



“Rooting out racism: How to get started at your association,” as originally aired July 28, 2020

Chelsea Brasted: Welcome to Sidecars' virtual workshop, Rooting Out Racism: How to get started at your association. My name is Chelsea Brasted and I'm the Content Manager for Sidecar, and I want to extend a very warm welcome to all of you for joining us today in what I hope will be a compelling and educational experience for all of us. As the summer began, our attention turned to social justice when George Floyd was killed in Minneapolis. In the wake of that tragedy, we reflected about the changes we could make, and we believe one of the best ways for us to move forward is to provide the tools and hold conversations that can help association professionals tackle some of these issues inside their own organizations. So that brings me to today, and I'm so proud to host Maxine Crump, the CEO of Dialogue on Race Louisiana. Maxine is joining me for conversation about how to identify and discuss the policies and practices that might be protecting an inequitable environment inside our organizations. At Maxine's request, I'll be jumping in with questions throughout this discussion. And so, let's all remember that this workshop is a first step, eradicating racism as a process. And so, with that I'd like to introduce Maxine. Maxine attended Louisiana State University where she became the first African American to live in women's housing. Her career spanned from working in news, public relations and media development, and some of her volunteer leadership led to her development of the Dialogue on Race Original Series program. Maxine has received more than a dozen awards from various organizations honoring her for her work around race. And in early 2016, she learned she was a descendant of enslaved people who were owned by Georgetown University and sold to Louisiana in 1838. And that is how she came to be born in Louisiana. So, let's go ahead, and let's get started. So, Maxine, I want to kick us off by asking you to tell me a little bit about Dialogue on Race Louisiana, and Color of Change. We are splitting 100% of the donations from this workshop between these two organizations, and they were your selection for that. So, tell me a little bit about those organizations and why you would like to support them?

Maxine Crump: Well, Dialogue on Race Louisiana is an organization that has a core message, our core program, which is Dialogue on Race Original Series, which is a six-week series for educating around race. And that education helps inform people as they look toward what changes they would like to make. Color of Change is an activist organization and advocacy organization that follows up and points out things that are not seen

sometimes in our operations, our whole society, and they bring that forward and make it known publicly. And some of the things that they brought out that get your attention are things that other people wouldn't have known had Color of Change not brought them out. So, they are an organization that we can count on as almost like a pulse on how we're operating around race and to bring it forward to the public. So that we can all actively look at it and decide, is this what we want our society to be like?

Chelsea Brasted: So, as we get this conversation started, I want to ask how important is it to have a shared understanding of language, like shared definitions around, you know, what it is we're discussing specifically?

Maxine Crump: The need for shared definitions is very important, because until you have properly defined the problem, you cannot solve it. And we do not have properly defined or shared definitions of racism. You ask 10 people to define racism, you get 10 different answers. So, there's no shared definition. And when people come into Dialogue, we help them know the definition we're using. We also tell them, "we're not saying this is the definition that you have to use, but you will know what we're talking about as we talk through this." And even without agreeing to the definition, at least the information we're giving is around a clear definition.

Chelsea Brasted: So, it essentially says, "when we say this, this is what we mean."

Maxine Crump: Yes. And if other people have a different meaning or different definition for racism, then they will need to bring it up and say, Well, when I say racism, this is what I mean. We can give evidence around definition. And so, we asked them the same thing. What is the evidence that your definition is a workable definition around race?

Chelsea Brasted: And so, for the purposes of this discussion today, what is the definition you would like to use?

Maxine Crump: The simplest definition is it is personal racial prejudice plus institutional operation is the power of an institution makes it racism. So individual prejudice alone does not create the barriers or prevent anyone from accessing what is fully open to all Americans, all United States citizens. But if it's empowered by institutions, then that institution can grant or deny access. Sometimes it's unconscious, invisible and unintentional. But the limit of the access is powered by institutions.

Chelsea Brasted: As a white woman, one of the things I hear a lot when discussing races, well, I don't see color. And my understanding is that this color blindness is a problematic approach and if so, can you explain why?

Maxine Crump: One thing I'd like to say I'm hoping they don't have that same problem when they're driving because they may drive through some lights that say stop. So, they need to see color. They need to see color to drive, they need to see color to navigate the system. Because to say you don't see color is to assume that seeing color doesn't matter in this country. Well if it doesn't matter, we still are using these color groupings, as long as this construct of color, ranking and hierarchy of human value is operating in our society, we all need to see color, so that we can know that there is one color that is preferred in America, maybe not consciously, but still left in place where the most opportunities are open to those who are white. The barriers limit those who are not white, because that was the original construct, and it has never been dismantled. So, we need to see colors so that we can notice that those who are white are having one experience in America and those who are not white are having another experience. So, you need to see that.

Chelsea Brasted: So, before we get too far into this discussion, I asked you about the definition of racism that we'll be using today. Are there any other definitions or terms that you would really like to highlight and make sure that we all have a clear understanding on what they mean, as we get into this discussion?

Maxine Crump: Well institutions, because people have a limited thought about what is an institution. An institution is any entity that has a license to operate, that you have to go register with your secretary of state. That makes you an institution, you serve a particular clientele, in the communitarian society. Those are the things that are mixed with an institution. So that involves all of the government, all of the internet, social media, broadcast media, any media, newspapers, educational outlets, police departments, hospitals, churches, all those things are institutions. And so, it helps people to understand that we're not talking about limited. When we say institutions, we're talking about all entities that operate and serve the public that has a license to do so.

Chelsea Brasted: So, it's a great transition I think, because you asked everyone before this event to watch a video from Wornie Reed it was a TEDx video. And can you please explain to me why you selected that video for everyone to take a look at before this workshop?

Maxine Crump: The main reason for selecting Wornie Reed's video on discourse is that people often when they hear racism defined and when they hear where you see it and

where it operates, and when they get to see some of the horrifying effects of it, they become ready to say "what do we do about it?" So Wornie Reed channels that very well and he says he's used to hearing that as well. So, what do we do now? And he says not so fast. So, there is a process to unpacking it and part of it is looking at it and calling it what it is, before you start to unpack it, and you have to, you have to talk about what hasn't been talked about. So, if you run off and just try to fix it, it may not be properly done, it may not be effectively done. It may not serve and benefit all and it needs to do that.

Chelsea Brasted: So, if we wanted to work towards eradicating racism and creating a more equitable environment for all of us, why is it important that we focus on these institutions instead of having the conversation around "Well, let's check yourself, let's check one person?" Like, what's the difference between that kind of conversation?

Maxine Crump: It's a great question because of the fact that that's the question we've been asking all along, asking people to change their attitudes and being nicer and get along and come together. And so, we still have racism. So probably we need to relook at that, that ask. Also, again, it is the power of an institution to make changes. So, an example is when we learned that smoking was hazardous for one's health. That didn't stop smokers from smoking. But then research showed that those who did not smoke and were breathing the secondhand smoke were being impacted by those who smoke. What they've come to recognize is the rest of us sometimes are often in public spaces closed in with those who do smoke. Doctor's office, getting your driver's license, getting your hair done, being in a restaurant where you can't constantly say to smokers, "would you mind not blowing smoke in my direction," or things like that. So finally, there was the recognition that there needed to be institutional change around smoking, because institutions get its power from the citizens to operate. So, we get to say what kind of institutions we're willing to have in our society. So, institutions owe us the responsibility of ensuring that our freedom is not impeded when inside of their institution. Breathing secondhand smoke was one way that it was. So, institutions agreed to follow the law, which was then put in place to ensure that those of us who don't smoke, don't breathe secondhand smoke, and put our health at risk. Before that it was constantly people putting up signs going out and asking people, would you smoke outside? Did you see our sign? And now, we don't have that problem. Not only that, smokers are also in agreement with that problem. Rarely, if ever, do people have to ask people would you mind smoking outside, this is a no smoking place. Most people know that public spaces are no smoking, and to show how much smokers agree with that, and have come on board with it. If they're in a parking lot, talking where there's no rule about smoking or not, they will excuse themselves and say, "I'm going to step over and smoke a cigarette." With that kind of change, we know that institutions can do the same thing, about ending racism. If

they're sure that all barriers in their institution have been examined and cleared, and sometimes they're not visible barriers. It's no longer where the sign is up saying, "we do not serve coloreds here," or signs that say, "white army." That's been taken down. But sometimes the barriers are there invisibly, unconsciously sometimes, and indirectly and unintentional. But they're still there because of the impact, the outcome. And so, I believe that the power is in institutions. If institutions start to make the change, in no time, we will have eradicated institutional racism operating, whereas it will be the same as smoking because they have the power to make the impact far more than trying to get individuals to change their attitudes.

Chelsea Brasted: So how do we as leaders create that space within our institutions to start these conversations? If you're going about the process of, you know, even wanting to start, how do you make sure that that you can do everything in your power to ensure that those conversations are productive, and you don't get distracted by the many different ways you can get distracted in a discussion about racism?

Maxine Crump: Start is the right word. So very often people say, well, gee, I need to find out if we have barriers here and their approach would just be to go ask everyone "do you think we have any race barriers here?" Well, this is where individuals can make a difference in institutions. It's not that in that institutions are active like people, but what is empowered in an institution continues to operate even after a new person is brought in. We get to look at the company policy, we get to act on it by the way, by the company's practices, sometimes the policies are one thing and the practices are another. Eventually the culture of the company determines how people operate in that institution. So if we want to change it, and if the culture of the institution has been to not talk about it, it's kind of not going to work to ask people to show the barriers because they've gotten used to the company culture too. But we can begin by before even going asking people if they see the bears, those who are asking can ask themselves first off in the environment that I'm in, who is in this picture? And who is left out? And why is that? What do I influence? And what can I do about that? There's another question that they can ask too: What are some things that I do that might perpetuate racism, unconsciously, indirectly, unintentionally? So those kinds of questions are a good way to begin looking at.

Chelsea Brasted: Can we maybe go through each of these questions and how someone might go about answering them?

Maxine Crump: Yes. Yes. So yes, so who's in this picture? Well, if you look around, and your entire staff is white, all of your clientele is white, and all of the vendors that you use inside of your company, all the people you serve, everyone's white. Then you have to ask

yourself, why is this? Who's left out of this picture? And how did it get to be all white? Because people have answered that for themselves. You can ask, "What do I tell myself to make this okay?" And it was wrong to tell myself nothing. This is just how we've always operated. These are the people who come here. I mean, we didn't make this happen, which is excuses and justification. If your company is a company you're fully proud of, what is the need to justify? When you have to justify your answer, then something further needs to be asked. So that's when you come back and do a self-assessment like, "well, why is that, that this is an all-white company, instead of describing, "well, I don't know. That's just the way they were doing it. Because there was a principal of an all-white religious school that was asked, "why do all the black kids sit together at lunch and all the white kids sit together?" And her answer was, "you know how teenagers are, who knows what they think, they just self-selected." I answer. It said, I have never asked myself why that is. And if I have, I haven't let myself think it through. So, it's very important to ask who's in this picture? And who's left out? And why is that? So, who's left out might be unintentionally and indirectly. Maybe your organization is located in an area that's all white, and the area of people that you serve are just those people in that area. So, your clientele is going to be all white. In that case, it seems like but it's not my fault. Well, if you have to defend it, it's still a question that needs to be asked. It may not be your fault. But the question is, what kind of company do you want? Are your neighbors only those in the community around you? People say, "well, you know, we're open to anyone. Anyone can come in if they want to." Not recognizing, actually, that the layout of cities have been institutionally engineered over time to offer land. In historical racism, when Jim Crow was legal, whites could buy land where blacks couldn't. So, the layout of a community is often based around that historical setup. The businesses have been there a long time, the homes have been there a long time. And so, they're still there because land isn't movable. And so, looking at this and saying, "well, you know, I didn't have anything to do with it," does not hold us accountable for our institution, and for our community in our society. We cannot just stay inside the walls of our own individual institution, as if we have no relationship otherwise. Every institution serves a clientele, and every clientele lives in a community or a society somewhere that you're serving. So that all works together. And so, being able to ask yourself, "what kind of company do we want? What is the core of our organization that we are offering to the community?" In that case, who needs to be here and who's not here. And if we say "well, because they live far, because they don't have cars to get here." Well it feels like to the company, "Well, what can I do about that? I'm just one company?" But they're often companies that typically have the ears of board members who are empowered in corporate America, they have a lot of influence in government and businesses and lobbying. And there can be things said that someone with more power can take forward and be a part of making the change and not say, I'm

blameless, not worrying about extolling the virtues of innocence and recognize more having the virtue of accountability.

Chelsea Brasted: So, Maxine, those three questions that you want. Can you start with one more time?

Maxine Crump: Who is in this picture and who's left out? And why is that? What can I do about it? Well, first off, what do I influence and what can I do about that? So, if you look at your area of influence your area of influence in the company might be that you get to only speak to one part ... one program that you're in charge of. That one program. And if you look at that one program, you may be able to say to the next person higher up, and notice that our program is a program that would greatly serve a lot of different groups of different colors, and we only have one color group, for example. Or you can say, "we serve a lot of colors, but our focus in this program is all geared toward the culture of whiteness. And so, would it be beneficial for us to look at making our program more culturally diverse for those we serve, things like that? So, it's what questions you ask yourself, that lead you to it. So that may be the only area you influence but asking the right question can make a difference. There was - I'll actually say it was um, an Ascension parish sheriff - a woman, African American woman who had worked in Donaldsonville had noticed that in Donaldsonville, he was thinking about how to put more deputies in the Donaldsonville area. She was just his assistant. And she said, I've noticed that Donaldsonville does not need more police officers. What it needs is more space for the children to play in a safe place. And in the parks, to have policing there with guns, policing that makes the parents keep the children home. And he listened to her and they opened up a center there for children and she said not for them to just play basketball. So, it was a space where they could have tutors after school and indoor events and, and spaces, and he reckoned he told his offices, no office in this park is there policing the park. You're there protecting children. And that was one person who had the ear of the sheriff, spoke up to him, and he listened to her and made that difference. So, you just use your area of influence where you are. It could make a big difference.

Chelsea Brasted: Maxine, it sort of sounds like there are two different things you're saying there. One, that every single person in an organization has an ability to make an impact wherever they are. But the second thing is, and this is like it's more of a question, not a statement. But if an organization wants to go about addressing their policies in a formal way, should there be one person who spearheads that? Or should that be looked at as every single person in the organization is responsible for thinking about this?

Maxine Crump: I think every person but maybe not made responsible, because it makes people sort of resentful, but empowered to speak up and have a voice. Then they could set a policy for how that communication is handled. If they don't want to have meetings or spoken out, they can have people to write it, but they assure everyone that whatever they write gets recognized, and that it is not considered a complaint to be punished. Because these are the things that have to be clear, before people feel that they can speak up. Many institutions need to make sure that they provide a culture where people can speak up and know they're going to be heard and acted on to the degree that they can. Granted, you know, there can be unreasonable things asked, but they need to know that there is an open space for it. So, making them responsible for it when racism is 400 years old, is a weight, but making, empowering them to speak up with the assurance that they're going to pay attention and act on it to the best of their ability.

Chelsea Brasted: The goal of today's conversation is to offer the real guidance on identifying these practices and policies as we've started talking about. But can you help explain a little bit about how these practices and policies get there in the first place? Now, as we've discussed, it doesn't necessarily have to come from one bad actor saying, "Oh, I'm going to do this and make sure that people of color do not get these opportunities." These policies can appear without that sort of bad actor, correct?

Maxine Crump: Yeah, you're totally right. They're usually not bad actors. They usually just benign going with the culture, but if this country has been set up to favor whiteness, and to provide layers upon layers of decades of the same practices going forward, they just seem like normal. They just say it's just business. It's a way of doing business. So right now, what we're doing is looking at all of those things, because we're not going to be able to make change by just adding a new coat of paint on this society, a pretty new coat, a shiny coat. We're going to have to, in some cases, rebuild. Much of the rebuild will not be building. It'll be looking at our policies different because you asked about the policies, the policies are often created by those at the top, and they really create them to make the best. In the past, it was usually to get the best bottom line. Most institutions now have come to not just think about raising money, or that sort of thing in their business or in their organizations, but they're thinking about their community relationships, and putting that in as a shared level of priority with their fundraising and in that case, you know that you may be serving one particular clientele, but that clientele lives in the society at other levels. And knowing what they're encountering before they come to you for your services is very important to know that because it informs how you're able to take care of them or serve them.

Chelsea Brasted: Maxine let's talk about how this begins at the beginning of someone's experience working at an organization. I want to talk about hiring practices in particular. Are there examples of policies or practices that you've seen that can contribute to these issues?

Maxine Crump: Well, one is trying to have a diverse looking operation, making sure you have this number of people of color and this number and trying to do that, almost as if you put together a bouquet to get the right look. And it may be well intentioned, and it may look good, but it may not serve because if you put it together just by color, and I can see people thinking, "and not qualifications." No, the qualification assumed is there, but if you want that particular choice of ethnicity to contribute to the culture, to contribute to the culture of your organization, it needs to be thought of as what do they contribute? Not just the color of their skin, or where they're from is the contribution. But there needs to be an intentional conversation with them about the contribution they bring into the culture. Sometimes just by coming from that culture is going to be better than not coming from the culture, but it's really good for them to know that they bring value as their ethnicity offers.

Chelsea Brasted: In these organizations, what are some of the things that we can really start to look at in written policies, in the way we look for volunteers in an organization, the way we look around for even, you know, if there isn't an open position, asking for people to come and apply for it for that position. What are some of the very specific policies you've seen that have been problematic? And are there any? I guess I'll just stop there. I'm sure I've got other questions.

Maxine Crump: Well, two things. Often, they're not practicing their policies. Once in a while the policy itself is problematic. There was a policy of hair being worn a certain way at a school. And it was a way that an African American at that school came in with dreadlocks and the school decided that that was not proper hair. When there is a whole cultural, natural way that African Americans wearing that style has nothing to do with, like a fad or something. It's natural to the hair. And it was specific that nothing in the handbook said no, you can't do that, except the way that described how the hair was worn had to be worn, could not be worn by African Americans with that texture of hair that you could dreadlock. So sometimes the policies in place overlook the fact that the policy was geared toward only what would be something that a person physically white could do.

Chelsea Brasted: Gotcha. So, dress codes might be then, if an organization has one, a pretty straightforward starting point then?

Maxine Crump: Pretty straightforward, especially when things are said like hair has to be shoulder length. And an African American woman works there, and her hair is natural, which people call an afro. But an afro is an afro not every natural hairstyle is an afro. But do you know when you don't know, see that's cultural insensitivity and lack of knowledge about culture, but if our hair is natural, it's not going to hang at all. So, there are some thoughts about calling in that person and saying this is not a professional look for our organization. And so, then comes the question of what is unprofessional about it? And why does it only, is it only a question by those of this ethnicity? For example.

Chelsea Brasted: Are there other specific maybe coded language or phrases or things that that we can look for in these policies and bylaws that organizations typically have?

Maxine Crump: Yes, there are many we can ask. What in this policy serves every one of the ethnicities in our company? Because the policy has never been put in place long before the company was actually working toward a more diverse workforce. And in that case, just like there needs to be a reassessment of companies and organizations. So, like if you get your annual health check, organizations need checks too of their policies and their practices and bylaws to make sure that they're serving well.

Chelsea Brasted: So one of the things that I think a lot about is, especially when there is an open organization or open position in an organization, is I think one of the things we hear a lot is, "oh, yeah, send this around to your friends" or send you know, "we have this open position. Do you know anybody?" and one of the things I think about is when you do that you sort of end up with the snowball effect of your organization looking like the people you already have. So, is that a read you would agree with? And if so, how do you get to the next step? How do you move past that?

Maxine Crump: So totally on with that. The thing is, that's the point. That's a practice. It's not a written policy, but it's a practice. But it's a practice that overlooks the fact that is the people in your organization, or one group, the people that they know are likely going to be in that one group. And therefore, it is the question that you're asked, "What am I doing? What decisions am I making that is continuing to perpetuate a racial divide?" So that's a policy, that's a practice that needs to be questioned. And if you're afraid to question it, how are you ignoring what could be something you end up having to justify later. Clear it now, because it's better for all of us, it benefits all of us.

Chelsea Brasted: So how do you, you know, we're talking about this difference between practices and policies? How do you begin to see the separation in them? And then also, how do you begin to bring them in line with each other?

Maxine Crump: Most everyone has a mission and a vision. And that also needs to be checked. So, to ask, "how are my operations in line with our mission? Are we who we say we are?" Which is an organizational integrity. "Are you in line with who you say you are?" And so, working from that vision, from that mission will determine many other things you look at. So sometimes it's too easy to just come in, sit at your desk and start your operation from yesterday. There needs to be times to stop and assess. There needs to be reflection time. And the idea of not having time is to allow things to go on unchecked. It is how people end up going to the doctor and find out that they have something going on their health that has been going on a long time. And where the doctor has to say, "When's the last time you had a checkup?" Then you say, "well, you know, it's been years." So that's happening in companies. We need healthy society. We need healthy companies and organizations. And it comes from these, these planned reassessments, reevaluations and rechecks. If we want to close our eyes and ignore things, we're going to have problems. This is a dynamic life. It doesn't sit around because a two-year-old closed their eyes when they play peep-eye because if they can't see you, they think you can't see them. We're not two and we have to not close our eyes because it's going to show up. Take those moments, put them in, plan them in your assessment. Make sure that it doesn't disrupt your daily workload, plan them, you stop, and you plan budget. So, stop and plan those things because they are key to budgets. In fact, Jon Moller of the Budget Project here says the budget is the policy. So, as you plan in your budget, think about how it relates to your policy, or what it says about your bosses or your practices.

Chelsea Brasted: So, when you're stopping to have that moment of reflection annually, quarterly, whenever what are some of the things that you would want some organizations to think about when they are maybe having that reflection?

Maxine Crump: If a lot of problems come up in that one reflection, then we need to ask ourselves, "Do we need to do something intensive to bring this level and more into alignment of who we say we are?" And then next, we say, "Well, how often do we need to meet around this, so that we can put a plan into place for changing this?" Then once it's changed, and it's going a certain way, then maybe you might need to do a six month check in, and eventually an annual check in and then actually, it would end up being maybe a bi annual check. And you don't have to do it for two years, depending on the flow of your company. But just stop, and you make a starting place for something different, that

eventually is going to serve you well. And it also will improve outcomes in your measurements for your organization.

Chelsea Brasted: I think one of the things you mentioned earlier, Maxine is thinking about not just who's in an organization, but who your organization does business with. So, with vendors and things like that, how can an organization go about not only sort of taking stock of those relationships, but beginning to diversify them as well?

Maxine Crump: Just deciding to do it. That's one of those things you can say "we're going to realize that we've only been dealing with these companies, because that's who we've always dealt with, when I came here two years ago. That's what they were using, and we started using them." Start to look around for more. Because in the case where some vendors are coming online now, you may be using a vendor that an organization has been using for 20 years. But 20 years ago, there weren't other vendors of other ethnicities that did the same thing. You haven't even stopped to assess them. It's making sure you know how you can be a part of this change. For a long time, people thought racism was something couldn't be solved. So, they just they just exhausted the thought that there was anything they could do. But now that it's such a public conversation, people are so aware that there are things they can do. And they're asking. These are things that they can do. That's why you're asking me these things, so that people can rethink what's been business as usual, and what new outcomes they want, and how do they want to be a part of. When people started putting up on their Facebook page, Black Lives Matter. Some of the people came into the dialogue series and said, they checked and followed those companies that posted Black Lives Matter and found out that those companies were all white. And they said, they're trying to understand why a company or organization that's all white and serving all white, putting up Black Lives Matter. Black Lives Matter that calls for something else to look at. And it doesn't mean really and truly, that companies need to have a certain amount of different ethnicity. That's called a quota, which quotas were never, there's nothing legal ever put in place about quotas. But for the choice of living in a society, it may be significant to recognize that it is an important thing for businesses to think about. If you're only serving one public group, and that color group is white, if it's not your preference, why let it just continue and shrug your shoulders and use your innocent virtue to say, "not my fault," instead of using your virtue of accountability?

Chelsea Brasted: I think one of the things I hear sometimes is that "oh, we put out this call for vendors or we put out this call for people to hire for this position. We put out a call for volunteers and only white people applied." What are your recommendations for getting an organization past that kind of thinking?

Maxine Crump: You know, it's really kind of tone deaf because sometimes they haven't asked themselves "where did you put your calls for it?" They will say, well, you know, I ran it on TV, or in certain programs where people of color are not watching. So, go with the way you're sure that your call for new staff is reaching a broad range of ethnicities, if that's what you're looking for.

Chelsea Brasted: As these organizations begin to rethink their practices, rewrite policies, is there anything that they should bear in mind as they're beginning that process too? Maybe they've already identified something they have found is problematic. How do they bake into this institution that proactivity going forward?

Maxine Crump: Well, if they come to a Dialogue on Race Series with me, it will be easy to know that it gives you language and information that helps you inform your decision. So, it's like you don't solve a problem at the level of the problem. You have to learn more in order to be able to do that.

Chelsea Brasted: So, for the leaders in these organizations who are looking to create these action plans, right or to, to empower the people in the organization to start having these conversations to say, "come challenge me when you see something that doesn't seem right." What are some specific things that they can do today, this week, next month to begin these conversations and empower the people in their organization?

Maxine Crump: Well, one of the things was that the sheriff gave that particular assistant, an assignment to research something. She was happy to be a part of bringing more information back. So sometimes, there's more brilliance in an organization than people first thought. And so, to encourage more brilliance is to have a participatory connection with the employees. Otherwise it becomes just a complaint that they hope nothing, that they hope something comes up. But if they never give anything of it, they feel like it didn't go anywhere, and they stop doing anything. But to connect them in some ways, maybe just to find some sort of piece of information to bring back on that can be helpful.

Chelsea Brasted: So, Maxine, are there any other closing thoughts?

Maxine Crump: The main thing that I'd like them to think about that made me wonder, "why am I using white groups as the group that is in the position to maybe be a part of the more harm?" So, they'll have to keep in mind that this setup was not done by anybody alive today. This setup was done by people who have long been dead and the entrenchment of it and the carrying through of this story, but it has landed on all of our desks now all of our laps. We've inherited a hierarchy of human values and institutional

barriers that have never been actively eliminated. And so, this will be the first time that we're actually making a concerted effort to take a real look at this institutional construct from many years ago. And it's not about blaming anybody for it, because it would be lost on the people who are around today because nobody here today created this problem, but as those who've inherited it, there are things we can do. And we have the ability, the access, the momentum, the reason and will benefit from being a part of doing what we can do where we are at the institutional level, because that's the power to bring about change. But now it's in front of us, and a lot of people are looking at it in a sincere way. And now's the time, we can make that shift to where our country operates the way it was designed to operate in our founding document. We can do it; it doesn't matter whether it's our fault. What matters is it's here. And what matters is what kind of country do we want, what kind of society, what kind of communities, what kind of organization? We can do this.

Chelsea Brasted: Maxine, thank you so much for taking the time today.