



UP for Learning: Partnering to Make Space for Today's Youth to Dream Big

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 00:03

Hi, Lindsey and Evelyn. It is so good to see both of you.

Lindsey Halman 00:08

Hello, good to see you too.

Evelyn Monje 00:09

Hello!

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 00:11

Listeners today I'm chatting with UP for Learning's executive director, Lindsey Halman, and youth advisor council member Evelyn Monje. Evelyn, am I saying that right?

Evelyn Monje 00:23

Mon-Hey, but you're very close.

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 00:24

Mon-Hey, awesome. UP empowers youth by building strong relationships with youth and adults to help youth make change and create a socially just climate and culture for all. And now we get to hear how UP for Learning makes this happen. Evelyn, will you tell us about how your high school activism initially connected you with Lindsey and then a position working for UP and serving on their Youth Advisory Council?

Evelyn Monje 00:52

Yeah, for sure. Um, so to think back, I began doing my activism work as a Person of Color in Vermont, which is I think 94% White. Back in early summer. And so in light of George Floyd's murder, I connected with a youth group in my town, and we've been working diligently since to create demands within our school district. And a part of that work was to connect with our school board. And so in creating the demands and working in partnership with the school district to implement the demands, I connected with Lindsey, who's here with us today, to to work with the board in youth adult Partnership, which is which is what UP really is centered in. And so I connected with her and we led a retreat. And then we just continued to work together on this Senuski project, which is the town that I live in. And UP became our fiscal sponsor and and I was just so in love with all of the work and it was so deep, I'm so deeply connected to the idea that youth need to be centered and need to be in connection with adults to create real change.



And especially in education, the idea that young people have to be the designers and dreamers about what their own education looks like. So I'd like met my people in this work, and was able to like really dive into what this meant. And it just continued to work and then heard about some other projects in neighboring towns, and was so excited by the prospect of all that this entailed. And then was offered, this all happened through, I think, like September, through December. And then I was offered a job for January and have been been working since, and it has been like magic, such an incredible group of people. And as like, this is my first. I've been a summer camp counselor forever, but as like a more solidified job like this has been the best job I think anyone could really have. And it's been so awesome to sort of put all the values like if you think about all the values that you have as a person, but it's your job. And it's so, so incredible, and so much joy and just been able to really just dive into anti racism and all of the activism work that I've, that I've been doing.

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 03:30

On top of your dual-enrolled college classes and finishing up your senior year, no less?

Evelyn Monje 03:36

Yes, yes. I'm dualy enrolled in the early college program of Vermont through the community college of Vermont. And it's been like, definitely a balancing act. Challenging to hold both, but because it's so like fundamental to who I really truly am as a person. It's been something I've been able to do and prioritize and find ways to hold space for the education and learning that comes with being in early college and then like the creativity and design work that comes with being an employee of UP. And it's been a really cool senior year, even though, even though we're in COVID and pandemic, and the challenges that come with that. It's been, it's been pretty incredible.

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 04:26

I love it. You are so on fire and making a difference. And, Lindsey, I want to shift to you I know you're a career educational innovator. As a teacher, you created a youth empowered school within a school, The Edge Academy and, and youth adult relationships were a top priority there too. It sounds like what all schools should strive to become. Tell us more about what drives you and what's led to the hard work you do to support our education revolution.

Lindsey Halman 04:58

Yeah, so I was, I'm very grateful to have taught for in public school system for 15 years prior to joining UP for Learning. And I knew as soon as I entered the public school system, that what I experienced as a learner was not what the learners that I was partnered with should be experiencing. And it's, you know, I was offered an opportunity in 2009, to create a school within a school, essentially, like a micro school. I had a, at the time, there was an innovative superintendent who just said, "This is your opportunity to really tear it down and reimagine," and really reimagine, not redesign. Because the public school system, as we know, only works for a



very small amount of young people. And, and so with that opportunity to really just reimagine what school could be, I had about a decade of my career was spent in The Edge Academy, and which was founded on youth adult partnership, project based learning, community based learning, not having grades in a sense of like, being assessed on a grade based system, but really on a standards based or proficiency based system before, that was really even part of our, we have policy in Vermont now that that all seventh through 12th graders are assessed in a proficiency based system. So this was before that, and we didn't have grades like I'm in fourth grade, fifth grade, sixth grade, seventh grade, we were all just learners, you know. And so, my role was a facilitator of learning. And that's what I see myself as always, is a facilitator. And I learned so much from the young people that I partnered with, during that time. And the experiences, I had really to stretch the possibilities and imagine beyond what I what we might know, gave me kind of the energy and inspiration that I brought with me to UP. You know, unfortunately, over time with The Edge Academy, being in a public school system, we dealt with constantly trying to, you know, fight for what we knew was, was really right for young people. And we got kind of pushed back and back and back inside the box of school. And at that point, you know, I knew it was time to kind of spread my wings and support a larger systems change. And that's what brought me to UP for Learning in 2018. As a program director, and the founder, Executive Director, retired in 2020. And that's when I moved into the role as executive director.

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 08:01

That is so impressive that you started a school within a school. It's, it is, it's really hard to make changes within the system and not get pushed back. I, I did my doctoral work on that. And I think that's why I started a microschool is because I wanted competency based, no worry about are you a sixth grader or an 11th grader, I really want it to be about learners and teachers to facilitate. And I'm like, it's just easier to start something from scratch than to try and get change within and to have it be sustainable. So that you did that, and that you've taken that experience and you're bringing it to UP is it's what we need. And I'm so glad that UP for Learning is a part of our summit, because we really are going to need activists. And what you are is you're front runners of this activism that is needed. And and this youth voice that so missing. So Evelyn, bouncing back to you, how does UP empower youth voices and youth initiatives? You've experienced it personally, and I really wanted a primer for other people to be able to use. What would you recommend for other people to do if they want to be empowering youth voices?

Evelyn Monje 09:17

Yeah, for me, I think what stands out the most is we talk a lot about youth centered and youth voice, but youth have a voice and they know what it feels like, they know, just this idea of the fact that young people really get it. And so it just looks like reimaging the ways in which we move and exist in spaces so that it isn't adult dominated but it's that there space for youth to also share and to be present and to do that reimaging redesigning work. For me, what does it look like? It's really just been a place where I've been able to advocate And meet adults as as peers. And I think we so often return to that, that sort of power dynamic of adults as decision



makers, when in reality, we're all decision makers, and we're all human beings; we're just in different levels of like experience with the world. And so how do we find ways not to tokenize young people or to provide one space for one person, but but to really pull youth in as as partners. And I think it just, it's creating that mindset, and shifting our mental models to really just understand from the beginning that of course, young people have have things to contribute. And, and they are deserving of space to be in partnership with adults. That looks like for me often, lots of emailing, lots and lots of emailing and connection. And it's so yeah, just finding ways to be to be present as a young person. And it's definitely like it takes two. But it's it's from the beginning, letting young people know that they can, and having the right space to be able to, to take up space, because so often we we don't think of young people as the people to take up so much space, but we need to celebrate that when it when it does occur.

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 11:29

Absolutely. I'm curious, what's an example of a demand that you took to your district last fall?

Evelyn Monje 11:38

Yeah, we one of the demands, that's been sort of the hot topic has been the removal of the SRO, so our school resource officer. And that has been, yeah, yeah, exactly. So that's been a tense topic this past year. And we just had the board meeting, about the decision for the SRO. And in the end, our school board decided to retain the SRO. And they'll make a committee or task force to explore alternatives. But they did decide, even with, even with young people advocating both for and against the role of the SRO to keep it for the next academic school year.

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 12:33

So you got their attention. And you were heard, and it's not totally dismissed, it's going to be processed more. And you took on huge I mean, as you can imagine, in Seattle, that's been a big issue for us, too. So you guys didn't go for like, yeah, we want five minutes more at lunchtime, you went for like the really big, important, profound level of change.

Evelyn Monje 13:01

Yeah, deeply rooted stuff.

Lindsey Halman 13:03

And I will say, at the same time, yeah, that having been a partner with Evelyn, in and supporting her, in many of this work, that, you know, schools are the primary stakeholders of school, our young people, right. And if young people are saying, "This is what we rightly deserve, this is what makes us feel safe, and, you know, and secure when we are here. And this is what does not provide safety and security for us." You know, it's, I can understand for young people how it can be so frustrating to have really demanded that and then felt in many ways that they were their voices had been erased or silenced in some ways, because of the ways things always



have to kind of work out. Well we have an MOU and we need to explore this. And we need to have another multi stakeholder committee, which one of our colleagues had given us a really good term of like thinking of this as a facade of action. Like sometimes there's these facades of action that adults put in place to buy time, right? To buy time, to have another multi stakeholder committee, to explore the issue, when what young people are demanding is action. If I knew that the young people in my space were not safe every day did not feel safe, and perhaps maybe the adults as well who are maybe also not feeling that they are empowered to use their voices as well for fear of whatever i would i would be that would give me a lot of pause to make some changes if I knew that the young people in the school did not feel safe. And even if it was a split issue, "Okay some people feel safe. Some people do not. Let's come together and really explore this issue together." What an amazing learning opportunity. Instead of creating divisiveness in the community, let's bring people together to have dialogue. And that's really the work that we do through our youth adult partnership work in communities and in schools, is gathering youth and adults together to explore an issue, collect data, engage a community and dialogue around change, so that people are not pushing away from each other, but coming together, coming together and connecting, even when the conversations are hard.

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 15:37

Yes. So tie that in, Lindsey. UP for Learning talks about wanting to create a socially just climate for all. So what does that mean and how would that what would that look like in this situation?

Lindsey Halman 15:56

Well, in this situation, I think, you know, what that would look like is really honoring all the voices, honoring all the voices and making space for all the voices to be heard, without fear of, you know, being, you know, disciplined and or losing social capital. Just making space for a dialogue. You know, and a lot of our work out for learning is also grounded in restorative approaches, restorative justice, restorative practices; that was a big part of the work that I did, within my school, moving to a restorative approach, rather than a punitive approach. So if we could just bring people together to have dialogue, youth and adults, and really value everyone's voices and everyone's experience, and not just, you know, I, you know, the those youth that have social capital, or those youth that are typically the leaders. We really demand when we work with teams that they are creating a representative team of their school. And that team represents all the, you know, as many of the voices as possible. And if they can't represent all the voices, that that's their work is to gather those voices. So how do you engage the community? To me, that's a social, that's a socially just way, having dialogue for change, intergenerational dialogue, is what creates change. Because when people can sit side by side or Zoom box to Zoom box, and have a dialogue and an exchange, you start to develop an understanding of that person as a human, not just as a one sided issue, you know, or that that's their belief and this is my belief, but you start building humanity together and seeing their full humanity. So that that's our process at UP for Learning as both, as Evelyn said, helping people really explore their mental models around what youth bring to the table and what adults bring to



the table, shifting power dynamics, sharing power, sharing decision making, sharing responsibility, so that ultimately, the learning, the leadership, the teaching, the community looks different, the outcomes are different.

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 18:25

Wow, there's a lot to that. So many parts, and as you said, this is, conversation means ongoing to me; this is not something like, "Oh, we'll have one retreat and done. Okay, we took care of that issue." This is this is about how we interact with each other long term. So this is not an easy fix revolutionizing the system or as you said, it's not redesigning as you as you reimagine. This is going to be a long term, value driven process.

Lindsey Halman 19:01

Yes. Right. And you can't, you can't, it takes time. And for young people, there is a time sensitive feeling to school, right? Like there's a time stamp on it. So that is another piece as it becomes even more important to have these dialogues, ongoing dialogue so that young people have the ability to express their, to share their values, express our opinions, and come up with ideas, creative ideas for change. And because for adults, like we've been there, done that, been in school, we've got all the time in the world. I don't really have all the time in the world; I want, I want change yesterday. But young people, they have a time stamp on their time in the educational system. And I feel like that is, they are the most valuable stakeholder that we need to be listening to.

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 19:57

Absolutely. Can you give me some examples of some youth-adult partnerships at UP? I just want people to see how this could be applied.

Lindsey Halman 20:07

Sure. So at UP for Learning, we have a variety of programs that we facilitate, along with many customized like in projects for communities in schools. So some of our programs, I'll just explain a few of them. Our oldest program is called Youth and Adults Transforming Schools Together. And that was our original that was actually our original organization, and it involved high school youth and adults coming together to put all of our programs are grounded in the participatory action research cycle, but to identify strengths and opportunities for change, and building off one of those opportunities for change, collecting data, analyzing the data from all the different stakeholders in the community, and then creating change. So for instance, in a YATST project, some of our teams have created reimaged schedules in their schools, or learner-teacher feedback systems. Or they've created youth, youth governance procedures. So those are some that's our YATST program. We also have a program called Getting to Why, which it has actually been recognized as a best practice by the Association for Maternal and Child Health Programs. And so it's a program that is now being implemented beyond Vermont too. In Getting to Why, youth and adults in a community or a school are looking at the Youth Risk Behavior Survey data



for their school, or their area. And that is a that's a survey that almost every state in our country, youth, middle school and high school youth, take part in. And so they're looking at their own data, because I can tell you as an educator, the youth in my school, and myself as an educator, we never saw the data. Um, I knew that we had to take it every two years, but I never saw the data and and how powerful is it for young people and their adult partners to look at the data, look at strengths and opportunities, do you know a root cause analysis, bring that to the community, have a dialogue with the community, and then create action plans for change. So has looked like a lot of different pieces, some around, you know, one school put a food shelf in their school, there have been schools that have advocated for more health education and sexual education in their schools, for drug and alcohol prevention programs, all sorts of I can go into it, there's probably I'm not coming up with specifics right now but there's lots. So that's another one of our programs, and then just a couple others. One is we do a lot of work with restorative practices and shift at transforming school culture through restorative practices. And that is, you know, really a multi year project, of youth and adults really learning about restorative approaches, implementing those over time, and then creating their action plans for change, to really move from a punitive system to a restorative system. And that starts with community building. And then finally, I'll just share one more that has been really a highlight for us also this year is our cultivating pathways to sustainability is again, youth and adult teams from schools coming together throughout the year as a cohort, but then also receiving individualized coaching at their school, around the United Nations sustainable development goals that were launched in 2015 as their framework for change. Identifying again, where are the areas of concern in our community, and what do we want to do to understand more about this issue and then create change? So that has been another one of our really growing areas as well as around the Sustainable Development Goals, because why not? I mean, there's a framework right there for everything. There's your framework for learning. There's your framework for change. So Evelyn, you could probably think of other projects too, but those are just a few.

Evelyn Monje 24:39

That was perfect, Lindsey. Exactly.

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 24:42

Wow, and you really checked all the boxes. That ties into so many ways, the schools can be transformed. Evelyn, both in your efforts at your high school and working for UP, what do you see as some of the obstacles or roadblocks for it to really become youth centered? I can only imagine, but I'd really like to hear it from your perspective.

Evelyn Monje 25:07

Yeah, I think it sort of returns back to what I said earlier about, about this idea of like youth-adult partnership and how it comes from, when you think about any power dynamic, or yeah, just inherent power dynamics between youth and adults, or just any, any in general, the idea that those in power have the ability to shape what things look like. And so in this case, adults have



the ability to shape what things look like. And so I think the the first barrier is the thought that maybe not everybody's ready to dive into youth adult partnership, or has like that, that idea of like those mental models, how do we how to create a culture that is ready to hear from young people. And in my high school, I feel like we're on the brink, we're so close. And in many ways we are there. We have like I connect with plenty of my own educators as peers, as as deep thinkers and Dreamers. And people who want to to do that reimagining. And I know people on the on the leadership team and in the school board, who I connect with, who are also so ready. And then there's that barrier of like, Are you are you with the people who should be like, it's just that that one barrier that I think many people return to is like that idea that that stands out to me as like, children are seen and not heard. And so we have this thing that we're sort of raised to believe. And it's internalized. And so young people might not know or be ready to be the people to speak up, or adults might not know or be ready to be the people to hold space for that, as young people begin to build that confidence. And within my school, as I said previously, I feel like we're there, and we're not. And I think that's for plenty of spaces is there people who who are so ready to do that work in education, but it's so easy to just return to what we've always done. And wanting to acknowledge that is that it is really easy to just go through the motions. And change is really hard. And it's scary, and it's work. But at the same time, I highly doubt people go into education, for the easy work; you're there because you care about young people, you're there because you care about the future. And you want education to be the safest, most incredible place, that there's a sense of belonging for every child who enters the school system, the education system. And so we have to do the work and sort of break down those barriers that are that are in our minds, because there is such incredible change that I've seen, and I'm sure Lindsey and you, that can happen once we begin to rethink and reimagine the ways in which we choose to interact with one another. And the ways we we choose to to look at education and to begin to celebrate youth as as peers and partners and thinkers.

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 28:28

Love it. Yes. I am going to shift a little bit because right now you guys are like superheroes. So I want to let people know the behind the scenes personas a little bit. So Evelyn, let me start with you and let's just do some turbo time questions to get to know you. So who are, these are just rapid fire questions, who are two inspirational folks you'd love to meet?

Evelyn Monje 28:56

Ah, yeah, we have been reading, I have here with me, Emergent Strategy by Adrienne Maree Brown. And I, and another nonprofit I work with, a group of my my pals, we've been talking about about her and just really, that is like that is the dream. And I think just to keep it rapid fire, just how incredibly deeply connected I am to this book. And we're only in the first the first like we're just at the beginning. And my my friends and I have watched some of her Instagram lives together and just like sat and just watched it and just soaked it all in. Just like the magic that comes with emergent strategy and all of the other things that are said. And then the other person I think this ties to my, my Vermont routes, but I would love to sit down with Bernie



Sanders. I would love to sit down with him and just talk because he is like the coolest person. I know like my mom has like seen him in grocery store, or I attended like a college fair and like, got to hug him. And I just want to like, sit and just listen. I would just like to listen and watch him talk. And I could just do that. I wouldn't even have to say anything. I just want to listen to what he says all the time. Those would be my two people.

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 30:18

My daughter actually got into politics because of Bernie. She used to just like issue that it was like it I we have no power. But he changed her whole perspective on that. So I agree. What's your favorite place to travel or where you'd like to travel?

Evelyn Monje 30:34

that is like a very on brand question at the moment with with as I just got vaccinated, and my mom's vaccinated. So we're doing a lot of dreaming. My mom just got back from her girls week in Florida. So I don't know if I have a destination. But we just had a snow here. It snowed in Vermont. So I think I want to be somewhere warm, in the sun, on the beach. That would be that would be my destination is somewhere warm and sunny. And I don't have to do anything.

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 31:06

Yes. What's a TED talk that inspires you?

Evelyn Monje 31:11

I was thinking about this. And I think maybe in hopes of, of just in my own mind, I often think that I have to be the person who's watching all the TED Talks. I don't watch a lot of TED Talks. But I've been in so I am taking Intro to Sociology and one of the past weeks, we were discussing sex and gender. And this isn't a TED talk. But it's been like, it's been such a shift in the way I think and process things as a young person. But we watched The Mask You Live In, and it's about toxic masculinity. And as someone who who has like in high school, like a bunch of friends who are guys in like one of the most like foundational points in our lives, like being able to have conversations with them about like, that's toxic. You need, like, let's let's talk about, like, this can't be the way we act. And I know it's socialized. And it's just really interesting. It's It's such a good documentary movie piece like so as a woman, like being able to acknowledge that and see it and then also find ways to pointed out and to hold space for all of those things. So that would be my not TED Talk, but yeah.

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 32:32

One of our younger teachers brought that into our school and it was like an eye opener for me. It was like, I yeah, I'm with you on that. What's the biggest thing you wish folks knew about empowering youth?

Evelyn Monje 32:46



I think youth are ready. And it doesn't have to be like I started in high school. But I think also like, young people are so ready the day they're born, they're ready. Like we're all human beings and have thoughts and dreams and, and ideas. And we just need the space. And I like I think I mentioned earlier like I'm a summer camp counselor. And the things that come out of our like five year old's mouths I'm like, "You get it, like you have the answers to the universe." And so just like, it's, it's challenging, because of the ways like the systems that we live in and the structures. And young people get it and they want to they want to contribute. So fostering that, that dream, from such a young age in school, at home, wherever you you interact with young people, just knowing that they are so jazzed to have dialogue and to be a be a part of it all.

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 33:47

Yes. And finally, what's one passion you bring to UP for Learning?

Evelyn Monje 33:55

I think it's probably my youth-ness and just being like, I'd like to think, and I know we've talked about this before, but just like in Zooms I'm usually just muted and just like laughing and given thumbs up and moving about. So I think just a joy and and like, excited usefulness and big dreaming. And I think it's something that we lose as we age sometimes, that that like dreaming big. And, and it's something that I think we often check ourselves like, that's too big, we aren't going to be able to do that. But why, why not? Like why can't we think about all those huge things that we should be doing? We should be like redesigning the universe. And that is that's what I think I bring and I'm I try to do my best to bring all of that all the time and it's it's such an incredible space to be with adults who also have that youthfulness, to like really just break down those barriers and be out of the box thinking, and think big, dream big, reimagine as big as you can.

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 35:08

Love it. Lindsey, your turn, who are two inspirational folks you'd love to meet?

Lindsey Halman 35:18

So my like, I feel like my thesis right now in my in my life or just like in general is this question of "What is justice, really?" And so for me, right now, it'd be Bryan Stevenson, who I've just been forever engaged in his work and just has, he's been an inspiration to me. And I actually have three but Bryan Stevenson, and Fanya Davis, who has done a lot of work and restorative justice and transformative justice. And I just, also, her work really resonates with me. And then finally, John Lewis, who I wish I would have had an opportunity to have a conversation with him. And yeah, those would be my three people right now.

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 36:09

Yes. How about a favorite place to travel?



Lindsey Halman 36:13

I would, I don't, anywhere by the ocean, I'm really drawn to the ocean and just the energy of, of being by the water. So whether it's like the rocky coast of Maine, which I love, or right now, I'd think I'd take, like Evelyn, a warm, a warm destination beach, just sitting by the ocean with a book. That would be the dreamiest thing right now.

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 36:42

Yes. A TED talk that you really are inspired by?

Lindsey Halman 36:47

I think like Evelyn, I, I don't have a necessarily. I mean, there's definitely been lots of inspirational TED Talks but a video that I've come back to kind of like Ted Talk ish recently with a lot of teams is Michael Jr. who has his Know Your Why. And we have been using that a lot with teams recently around when you know your why you can walk in your what was purpose, right. So then you know, your what, and you have purpose. And so Michael Jr., break time, Know Your Why it is brilliant. It's short, like four minutes, and it says it all.

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 37:27

Yes. And then that has the musician in it to that sings? And then.

Lindsey Halman 37:31

Amazing Grace?

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 37:32

Yes. So then you get to experience it. I remember just like going oh, gosh, yes.

Lindsey Halman 37:38

Every time I get chills.

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 37:40

Yes. Yes. What is the biggest thing you wish folks knew about empowering youth?

Lindsey Halman 37:49

Yeah, I think the biggest thing people need to know is like maybe to just listen. Just to suspend judgment. And listen, and just sit and listen and learn. I think Evelyn spoke to that. Because I think what builds empowerment is when you feel seen and heard and valued. And if we could just as adults, listen. And and witness, see, value, hear our youth partners, that would build empowerment.

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 38:28

Absolutely. What is one passion you bring to UP?



Lindsey Halman 38:34

I think it's similar to Evelyn, even though I am an adult, and I bring this ability to dream big and imagine the possibilities. I'm never one to like, say like, I just Oh, that was my life as an educator was like, "No, like, that is possible, we're gonna make it happen." And change is messy and change is hard for people. And at the same time change is beautiful. But you have to get in the messy, and the complications, and, and kind of, you know, just experience all those emotions to even get to the possibility. So I bring my my youthful energy to dream big and imagine the possibilities.

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 39:19

And I see Evelyn doing like a total cheer on her Zoom. She agrees with you, Lindsey.

Lindsey Halman 39:27

Awesome. That's why we get along so well.

Evelyn Monje 39:31

Yeah, exactly, exactly.

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 39:35

So let's give you both a magic wand wish, this is how I wrap up my podcast: What would you wish for our schools, in terms of understanding both anti racism and equity overall? What would you wish for our schools? This is something that they're grappling with. And it ties into the hard youth partnership work that you doing. Yeah, I'm giving you a loaded question. I know,

Lindsey Halman 40:08

I guess what I could start, if that makes sense. Um, you know, just last week, or I think it was last week, we we host, we have some of our youth facilitators host monthly racial justice dialogue for to the intergenerational dialogue for any youth or adults who want to attend. It's on the think, the second Wednesday of the month, and they were sharing some content to get people grounded before they went into small dialogue groups. And one of the statistics was that 84% of educators wish, want to be anti racist educators. And one of my youth partners, and I was like, okay, 84% Yeah, like, as an adult, I was like, that's, that's good. You know, like, I was saying that as a number, but one of my youth partners reminded me like, and reminded all of us, where's the other 16%. So what my dream would be is that every educator is an anti racist educator, which means they come in, and they believe fully in, in the talents and wisdom and capabilities of every young person that they work with. And they also believe in themselves, and they have their own agency, that they believe that what they are doing, you know, that they can take the time to be in relationship with every young person, they can slow down, we need to slow, I used to call it like the slow schools movement, slow it down. Take time together. We had the slow foods movement, we need to slow schools movement, maybe that our does. So that



would be my that'd be my wish is that 100% of adults believe that they are anti racist educators, because that's all that at the core is equity. I mean, if that's the case, and and maybe they need some support and getting there, and that so they're provided the support, but that'd be my wish.

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 42:12

Huge. Absolutely. Evelyn.

Evelyn Monje 42:16

Yeah. Sorry, I just want to back that I'm so excited. That's like exactly what I was thinking in my mind is like, this is necessary. This work is so necessary. And so how do we with that equity mindset, how do we bring everybody into it and and reduce the polarization? Because it is so polarized thinking about equity work and anti racism and systems of oppression period period that are just rooted in many of our of the the systems and structures in the in the United States and beyond. How do we bring everybody into this work so that they feel welcome and ready to hold our young people in their own journeys in this work? Because it's, it's just returned to them where necessary, like, it's so essential for us to be doing this, and thinking about the future, and young people are so ready for it. So how do we provide them this space for processing and reimagining and recreation? And that begins with understanding that this work is necessary, and and that we're ready to hold all people in their journeys towards anti racism and full equity work.

Maureen O'Shaughnessy 43:36

Drop that mic. Yes. Aha. And like you said, Evelyn, journey. It's a journey, these unconscious biases. The more I study, the more uncomfortable I become, the more I experience. I'm like, oh, wow, I have so much further to go. It's got to be a journey and not like, "Okay, now I'm completely anti racist, done." Yeah. Yes. Wow. I am so impressed with what UP for Learning is doing. I'm going to put your links in the show notes, because I want people to join your intergenerational conversations and know about the resources that you offer. And I can't wait to have you in the summit, the EdActive Summit so we can really give more resources to get schools transformed. Thank you both for joining us today.

Lindsey Halman 44:28

Thank you.

Evelyn Monje 44:29

Thank you.