

TRANSCRIPT

EP 074: Trudi Lebron on Building Anti-Racist Businesses, Being an Equity Centered Leader, and Committing to Inclusivity

Intro Clip, Trudi Lebron: I think if more coaches took an approach to their work, where they understood the deep impact that they could have in people's lives, it would really change the world. I don't say that lightly. Like I literally mean it, if we could train more coaches, traditional coaches, and then also coach people who are like in coaching roles. So, you know, maybe like social workers, or teachers or people like mentors, people who are in those kinds of roles, if they took a coaching approach to their work with other humans, you know, people, CEOs, people who lead other people, if we do our work in a way that's really centered on equity it's really life changing.

Shannan Monson: Welcome to CEO school. We're your hosts Suneera Madhani and Shannan Monson, and we believe that you deserve to have it all. Less than 2% of female founders ever break 1 million in revenue, and we're on a mission to change that. Each week, you'll learn from incredible mentors who have made it to the 2% Club, as well as women well on their way sharing how they defied the odds so that you can do it to your real business now, class is officially in session.

Shannon Monson: Welcome to the CEO School Podcast. I'm so excited to introduce you to today's guest. Trudi Lebron is a diversity, equity and inclusion coach who teaches individuals and institutions how to build successful anti racist businesses. In the past seven years, she's grown her company ScriptFlip into a multiple six figure machine for helping others maximize their social impact. And I absolutely love on the front page of Trudi's website, it says "Stop choosing between doing good and doing business". So tell us about how you got into this space and kind of a struggle between as entrepreneurs, how we can make money and support ourselves and also make an impact in the world.

Trudi Lebron: Yeah, the biggest thing for me that really got me into this inquiry around how can we do both right, how can we make good livings and have responsible socially responsible businesses is because I came up professionally in the nonprofit industry. And the nonprofit industry is rife with like, negative money stories. And like a whole lot of good, right. The not the work that I was doing in the nonprofit world, was really around helping inner city communities, the communities that I grew up in, like the literal community I grew up in. You know, helping people who live there have better access to like basic needs housing, food, education, healthy positive youth development. And that work was like amazing work. I worked in schools for a long time. And I was severely underpaid constantly and sore, you know, so were my colleagues and team members and staff that, you know, I got to the point in my career where I was supervising staff members, and it just was not, it wasn't equitable. It wasn't the compensation that we were getting for the work that we were putting in, and the emotional and physical toll it was taking on us was not working. And so I constantly had to have a side hustle, because, you know, I had been a teen mom, I needed to make money. You know, I had to like real people like

adult bills that I needed to be paying. Yeah. And so I was, I was always side hustling, and I had to learn, like how to be making money on the side just so that I can make ends meet. And so that kind of introduced me to the world of entrepreneurship. And I started listening to podcasts and online courses and things like that. And I started to see like, Oh, you can make money. Like there's, there's ways to really make money but what I was seeing also in that world was that that the world of coaching of personal development online entrepreneurship was missing some of the qualities of the nonprofit industry that I really loved, like the, the impact the changing people's lives. And I was like, we have to put these things together.

Shannan Monson: That's really interesting. And I want to kind of go a little bit deeper here. So it was is the money stories that you know, that came from the nonprofit side that you either choose to do good in the world, or you choose to get paid? Right? There, you work in a really crappy low paying job and actually make a difference? Or you get paid? It was kind of like, either or. Right.

Trudi Lebron: Yeah, totally. And they're, you know, it's the nonprofit industry is constantly, especially when you work in small community based organizations, they don't have they're underfunded. And so it is in the best interest of the nonprofit, to really get an end of that industry to get people to think that, you know, sayings like you don't go in this work for the money, right? Like, that's a popular saying, and like those kinds of fields, like teaching social work, and kind of Human Services work. And so you adopt that mantra as a worker, and you realize that you're actually an oftentimes you're not that far off economically, from the people that you're helping, like, it's just a couple paychecks between you like where you might be, and homelessness, you know, and I don't say that. I'm not exaggerating, like that is like the literal

Shannan Monson: Yeah, truth.

Trudi Lebron: But that is

Shannan Monson: Yeah, and you start calling yourself Oh, yeah. And then you start repeating that story in your head that like, it's okay that I'm not making any money, because I'm making a difference. And it's also probably start to associate people that make money are greedy, bad. So tell me about that transition when you started to be opened up to this world, because I agree. I mean, I think the freelancer economy is bigger now and going to only grow in the next five years in a way that we've never seen before our access to the internet and to to jobs online. I mean, just from data entry to, we've all seen this shift, with COVID, of just being able to work from wherever in a way that we didn't, didn't exist 10, 20 years ago. And so I definitely think that there's a big opportunity for you to actually, you know, make good money. So where did it I think my question for you is, how did you start making money online? How did you start freelancing? And what was that journey like for you? Yeah, so

Trudi Lebron: I want to be clear that I, my first, my first business, or the first version of my company, was not an online company, I was an in person consultant. So I would go into schools and to nonprofit organizations. And I would teach about adolescent development and racial

inequity and diversity, equity and inclusion. I've been doing that work since at least 2008. Like going in physically into places. So I was the company was a six figure business before I started anything online. And then I what stuck, what started to happen was because I was getting the information online, because I was participating in you know, listening, like I said, listen to the podcast, participating in masterminds, I learned like the power of the Internet, and that it can really open up your your reach, and that there were people outside of my community that really needed access to the things that I was teaching. And then even even more specifically, realizing that the skills that I had gained, both in my academic journey and also my professional journey, around social impact around diversity, equity and inclusion, that that was really beneficial that and not just beneficial, but was going to be needed in the online space. And so I had been getting it was like this moment where I realized that I was getting really burnt out emotionally, physically, from running all around New England, because I live in Connecticut. Yeah, like running all around New England, driving to schools and meetings and things like that, you know, being away from my family, for extended periods of time and not having the impact that I wanted to have. Because when you do D I work in a school system, you don't see the transformation, it takes like years to see the kinds of transformation that I now see with my clients in six months. So I decided that I needed to step away that it was like really started to become an issue of my own mental health, I needed to step away from that work and concentrate on where I can have a faster impact. And that happened to be in in the online space. So working with other coaches working with other online business owners. And the other reason that I really wanted to do that is because I believe in coaching so much like I believe in the process of like high quality coaching and the transformational impact of that, and I wanted to make it accessible to more people. And the way to make it accessible to more people is to teach more people how to do it, how to be high quality, like culturally responsive coaches and to run businesses that really center diversity, equity and inclusion. So I, you know, I pivoted and made that what I was going to focus on, and I made that decision in like, 2016. And so that's what I've been doing, for the most part ever since.

Shannan Monson: There's a couple of really interesting things that I want to point out in, you know, one is just realizing that okay, how can I personally as just one woman, because I think sometimes we feel that right, like, I'm just one person, how much good can I do, realizing that the way that you could have the greatest impact was actually by educating other educators educating other coaches. And this is a shift that I see a lot of entrepreneurs make going from, you know, direct food Consumer Direct to a customer to a b2b model. And I think I just want to applaud you, because it doesn't matter. There's not a better or a right or a wrong, like, we need people to work with individuals, one on one that's so important, but it's really cool how you're able to take the years of experience that you built on all everything that you've learned working in schools and turn around and empower people that can't spend a decade learning how to do that, right, or that they can do better and help more people. Something that was really interesting seeing that you're talking about was this, like mental burnout. And I'd love to go deeper here, because I think this is really common. We care so much as you know, as a socially conscious entrepreneur who wants to do good in the world, you care so deeply, how do we find that balance between fighting so hard for the things that we believe in and making sure that we still mentally emotionally have the capacity to keep showing up?

Trudi Lebron: Yeah, um there's a lot there. There's a lot there. So I will say that, you know, yeah, for me, the kind of emotional toll it was taking was really, um, it was really deep, I was being like re-traumatized every time I went into the schools that I was working in. And that's because I went to schools in an inner city, where I was, you know, treated really poorly. And I dropped out of school in ninth grade, I dropped out of high school in ninth grade. And I was, I was basically, I've disappeared from a school system. And it was totally fine. Because I was a pregnant 15 year old, and the quality of education was really poor. And, you know, there was no one came to look for me, there was no truancy officer, nobody came like it was just really, it was really toxic environment. And leaving school was a decision that I made for my own mental health even at that time, but then going back into schools as a professional and seeing what was happening to students. Um, it was like a constant reminder of what I had been through. So I did that work. For years, I worked in schools and nonprofits directly with young people from the time I was like, 19 years old, through, you know, until until I left working full time, you know what I mean, in 2016. So I put in a lot of years doing that work, and it just got to the point where it could no longer I just couldn't anymore. And it's it. What's interesting is that now I just had a meeting the other day, now, I'm actually looking to see how our company can get back to those roots and, like, do some of that, like on our terms, you know, what I mean, like a through through some of our impact initiatives, but I needed I needed a break. And, um, I think it's part of I think, we need to be honest with ourselves, you know, about like, what, what our capacity is, where we can make a difference, and what we need, you know, like, what we need to take care of ourselves. And so that was a hard choice. But I just couldn't, I like, could not function. I was like, going to work and crying in the parking lot. Like it was just like, it was as bad.

Shannan Monson: Thank you for sharing that story. I first of all, just want to big stadium. So I'm sure that it's a very vulnerable experience to talk about and I think it's something that it's pretty common for us as entrepreneurs to get into something that we have a personal story around.

Trudi Lebron: Yeah, right, absolutely.

Shannan Monson: Felt passionate about it because you left it and you want to make sure that other people don't have to experience that again. It's not okay shouldn't happen. Nobody Go ahead. Yeah, oh, no, I'm

Trudi Lebron: Yeah, oh no, I'm sorry, I was, I was gonna say like, it's also the reason why I do the work that I do now. Because, because because I had, you know, even though some of these people wouldn't identify as coaches and the way that we talk about coaches, um, I had people when I was, you know, all the way through, you know, through like young adulthood, who, who were basically coaches, they believed in me, you know, they had a bigger vision for my life than the one that I was able to see in that moment. And that's, that's why I believe that coaching is so important. And that's why I work with coaches, it's not because I just think it's easy. And like, I like to work online. The work I do with coaches is, is really, I think, world changing. Like, I think if more coaches took an approach to their work, where they understood the deep impact that they could have in people's lives, it would really change the world. And I don't say that in like this, I

don't say that lightly. Like I literally mean it, if we could train more coaches, traditional coaches, and then also cook people who are like in coaching roles. So, you know, maybe like social workers, or teachers or people like mentors, people who are in those kinds of roles, if they took a coaching approach to their work with other humans, you know, people, CEOs, people who lead other people, if we do our work in a way that's really centered on equity, we can I mean, we, it's really life changing.

Shannan Monson: I love that I just got through some thinking about that. And I'm sure everyone listening has even maybe people that came up for them, immediately that were those mentors, as coaches or still are currently are in it is so important. And a lot of times it's not something that is valued as much as I think it should be, for someone to look at you and say, hey, there's a bigger vision for your life. And then you can see right now, that's powerful. And I'm sure I'm sure that changed the course of your life, I definitely had those moments. Let's talk about how we can do this as coaches as social workers as teachers, how can we step up and be better leaders be better coaches? How do we focus on equity? So to someone that's running a business, and this is new to them, they don't have any experience in social work or diversity, equity inclusion, what would you say are the top three things that they could do right now, to start making an impact?

Trudi Lebron: Yeah, so the first thing that I say that everybody needs to do is to commit to an internal process this equity work, having a company that is equity centered, is not like a check the box kind of thing. There's no like, freebie opt in, that I can send you that you can just like check the box, and then you're good. Like, it really starts with this internal process around understanding your position in in the world. What power you have, how you use that power? how comfortable you are with that power? What kind of privilege you have? What's your relationship to that privilege? What have you learned, like, what biases are you holding on to and I don't mean to say that as like a negative thing. Everyone has bias. It's just the way that our brains are wired. So confronting what that bias is understanding how it shows up, and then unlearning, like we're unlearning some of those negative patterns that perpetuate unhealthy power dynamics that perpetuate toxic masculinity that perpetuate patriarchy and oppression, like confronting those things and replacing them with things that are more focused on equity, focus on liberation focused on inclusion. So it starts with an internal process. So that is like the very first thing. And you can do that by, you know, working with a coach, working with a consultant who are therapists who can like, walk you through that kind of process, so that you can start understanding just where you sit. The next thing is commitments like really deciding what you're committed to what kind of impact you want to have in the communities that you have relationships with. So the including your own team members or contractors that you work with your clients, your audience, your local community, where you live, like really starting to understand how you interact with these different spaces, and making commitments to like how you want to show up and serve them, right? Like how, what is your what, what what can you give, how can you make things better? Because we can't wait until we can't do this thing where it's like, oh, like, I'll wait till I hit six figures or seven figures or a fingers or whatever. And then I'll give back like, we got time for that. We know that we can, the world cannot wait for you to like, figure out you know, whatever. There's things that you can do now to have a positive impact on

the people around you. And like, you have to figure out what that is and commit to it. And then like at a structural level, like for people who are kind of a little further on their entrepreneurial journeys and do have teams really committing to things like things that change the world and create more liberation. And so the, the, what else set up, like the juxtaposition between a leader that is focused on liberation and equity and like more of a traditional CEO, is that a CEO, traditional CEO, and traditional kind of business practice, is to just make decisions that are in your best self interest in the best self interest of the company, right, maximize profit, reduce cost, you know, like, serve as many people as possible. And like, Okay, I get that, like, I want to make a lot of money, too, I want to live a fabulous life, I have very expensive tastes like I get, I get all of that. But, you know, there is, well, there's consequences to showing up that way, the showing up in a way that does center more equity liberation, you're thinking about, like what's in the best interest of the business and what's in my best interest to help me get to my goals, but you're not going to make any decisions. If what's in the best interest of the company is not in the best interest of an employee or a client, like you want to find ways to make decisions that are mutually beneficial. And so sometimes, that means your profit margin goes from 40% to 35%. Big deal, you know what I mean? Like, you'll be fine. You create more like, I think the moral bottom line of those choices outweigh the financial bottom line.

Shannan Monson: This is so good. I want to re listen to everything you just said. Like what a pause, go back, relax, and,

Trudi Lebron: and for us, and I'll give you I'll give you some really practical ways like the for this in our business. And for what we work with with our clients. That means that we're we prep, we have a hiring preference for employees and not contractors. So even, you know, people who don't work, you know, a whole lot of hours, like we want to, we want to offer paid time off, for example, and sick time. And we want to put people on payroll, if you know if they are employees, not if they have their own companies and are doing you know, like their own thing. But we have a preference to hire employees, even though for the size of the company that I run, that may not be something that everybody chooses, but from a value perspective that makes that is more in alignment with our commitment to equity and liberation, because we want to make sure that like if I have to let someone go for some financial reason, or COVID, or something that that person qualifies for unemployment, for example. Right? And that we have it forces us to think about sustainability and like things like six sick time and minimum wages and things like that. So yeah, it's just a different way of, of making choices. It's a difference between, do we have a sales team that's only commission based? Or do we pay a base salary plus commission, like, it puts us in a different kind of inquiry? And it's not that there's one way to make a decision, there's not one right answer for everybody, it's about being an inquiry around what is just and what is in alignment, and then making the appropriate choice.

Shannan Monson: I love that so much. It's, it's putting people over profits, exactly knowing what your core values are, and sticking to them. And I think something that has been pretty eye opening to me in my entrepreneurial journey is just how much of us social responsibility CEOs have, whether they realize it or not, you know, kind of watching everything that's happened where a lot of big companies that have been canceled or you know, I'm gonna use the the wing

as an example, I don't know if you've followed kind of a story. But this female founder belts business really quickly with VC funding and wanted to, you know, prove that a woman could do it just as fast as a man and I was recently reading her public apology and one of the things that she said was, you know, I used the same systems of oppression that my male peers were using, right like we had underpaid food service workers and I was so focused on my goals and like proving myself that I didn't pay attention to the bottom line and I don't want to put her on a you know, not not canceling anybody but realizing that you know, when I start a business, I bring in all my internal biases like that comes back creates the company culture, right and company cultures and we talk a lot about as the no school scenario has. My partner has another company that she runs, the biases that we bring to table the values that we bring to the table are drives every single decision you make and so there have been a lot of times that this year we've sat down said no no wait a minute yes this might be the what you said traditional ceo decision right lowest cost high profit but what's best for our people what's best for us you know are we really representing the mission that we want to have and i think that it really stuck out to me when you were talking about it's not a checkbox because it's a forever process i really genuinely thought that it was like a one and done we're good like you hire you hire the right if you hire a diverse people or not yes or no and that's been a really eye opening every single room you going into being the loudest one in the room fighting for what you believe is right and it really does start with that process of self discovery so thank you for sharing that i love that what are some practical tips i know you talked about hiring employees i think that you do when you go into another business and you're coaching or consulting what are some of the common things that you see right off the bat like mistakes that are being made that you can help fix

Trudi Lebron: Yeah so some of the things have to do with like some of the common things have to do with marketing and sales processes so looking at how people are talking about their work making sure that the language that they're using is inclusive and accurate right like that it is really clear about what people are selling and and you know who they are prepared to serve and then that kind of combines with like the programmatic elements of it because you don't want to just say oh we're like an inclusive business and we're open to all like black and brown folks and blah blah blah if you actually aren't prepared to hold space for that so we are like looking at marketing and sales process but then like at the same time looking at like the team and starting to understand does this team have the skill to hold space and facilitate conversations that are rooted in equity or can they if somebody says something that's kind of racist or really racist or microaggression you have the skill to process that and navigate that and interrupt you know like interrupt racist behavior that we need to make sure that people are prepared to deliver the space that the marketing is saying that they can so those are some of the things that we look at we look at policy practices and procedures making sure that it's clear like you have community agreements and guidelines and that you know what to do if they're not upheld and that if people are asking questions about things that your customer service team knows how to respond you know like it's really a dynamic it's a whole approach it's not the one statement right that people roll out i think we saw a lot of that last year you know as the heels of the murder of George Floyd and then the whole kind of fall out around the school which was very public and caused a lot of people to move into you know into action they you know lots of people like made these pledges and like these statements but if you don't do the work to prepare to uphold it it's just it's

just words it's meaningless so we try to help people make sure that their intent and their values and then their policy practices and procedures are all in alignment so that they so that it becomes a way of doing business and not this like extra thing right it's not like this diversity initiative that we like roll out in the corner or this like statement that we make that lives in our website but like we are fundamentally evolving how we do business

Shannan Monson: And it's weaved into every aspect of that it's not just the marketing process it's your customer experience delivery it's it's your

Trudi Lebron: Management yeah planning is everything

Shannan Monson: Yeah. I'm curious your take on this because i feel like one of the things that has been really eye opening i've been definitely going through a big process of alerting before starting CEO School I didn't have a lot of clients that weren't white and didn't look like me and I really had a lot of naivety in learning there and just thinking that you know I wasn't I didn't say I wasn't actively racist and what I have learned this year that you're either racist or you're anti racist there's no in between and what I have found for myself and for our company is that a lot of times it's more about if you say something or if you don't so it's almost like you can have you know on your sales pages on your website if you just don't if you ignore it it's almost like that quiet is the problem is that accurate like not having statements weaved through your sales and marketing process not saying anything is actually what makes people afraid It's not a safe space.

Trudi Lebron: Um, I would say that that could be the case, it really depends like business to business, it really depends. I think that if if people are on an active, anti racist journey and really prioritizing this in their business, then there should be, there should be something to indicate that, but it doesn't necessarily have to look like a full fledged, like, here's our entire racist statement. There are other ways to do it. And so it really depends on like, what you feel called to do what's most appropriate for your audience, what's most appropriate for your business? You want your all of your copy, obviously, to be values aligned and inclusive, and explicitly inclusive, like you really want to be clear about who you are and what you stand for, for sure. But it's not about like having like the one page, which I think a lot of you, you know, do, yeah.

Shannan Monson: No, I hear that. And I think the one page, it's the, it's easy, it's it's important, I think you should do it. But it's, it's also not the ongoing work. And my my short experience, I feel like this, I'd like to hear more about it's the explicit statements like explicitly saying LGBTQ members are welcome here. It's explicitly saying that, you know, we respect black and brown women, and we want to have equal outcomes is explicitly saying that. So can you give us some examples of ways so for example, a lot of friends that are dietitians or past clients and Dietetics nutrition, it's very, very white. There's not a lot of black brown women of color in the profession in general. And like, food is a big problem and food, food deserts. And there's a massive disconnect there. And so I've heard from a lot of them, you know, I want to help build a more inclusive business, I want to serve this community. Can you maybe speak to what some of the disconnects are? Like? What are what are some of those explicit things that as a business

owner, we can do to welcome in, you know, from the first step to welcome in other members that aren't necessarily buying right now? Does that make sense?

Trudi Lebron: Yeah, I think that I think that we need to be more inclusivity isn't just about like, racial inclusivity. Right. Like, we need to shift the way that we're thinking about the problem. So the problem in this scenario, you just framed, right? isn't the problem isn't only that there is not a lot of black and brown folks, or that there's a disproportionate amount of black and brown folks who are in the industry. The fact is, there is a tremendous amount of black and brown folks who work in, in industries that are connected to that field, right? Like, so it doesn't have to just be dieticians, like certified dietitians. There's all kinds of people who are alternative, like deal with food and alternative health. You know, what's the word plant based plant based diets, food justice, like, you need to open up the way that you think about your work, and all of the ways that like, and all of the things that intersect with that work, and then you find like, Oh, this is actually way more diverse than I was thinking about it, you have to change, change the way that you're looking at the problem.

Shannan Monson: I love that perspective. And I think it's something that a lot of times we get so focused on our one industry or one job, and we're only collaborating with or working with people that have jobs like ours, that we do forget that, that there's a big community. I know, this is something my husband's in medicine, and that he talks about a lot, you know, a lot of times it's looked at as like the doctor hierarchy. But the reality is you have this whole care team, right? Yeah. And really making sure that you're taking a holistic approach. So to I guess, kind of like answer my own question, the first step would be to step outside of yourself and realize now hold on, there's a lot more people in this community. Am I including them? Am I right? Exactly. Being an active member of this conversation, yeah. Right.

Trudi Lebron: What you may find is like in this, this happens, like what you may find is that you're, you're focusing on something that's so narrow, and that that that actually is the problem, because part of the reason that there aren't more black and brown folks in that industry is because they're barriers to entry. Right? Like you have to have right schooling you have to like get this license, right. So that inherently creates barriers, right? So like you have out beyond you have to like be understanding those systemic things and understanding why people are not. You know, why? Why it seems to be not diverse. But the fact is, there's a lot of people who are addressing the very same issues and asking the questions like How can I be more inclusive to them, leads you to new answers.

Shannan Monson: Oh, I love that. So it looks fundamentally asking the wrong questions. Right, and I think I hope it's okay, I'm gonna be a little bit bold here. I've had a lot of white entrepreneur friends. said, you know, like, Why are, why are black people not buying from us? Well, you know, I'm doing everything that I can. But I think what I've found in my journey, and I'm continuing to find, and I know it's a long way to go, but it is it is looking at it the wrong way, asking questions, and what are some of the

Trudi Lebron: my, let me just say, my, my answer to that question is I have heard that question. My answer to that question, or is not really an answer. But the question that I prompt people to ask is, how did you build a business that only white people come to?

Shannan Monson: Oh, go on, keep going.

Trudi Lebron: Like you created it, right, like you built it?

Shannan Monson: Yeah.

Trudi Lebron: So like, the question shouldn't be like, why aren't these people not coming? The question is like, you created a whole marketing plan to target your target audience. And that's who's showing up. So like, how that happened. And that I mean, that and that takes us back to that very first thing I said around like the internal process of like, what biases do you have? How are you showing up in the world? Like, that's, that's the answer. That's how you did it. But it's not until you confront those things that you'll start to see that change.

Shannan Monson: I just want to like I'm over here, slow. Clap. I was nervous to ask that question is my own white fragility being, you know, afraid to have conversations and tiptoeing around these conversations? And I think that's something that if you are listening to this podcast episode, and you're thinking, I don't have biases, I'm not racist. I'm not. I don't have internalized misogyny. Like, I'm just gonna tell you like we absolutely we all do. It's the it's a society that we've been raised in. And unless you're past the humility to say, Okay, now hold on a second, who's not everyone else's problem, like I am a permanent problem. When I see change,

Trudi Lebron: Yeah, it's also, it's also not just like the society that you're, you're raised. And it's, it's how your brain is wired. Right. So, so I am a, I have a master's degree in psychology, I've completed all of my coursework. For my PhD in psychology, I will get around to writing my dissertation, hopefully this year. But I've been a little busy.

Shannan Monson: I believe in you.

Trudi Lebron: Yes, I'll get it done. But right, like our, our brains are wired in such a way that like, we bias is useful in some ways. It's, these are the things that like, keep us safe, like these are part of very old, you know, very old wiring that we have that, that required us to put things into categories, I can eat this, and it won't kill me, you know what I mean? Like, I can't eat that, because, because it will, like our brains are wired in such a way to create categories to have preferences. So it's not a bad thing that you have bias. What is harmful is when you have bias that you're not acknowledging, and that you're and when you're not recognizing that the certain biases that you have, that they are the ones that are incorrect, or that are that are causing you to be misaligned with how you want to show up in the world, that you change them. And they can be changed. It takes time and effort and a process. But we can change our biases, so to say to you know, that nobody should feel like it says anything about them to acknowledge, like I have by everybody has bias. Like you can't even be a human without it.

Shannan Monson: Yeah, and when I mean, we're all flawed, trying to become better people, but also like, you're not a horrible, you're not a horrible human. And I think just the very nature that you're listening to this conversation that you want to do better. Like that. That is like you said, that's the first step is having these internal conversations. Okay, this is phenomenal. I everybody should work with you. I'm really excited. This has been a phenomenal conversation. Tell us more about what your, your business and your work as a coach and kind of, I think that people have a good understanding of how this could help their business. Can you tell us more about really what it is that you do and how you work with clients? Yeah, I know, you have an event coming up. We're all excited to go back to events when the time is right. So tell us about all the exciting things you've got going on and how again, we listen to our company.

Trudi Lebron: Yeah, so we, the way that we work with people, we work with people in groups, and we have a membership and we also work occasionally one on one with bigger companies. And the goal is really to help companies and like become better leaders become more aligned with their values and become become equity centered. That's what that's what we call it equity centered practice. And it's important because, first of all, it's important just morally right, like we need to be doing better, right, like we just need to be doing better. So the work with the outcomes they see is that their, their teams become more diverse, their audiences become more diverse. retention in their program, like in their programs increases, because you're attracting the like better quality, more values aligned clients and team members. So even team retention goes up. You're just like more effective overall. And, you know, I, there, I hate to, I hate that I have to make this argument. But it's important because it's affect people over time people see their revenue increase, of course, because they're they have a healthier business like this is this is an issue of like, business sustainability, you know, over the long term. So yeah,

Shannan Monson: Yeah. Great. Yeah. Gotcha. Yeah.

Trudi Lebron: Yeah, it's important.

Shannan Monson: Yeah, it gives you long longevity and makes it a more fun, safe place to work. I mean, yeah, I want to wake up every day and enjoy their job. Your customers want to enjoy their customer experience, right, not about just not getting canceled. I think sometimes we we focus on that like

Trudi Lebron: Yeah, no, there are, there are real financial gains to be made. When you have a healthy culture. When you have a diverse, inclusive, equitable community, your impact becomes more dynamic. So one of the things that we do with our, with the teams that we work with, especially at the one on one level, is really helped them to start to measure the actual impact they're making in the world, not just what their clients but like, what is the change that you can actually make? And how do you report about that? And how do you become accountable to those things?

Shannan Monson: Oh, I love that.

Trudi Lebron: Yeah. So I'm a data nerd. Like I, I mean, yeah, I get really into this stuff. So yeah, so there's a lot of stuff that we help people do. And it's all about like improving the company overall, right?

Shannan Monson: Yeah.

Trudi Lebron: For coaches, and some, like solo entrepreneurs, what we do is we help them improve their coaching practice, like how do you become a more effective higher quality coach that has a diverse practice, that you can navigate these uncomfortable conversations that you can hold space for diversity, and really be inclusive in your coaching practice, and also your program and curriculum design. So that's, those are some of the things that we work with people who have smaller, you know, smaller practices and solo practices. And we have, a lot of people get started in our membership, which is called the equity centered coaching collective. And we publish a monthly learning journey in there. And people kind of go through that learning journey, we host a q&a call, I go in and do a live stream to do some training. And it's just a good like, starting place for people who are like, new to the work or for people who have been around who have been doing the work for a while but want like an ongoing practice. And I talked about the this work as a practice a lot, because it's not this fixed place that you just get to, but it's something that you incorporate and just get better and better and better over time. And that you stay connected to the conversation. Because the fact is, is that like things change, and evolve, and different, um, you know, like, we learned different things and culture shifts. And so people want to be connected to like, what's the what's the new language? How can we be better? How can we be more inclusive, and that's an ongoing process. So we do that kind of work in our collective.

Shannan Monson: I love your focus on it being ongoing. We talked about this with leadership, it's not you know, a course you take in us, Brian, get a certificate, although it can look like that. Every single day. It's asking yourself, like, am I showing up as the best leader I can be today? Absolutely. I think this is the same with are we your core company values I'm gonna use as an example, a lot of times, companies and I've been guilty of this in the past, you read it out, you put it on your website, you post it on a page in your employee handbook, and then you're done with it, right? Yeah. And if you're not, every single week, shouting out your team members for embodying those company cultures, if you're not asking yourself, Am I embodying this culture is this practice is this decision we're making coming back to our core values and in alignment, like it isn't constant. Leadership is a constant check in with yourself. And so I love that it's a monthly membership and gives you that time and energy to to sit down and realign, refocus, reset. You can think of it like a personal trainer or working out or your fate, right, if you don't continue to focus on it. It's not going to continue to be a priority and you'll be able to tell him that way. So where can we where can we find you? I think you're on Instagram, social media. what's your website? Where can we learn more about the membership?

Trudi Lebron: Yeah, so people can go to the website and learn more about the membership. My website is just trudilebron.com and you're just going to look for the collective. It'll be it'll be

prominently displayed, it'll be easy to find. And I will also say, you know, later this year, we are having you know, in the Early, early summer is summer what summer actually start the summer started in June.

Shannan Monson: Hi and always later than I think, every year.

Trudi Lebron: Maybe in the spring. So at the end of May, the end of May, we are having our, an event called Show Up and Serve 2021. And so maybe some people have attended because we've had 1000s of people take the workshop and hundreds of people show up live last year to the, to the workshop that we held, it was called show up and serve. And that event, we had 600 people on that call live and like probably about 3000 people take that workshop over the course of last year. And that was really an introduction to diversity, equity and inclusion in the coaching world for many, many people. And so this year, we're kind of having, we're gonna make this an annual event is our goal. And so we'll be hosting it again this year as a two day event. And we are going to be doing kind of an update on where the industry is around this work overall. And doing a little bit more teaching around these concepts of liberatory leadership and culturally responsive coaching and being equity centered. So that is coming. And yeah, we'll be sharing all of that information on our socials and on our website. You know, actually in the next couple of weeks we'll be opening up invitations to that.

Shannan Monson: Amazing Okay guys, check that out at TrudiLebron.com, I'm in already got my second. I'm very excited. That sounds an amazing opportunity. Before we wrap up, is there any last piece of advice maybe you could give to your younger self or a new entrepreneur just starting this journey? If you could tell her one thing? What would it be?

Trudi Lebron: Yeah, the thing that pops right into mind when you're saying that is, is a reminder to everyone that change is a long game, that we are playing a long game and that business social impact business and businesses that really create a big difference in the world is a long term commitment. And so we have sometimes we're maybe sacrificing short term games, but just know that the, the it's all about the bigger picture and to stay focused on that and keep you know, just keep in action every day.

Shannan Monson: I couldn't agree more. It's always always playing the long game. Thank you so much for coming on the show, Trudi. You guys go check out her website, TrudiLebron.com

Trudi Lebron: And hang out with me on Instagram for sure.

Shannan Monson: Yeah. What's your Instagram handle?

Trudi Lebron: It's just at [@trudilebron](https://www.instagram.com/trudilebron)

Shannan Monson: Okay, perfect. We'll link that below. Thank you so much. This was a really enlightening episode. I'm confident it's helped so many business owners and would really

encourage you guys to take the next step by joining the membership and making this an ongoing practice in your business. So thank you so much for coming on.

Trudi Lebron: You're so welcome. Thanks for having me.

Shannan Monson: Thank you so much for listening. We hope you enjoy the show. Follow us at CEO school on Instagram for show notes, inspiration and exclusive behind the scenes that you won't find anywhere else. We also have an absolutely incredible resource for you. It's the seven lessons we learned building million dollar businesses. These are complete game changers and we want to give it to you absolutely free. All you have to do is leave a review of the podcast, why you love the show, screenshot the review and email it to Hello@ceoschoolpodcast.com and we'll send it your way.