

Vidya Shah: (00:00:05)

Hello, my name is Dr. Vidya Shah, and I'm so excited to welcome you to Season 3 of the Unleading Podcast. For those of you who have been on this journey with us through Seasons 1 and 2, we welcome you back. And for those who are tuning in for the first time, welcome. We hope that this experience invites really kind of like a peeling back of the layers of how we have come to understand leadership, so that we might make space for greater nuance, more authenticity, more joy, more wonder, more complexity, and definitely more justice in our understandings and enactments as leaders. After Season 3 and now 15 podcasts, I can say that my understanding of what leadership is, is probably just as muffled as it was when we started this project three years ago. But I can also say that my understanding of what leadership is, is probably just as muffled as it was when we started this project three years ago. And I think that's the point of unleading, not to have some clearly defined list of what it means to be a leader and train people into following that list, whether through compliance or maybe a bit of charm, but to continuously be in the process of undefining leadership so that we might get a bit closer to experiencing this quite undefinable phenomenon. I'm really excited about today's conversation that in many ways picks up on this idea of undefinable. With amazing folks we have joining us in conversation who span community spaces, the academy, schools, and more. And if you want to know more about our panelists, you can find their full bios and contact information on the Unleading website at www.yorku.ca/edu/for_education/unleading. Today's topic is technologies of leadership. And when I say technologies of leadership, what we mean is that we're recognizing that technology, like leadership, is not neutral. We'll explore leadership as we move away from the information age towards the age of intelligence and other ages that we may not even know about quite yet. We consider what it means to lead in a time of constant change, technological opportunities, and innovative possibilities, but also in a time of unprecedented surveillance, and often unregulated technology sector, racist algorithms, the attention economy, and neocolonial practices in the AI sector and beyond. And so this podcast will really explore what leaders need to be aware of and how we need to rethink leadership in these times and through these times, and how we can lead in ways that leverage possibilities of technology while actively resisting the potential dangers. And as I think about my own journey and my own hopes and fears with technology, the ways in which, you know, AI and ChatPT have become both students and teachers in my classes, and that I think about the fact that I, like many of you who may be listening, actually existed in a time before cell phones and email addresses and perhaps even the internet. And because of all of this, I'm really excited to learn from our panelists today and dive into this discussion about both presence and futures that I don't yet know or understand. And as we have with all of our podcasts, I'd love to welcome the amazing Dr. Sava Saheli Singh, who will be our opening speaker to sort of give us a little bit of a lay of the land and help us understand what it is that we're going to be thinking about and talking about in this podcast. Sava is an assistant professor of Digital Futures and Education with the Faculty of Education at York University and a wonderful human being. Welcome, Sava.

Sava Singh: (00:03:53)

Thank you so much for inviting me to contribute some initial comments on the topic of technologies of leadership. I wanted to start by saying thank you to Vidya and Aura for the important conversations they have made possible through the Unleading podcast. I was excited to contribute to this podcast because, I mean, not only do I know and love Vidya, who is amazing, but also because this topic is very much in my wheelhouse for a few reasons. Firstly, my research and teaching focuses on critical digital literacy, which at its core guides us to examine all the facets of a technology to understand its impact and use. Secondly, I've always had a viscerally negative reaction to the word and concept of leadership as it is often applied and understood within frameworks of power and also in the context of grifting through things like thought leadership. So I really appreciate what Vidya is doing here to unpack what is and isn't leadership. Having said that, we still exist in an imperialist, white supremacist, capitalist patriarchy, as Bell Hooks so eloquently put it, and sometimes we might find ourselves in leadership roles, so it becomes useful to examine what leadership within this system can be useful for. For me, that's what unleading points to and how I'm thinking about it in relation to technologies of education. Once we have located ourselves in the hierarchical structure, we can use our relative power to affect real change, not the book-banning kind of change, but the supporting your students and teachers and staff kind of change. I think that starts with understanding what technology is, and here I'm using technology broadly to mean everything from a particular program or a device or AI or what have you. So it becomes important to understand what it can do and who stands to gain the most from its implementation. While there are a lot of good examples of technology being useful in education, be it pedagogically for students or as supports to instructors, there needs to be clear critical examination of these technologies, how they are implemented, who the procurement decision-makers are, and how to include the communities who will be impacted by these technologies in the discussions to gauge the need and impact before implementing it. As leaders, it is important to look beyond and behind the hype to understand not only the potential negative or positive impact it can have on students, but also the impact that its creation has already had. For example, on refugees, migrants, and other forms of exploited labor, on land, water, flora, and fauna, on the global south, on Indigenous communities, on communities of color, disabled communities, poor communities, especially for those who cannot opt out of its use, or for those who do not even have access to it. When thinking about ecological, environmental, and climate impacts, it is important to understand, for example, what data centers are, what role they play in our lives, where they're often constructed, and who and what is impacted by that construction. It is also important to ask questions about data. How is it used? Who owns it? Is it used to surveil? What sort of decisions do the data inform? Is there a way for people to consent to the use of their data? Is it used for things that folks did not consent to? What does consent look like? What is real consent? Just getting people to click OK with no options or choices is not consent. As a leader, how can you create real options that are supportive of

communities and respectful of privacy without sacrificing the quality of the learning? All this to say, it's important to understand not just what the technology can do, but what creating that technology has already done. It is really difficult to make ethical choices in the world right now. In fact, I'll go so far as to say there are no ethical choices that we can make. So how do we think about making better choices and working towards contributing to undoing the harms that the technologies we rely on have already caused in the world? How do we bring these conversations into our spaces and collectively dream of how things could be and work towards making that a reality? I think that being in a leadership role is an opportunity to really understand what technologies are and to make better choices about the technology that we bring into schools, institutions, other educational settings, and even our lives. Being a leader is an opportunity to work towards a more equitable approach to technology adoption and calibrating our relationship with the complex networks of impact that technology can have to create a strong foundation for choosing when to work with and without technology. And I think that's a really great conversation to have, especially now as the world lurches towards fascism. All of this is of course related to what you mentioned, Vidya, about how AI is everywhere. Almost everyone is using it, knowingly and unknowingly. Everyone's talking about it. Institutions, including ours, are sinking money into the AI hole. Our use of AI has already caused so much damage to people and places, and its continued use is going to accelerate environmental and ecological damage. So I think it's a good time for leaders to think about what that means and how you can engage with this in a way that's useful. It is important to look at the context of how AI as we know it today came to be, and how it continues to operate, and what the long-term social, environmental, and economical implications are. You cannot think of the classroom without thinking of the world in which that classroom exists. I hope these are useful comments. Thank you very much.

Vidya Shah: (09:46:06)

Thank you so much, Sava. That's such helpful framing. And I think really what I appreciate the most is sort of naming what we don't know, or naming what we're intentionally not supposed to know about tech and AI and this whole field. And I think there's something really important about exposing that for people who have various leadership responsibilities. Thank you so much. Folks, I'm really excited to dive into this conversation with a wonderful panel. We have four panelists. And I'm going to just take a moment and introduce each of those panelists, and then invite them to share how they come to this podcast today. Our first panelist is Lisa Cole. And Lisa is the Director of K2I, that stands for Kindergarten to Industry. And it's the K2I Academy at the Lassonde School of Engineering at York University. Lisa's a passionate educator, a systems leader in STEM, science, technology, engineering, and math education. And she's committed to building equitable opportunities for students. I've personally had the opportunity of working with Lisa on a number of projects, and it's just been an absolute joy. So welcome to the podcast, Lisa.

Lisa Cole: (00:10:04)

Thank you, Vidya for the warm welcome and the invitation to join this conversation. I would say that I join this primarily as a dreamer. I think I'm a true optimist. I know that I often speak about problems more than solutions. But I think the reason why I like to sit in the space of problems is because I'm a true optimist and love engaging in conversation to see what we can do together to create the future that we want. So, thank you. Thank you for having me here.

Vidya Shah: (00:11:32)

I just love that. I love that. Well, we have another dreamer on our podcast, Dr. Kishonna Gray. Kishonna is a professor of Racial Justice and Technology in the School of Information at the University of Michigan. And she's also the director of the Intersectional Tech Lab, which is a Mellon-funded initiative and author of many things. Welcome, Kishonna.

Kishonna Gray: (00:11:55)

Thank you so much for having me. I'm really excited to be in this space. I'm a huge fan of folks who are on this panel, and the lovely Sava who opened us-you know, we've been connected-you know, for a long time now. And so, and I really love-you know, how you, how Lisa just gave us like that framework of like being like a dreamer. And I think that, you know, I want to echo that as well. Because how I come to it is like from an imagination space around play and thinking about what are the possibilities we see what is. But I think that we can engage the imagination and the play space and really think about what could be, and really look at play and youth spaces, you know, for a sense of like the possibilities and opportunities inside that space, like for our technology. So I'm glad to share. I'm glad to connect and can't wait to start the conversation. Thank you for having me.

Vidya Shah: (00:12:41)

Oh, I love that. The notion of play is something that we have so gone so far away from, and it's so fun. We got to get back to that. We got to get back to that. I'd love to also welcome someone who knows how to play, Andrew McConnell, who member of Nipissing First Nation and Toronto resident. He boasts nearly 20 years of experience in education, emerging technology, and Indigenous teaching. He currently holds the IBET fellowship at Lassonde School of Engineering at York University, and is a seconded faculty member at the Faculty of Education at York University, where he teaches in the Waaban program for Indigenous teacher candidates. Welcome, Andrew.

Andrew McConnell: (00:13:23)

Thank you so much. Yeah. I'm so excited to be here to have this conversation, it's great to have, because I kind of play in these two worlds of what does leadership look like, especially in education, and then also technology, because the funny thing is, like even at the school board when I work there, I very often get pegged as either I'm a tech teacher or I'm an

Indigenous educator, and the funny thing is I'm both things at the same time. So to be able to talk about these concepts of what does it even mean to be in leadership, both in education, but then through a technological process, I think about a lot. So it's kind of fun to have these conversations with people in different spaces. Miigwech.

Vidya Shah: (00:14:00)

Miigwech. Thank you for being here. And last but certainly not least is Michael Kwet. And Michael is a postdoctoral researcher of the Center for Social Change at the University of Johannesburg, and a visiting fellow at Yale Law School. And his research focuses on digital colonialism, social media, surveillance, and the environment. Deep welcome, Michael.

Michael Kwet: (00:14:21)

Hi, I'm glad to be here. My most recent work, I just released a book called Digital Degrowth: Technology in the Age of Survival. And I'd like to bring to the table, I hope, an argument for a kind of big picture analysis of putting technology into an environmental context. And yeah, so glad to be here.

Vidya Shah: (00:14:49)

Thank you so much, Michael. Looking forward to that conversation. And, you know, folks, one of the things that I've noticed we tend to do here in Unleading is make up terms and make up words like 'Unleading'. And so one of the things we have made up is this notion of technologies of leadership. Not really sure what that means, but we are here to explore that together as a group. And I'd love to hear from folks as to what they think this means, this notion of technologies of leadership, and not just what it means, but what that might look like in your everyday practice. So Kishonna, I'd love to start with you and ask you your thoughts on that question.

Kishonna Gray: (00:15:24)

Absolutely. I'm glad to engage that question, because whenever I saw it, I was like, hmm, what does that look like? Where could we go with that? And I appreciate, you know, Andrew's prompting of, like, you know, allowing us to then think about it, like, from our own perspective. I think how I approach a concept like technologies of leadership is really thinking about, first off, the things that we don't see, you know, at the forefront, right? So we see all these innovations, we see the things that are out there, we see the things that we can engage in. But I always, and a lot of folks, like, in this room, you know, we often think about, like, who's missing? Who are the people who are not part of the conversation? What are the conversations we aren't having? A few months ago, I was asked to speak to the Apple Vision Pro technology. And I was asked by USA Today to kind of, like, chat about it. And I think a lot of people would think I would always be in a celebratory space, like, around technology. But the first thing that I said, as a Black woman, I'm like, well, I'm not going to wear that outside because it's going to mess up my hair. And I think they were kind of

shocked at that. And I think it goes, you know, to these conversations of, like, universal design, and they assume a universal design, and assume everyone will engage in it. But even also, like, as a woman, like, I'm not going to put that on and just walk around the street, you know, conversations of, like, safety, right? So I always, you know, go back to, like, you know, what's missing? Who's not there? And what kinds of conversations do we need to have, like, at the table? I think another thing I've really been inspired by, like, a kid space, like the youth and what youth are engaging in, and how much we don't engage youth enough, like with a lot of the technologies. I remember when I was in graduate school, one of the frameworks that I thought were really interesting was the, was the diffusion of innovation. This is, I can't even think of the theorist right now. But what was interesting to me is that it had these categories. It had, like, categories all the way from, like, early adopters to laggards, right? And of course, early adopters are people with a lot of money, a lot of time on their hands, you know, some of the most privileged among us. But even in that space, I remember the early adopters, like, in my communities, they wouldn't have talked about them as early adopters. But I remember, you know, for instance, like, drug dealers would always have, like, the latest technologies, like, in my neighborhood. So we saw pagers and cell phones and computers and laptops. And, you know, I'm thinking about, like, in the 90s, you know, all this amazing, like, technology. But I just remember being excited from some of the people from the struggle classes the most. And they are the ones who got me excited about technology. You know, looking at the screen, looking at advertisements and stuff, you know, I wouldn't have been, like, the go-to audience to engage it. But I love that, you know, folks like my mom, you know, always kept us up, like, with the latest gaming technology. And so it was really, like, these folks who have been left out and left behind were always still so excited about it. So I love how the technology just kind of excites people around this kind of stuff. But I think for me, you know, I think about, like, technologies of leadership. I think about the innovations. I think about who's at the fore, who's there, who's not there, and who are we designing for. And I really would like for us to continue to push that conversation so then we could think about having, instead of universal design, to move more into, like, an intersectional design and just acknowledge that, like, a single thing does not have to be created for everybody. And also that when it is created, we might do different things with it, you know, once we have it. So I'll stop there to provide space.

Vidya Shah: (00:18:30)

I so appreciate this. I know that universal design is such a foundational concept in so many educational spaces. And thinking about what that could look like as, you know, intersectional design and challenging this very notion of a one-size-fits-all period for anybody, for anything, is such an important piece. Thank you, Kishonna. So helpful. Andrew, we'd love to hear from you on this question. What does technology of leadership look like in your everyday practice?

Andrew McConnell: (00:18:55)

Oh, I am so happy I get to go after Kishonna, because she just hit on so many things that I've been thinking about lately. Like, just even the ideas about diffusionism. Definitely universal design, because it doesn't work, right? I'm doing all this research right now for a paper I'm working on, and you can just see it. It's constant over and over and over for Indigenous folks, and education in general. Like, I used to, when I, my prior role when I was working at the school board was advocating for Indigenous education. And so much of the main priorities in the school board, they're important to Indigenous people, but they're not our primary importance to us, right? And so, you know, it's even this concept of what is technological leadership. It really depends on who you are and what you need, and very much that cultural lens. At least that's my thought. Because I know coming from an Anishinaabe point of view, and again, so Nipissing First Nation, I'm Anishinaabe, Indigenous to Ontario, you know, our concepts even of what technology is, are, they're all connected. Like, when we're talking about technology, yeah, we're talking about cell phones. John Rice is an amazing, amazing leader from Wasauksing First Nation. And so he appreciates the fact that in the dead of winter, he can start his truck from the comfort inside his house by using a cell phone. Like, we do appreciate these things. But at the same time, we also acknowledge our old technology, such as using fire to both control and renew landscapes. You know, to us, that's a technology. And very much this idea of technology, it's a tool. And a tool is very much an extension of your presence into other spaces and other places, and allows you to do work that you would do with your hands, you know, if that's all you had, or your mouth in this case. Because very much from an Anishinaabe point of view, leadership has to do with conversation and communication. And for us, leadership is never about telling people what to do. It's the other way around. For us, leadership is a sense of service to the people you're in community with. And so therefore, any tool that allows you to learn from your community, that allows you to connect with your community in a good way, and then carry that voice forward, that is the technology of leadership. So very much in my mind, I think, you know, social media is a technology of leadership, but it's one that comes with all those senses of responsibilities. You can't just say things that are at the top of your mind. You must sit with them for a while and talk with others. Therefore, email is a great thing. In Indigenous community, I'll be honest, Facebook is it. Because it's allowed us all to connect. And as much as we know Facebook is owned by somebody else and not by us, and that's problematic. And I think that's where the future is. And maybe we'll come back to that later. But any tool that allows us to connect with our kin over distance is a tool of leadership for us. And I'm very much interested these days in how do I bring those tools out of the dominant society and put them into the hands of my community so that we are able to work with them in our own way and take ourselves forward. So that's kind of where my head is.

Vidya Shah: (00:22:15)

I just love that, Andrew. And thank you for really broadening this notion of what both technology means and also leadership and, of course, bringing them together. Really helpful.

Thank you. And Michael, I'd love to hear from you on this question. What does technologies of leadership look like in your everyday practice?

Michael Kwet: (00:22:32)

Okay. I would like to piggyback off what Andrew said towards the end about ownership. I don't think that you can self-lead or self-manage in a situation when the technologies are owned and controlled by a handful of predominantly U.S. corporations. I did my Ph. D. on communication technology. I started the Ph. D. in 2012 before I officially signed up in South Africa. And what I learned very quickly was that the big tech giants, especially Microsoft, Google to a small degree, but they were waiting for internet connectivity to go up. Pearson, the European textbook giant, that is in the process of, was at the time in the process of creating a digital strategy, that these corporations basically rule the roost. Down here and more broadly, the general digital ecosystem, the core infrastructure, the means of computation and the knowledge, including the data and the intellectual property, are pretty much locked up by American corporations. And so if you're looking at leadership from the Global South, let's say in a place like Johannesburg, which is where I live, unfortunately, in the Global South, the issues are so severe that people are focused on things like getting access to water, to electricity, alleviating severe poverty, inequality, and the basic needs, healthcare etc. so that when a big tech corporation shows up and decides they're gonna push their technology into your schools, that they're going to open cloud centers in your cities, there's limited activist capacity to resist these encroachments. So I think what we have at the end of the day is a situation in which the leaders are really those who own and control the technologies, and the rest of us are left to do the best we can within those spaces. But we're so severely constrained that access to technology isn't good enough. So I think really what we need to be looking at is ownership and control.

Kishonna Gray: (00:25:14)

Thank you so much, you know, for offering that, Michael. And I know, and thinking about like a lot of, you know, Black spaces, you know, here like in the U.S. and a lot of, you know, Latinx communities, Indigenous communities here like in the U.S., North America space. One of the things that I remember us having, we had a conversation, it was right after Trump was elected. And I remember like all those feelings of, you know, the doom and gloom that was happening. And I remember a lot of folks felt bad for still engaging with a lot of these problematic technologies, like you had just mentioned, right? And then I remember being in that space, you know, some of it may have been like Chris Gilliard. You know, I can't remember who or like André Brock. But somebody had said that we still have space, like for joy, and we can't let them take away the joy. And that it's like both these things, or all these things, can like still be true like at the same time. And I remember, like, at that moment, I was starting to study like the alt-right space, like inside gaming, and how, you know, algorithms. were like used to push certain content at us, and so it was like more and more of like this really negative work um, and also it's work that I didn't think was that generative um, but I really remembered um you know somebody then saying, well if these spaces are

so bad, then why are we still there? And I remember responding, 'I'm like, we're there for each other' you know, these communities of support, building solidarities, building like the connections, like building all of this stuff um, like there's like a reason you know that that we're still there.

And I think even um, a lot of us, you know, we kind of felt complicit, like for instance with all the things that were uncovered and discovered, like among like Facebook, and you know, we're like, why are we still there? You know, we're there, just like, folks were saying, like we're there because Granny's there, you know. We're there like because you know we've made these connections, and those connections are the are a stronger bond than the weak connections that we might have then with, like, the technology.

Vidya Shah: (00:27:04)

I love that so much Kishonna, I think one of the things I love so much about this conversation is that we're literally holding multiple truths often that are contradictory in the same conversation and giving them all giving them all space. And I think that that, in and of itself, is something to say about technologies of leadership, the capacity to hold multiple and contradictory truths, uh, together. Mike, I want to thank you for bringing in perspectives of the global South, which often don't make their way into conversations in the global North, and it's really important um to hear about that. And especially this notion of you know companies just coming in and taking up space in your, in your, in your neighborhood, and you actually just don't have the capacity to fight back against that. Um, it's something that's really important for us here in the North where those companies are situated to be aware of and to start acting towards. Super helpful, thank you so much. Lisa, welcome, I'd love to hear your thoughts on this conversation: What does technology of leadership look like in your everyday practice?

Lisa Cole: (00:28:05)

Yeah this is you know the fact that you know there's two words technology and leadership and then you've chosen to put them together in this way uh had me kind of puzzled and kind of thinking through like how do I respond um and I'm and I see um I feel like the group that you've brought together is a really fascinating group because we do come at this work from a slightly different you know uh places and spaces. So you know when I think about you know just the word technology for me you know I I think about um, the, the ingenuity, right, uh, of problem-solving of humanity, um, of us as a species, right, on earth, and our genuine curiosity and willingness to grapple with a problem to create things, uh, to solve problems, uh, in the every day. And then when I think about leadership, I think of, you know, sure like the titles, right, in our current organizational, you know, hierarchy, hierarchical that we actually operate in, but I would argue that in any social construct, and you bring people together, this notion of leading and leadership has always been in our dynamic social construct as a way of coming together, right? And who leads in what moment in time uh shifts and changes in that social construct and I think you know I think of you know sort of even family dynamics right? You follow somebody uh for different reasons in a family

construct. So when I think about these two things coming together in the work I do um I work in an engineering faculty right? We create future innovators in tech right and um you know when I think about the work I do for K2I academy uh we're looking at uh increasing uh diverse talent uh into these professions to create these you know technologies or solutions to challenges, um more broadly speaking because I think you know, currently we're talking about AI, but you know you know five years from now we're going to be talking about quantum tech and then who knows what's next right? Um and when we think about you know the evolution of solutioning problems and the people that we usually put together right through our educational systems to become the new innovators of tomorrow right um you know I think about the the the system the education system that has pushed out certain individuals from those pathways and kept certain perspectives in those pathways in the current state. And so when we talk about this tension around I mean let's just pick on AI for a moment because it's a hot topic and the bias inherent bias that currently exists in our AI systems, they were created based on the current data we have right? They were created by a particular group of people that had access to the education to pursue these careers in its current state, right? So when i think about the opportunity here as someone who is actually you know leading I use air quotes um this new this you, I grapple with this question around who are our future leaders in this space? Who are our future innovators? And how do we uh ensure that we are building a space that enables diverse people diverse perspectives, the kinds of community that we actually need to be a part of this creating of a new future, right? And you know I don't claim to have answers to any of those questions I love problems. I'm often uh sometimes criticized in certain spaces because I love to sit in the space of problems and not because you know I'm a pessimist, but because I'm an optimist, and you know when we think about the busyness of uh the spaces in which we work, we are often busy putting out the little fires, right? That are bubbling up everywhere. But if you sit in the space of really problem-seeking, I think you get to better understanding the source of that fire. And if you know, if I were to make an analogy, it's the difference between uh emergency and triage medicine and wellness and preventative medicine, right? And where are we going to commit our efforts, in sort of, you know, grappling with this, you know, need to address the immediate, but also really think about the future and how, how we're going to, you know, lead a change, collectively together, to create the future that we, I think, are all dreaming of here today.

Vidya Shah: (00:33:17)

Lisa thank you so much for sharing this, you know, this notion of actually sitting with problems like deeply, being, building a muscle to sit with problems, to explore them from multiple angles. It's one of the things I appreciate most about your leadership, and I think it's one of the capacities that we have lost in this sort of attention economy age, in this time where everything is so fast, we've lost the capacity to just sit with complexity and be okay with that. And I think it's a real invitation for us and to your point about you know not spending so much time dealing with all the outcomes of not addressing the original

problem, we actually have some time and space here maybe for maybe for that joy and that rest that Kishonna was talking about earlier, yeah. This is interesting folks, and you know we're moving into this sort of, many of you have talked about this already, but really thinking about um how technologies of leadership and technologies, in general, how does this actually disrupt our ideas of schooling, of leadership, of even technology, like what does this notion of technologies of leadership, how does it disrupt sort of the um commonplace, the common sense that's in schooling that's in leadership and what challenges do you face in leading in this particular way. I would love to hear from you all about this, and Andrew maybe we'll start with you on this question if that's okay.

Andrew McConnell: (00:34:52)

Yeah sure. It's interesting because again like Lisa said I don't see what's wrong with sitting with problems. That's where all of our opportunities are. But the fact of the matter is that people within the system are trying to avoid the problems and just say, 'We've got to keep the train on the tracks.' And meanwhile, they're completely ignoring the fact that the tracks don't meet all neighborhoods. They go past some completely and don't stop at others. And that metaphor is very true for my community. The train never stopped in Nipissing. It always stopped in North Bay. So I think about that all the time as far as these technological pieces. And I believe in education, obviously. I am a teacher. I wholeheartedly believe in it. But I'm not always-I'm not always sure that the system, the way it's set up, which is actually capable of meeting the needs of many students. But there are lots of people who just want it to meet the needs of one particular style of student and then expect the student to move in to modify themselves, right? And I have lots of problems with that, which is why I'm excited by things like K21 or Anishinaabe education system or the other pieces that exist in communities around the world that show that, hey, you know what? Maybe we just do education this way. And it's certainly something I'm exploring in my own work for my PhD. But these technological pieces, I keep looking at, I think a lot of the answers for technology and leadership and education, they don't actually sit in education right now. And they certainly don't sit in corporations. Because again, corporations, they want to sell to the most people the single product, as opposed to trying to make it modifiable. And I'm looking at the things lately of what a lot of what really cool Indigenous women have been doing with programming. In very artistic and game-based senses, they're exploring what does the medium do? And like Joanna Hearne in *Native to the Device*, she really talked about how there's a lot of Indigenous women who are appropriating the tools of technology, that is coding, programming, and creating things inside computers, games, places to congregate, works of art that are based on our cultures and our languages that allow people who are dispersed, because very much Indigenous people, we live in urban centers and we're basically diasporas in our own lands. But we can come back to these places by our computers now. And the dropping in price of devices, the dropping in prices of computers, and also the movement of programming online is all of a sudden creating avenues for us to make things for ourselves, by ourselves, because you don't need huge development teams

to create some of these things. There's lots of possibilities there. But education is actually the block, because not a lot of Indigenous students are getting access to computer science programming in high school. They're getting English, they're getting math, they're getting science, and technology courses are very much sidelined. And also, the expertise doesn't – it's expertise in computer science, but it has no expertise in ethnographic computing. And so, that's the other one. So even when you walk into a computer science classroom, you are assimilated into a colonial process of programming and meeting the needs of Ubisoft or whatever programming company that you're supposed to, as opposed to learning how do I program from my own culture's mindset? And what does that look like? Would that be different? Would the logical hierarchy that exists in the coding be different? Would it exist as a difference? Not to mention the fact that, you know, honestly, to code, you got to speak English, because all the coding is based off English. So, I mean, there's all sorts of ideas in there. But I mean, for me, education is both the problem and the solution. And it really is based on the people who come together and create these possibilities, both inside and outside the system. So I'll let it go there, because I really want to hear what other people have to say. I'm excited.

Vidya Shah: (00:39:01)

I so appreciate this answer, Andrew. So many things to think about. And folks, you don't have the luxury of being on our call and seeing the chat that's just blowing up and lots of conversation here. Kishonna, I'd love to hear your thoughts on this question. So how technologies of leadership really kind of disrupts normative ideas, but also challenges that you face in this process?

Kishonna Gray: (00:39:23)

Yeah, absolutely. I think one of the reasons because of what was just said, because of how coding is such a colonial legacy, right? I always try to disrupt that. I know, especially with all the STEM education, a lot of the fundings around that, let's, you know, teach kids coding, let's do that. I'm like, how about we not, you know, we can do so many other things, and still get to this end point of where we want students to be activated, like in this kind of thinking, this computational thinking, whatever we want them to have. But also, we have to think about why, you know, what's the purpose? What's the end goal? What's the end game? You know, so often, you know, whenever like, there's like a rush, or it's like an influx of technology, or an influx of things inside schools, you know, always try to like, at least have our administrators, like the leaders in the schools, like think about why, but then also like get teachers thinking about it more other than they're told to do it, and it's their job to do it. So I've really been in a space where I've been trying to engage teachers a lot more and talk to teachers a lot more. And I recognize that. So during the summers, and like during the school year, I run like a sort of camp. Some of the kids call it like a bait and switch. So I tell them they're going to come and play games. And then they come and play games. And then they learn other things, you know. And I think also getting it to the point of what Andrew just

said, I think multiple disciplines and multiple subjects need to be activated for this work, and to show the interdisciplinary nature of how all these things are really like connected, and to show that, you know, it's not disparate, like, sure, engineering is over there. But there are some conversations that engineering can have with like literary studies, you know, they're not like so far, especially like with, with language models, linguistic practices, you know, there are some things that that are some connections. And I think that as educators, like we have to draw the through threads, so that we recognize we're not as distinct and not as disparate, as we might think that we are. One of the things that I often do, especially like with teachers, because teachers are always that, I'm not sure if you all watch Abbott Elementary, but it's one of my favorite shows. But there was like an episode of Abbott Elementary, of where the teachers, they were introduced to a new technology. And it showed the intergenerational kind of like tensions of how the younger folks can adopt it, because, you know, they're more of like, you know, call it whatever, whatever you want, they're, they're more immersed in like digital stuff. And some of the older teachers were very nervous about it, you know, because, because they're, they're not. But I think one of the things that I try to do when I work with teachers, when they see me utilizing gaming technologies, and utilizing those kinds of things in the learning process, that gets keep students immersed, keeps them engaged, keeps their attention. I try to help them understand that technology is nothing new in the classroom. And I tried to dismantle like this notion of like technology, like for them to not think about it as like some, some kind of thing that they've never explored or used. I love talking about, for instance, like the incorporation of like the pencil into the classroom, like pencil and paper. Like that's like a technology of like leadership, that's a technology, you know, that we don't often think about, you know, the typewriter, you know, books, you know, like thinking about like the printing press, we didn't have books if it wasn't the printing press, and there was a technology that created that. So I like to historicize it, you know, so that way teachers realize that there was like a point where that the thing that they are used to doing, the thing that has become so normalized, there were tensions around that thing and bringing that into the classroom in and of itself, you know? So these are conversations that's like nothing new, but hopefully that eases them of saying, 'hey, we got to start at a space. And you are the teacher that can be that space of like where we start.' So I really like to kind of like dismantle all the myths and all the assumptions, you know, like around the technologies and help them see that it's really not that big of a hill we got to climb over. It really isn't. And I try to also anticipate spaces like mine, for instance, could be like a supplement for like what the teachers are doing in the class, because I also don't want them to be replaced. I don't think that, you know, technologies are something that just supplements like classroom spaces, and they just enhance like what the teachers already do. So, you know, I'm a huge advocate of making sure that there's like a teacher there that they're the facilitator of learning. And then we just add these things on to kind of help with like that facilitation. So I hope, I think I think that's been like my biggest challenge. Oh, that's not my biggest challenge. The biggest challenge, especially when it comes to the teacher space, because that's where I'm really focused at

right now, is getting them to let go of this idea of control in the classroom. And that has nothing to do with technology. That's just a people thing. I think a lot of these issues and a lot of these concerns that we have, these are people problems, right? And so a lot of teachers are so nervous about like the class being disrupted about managing the classroom. And then once they realize that they don't have to have control, and they can actually allow the kids have to have more autonomy to have more agency to have more direction and flow and like what they do, at all ages, even the younger kids can do this, then I think that it eases their burden. I try to tell teachers to let go, because it makes it easier, like for them in the classroom. I'll stop there.

Vidya Shah: (00:44:14)

I so appreciate this, Kishonna, this, a number of things that you shared that I, that I just want to lift up. And first is this notion of inter and whether you know, like when we see ourselves as deeply interconnected, then our disciplines are deeply connected, as Andrew was sharing, our communities are deeply connected, our generations are deeply connected, like there's so important about this interconnectedness that I think technology can facilitate. And also this certainty of change might be the only thing that we can be certain, certain of. And I think that there's something that you're saying in that, as well as this giving up of control, like such important pieces around what it means to walk in the world as a technology of leadership, where we don't always have to be in control, where there are things there are forces that are far beyond our control. You know, people often talk about COVID-19 acting on us as a whole force in and of itself that has been acting on us that who are we to think that, you know, that we as humans are the be all and end all, when you have these larger forces that are acting on us. And I think there's something to be said about that's really powerful. Thank you. Lisa Cole would love to hear from you on this, and what your thoughts are on how technologies of leadership disrupt our normative ideas and challenges that you face in that from that standpoint.

Lisa Cole: (0045:34)

Yeah, this was also an interesting question for me. I've had to kind of think about you know a little bit about the different experiences in education I've had. I used to be a physics teacher, physics and mathematics teacher in in high schools, and before you know moving into other roles. You know when I think about the time that I was in the classroom, you know I think we went from a network that was operated and and managed school by school to centralizing it across a district. It was during you know early parts of my career. So you see sort of the evolution of decision making that happens based on current technologies and shift to you know I would say control right, you know moving autonomy for classroom teachers to make their own independent decisions to you know now centralizing system decisions on how the technology will be deployed and used. And so I have this a little bit of like this love-hate relationship with that right because as a classroom teacher, I was like what do you mean now I need to go through all of these approvals versus you know from a system perspective

understanding that you know decisions to ensure privacy and you know security and optimizing access in sort of thinking about equity is also important, right? So I have this sort of tension that plays out in terms of the deployment and access to technology so that kind of came to mind for me. But I also think that for me this notion of expertise gets uh sort of plays out for me right, because you know as we move from an era of time pre you know Google or pre-internet, right, you know expertise, the teacher was the expert right and it was very defined right, so there was this you know kind of unsaid and notion that the adult in the room knew more already right? And now we have you know a culture where we're grappling with an education system that still wants to hold this notion of expertise, that age somehow defines expertise, we move students through a system grade by grade by age groups right because you know, we presume that they can only handle learning by you know age right?

And now we're disrupting that right um, and so how do we, how do we rethink sort of this notion of expertise and, you know, create a way of, you know, mobilizing sort of the opportunity like I really do think this is an opportunity right? But when we have a current system where we have structured it in a particular way that's hard to disrupt, right? And I think about decentralizing, sort of you know, decision making, you know, leadership, you have access to networks like we've never had access to and yet, we haven't figured out how to do that really well, right? So I think this is why I think it's an actual opportunity. I do think you know earlier there was mention of interdisciplinary and the need, I mean, I work in an engineering faculty; it's clear that engineers are not going to be the sole solutioning, future innovations right? And we know that, but we are we have a system where we have siloed, put things all in compartments, right? This is actually our colonial system that we've created, right? Because if you really think about education holistically, education is a human endeavor, right? It's always has been. Without our current structures in formalized education teaching and learning would still be the same thing right, from the moment you're born, right? And learning is just a part of being human, right? And our current systems has you know gone so far as to putting everything in compartments that now we're realizing it's not working and then we're saying what are we going to do about it? Right? And so this you know sort of current state structure this idea of technologies kind of disrupting our thinking about experts and expertise I think gives us an interesting opportunity for us to reconnect to the human nature of what teaching and learning was supposed to be about. And I do think there's an opportunity for us to think a little differently about what the future state of you know leadership development, building sort of a love or joy for you know a career pursuit, who you want to become, uh, be different. Um, I'll stop there.

Vidya Shah: (00:51:10)

Thank you so much, Lisa, and I appreciate you bringing the human into a conversation that is often, you know, people often don't associate technology with humanity in this kind of a way, and the invitation that you're offering here is that we can in fact practice being human differently, perhaps because of technologies. I appreciate that, I appreciate that perspective.

Michael, I'd love to hear your, your thoughts on this question: challenges that you see in leading this way and how technologies of leadership might disrupt normative ideas that we have.

Michael Kwet: (00:51:46)

Okay, I'd like to piggyback off Kishonna this time and ask the question, what is the end game here? The core of the issue of tech in the environment is an academic concept called ecologically unequal exchange. And unequal exchange taking place at the global level basically means that the rich big tech corporations, primarily again located in the United States. I don't say that as a sympathizer of the Chinese Communist Party. I'm not a sympathizer of the Chinese Communist Party, and if you look at some of what they do, for example, they pretty much run the mines in the Congo, and they do all sorts of other thing, that some on the left seem to want to defend them over, but uh, putting that aside, I ran through the data in the book, and the digital economy is overwhelmingly dominated by the United States. So what this winds up doing is it reinforces this centuries-long colonial division of labor. Here you have measured by market cap, the most lucrative part of the global economy, which is the tech sector, basically locked up by one country that has four percent of the world's population, it has 31 percent in the wealth and 45 percent of the household assets, and that's especially now due to the tech companies. So what you now see is that the rich West or the global North led by the United States does the quote-unquote higher level thinking, they own and control the knowledge economy, and the global South does the things that they have been assigned under this colonialism, which is to do things like menial labor, digging the dirt for metal, etc. on the cheap. And so that ecologically unequal exchange the ecological part has multiple dimensions to it, so you can bring in the e-waste the digitization of industrial agriculture the use of AI for oil production and exploration. If you look on an aggregate level, we're consuming too many resources: 100 billion tons of approximately 100 billion uh per year and the safe limit that doesn't exceed planetary boundaries may be as much as half of as that. Now in a global economy of about 105 trillion dollars in eight billion people, that leaves about twenty thousand dollars per head. Now you can look into the the studies and you can try to think this through for purchasing power and things like that, right? Twenty thousand dollars buys you more here in Johannesburg than he does in New York City buys you more in Turkey you know. But if you really break it down and you look into it, even if we do things like stop producing insane things that we're doing, like weapons for military warfare, and luxury items, and a whole host of other things and we reorient production towards the needs of the global poor and the poor elsewhere, even in the global north, basically, there isn't much room for class. And so the point is: if we were to reduce and cap the aggregate material resource use of the global economy, that capping part is incompatible with the logic of how capitalism works, because you invest in that which grows right? So we're looking at a massive redistribution of wealth and power within and between countries, in a very short period of time. Which I would call revolution, and I think that's the only thing that can save the day on not creating a

nightmare of disfiguring the environment. So bringing it back to tech in the end game here, we can't have a situation, in the ecologically unequal exchange, we can't have a situation of this elite accumulation, we don't have enough resources that are safe for the world's people there's we're sharing the world with eight billion people. And so if you're even, you have your billionaires, you have your millionaires and, you even have your tech workers who are making three hundred thousand dollar salaries. And unfortunately um it's too much. There is such thing as a fair and sustainable amount of material resources per head on the planet. And so tech is not the only thing that is right at the center of that. And so this is where I think the conversation needs to be, and it's very sad to me to even have had to sit down and write the book because as I looked around at places like where I'm at, say for example at Yale Law School, a colonial mindset is deeply imbued in my colleagues there; they don't want to touch the issue of digital colonialism. I think in my seven plus, seven or so years there, you know 200 plus seminars, I don't think I've ever heard the words American empire come out of their mouth, and I never hear anything about the environment. And it's like that pretty much across the field of digital studies in the conversation. So, I think in terms of that end game, um, I think we need to be looking at the big picture. And I find this moment, you know, also what Kishonna said, we have our fun down here in South Africa, so if you ever come down, as soon as this podcast is over, I got my buddy over here, we're going out, I'm a piano. The music scene here is awesome; we have our fun. But, you know, and underneath the surface, or in you know, everybody needs their escape or their fun time, but um, we're in a very serious situation and so that that would be my thing is you know here that I hope I bring to the table is that we need to really take on the big picture you know what is the big big picture. Yeah.

Vidya Shah: (0058:21)

Michael I want to thank you so much and just take a moment to hold the gravity of what you are sharing, that we are literally talking about planetary destruction, we are literally talking about people's lives unequally disposable which is you know the state of the world and we cannot talk about technology and the innovation and the excitement that it can potentially bring without explicitly naming the deep connections to capitalism and colonialism, and the ways in which these systems are replicating, if not advancing quickly, the very oppressive structures that many of us have been working against for so long. And so I want to really thank you for naming that so explicitly. It is something for us to really sit with. I'm feeling this deep in my body and I'm surrounded by people who are climate activists. And so this is especially sitting with me and I appreciate you. I appreciate you for sharing this. And, you know, one of the things that this conversation is making me think of is the inherently exciting ways in which technologies disrupt status quo. They just disrupt life as we know it. They disrupt what is real. They disrupt what is true. They disrupt what is expertise. They disrupt who's in control. There's so much disruptive nature. And I'm holding that intention with what Michael was sharing earlier about how they also disrupt the planet, depending on who's at the base of that, who's at the core of that, and for what purpose, what their end

game is. And so just holding, you know, this whole conversation for me has been one about holding what seems to be fundamentally different concepts and truths at various levels and layers across global North and South. And thinking about that as we move from this place of the challenges that are inherent in this work to the possibilities that might emerge from technologies of leadership, or what you hope that leaders, and again, folks, if you're tuning into Unleading for the first time, please know that when we say leaders and leadership, A, we have no idea what that means. And B, we mean that so broadly to include everybody and everything in their own right. So please know that as we say that, it's to everybody, everybody engaging with us here. But what are the possibilities that might emerge from technologies of leadership? And what do you hope that leaders might take away from this conversation? And so, Lisa, I'd love to start with you on this question.

Lisa Cole: (01:01:05)

Well, this one, you know, I don't claim to really have a definitive answer to that either. But, you know, the thought that comes to mind is, you know, a hope. I would want to have our, I think, leaders embrace the possibilities that technology offers with optimism, while also leading with a critical, ethical, and human-centered approach to how these technologies might be taken up, and create, you know, sort of the culture in the spaces that they are taken up. You know, I think at my core, I've already shared, I really love problems. And I'm a true optimist. Right? And I think the problems we currently have will change and evolve. What I do know about humanity is that we do learn from mistakes, right? And we have made enhancements on past technologies to be better. Maybe not perfect, but to be better. But I think our ability to improve comes with creating an educational system that does not exclude, right? And so when I look at educational leaders, I think my call to action is for us to lead so that the spaces in which we engage with youth includes and not excludes. That every single youth that engages in our school communities can find a meaningful place in those space, that can discover who they wish to become, and it becomes possible. I think if you ask any, even this group, right? And I said, you know, think of that educator or that caring adult in the school that inspired you, right? We could probably find one, at least one, right? It would be sad to not have at least one. But I suspect that there are some families that the whole system has failed, right? And, you know, and I would also argue that despite our success, like our academic success, because that's why we're here on this podcast, right? If I ask the question, you know, think about that one person in your school career that was not your ally. That told you you couldn't. And, you know, when I ask that question, we all typically have one, two, right? And for some of us, that was a barrier at the time, but we've overcome that. But for some of our youth and families, they don't, right? So as leaders in our educational spaces, I think the call to action for me at this time is really around creating a culture around the community that really values people first. You know, I think technology gives us sort of an excuse to dehumanize, you know, the teaching and learning space, right? Like if we use that cool app in our classroom, then I'm doing my job really well, right? But the cool app is not what students are, you know, in that space for, right? They're in that

space for community. And I think we need to remember that and that the tools and, you know, I think, Andrew, you refer to technology as at times as tools, right? The tools in that space changes. And, you know, sure, they can be good or bad at any moment in time. But it's the people in that space that brings richness to the learning. And I think we need to really, you know, push ourselves to remember that. And, you know, Michael, your comment, you know, environmental, social justice themes becomes even more critical, right? Because if we don't put that in the educational system for those who become engineers, we will continue to perpetuate, you know, the current state that we currently see. So that comes to mind.

Vidya Shah: (01:06:03)

Thank you so much, Lisa. Thank you so much. And Michael, over to you. We'd love to hear your thoughts on this.

Michael Kwet: (01:06:10)

Okay. So, I mean, in terms of, like, what to do, I just want to say, like, I really kind of don't know, right? So, like, one of the people I was reading at the time, I was writing the book, what is the name, Joy James. I don't know if y'all have heard of her. But she is, you know, she worked with some Black Panthers that are, like, political prisoners, and she does archiving things. But she also had the audacity to talk back against some of the kind of elites in the black community and Black Lives Matter and those kinds of things, you know, offer some critiques of Angela Davis. And I discovered her on the Black Myths podcast. So I recommend the Black Myths podcast as well. But basically, one of the things I heard Joy say. It's, like, you know, like, a lot of times we just don't know exactly what to do. We all got to admit, like, you know, I don't know exactly what to do. But what I would say with that caveat in mind is that I think that we're in a moment in history where we can't be reactive, right? And, you know, inequality has been normalized. It's been naturalized. People may not necessarily like it. I mean, I can tell you here in South Africa that the majority of the, like, when I came here, I met friends with, I made friends with normal people. I didn't have any classes. I wasn't teaching anybody. I do have, like, uni friends, too, but, like, you know, there's an obsession with money. And Johannesburg is one of the most unequal countries in the world. And there is a lot of hustling going on. There's an individualized way of looking at things. And there's this just huge fetishization of money. And it's, like, a deep-seated kind of capitalist mindset. And it's hard, you know, because it's capitalism is a system of, you know, it's like trying to be rich is trying to win the domination sweepstakes. And a lot of people don't see it that way, that the poverty that exists is a reflection of the concentration of the wealth into the hands of those who have most of it. And so, at that point, we're in a situation where we really kind of need to snap out of this. And I don't know exactly how to do it because the people who are against it are a very small number, and we need to spread this kind of awareness quickly. We're not going to fix our problems without serious, forceful protest. And it's got to happen in a small time frame. And we need to think together to figure out how to reorient this whole thing. Right now, we're in an education stage, but I think what we need to do is have

real talk about the situation. We can't be BSing. We can't be whitewashing. We need to talk seriously about the serious situation that we're in right now. And we can start there. And that is going to mean sometimes as professionals, feeling a little bit uncomfortable about the things that you're saying.

Vidya Shah: (01:09:52)

Michael, I want to thank you so much in part for just being real with not necessarily ending on some positive note because that's, well what the question is asking, but also, that's what tends to happen. You know, you want to leave people on some kind of positive note, but like, right now, that might not be what's needed. We actually might just need to sit in the stuff that is gross, that is hard, that is difficult to actually see and name. And so, thank you for that invitation. I appreciate that.

Michael Kwet: (01:10:22)

And if I could, I just want to add one more tiny point. I found myself, again, when I was writing the book, like over the last five years. I didn't do it overnight but, the research. But I didn't get taught properly about the environment. So, I had to, like, Vandana Shiva is one of my, like, heroes. She's an environmentalist in India. And I watched a lecture with her and she said, every academic should have to get a second PhD. And I was like, because you know academics, right? Like, you master something at the PhD level, and a lot of them just kind of cruise on that narrative forever. And so, I kind of had to teach myself. And I'm still teaching myself. And I was doing, like, lecture series one what is global warming. Because the other thing is with this, I feel like if we're going to try to educate and communicate and, you know, work this out together, but we have students, it's not enough to just say the scientists say this. We have to at least build, we're not going to become, like, scientists with, like, climate modeling, you know, expertise and things like that. But I think that we all also need to keep pushing ourselves to spend, even if it means, like, you know, heavy hours sometimes to learn this sufficiently so that we have genuine explanations, and we're not just saying believe what these guys think.

Vidya Shah: (01:11:52)

I appreciate that. Learning and revolution, here we come. Here we come. Andrew, we'd love to hear from you on this question.

Andrew McConnell: (01:12:00)

Yeah. I mean, there's so much playing around in my head because I could talk about all of these subjects for hours and hours and hours. And, again, it's interesting, even the conversations about global North, global South, I always find interesting, right? Because I'm native. And we don't get anything from what sits in the global North. In fact, it's all just pulled out of our territories, trucked away to somebody and used by them. You know, I used the train metaphor earlier. Like, that's an actual story. My great-uncle used to work on the

train. And the only reason my cousin, my aunt, my cousins, all those people used to get stuff is he would intentionally slow down the train on the way through. They all knew it was his train; he was coming through, and he would throw things off the train to them as he was going by because it wasn't stopping. And, again, I think about all those pieces. Like, now it's Highway 17 drives through the reserve. And it goes through. You know, it's not for stopping. And so, you know, anything that we have, we have to make for ourselves. And that used to be the thing. We used to make all of our own stuff. But because of colonialism now, we always have to go into town to get something. You always got to go here and get something. You know, we're reliant upon other people giving it to us. And I, for one, am sick and tired of it. You know, all my work is about how do we educate ourselves? How do we take over our own spaces? I voted for an Anishinaabeg education system personally. I was happy to work, you know, on the board side, liaising with them and doing those things. Because, quite frankly, you know, Michael said it. Kishonna said it. You know, we've all talked about it. Capitalism doesn't work for us. You know, and people will say it to us. You know, why don't you just move? And I'm like, just because you all moved from all over around the world to come and live next to us, doesn't mean we want to now move somewhere else. We're happy where we are. We are exactly where our ancestors were. Like, these are our homes. We're not going anywhere. And so, when I think about these pieces, about even what does leadership mean? Like, we have very clear concepts of leadership that exist in my community. And I guess I'm lucky these things exist because people talk about them still. And they are completely opposite to – I'll use English because I'm also English. I'll use the English ideas of leadership. English ideas of leadership is you're a brilliant thinker and you tell everybody what to do and they do what you told them. Ours is the other way around. Our concept is that every single human being is born with a gift, and they are here because we need them. And therefore, the role of leadership is to listen to all those people in your community and then carry that message forward, right? And we actually have three – we have three different names for leader depending on the situation. We're very thoughtful about these things, right? You know, everybody always thinks of, you know, Ogichitaa, right? And that's the one that's very much connected to us. And that's the war chief, the warrior, the person who goes out and fights physically for the community, and sacrifices their life. But that's only one kind of leadership. And quite frankly, that one only shows up when you reach into these positions of conflict. The other one is, you know, Gindaswin. Sorry, not Kendasowin. It's Ogimaa , Giimaa. And if you listen to Basil Johnston, Basil Johnston draws the connection between the term Gima and Gindaswin, which is to count. And it's a person who people choose to follow. You know, people choose to follow this person. So you're a leader because you turn around and you realize you're going in a direction everybody's going with you, right? That's why you're a leader. And so in order to actually be a leader is you need to make decisions for yourself first, but with your community in mind. You're never doing it because it's good for you, you're doing it because it's good for your community. And that's what it means to be in that position of Giimaa. And when all of a sudden you realize all these people are behind you and they're like, we need you to go forward and do this, right?

It can be scary because all of a sudden you're like, oh, crap, I got all these people relying upon me. But it's actually also really empowering because I've had those situations in my last career where all of a sudden I would go into spaces and I'd be getting people turn around, look at you and say, so, Andrew, what do you think? And you're like, because I listened, I have so much to say, not because it's flowing from my mind and my heart, because it's flowing from the minds and hearts of the people who sat with me and took their time to talk to me. And I'm like, this person's asking for this, and this person's asking for this, and this person is asking for this. And that's, I think, really very much about leadership is about sitting with others. And Michael said it. It's about sitting with our community members and realizing their priorities are not Apple's priority or Microsoft's priority or GM's priority. Their priority is whatever they say it is. In my community, it's language and culture, right? And being acknowledged for what we have. Even these concepts of environmentalism. We actually don't have a word in Anishinaabe for environmentalist. Because we didn't need it. It's literally built into the concept of Mnaadendimowin, which is living in a good way. And to live in a good way, you have to live in relationship, not just with human beings, with everything else. It's tied up in our culture. We teach it to our kids. It's so important. It exists in all of our stories, right? The animals were all here first. And we are only here because of them. That's that thing, right? And that's integral to our way of being. Which, again, Michael, you said it. It's not taught in our schools. So you can see how school system as it's built is just so antithetical for an Indigenous student. So many of us just don't graduate. Which is why it's really hard to find somebody who's a teacher and Indigenous. I'm such a rarity. And yet I'm only here because of the gifts of everybody who's pushed me forward and said, 'You go do this. You go do this. You go do this.' Right? I'm only able to be here because my mom said, 'You got to go to university, kid.' And what else was I going to do? I was bored. I was a teenager. Let's go to university. You know? And yet I'm in university and I'm alone. And that's scary, because then you're like, where's all my people at? And so that's it, to me, that's my current role. How do I make this space work for us? And if it doesn't work for us, how do I create a space that will work for us, that does the same sort of accreditation and lets us do these things? Because, again, it seems ridiculous to me that, yeah, Michael you said, all these people are focused on their own little specific areas and they're missing the problem that's going on around them. Like drinking water? The government's been promising for the last 20 years they'd fix drinking water on the reserve, and they still haven't. And we still have tons of reserves, that you can't drink the water. And here's the weird thing, folks, we used to drink the water before everybody else showed up. So that should really give you a hint on whose fault it is. It ain't ours. And again, the solutions that are sometimes given to us, which is, 'here. drink bottled water.' You're like, well, this is ridiculous. Now I've got a plastic problem in my community that, again, I didn't used to have. You know? And yet, as much as I rage on these things, and I talk about them, and I get upset, I'm lucky because I get surrounded by people who aren't Native, and you're all here, who are good friends, good thinkers, and are willing to sit there and, again, have those conversations with me on the other side. I'm one of those lucky – I see myself as very fortunate because I

sit between two worlds. And I'm very much aware of what's happening on my Anishinaabe side. I'm very much aware of what's happening on the Zhaaganaash side. And I see possibilities for us coming together and having these conversations. But not when we talk about dollars and cents. The second we talk about dollars and cents, everything gets shut down because the economic model is about growth, and that doesn't work. The economic model should always be about balance. And everything's out of whack right now. And very much with Indigenous people, a lot of us are just like, why do we even want to play with you folks? And when I say you folks, I'm talking in a really huge sense because I love hanging out with my Zhaaganaash friends. But it is that piece of, yeah, where's the joy? We just did the powwow at Georgina Island two weeks ago, and I'm so honored when they invite me to come and work there and do those things. Because I get to be amongst a massive group of Native folks and non-Native folks. And it's that moment of where we practice our traditions – the dancing, the singing, the fire is there – I get to look after the fire for two days. And it's an amazing thing to think that in that moment for two days, my job is to keep this fire alive, to feed it, but keep it in balance, to not let it grow so large that it will cause damage. But that it's there for the dancers, the community people to come and make those connections with creation. And it's an honor to do something like that. And again, I'll go right back to that concept of technology. What's the technology of leadership, right? Fire is a technology. It's a tool. And if you use it properly, you can help create community. And if you use it improperly or you pay it no heed, it'll burn it down. But without fire, there's also no community because we rely upon heat to live. And so very much I think about that. I'll wrap it all up there. To me, the technology of leadership is creating that balance and finding the tools that will help your community to grow and connect wisely with those around it. Miigwech.

Vidya Shah: (01:21:59)

Thank you so much, Andrew. And I know listeners, if you are paying attention like me, you're going to want to know what that third form of leadership is. And so I know we are at time, but I'd just love to hear if you can just share with us, what is that third approach to leadership that you were talking about?

Andrew McConnell: (01:22:13)

Negating. It's about being out front. It's bravery. It's merely just, I'll go. Right? Because we don't know what's over the hill. I'll go. That's what it is.

Vidya Shah: (01:22:25)

I love it. Thank you. Thank you. And last but certainly not least, I'd love to just hear a few thoughts from Kishonna, just as we wrap up. What are your hopes in this? What are possibilities for you, if there are any?

Kishonna Gray: (01:22:38)

Oh, my goodness. I think the through thread between everything that I've heard people say, and I even think in the original question, you know, we said, what do we want leaders to know? But I love how all of us looked back at our own communities., looked back at our own folks and realized that that's where the power is. that's where the opportunities are. That's where, as my granny would say, that's where the sauce is. You know, that's where I think that we have to continue to engage. Because most of us, we've long given up the illusion of engaging with our elected officials and with our leaders, you know, on all sides of the aisle as they currently are constructed, right? You know, because they aren't there to listen or sit with us. You know, they want votes. And we recognize and we acknowledge that. And even what Michael was saying, you know, at the core of those systems, like, is capitalism. And we've long, and we recognize we have to, like, operate within them, you know, but we're not at the feet of capitalism to beg and to want, you know, and to desire anything from that. And I think so much of what we get joy and fulfillment from is that sitting with the community, you know, sitting with our elders, you know. And I also love, like, all the solidarities, you know. That I want to continue to grow more and more solidarities, you know, across Indigenous communities, Black communities, Latinx, global South communities. You know, that's, like, where the power is. And I think, you know, even as, you know, some of the global tensions that we see right now, you know, we're seeing those solidarities grow. And I think once we realize, you know, I'm thinking about, you know, I heard Michael, you know, mention, like, the Black Panther Party. You know, once we realize that, you know, the power is with the people. And when they recognize that and realize that, you know, that's when we'll have, you know, transformation. You know? Whether it's a revolution, you know, regardless of the forms that that might look like. You know, that's when we'll have, you know, like, actual change. But in the meantime, you know, I think most of us are content with the small pockets of progress that we actually have and the protection of the community, care for, and concern, you know. I'm thinking about, like, being, like, in Michigan and thinking about, like, the folks in Flint who are doing the things that they can regardless of the inaction by the leadership, you know? And we see that, you know, across those pockets. And again, of course, we want it to be on a larger scale. But so many of us, like, are doing so many things right now. And I think that once leadership, whoever that leader might be, once they look back and see us doing the work without, you know, we don't need them to do anything, you know. Once they look back and, you know, then they'll join us, you know. And we'll be right there, you know. I'm just thinking about just the grace that so many of our elder communities, you know, have, our Indigenous and Black communities, like, just the grace that we have to accept them back and to repair the harms, you know, that have happened. You know, the reparations piece. You know, we'll be there waiting for it because we, our communities, we come from communities that lead with grace. You know? And, you know, there's a pathway back, you know, from all the harms and violence that they have, that they've enacted upon us and the globe, you know, our earth. So there's a path forward, you know. But we're on it already. You know, we're just waiting for the leaders, you know, to catch up. Yeah.

Vidya Shah: (01:24:46)

I love this so much. Kishonna, thank you. Thank you for sharing. And I love that this conversation on technologies of leadership has landed us at systems of oppression, again, like capitalism and colonialism and white supremacy, and thinking about how these things inform us, challenging this idea that technology has ever been or will ever be neutral. And it's also led us back to each other. And I think that there's something so special about the fact that we are talking so much about humanity and who we are and who we are in relation to each other as part of this podcast. It says so much and it offers so much. And I want to say such a special thank you to all of the panelists for being part of such a rich discussion. And I wanted to also just check in with Sava. I know that, Sava, a lot of your work is in this area and thinking through, you know, the challenges that we face with this work. I'm sure you're going to pick up on some of what Michael shared. But your own thoughts as well on what the challenges are in this work. I'd love to hear.

Sava Singh: (01:26:55)

For sure. I think picking up threads from what everybody said, right, I teach a class on critical digital literacy. I know Andrew teaches a section of that, and I love how much each of us teach it in a different way. But I think we all kind of come to similar places in terms of equipping our students to understand how to interrogate digital technology critically, right, and understand what that is. And one of the things that I kind of do in my class is, you know, we grapple with the conflicts of technology being a positive and a negative. And I think that's kind of what you were hinting at at the beginning, too, right, Vidya? And one of the things that I stress on to my students touches on everything you brought up here, especially the notion of who is an expert in the class. I tell them that we will never be cool to the young people. So I encourage them: like, listen, I'm going to be cringe, I'm going to show my old gifts from TV shows you don't know. And, you know, that's okay. I think it's okay to lean into the cringe as teachers in the classroom and kind of cede some of that ground and some of that expertise to students who know so much. I learn so much from my students. And I love learning that. And I'm very clear to them saying that I'm not here as an expert. I'm an expert in a different thing. I'm here to guide you into understanding your own experiences and connecting that to, like, theory and practice. And how do you bring that forward? So, you know, setting that up, I think, as leaders is very important, right? But also how do we show up for our students, right? They're dealing with planetary destruction. They're dealing with technology. They're dealing with having to get degrees in order to get jobs in order to feed their families, right? So they're dealing with different realities. So how do we show up for them, especially when they struggle with technology, right, when they are dealing with being bullied or harmed online, right? I think as teachers and leaders in the classroom, it is our duty to be someone students can turn to for that guidance and support. So we are often forced into being cops in schools and in institutions. Like, I show my students what the learning management system we use shows me. Like, we use eClass. I show them what I can

see on there, right? I can see when they're logged in, how long they stayed on. There's certain granularity from what I can see, and they're shocked that I can see that. And I show them. I was like, listen. Like, this is what I can see, and I don't like it. I want to build trust with you in the classroom without this layer of technology between us, right? So my point here is mostly to say that, like, we need to be in solidarity with our students and resist the technology-enabled carceral systems that schools and institutions, more often than not, tend to be, right? So I tell my students that if at the end of my class, and honestly, like, I mean this. Like, at the end of my class, if they decide to band together and march to the president's office, and demand transparency and participation in decisions that are made about them, that I would march with them. And I also said to a friend that if the day my classroom does that is the day I will retire. Because that's it. That's the pinnacle of my achievement. Which is, like, you know, I think many of our students come through systems and are embedded with, like, understanding them as individuals. And I find myself kind of helping them unlearn some of that. Which is, like, we are in this collectively and organizing and coming together. We can try to affect change, right? And young people today are doing some of that. They're aware of their earth just not going to be there. So how do we kind of show up for them and disrupt the systems and be in solidarity with them rather than with the institutions that we are meant to represent, right? So that's kind of what I wanted to kind of bring together. Like, all of these threads kind of made me think of that. Which is, like, as leaders, as teachers, how are we showing up for our students? And being like, hey, I'm in solidarity with you. I'm not the opposition. I am an authority figure. But how do I use my position to support you? And kind of doing that with them, right? And I think that changes, that shifts some of that leadership or authority or expertise in the room. And I really, I mean it. I want to show up for my students. And I encourage them to show up for their students when they're in those positions.

Vidya Shah: (01:31:04)

And I want to say thank you so much to Sava for her words today, for both opening the podcast and for sharing these final words. It's been such an absolute pleasure to be in conversation with all of you today. I love that we are coming at this topic from such different angles, that we have found inroads and bridges and threads to weave together in all of these conversations. It has been so rich. And for folks listening to this podcast, we really do hope that you are taking away with you this notion of complexity, this notion of disruption, this notion of really sitting with a both and here, the possibilities of technology. But also, the deeply rooted ways in which the very concept of technology is being held up and promoted because of various systems of oppression. Lots to hold here in tension and in conversation. Thank you for joining us for this podcast. Please join us again later. Thank you.