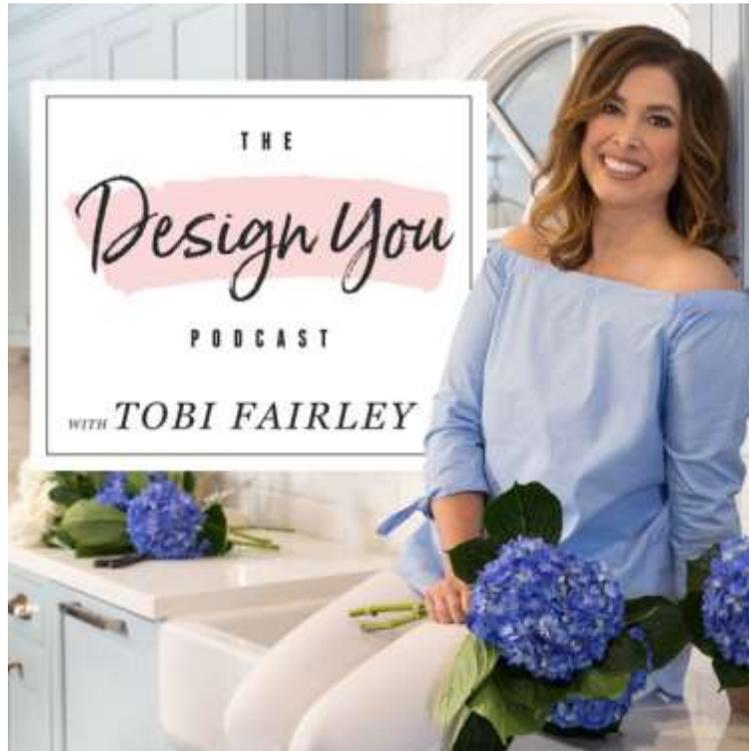


Ep #137: How to Create More Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for All with Trudi Lebron



Full Episode Transcript

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Tobi Fairley

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Tobi: You are listening to *The Design You Podcast* with Tobi Fairley, episode number 137.

Female Announcer: Welcome to *The Design You Podcast*, a show where interior designers and creatives learn to say no to busy and say yes to more health, wealth, and joy. Here's your host, Tobi Fairley.

Tobi: Hello, friends, I hope you're doing well today. I'm recording this episode on November 5th, so by the time you hear it just a week later we may know a lot of things that we don't know right now with regard to the election. For those of you living in the US we're kind of patiently or impatiently waiting, right? So, by the time you hear this we may know a lot of things. It will be interesting to see how the next few days unfold.

I think for that reason today's episode is a very, very timely one. It was just kind of an accident that it worked out to be today's episode. Originally, we had another guest planned and she had to reschedule and so I was already scheduled to interview my Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Coach, DEI Coach, Trudi Lebron and so we did that the day after the election and that's what today's episode is.

Now, let me be very honest with you. This episode talks about politics. It talks about my politics. It talks about Trudi's politics. It talks about creating an anti-racist business. It talks about bringing diversity, equity, and inclusion into your business. It talks about why you might want to do that. It talks about deciding on and defining your core values and letting those be the things that really drive your business.

It also talks about why I decided to show up this year for the first time ever post-George Floyd because of the George Floyd incident really – not an incident, a murder that I decided to show up more than ever and for the first time talk about politics in my business. It was a very conscious decision and not everybody likes that and that's okay. You'll hear me talk all about that in this episode, but I just want to be really clear that this episode is for you if you're interested in learning more about making your business a

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safer space for all people. If you have a membership like I do, a community, courses, any kind of group program, if you just want your social media to more reflect your values and how you want to show up in the world this episode is for you.

Even if your politics aren't the same as mine it still might be what you want to hear and listen to if you want to show up more transparent and more authentic to you in your business, but here's who it's not for. If you have no desire to do that, if you think politics should stay separate from business, I guess unless you're open-minded that you might want to hear a different perspective, but if you absolutely only come to me for decorating maybe for business, but you don't want to hear my politics this is probably not the episode for you. If you think white privilege is not a thing and if you don't think there's a systemic racism problem in America, probably also not the episode for you because we talk about all of those things and I firmly believe that we absolutely have a systemic racism problem in America.

I believe that a lot of Americans, whether they know it or not, are voting more than anything to sustain white privilege and whiteness, not white people, but the culture of whiteness in our country and you may not even know what that means, but we talk about that. Trudi does a great job explaining that in this episode. So, we get into all of those things.

This is not an episode that has to mean you align with my politics, but it is an episode for people who are interested in creating diverse, safe, equitable businesses built on their core values that serve and welcome and make an impact for a certain group of people or all people depending on how you look at it in your business. If any of that sounds interesting to you then this is your episode and you are going to be, I think, very impressed with Trudi Lebron. She is an absolute expert in this work, in diversity, equity, and inclusion work.

She works with entrepreneurs to do this. We tell you in this show how to work with her, at the end of it, and I'll remind you again at the end of the show where to find her, but she just opened a very affordable membership

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if you would like to test this work and start this journey. We're going to tell you how to do that with Trudi and you can check her out. But let's go, let's talk about everything that I'm doing to build an anti-racist equitable business and you're going to hear all about it in this episode.

So, I hope it's one you enjoy. I understand if it's not right for some of you and that is the very reason why we are being so clear about the values of my company, the values for what I stand for in this episode and that I'm being so transparent with you here about what I think matters, what matters to me, what matters in business and what the future of my business from this past May forward will now forever more look like with regard to these things, equity, inclusion, and creating safe spaces to help all businesswomen, creative businesswomen become millionaires, create more health, wealth, and joy. That is absolutely my goal, so I hope you enjoy this episode. Thanks for listening and get out your pen if you want to and your paper because Trudi's got a lot of great things that you might want to take note of. Okay, here we go.

Hey, Trudi, welcome to *The Design You Podcast*. I'm really excited you're here today.

Trudi: Thank you so much for having me.

Tobi: So, we're recording this the morning after the election that is not over.

Trudi: Definitely not over.

Tobi: And as I just said to you, I don't really want to be with anybody yet today because of anxiety, but if there's anybody I would want to be with it is you because of the work we're doing together. So, why don't you tell people a little bit about – because I don't want to get it wrong, like what you do. Who you are, what you do, because there's some nuances and there's a lot of people out in the world that are saying they do what you do these

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days and they really don't. So, kind of give us the synopsis of the work that you do and then we'll get into it.

Trudi: Sure. So, I help entrepreneurs, mostly coaches and service-based entrepreneurs, build businesses that are equitable, that are inclusive, and that really allow the entrepreneur to run a business that focuses on high impact, that their values are reflected through in their business and that they're not doing that at a sacrifice. They're not running a non-profit, they're running scalable, profitable businesses and they're doing it in a way that is just and is equitable and really just creates change in the world.

Tobi: I love it so much. Yes, that's exactly what we're doing together. I love what you just said because I think a lot of – about making a profit because I think sometimes that there's a little bit of a moral thing that can creep in for people about making money and helping people and as if those two things cannot co-exist, right?

Trudi: For sure. That is one of the reasons that I started my consulting practice in the first place a long time ago. I don't even remember how many years ago, but it was because I had come up through the non-profit sector. My professional career pre-entrepreneurial journey was in the non-profit sector and what I had learned in the non-profit sector was that money was bad, there's this narrative that folks are fed about – you don't do it for the money which leads to this really toxic culture of overworking and being underpaid and settling.

It's really unhealthy and then when I started because I was underpaid for so long I was looking for ways to supplement my income through consulting and training and so I started listening to business podcasts and learning about what it means to be a lifestyle entrepreneur and I was like, "Wait a minute, this is a whole different world." What I realized was that that world, the entrepreneurial world really had some great strategies that the non-profit industry could really benefit from, but vice versa. The opposite was also true that this world of coaching, consulting, entrepreneurialism that they could use a healthy dose of some values work.

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Tobi: Yes.

Trudi: You know what I mean? And connecting with mission and impact, and so I set out to do business in different way that I could combine the skills that I had on both sides and now that's kind of my work every day.

Tobi: So good. Okay, so confession, a little bit, I am one of the many, many white businessowners who thought they were on the right side of their thinking and history and love and politics yet in I think – what was it? May, when George Floyd was murdered we suddenly became kind of – well, in a lot of ways we already there, but there was a line drawn in the sand, I think, and a lot of us that I guess I hate to use the term but we sort of we became woke if you want to call it that a little bit more. That's kind of a dangerous word and it gets – whatever, but anyway, I was one of those very people whose eyes were greatly opened to the fact that I should have been doing a whole lot more, I should have known a lot more, I should have been reading a lot more, and I had done a little bit of work around white privilege. I had read a book called *Waking Up White*.

It was definitely something that was in my mind, but not at all to the degree that I'm now focused on this because of that one moment in time and I think that is true for so many people right. So, that's when I found, I saw that great – you jumped on and immediately did a training I think that was at first free, I paid for it. I was happy to pay for it because I found it a few days later.

Trudi: It was. It was always a paid –

Tobi: Oh, it was paid the whole time?

Trudi: Yeah.

Tobi: Oh good.

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Trudi: We made that decision really consciously because we wanted – it was also on a Sunday afternoon when we held it and this is serious work, you know what I mean?

Tobi: Yes.

Trudi: We wanted people to come who were going to make a commitment and we thought that it'd be great to have 50 or 100 people on the call, and in 24 hours we had 600 people registered and most of them showed up live.

Tobi: Now you've had thousands buy it, right?

Trudi: We've had thousands of people buy it and watch it.

Tobi: I'm glad that you made that point because that's part of the work in and of itself to say – I mean, one of the things that I've learned is that there are so many times – and it goes back to what you were saying about people working for free and feeling like they should in some way and us really starting to understand that that's not appropriate. That's really not how – if we believe in equity and if we care about other people asking people to do things for free, not that you and I don't do a free webinar as part of a launch or something, but this is serious, deep work and I'm thrilled that I'm investing what I think is a somewhat significant amount of money in you because I think we show up more when we've got a reason to show up, when we've got that leverage of saying, "I'm paying this money. I'm committed to doing this work with you."

So, I found you at that point and I knew immediately I wanted to hire someone and I'm just that kind of person. I'm like, "If we're going to do this let's do this right. Let's not try to cobble together something and read some books which I did do and get it wrong and pretend like we know what we're doing." I'm the kind of person who's like, "Let me find the expert." I watched your training. I trusted you immediately. I'm like, "This lady knows what she's talking about," and I grabbed one of your last private consulting spots

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for my team and me and we've been working together every month now to start creating equity in my business and anti-racist policy. We're putting all kinds of things in place.

Let's talk a little bit about what that looks like for businesses because I think people didn't even know they needed to be doing this a lot of times, never heard of it before, and now they have. So, will you speak to that a little bit and how that starts to look if you're going to put practices, policies, values really in place in your business because you care about other people and you care about creating safe, equitable spaces for people?

Trudi: Yeah, I would definitely say that this is essential work for every entrepreneur. I was really surprised by how many people were not doing it and that was because, again, I had come out of this non-profit industry where I was doing this work. I had been doing DEI work since 2008 and I showed up in the entrepreneurial space and no one was talking about it and I was like, "This is a problem."

Tobi: Yes.

Trudi: Every leader industry is looking at this and this is going to result in some issues and it has, right? So, what this looks like is really considering how your business plays a role in dismantling racism, how you can use your business to create social change, how you can use your business to – or how you can look at your business and measure the kind of impact that you're actually making and start asking some uncomfortable questions around like, "Who are we making that impact for? Is our business only making an impact and only serving a particular type of person or population? Does that population look like the entrepreneur?" Usually that's the case, right?

Tobi: Totally.

Trudi: Then, start going down this path of why, why is that? What I find, for folks who tend to end up in my community and working with me once they

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realize that it really bothers them and it keeps them up because they're like, "That's outside of my values. I actually believe that we are all equal. I want to help people transform their lives. I don't want to only help white people transform their – "

Tobi: Exactly.

Trudi: "I want to help all people transform their lives."

Tobi: Right, yes.

Trudi: So, that process looks like really getting in touch with your values and I think surprises people. I'm actually interested, Tobi, what you think. I don't think we've talked about this. I think a lot of folks anticipate when they start working with me or maybe another consultant that I'm going to come in and say, "Well, here are the list of things." Like, "We have to make sure you have this policy. We got to make sure that you have this policy and we have to make sure that we diversify your team and then all set, you're ready to go."

Tobi: Right.

Trudi: But I really take the time to do some internal work with people and really help people get in touch with like what are your values? What are the values of the business? Why are you even doing this? And then let's start looking at who are you impacting and taking a little bit more slow steps towards creating more diversity and creating that inclusive space because if you just rush in with a set of policies and a set of marketing techniques that are designed to create more diversity, if you're not prepared to keep that space safe for people it will backfire. It will backfire.

Tobi: Yeah.

Trudi: It looks like taking the time to do some internal work and start confronting your own thoughts about identity and thoughts about how often do white folks think about just being white and what that means and how

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that influences how we run a business, how they run a business. That is important.

Tobi: Yeah, that's probably my favorite thing about working with you. Because you didn't come in – first of all, you come from a very loving space and are very non-judgmental. I mean, you're straightforward and you're direct just like I am and if you're like, "No, that's a problem, Tobi, we need to look at this." You tell me, but you're not coming in with a finger pointing or a judgmental – you're very loving in the way that we just are able to have these open discussions. That, first of all, is amazing and builds so much trust.

I think my favorite part about working with you is what you're talking about because we had just recently back in March, right around the time COVID hit, started on our as a company following some of the things in the book *Traction* and the EOS system and had really for the first time really written down our core values.

So, it was perfect timing for you to come and say, "What are your core values?" But I remember on the meeting when I read those to you you were like, "Okay, those are a start, but they sound very corporate and I don't really feel any feeling or emotion and do you really believe in these?" You really challenged me because as the leader of the company the values have to start with me really or they probably should. You challenged me to get in there and say, "Okay, but what do you really feel? Would this roll off your tongue? Does this hit you in the heart or the gut? Is this really important to you?"

We tweaked our core values and that was so important because those literally are driving every decision we're making.

Trudi: Exactly.

Tobi: I love it. Then, like you said, you didn't say, "Here's a checklist of what you should do." You just started asking me questions. "What do you

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think about your team? How would you like your team to look? How would you like your community to look?” And we tailor the work we’re doing in my community, my programs, my audience to things that are important to me because I remember one day you said to me, which is so spot on, you said, “Okay, Tobi, you need to chill out. You cannot control the universe. You need to pick the little corner of the universe you want to work on, and that’s not everything. You can’t impact everything.” You’re like, “You got to pick the handful of things that really matter to you and we’re going to build this based on those things.”

That was so helpful because those are things that I believe in, that I’ve bought into, that matter to me, that keep me up at night, and if you build your program, your diversity initiative around that it’s the opposite of what you said earlier of, “It’s just a checklist somebody else gave you that you don’t care about.” Because not only can that backfire on you, I think it also is just something that you’re not going to focused on, you’re not going to make a priority because somebody else gave it to you. It might be their values and I think that it’s so important that it’s built the way you are helping me build this where it’s based on something that matters so much to me that I’m not going to forget about it.

We’re not going to go six months and be like, “Oh, did we ever do anything about that scholarship or that diversity – “ No, we’re literally thinking about it in every decision we make and I think that’s because of your wisdom and how you lead people to design something from their heart, from their values, not just something that you sort of imposed on us.

Trudi: Yeah, because it’s not just about – and actually, not that it’s not just about this, but this work has very little to do with just – with only the goal of creating diversity. Because diversity for the sake of diversity is kind of meaningless. That says nothing about the quality of the experience that people are having when they come together. We see that replicated in so many corporate institutions and school systems and businesses where

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there's this diversity initiative and so you have Black and brown folks and non-white folks who work at a place, but their retention is very low.

So, they come, they work for a while, they leave. Or they come, they experience some microaggression, let's say a client comes in, experiences a microaggression and they fade to the back of the program and they don't complete it, right? But those people can say, "Oh, we have all this diversity. Look at all the diverse people we hire."

Tobi: Right, yes.

Trudi: This is about real – the real culture of a business and the experience that people are having when they're with you and the transformation that can occur as a result of that community that you build. That's the goal. The goal of diversity isn't just to like have more people of color around. The goal is that we're impacting people's lives and that we're transforming people's lives so that in the grand scheme of things Black and brown folks can have better life outcomes because right now just the way the statistics are if you are a Black or brown person in America you're just less likely to have wealth. The kind of wealth that a white person would have or to graduate college or to own a successful business or –

Tobi: Have wellness and health and all of the stuff.

Trudi: Exactly.

Tobi: One of the things I was thinking about when you were talking about transforming lives, the transformation has to start at the top and it almost gives me chills, it brings me to tears, it's emotional for me because I'm doing deep, personal work, and not that you told me to, that's just the kind of person I am. I want to know and read and what was I missing? So, I've been doing some really deep personal work and study and I'm the main first person being transformed in this process.

Trudi: Yes.

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Tobi: If we did nothing, if we wrote no policy and we made no scholarship and we did nothing else that work would transform the way I show up in my business for the rest of my life because we're starting with me and transforming me and the way I believe – it may not even be changing my beliefs, but it's articulating my beliefs and noticing where I hadn't had a belief system about a certain thing or hadn't even thought about something. It's awareness, it's all that stuff which is so good.

Okay, so now that it is the morning after the election, November 4th, that we're recording this, it'll come out a few weeks later, but let's talk about the election a little bit because one of the things that – I mean, there's a lot to talk about there, but one of the things that's really on my mind, I think, right now – and this may not even be the most important thing you want to talk about with the election, but let me just say this and I want to see what you think about it.

Because following George Floyd and so many other things happening around that time, Breonna Taylor, there's been so much, the election, so many things and it's been top of mind, but this morning when I woke up I had – it makes me cry in a sense it's a fear that once this election is over no matter who wins the presidency I feel a little disheartened, not losing hope, but just a little disheartened because we haven't seen some of the change we thought we were going to see and of course we're not going to see that instantly. It's going to take years, it's going to take generations for some of this to change, but my fear is that it makes it so much easier to go back to before George Floyd and everybody just kind of fall off of this being top of mind.

I was kind of feeling some grief about that this morning. So, I want to hear, do you feel hopeful? Do you feel like – how are you feeling right now, today sitting in this moment of uncertainty? We don't know what's happening in a lot of ways. We know what's happening in a lot of ways with the senate and some other things. We know how America voted for the most part, let's talk about – I want to hear what you think about that.

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Trudi: I have a lot of mixed feelings and I feel very exhausted today. I was up late last night. I watched as much of the election results come in as I possibly could bear and at some point in the night I was like, “Can we just turn something else on?” There’s not going to be a resolution here. I have to like disconnect.

So, there’s on one hand it’s really scary that things are even as close as they are, to me. The fact that we have so many people in the United States who can vote for a person who late in the evening last night can like call for votes to stop being counted. I mean, just that – even if you ignore absolutely everything else which you can’t, but even if you could, the fact that so many people – there was a point this morning where I said to myself, “I wonder how many people saw that speech last night and wished they could change their vote.” You know, and like wished they could be like, “Oh, I can’t believe I voted for this person who is now saying the rest of the votes don’t count. I’m going to call to stop counting votes.”

This is supposed to be a person in a position who is the ultimate defender of democracy and that is exact opposite. So, the fact that we have so many people who are like cool with whatever else that can vote for – just like, how is that – again, there’s so much more egregious acts other than that, but I think that is such a neutral – I feel like that’s – if we can’t agree on anything else, I would imagine that we could agree on the fact that yes, actually, everybody should be able to vote and have their vote counted. We’re not even there. We are not even there and that is scary. That is very scary to me.

Tobi: Right, because we never saw that even with the other close races, the Bushes, and the Gores, and the Kerrys, and all those other races never did we see anybody on either side say, “Let’s stop right now while I’m ahead and not count all the people that voted that we have no idea what their votes are right now.”

Trudi: Exactly. Exactly. Then there’s this fear around what if it doesn’t go the way that I want it to go, you know what I mean? I think it emboldens

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people to show up in the world in ways that are outside of – it's so hard to even put words around it, but like what we would have hoped to be American values.

Tobi: Yeah, outside of the law. I mean, for a law and order candidate showing up outside of the law and perpetrating and harming other human beings, right?

Trudi: Exactly. So, it's really scary that that is the leadership that so many people vote for. Regardless of where you fall on the issues, regardless of all of that just the behavioral piece of this person is so unstable I can't believe that we have so many people who are like, "Yeah, I'm actually fine with the way that he behaves because I want my taxes to be lower, or I'm pro-life," or whatever, again, whatever the issue is that those issues are more important than people's safety and the fundamental ideals of democracy. I feel like those are things that everybody should be able to agree on.

Then, it brings me to this place I think about what does that mean for me? The fact is that whether or not Trump is re-elected or Biden is elected, just because Biden is elected does not mean that everything gets fixed. I think that is a very important thing to understand. I think that the fact is that despite what the outcome is our day-to-day realities for most people our day-to-day reality like what we do in the morning when we wake up and go to work and pay our bills and take up our children for most people there's not like a daily impact of who wins the presidency.

Tobi: Right.

Trudi: What we do have a daily impact on is the systems that we interact with on a daily basis. So, where we work has a much more significant impact on our quality of life than who sits in the presidency, for example. Or who our leaders are, like the people in our community, who our mentors are those things have a much more significant day-to-day impact on our

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lives which is why I do the work that I do because I work with leaders and I want leaders to understand that they have an opportunity.

I hate to put – I hate to use the word obligation because that is a lot, but for me I certainly feel an obligation. I think a lot of my clients feel that they have an obligation to show up in a certain way, so I want the folks I work with to be able to be supported so that they know that they can show up in their work and in their lives and create change for other people. As a result they are – in the way that you described I become the mentor for my clients. Their day-to-day life is impacted by the work that they're doing with me.

So, I try to – despite everything that's happening in the election and all of the very important things, I try to come down to this place of like, well, what do we do tomorrow? What's [inaudible] tomorrow and how do we impact a person's life tomorrow?

Tobi: Yes. Yeah, and I think the flip side of my fear of does this make it easier depending on what's happening in this election no matter who wins kind of it's so close we know by that vote, the vote for Trump how many people are okay with a lot of things like you said and even though I'm fearful of does that make it easier for people to kind of just forget about this work or sweep it back under the rug or whatever, for me, it actually calls me to more action.

It calls me to do what you just did and I love how you said that because I hadn't exactly gotten there yet to articulate it, but the fact that you said where we work and our mentors in our community because I was thinking a little while ago we've got some serious work to do. Voting is important, but where are my boots going to be on the ground doing this work the next 4 years, the next 20 years?

Trudi: Exactly.

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Tobi: That's where even just putting politics in my business is not enough for me if I'm going to be authentic and not feel myself that I'm being a hypocrite. That's where you kind of even bump up against some internal conflict sometimes because that's like me calling myself out for, "Okay, Tobi, how much time are you going to give? Are you going to give time weekly to causes? Are you going to go sit and mentor people or do something? How are you going to show up?"

I think as a white person it is so easy for us to just not do that because we don't have to. Because like you said, of all people our day-to-day isn't changed, it's a whole lot – it's really easy for us to ignore this. So, it takes conscious effort and decisions and determination and commitment and recommitting and telling some people to hold you accountable. It takes a lot of that. So, I'm anxious, I'm also excited to get my journal out again this week and dial back in and say it's in some ways easy to vote in a presidential election, it's not easy to take your time and your money – it's even easier for me to just pay my money than a lot of times my time because a lot of us say we're so busy and time's our most precious resource. But how am I going to go show up in the world? So, I love what you were just saying.

One other thing I kind of want to bring up here which is maybe controversial for some people, but I mean that's what we're talking about, we're talking an uncomfortable subject, right? And you told me earlier you haven't read the book *Caste*. I just finished it. It is deep. It is heavy. It is dark in so many ways which is the truth about the history of America and other places that nobody is talking about. It compares the American caste system that nobody wants to call a caste system to Nazi Germany and to the Indian caste system.

So, it's really fascinating, but I just happened to finish the last section, that's all I hadn't finished, two days before the election and it answered so many questions for me because I think she's exactly right. When I'm asking the

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question, why? Why do these people support Trump? Why do these people vote against what looks like their own self-interest?

The interesting thing she talks about is how basically what we're looking at is people voting for whiteness over anything else. So, when we're looking and saying, "Well, they're voting against their own self-interest about healthcare or about economics," the argument is yeah, but their main, number one self-interest as a white person, especially a poor white person is to stay one level above the poor Black person or the poor Hispanic person or any other person and so a vote for caste because of the privilege that comes along with being a part of the dominant caste becomes people's biggest motivation.

They will even die or go hungry or other things to preserve that and it shows how then when they find a mentor like a Donald Trump – I mean, anybody, but any mentor that they can get behind that's in their caste, the dominant caste, that they almost start projecting their own – it's not even just Trump projecting narcissism on them, they project their own narcissism back almost on to him and they start to almost feel like his money is their money and his bold actions are theirs. It's so fascinating to me, but at the end of the day I kind of believe that what we just saw was a vote for whiteness above all else. I mean, what do you think about that?

Trudi: Yeah, I would definitely say that's true and I do want to make the distinction for folks who may not understand and just not familiar with the terminology, that doesn't necessarily white people. White people – Joe Biden is a white dude, you know what I mean?

Tobi: Right. I mean, I'm white.

Trudi: Even though Kamala is not, obviously, so you can make that – let me just side note really quickly, I heard, I could not believe that I heard someone on the news say that she was voting for Trump because if Biden died then Kamala would be the president and Nancy Pelosi would be – like

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two women would be leading the country and she wasn't comfortable with two women leading the country.

Tobi: Yeah, which supports the whole caste thing, too.

Trudi: It blew my mind. So, I think that this is definitely a vote for whiteness and whiteness meaning the culture of whiteness which includes this idea of rugged individualism. Like it's all about me, it's all about me and mine and my family and what we have and where we are, our status and place.

Tobi: Our money, how much more money we can get or save for ourselves, how we can get a better foothold or positioning just for us. Everybody's on their own. Even you see other groups of people which is what the whole book is about also holding up the caste system just like we see like Cuban Americans in Miami voting for Trump because at some level they believe that individually they will end up with more money or more opportunity on their own for their family like you just said with him versus Biden or something.

Trudi: Exactly.

Tobi: That kind of concept. It's fascinating.

Trudi: I think that's exactly right.

Tobi: It's fascinating – which we can't remove ourselves from it if we care, but if just for a moment you could kind of be the watcher and look in on it and just look at this concept and the data it's mind-bending, it's hard to get your head around but I think she's exactly right. I think at the end of the day the threat to white privilege – and I mean let's even be honest, like I just said, I love to be transparent. I'm white and I mean it's true that we're not trying to take things away from white people to create equity for Black people necessarily, but you've got to change some things if this is important to you. You've got to show up differently. You've got to be willing to give more of your money if you're going to elect Biden to help other

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people, to help the world, to help the country. So, yeah, you have to be willing to make some sacrifices.

Trudi: The irony there, Tobi, is that that doesn't even affect that many people. That kind of change doesn't affect that many people and I think that the brilliance of the lie is convincing people who are actually negatively impacted by some of these policies – let's make it super concrete. So, let's say you are a lower-class white person who is a Trump supporter because you feel like Trump is going to save us and trickle-down economics and create more jobs and all of this. If you can't pay for healthcare and there is no Affordable Care Act you're negatively impacted by that policy. You're not making enough money for it to really impact your taxes at all. There's not really any other positive thing happening other than your ability to identify with this person and hope that you're going to have some kind of positive outcome from it.

So, you're negatively impacted by it. It's only a very limited number of people proportionately who earn hundreds of thousands of dollars –

Tobi: Yeah, \$400,000 or more.

Trudi: Yeah, who have to give more, like, too bad.

Tobi: Well, and as I told my mom yesterday because she and I are of the same politics and I said, "I saw a thing that broke down the actual numbers of the Trump versus the Biden tax policies and it showed that for people which would be my husband and I and our combined income, for people making over \$444,000 a year it's a \$3,000 difference."

Trudi: Yeah.

Tobi: Okay, \$3,000 a year. I'm like, I would gladly give. I mean, I give more than that all the time to charity and the things that are important to me. That is such a no-brainer to me if I'm making \$400,000 or more to give an extra \$3,000 a year so people can have healthcare and safety and all the things

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that we're talking about that it appalls me that we're having this discussion of like a bunch of stingy individualism and the kind of people saying, "I might give money, but I don't want you to tell me how to give it." I can't get my head around that.

This is not an episode against Trump supporters. That's not what we're trying to do here. I'm trying to ask you to look at your value system and say is that how you want to show up in this world? Do you want to be on that side of this line or the other side? Do you want to be on that side of history or what I would consider the loving and kind right side of history? That's what we're talking about here is for people to look at that and I think what's so important about the work you do is we can talk about the election all day long, we can all have our opinions, we can get mad about it, but as we just said that really is not where the impact comes from. It's what you're doing in your business.

How are you running your business? How are you showing up? How are you mentoring? What kind of leader are you? Everything.

Trudi: Right, exactly. That's exactly right. What kind of leader are you? What kind of leader do you want to be? Where are the opportunities? I was telling someone the other day, I don't care if you have one person on your email list, I don't care. You have an opportunity to create a change and that seems small and it's like, "Oh, no big deal." I know what it feels like to be the entrepreneur who feels like they're talking into the void and is anybody listening? Is anybody even opening my emails?

Tobi: Right.

Trudi: But you have to keep showing up and you have an opportunity to run your business in a way that creates real change and that creates change for other people and also changes your life as a result of that, that you become a stronger leader. That you become more connected with your community. I always give a disclaimer when I'm working with people, the work is not just about your business. Like you said before, it changes you

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and you start to just see all the ways that you're like, oh man, things have been set up to privileged certain types of people and if we can make small modifications here and there, and maybe larger modifications in other places we can really do something special.

Every day there are more and more people coming to entrepreneurship, coming to online business, and so just imagine if everyone took just a few steps it could really change the culture.

Tobi: Totally. Okay, so before we wrap up I want to talk about two things. So, the other thing which after today you're going to be like why is that my schedule? But you're about to also spend two more hours with my team and me because we were supposed to do this last week and we had a change of schedule because we're about to do a lot of the deep work we've been leading up to the last few months. We've been working with you in sessions and now we're going to sit down and have this strategic planning session and make some key decisions of what anti-racism actually – the policies and the processes look like in my business and how we're showing up. We're working on a scholarship, we're doing some other fun things.

So, that's happening today and we can address a little bit of some of the ideas of things we might be working on because people are like, "Well, what do you mean policies?" But the other thing I want to talk about, too, before we wrap up is having the courage to show up publicly in doing this work because that's been a really interesting experience for me and I've been really, really happy and felt good about how I showed up in the last few months especially with regard to election.

Since George Floyd, I immediately, even before I knew you, I knew I had to take a stand. I knew I had to say something the very day a lot of that stuff was coming to the surface and I did publicly on Instagram and some other places. Then I decided for the first time ever in my life to be public about my political candidate this time. I decided to talk about it. Now, what I don't do is spend a lot of time in the negativity and the disparaging of the president or any of that because that doesn't really move me forward, I

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don't think in progress, so I stay focused on the work I'm doing and what I'm for most of the time. Occasionally I talk about what I'm against when he does something crazy like abolished DEI work in the government.

That kind of stuff makes me crazy and I do talk about that and why, but mostly it's just been me saying, "Here's what I stand for." It's been a really fascinating social experiment because I've had so many people reach out to me and say, "You inspire me. You're so courageous." And it's not about me, I'm not doing it to get attention, but I've had an equal number of people and even some people in my community say, "You called me a racist," which I didn't. I just said who I'm for and made them feel bad or that said, "I can't believe you're doing."

So, the night before last, before the election, I had a friend who's a gay but white businessowner send me a private text message, I haven't heard from him in a few years and say, "I just need you to know how important it is to me that you're doing this work and you're speaking up and I really admire that." Probably an hour later I had another lady who was a former client text me wanting me to watch an evangelical sermon telling me that I'd be glad I watched it and wanting me to defend all the reasons I was for Biden. Of course, she didn't like my answer. This happens, like both sides of the coin happening on my phone in a text message within an hour of each other and that's what it looks like when you start to do this work and you start to show up.

I think a lot of people are afraid of that. They're afraid it's going to kill their business, they're afraid they're going to be harmed or it's scary and so while we're working on putting policy in place you can't keep it in secret or it doesn't work. You have to be willing to show up. So, can you speak to that a little bit and how you help people show up because you do have to have some courage. I mean, you're going against the grain if you're a white person standing up for this which is not going to be – I mean, I live in Arkansas, the way I show up is not how my neighbors are showing up, it's not how a lot of my community is showing up.

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Trudi: Yeah, for sure. So, I think that the first thing is to understand that this is about creating – the reason that you want to show up in the world and kind of be vocal is because if you're creating a business or a community where your goal is to create change and to bring in people who have diverse backgrounds and not just racially diverse, but gender diversity, sexuality diversity, all kinds of diversity, you want people to know that when they get there they are going to be respected and cared for and that it is going to be a safe space for them.

So, if you don't have a safe container and you welcome those folks in, you're going to have a lot of issues in your business in terms of the client culture and people not wanting to be there anymore. Just all kinds of stuff. So, you want to be explicit about what you're building so that people know just like business 101 you want to attract and repel. Attract your ideal folks and repel the folks that are not your ideal customers.

That means that you don't want to attract people who have views that are so different – I'm not saying that you can't have people who Democrats, Republicans, Green Party, whoever –

Tobi: Exactly.

Trudi: That's fine, it's just a matter of can all those people who show up, do they understand that the rules in this space is that it's an inclusive space and that there's no tolerance for certain types of language and that you are going to be supporting people – that you support the movement for Black lives and that that's important. You want to create that container so that people know whether or not they want to be there because the fact is that there are people that you don't want to be there because it will be disruptive.

Speaking up about it doesn't mean that you have to become the next social justice activist, you know what I mean?

Tobi: Yeah, influencer.

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Trudi: Yeah, you're not changing your business so that now you're teaching DEI. No, that's not the point. The point is just that it's clear so that people don't have to wonder where does Tobi stand? Am I going to be safe in Tobi's community? I want to know, because people are looking.

This is just something that we know. This is a fact. I would say this has changed and increased over the last definitely 12 months, but it has been a trend. People are looking and considering the places that they're doing business with whether they're hiring a coach or a mentor or joining a program or purchasing a product or moving into a certain neighborhood or whatever, they're asking questions like, "What are the values of this community?" They want to know that before they're investing their money because they want to invest money with people whose values are aligned with them and more importantly where they can come into community and be safe and honored and show up fully.

Tobi: Yeah, absolutely and don't you think that we have hit a moment where if you're not willing to say where you stand on that you're going to be lumped into the group that people – like for me, if I don't stand up and say what I stand for a lot of people are going to assume I stand for the opposite. When I did start speaking up I did have a lot of Black friends and other people say, "Wow, I kind of am pleasantly surprised because I assumed you felt differently. I assumed you aligned with other politics." They were making a lot of – even one of my people on my team, April, she said, "I knew you were Christian, I thought you were from Arkansas," she's like, "I even didn't really know before I got to know you where you stood."

There's the danger of being quiet being – like all of those things. So, if you're okay with that then you don't have to speak up, but you just know you're going to keep attracting a certain type of people and you're going to accidentally be sending a message that may not be the message you want to send to everybody else.

That's where for the first time ever I felt like we had hit a moment in history and in business and in time where I wasn't okay with people assuming that

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I stood for something that I didn't. So, if I'm not willing to stand up and say what I do stand for knowing that it's going to repel some people then I'm just kind of taking the brand, the assumptions, that story, that narrative that other people are writing for me because I'm not writing it for myself, right?

Trudi: Yep, exactly. I think that's really important and there are people who are listening to this podcast even who are listening to this conversation and they're like, "I can't see myself doing that. I don't feel compelled to speak up about these things. I don't feel called. I don't see how it impacts my business." I'm fine. My work is not in convincing people how they should or should not show up, however, there are people listening to this podcast episode and thinking to themselves, "Yes, I want my values to be more clear. Yes, I do believe in these things. I just spent hours and hours phone banking for whatever candidate, but if you look at my business no one will ever know where I stand on these issues and I actually want to be more fully seen." If that's you, this is the work. This is your path.

Tobi: Yeah, and it's kind of the same argument of people, of course, the minute I started speaking up people were like, "You need to be quiet. I didn't come here from politics for you. I came for decorating," or whatever. I'm like, "No, I'm not going to be quiet, actually. I'm using – this is my space. You don't have to come over." But I think that it's not that we're trying to make business political, it's just that we're leaning on our own personal core values to show up authentically in our business and in the world and really make the biggest impact we can and if you're not the side that I'm on, that's fine, too.

I mean, if you're like, "No, all my customers are this. I'm this," then fine, take a stand for that. But we're not saying which side of the coin to come down on. We're not telling you what to do, but you've got to decide if you want to show up and tell people what you stand for or if you just want people to decide that for you.

Trudi: Exactly.

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Tobi: So, last thing, because I know we've taken plenty of time and I'm going to do another episode later where I kind of give an update on the actual work – that's just a solo show of the work we've done and that process, but we're about to sit down together with my team in just a minute and we're looking at various things.

So, when people start to say, "Okay, yep, I'm in. You convinced me. I want to take a stand, I want my values and my business." What are the areas they look at? We can look at who we employ, right?

Trudi: For sure.

Tobi: We can look at where we spend our dollars, too, which I think is a huge one.

Trudi: Yep, that's a big one. The type of culture that we build in our community, so if you're in the kind of business where you have communities that clients are interacting with each other, it's like a group learning space the container that you build, so what are your community standards? What do you do when people violate community standards? How do you teach people about those standards? What you do to teach people how to show up in support of one another, that's a big place.

We also look at things like marketing strategies, outreach strategies, collaborations and partnerships, affiliates, sales process, a corrective action process. Like if you have team members, how do you coach them if they're not performing well? We don't just dismiss people. We want to think about how we support people.

Tobi: It's inherent in every decision you make, so literally HR decisions, not only the hiring, but like you said how you deal with people that are struggling or not hitting their – whatever their role or how you communicate with them, the community itself. We're even looking at my content and my courses because as you said earlier, if my whole community just looks like

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me then I'm not really trying to help make millionaires out of all women, I'm just trying to make millionaires out of white women, accidentally.

So, if I want to make millionaires out of all women, all creative women then we got to look at okay, what other things are Black and brown people bumping up against, Tobi, that you haven't even addressed because you see it because you didn't never have to encounter it because you're white? We're looking at even things as simple as, Tobi, every slide in every one of your courses only shows white people and white examples, do you think that's going to really make a Black or brown person go, "Yeah, this is representing me"? No, it's going to be like, "This white lady's telling me how from a white perspective to build a white business and I can get some things from her. I can get a lot of things from her, but it's not fully representative or helpful in some ways about how I go then build my own business."

Trudi: Right, exactly.

Tobi: We're looking at all of that. Yeah, it's so good. Okay, well, thank you. Anything else that you want to share with people? For sure let's tell them where to find you. You're obviously brilliant. Look at what you've led me to do in such a short time. But yeah, help them know where to find you.

Trudi: Folks can find me over on Instagram where I'm hanging out more these days just @TrudiLebron and Instagram is fun because I'll drop lives and kind of go and do my educational rants and stuff. So, come hang out with me on Instagram. If you're interested in learning more about the work that I'm doing we actually just opened a low-cost, pretty accessible membership program for people to start this journey around equity-centered coaching and leadership.

So, folks can just check out our website at trudilebron.com/thecollective and all of the information is there. It's something that I definitely suggest that people go take a look at if you're looking to just dip your toe and not ready to dive in head-first. I think that's a great place to start.

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Tobi: And you have a podcast, too, right?

Trudi: Yes, check out *Business Remixed* which is my business podcast and then I have a podcast with my friend and collaborator, Louisa Duran, and that one is called *That's Not How That Works*.

Tobi: I love that one. If you're like me and you're like, "Hmm, what do I think about this book or this person or this policy?" That's where y'all get into the weeds and it's fun. Y'all don't always agree on everything. It's interesting. It's really interesting to have those two perspectives. Well, thank you so much. Again, it's just been a joy working with you. I've grown so much. You've taught me so much and we're just getting started.

Everybody listening, I will be doing an update soon to get more into the weeds. If you're like, "Tell me more what you mean about investing," where you invest your money or how you show up or how you build your community, as I continue this work with Trudi I'll be sharing more of that in a pretty transparent way so that you guys can know and ladies can know more if this a journey that you want to get on and if you want somebody like Trudi to help you do this work.

So, thank you. Thank you so much.

Trudi: Thanks for having me. Thank you.

Tobi: So fun. I could talk to you for hours. And thank you, honestly, it is a huge gift that you're giving us your day after election when you should just be curled up drinking tea and taking a nap. So, I'm super grateful for you in so many ways and I'm so glad that you were here.

Trudi: Thank you. Take care.

Tobi: Okay. Isn't Trudi amazing? She's so calm. She's so wise. She's so knowledgeable. Those are all the reasons I work with her. I love working with Trudi. I trust her so much and I'm just thrilled that she is my guide and

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my team's guide on this journey. Let's just be clear, I'm not doing this work by myself with Trudi. My entire team is committed to this work and my whole leadership team is on all the meetings with Trudi and they're invested and part of making all the decisions for our company and who we hire and how we show up and things that we're changing about our work and our programs. So, yeah, it's really exciting.

I will be back soon as I said with another episode getting more into kind of the nitty gritty, the weeds of what we're doing, the description of our anti-racist policies and initiatives because not only do I want you to know about that in case you want to do that work in your own business, I want you to know about it because I want to hold me and my team accountable to actually make a difference, make these changes, and show up in the way that we have decided aligns with my core values, the company's core values, and our team's values.

So, I want you to know that so that we absolutely have that accountability going forward and that we're transparent. For those of you who were moved by this episode who want to know more about Trudi or who have questions for me, I'd love to hear from you and Trudi would too, so check us both out on Instagram. You can send us direct messages there. If you have issues with this episode, if you don't like it, don't send me those DMs. I'm not here to have any arguments and neither is Trudi.

As she said, her job is not to convince people that they should do this work. That's for you to decide. You get to decide what your values are. You get to decide if this is important to you and we're not saying that you should. But if it's something that interests you, we would love to hear from you. We would love to have a conversation with you, either of us. I'd love to tell you more about Trudi if you need to know more about her and my experience working with her and of course she would love to help you on this journey.

Check us out on Instagram, listen to either of Trudi's podcasts, check out her website, she is 100% an expert in this field and you will be in great hands if you follow her lead, if you work with her. If you even just consume

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her amazing free content and podcast, you'll get so much from her. So, thanks for listening today. Thanks for being open-minded or digging into this work. It's not easy work, y'all. It's uncomfortable. It's not easy to do the right thing. It's not easy to show up differently. It's not easy to stand up for certain things in our lives when maybe our friends or our clients or our relatives don't and so for that I applaud you, I'm with you, I'm here to support you if you need support. I know that in the long run you will have so many more blessings from choosing the authentic path for you than you have negatives from this process.

You can do it. You're strong. I'm doing it, too. Let's do it together. I'll talk to you soon. See you next week, everybody. Bye for now.

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