidad, and I came to this country when I was 17 years old. I lived in both countries my whole life until then. So when I came to this country, I went to Princeton, and I lived there for a few years. I traveled a lot when I went to Princeton. When you grow up in two very small islands, when you have the chance, you will do as much as you can to just get out of anywhere you can. So the four years I was at Princeton, I worked in Kazakhstan. I worked in Peru. I worked for UN in Geneva. I

worked in Botswana because my mom was living there for a bit too. I just really spent as much time as I could traveling.

Michelle Silverthorn:

Then I went home for a year and then in '05 I started at Michigan. I was there for a few years, and then I went to New York. Practiced big law in New York and Chicago, did that for about four years before I decided that I really want to do is teach. I talk a lot about this in my book, which is the decision that you make, and there's another reason why I'd love to, and that can also go into what we talk about later. But I realized that if I wanted to have the impact that I wanted to have in the world that I was in, it was not doing practicing law. It was doing something else.

Michelle Silverthorn:

So I went, and I went into the Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism, which is a wonderful organization. I worked there for about seven years. Actually, I guess, six years, six and a half years. At the end of it, when I left, I was the director of diversity and education, did a lot of CLE programming, did a lot of programming on diversity, attended a lot of diversity programming, which is partly where I could see, here's where we need to get better with it. Here's what people really want when they go to these sessions. Here's what they want to learn. But also, here's what they're not being told. Here's what they should be learning. Here's what they need to understand when it comes to, how are we really going to affect change?

Michelle Silverthorn:

I was able to see a lot of [inaudible 00:05:51] put in place some really great policies, and then I left the commission and started Inclusion Nation. It was kind a three-part reason. I mean, there's a lot of reasons why I wanted to go out and speak about DEI. But in a very short sequence, I had a TED Talk picked up. So I got booked for a TED Talk. I had a really popular article published in the Tribune about unconscious bias, and then I got a book deal, which is the book that was published yesterday. So-

Alexis Robertson:

Like I said, celebrity. But by the way, I'm going to back you up. So I appreciate that. You just summarized your whole life in two and a half minutes.

Michelle Silverthorn:

You're welcome.

Alexis Robertson:

Great. I'm not going to let you get away with that though. So just backing up, quite a bit, actually, I think you said that you grew up in Jamaica and Trinidad. Is that right?

Michelle Silverthorn:

I did. I did. Yes, yes, yes, I did. Two beautiful islands that are currently... Well, one of them is closed to COVID, and one of them is experiencing a surge, which is very sad. But yes, I love my islands very much.

Alexis Robertson:

What's it like growing up there.

Michelle Silverthorn:

Because I talk about race a lot, because I talk a lot, especially about being black in America, when I tell people what it was like growing up, I always think of it in the context of race. I spent most of my life in Jamaica. My mother's Trinidadian. So we went there a lot. But from the age of about eight until 17, I was in Jamaica. Jamaica is 95% black, and we have some really strong legacies of white colonialism that still exist and exactly know who were our first presidents, who were the first prime ministers, who were the first principals of our schools and things like that. However, we look at newscasters, and they're black. We look at advertising, and it is black people. We look at billboards, and they're black people. My teachers were black. The engineers were black. The lawyers were black.

Michelle Silverthorn:

I grew up in Wauconda. I really did. I grew up in a world where I knew that black was great. Black was awesome. Black was fine. Black people were funny. Black people were not funny. Black people were great. They were mean. They were everything, right? To live in that world and to go to a school, I went to an all-girls school, which again was predominantly black, but not all black because Jamaica does have a lot of diversity in it as well. But to go to that school, to have that experience, to be allowed to be authentically black and to never have to apologize for it, to never feel like there are spaces in this world that you aren't welcome to, which there were in Jamaica. Like I said, there was a legacy of colonialism. But it was our country, and it was our history, and it was our heroes, and this was our people, and blackness is our life.

Michelle Silverthorn:

Then Trinidad is different. Trinidad, I mean, I'm still authentically black and Trinidad, but it is so richly diverse. It's still ethnically diverse. My grandparents were Chinese. My great grandparents are Chinese and Indian. So again, a different kind of ethnic diversity, but still never, ever feeling like you are the minority never, ever feeling like there is a majority culture that does not include

you. Then you come here, and it's different, right? You come here, and you are a minority. You come here, and you are the person who's trying to get into the mainstream. That is-

Alexis Robertson:

Let's just set this up even more. For you coming here straight to Princeton, that's the segway. That's it. Just got on a flight, went to college. You're at Princeton.

Michelle Silverthorn:

My sister came first, though. She went to Vassar first. So she was there for four years. So I went to Princeton, gosh, that would have been, my goodness, 2000, a long time ago. It's different, right? Because when you get there, a lot of my friends were international students. A lot of my friends still are international students. But college is different. College is a space where you can go in, and you reinvent yourself, and you become someone who you may not be... Maybe it's the same person, but you still try and figure out who you are because you're still growing up. You're still trying to formulate that identity.

Michelle Silverthorn:

So for me, it was learning about this very privileged space. I talk about this in my book. I am part of this hugely privileged space, which you don't realize until you leave, right? Then the experiences that you have as a black person at Princeton, I had some great ones. I had some not great ones. I had people who had wonderful experiences at Princeton. I had more people who had terrible experiences at Princeton. But those are the experiences. When that is your first entry to America, it really can help define what comes next. Right? So next for me was Michigan, then it was New York, then it was Chicago.

Alexis Robertson:

I do want to ask with you though to grow up in... Like you said, "I grew up in Wauconda." By the way, you're the first person I've talked to who's characterized anything like that ever, and I think that's awesome. But was there culture shock when you get to Princeton, and you look around, and it's not 95% black? Are you like, "This is the America I saw on TV"? What is your thought process?

Michelle Silverthorn:

I mean, we traveled to America a lot. So we did come to the state. So that wasn't my first ever experience in majority White America. The other thing with America is that you watched on TV, right? We grew up with the same Backstreet boys and the same NSYNC. We grew up with the same TV shows. We grew up with the same books. A lot of it got to the... America's cultural colonialism was very, very, very evident in Jamaica as well. So you get to the States, and you

get into that world, and it's different. But because you have been a majority for so long, I never felt like a minority at the beginning because I felt completely confident in claiming my space because that's one of the space alls I knew.

Michelle Silverthorn:

One thing I will say about Princeton, I will say that about any organization that does this, the onboarding programs are essential because then you get to the school four days or five days or six days before school starts. Then I was there with my international students cohort. I know that there was a black students, one as well. You get to own that campus for a week, right? That campus is yours. So you, again, feel like you can claim your space in a space that was never designed to clean you. It was never designed for you. So as you claim that space, that's the work that I was doing at the beginning. But for me, I mean, I fit. Princeton was great. I liked it.

Alexis Robertson:

That's so interesting. This reminds me of a conversation that we had. It's probably at this point, I don't know, maybe three years ago, five ago. So for background, as Michelle said, we both went to the University of Michigan for law school. We were there at the same time. We are technically the same graduating class, although I was this weird summer starter thing. So I graduated a semester early.

Michelle Silverthorn:

Alexis was over-eager as what she's trying to. She really wanted to become a lawyer so early.

Alexis Robertson:

That accelerated program. We knew of each other. We weren't particularly close in law school. We knew each other from round, and I would say over the past many years, we've gotten to each other more because we're in this space and whatever. But I remember having a discussion with you, and I can't remember how we started talking about it, but about that very different experience growing up. So we are the contrast between... For me, if you use the term African American, I technically am African American, in that my family is the legacy of slavery through plantations in South Carolina. I'd have not grown up in a majority black environment ever. I've always been in predominantly white institutions.

Alexis Robertson:

So what you just said about that comfort and claiming your space growing up in a situation where you weren't really othered really in any way. But I remember us having a discussion about... Maybe it was even about diversity.

Michelle Silverthorn:

It was at Navy Pier in about 2013 or '14. Yeah.

Alexis Robertson:

It was something that was so interesting to me, because up until then, I don't know that I fully appreciated how different our perspectives were and that although I think we agree on most things, you were just sort of like, I grew up in a world. You couldn't call it Wakanda then because there was no Black Panther.

Michelle Silverthorn:

There was no Wakanda.

Alexis Robertson:

But you were like, "I grew up in a world where every, everything was black, like you said, black newscasters, black, this black that I come here, it all feels white. Like whether or not there's four black people in the room or not. Because I think even my question was like, "You've always seemed so comfortable in white spaces." Why is that? Right? I wish I could remember how exactly got on it. But it was so interesting because it was the first time you could listen like, "This is where I grew up." To me, a lot of this is white spaces. Even when you have your 13% African American.

Michelle Silverthorn:

Still white space.

Alexis Robertson:

Yes. I did not have that perspective because that was not... For me, I was like, "Hey, we got our 13% in here. Yay."

Michelle Silverthorn:

Yeah. 13 is great. My school had 1,300 blankets. The thing in America it feels like... Again, this is not universal. People's personalities are different, right? People's experiences are different. I have a lot of black West Indian friends who felt that discrimination from day one, who felt that exclusion from day one. Everyone has a different story on a different path. For me, my particular path was recognizing that it doesn't matter for people have such different opinions. What does diverse mean to you? Right?

Michelle Silverthorn:

So okay. If we have six black people in the room, six black people in the room, and there's like 90 white folks in the room, that room because we had the six black people though, that we are going to have diversity, right? We had two black kids in our class. That means our class has diversity. We had the four black executives sitting on our 20-person executive team. That means we have diversity. Like, "What. No, it doesn't." It means you had two black kids in your classroom. Congratulations. Right?

Michelle Silverthorn:

So I think it's like a different perspective of what it means to be represented. For me, when I look at representation, when I come from where I came from, representation was I wasn't everywhere. Right? Then you come here, and it's so different. It feels like you have to prove yourself. You are only in that room because someone let you in. What? What is that? You are only in that room because someone lowered the bar. Come on. Get out of that with that? That is ridiculous. You are only in that room because of affirmative action.

Michelle Silverthorn:

Please, why do we keep on saying that you are not qualified to be there? Right? I am qualified to be in any room. So I really want people to get away from this thing that we're doing a favor or it's a charity, or we're lowering the bar or helping, right? No. Let's try and create a system where we are allowed to be in their rooms and being to succeed, and you know that. So I completely understand you. It is a different perspective that I come into a perspective that really informs the work that I do.

Alexis Robertson:

Well, it's so important. Also, as D&I professionals, we will talk about a lot of trends. We'll talk about typically the experience of a diverse person as X. But those are always this generalizing. So it is important to know that different people have different perspectives. You make sure Michelle or me. Say something that is a generalization. But we even recognize that within D&I and within how we grew up, and on paper, we are both two black women who went to the University of Michigan for law school, right? In terms of types of people on paper, we are the same "type of person". But even we have-

Michelle Silverthorn:

And both started in big law and left practicing, both of us.

Alexis Robertson:

Well, started in big law, and we could even talk more about this later in the podcast, but we're both also raising biracial children. We're both married to white men. On paper, people might

think, "Well, they are actually interchangeable." But actually, our perspectives in life are very different. So I'm sure we're going to kind of probe that more, but it's just something that I found-

Michelle Silverthorn:

I listen to a lot fewer podcasts than Alexis, so yes.

Alexis Robertson:

But okay. So go on. Listener, this is a different podcast because I can't help but tease out Michelle's perspective as we walk through her path, and then soon we will talk specifically about her book. But okay. Jamaica, Trinidad to Princeton. Why law school? Why did you go to law school?

Michelle Silverthorn:

Oh, that's a great question. Because I think the answer changes, right, as you get older, new flick on your life. When I went to law school, I wanted to be a human rights lawyer because I'd worked in the UN. I'd worked at a refugee agency in the UN. I'd worked for human rights and for indigenous rights in Peru, and both of them had told me that the only way that you are going to create change is if you become a lawyer. The only way for the work that I wanted to do, which was to advocate for the rights of the dispossessed, the way to do that was to become a lawyer. So that is absolutely 100% the reason I became a lawyer. I became a lawyer because I wanted to do international human rights.

Michelle Silverthorn:

It turns out though that international human rights is A, not as easy to get into as you might think. But also, I realized that I had no idea what any of it. I had no clue. I had an idea of what I wanted to do. I wanted to do human rights work. But then I started. I was just like, "Oh, this looks interesting too, and this looks interesting too, and this looks interesting too." But when I think back on the reason I wanted to go to law school, which is to advocate for the right to the dispossessed, it's the reason I do this work now. It just took me a lot longer.

Alexis Robertson:

It's the same reason. It's the same thing.

Michelle Silverthorn:

It's the same reason. It took me longer to get here. I took a much more winding path. But you ended up in the same place. But that was the reason I wanted to go to law school. Then I get to law school, and who do I meet on day one, Alexis? My husband. Day one of law school, I met my husband. It is my favorite thing to do when I talk to orientation programs at law schools and

look to your left and look to your right. That's who you might end up with for the next 50 years of your life. But yeah. Michigan was great, as Alexis knows. We had a great time at Michigan.

Alexis Robertson:

I have to say that whenever a law student or anyone talks to me about international, almost anything, I'm usually like, "I need you to get a lot more specific."

Michelle Silverthorn:

Yes, you have to.

Alexis Robertson:

Or a college student. They'll put the word international on, and you're like, "But at the core of that, what skills are you going to get before you can do whatever that is on the international scale." But Michelle, I'm learning new stuff about you. I didn't know about that. You said Kazakhstan, Peru?

Michelle Silverthorn:

Yeah. Kazakhstan, Peru.

Alexis Robertson:

Kazakhstan.

Michelle Silverthorn:

I had to get out or I had to move. I had to travel, and we still do that. I mean, I've traveled, I know, over a hundred countries at this point.

Alexis Robertson:

Just backing up quickly, you did all of that in college.

Michelle Silverthorn:

Well, no. The first five or eight or 12 were in college, and then over the past, what, it's been 20 years now?

Alexis Robertson:

Yeah.

Michelle Silverthorn:

20 years traveling.

Alexis Robertson:

Oh no, the travel I've seen. But I just mean those experience that you mentioned, were they internship opportunities you did during college or-

Michelle Silverthorn:

Princeton, some were volunteer trips, some were internships. It was all different experiences that we found through Princeton and the people at Princeton. So it was all great. It was always to just get out... I wanted to travel, and I wanted to change people's lives. That was it.

Alexis Robertson:

Okay. So zooming a bit through, you get to Michigan. You meet your husband. You've started at Michigan, and you're still international law, advocating for the rights of the dispossessed. But then what happened? You did it. You went to a law firm.

Michelle Silverthorn:

I did. Then I went to big law. I will say, well, because I have a lot of loans to pay off. It is the reason a lot of us go to big law. But I also will say big law was able to... When I interviewed at Lakeland, which is a firm I started with, they did a lot of international human rights work. [inaudible 00:20:29] was a really great client of theirs. They had the UN Global Compact as a client. So they really did. They had a rate refugee program. So a lot of the pro bono work that I really wanted to do was work I could do when I got there. I did because it turned out that when we started, as lots of snow is in a way, there wasn't that much billable work to do.

Michelle Silverthorn:

So I did a lot of actual human rights work for the first six or eight months. Then it changed. It changed into what we know that we typically do with these big clients and billable work. But for me, I mean, I spent three, four years at big law. I had the best mentors and the best sponsors, and I got really great work access. It's from that experience that I started to realize if you want to succeed as a black person, and I specifically talk about black people by any marginalized minority, you need access to the good work and the sponsors because the systems haven't changed yet to make it clear for everyone, and this is something, Alexis, I actually had a really great post about in LinkedIn. We got to change the systems. But until we change the systems, we got to let people access those systems to succeed.

Alexis Robertson:

Absolutely. All right. So three, four years, big law. At some point you were like, I'm leaving, and I am going to do what? How did you find that opportunity with the Illinois Supreme Court?

Michelle Silverthorn:

Gosh, if I can remember, because that was eight, nine years ago at this point, I think they just posted it, and they had just posted it in some... It might've been the Chicago daily levels, and now that I think about it, I think, because I was reading that because I had written something for them when I was at Schiff, and I was reading an article. I think I saw the posting there, and I interviewed, and it was terrific, and that was that. I learned so much through those seven areas. It's so much not just about diversity work, but really also about how to get buy-in from people who don't know that they need to change.

Michelle Silverthorn:

I think that's the big thing. Because our world was 90,000 lawyers in Illinois, right? Many of you may not know this in Chicago. But the vast majority of those are solo and small practitioners. I count so many of them as my friends now, right? I've gone to so many places around the state. So many places around the Southern part of our state. It's a big state with a really, really, really, really diverse group of people who live here and to be able to reach out to them is key.

Alexis Robertson:

You had me at how to get buy-in from people who don't know that they need to change. You could run a whole course on that. But also, you said it. But say it again. What was your specific role at the Illinois Supreme Court? What did you do there?

Michelle Silverthorn:

I started out as the education associate. That was the first thing that I did. So I did a lot of the CLE approvals, a lot of the CLE work. Then as time passed, we wanted to get more into diversity, and I was already doing a lot of stuff on diversity anyway. So then we came to the diversity education director. Holler out to Leslie Richards-Yellen in case she's listening to this because she did a huge part in making sure that we had a really robust diversity mandate, as did our justices who really... I mean, honestly, I have to say this guy was available for this. But our Supreme Court justices in Illinois did a really good job of being some of the first in the country to really step forward and claim that diversity matters. In the legal profession, we are going to talk about it. We are not going to avoid the discussion, and we have to engage with it. I mean, they have promoted that nonstop for the past six years at this point.

Alexis Robertson:

That's awesome.

Michelle Silverthorn:

Or longer, because we've actually had that diversity requirement in our CLE for, gosh, I don't know [inaudible 00:23:49]. But now I don't remember because I don't do it anymore, but we've had it for decades. Right? So really, it's a matter of having that vision and having that boldness to say, this does matter. It is not a political issue. It's a human rights issue, and we are going to make sure that people pay attention to it.

Alexis Robertson:

It's a human rights issue. We are definitely coming back to that. I'm going to wrap up the path part, and we will transition to the new book. Well, for you, the practice, we'll be talking about D&I, but I'm shoving you into the framework of this podcast just to keep with the spirit of the show. But then we're going to let loose and just, we're going to talk about diversity. But for me, it was interesting because I think at some point, we went to law school together. I probably talked to you for many, many years. I probably saw on something, whether it be LinkedIn or whatever, like, "Oh Michelle, I knew you were in New York, and then you came back, and I knew you were at the commission and that you gained all these phenomenal skills and want the messaging and how to get people who don't know how to change."

Alexis Robertson:

But also delivering this content in an accessible way. It seemed like such an amazing training ground for what you do now. But yeah. You said it before. We'll say it one more time, as of a few years ago. Has it been two years since you've launched Inclusion Nation?

Michelle Silverthorn:

Yeah. So that would have been April, and the story... Alexis, the part of the stories I tell, I talk about Trayvon, the reason I really want to work on racial equity. I talk about Jasmine or her cipher. Her name's not really Jasmine. But the law student that I met who was talking about, when will I be allowed to be black, and that would have been April, I think, or March of that year. Then really, in 2018, it was that change. It was the podcast. It was the book. It was the Michelle, what are we going to do with our life now? What is the next step here? How can we make sure that this messaging resonates with more people?

Michelle Silverthorn:

I had a really supportive group of people at the commission who were just like, "Yeah. Let's go do it. Go do it. Go change the world." They're awesome. They're still doing awesome things over there.

Alexis Robertson:

I do remember this. I remember you being like, "I'm starting my own company." I was like, "Okay."

Michelle Silverthorn:

Yeah. Well, let's do it. Yeah. Yeah. So-

Alexis Robertson:

[crosstalk 00:25:47]-

Michelle Silverthorn:

... that would have been September of 2018 when I started my own company. We can talk about that. Is there anyone out there looking to start any kind of company. I'm happy to always talk about lessons I've learned on that process. But it really was a matter of, you have the community, you have the support. A lot of my clients were people who knew me from before and who were really excited about this change as well. So making sure that you have the people who are cheering you on and advocating for your success, and that was how I started. It was great.

Alexis Robertson:

All right. So here we are, two years later. Like I said, Michelle's now a celebrity D&I consultant expert.

Michelle Silverthorn:

Celebrity legal.

Alexis Robertson:

Expert.

Michelle Silverthorn:

I would say only half of my clients now are law firms. Maybe a third of them are now law firms. Two-thirds of them are outside of law firms. But I will always, always come back to legal because that is what I know. That is my stomping ground.

Alexis Robertson:

Well, that's fantastic. I mean, I'm just so happy. I was able to get you to sit down with me today. So now let's do what need to do, which is talk about this book. You mentioned that somewhere around the time period of all this activity of the Tribune article, the TED Talk, someone approaches you and is like, "Hey, do you want a book deal?" How does that-

Michelle Silverthorn:
That's not how it happened at all?

Alexis Robertson:
[crosstalk 00:26:57]-

Michelle Silverthorn:
I sent out an email. I sent out emails. So I think three publishers. I had a great idea that I wanted to write about based on the Tribune article, based on... It definitely changed right. Remember our NALP talk that we were talking about the black millennial. We did that a few years back. So I think that had been the original idea that we were thinking about doing something for that. Then it shifted into, okay.

Alexis Robertson:
Well, we need to pause on that completely because that [crosstalk 00:27:22]-

Michelle Silverthorn:
I forgot about that.

Alexis Robertson:
No. But that NALP talk is actually the catalyst for me working in diversity and inclusion. So let's just say, because I also think Kevin from Yale is from that NALP talk. I could be wrong.

Michelle Silverthorn:
Kevin from Yale is from that NALP talk.

Alexis Robertson:
So to catch everyone up, in 2017, I think, you-

Michelle Silverthorn:
April 2017. Me, Courtney, [inaudible 00:27:42] and Cartner.

Alexis Robertson:
Who's over at Jenner. We got together, and we did a presentation on recruiting and retaining millennial attorneys of color. It was for the NALP education conference at the time. I was still legal recruiter. I focused a lot on placing diverse attorneys, but at that time, I did not know that this was going to be my future, and we did a talk on what everyone needs to know about

recruiting and retaining millennial attorneys of color. So it's interesting what that launched for you, what that subsequently launched for me.

Alexis Robertson:

But what we did was we walked everyone essentially through a case study where we created a character named Kevin from Yale. Kevin from Yale, for the many people who've been lucky enough to see you.

Michelle Silverthorn:

To be fair, he wasn't actually from Yale. His name is Kevin because-

Alexis Robertson:

Oh, I was cut [crosstalk 00:28:30].

Michelle Silverthorn:

... he did not put him from Yale because-

Alexis Robertson:

You're right.

Michelle Silverthorn:

... he was going to lower-ranked law school because we wanted to talk about why he chose that lower-rank law school.

Alexis Robertson:

No. You're absolutely right. The idea of Kevin was launched that. But I think so many people have now seen you discuss diversity in their firm and racial equity, and they've heard of Kevin. So it's funny. I was there for a tiny part of it. I've totally lost track as to where I was even going, but I felt the need for the world to know.

Michelle Silverthorn:

No, no, no. Because that NALP program, that was like... Because one of the things that came from that NALP program, I'm going to fast forward back to NALP, right, is that a lot of folks don't know what it's like to be black. I'm just going to say that, what it is like to be a black attorney, right? As I was writing the book contents, and I was thinking about that, and that is the perspective I want to share. I want to share the perspective not of, here are all the different things that we can put into place that can make change. No. Let me tell you what it's like to be

black. Let me tell you what it's like to have a disability. Let me tell you what it's like to be LGBTQ+. Let me share the world from our perspective.

Michelle Silverthorn:

So it's the world from... Actually, I remember what. I think his name was Kevin, but the world from Kevin's perspective, which was he has a second job, and he has a kid to raise, or he just chose a lower-rank school because it gave him more money or the perspective from someone who has to be perfect and cannot stumble and those that she says the wrong thing. She will get judged. These are actual people who are in your law firms and in your companies. Let's change it for them. Right? So it was that twist that I did my book. It was a matter of using you to stop looking at this world. I remember, because I was thinking [inaudible 00:30:06] about millennials, and I was so tired of reading-

Alexis Robertson:

I go back with this. I remember that.

Michelle Silverthorn:

... so many articles by baby boomers and Gen X are saying, "Well, millennials are awful, and they're terrible." I'm like, "First of all, y'all raised us." So let's start with that part. But second, change the perspective, change the narrative. What is the perspective from the millennial? What is the perspective from the millennial of color? What is the perspective from the immigrant? So the work that I've done in this book and whatever version, I think it's version 9,000 at this point, but the work that I've done in this book is to talk about that perspective. For all people see me talk this summer, that is the perspective I will always give you. I want to give you the other perspective because those are the stories that we need to hear.

Alexis Robertson:

Right. So you sent an email, and they said okay?

Michelle Silverthorn:

Yeah. That's pretty much it. The wonderful person from Rutledge and Hillard Francis now, they said, "Sure, that sounds great." She kept on checking in with me every month to see how I was doing. As we got to the date, which was like 18 months later, I said, "Oh yeah, yeah. We're getting there." But then I started the company, right? So I told her we would probably have the book finished in December of 2018, and then Inclusion Nation started, and Alexis knows this. I have been running nonstop ever since. I mean, it started, and it took off like, I don't want to say wildfire. It took off, and it just went in directions that I have absolutely no idea where it would've gone.

Michelle Silverthorn:

So it's been a great, great, great experience with that book. Yeah, that book, having that book. I think it's been on my LinkedIn profile for two years. I see my book is forthcoming. But we finally finished it, and we finished it earlier this year, and then they published it, and sadly, it was even more timely than it was two years ago.

Alexis Robertson:

Absolutely. Well, it's been fantastic to watch the ride. I will say, as I have stepped into these D&I roles in law firms and at Foley, I've had some people reach out to me occasionally and say, "Hey, have you heard of Michelle Silverthorn? Do you think we could maybe get her?" I'd be like, "Maybe. Let me see what I can do." But we were fortunate to have you speak at Foley. I guess that was in July, and you made a tremendous impact. I think you're making this impact just across large law firms and other organizations. So I'm so happy to have you back because I want to see what other pearls of wisdom we can get out of you, the last, I don't know, 20 minutes of this podcast. I want to use your book.

Michelle Silverthorn:

Alexis, do you know I was thinking of going back to that NALP program? Do you know the first person who called me after George Floyd's murder and after that weekend? Courtney.

Alexis Robertson:

It was Courtney.

Michelle Silverthorn:

She was the first person who called me Monday morning, and she said, "Michelle, let's talk." Then after that, that there were hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of calls after that. But Courtney Carter was the very first person to call me, and she said, "We have to talk about this. We have to make some change." So that NALP program.

Alexis Robertson:

I believe it. Also, if I had a dollar for every time I saw your name shared on a law firm LinkedIn page, thanking you for speaking, I'd have quite a few dollars right now.

Michelle Silverthorn:

You probably would have a lot of dollars right now.

Alexis Robertson:

So okay. But let's talk about diversity inclusion in the world and law firms racial equity. But I want to do it through the lens of your book. So I have not received my copy yet. But I have seen the table of contents, and this might sound weird, but Michelle, you had me at the table of contents. Okay?

Michelle Silverthorn:
Right.

Alexis Robertson:

So I've noticed that something you do and that I love is you break the book down by the old rules and the new rules for diversity. So I'm going to say some of them, and maybe you can say a few words, and we can kind of see where this takes us. But one of the rules you say is an old rule is just make the business case for diversity. So what's wrong with that? What's wrong with the just making the business case?

Michelle Silverthorn:

No. This summer has been extremely, and it's been extremely difficult. I will say after the summer, I think I will never have to make the business case of diversity again, hopefully not, maybe at least for the next new year and a half. Right? Here's what's wrong with making the business case, and we do it a lot. First of all, we make the wrong business case. So in the second part of the book where I talk about the new rules, I'm going to say, you want to make a business case, you've got to make a real business case. You have to be specific about how it benefits you, not like some broad based reasoning, right? So we'll talk about that as a new rule in a second.

Michelle Silverthorn:

But for the first reason, the reason we failed the business case is because, A, this business case, which is typically all these different perspectives, bringing in different ideas that lead to greater innovation, and they lead to greater profits for our organization, first, they do if you allow them to be different, but we're not, because we're not teaching managers how to manage conflict. We're not teaching them how to organize different identities in their team, how to recognize that people of different races and ethnicities and religions come in with their different values and to make those values work in the work that they are doing. If we aren't doing that, then all the things about diverse thoughts and diverse perspectives aren't going to matter.

Alexis Robertson:

They don't even exist. The business case is backwards most of the time, because for me to tell you, bring in diverse people, include them, you'll make more money, okay, that logically makes

sense, sort of. But actually, the organizations that have these results that the McKinseys of the world document, the cultural foundations, the underpinnings of the organization, that's a result. The diversity's a result of this other stuff versus the diversity driving the improved outcomes and improved revenue.

Michelle Silverthorn:

We don't see that because it worked great, that culture. I put it as my old rule number one, because here's what happens. You're going to say that diversity makes me more money, right? So what I'm going to do is I'm going to bring in all this really great diverse classes because I'm only doing it because I think it makes me more money, right? None of those diverse classes are going to stay, by the way, because we don't do anything to actually retain them. But we're going to bring them in. But then you don't make more money. You don't improve your bottom line. You don't improve your products. You don't improve your profit, and you're like, "Well, okay." So I did bring in all that diversity. It didn't work. So clearly, the business case has failed, right?

Alexis Robertson:

Yes.

Michelle Silverthorn:

Plus why are we crying to create profits out of people. Diversity shouldn't matter because of profit. Diversity should matter because you are a leader who cares about people. So if you want to go ahead and tell me that I'm going to see seven black people as widgets, rather than as people, then I'm going to tell you that you're a leader who's failing. If that's the business case that you are making them, that is a field business case because I will tell you the fourth reason it doesn't work is because you will get resentment. You will get pushback. You will get people who have only bought end because you have told them, here's the very surface reason why diversity matters, and there is zero investment across the organization.

Michelle Silverthorn:

The business case makes me so angry, Alexis. If you cannot tell. So the one thing that I think from the summer that I will take away is that over the past four months in the 50, 60 webinars that I have done, I have not had to make the business case once. I think that at least is some kind of progress.

Alexis Robertson:

To completely agree with you, I am someone who can talk about the business case. I do find that the business case for some is their entrance to diversity, their ear perks a little, I guess. But

I mean, I absolutely agree with you. We could both rant about it for a long time. So we're going to stop now, but who knows? We might pick up that rant in a few minutes.

Michelle Silverthorn:

I will say, if you go to my new rule, I think it's number two. It is number two because of the book. It's number two. Let's make the real business case. Right? Let's talk about, when you bring in more black partners, how that will increase the likelihood of your black associates staying and succeeding and therefore becoming black partners. But that is not the business case we make. We are not specific about it. We don't tie it to business drivers. We don't tie it to what we want. We just try and make this broad case, and then that's it. Right? I can tell you all the studies that McKinsey and Deloitte and all the... I mean, I list all of them in my book, and then I tell... We have made much progress on diversity, even though we have all these studies. So that's my old rule number one.

Alexis Robertson:

Well, and we are going to talk about a few more of the old rules, and then we're going to get some of the new rules. But by the way, we're not talking about all your rules. People also need to buy the book. Right?

Michelle Silverthorn:

They read the book. Read the book.

Alexis Robertson:

Let's give them a little preview, but okay. The next rule is, make sure you mentioned that bias is okay. That's an old rule. Old rule.

Michelle Silverthorn:

Oh, it's fine. Don't worry about it. You're fine. Everyone's biased. Everyone has bias. You're not five years old, y'all. Y'all can deal with the fact that we have biases. I don't need to talk it down to you. So that's my challenge with bias is that we don't talk about, unless it's known this because I spent so much time this summer talking about why we need to dive deeper into bias, but you listen to so many bias talks and bias programs, and they're trying to treat someone like they're a child. You're trying to tell them that, "Oh, it's okay that you have bias. Don't worry about it. You're fine. Everyone has it. It's fine."

Michelle Silverthorn:

Yes, Everyone has it. Yes, we can talk about strategies. That is all wisely important. But I need you to understand what it feels like, how it cuts someone down, how it makes you feel

worthless, how it makes you feel humiliated. Do you want to talk about microaggressions and me using that very nice, polite euphemism, microaggressions. I will. But I will tell you what it really feels like when you suffer from it and how it will kill someone's career. So no, I'm not going to sit here and pat your head and tell you that, "Okay. You're fine. You're biased. It's cool." I'm going to tell you what it really does and how it is endemic at every systemic level of your organization.

Alexis Robertson:

That is really, really powerful. Because I want to keep moving forward, I will not comment further, but yes. Wow. Thank you, Michelle. All right. Another old rule is whatever you do, don't mention race.

Michelle Silverthorn:

Don't talk about race. Yeah. Don't mention race. I mean, that's why I have a TED Talk all about that. Right? This again is something that we have made progress on the last three months, right? We are talking about race, and yet, people are still really uncomfortable with doing that, and they would much prefer thinking of themselves. I will be specific, white people, that they are color blind, and they don't see color, and they don't see race because so many white people have been socialized to believe that they don't see color, and they don't see race.

Michelle Silverthorn:

That's why I have them do the reflective exercises in my book and my podcast, my TED talk to have us realize that we do see race, and then let's take it bigger. Let's talk about systemic racism. This is what our nation is like on systemic racism, and this is how all the systems of systemic racism have led to that, "Oh well, there are no qualified candidates. Let me break down the reason when you tell me things like you are lowering the bar, where that comes from, where that belief comes from." That's how we're going to talk about when we talk about race.

Alexis Robertson:

Well, and really when someone says I'm colorblind, or I don't see race, what you're actually saying is you don't talk about race, but you do see race. Then there's that issue of like, if you can't see how we are different, you actually can't see my experience, and you can just think about different exercises. If I described someone and all their accomplishments, I leave out their gender, or I leave out their race. You do a great job at this within your seminars. We have these default settings, where we fill it in as... It's probably a white guy. If I say think of a doctor, you might think about an older white man in a coat. If I say think of a pilot, older white man wearing a pilots hat.

Alexis Robertson:

But now I add in black woman pilot. I add in black woman doctor. The experience this person had and even achieving that in our society is very different. At this point, I'm not describing good or bad, but I'm describing different. So if you're unable to sort of truly see who I am and how I present in the world, you're sort of denying me of my habit. Sort of you are denying me of my experience.

Michelle Silverthorn:

You are.

Alexis Robertson:

We could talk on and on about that.

Michelle Silverthorn:

My race matters. It matters to me. I mean, I say this in the book. It is the stamp of my ancestors, is the stamp of their survival. It denies me entering into places, and it welcomes me into places that feel like home. If you do not see that, then you aren't seeing me, and you aren't seeing the actual change you need to make to make people who look like me and who don't look like me succeed in your company.

Alexis Robertson:

Yep. So as people listen to this, and I think at this point, given where we're in right now, there is more permission, I think, to talk about race, if anything. If anything has happened in the last what? Now, was it four months?

Michelle Silverthorn:

Yes.

Alexis Robertson:

There is permission to talk about it. But in some ways, the reason I have a job it's this discomfort. It's because one, we are say, perhaps prepping for a client meeting, and the client has made it very clear that they are focused on diversity and inclusion, that I'm the one who says, "Well, I think we're going to want to address what we're doing when it comes to staffing people of color." At that point, that partner's like, "Oh my gosh, I'm so glad you mentioned it. I wasn't quite sure how to raise it." And just learning that ability to be comfortable or at least back to the kind of stereotypical comfortable, being uncomfortable.

Alexis Robertson:

I don't know. I think that's getting kind of played out now. But it's okay. It's okay to see who someone is and acknowledge that. For those who are like, "But how? What do I do?" I say, "All the more reason to read Michelle's book or some of the many resources that have been compiled-

Michelle Silverthorn:
The many.

Alexis Robertson:
... over the past few months."

Michelle Silverthorn:
I mean, the number one followup course that we've been booking right now after we do a lot of, I will say we [inaudible 00:43:02] but the number one book course that I've been doing as a followup is, so you want to talk about race. So what do I say when I say the wrong thing? So it's like practical scenarios. Someone walks in the Black Lives Matter shirt, and then someone says, "I have a Make America Great Again shirt." What do I say? Someone says that you are not promoting enough people of color into your executive suite. What do I say?

Michelle Silverthorn:
Because that's what people need now. Right? They know that they can talk about race. But how do they do it? What do they think about? What do they say? What actions should they take? So that's one thing. The second thing is going back to that discomfort. How do I like to view of these new rules and these old rules, it's like... I say this when I do my design programs, right? It's like putting on a seatbelt. Seatbelt is not comfortable. We put it on every single day. We don't put it on every single day because we're like, "Oh, you know what? It'll be a great idea. We should all put on our seatbelts." We put it on every single day because in the 1950s and the 1960s, we have car manufacturers and then legislators tell us to put on our seatbelt, and we started putting on our seatbelt, and it became a habit.

Michelle Silverthorn:
I would like anti-racism to be a habit. I want that partner who did not think about saying, what about the diverse staffing on this to think that is the first thing that automatically comes to his mind. I'm going to think about diverse staffing every single day, every single time. Anytime it comes up, it becomes a habit, right? So if we can create those habits, then we can change the world. But the only way to do that, honestly, you can start by waiting for people to change, and that's great. But you can also put into place systems that make them change.

Alexis Robertson:

Yes. You're talking my language. You talk about systems, because for me, I separate D&I work into two types of work. But changing hearts and minds, we are going to have [crosstalk 00:44:45]-

Michelle Silverthorn:

Which is [inaudible 00:44:46].

Alexis Robertson:

We bring Michelle. We bring you in. You say something compelling. I hope it causes people to self-reflect and maybe on their own accord to work on changing their own heart and mind. Maybe. That's hard work. That's longterm work. A lot of that is life work. That's the stuff you're going to do with the rest of your life. But then there is the systems. There's the, what can I put in place that causes you... Maybe it's a checklist, put on my seatbelt. Maybe it's an email that tells you, put on your seatbelt. Those are the things that result in-

Michelle Silverthorn:

You should put on your seatbelt.

Alexis Robertson:

... yeah, immediate behavior change, whether or not the heart and mind has been changed, that maybe later will cause your feelings, stories, emotions, to correspond with the behavior change via... I could rant on that for a very long time. You're talking my language.

Michelle Silverthorn:

Yeah. That's exactly why this book is in two parts, right? The old rules are all about, here are all the stories and the feelings and the reasons that we change, and then the new rules are, here are the systems we got to put into place? Right? Here's the rule I would like you to put in place as an organization to make sure that when people know that, okay, I have this hiring pool, and it has one woman and zero people of color, that is wrong, and I don't need someone to tell me that I have to change that. I know that I'm going to change that.

Alexis Robertson:

Exactly. Well, let me share a couple of your new rules. Maybe you'll say a few words about those. Then even though we're going a tiny bit long, I wanted to sneak in a quick ask Michelle before we sign off here.

Michelle Silverthorn:

Ask Michelle. Yes. Yes.

Alexis Robertson:

Okay. So the new rules, and I'm going to read the first three. First one is make the people case for inclusion. The second one is, want to hire the right fit, use competencies to find them. Then the third of, and there's more than three rules, but the third new rule is build a community that works for your marginalized employees.

Michelle Silverthorn:

Yeah. Those are all really great rules. I wonder who wrote them? Those are just brilliant.

Alexis Robertson:

Really smart person wrote them.

Michelle Silverthorn:

I put that first drill down because I want people to stop centering DEI on folks' comfort. If they're not comfortable with it now, they're not going to be comfortable with it later. You can spend your whole life waiting for someone to be comfortable with something. The reason I put that as the first rule is because I wanted to completely contrast with, if you are a leader who is doing this, you've got to center the work on the people who you are leading, and the people who you are leading are the ones who are... It's kind of like the phrase of the Black Lives Matter, like whose house is on fire right now?

Michelle Silverthorn:

The house that's on fire right now are your marginalized employees. If you want to make sure that you are a leader who's not just saying, "Oh, I'm only doing this because it makes me more money," or because people are widgets. I am doing it because people want to succeed. They would like to belong here. They would like to be valued. As a leader, I'm willing to allow people to do that. I'm going to put systems in the place that will allow that change to happen. So I listed a whole bunch of ways. You can start with that. But at the very core of whatever you do as a leader, you have to start with the people.

Michelle Silverthorn:

Then that goes into the next thing. You want to look for the right fit, great. Everyone wants to find the right fit. Right? They always want to find the right fit for us. But if you are only hiring the right fit for the ingroup, then people on the outgroup are only ever going to make it just when they get lucky or just when they get fortunate for someone to open the door just a little bit so they can come in. So create your competencies. That's fine. But if you're creating your

competencies, make sure that you're following those competencies. Make sure that you are using them for your promotions and your hiring. Make sure that you follow them.

Michelle Silverthorn:

The last one is when I talk about employee resource groups and sponsors. This is how we actually make employee resource groups work. This is how we make them meaningful and not your free DEI consulting work, right? They are not your free DEI consultant. Employee resource groups exist to support your marginalized employees. Let us use them to support your marginalized employees and then give them the support and the resources and the financing and the backing to make them matter. Same thing with sponsors. Until we change the systems and the pathways to success, allow your marginalized employees to have sponsors too, because your majority employees have them, and they've had them for years. You have to create a system for your marginalized employees to access that as well. It is not enough because we still got to change the systems. But until we do that, you have to give them the guide so they can succeed too.

Alexis Robertson:

So powerful and succinct. I think I'd say actionable, but it's going to take work. It's going to take change. Then as you also talk about the book being focused on people and that people aren't widgets, there also is this just broader transformation of work. In a lot of ways, our workplaces are still based upon as if we were factory workers working 9:00 to 5:00. If I'm just pressing a button all day, I don't know if it matters if I feel included. I don't know if it matters if I'm having to use a lot of my energy to cover certain things about myself.

Alexis Robertson:

But now, for you to channel the creativity and the intelligence that you need to give clients the best work product, that's why all this stuff matters. Actually, that's why ultimately diverse organizations make more money. It's because that other stuff is happening first. But okay. Let's try to do in the next, I don't know, three minutes, because I'm sure you need to run to Michelle. You're doing all these presentations. What are the top handful of questions you're getting, and what's your 30-second, 60-second response? Maybe we'll start with just two before we go.

Michelle Silverthorn:

Let's do 30. We'll do 30 seconds. We can do it. We can [inaudible 00:49:54] in 30 seconds. Get Ready. What if I say the wrong thing on race? I really want to talk about race. What if I say the wrong thing? You're going to say the wrong thing. When you say the wrong thing, apologize for it. Repair the relationship. Learn to say the right thing and then make sure none of you people in your peer group see the wrong thing as well. That's the first one. Second one I get, I'm not a

black person. I am not a white person. What is my role in this movement? What is my role in this struggle? What is my role in this fight for justice? The fight for justice includes everyone. Justice is not pie. We don't all just get a piece of it. We don't just get scraps. We all get it. Right?

Michelle Silverthorn:

So think about what networks you have access to. Think about what ethnic groups or what identity groups you are a part of? How is injustice perpetrated there? How is anti-blackness perpetrated there? What are the words and the phrase and the actions that you can take as an individual. Whatever platform that you might have as an individual, how can you make change in your groups and how can you make changes parts of your larger organization? But also recall that justice for one is justice for everyone because that is how justice works.

Michelle Silverthorn:

Third question I get all the time. I am dealing with my progressions. I don't know what to do, and it's a supervisor who is doing it to me. What can I do about it? Listen. I mean, first of all, I just say to people, go get validated by someone else. You need to go and find some friends and your group of people, your community, your ERG, and share with them this is happening because often what happens is that you feel like you're being gas lit, and you feel like you were being told. That's not true. Of course, no one said that to you. Go find people who will validate you and know that, "Oh yeah, that's what happened. Okay. Let's talk about that." They won't tell you that you were wrong or that never happened to you.

Michelle Silverthorn:

If you decide that you would like to engage in a teaching moment while still preserving your career, why and Alexis knows this, why is the most powerful question you can ask anyone. Ask why? If you want to continue with that, remember that you want to continue engaging in the learning process or the teaching process. Listen to what they say. Listen to their response. Share with them why it was incorrect. Share with them what a better response would be. Model that for them and then make sure that they go share that with others.

Michelle Silverthorn:

Ideally, that would happen. Often, it doesn't. Go find an ally. You'll find someone at that person's level who can share on your behalf, who could speak up for you, so again, your career isn't affected and isn't hurt. Those are the top-three questions that I have. Is there anything else, Alexis, that you have seen that you would like me to address in 30 seconds?

Alexis Robertson:

Can I reach out to my black colleagues? If I'm a white person, bad things are happening. Should I reach out? How do I reach?

Michelle Silverthorn:

Sure. Reach out. Don't reach out. You know what, if you don't know at this point whether you have black friends who you can reach out to, you're not going to suddenly find them in the next like 30 days, right? So if you have black friends who you would like to reach out to and just say, "I'm outraged. This is upsetting. I'm doing my own work of learning. My door's always open. Please feel free to use it. Thank you. That's it." If you don't have, and you just have black colleagues who you have never reached out to and never talked to, people you've seen in the elevator a couple of times, you could also say the same thing. But just understand that that's kind of going to come across as performative. It just is. Right? You can give all the support that you want, and it's great to give support.

Michelle Silverthorn:

But if you don't have a relationship with this person, they're probably not going to talk about racism that they've experienced. They might appreciate you reaching out, or they might not. I don't know who the person is. But it's worth it to try. But recognize, if you do try, it might come across as performative. You might not have the effect that you want. They may not open up about you about the racism they've experienced. But y'all, we are in this to support each other. We are in this to create empathy. We're in this to build a community that works for everyone.

Michelle Silverthorn:

So please, do not be afraid to reach out. But when you do, say that you were doing your own work of learning. Do not ask them to play devil's advocate. Do not ask them to answer your questions. Do not ask them to show you why their black lives should matter too. Just say that you were there, and you were willing to help, and you're willing to do the work. That's all. There you go. Four questions.

Alexis Robertson:

That is perfect. Michelle. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. With that, we'll wrap up. I'll just say once again, appreciate you being on the podcast. If people want to find you, is inclusionnation, is it dot org? Is that the best place?

Michelle Silverthorn:

Michellesilverthorn.com, michellesilverthorn.com. That's the only place to find me now. You can always read the book on Amazon. Unless you're like Alexis, and you can buy Kindle books too, right? I mean, there's no backlog on the Kindle. It shows up in 30 seconds after you hit buy.

Right? So buy it for your friends. Buy it for your less friends. Buy it for your bosses and your leaders? But it for your entire team? It's I think it's a great book. But it's a lifelong effort. I just like real books.

Alexis Robertson:

I know you do. I wish I could help you with that. I can't. I can't.

Michelle Silverthorn:

I cannot remember the last time I bought a printer. I'm just going to say that.

Alexis Robertson:

But how do you... Nevermind.

Michelle Silverthorn:

I only buy Kindle books.

Alexis Robertson:

We'll take this offline, Michelle.

Michelle Silverthorn:

We'll take this offline. We're going to take this offline.

Alexis Robertson:

All right. Thanks so much, Michelle.

Michelle Silverthorn:

Thank you for having me, Alexis. Thank you so much.

Alexis Robertson:

Thank you for listening to The Path & The Practice. I hope you enjoyed the conversation, and join us again next time. If you did enjoy it, please share it. Subscribe and leave us a review as your feedback on the podcast is important to us. Also, please note that this podcast may be considered attorney advertising and is made available by Foley & Lardner LLP for informational purposes only. This podcast does not create an attorney-client relationship. Any opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of Foley & Lardner LLP, its partners, or its clients. Additionally, this podcast is not meant to convey the firm's legal position on behalf of any client, nor is it intended to convey [inaudible 00:55:33].