Women in Business and Technology

Transcript of Episode 038 - Designing alongside excluded communities with Mismatch.design Founder Kat Holmes
Guests: Beatris Mendez Gandica, Kat Holmes

Summary: Sonia and Colleen share progress on their new YouTube show, Microsoft Unboxed. Colleen chats with Founder and Chairman of the Board of the Nuevo Foundation, Beatris Mendez Gandica about her work to inspire kids to be curious, confident, and courageous by discovering the world of STEM. Our hosts interview the Founder of Mismatch.design and the Author of Mismatch: How Inclusion Shapes Design, Kat Holmes. The show wraps with a conversation about The Wing's updated admissions policy.

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(Music.)

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Welcome to episode 38 of Women in Business & Technology. I'm Colleen O'Brien.

SONIA DARA: And I'm Sonia Dara.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: We're kicking off this show in our Community Connect segment with a conversation that I had with Beatris Mendez Gandica, a Security Program Manager here at Microsoft and the Founder and Chairman of the Board of The Nuevo Foundation, a nonprofit that inspires kids to be curious, confident, and courageous by discovering the world of STEM.

SONIA DARA: And then, we'll dive into a conversation that both Colleen and I had with the Kat Holmes live at The Riveter in Seattle. Kat is the Founder of Mismatch.design and a Director of User Experience Design at Google. We spoke with her about her recent book entitled *Mismatch: How Inclusion Shapes Design*.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Finally, we'll wrap things up in our Cutting Edge segment with a conversation about the membership policy update at The Wing, and who is allowed in their co-working spaces.

SONIA DARA: So listeners, if you really can't get enough of Colleen and me, I just wanted to quickly plug a new project that Colleen and I are part of, and it's a brand-new YouTube show that we're hosting. It'll be on Microsoft's YouTube channel, and it's called Microsoft Unboxed.

So every week, Colleen and I will be hosting the show, and we'll be talking about all the great, really cool tech stories coming out of Microsoft and the great people behind each of those tech stories. So make sure you check it out, subscribe to the channel. Everything will be going live February 7th, so make sure to tune in then and every week after.

VOICE: Community Connect, get involved and stay connected.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: I'm thrilled to welcome to the studio the Founder and Chairman of the Board of The Nuevo Foundation, Beatris Mendez Gandica. Thank you so much for being here today.

BEATRIS MENDEZ GANDICA: Thank you. This is fun. This is my first podcast, so I'm very excited.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Excellent. And it's okay to call you Bea?

BEATRIS MENDEZ GANDICA: Yes, please. Let's do that.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Bea, what is The Nuevo Foundation?

BEATRIS MENDEZ GANDICA: Nuevo Foundation is a non-profit that is run by a group of passionate professionals. We empower underrepresented students for future solutions for success. Our goal is to inspire kids to be curious, creative and courageous by discovering the world of STEM.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Oh, that's wonderful. And I imagine that this is somewhat of a personal passion project for you.

BEATRIS MENDEZ GANDICA: Correct. We really wanted to go inspire other kids, and especially the kids that have not yet been exposed to STEM or tech because we truly believe that you cannot be what you cannot see. And that's where we play a role, or where we make a difference when we go to these communities, or these schools, or these students that really don't necessarily have someone in the STEM field or in a big corporation that they can look up to. And that's where we come.

And then, we teach them how to code, teaching about what STEM is, what's the tech field, the tech industry; and then, that they can do it, too. And then, when you see their faces, they are like super happy because they just didn't know it. They just think that coding, maybe it's just something out of their reach or out of their comfort zone. But then, when they actually do it and you see them do it, then it's just like, "Oh my goodness, I'm doing this. I did it."

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: (Laughter.) Yeah, you're teaching them how to do magic on a computer. That's really cool.

BEATRIS MENDEZ GANDICA: Correct.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: And in your role as Founder and Chairman of the Board, what role are you playing? Is it purely strategic, or are you out there also teaching these kids how to code?

BEATRIS MENDEZ GANDICA: I do pretty much everything, and we all teach or play the strategy, reaching out to schools, reaching out to other organizations. Like for example, at Microsoft, we have HOLA, which is Hispanics at Microsoft. And we have BAM, which is Blacks and African-Americans at Microsoft. And we work with these ERGs, or Enterprise Resource Groups, and teach those students.

At the same time, I also teach classes. I create curriculum. I help with the website. We help with social media. So it's a little bit of everything. So, it's like a startup mode all the time.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Fantastic. Tell me about how you really got the organization started and up off the ground. What was your launch like?

BEATRIS MENDEZ GANDICA: Correct. So for my launch, we went to University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, which is my alma-mater where I went to school. And we got to bring kids from a region in Wisconsin which is mostly populated by Hispanic families, or Latin families. And so, we brought 48 girls from this area in Wisconsin and we brought into the University of Wisconsin in Eau Claire. And they were, like, fascinated because for them, it was the first time they visit a university. These are middle school girls.

And so, to kick off the event, I start talking about, "Hey, I work at Microsoft. I'm an engineer. I work on security," and so, trying to make sure that they understand what I do so that they can have a feeling of what being in tech was.

And so, before we get into the coding, I wanted to ask them what's their dream job look like. And so, most of them, they raise their hand and say, "I want to work at a factory line." And then, the next person says, "I want to work in the factory line," to you, "I want to work on this." And it all revolved through maybe like a common them, which was a factory line.

And so, I was wondering why. But maybe, again, we go back to you don't see what you can be unless you see it.

And so, we went into the coding. We teach them how to code with a small basic, which is the one that you move the little turtle, you tell him what to do; showing a bunch of videos about Microsoft campus, what it's like to be an engineer, that we that we get free food. And for them, that was, like, super-duper cool.

And then, at the end, we did like an exercise where they can actually do the hands, because when we work with kids, it cannot be all coding. It has to be an exercise. It has to be fun. They have move.

And in Nuevo, we always collect feedback before they leave. And the greatest thing that happened is that every girl, after the workshop, wanted to go to school, and wanted to pursue their dreams, and they wanted to be engineers, doctors and nurses. So, that was when we really see, like, the impact that one class, one day, two hours -- three hours -- can have on these kids.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Thank you for sharing that story. I wish that I could have been there. I'm sure that you were their role model after those two hours. (Laughter.)

BEATRIS MENDEZ GANDICA: Yes. You can come to our next one and then you'll get to see how they experience. And other events, just kids like, "Hey, can I come tomorrow? I love this camp." And we're like, "Not quite a camp, but thank you. I'm so glad you love it."

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Yeah. That's such great feedback. It sounds like you're really serving populations that most need it and most need access to that inspiration and aspiration.

BEATRIS MENDEZ GANDICA: Correct.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: What programming are you offering with Nuevo Foundation?

BEATRIS MENDEZ GANDICA: So, we started in April doing workshops. And this year, we came up with four curriculums. So, we do two in Python, one in Scratch, and one with C#.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: And who is the audience for this programming? What age group are you targeting?

BEATRIS MENDEZ GANDICA: So, we go from kids as small as six years old until, like, college students.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Wow.

BEATRIS MENDEZ GANDICA: Yes. We teach differently depending on the age group that we have, and based on the experience. But the kids that are six, sometimes they're, like, just so fascinated because they want their robot to move. And they're just like, "I'm doing it. I'm programming, Mom. I'm doing this," because sometimes the parents come.

And it's just beautiful to see that we teach them how to do something, but then they go a mile forward. And they just go and program. They program a maze. They program other labyrinths and other activities that we do.

And then, for college students, we also have virtual sessions, so we talk to students across the world. And so, we've been doing this in Peru, Bolivia, Mexico, Australia. And then, we just go and talk to these students about what's being an engineer, what's being in tech, and about what The Nuevo Foundation is doing.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: So not only these coding boot camps, but also just exposure to the careers you can have with this toolset.

BEATRIS MENDEZ GANDICA: Correct. We call those "virtual sessions."

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Fantastic. Bea, how do you measure success in your organization? What does success look like beyond that little kid who's smiling because he's getting a robot to move?

BEATRIS MENDEZ GANDICA: So, I guess from the success aspect, we see the feedback from the students, from the parents, from the teachers. And then, they play a role in what we offer because we change curriculums and we update them as we go, based on the feedback.

And then, the end goal, or success, will be when students leave inspired to go back and code in their homes, or to go back and show their sister or their brother, or their parents, or their grandparents, or their friends at school. That's when we can say we accomplished something. We accomplished that a kid comes, not knowing anything about coding, and leaves the room

saying, "Hey, I want to code for fun." Or when we teach him how to do, like, the Caesar cipher, and then they want to go and send text through message encrypted -- things like that. That's, for us, what success is.

And then, since we're all engineers, we all like numbers, right? So, what success has been since April, which was when our first event is, we have done seven coding workshops with 256 students, eight virtual sessions with 250 more, two hack-a-thons -- both our hack-a-thons had more than 90 people, 90 hackers -- and then one school tour.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: You started in April of this year?

BEATRIS MENDEZ GANDICA: Yes.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Whoa, congratulations!

BEATRIS MENDEZ GANDICA: Yes, it's been super fun.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Yeah. And I imagine only starting in April, that it's so much success under your belt. But I can't wait to see your first college grads who are applying for their roles in the tech industry.

BEATRIS MENDEZ GANDICA: That's what we're trying to do. The idea is that the kids that we teach, because we're so close to Microsoft and the state of Washington, is how can we make sure that the kids that we teach can get that internship for high school students, or for college students. So, that's the goal, and we're working just to see how can we make this happen.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: And why is it important that Nuevo Foundation exists? What is at the heart of this organization?

BEATRIS MENDEZ GANDICA: I think we can sum it up in a quote that is, "You cannot be what you cannot see." I'm from Venezuela. I grew up in Venezuela at home. And then, none of my parents are engineers, but they never said it was impossible. They never put in my head, like, maybe being an engineer is not what you go for. They were more like, "Hey, what do you want to study? Just go and do something that you're passionate about."

And I was always passionate about computers and Encarta. So, Encarta used to be like the old Wikipedia, for those of you that don't know. But for me, it was just amazing how much information can be stored in a CD because I don't think I have Internet -- that was back when Windows 98.

But I remember I put in my CD of Encarta and I can find out what's life in New Zealand, how do you get to Mars, and things like that. And I said, "This is insane," because how come so much -- because my parents had to go to the library and find all that. So, I always have that curious spark for technology.

And then, Venezuela political situation keeps going bad and bad. And I come to school in the U.S. in Wisconsin, and I was like, "What's in here that I can do that's computers and also

something fun and international?" So, that's what I went to school. And then, when you come into the tech field, you notice that there's not that many people that look like yourself.

But for those kid that are now studying for the future engineers, then when you just want to make sure they have exposure. It is their choice if they want to go forward and follow a STEM degree or not, but at least -- when it comes to Nuevo -- is you can be it, too. You can be an engineer. You can do what you want. You can help your community. And it's just that you need to see it sometimes in order to believe it.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Nuevo Foundation is purposefully including so you're not accidentally excluded.

BEATRIS MENDEZ GANDICA: Correct. Thank you.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: (Laughter.) Fantastic. And Bea, what is your hope for the future of Nuevo Foundation?

BEATRIS MENDEZ GANDICA: For the future, I just really hope that we'll continue to inspire kids to be curious, confident and courageous by discovering the world of STEM. And we will continue delivering new workshops, new curriculums, new sessions.

And then, eventually, we have some other plans that we have for the new year would be to have some sort of mentoring program, maybe like a one-to-one mentoring, or kids that are really wanting to do something outside the classroom, or on their own time and that say they want to build a bot that does something. And they just need that person that they can reach out and say, "Hey, how do I connect this library? Where do I get this? How do I do my first push?" and things like that. So, we want to do that.

And then, obviously, hosting more virtual sessions, helping out more students, and growing. We have stuff coming up in Florida. And then, as much as we can do and as much as we can share is I think where we really want to be in the future.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Amazing. And if our listeners are feeling inspired, they want to support your mission, they want to be a part of it, where can they find you on the Internet?

BEATRIS MENDEZ GANDICA: Absolutely. So, our website is www.nuevofoundation.org. And then, if you have any school that we can partner with, or you want to reach out, "Hey, can you come and teach our kids?" -- we have done Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, schools all around the area -- then it would be contact@nuevofoundation.org.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Bea, thank you so much for the work that you're doing and for being here today.

BEATRIS MENDEZ GANDICA: Yes, thank you.

(Music.)

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: And now, let's get on with the interview. Hi, everyone.

SONIA DARA: Hello.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Welcome to a live recording of Microsoft's Women in Business and Technology podcast. I'm Colleen O'Brien.

SONIA DARA: And I'm Sonia Dara.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: And we're so excited for you to be here today. We started this podcast about a year ago. Sonia and I were reflecting on all of the privilege that we have working in the technology community. And we were thinking about the resources that we have access to, the mentors who would always say, "Yes," to coffee dates, and the communities that have really sprouted up to support us. And this podcast was our way of extending all of those things to our listenership of scaling that mentorship and access to those resources.

SONIA DARA: So, we do have a very jam-packed evening tonight, a great program planned. But before we jump in, we do have a couple of thanks to offer out, especially to our volunteers who helped us out today. We have Meghan Gustavson Malloy (ph), Ellen Nasfani (ph), Tshin Zang (ph), Peter Dodds (ph), John Cresmian (ph), and Tara Brooks (ph). Thank you very much for coming early and helping us get set up. (Applause.)

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Yeah, round of applause.

SONIA DARA: And of course, a big thank you to Heather and everyone at The Riveter for obviously helping us pull together this amazing venue and bringing us all together on this very rainy day, but we're all warm and cozy inside here.

And then we have Xiao Ching Chow of Mismatched.design for helping bring together the entire event, so thank you so much; Nasty Women Wines and Madre's Kitchen is the food and drink that we have in the back, both female, small businesses that we're helping bring to light and support; the Hearing Speech and Deaf Center for providing the ASL interpretation. So, big applause for them as well. (Applause.)

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Round of applause for them.

SONIA DARA: And a final thank you is to you all, our audience. We have raised over $1,800 today to both 400 Ford and Warfighter Engaged Charity. So, thank you so much for all of your donations. Everything will be going to those two charities, so give yourselves a round of applause. (Applause.)

And so, now we would like to introduce our guest of honor.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: I met Kat almost two years ago to the date, and this was at Jinx Monsoon's Holiday Drag Show. (Laughter.) And I thought, "This is the coolest Microsoft executive ever." Kat has, of course, gone on to build her career even more, but that cool factor is definitely still there. And I'm going to read a little bit of her bio right now.

Kat was named one of Fast Company's Most Creative People in Business in 2017. As the author of *Mismatch: How Inclusion Shapes Design*, and the Founder of Mismatch.design, Holmes works with multidisciplinary leaders to set a foundation for why designing with excluded communities drives better solutions for everyone.

At Microsoft from 2010 to 2017, she led the company's executive program for inclusive product innovation. And her award-winning toolkit was inducted into the Smithsonian Institution's Cooper Hewett Design Museum.

SONIA DARA: That's pretty cool. (Laughter/applause.)

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Holmes is currently a Director of User Experience at Google and continues to advance inclusive development for some of the most influential technologies in the world. Please give a warm welcome for Kat Holmes. (Applause.)

KAT HOLMES: Thank you. Wow. Hello. Thanks for being here. This feels like a family gathering.

SONIA DARA: It is.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: It is. Isn't it nice?

SONIA DARA: So Kat, before we jump in, there's a couple of pieces within your book and key vocabulary, I think, for the audience to just everyone get on the same page, understand your definitions in the book. Sometimes it's not maybe really everyone's perception beforehand on what those definitions are.

A little rapid fire, but I think these definitions could be helpful. Inclusive design.

KAT HOLMES: So, inclusive design, a methodology that considers the full range of human diversity as we design solutions, especially designing with excluded communities.

SONIA DARA: Awesome. Mismatch.

KAT HOLMES: In terms of this context, mismatched interaction between the features of a person's body and the features of the environment in which they live.

SONIA DARA: Accessibility.

KAT HOLMES: Accessibility, most importantly, a fundamental criteria in how we make basic aspects of society accessible and open to all. There's a legal criteria that comes with that, and also a discipline, a very in-depth kind of expertise in how to develop accessible technology, assistive technologies.

SONIA DARA: Universal design.

KAT HOLMES: Universal design, as an origin in the built environment, aims to create solutions. So, it's more about what we make, at the end of the day, and that object, that outcome, that

environment working for as many people as possible. So, one size fits all -- one solution for all -- not very much in the world of universal design.

SONIA DARA: Awesome. And the last one, exclusion expert.

KAT HOLMES: So, this is one that I think I made up. (Laughter.) Somebody else might have made this one up. But so, as we think about someone who has a deep expertise in the ways that society or solutions exclude them from participating, and that that expertise also gives them a depth of knowledge and experience that can be applied towards solutions.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: So Kat, while you were at Microsoft, I had the great opportunity to enroll in one of the inclusive design workshops that your team was running. And in that workshop, I learned about the three principles of inclusive design: Number one, recognize exclusion; number two, learn from diversity; and number three, solve for one, extend to many.

And that last principle was really difficult for me to understand. I couldn't fathom how solving for one person could really extend to others. I was thinking more in this universal design mindset of one size fits all. So can you provide an example to illustrate why this principle is so important?

KAT HOLMES: It's a good example because this is actually one of, I think, the most powerful tools of inclusive design, is this concept that strong constraints and actually thinking about designing a solution for one person can actually extend a benefit in some really interesting ways.

It happens to work well in the realm of inclusive design, or thinking specifically about accessibility because ability is one of those types of human diversity that transcends every other kind of human diversity, right? When we talk about human diversity, we often list categories. We talk about gender and race, and national origin, and age.

But disability is often last on the list, if mentioned at all, right? And ability is something that we're born and we gain abilities over time. Those abilities change with injury, or even just moving from one environment to the next. What we can hear, how we can move, what we can see changes, depending on our environment. And then, of course, we all lose those abilities over the course of our lives as we age. And so, it's one of those threads that really does connect us, regardless of where our experiences starts.

So if we think about an example of how designing for one, curb cuts is the quintessential example so I'll use that. But there's many in our environment, and I hope we can get to some more examples.

One of the first fully wheelchair accessible streets in the United States -- I didn't know this until a couple years ago -- was in Berkeley, California, Telegraph Avenue. And Telegraph's famous for a lot of stuff, a lot of debauchery, a lot of important civil rights movements, but it's also one of the first fully accessible streets to people who use wheelchairs.

And that was largely driven by Ed Roberts, who was one of the -- I think you'd call him founding fathers of the independent living movement. And he, himself, was a student at UC Berkeley and had a profound mobility limitation. So his work in the community there really drove the

transitions from sidewalks to streets to create curbed access down the entire length of the avenue.

But those cuts in the curbs create access for all of us. We all benefit in some way, I want to say whether we're roller skating down the street, or pushing a stroller, or pulling a suitcase behind us, that we all have taken advantage of and benefitted from those solutions. And so, something that was started very much thinking about this specific kind of mismatch to resolve ended up benefitting society in a much broader way because we all have these changing abilities at any moment in our lives and our days.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: One of my favorite examples from the book are the OXO kitchen goods designed by a couple. The wife had mobility issues with her hands, but those are now quintessential household items. They're easier for everyone to use.

KAT HOLMES: Yeah. You know, Sam Farber, we hear quite a bit about it, if you know the OXO story -- the Good Grips kitchen utensils. Betsy Farber had arthritis and, like, potato peelers -- I don't know who's old enough to remember -- they used to be metal and pretty slippery. And so, Betsy and Sam worked together along with Smart Design to reshape the grip of that to be flexible and shaped more contoured to the grip of a human hand. And that design works well for anybody whose hands are slippery in the kitchen.

But as an example, that solution is not a universal solution. That solution does not work well for someone who does not have use of their hands, right? So, it's how the design was created. It was with and by someone who'd experienced a high degree of exclusion and thinking about a solution in a way that would then extend benefit to many more people.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: So another really critical A-ha moment for me in this workshop was when you introduced this concept of a persona spectrum, which you talk about in the book as well. And the example that was referenced that really helped solidify this concept in my mind was on the spectrum of touch, and how a person with one arm might experience a permanent mismatch. But if we solve for that person, individuals who have arm injuries -- maybe their arm is in a sling -- or someone who's holding a child might also benefit from that solution.

Can you share more examples of these persona spectra and why they're so important?

KAT HOLMES: Yeah. I think in the design, especially human-guided design community, for a long time there's been debates about personas and the usefulness, or lack thereof, of personas. And what I really love about the idea of a persona that's defined by how people interact in the world maybe more so than a traditional persona, which is often a marketing persona. It's more by, you know, "Here's Anna and she's 36 years old and a soccer mom and has a busy day, and limited budget to spend on technology." There's one way of painting a persona.

If we think about personas from the spectrum of how a person interacts with a solution, to your point, there's lots of examples for everyday objects that have come about in this way. So, one of my favorite stories is of the first typewriter, if you've heard me tell this story because it's the one I always tell first.

The first kind of typewriter prototype was invented in the mid-1800s by an Italian inventor named Pellegrino Turri, and the Countess Carolina Fantoni da Fivizzano -- I practiced that one as best I can.

SONIA DARA: Well said. It was good.

KAT HOLMES: Yes, and so the two of them were very, very good friends, and there were rumors that they were lovers. And when they were apart, they wanted to correspond by written letters.

But the Countess was blind, and in the mid-1800s, if you were blind and you wanted to author a letter, you had to dictate it to another human being who would write it down for you, and it was not an awesome solution if you wanted private communication with someone. And so, they worked together to create the first prototype of a typewriter so the Countess could author her own letters in private communication.

And so, what I love about this story is that it's a solution that, first, worked well for someone who had low vision or was blind, but that we've all benefitted for this in any way that we wanted to author letters, books, written communication over time. And then, it's become this primary mode of communication through computing devices.

And so, everything from flexible straws, audio books, captioning. Instagram today has captioning on all of its videos. That was a technology that was first created to work well for deaf and hard of hearing communities. Cruise control in the car was invented by a man who was blind.

So, there's all these things, these stories that live in our everyday environment, these solutions that we interact with. And many of them, we don't know that they started with this design for one. And at the same time, they're also often love stories. Like, they're often stories of someone who'd experienced a high degree of mismatch and paired up, partnered up with another person they deeply connected with. And they found ways of interacting and communicating with the world that we all now benefit from.

But that's why writing this book was really a pleasure, because going back and looking back at the history of some of these everyday objects and realizing how many of them really do have that kind of story.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: And you know, I really appreciate this commentary of the love stories in inclusive design. And supporting someone else seems like a way that inclusive design solutions manifest. But another one that you point out in the book is when individuals have such a passion for something and work really hard to make it happen. And I'm thinking about the woman who was losing her sight but was an astronomer.

KAT HOLMES: Yeah. So, this is a story that I came across and I hope to meet her one day. Wanda Diaz Merced (ph) is an astronomer who was born and raised in Puerto Rico, and progressively lost her eyesight in university. And it's a big deal if you're an astronomer to lose your eyesight because most of the data that's analyzed is analyzed visually.

And so, she's worked very hard to develop soundification techniques of astronomical data, and so, in essence, applying an instrument or a different tone to the different types of data that she's collecting from the universe. And she creates these star songs out of them.

And what's really amazing is the things that you can discern. Like, the nuance that she discerns from the information is a different type of detail than what you can get from a visual analysis. But then, also, it's a solution that a lot of astronomers are using now as they're doing both visual and auditory analysis of their data.

And so, I think this idea of there's passion that's driving it, but it's also about participation, right? And it's about the -- we talk about access, and kind of just to the profession itself, right, that so many of our professional practices are gated by the tools that we use. You think about U-Ex design -- user experience design, the field that I work in -- having a very complex tool like Photoshop be the gating requirement to becoming a U-Ex designer. Well, is that really the skill that's required, or is it really about thinking about human beings in a way that we can connect them with solutions?

So, there's so many of these moments, I think, of talking about these mismatches, even, and becoming and participating in a profession that are gated by these mismatched tools and mismatched designs. And passion will get you partway there, but I'm looking at John over here because John's really the expert in this topic.

So, John is a contributor to the book. If you haven't met him yet, he's front and center. That's John Porter, friend, colleague, designer at Microsoft. And he's also a really, really kickass gamer. And so, if I relay some of what John shared with me -- and he's a contributor to especially Chapter 4 where we talk about inclusive designers -- but he described to me the work of being in the game.

There's a game you want to participate in. That games requires -- let's say in an Xbox World or a Sony PlayStation, I won't just pick on Microsoft -- involved the controller. Well, the controller, most since the beginning of time have been designed to require two hands to play, right, if you think about the design of controllers.

So if you don't play a game with two hands -- if you play primarily through speech commanding, or different types of switch controls -- then the work to get to the point to play, right, like the game of figuring out how to get in the game in the first place is something that many communities of people have to apply that work just to be able to play in the first place.

And I just love that example as John was describing the work that he does to game, right -- to get in the game -- but then also thinking about that in context of the professions that we have, that we require people to interview in particular ways and use particular tools. So, we're in essence requiring people to play this particular game in order just to get in the game in the first place.

So, that was really eye-opening for me in thinking about how many types of mismatches people need to transcend just to participate.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Yeah, be sure to talk to John about his wall of exclusion where he hangs all of the different gaming controls at the end of the event. (Laughter.)

KAT HOLMES: And also, the work on Xbox adaptive controller because of the ways that that's changing the gaming space.

SONIA DARA: So Kat, while habits of exclusion are reinforced over time, the motivations for exclusion are apparent at a pretty young age. So, you've referenced the work of preschool and kindergarten teacher, and early childhood education researcher, Vivian Paley (ph), and her book, *You Can't Say You Can't Play*. So, what can we learn from her observations and experiments in the classroom?

KAT HOLMES: A little context. When I set out to write a book, I quit my job at Microsoft -- just for context, if you don't know. I quit my job and I thought I was going to start a company, and then I got a phone call a week later and an offer to write a book. And I was like, "Yeah, sure. That sounds awesome. I'll totally try that." And I had no idea what I was getting into. And I thought I would just write down what I had been talking about, and that entirely failed pretty quickly.

And so, the reason I share this is because the search that I had to go on for really understanding what it was that I'd been talking about. I mean, you talk about inclusion, and this word means so many different things to different people.

And one thing that kind of struck me along the way is this idea of exclusion. Exclusion actually is a pretty universal experience. We know when we're left out. We know when our own experience of being excluded is happening. It's just that we have a hard time anticipating when it's happening to other people, or when it might happen to other people in the future.

And one of the things that really helped me think about this was going all the way back to Vivian Gussin Paley's work with children. And so, a kindergarten teacher established a rule in her classroom that you can't say -- if somebody says, "I want to play," you have to say, "Yes." You can't say, "You can't play with me." And just the idea she took a good few months to talk with her students about what might happen if they brought this rule into effect. And they talked with older students. The kindergarteners went and did research with other students.

And what I thought was fascinating about it was the concerns about what might happen were more intimidating than what actually happened, right? Like, all this, "Well, does that mean I have to share what I have? What if there's not enough to go around?   What if that person comes in here and they ruin my game?" Especially those who maybe set the rules of the game were most concerned about the game being disrupted.

And so, the why it matters, though, is that Gussin Paley observed that there were certain children, year over year, that experienced repeated exclusion. There are some children that carried the burden of exclusion to a much higher degree than others, and that it had this kind of social phenomenon, no matter which class came through, that there would be children who, to a degree, had experienced a much higher degree than others.

And so, the importance being that exclusion is something that's learned, and it's learned early. And we don't come out into the world knowing what that is. It's a moment in time. So, she knew she had this moment in time where she could affect that change.

When they enacted the rule, what they found happened was most of the students just kind of fluidly moved into it. There were a few, again, who had maybe set the rules of the game, enjoyed kind of being the boss. I was one of those kids. Like, I set the rules. "Uh-oh, it's not going the way I want it to."

But what they saw is those kinds of conflicts kind of took some time to work out, but for the most part, what happened is that the children started to adapt what roles they were willing to play -- all of the kids, right? So, you might have always been the villain and now you can be the newborn baby. Or you might have always been the -- I don't know -- the mother, and now you can be the father, right? There is this flexibility in roles because there was a new kind of need when you're just like, "Oh, we are stepping into that role."

And so, I think it's easy to say the benefit is then those children who experienced a higher degree of exclusion were sharing in the experience. But the benefit I think really is that everybody knew themselves in a much broader way at the end of that experiment. And I think that that plays out and could play out in so many areas of our adult lives as well.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Speaking of our adult lives, I think one of the most compelling sections of mismatch is the description of your tour around Detroit with architectural designer Tiffany Brown, who is experiencing Detroit as an adult but actually grew up there as well, and is having a fundamentally different experience. How did that trip impact how you think about inclusive design?

KAT HOLMES: Ooh, so that was another moment where writing a book in this way led me to stories and connections I'd never expected to make. One of the things that sparked that trip was when I first met Tiffany, she told me something I'd never forget. She said that in the history of licensed architecture, like in the United States, that only 400 architects were female and African-American, which is point three percent.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: In the history of the profession. (Laughter.)

KAT HOLMES: In the history of the profession. So Tiffany, herself, she grew up in a housing project called Herman Gardens that was torn down when she was 15 with the promise of economic rehabilitation that never manifested. And it profoundly shaped how she thought about the spaces of her own neighborhood, of the places where her family grew up.

And so, she took me on this journey -- kind of this history -- of Detroit. And I started to get this bigger context. I didn't realize this, but Detroit is one of the first cities to have public housing. The very first public housing project in the United States in the mid-1930s was in Detroit, the Brewster Douglas Housing Projects. And it started out as a private benefactor project and eventually turned into a government-owned entity in the 1960s and '70s where we saw a real decline in the design of public housing.

She toured me around the city in all these places where she'd grown up, and some abandoned -- like the neighborhood she'd grown up in; some in the process of gentrification because Detroit is now the place to be and everybody's descending on it trying to make it what they want it to be.

And along the way, the second thing I learned that I did not know is that Detroit is almost 88 percent African-American. And if you look at a racial distribution map of the city, you can almost precisely see the outline of metropolitan Detroit because inside the shape, you'll see predominantly African-American population; and then outside of the kind of boundary of the city, super dominantly white Caucasian population. And those lines are delineated by streets, and there's waterways and physical structures that literally were set up to create racial barriers and boundaries inside the city, along with policies.

So when we think about mismatch and we think about exclusion, it can be these very physical, very real kinds of borders in our society, but that also the policies that are enacted, the ways that education is offered inside of certain boundaries. And I think that, for me, it helped connect the dots between what I had been thinking about as inclusion from a disability lens primarily, and thinking more broadly about gender, race and other aspects of society, aspects of demographics. What are the threads that connect these conversations?

And for me, it really came to thinking about exclusion and how it manifests in the world, how we -- intentionally or unintentionally -- make choices that then create a boundary that bar participation and access for people.

SONIA DARA: Yeah, you mentioned in one of your talk about a bridge in New York that was built at a certain height so public busses weren't actually able to head into the beach areas. Can you talk a little bit about that?

KAT HOLMES: Yeah. So, you're referring to Robert Moses. So is anybody from New York, Manhattan kind of area? Yeah. I was just there and I spoke to this example, so I've verified that it's legit (laughter) as the New York team would tell me. But there's a lot of overpasses, especially along the Long Island Parkway, that are pretty low and a lot of them were built in the 1930s and '40s when Robert Moses was Park City Commissioner.

And Moses was demonstrably racist. It's documented in a book called *The Power Broker* by Robert Caro, and it is a known fact in practice. And one of the examples is that these overpasses, he'd build them with the underside of seven feet, seven inches high, which is just low enough that a public bus couldn't pass underneath it, and a public bus being a primary mode of transportation -- especially in the 40s and 50s -- of African-American, working class families, or families with lower income. It effectively created physical barriers to enjoying the beaches and the parks on the other side of those overpasses.

And these structures have stood for nearly a century, right, because when you put something physical into the world, it endures, right, long beyond the designer. But the kind of invisible nature they can have sometimes, we just pass through them every night and not know that that was part of the design intent.

This manifests in things today, even as we think about website accessibility, right? Microsoft is doing really great here (laughter) -- I know, yes. I worked with in my own practice and in my new company where the number of websites across our industry that are inaccessible is incredibly high, upwards of 70 if not 80 percent. And so, that basic access, when it's not built in, in effect creating barriers to information, right? And so, I think about those Robert Caro structures somewhat in the same way as we think about website accessibility today. It's the new challenge we have.

SONIA DARA: Once again, just a reminder to everyone, the donations for the tickets from tonight's event benefit 400 Forward and Warfighter Engaged. And we successfully raised over $1,800. Once again, a few more snaps for everyone. (Applause.) So, I know the proceeds of your book support those initiatives as well. Can you explain a little bit of why these two charities are so important to you?

KAT HOLMES: Yeah. The book would not have been possible without John's contribution, and without Tiffany's contribution. And so, we talked a little bit about where would we want the proceeds from the book to go, and John selected Warfighter Engaged. Warfighter Engaged is based in Jersey, and they started really with gaming rigs for veterans and people with different mobility limitations or disabilities. But they have expanded to a much broader kind of life design, like designing different types of assistive technologies for a wide range of people, but the heart of it is with wounded veterans.

And then, 400 Forward is Tiffany's initiative to introduce the next generation -- the next 400 female, African-American architects through education, mentorship, and a range of kind of educational programs that she leads.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: So thank you all for your contributions. (Applause.)

SONIA DARA: Good job, everyone.

KAT HOLMES: They're thrilled, yeah. They're really thrilled.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: So Kat, Mismatch has also come to life as a digital magazine, which you can find at Mismatch.design. And the online publication is dedicated to a growing community of inclusive design practitioners. How has that community come to life and what is your hope for the future of Mismatch.design?

KAT HOLMES: Well, let's see. Where's Xiao Ching? Raise your hand. Okay, that's Xiao Ching back there. (Laughter.)

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: She's hiding. (Laughter.)

KAT HOLMES: Yeah, so Xiao Ching is my business partner in Mismatch.design. When I quit my job and decided to write a book, I also decided to build a company. And part of it is trying to test what does it look like when inclusion is a business. What does that look like? I spent most of my time consulting with a really wide range of companies from Airbnb to Scholastic and Mattel, and Volkswagen -- this really nice kind of voyeuristic trip through other people's backyards and seeing how they thought about inclusion.

And that, to me, what I saw as threads, one was language. The starting point for a lot of these teams and companies, and leaders, and I think us, as a community, is finding shared language when we talk about inclusion. What do we mean when we say inclusion? What do we mean when we say diversity? And so, a very large part of that was just trying to find the starting points for people in how we talk about this topic.

And then, another part was really thinking about connecting people who are passionate about the topic but maybe were alone inside of a company. They might be the only person who's thinking about this topic, and it can be a very lonely place at times because it's hard work, you know. It's one of those things, especially if there's a lot of interest in inclusion and it's a rising topic, and at the same time, where to start and how to make progress, and how to measure that progress -- these are all questions that I found everywhere I was going.

So, I wanted to find a place where we could bring people together to explore those things, share what was working, and that's what Mismatch.design has become. So, it's a collection of stories authored by people who are inclusive designers. The stories come from a vantage point of their own experiences with exclusion and how that shapes the solutions that they make; but then, also, resources in the news, kind of where to start with screen readers, or what's the fundamentals of accessibility?

So, those are what I find a growing interest in finding people and a sense of community so you don't feel alone in that work, but then also because there's no central resource today. You'll find agencies that maybe work on the topic, or companies that publish some resources. But can we create a place where that education can become elementary school education, it can be embedded in university programs? Can we make accessibility a fundamental, required course for every designer and engineer? Can we, as practitioners, have ongoing education in that space?

So, that's really our ambition, going forward, for Mismatch.design, which is it can be a place where that's co-created, and then also a leading example for others.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: And we've seen the impact that community can have in the inclusive design space. You've referenced some of the work of John Porter, especially with the Xbox adaptive controller. But it seems like there was a groundswell of gamers interested in accessibility that's really brought about a lot of that change. Are there any other industries that you see are really have the same amount of community involvement and excitement, or maybe the other side of the card that are like really ready for an inclusive design revolution? (Laughter.)

SONIA DARA: Much-needed. (Laughter.)

KAT HOLMES: Probably some folks in the room here might have examples of that. I think the fact that we're all here talking about this, to me, is a great sign that there's a growing community. And I think that culture often drives -- like, the gaming culture is such a kind of sharp focus, right? There's such passion already just for gaming itself. And then, thinking about how the design of games and the controllers have changed who can participate in the game design process, so we see this kind of cyclical relationship that's changing as who creates games changes, it changes the games that we play.

I think that plays out, I think it's playing out all across the tech sector. It's maybe to a slower degree in some places than others, but there's definitely, as we think about -- you know, Airbnb has a team entirely dedicated to, I think they call it anti-discriminatory team, which is such a specific name, right? But it makes sense in context of what Airbnb does.

And I think those kind of shared economy practices is definitely a place that's right and ready, especially as it's transforming so many industries, it's important to be thinking about inclusive design practices in that space.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: So, I've been taking a lot of Lyfts recently and I actually got a text about a driver who was coming to pick me up. And it told me, "Your driver is hard of hearing. Be ready to anticipate it." Another experience that I had recently in Orlando, my driver didn't speak English so we communicated through Google Translate the entire time. (Laughter.)

KAT HOLMES: That's kind of cool, yeah.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Yeah. But I definitely see that opportunity in these gig economy or shared economy spaces.

KAT HOLMES: Yeah. I think because it presents some really extreme challenges, as well, right? Like, accessibility for homes that are in New York City. It's pretty challenging, just basic access to a lot of these older structures. So those are things that, as people figure out these ways of increasing access in these environments, it's going to benefit a broader set of industries.

I think education has been way ahead of technology for a long time. I think there's practices from inclusive play spaces and education spaces that will transfer over to tech, if we seek out solutions and learn from those groups. And I think architecture and how we build our spaces and environments is really ready for some change, as well.

SONIA DARA: So there's a quote, "It's easy to defer responsibility by claiming this is just how the world worked when we arrived." So in your experience at Microsoft and now at Google, what are some of the strategies you're using to get your engineering partners to take more responsibility for inclusive design? So once they're brought in, how do you actually avoid the adoption of a superhero victim or benefactor/beneficiary mindset?

KAT HOLMES: Yeah, that's a really big question. There's a lot in there.

SONIA DARA: You can break it down if you want. (Laughter.) How do you get your engineers bought in?

KAT HOLMES: So, the punchline question. (Laughter.) So, I think to the point of Vivian Gussin Paley's kindergarten classroom, right, it's easy to show up in an environment and be like, "Ah, exclusion is just part of being a human being. Being left out is just part of our nature." And what I found really interesting is there a moment in time when it's taught and it's learned.

And I think in the same way any environment we step into, we inherit these kind of practices, maybe, or things that are -- processes that are running the way that maybe they have for years,

or especially in a company. Maybe the founders of that company had a certain culture they established. And the founders are long gone, but the culture lives on.

So, I think one of the most important kind of ideas that's made a difference for me is anybody can start anywhere at any moment thinking about how exclusion shapes the environment. How's it shape who showed up here tonight? How's it shape the nature of the conversation we're having?

And I think one of the keys in getting to that point is trying to life some of this good and bad nature of, "Inclusion is good and exclusion is bad, and I'm a bad person if I left somebody out," because it does stop people from proceeding further and understanding a place of responsibility that we can each take for, "Oh, there's an exclusionary moment that I created that left people out. Now, how do I take responsibility for that and start shifting it towards inclusive practices? Who can I partner with who can help me recognize this problem differently and think about the solution in a new way?"

And when I work with engineering teams, one of the most effective ways of getting people started is meeting people who are using their solutions, and are unable to complete a task or fill out the job application because basic screen reader accessibility isn't met, or suddenly you improve a product, but it loses accessibility basics and somebody's unable to do their job.

And so, making those moments really concrete for people, and I think especially -- most of us come into our roles wanting to produce something that is of use in the world, and there's something about seeing something you made really not working for somebody that's very motivating. And I think, especially for maybe an engineer or a designer who's very intimately familiar with how that solution was constructed, to say, "Oh, it's not working but I can see the one or two things I need to go do differently to make this work well," try to do it in a way that's not shameful, but that really is about recognizing the responsibility for that solution.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: And after that initial meeting, I'm sure it's really impactful. I'm sure that engineering leader might have that person's interests in mind, moving forward. How do you reinforce that you, as an engineering leader, do not always know best? It's important to continue working with that exclusion expert.

KAT HOLMES: The humility is a huge practice. It's a skill to build, I think. And it's easiest to build when it's demonstrated well by the leadership of a company, I think, in one effect. I've seen that more than anything as an accelerator for a company in terms of changing culture in this space, is demonstrating humility at a level of leadership that sets the tone for a much broader organization to behave in that way, as well.

But there's also I think recognizing our own -- another term I use in the book is -- ability biases. Again, biases are kind of built-in. It's not like we're going to get rid of them easily any time soon. So when it comes to abilities, ability biases are some of the sneakiest kind of biases we have, because if we design something that we ourselves can see, or hold, or it maps to how we think and learn, it works well for people who have similar preferences or ways of working, but it ends up excluding a much broader group of people.

And so, I think there's a real strength in recognizing what our ability biases are. It might be speech and, I don't know, vision, right? Like, speech and eyesight. Then, we can say, "What ability biases would complement my own? Is it someone who is highly acute in terms of using auditory signals to discern information? Okay, how can we pair up and think about the solution in a partnership kind of way?"

And so, I think it's humility combined with some real pragmatic -- I'm a pragmatist -- some real pragmatic kind of recognition of our own strengths and of the strengths of the people around us.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: So, we're at The Riveter. It's a workspace for many entrepreneurs, and I bet we have many business-minded folks in the audience right now. So when building a business case for inclusion, what are some of the insights and opportunity areas that we should consider?

KAT HOLMES: Oh, there's a lot of different lenses I've been at this point in taking this kind of business case argument. It depends on the motivation and the goal of the business, in many ways.

For some, just talking about total addressable markets, like we maybe start with a solution that works well for someone who's deaf or hard or hearing. And here's how, if we make sure that Spotify works well for someone who's deaf or hard of hearing, that it could go on to benefit a much broader group of people. The team at Spotify, when I was working with them, was like, "Well, we just kind of assume that someone's who's deaf doesn't use Spotify." So untrue, right?

So, there's that checking of assumption, and then thinking about how we would actually design first, think about who's most excluded and how that could extend to more people. So, that's kind of a total addressable market argument.

There's always carrots and there's sticks, so the stick is always the high cost of retrofitting accessibility. I don't know if anybody's published their numbers on how much time and money it took them to bring their websites up to compliance, but it is in the order of millions for large companies.

There's also the nature of differentiation and innovation, thinking about how we frame the goal of a product. Sometimes, something like screen contrast on our phones today, we all benefit from it because we walk out into the sunshine and suddenly the screen automatically adjusts. But it's a technology that was first designed for people with low vision.

So once we started taking computers outside, suddenly that technology that had maybe been on the shelf for many years became newly useful, or there's a new context and it gave new life to these innovations that maybe we have but haven't thought of in a new way.

So, it's challenging assumptions. It's that creativity and that innovation is I think the hero kind of example of business case. But often it starts with a couple of sticks, like legal requirements, and then slowly growing into what the business specifically is trying to achieve.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: And it's encouraging that you reinforce in the book that the best time to start remedying exclusion is now. You've explained that inclusive design is not about being nice,

that it takes work. And for those in the audience who are interested in implementing some new, inclusive design practices, or really want to invest in being inclusive design practitioners, what is a step that we could all take today to bring more of that into our everyday lives?

KAT HOLMES: Yeah, this actually grew out of -- the whole "inclusion is not nice" piece became so clear to me in the process of kind of the early days of working on inclusive design. And there's a number of people in the room here who were part of that, so I'll say it kind of in a shared way.

But in the early kind of stages of work, it was very much about how do we convince people that inclusive design is important. And you'll often hear teams, even today, say, "We should do it because it's the right thing to do." And I don't know many commercial businesses that thrived on doing the right thing to do, right? Not to be cynical, but just at the heart of it, it has to be good for business.

And so, inclusion is not nice speaks more to -- I personally would, in a heartbeat, choose someone who's demonstrating inclusive practices but maybe doesn't internalize all the elements of the mindset over someone who has all the mindset but doesn't demonstrate the practices.

And so, when we think about places to start, one of I think the most kind of simple ways to start is just to start recognizing, almost as a habit, what kinds of exclusion are happening around me today. Thinking about the nature of this space -- we've got a pretty good space here tonight -- but entry into the building. If we have a job we're posting, what kind of tools are people required in order to apply to that job, right? What kind of questions do we require them to answer?

If we're thinking about gathering feedback to improve product design, what are the tools and mechanisms that we're using to gather that feedback? Whose voices will show up the loudest if we use an online forum versus an in-person forum, a human-guided process?

So, we start to recognize exclusion in our immediate environments, the kind of tools that we use in our workplace, the ways that we gather feedback to improve our products, and I think just finding those little, simple places to start and then seeking out, "Well, who is maybe most unable or most excluded from participating, and let's go seek out that perspective and partner on how we can rethink those solutions."

Then, it suddenly becomes I think a little bit of a halo effect. You start to see, you start to shift, like just building a muscle. It's like brushing your teeth when you wake up in the morning, to me. Like, it's always going to be -- you're always going to have to do it again tomorrow, but if you could do that today in even a small way, you start to build it as a habit in the same way that we've learned how to exclude as a habit. So, start to clean the plaque off.

SONIA DARA: Oh, I see what you did there. That was good. That was great. (Laughter.) So besides Mismatch.design, where can our listeners find you online?

KAT HOLMES: That is the best place. Yeah, Hello at Mismatch.design. I'm active on Twitter. It's probably the second best place to reach me.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: What's your Twitter handle?

KAT HOLMES: @KatHolmes. I got on early. I was on Twitter early.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Awesome. (Laughter.) Kat, thank you so much for joining us today and for the work that you're doing.

SONIA DARA: Thank you, Kat.

KAT HOLMES: And I have to give a shout out because my 11 year old, Sophia right there, is also a contributor to the book. Can you stand up for a second?

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Nice.

SONIA DARA: Hi, Sophia.

KAT HOLMES: So, I think inclusion by age. This is Sophia. (Laughter/applause.) Thank you for being here, and my mother is here as well. And I think just as we think about whose voices and thinking about age, as well, and contribution, so much of what started here is thinking about play spaces for children, and how children learn. And ultimately, I mean "us" when I say children, right, like all of us.

So, I encourage you also to think and seek out the young people in your life and how you can partner up with them in thinking about solutions.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Yeah, Sophia was a very wise contributor to the book. I was really impressed.

KAT HOLMES: Yeah. (Laughter.)

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Thank you so much for being here tonight, and thank you again, Kat.

SONIA DARA: Thanks, Kat. Thank you, everyone. (Applause.)

KAT HOLMES: Thank you.

VOICE: Cutting Edge, our take on stories in the business and technology world.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: In this Cutting Edge segment, we'll take a look at an article that was written by J.K. Trotter that was published in *Insider* on January 7th entitled "Women's Club The Wing quietly dropped its practice of banning men after a man filed a $12 million gender discrimination lawsuit."

SONIA DARA: At its founding, The Wing refused to admit men as members or guests. According to the article "Paying members have portrayed the no-men rule as a bulwark against sexual harassment, while critics have called it discriminatory."

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: This criticism came to a head last year when a 53 year old man brought up a gender discrimination lawsuit seeking damages of up to $12 million against the startup. The Wing stated earlier this month that they have, "Adopted written membership policies to ensure The Wing's staff is trained not to make assumptions about someone's identity based on how they present, or to ask prospective members or guests to self-identify."

SONIA DARA: The Wing's co-founder and CEO, Audrey Gelman, clarified that the new policy, "Provides that all applicants will be evaluated based on their commitment to The Wing's mission, regardless of their perceived gender identity." And that mission she's referring to is advancing women through community.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Insiders say that the lawsuit was not the only or primary impetus for this adjusted membership policy, and that there have been ongoing conversations to better recognize trans and gender non-binary. Regardless, I'm personally glad that this conversation is happening and that they are opening the doors to more people.

SONIA DARA: Yeah. Agreed.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Workplace equality is important and a really difficult problem to solve, and we need as many people in that effort as possible, especially if they are committed The Wing's mission, advancing women through community.

(Music.)

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Well listeners, thanks for checking back in with us this time. And a special thank you to Beatris Mendez Gandica. I loved hearing all about your great work with The Nuevo Foundation.

SONIA DARA: And thank you to Kat Holmes. We had such a great time at our live event with you. There was an awesome crowd and I know everyone really, really walked away from that event super, super happy and pumped.

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: Yeah, great food and drink. We had Madre's Kitchen. We had some Nasty Women Wine.

SONIA DARA: Nasty Women Wine was very popular. Yeah. And I just had so many people reach out afterwards saying, "Inclusive design is the best."

COLLEEN O'BRIEN: It is. And listeners, remember to rate, review, and share our show on Apple podcasts, or wherever fine podcasts can be found.

SONIA DARA: If you have any questions or feedback, you can email us at wibt@microsoft.com or tweet us @MicrosoftWomen.

Listeners, your mission for this episode, if you choose to accept it, is to consider an anonymous application process for your team. This mission is inspired by the recent annual Telescope Allocation Review for the *Hubble Space Telescope.* Those observing proposals were reviewed through a dual anonymous system, so neither the reviewers nor the investigators knew the

gender of the people on the other side. In an article published on the Space Telescope Science Institute's website and whose parent org is NASA, author N. Reid states, "To the best of our knowledge, this is the first occasion where a fully anonymized process has been employed in a large-scale proposal review in physical sciences." Pretty cool. Maybe your team should try it out, too.

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