

Women in Business and Technology

Transcript of Episode 020 - Navigating the Women in Tech Regatta with Cynthia Tee and Melody Biringer

Featuring: Melody Biringer, Fethya Ibrahim, Cynthia Tee

Summary: Recorded at Seattle's Women in Tech Regatta, Colleen and Sonia connect with the event creator, Melody Biringer to learn more about her motivation to curate a week of educational events, workshops, and conversations. Then, Colleen interviews Fethya Ibrahim, the secretary of the local professional chapter of the National Society of Black Engineers. Sonia interviews Cynthia Tee, the former Executive Director of Ada Developers Academy and an Advisory Board Member for the WiT Regatta.

Find audio and more information at Microsoft.com/WIBT

Colleen O'Brien, Sonia Dara

(Music.)

NARRATION: I actually think that bringing panels together, bringing forums for people to meet other people who aren't like them is an important part, because inclusion starts with you.

(Music.)

NARRATION: Microsoft Build is our ultimate annual developer event, where the most innovative minds in tech meet to get inspired, create tomorrow, and code the future.

The conference will take place from May 7th through the 9th at the Washington State Convention Center in Seattle, Washington.

Programming will focus on artificial intelligence, machine learning, mixed reality, cloud, data, and other emerging concepts.

For more information about the event or to register, head to Microsoft.com/Build.

(Music.)

NARRATION: You are listening to the *Women in Business and Technology* podcast from Microsoft. In each episode, you will hear from women in amazing technology and

business roles, as well as male allies who are helping make the industries more inclusive, and bringing you tips on how to build a successful career in a supportive community.

Welcome to *Women in Business and Technology*.

(Music.)

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Welcome to Episode 20 of *Women in Business and Technology*, I'm Colleen O'Brien.

SONIA DARA: And I'm Sonia Dara.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: And we are recording on site at the Women in Tech Regatta. This is the second annual WiT Regatta, and it's a week-long gathering to connect women in tech to mentors, peers, and resources. So you can imagine that we are having a great time here.

SONIA DARA: So we're here recording at The Collective, which is a brand new urban clubhouse that just opened up in the heart of South Lake Union, which is actually the tech neighborhood here in Seattle. So right down the street is Facebook, Amazon, we have a Microsoft office nearby, Snapchat -- just very tech-centric area, so perfect fit for the event tonight.

So The Collective is a great clubhouse where you can come eat, drink, chill, you can network with people, or there is even a bouldering wall if you wanted to get in some fitness.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: And Sonia and I are incredibly honored to be joined here by connection engineer, startup junkie, and the creator of the WIT Regatta, Melody Biringer. Melody, welcome.

MELODY BIRINGER: Thank you. This is so fun.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: I know that you are the creator of this event. Why did you decide to make it happen?

MELODY BIRINGER: Well, I was on the board of Women in Tech, a nonprofit in Seattle, about five years ago. And for the last 20 years, I've been supporting women entrepreneurs, but I've been hanging out on the Women in Tech board just kind of seeing the ecosystem, what's going on in Seattle with Women in Tech, and I was just fascinated.

And in the last couple years, we as a board were kind of studying how many nonprofits were popping up in the Seattle area alone, and we started adding them up and we

found that there were 66. And I said, "Oh, my goodness, we need to have a resource reception and get all of these people together." Some of them are national organizations, and some of them are local. And let's just have a big party and show everybody, you know, what we have to offer as a city.

So last year, we did the first one. And we had 700 people come and so much community support. And it was just one evening, so I've been working on this for a year. And I decided to blow it out and make it a whole week. We have 37 events going on this week, and it's just -- to me, it's just this amazing experience. Like you said, I'm a connection engineer, so I love trying to figure out how to bring groups of people together and have them connect.

And I really saw a need for Women in Tech, most techies are introverts. And so they need somebody like me to say, "Hey, I'm going to bring you together and figure out how to get you seen and heard."

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Can you tell me about the theme or the slogan for this week?

MELODY BIRINGER: So the hashtag is "relationships are the true currency." And I just really want to emphasize that everybody that comes to the Women in Tech Regatta, the WiT Regatta as we call it, I want them to be seen and heard.

So this is not a keynote event, this is a boutique event. And so everything we do is very intimate. Even though we have over 1,000 people coming, all of our workshops are like 50 to 100 people and we break everybody up in groups of four and five, and we ask them some vulnerable questions for them to get to know each other so they can really create those true relationships.

It's my goal that if they walk out of here with one friend after the week, I've succeeded, and it can be a friend, friend-friend, or it could be a colleague, you know, a new business relationship.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Melody, I'm so excited that you had this big idea, and I'm really looking forward to the rest of the week.

MELODY BIRINGER: We're so excited to have you here.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Thank you for putting so much time and energy and passion into this event.

MELODY BIRINGER: You're welcome, thank you.

SONIA DARA: All right, listeners, we're going to go check out the networking event right now, but let's move on to the interview.

(Music.)

NARRATION: Community Connect, get involved and stay connected.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: At the opening reception resource fair, I spoke with Fetiya Ibrahim, a systems stress engineer at Boeing, and the secretary of the professionals chapter of the National Society of Black Engineers here in Seattle.

Fetiya brought me up to speed on the history and the mission of the organization.

FETIYA IBRAHIM: The National Society of Black Engineers was an organization that was started by some students -- undergrad students at Purdue in the 1960s, and basically it was put together to help the retention of black engineers, because 80 percent of black students who went into engineering major dropped out before they graduated.

And so there was a need for some sort of support system to help students graduate from schools, and so the National Society of Black Engineers started as a collegiate organization.

And over the years, it grew so big that they actually -- it became not only a collegiate organization, it extends to pre-college students and also people who've left college and are now in the professional fields.

The mission statement of the National Society of Black Engineers is, "To increase the number of culturally responsible black engineers who excel academically, succeed professionally, and positively impact the community."

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: The professional chapter of the National Society of Black Engineers - or NSBE -- recently formed in Seattle in response to the growing community of engineering students graduating from local colleges.

Fetiya explain that NSBE decided to partner with the Women in Tech Regatta to raise awareness amongst the local community of tech professionals and more tenured organizations.

FETIYA IBRAHIM: So we said, hey, you know, the Women in Tech Regatta is a huge event, hundreds of people, it's a great way to get our name out there, it's a great way to connect with other groups and see how we could maybe work with them, you know, align our different programs maybe, and just leverage the different, you know, the different talents out there.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: While the professional chapter of NSBE is new in town, Fatiya has a clear vision of what success looks like for the organization.

FETIYA IBRAHIM: Success would be the word "engineer" being a common word in the community of color. There's not a lot of people of color who are actually pursuing engineering degrees for one reason or another. But I feel like success would be like any household you go to, you talk engineer, everyone knows what it is. It's not just, "Oh, engineers, what? Build buildings? What do you do?"

So once that everyone understands like what an engineer does and everyone feels like it's something that they can do, I think that would be a huge success for the organization. It's basically like making people see that this is something that is an option for them.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Fatiya outlined a few ways that allies can support NSBE.

FETIYA IBRAHIM: One way is to help when we do outreach events, for example, like at UW or high schools or middle schools, volunteering to talk about engineering with those students, because we mainly focus on underrepresented minorities and students that don't really get that type of outreach. And letting them know that, hey, this is what it actually is, and making them aware.

Another way is to spread the word. Like if you know someone that's struggling, maybe they feel lonely and they want -- they're, like, "I don't know anyone who looks like me," and you've heard of this organization, then link them up. Be, like, "Hey, I know there's a National Society of Black Engineers, I heard they're a cool organization, they're a big family, you know, I think it would be something you'd like."

So spreading the word, volunteering, and if you can, even, supporting it financially if you can.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Fatiya explained that if you're hiring for a job, NSBE is the first community you should consult to identify great candidates.

FETIYA IBRAHIM: Our chapter on campus at the University of Washington has actually gotten so big that we've gotten so many companies reach out to us and say, "Hey, we're recruiting, can we come in and talk to your students?"

And it's been a great resource. We've gotten like 30 people got internships and jobs and it was like a record high that we've had in the history of what we know at least at UW. We're working on trying to make the professionals chapter also a good resource for recruiters to come out and maybe look for professionals to hire, and even executive positions because that's our goal as a professionals chapter, too, is try to get, like, okay, we graduated from college, now let's try and get our professionals up to those higher positions in these companies.

Come if you need anyone, if you need to recruit, it's a great, great group of people.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: To find a local chapter of the National Society of Black Engineers and to learn more about future events and volunteering opportunities, visit NSBE.org.

(Music.)

SONIA DARA: I'm thrilled to welcome Women in Tech Regatta advisory board member Cynthia Tee to our show today.

Cynthia, thank you so much for joining us. We're very excited for you to make the time to connect with us on this very, very busy week.

So, Cynthia, what does your role as an advisory board member for WiT Regatta actually entail?

CYNTHIA TEE: So I started weren't with Melody Biringer, who's the founder of the WiT Regatta, last year actually in April when she put this event together for one evening.

And my role has primarily been to really help her bring a diverse set of women and men together for her panels around leadership and mentorship, around tech topics, and around inclusion. And also just volunteer in general to help the event be successful.

SONIA DARA: What attracted you to the organization in the first place? Like, how did you actually get to meet her last year?

CYNTHIA TEE: Last year, there was an organization in Seattle, actually, called Women in Tech that, for a couple of years, basically founded by Britta Jacobs and Martina Welkhoff, did these quarterly panels that brought women together and allowed them to build relationships.

So from that particular organization, they thought of this one-night event of panels, and they brought Melody in to basically orchestrate it, and she basically took just basically a very simple concept that both Britta and Martina had and just transitioned it into a wonderful Regatta event that evening.

And so I was part of the Women in Tech organization at the time and met Melody and got very excited because I really believe that having a network is super important, as a woman in tech and as somebody underrepresented. And I think I very much believe in her motto that relationship is true currency. I think that is super important, and it's what helps us thrive, be successful, and be supported in this industry. And so I really wanted to help make that event a success.

SONIA DARA: So if it's not obvious to our listeners already, the concept of inclusion is a major theme in your life.

CYNTHIA TEE: Yeah.

SONIA DARA: It became a "tent pole" of your career as well when you became the executive director of Ada Developers Academy in 2015.

So, for our listeners, Ada Developers Academy is a training program here in Seattle, Washington, for women and gender-diverse people who want to become software developers.

Can you tell our listeners a little bit more about Ada Developers Academy and what that work meant for you?

CYNTHIA TEE: So I was the executive director for Ada for two and a half years. I left that position six months ago, Nicole Buchanan is now the executive director.

Ada is a tuition-free, fully full-time, immersive program to take those without any formal computer science or programming training and turn them into software developers, entry-level software developers by the end of that year.

It is a six-month classroom experience combined with a five-month internship program. The graduates basically come out with an average salary of \$95,000 a year.

SONIA DARA: That's awesome.

CYNTHIA TEE: I think the key thing about it is it provides access to a career that has traditionally been completely inaccessible to people. College is expensive, people can't afford it, there are a lot of smart, capable people who just have no role models, have never been encouraged to go down this path, did not have the training opportunities. And when they do have the training opportunities, feel like they're already behind because they don't have the machines, they don't have the financial means to get exposed to it early on.

So Ada tries to address that and does address it. We have a pretty high job placement rate for all our graduates, and there's a whole lot of companies in Seattle. I'm very thankful that the industry in Seattle is so supportive of this program, and more and more sponsors, including big corporations like Amazon and Microsoft and Google support the program.

SONIA DARA: Cynthia, you have a master's, as we mentioned, in computer science from MIT, but at Ada you were leading an organization where applicants had almost no experience with software development, as you mentioned. So they are graduating into

industry roles. What does it take to be successful in the technology industry today, and what would you say to other graduates who are entering without that experience?

CYNTHIA TEE: I would say to be successful today, you definitely need the training to be able to program. I feel like programming is just part of a toolbox of solutions you need to solve problems today. It can definitely be vocationally trained, as I would say, meaning you don't necessarily need a formal degree in computer science.

But I think to be successful today, you need a more well-rounded understanding of the full context of the problem you're trying to solve. If you build software that you expect everybody around the world to use, you better understand the backgrounds of people around the world and how they're about to use your technology, the issues that are very specific with different countries, with people from different religions, people of different race, people of different financial backgrounds. If you want software to be integrated in their lives, you need to be able to understand that.

One person cannot understand all those things. And, therefore, you need a team that is diverse enough to contribute to that.

And so I think if you bring together people from different backgrounds to really understand all the issues earlier on, I'm not saying you'd be perfect and avoid it, but you probably would have been able to preemptively see quite a bit of it.

SONIA DARA: So, Cynthia, you managed Port 2 at the Regatta this week, which is actually entirely focused on inclusive culture.

CYNTHIA TEE: Yes.

SONIA DARA: What was the motivation for making inclusion such a major focus for this week-long event?

CYNTHIA TEE: You know, at the time that I started participating and volunteering for WiT, I was the executive director at Ada Developers Academy. And I have always been a champion of diversity and inclusion, even when I was working at Microsoft. But I actually don't think I knew what that meant until I started leading Ada and realized I had a lot to learn, actually, about how to create a more inclusive space at the academy to support not only women, but gender-diverse people, people of color, and people with disability, and people that just have so many identities that are underrepresented today in our industry.

And so as part of my journey through Ada and wanting to really create a supportive community within the academy, I also felt like I wanted to support and create a community for them in the industry. And, hence, my passion for participating at a more city-wide level to promote that.

I also believe inclusion is a journey for everybody. And I think it's not something you just do with training. I actually think that bringing panels together, bringing forums for people to meet other people who aren't like them is an important part, because inclusion starts with you as an individual. And I wanted to create the opportunity for people as individuals to really define it for themselves by meeting other people who are on the same journey.

So that was my motivation for the single event that was part of that April 1st regatta, and Melody's motivation also for just taking every single event she took that night and making it its own track.

SONIA DARA: So you were talking about this concept of inclusion in this journey. So when would you say you started your journey for inclusion?

CYNTHIA TEE: I started realizing that it was a problem for me in college when I majored in computer science because I always felt like the only one, and I always felt it was behind.

I did not actually recognize that I could do something about it until I started working at Microsoft.

And it's one of those things that the problem -- you look at it, and then you're aware, it gets bigger and bigger and bigger. It's like peeling an onion, finding several layers, and then it took me a couple of years at Microsoft to realize truly how deep those layers ran.

And at Ada, it became really, really huge in terms of being so multi-dimensional and complicated because so much of what is good inclusion is really understanding all the different dimensions that people are different and really building an environment that makes people feel heard and makes people feel like they belong, is recognizing all these differences, and creating a safe space to accommodate them -- religion, race, gender identity expression, orientation, body size, ability like everything. It's complicated.

You know, in tech, I think we aspire to be experts at everything. Like, I don't know that there's such a thing as being an expert in this area. I think you just start the journey, you get better, you don't ever expect thanks for it because it is actually an obligation for the leaders in this space to strive towards a more inclusive community.

And I don't actually think anybody does a perfect job of it today. I don't think there's such a thing, you know, maybe there is such a thing as perfect, but we're all still trying to get there, and I think every effort and every good positive outcome counts -- at an individual level, as well as a team level.

SONIA DARA: In addition to coordinating so many conversations throughout the week, you've also been contributing to the program as well. So earlier today, you were sitting on a panel discussion titled, quote, *The Right Crew: Secrets to Successful Ally-Mentee Partnership*.

The panel was comprised of mentee/mentor partners in pairs, which made for some really dynamic conversation, which we loved.

And you were joined by your mentee, Tahout (ph.), and a lot of the panel discussion was focused on the work it takes to actually build a great mentoring relationship, that there's effort to build on a foundation of honesty.

So how do you go about establishing radical candor in your mentoring relationships?

CYNTHIA TEE: I think there are a couple of parts to it. I think that part of a mentoring relationship is to build trust with whoever you're mentoring, right? A mentee needs to want you to be their mentor, and I really believe in making sure that that is established, this person actually wants me to be there to give them guidance. I don't believe in just giving guidance for the sake of giving guidance to somebody.

And really getting to know that person and establishing trust with that person is super important. That allows them to feel safe to be candid with me, and that means asking me questions that they feel safe asking me, whatever question is on their mind, but also feeling safe being vulnerable with me. And in exchange, for me to feel that I can be also vulnerable with them because my goal as a mentor is not to be perfect, my goal is to be able to support somebody and give them guidance within the context of what they need, but also to learn from them. Like, this is a two-way street for me.

SONIA DARA: And later this afternoon, because not only did you have enough on your plate, so you were involved in a couple of panels, there's another one that you were part of called *When Women Turn on Other Women: Why this Happens, and How to Fix it*.

So the panel composition was great, featuring both women in tech, psychologists, those who could help work through the behavioral motivations behind stories from basically the trenches.

I was surprised that almost every anecdote from that panel reference a relationship, though, that was both personal and professional.

CYNTHIA TEE: Yeah.

SONIA DARA: So there was a lot of, "I lost a friend," was uttered definitely more than once. I'm not sure if you had noticed that as well.

CYNTHIA TEE: Yeah, I did. I think it gets extremely personal because on the one hand, we're all in this together, we all want to fight for equity, we all want to champion women and support them, and I have to honestly say that so many relationships I've had with women have mostly been positive. It's the couple of them that are not positive that then become that much more painful because of every -- all the mission we share, and then you have these situations happen, right? And I think that it's really difficult for us to be very objective.

I really want to make sure that people know that they're not alone, that so many of us have experienced this, and I think there's a way we can have these conversations so that we keep each other accountable to healing and making things better.

There's a part of me that's like, well, why didn't I step up and treat that situation just like I would any other situation with a man? Have those honest conversations, call people on it, not be afraid to be direct.

And I think, in part, you know, I did that panel because I wanted to call myself to action. I wanted people to also validate that, yeah, you do need to do something about it, Cynthia.

SONIA DARA: Unfortunately, there were definitely some standard themes that were referenced during that discussion of -- that there's only room for one at the top.

CYNTHIA TEE: Uh-huh. (Affirmative.)

SONIA DARA: That women are constantly in competition with one another. So how do you, personally, set those untrue stories of competition and scarcity aside to do the important work of supporting other women?

CYNTHIA TEE: I mean, I think it's a very deliberate balance. I think that I consciously choose times when I give space to others. I've been in this industry now for over 20 years. I've made it to a fairly senior executive level.

SONIA DARA: Yeah, you have.

CYNTHIA TEE: I feel like I still have to fight for it sometimes. It's unbelievable sometimes how I still have to explain that I am actually technical, I have a master's degree --

SONIA DARA: From MIT, nonetheless.

CYNTHIA TEE: Yeah. Yeah. It's amazing to me how I have to sometimes "mansplain" my way through job qualifications.

SONIA DARA: Awesome. And then we just left your third panel that you helped coordinate today called *In Their Own Words: Stories of Underrepresented Voices in Tech*. I absolutely loved this panel.

CYNTHIA TEE: Yeah.

SONIA DARA: I thought it was amazing.

CYNTHIA TEE: It was amazing.

SONIA DARA: Super intimate. There were five panelists. Just some of the most amazing women that I have heard their stories.

For our listeners and people who couldn't be there, what would be your top three take-aways from that panel?

CYNTHIA TEE: One is what Zena (ph.) said about social justice and that what we face in the tech industry about diversity and inclusion is social justice. Diversity and inclusion and social justice -- the same thing. Because for so many people, it's not different. What you experience in the workplace, the oppression and the bias there and the oppression you go out in the street, it's not different. And so that was one key take-away.

I think the second was the allyship being about action, being about empathy, being about really doing your own education and not putting the burden on people who already have to deal with this every hour, every second of their lives.

And I think the third one that was just -- really struck me as each panel's stories about all the ridiculous questions that they have to deal with. The stereotypes, the very rude, invasive questions about their body parts, about terrorism in their religion. And it seems appalling on the surface, but it still happens quite a bit. And, you know, to be an ally is to catch those and call people on it. It's not okay to do that. And if you do it yourself, to just apologize and move on and not try to justify your intent. This is not about intent, this is about your impact on other people.

SONIA DARA: Cynthia, in addition to your work with WiT Regatta, you are a consultant with Diverse City, LLC, where you facilitate ally skills workshops. These workshops teach everyday ways for people to use their privilege and influence to support people who are targets of systemic oppression.

Can you share one of the tactics from the workshops that our audience could, perhaps, start using immediately?

CYNTHIA TEE: I feel very strongly about this workshop, I also do it for Ada Developers Academy, and I believe it's an important discussion to start. And I do it because it is a journey and a discussion for me even, and I think the more people we bring into this discussion, the more people understand that you can talk about these things. You can make mistakes, but if you do make mistakes, apologize, move on, focus on the impact, and make it a learning moment is truly important.

I think one of the pieces of action people can take that is super important is to really empathize and act on what it's like to be the only one. And there are so many of us in this industry that feel like the only one of ourselves in a room, in a meeting, in a conference, in a performance review discussion all the time. And if there's one thing you can do as an ally is to put yourself in that situation as much as possible.

When you ask for the trust and put yourselves in that space with people who are so different from you and you start to understand what it feels like to be the only one, you will develop the empathy, and you will naturally start to figure out what to do to champion people in that situation.

SONIA DARA: In addition to your work with Ada, you're inspiring more girls to become interested in STEM as a volunteer with IGNITE Worldwide.

CYNTHIA TEE: Yes.

SONIA DARA: IGNITE is an acronym for Inspiring Girls Now in Technology Evolution, and we actually just saw you at the IGNITE gala a couple weeks back.

CYNTHIA TEE: Yeah.

SONIA DARA: The organization introduces girls from grades six to 12 to technology careers via panel discussions, job shadowing, mentoring, field trips. So what does your volunteer work look like with IGNITE?

CYNTHIA TEE: I found IGNITE because one day four teachers and 25 girls showed up my door at Ada. And I had no idea who they were. They said, "Well, we are here to visit Ada, we arranged it."

I quickly looked through my e-mail because I was very worried that I had accepted something and forgot. And I couldn't find anything. And I looked at all these girls, all high school age, all girls of color with their teachers of color come through my door. And at that point in time, my staff and I basically had the time to take them in. Crystal, who was one of my instructors, did an impromptu workshop using Arduinos, which she does a lot for high school in general, and was able to pull that off.

And we talked about Ada and, you know, we had some of our students in the classroom also come and speak to them. And it was such a wonderful experience. And Cathi found me later and she said, "I am so sorry." To this day, we don't know how this happened. But I also told her, "This was truly a blessing in disguise. I loved it, I enjoyed it. I learned more about your organization, I think this is great."

Starting from that point, twice a year we're bringing the girls from IGNITE over for the morning, and today, Nicole has carried that forward.

I went to Cathi's gala. I do that now. This was my second year, and I love what she does. I love what she enables. I am in support of really encouraging, at every age group, this whole participation in STEM and accessibility of technology. I think Cathi is doing it for this particular age group.

I think these girls need to see role models and examples of what it's like to be successful. They need to find themselves in other people, and I think that is really one of the key things that's going to help them build their interest and keep it sustained.

SONIA DARA: What do you want your legacy to be?

CYNTHIA TEE: I think about every workshop I do and I think about every panel that I'm on and I think about every mentoring or coffee relationship that I have. And I feel like out of all those, if I just somehow, with what I say, convince somebody to come on that journey with me, to just be more self-aware about their biases, figure out how to take more action as an ally, that for me is a really good outcome.

SONIA DARA: So, Cynthia, where can our listeners find you on the Internet?

CYNTHIA TEE: I'm on LinkedIn and people can always find me on LinkedIn, on Twitter, on Instagram.

SONIA DARA: Thank you so much for joining us today.

CYNTHIA TEE: Yeah, thank you. Thank you for having me.

(Music.)

SONIA DARA: Well, listeners, we are officially wrapping up this week at the Women in Tech Regatta. We are currently sitting at Bar Harbor, which is a local restaurant, enjoying some rose to close out this surprisingly sunny day.

Colleen, what were your thoughts as we close things out here?

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Well, I have been so impressed with the WiT Regatta programming, you know, from panels on cryptocurrency and bleeding-edge tech to resume help and side-hustle support. I have learned a ton over the past few days.

And I really appreciate that every panel this week kicked off with a reading of the Code of Conduct. Many conferences don't even have a code of conduct, so I doubly appreciated that commitment to maintaining a safe space for everyone.

Yeah, how about you, Sonia? What are you reflecting on here over this rose?

SONIA DARA: Yeah, no, it would definitely have to be the hashtag #WhatWouldChadDo? The whole premise of that panel was to examine the research-backed ways that men and women behave differently in the workplace, and to promote ways that women can be basically bolder at work. Two really great examples that bubbled up were how we negotiate for salary increases, or even speaking up in meetings.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Yeah, I really appreciated that panel, too. Marleigh Chiles was one of the #WhatWouldChadDo panelists. She's a graduate of Ada Developers Academy -- the organization that Cynthia led that you spoke to her about -- and a current program manager at Microsoft. And I was so inspired by her message.

She suggested that even if you have an incredible new job offer on the table, an offer that you're completely in love with when it comes to salary, time off, et cetera, that you need to ask for something. That the company needs to know that you're the type of person who asks for more.

I'm so energized by that sentiment of asserting your self-worth and your confidence in such a critical moment.

SONIA DARA: Yeah. And there was one man on the #WhatWouldChadDo panel, Nick Peddy, a VP of software engineering at Capital One. He is an instructor with Girls Who Code, and an advocate for women at work.

A secondary hashtag that grew organically out of the panel was #FindYourNick, which I loved. That was definitely a big take-away for me.

If your ideas are getting trampled in work meetings and you're not finding and getting the credit that you deserve, please get out there and #FindYourNick.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: You know, I really can't think of a better way to wrap this episode.

SONIA DARA: Yeah, but before we officially drop these mics and switch back to our rose, we wanted to plug two upcoming events for anyone traveling to Seattle for Microsoft Build, our annual developer event.

The conference will be here at the Washington State Convention Center, where in addition to finding great keynotes and sessions, you'll discover a relaxing oasis called The Lounge.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: That's right. On Monday, May 7th, from 5:00-7:00 p.m., The Lounge will host a Women and Non-Binary Community Happy Hour, hosted by Microsoft Katie De La Maza-Baker and Nina Baliga, the cofounder of <div>ersity, that's stylized as an HTML division or section tag, and then "-ersity" -- "diversity."

SONIA DARA: Nice.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Nina and her cofounder are connecting a community of diverse tech talent with trusted, transparent companies.

SONIA DARA: Yes. And then on Wednesday, May 9th, The Lounge is hosting a Represent Breakfast for attendees who identify as part of an underrepresented or marginalized community. Head on over from 7:45 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. for mimosas, breakfast burritos, cappuccinos, art, and plenty more.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: For more information about the conference, visit Microsoft.com/Build, and as always, we really appreciate your support, so subscribe to our podcast on Apple Podcasts, Google Play -- wherever you get your podcasts, or find us at wibt.com.

SONIA DARA: Thank you so much, and we're going to go back to our rose now, so see you later.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Our food is here, so we'll catch you next time.

(Music.)

END