

Hummingbird Humanity

an LGBTQ+ owned business

Conversations of Hope, Heart, and the Human Spirit

with Maya Bugg

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Brian McComak: Well happy Wednesday, everyone. I can't believe I have to pause and say happy Wednesday. These events are always on Wednesday, so that's what should clue me in. But in the time of the pandemic and we're all still, everyday feels like the same as every other day. Looks like we have a good group in the room, thanks for joining us. And we'll get started here in just another moment. As Liz said, if you were with us when she spoke up this a moment ago, feel free to introduce yourself in the chat, share your LinkedIn, feel free to connect with others, we want this to be an opportunity for others, for community and connection. And if you're working on something that you want others to share, if you have your own live event or your own firm, please feel free to share the links in the chat as well. Let's all connect with each other and have some community. So with that, I'm going to take down the slide and we will get started. I'm always afraid I'm gonna hit the wrong button. There we go. Well, welcome everyone, happy Wednesday. Thank you for joining us for, is it week 10, Liz? Is that right? Week 10 of Hope, Heart, and the Human Spirit. I am delighted to be joined by my friend and colleague, Dr. Maya Bugg, she is phenomenal, so I hope you all enjoy hearing from her today. Before we dive into to Maya and the conversation we're going to have, for those of you who might be new to these weekly calls, thank you for joining us, we're so glad you're here. Hummingbird Humanity is a consulting firm that I started to work with organizations on creating human centered workplace cultures. I really believe that there's a better way for us to do work that ultimately benefits the bottom line, I realized that we have to think about the bottom line, but I believe that the best way to get there is actually thinking about the humans and the people that work in our organizations as humans first. So in the spirit of that, I started this conversation series where we will talk with professionals who have lots of expertise to offer, but they're also humans first. So this is an opportunity for us to get to know these amazing individuals, understand them as people, and also hopefully learn from them as well. And in the spirit of that, I invited Maya to join me today. So welcome, Maya, happy Wednesday, thanks for being with us.

Dr. Maya Bugg: Hey, Brian, thanks for having me.

Brian McComak: So for those of you who don't know, which I think is everybody except for Maya and me, Maya was one of the last people I got to hang out with before the pandemic. I was Nashville and Maya and I had a chance to work together about 18 months ago on a project and I learned so much from her and also just fell in love with her as a person, so we've stayed in touch and stayed connected. And so we had lunch when I was in Nashville, which is where Maya lives. And it's a little surreal to realize that that's almost four months ago now and we're all still essentially in lockdown, feels like.

Dr. Maya Bugg: Yeah, and it was just about a week or so after the tornadoes we had here in Nashville.

Brian McComak: That's right, it was a tough time for the city. So, Maya has two worlds that she's involved in and actually I'm sure there's more than two, that's the limousine, the power of Maya. She is the CEO of the Tennessee

Charter School Center and she's also the CEO for own consulting firm, the Bugg Consulting Group, where she works in diversity equity inclusion. And we know each other 'cause we were also both members of the Jennifer Brown Consulting team. Liz, as it always happens, there's a phone that's gonna ring .

Liz Roy: It happens.

Brian McComak: It happens, it's okay and fine, the soundtracks of our lives.

Dr. Maya Bugg: Brian, every time I tried to turn off my phone I found the message, it attacks me, it comes back. I don't know how to make it go away. I quit it, I turn it off, always. So bear with me, thank you.

Brian McComak: No worries, well, it just means you're human like the rest of us and that's okay. So we're both members of Jennifer Brown Consulting Community as is Liz who's with us today. Welcome back again, Liz, thanks for being with us.

Liz Roy: Thank you for having me.

Brian McComak: Liz is fantastic. For those of you who this is your first time, you'll get to know Liz in the chat. She will keep Maya and I on track as well and help to make sure that we don't miss your questions along the way. So Maya, I know I have shared a little bit about you. Is there anything else that you'd like to share with the group, about who you are professionally or personally that I haven't covered yet that would be good for people to know?

Dr. Maya Bugg: You should know that I do have three little girls, nine and twins that are six. I have locked my doors in my office in hopes that they do not come into this interview at this time. So if you hear a loud knocking, that's really a part of my world in my life. So you should know that I'm a proud mother from Philadelphia, born and raised and I think some of the rest of who I am will come out in the interview, but just not been doing this work for a long time, it's something that's near and dear to me. It's very personal for me. I've been working with students and companies and organizations for years, typically working on behalf of black in marginalized communities. And I like to tell people this work is very personal, only a couple steps away. So yes, I'm able to say I'm a CEO, I'm doing this and I've got these companies, but just a step away. I have cousins who will call me and say, Maya, I'm very tired of being poor or fill in a blank, or this person is experiencing this issue. So this is all very personal, this isn't hypothetical work for me, this isn't theoretical, this is real work that's impacting my family and other stuff. Happy to jump into it and talk it through today.

Brian McComak: I love that. Thanks Maya, thanks for sharing a little bit more. Well, I'll just go from there. The conversation around Black Lives Matter, which as many, if not all of us are aware, has really reignited in the last five plus weeks in response to the murder of George Floyd. Of course this isn't the name that we often mentioned the most, but there's so many other names that we could mention as well, who have lost their lives or who have been significantly impacted by the treatment of the Black community here in the United States, in particular, something though for me as a practitioner, as I think back on the years of my work in HR or in diversity inclusion, something feels different about this time. And part of that for me, I think is also, if we would have had this conversation two months

ago, I might have suggested that I have a good understanding of the challenges affecting the black community. I will fully own that I understand now I have how much I had to learn, and I'm now aware that there's so much more for me to understand and learn. So, the fact that my eyes have been opened and I'm starting to have conversations that are different conversations that I would have had a couple months ago and I'm leaning into learning and understanding the new ways, which is giving me a different perspective on my role and the reality of what affects the black community. So I think that's why it feels different to me, but I also realize I'm not in the black community and I'm curious for you as a member of the community, as a wife, as a mom, as a practitioner, does it feel different for you too?

Dr. Maya Bugg: It does feel different and I don't have an explanation for why it was this time in this moment, these names, George Floyd, these murders that sparked something. There's been thousands of thousands of black bodies killed and murdered for decades and centuries. So I don't know why this moment sparked this reaction, but I am encouraged by it, I am motivated and excited about it. But on the other hand, I am still pretty heartbroken about all that has happened because at the end of the day, you still have black people who are literally, we are begging for our humanity to be seen. Literally you see pictures of people on their knees begging to be seen as humans. And that to me, yes, there's change and this is different, but we're still in a space where black people are having to mean this. We shouldn't have to put that your life matters on a sign. And so as a mother, you asked how does that impact you personally? I told some of my friends, "Oh, the worst thing I ever had to do this whole quarantine where one of my six year olds accidentally overheard us talking about the George Floyd murder." She literally dropped to the ground and started sobbing. I had to wrap her in my lap for a good 10, 15 minutes. She just couldn't understand it. I don't know where they got this wrong, but they don't call white people white people, they call them light-skinned, which I think is hilarious. So she just wanted to know why are light-skinned people doing this and why would the cops do that? And so I didn't think in 2020, my nine year old would be on roadblocks, you know that video game the kids are playing? And she's put on a, you can change your clothes. So she's pulling up Black Lives Matter outfit or, and changed her name on there to Black Lives Matter. 'Cause 2020, this is what my kids are having to, I have to explain to them. So again, I'm really excited about the spark, I don't know why it took so long. So I do question that, but it is still heartbreaking to have to beg for to be seen as a human.

Brian McComak: Well first of all, thank you for sharing that and sharing your experience. What I've experienced in the last few weeks of just the access to... Access maybe is not the right word, the information that is coming my way for whatever reason is giving me a whole different lens. I'm having people now send me stories and articles and videos and messages and just one after the next is more heartbreaking. And I'm grateful that I get that information because it helps me do the work that I do, but it's also so sad. And I hope that when I think about, well, certainly for you and your husband and your family and your loved ones, I want the world to be a better place, but certainly for your little girls. So hopefully this time and this momentum that's happening today that we can sustain that. And that's something that worries me a little bit, is what we know from past is that these movements have a spike in activity and then they, they settle into something that blends with the rest of whatever we call normal. And this conversation needs a lot of energy for an extended period of time. I'm just curious, how are you thinking about that and processing that? 'Cause you do have this an interesting intersection here as you're a practitioner, you're a parent, you're a woman who is a black woman, you are CEO as a leader, so you have all of these aspects of your identity and a role to play, as well as it affects you and your family in a very real way. So how are you thinking about that, that future of this and how this work?

Dr. Maya Bugg: It is exhausting. As you can imagine, I get a lot of phone calls and texts. Apparently there was a, I think there was a message posted on Facebook that said for white people are checking your black friends. So everyone started texting and posting. And so it is a lot to receive because in my personal space or having these discussions in my we're having these discussions and then in my consulting work, I'm leading these discussions. So it's a constant conversation in a kind of a waiting to see, is this going to persist? There's a lot of fits and starts, there's been a, hey, this

is the name of the moment, we're all gonna rally behind and then it dies down. But as you mentioned at the top of the conversation, something seems a little different about this time. And again, I don't know why. But you see certain changes being made again, they are not massive changes that are going to change behaviors necessarily, but they're symbolic at least. So you see the Confederate statues being taken at the flags being changed. Again, these don't necessarily change my life directly, but they are symbolic in their steps in the right direction. And these are changes we had not seen in other moments like these in the past.

Brian McComak: Yeah, there is momentum. And one of my, I'll say hypotheses, because I am not sure it's one will ever prove one way or the other, but I believe that the pandemic and that we were all at home is certainly a conduit for why people are paying attention. I also would give credit to the millennials who so many of them are now in the workplace who say, hey, this isn't okay for me and they challenge their employers and their leaders. And I encourage those activists into side of companies to keep pushing and keep challenging 'cause I think we need that. So I'm gonna go to you as a professional and we're gonna come back and we're gonna intersect human and work as we go through the conversation. So we've talked a little bit about the work that you do today. I know that some of the people that join our calls are early career professionals who particularly, there's several who I know who joined who are early in deep diversity equity inclusion work, how did you find your path into the work you do and the various roles that you play in your work today?

Dr. Maya Bugg: Well like I said, I grew up in Philadelphia and I was supposed to be a doctor or a lawyer because that's what smart black girls are supposed to do. You're at the head of your class and you were not supposed to go into education. But I had opportunities in high school to tutor, I went to the top public school really in the Tri-state area, would walk up the block to tutor. And the children that we were tutoring would not read simple instructions. And what I can understand is how is it that I go to the top school in literally a block away and you're going to a school in the same district in the same city and you're not being taught to read? And that just didn't sit right with me. And then personally with my family, there was always jokes around the school that I went to, but I would see what my trajectory ended up being based on the quality of my school and some of my cousins ended up having lesser opportunities because of the poor quality of their school. And so I decided that I was going to get off my career path of being a surgeon and to move into the education space. So I went into the classroom first, not with the intention to stay there, but I wanted to get an on-the-ground understanding of the system because I knew after being in a classroom, I wanted to move into policy. We did not want it to move into policies because it takes decades, sometimes centuries to change hearts and minds. What if you have smart policy that are implemented effectively with the appropriate consequences and incentives, you can change behaviors. And if you can change behaviors, you start moving closer toward building more equitable systems. So that's the path that I wanted to be a part of and wanted to lead in. And so there's a balance between my work at the Charter School Center, I'm supporting and moving and advocating for equitable policies that impact primarily black and Latino and low income children, but whatever child decides asked to attend a public charter here in Tennessee, and making sure that they're not disadvantaged by the policies that are moved here in our state. On the other hand, I'm doing through the Bugg Consulting Group, I'm supporting companies and nonprofits across the country really to make their spaces modern and change their systems and policies. And so I like to plan, and so far the plan's working. The classroom has given me so many insights into how systems work and how people are impacted and the different layers of the impact, teachers, families, students, the administrators, the community, the nonprofit, serving the families that are attending the school, it's all connected this web. And so it was a great starting place for where I've come to now.

Brian McComak: Well, I love that you chose to say I have different paths I can choose whichever one has for professionally, but you chose to be guided by purpose, is what I'm hearing of what is the difference you wanna make in the world? Did I capture that?

Dr. Maya Bugg: Uh-huh, you did.

Brian McComak: And I think, and that certainly, of course, you and Elizabeth both know that that's something that I connect with and I've gone on different paths over the course of my journey professionally, but it took me a few years to finally get there. But I said, "I have to do this purpose driven work," and I don't feel like I work anymore, I work hard. And as you all know, it's hard work, but to be in this space, but it's worth it and it doesn't always feel like work. So as we were talking about the influencing the policy, the programming, the experience of students, one of the things that I keep hearing about is, and I've learned a little bit about it and I need to learn and understand more about it, is how the curriculum is curated for our schools and the perspective of history that is taught. And what I know when we were having our prep call yesterday, something that struck me recently was, and actually it was two years ago that it struck me, but it really struck me in a different way recently, is until two years ago, I didn't know about Juneteenth. And it is a significant event, and it feels like something that I should have learned in school and that it should have been honored and I'll say celebrated 'cause I know there's a celebratory aspect to it, but it's also a day to honor and remember what happened and how we got to where we were and where we are today, and it wasn't part of my experience. So I know that since you happen to have this wonderful perspective, can you share with us more about the choices of what happens for history that's taught in schools or not taught in schools? And what, I know you're doing some work to try to at least influence in your local world there, what's taught in the schools and that's in that local area, Nashville, but I just need to know more.

Dr. Maya Bugg: Well, we know that the systems that we are part of are built to maintain into codified white dominant culture, white supremacy culture. So what that means that that's gonna fall into your education system as well. And so what you see in our textbooks and in our curricula is going to be a representation of that purpose. You have to maintain a certain history, and so what you see in our textbooks, the story of America, without the stories of all the people who helped build the country and make America what it is. And so you all can probably name, if we played a game, name the black people you learned about in school, I bet we would all call out the same ones. You all had Harriet Tubman, Martin Luther King and Earl, so on and so forth. And these are critical figures yes, but the push that I'm working on with a couple other parents, in my spare time, personal advocacy for my children and children in our district is what we see right now is that you only hear about and see people of color in particular black folks in the curriculum at moments and points of trauma. So imagine for your child, for my child, sometimes she's the only black child in the classroom. She could go throughout her whole schooling career depending on who that teacher is and how they modify the curriculum, and the only time she and her peers would see someone who looked like her is if they're talking about how her ancestors used to be slaves, or they're talking about how her ancestors were hosed down in civil rights and then maybe if they put today's moment into the history books, they'll talk about how they were, black people had to rise up around Black Lives Matter during a global pandemic. So all the points of trauma and that's just not sustainable, that's not healthy, that doesn't affirm identities of our changing and it definitely doesn't help white peers in the classroom better understand what's happening in society with our black families, Latino families that matter as well. So yeah, you didn't hear about Juneteenth. I didn't know about Juneteenth in my school either. My parents had to have special history books at home to teach me about some of these things. You could technically be in a household as a white person and never have to talk about race. Then you go to school, you talk about it those few times that I just named, you go to college, you don't have to talk about race or racism in college unless you're one of those cool kids who take ethnic studies or ethnic sports, but that's not required. So you get off the pallet, so on and so forth. You get to your workplace and only certain workplaces are talking about this, and you could presumably go through decades of your life and act as though you don't realize you're a raced person and you don't understand the other histories around you. And so we come to a point, you have to figure out when do you say, I didn't know, versus let me go find out? Because clearly, there's other perspectives to be heard and to be known.

Brian McComak: Absolutely, well, and there are two things that come to mind. One is, which I don't think I mentioned to you in our conversation yesterday of I read an article recently, which I need to find again, 'cause I need to post it, which the author was comparing the... And I think it's tough to compare the experiences of groups and it's not about who was impacted more, it's about the tragedy that existed. And then this author was comparing . You may hear knocking in the background from me too, I'm also in a house with three little kids, they are three boys who are six, six and seven, who fortunately love Mr. Brian and they want to hang out with me sometimes. And so if you hear the knocking in the background, that's those little boys. I guess we did talk about this, 'cause the author was talking about how, or made this comparison between the Holocaust and concentration camps, and the first part of the article was talking about how in Germany, the kids are taught in school about what happened and what the Germany's role in the Holocaust, and they understand what that means, and they understand the importance of not returning to that. And the author also mentions that statues that celebrate those individuals who were leaders in the Nazi party, they're banned and so they don't exist because we're not going to perpetuate that hatred in our monuments in their country. But then they also compared, the other officer compared to concentration camps to plantations. And that was one of the moments that really surprised me because of course, everything that I remember reading and learning about plantations were, unless I have seen 12 years of slaves, or I have seen some films and things that don't make it look like a pretty life or a good life. But most of what I remember is these plantations were centers of commerce that contributed to a successful country in the evolution of the United States, the comparison to the concentration camps, which I'm coming to understand, sounds like it's a more accurate depiction of what life was like. It surprises me of what we learn and what we don't learn. And I remember you were sharing yesterday about the plantations and your perspective on that.

Dr. Maya Bugg: Yeah, and you talked about what's being taught in Germany about how you don't wanna repeat that history, but that requires an acknowledgement that something was wrong, that this should not have happened. And I don't think we've had that as a country fully in order to put that in our textbooks and saying we should not have inflicted these injustices in this country on racism. So there's that. What I talked about yesterday is that, my parent work here, the district that we are in, and we've seen it elsewhere too, you have some really bizarre field trips and assignments that are given to the children. And so we had it where our second graders would wanna be taken to a plantation or a field trip. Slavery doesn't come to the standard course of study for Tennessee until fourth grade. They were not going to the plantation to learn about what it meant and the trustees and the slaves voters, they weren't going to frolic. They were going to play and learn about, I don't know, I'm not sure, but they were going to, how about disrespectful? How disrespectful? We had some families who attended field trips to the plantation and the guide said, "Some slaves headed better than the folks, the white people in the neighborhood, they were well taken care of." So you have these narratives that are being shared with students in their families and not one teacher stepped up to correct the statement. So there's bizarre things like that that happened, and this not just a Tennessee thing, that's across the South. I was not used to plantation tours, coming from Philadelphia. So I was shocked when I got down South and noticed like this is a thing y'all go and hang out and have weddings on plantations, why? Like there's blood here, there's there's pain here, what are we doing? Yeah, there's other things that happened across the South, and that are bizarre to me. And fortunately, the district didn't want to start making changes about those field trips, which we appreciate. And so we're working a cheaper way to make sure that the district becomes more inclusive and just more aware of what that feels like to be a black child on a field trip at a plantation when your friends are playing on these sacred grounds.

Brian McComak: Weren't those conversations and that awareness, I understand they're so important and something that is certainly inherent to the work we do as diversity professionals, diversity inclusion professionals. And one of the, I think I hear from what you were just sharing, around the way that those plantation experiences are curated,

continues to perpetuate white solidarity and white supremacy and the way that those, they're depicted. And I mean, one thing just for those of you who are listening, who may not have, or watching, who may not have understood the definition of white supremacy, and I will in spirit of being open and honest until about three weeks ago, I don't think I fully knew that, understood the definition of white supremacy. I always thought it was like, I'm not that person and no, I'm not a member of the KKK or one of those organizations. So I can confidently say that white supremacy is the concept that the world that we live in, certainly in the United States is dominated by whites' images, white stories, white references, white choices. And one of the simple examples that comes to me, but is also point yet, I'm sure without question for children of color, is the crayons like the skin tone color that existed in the crayons for ever until recently, it didn't really match white skin, but that was what it was intended to match. But there weren't colors for children who are Latin X or black, or from other communities of color. And so that choice and decision was made with white, the white supremacist mindset, it's about white as the dominant, and we're gonna make sure that it meets that need, and it doesn't meet the other needs. And so the plantation tours remind me up that as well. Like we're just gonna center it around this story and that's how it works for us. And it doesn't matter if it doesn't work or it doesn't work for others 'cause it works for us. So in the spirit of that continuing the conversation, I know the other thing that you mentioned yesterday was some of the other experiences that kids might have in school that might be, I'll say, well-intentioned activities, that their impact has a very different impact. And this question of cultural awareness and understanding is really sort of inherent there. And would you share a few example, two or three, whatever you have in your mind, of what some of those experiences are that you've seen or you've challenged or said, hey, let's think about this differently?

Dr. Maya Bugg: I'll share one minor, but still impactful I think. I don't know if you used to do those, traced your family history projects when you were a kid. So there'll be some projects, a couple of them said, what are the names of the first people who your family to immigrate to America? Well, that seems maybe harmless, why? I don't know who my ancestors, they were getting that from Africa. So, we have to talk to the teachers and say unless you want me to tell my third grader how to come to your class and discuss the transatlantic slave trade, I think you should change this assignment because it's not very inclusive, it's not inclusive to people who've been adopted, who don't know their family ancestry. And so nobody wants to be that kid who's standing there and say I don't know, and the rest of the group is saying, well, my ancestors came from Ireland and mine came from Germany, or fill in the blank. But if you're not of that mindset of thinking about how to be inclusive in affirming of all the identities in your classroom, that's gonna go over your head, but you're gonna miss that all day long. But think about that seems small, but if those types of things and assignments are being given out semester over semester, year over year, course over course, imagine what that does to students, all students, but definitely to black students and others who will be excluded.

Brian McComak: Yeah, and that was eyeopening to me, it didn't play out in my head that way. When you first start the activity, it seems harmless at the beginning, but there's when you think it through and that cultural awareness, and particularly when you're expanded to other children who are adopted, let's find another activity that works and allows for some research and some history, if that's what's important, but let's find something that the kids can feel good about. Thank you for sharing that. The other one actually, which is not the same question I asked there, but you were mentioning around representation of teachers who happen to be black and whether the experiences your kids will have in school or whether they'll see a black teacher, did you say there was only one in their current school? Did I hear that correctly?

Dr. Maya Bugg: Yeah, there's one and she left as of the end of the school year. So it's very possible that my kids will go through school and not have any black teachers without the, unless the district makes it a priority to add racial diversity at the classroom level, leadership level, central office. I mean, it's usually easier for people to talk about diversity in that way, but it has to be prioritized in order for it to actually happen. Lots of research around the impact of racial

diversity and in particular teachers of color in the classroom and the impact they have on all students, regardless of race. So yeah, we're doing, like I said, you've mentioned earlier, I have two buckets of work, I have way more than two buckets work. that with the Charter Center, the really important work we're doing with clients across the country and then advocating for my own children, and trying to make change in our district here as well. And I can add some more, but we don't have enough time.

Brian McComak: You know, it's so funny when I have people who come to me and they make situations binary like that, or like let's define this. When we're defining humans, the reality is there's so much more, so let's try to avoid the buckets too much if we can. But I appreciate that you advocate for your kids, that awareness of the importance of representation I think is also important. The conversation that you have to have with a teacher around the activity around, let's trace back to who was it, which of your ancestors came to the United States first, and I'll say this with a caveat of, if there's diversity in the room, and who's making those decisions, and so there's people of diverse backgrounds, they get to have hopefully raised different questions and influence the decisions that are made, which I think is powerful and that's important in every aspect of decision making. I also would say the caveat is if there's the one black teacher in the room, it is not that teacher's responsibility alone to have this understanding and awareness. And I realized they may take that responsibility and run with it as best they can because they may want to own that and want to experience with kids and I respect that, but I also challenge all of us to understand more. So it doesn't fall on that one individual. So as I say all of this, it makes me think about, there's these conversations around representation, around equity in schools, there's this work you do about workplace policies, and there's policies around the drive curriculum, so there's this collection of things that are influencing what the decisions that get made, but at that strategic level of policy and initiatives and what we're hoping to achieve. How do you see the connection between what's happening in corporate America and happening in education, and what are your hopes there?

Dr. Maya Bugg: Well, the students that we are talking about grow into adults, and they're the adults that are experienced in these workplaces. So when I'm talking to clients and partners, I tell them, part of my work is to help you close opportunity gaps and make the space more equitable for adults. Because it's super easy for people talk about equity in children, that's a bit safe. It involves places for students, and we want more diversity in the teaching workforce. But when you start to move that conversation towards, we want more racial diversity, gender diversity, what have you, in leadership or in companies, or in our nonprofits, then people get a little uncomfortable on boards, people get more uncomfortable. People don't wanna have that conversation as much, it's not as easy. This other work that I do with clients across the country is really centered towards that. How are we gonna make this space more equitable for everyone who works here? How are we gonna make sure that you can't say, I just didn't know? So we do things like people get stuck in their individual component of this, we don't have racism here, we're all nice people. We love each other, we're great, what are you talking about? they set layer and what we try to push them to do is to yes, have some self awareness, but moving to the institutional level of this, you have policies and practices and procedures that have inequities and exclusion embedded throughout. Some of them, current leadership put in place and some, they've just been a part of the institution, institutional ads, right? So, what I assume is most CEOs are not waking up and saying, you know what I'm gonna do today? I'm gonna make sure I pay all the ladies way less than I pay the men, because I'm really excited to add to the gender pay gap. That's not what they're thinking, but that's what they're doing because it's embedded in their policies . So I help companies to dig through and audit their policies and practices to move and pull out where are your policies, advantage in certain groups and disadvantage in others? Why is that? I helped them understand what is the experience that different team members are having within the organization. And then I helped them think through a strategy, how do you make this so this is not just, for example, we put up a really cool graphic to say Black Lives Matter and put out a statement for George Floyd and now we cut ourselves in bed? So how do we make this stick? How do we make this authentic so that you're not just talking? We get calls all the time, can you come? We really wanna do diversity and equity work. Can you come give us a training? And I just told somebody the other day, you can't train your way out of being an anti-black or a racist organization, you can't train

your way out of that, that's not how this works. It takes a lot of intentionality and a lot of digging. And sometimes, you dig up things you don't wanna know, but you need to know. So that's how I connect it. Babies that we're talking about in these schools are the adults that are getting doors slammed in their faces and being excluded in workplace. So that's the work I'm doing right now.

Brian McComak: Thank you for the work you do, it's important and needed. As I think about something you just said around, you can't train your way out of it, it's not how it works, it reminds me of, I was having a conversation with an HR person and a potential client recently, and I'd put together a proposal which included a variety of steps of the process and it wasn't the whole, it wasn't gonna solve everything. It's like, let's get it started, there are some steps that we have to take, and those steps included conversations and training for the executive leadership team and the HR person came back to me and said, "Our CEO wants to take those steps out of the process and just do the rest of it." And I said, "It's funny you say that because I was pondering this just before we got in our call today," and I said, "Something I wanted to make sure I share with you, well, first of all we shouldn't remove those steps, it's really important that those steps remain, we need the CEO and the leaders to be part of the work, that it has to come from them and they have to be involved in it. I also need us before we sign anything, before we agree to anything, you and I need to meet with your CEO together." Now I stopped short of saying, I'm not going to do the work if we don't have that meeting, the reality of that was the next conversation, I was laying the path, paving the way for that potential conversation of part of, I think my commitment here is, could I go earn a paycheck to do some work? Sure, but I don't do this work just to make a paycheck, I do this work to make a difference. So I think it takes us, people like you and me and others who are saying, I'm not gonna just say, yeah, I'll do that for you, I'm gonna make sure you understand what you need to do, why you need to do it, how we're going to drive change, I'm not gonna help you just check the box, that doesn't doesn't work for me. But it's not easy, I mean, you have bills to pay too I'm sure, so.

Dr. Maya Bugg: Yeah, but I also have to operate with a certain integrity and this work is already hard, I'm not here to help you check boxes and play games around this. It's I have other folks who are ready to do the work, they don't know what the work is yet, but they want to do something, I'm here to support those folks. But if you're just playing games around this and checking a box, as I already said, I got a lot of stuff going on, Brian. I mean, I I got a lot to do. We're gonna do this or we're not. So yes, everything will get figured out. I am not gonna be driven by a check, I'm not gonna be driven by the contract. There's plenty of contracts, so many contracts out here to grab if you want them and I think part of our work is pushing clients to know what good choices are and pushing the envelope so that they understand this is bigger than checking a box. And if you're gonna be receptive to my candor, and then we can keep moving here. If not, have so many other clients and people who want to really get this right, and I'll spend my energy there.

Brian McComak: Absolutely, I really like what you said, of we have to have integrity in this work. But it's the only way I can get in front of the room or have those conversations is to have that integrity. And to your point, we need to be able to have real conversations and say real things. We can't dance around what needs to be said, that's not gonna get us to where we need to go. And I think I said this at the beginning of the conversation as I was talking about the firm that I started, which has parallels to what you're affirming the work you do have. If we do the right thing for the people but we get, these companies have to make a living, have to have to make money, we get that, they have to make money to pay their employees and to do what they do and to give back to their shareholders, but you can do that by taking care of your people and doing the right thing. So I'm curious, and certainly I wanna ask if there's any questions we have. We still have a few more minutes with Dr. Buggy. By the way, I think that's the coolest name, Dr. Buggy. It makes me smile and it's also professional, I love it.

Dr. Maya Bugg: I had never heard of a Bugg until I got met my husband's, what is his name? He emailed me when we were in college, I never opened it up. The internet was so new because I thought it was like a virus trying to attack my system or something, like what is this Bugg thing? So I had never heard of this before in my life, but now I hear the name all the time, so I will hold and keep the name, it's cute.

Brian McComak: It's cute. It's like I'm tough and fierce, but I'm also sweet and kind of cute, I love it.

Dr. Maya Bugg: Kind of cute, I thought I was in a nice day .

Brian McComak: Good for you, I love it, I love it. Well, you look fantastic when you always look, I would love to see when you don't look fantastic. I have a feeling you always look fantastic. Well, I wanna, she's like, I'm not gonna go there, and that's okay. Well, as we've gone to the personal side of course, if there are questions for Maya here around her phenomenal experience and what she has to offer, feel free to ask. But I wanna ask you a couple of just more personal questions as I like to wrap up with some personal questions when you can. So I'm curious, what brings you joy? We've talked a lot about, you have more than two jobs as we covered, you have very intense work and very tough work and very important work that you do, you're a mom, you are a wife, you are a CEO, you have all these things that you have to do that are responsibilities, but what brings you joy? How do you find the joy in your life?

Dr. Maya Bugg: Oh, I love to see my girls playing together, like squealing, tickling each other, like just being silly. That just brings me so much joy in the middle of a really hectic day, if I hear a little squeals and just sometimes I just go up to each other and just hug each other and kiss each other, it is amazing. The other thing that brings me joy is just knowing that in these times of, I don't know, chaos and craziness, that we still have the capacity to find little nuggets of happiness around us. Like rather it's laughing hysterically with your girlfriend, on your Friday night virtual happy hour or dancing, listen to your favorite song or just holding someone's hand that you love, it's like these moments of happiness and you have the capacity to still feel that even though there's chaos, swirly violently at times around us, and that gives me joy.

Brian McComak: I love that. Those moments of humanity in your life

Dr. Maya Bugg: Humanity in just moment of pause. Pause and calm to bring that happiness, goes on all the way.

Brian McComak: So I think it's so easy for us to get caught up in all of the things that are happening and actually with the work that we do, I'm sure for you, you can correct me if I'm wrong, but I have not met another practitioner in the diversity space who hasn't said the last six weeks have been six of the busiest weeks they've ever had, because of this work. I think we all have to remind ourselves that well, one, we have to have to have self care and we have to take care of ourselves, that's the only way we can show up to do the work we do, but then, I actually, one of the things that I chose to do this past weekend was I actually decided not to work this weekend. I just said I'm just gonna take a break. And I had to say, thanks, Liz. And I was supposed to email Liz something, and she didn't give me a hard time about it until yesterday, she's like, "Hey, Brian, did you just," and I'm like, "I just took a break." I just had to take a break, and people understand it, of course. But this is this work and what we need to do, it's a marathon, it's not a sprint and we have to take those moments to pause. So it doesn't look like we've had any questions come in, so as we wind down

here, I'm actually gonna put up a slide for just a second, and then I'm gonna come back to Maya with two final questions. Let me see if I can put this slide up. This is where the technology is, let's see if I can do it. 'Cause sometimes it doesn't work, there it works. So, I just wanna just plug our guests for next week, Heather MacArthur, who is a consultant with the executive advisory. She's also an author, she wrote a book called "Low Man on the Totem Pole", she's an army veteran, I know Heather because she was an executive coach for me when I worked at the Walt Disney company and I learned a lot from her. So I'm excited that, no, this is Maya's slide, this is Heather's slide, that Heather's gonna be with us next week. So I'll hope you'll join us and hear some of about Heather story and some of the words that wisdom she has to offer. Actually, there's an article she wrote for Forbes that has become about coming conversations around racism in the workplace that I have shared many times and I didn't actually realize she wrote it until the last week, I'm like, oh my gosh, this is Heather's article! So come and hear a little bit from Heather. So as we wind down, Maya, I wanna ask what, what is your hope for the future? And as you think about all of these hats you wear and the multiple jobs you have, as you have, you do work that is intended to drive, change your parents, what is your hope for the future? And I'll actually add one part to that, what would you, all of us that are listening or watching, what would you encourage us to do if we are allies or if we're members of the black community, and we're trying to find our way through this tough time? So what is your hope for the future and what would you challenge us or encourage us all to do, who are listening and watching?

Dr. Maya Bugg: I think I would challenge us to all recognize that we're in a very important space right now where the understanding of anti-blackness is bubbling up. And that's not something that we were talking about loudly or publicly, until recently. Well, let me reframe. Certain white citizens and friends and allies we're not seeing the phrase around anti-blackness until recently. And so my challenge is that we sit with that and we wrestle with what is anti-blackness, which is at the base of our culture as a country since its inception, and that's not to discount other racisms and inequities, but there's something very peculiar and specific around anti-blackness that challenge us as DEI professionals to be able to pull that out, specifically sit with it, name it, and then work towards how do you make it something more for you to relax? How do you make it not anti-black? How do you make it, these companies, and these times you're working with, being ready to name it? And so my hope is that we're able to move forward in these conversations, and that work it's equity consultants, that we are helping these companies to not just say they wanna be more equitable in whatever they actually do it. They go from intention to action, otherwise we're all just spinning our wheels here. So that is my hope, my hope is that my girls, when they have their kids, if they decide to be parents, they're not looking at pictures of people literally begging to be seen as humans. We don't need this to move into another generation. So that's my hope.

Brian McComak: Thank you, Maya. I'll share that hope with you, I hope that everyone can see the liminal world that they're seeing as humans. And today, that the conversation that's a really important and it's gonna be important first of all, for a long time to come, is that we have that conversation around the black community and that we continue the conversation, and that we take actions to make change. The last thing I'll just wanna mention to the group is it was sparked by something you said, of sitting with an understanding that the world that we were brought up in and the world that I was brought up in taught me to be racist and taught me to be biased. And that's hard, I don't like that, it feels bad, it feels uncomfortable, and the only way that I can do something about it is to understand that and do my best to make sure that my choices are better than what the world taught me. And I will just share with the group that as I continue to do that, even just saying that, it feels uncomfortable. I don't want to say those things about myself, but I also have to be aware and acknowledge that that's part of what the world taught me. And that's true for all of us, so we're not alone in that but sitting with the discomfort is the way that we're gonna make change. So I thank you for sharing your story, for providing us another story to hear and understand and challenging us to help make the world a better place. Thank you for being with us.

Dr. Maya Bugg: Excellent, thank you, Brian, thanks for having me. Congratulations to you on Hummingbird and everything that you're moving forward.

Brian McComak: Thank you. It's a new adventure, I'm grateful to have people like you and Liz and everyone who joined, so it makes it fun where it's a new way to build community and connection and to make a difference in the world. So thank you again to everyone who joined us today, I wish you a wonderful Wednesday, stay safe and be well. We'll see you next week. Bye, everyone.

Liz Roy: Bye everyone.