

Season 6, Episode 2 - Brave Conversations: Getting to the Core of Equity and Identity

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SPEAKERS

Kevin Siefker, Dr. Terrance Scott, Alyn Eastin, Kalyn Walatin, Vonetta Clark-Tooles, Lisa Kaiser

Vonetta Clark-Tooles 00:09

Good afternoon, everybody. It is Monday, October 13, and we just want to say thank you all for joining us for our latest episode of getting to the core, a podcast for educators and those who are education adjacent. And so that's all of us. I am vanetta Clark tools. I'll be your host for this afternoon's episode, and I am partnered with my super friend and cohort member.

Dr. Terrance Scott 00:41

Hey y'all Good afternoon. Greetings. My name is Dr Terrence Scott. Is an honor and privilege to be before you here today, I get the lovely honor of serving in dual purposes. I'm wearing two hats today as a member of the dynamic get into the core podcast team. I have the honor of welcoming seed, our seed team here at Risa, which I am also a part of so I get the honor of asking and answering questions. Should be fun talking to myself a little bit. Today, we're going to get a chance to explore the work of seed and learn from some dynamic educators who've been doing this work for a long time. So without further ado, want to welcome you all. Thank you so much for being here.

Vonetta Clark-Tooles 01:25

All right, we'll have some brief introductions, and so we'll start with our first question, and it's not really a question, it's more of an opportunity for storytelling. So I'm going to ask Miss Ellen Easton, who is the historical grio, the arbiter of facts for seed to share the seed origin story for us. Lynn, please introduce yourself and give us the origin story of seed, if you please.

Alyn Eastin 02:00

Greetings, everyone. Thank you for having us. I'm super excited to be here, especially with this wonderful team that I am able to do this work with. I am a Lynn Easton, as you mentioned. I am an educational improvement consultant here at Risa, and I am also the lead for the seed project in here at Risa, the National seed project was actually founded in 1987 by Dr Peggy McIntosh, and evolved right? It just grew so quickly. And it was an initiative basically that partners with communities, organizations and institutions to foster educational equity and diversity. So that is what seed stands for, seeking educational equity and diversity. And the interesting part about it is, before my tenure here at Risa, I actually was an educator in the Twin Cities. And as a teacher, I was actually a part of a seed cohort in the Twin Cities area, and I just remember getting some really great books, having some really good

conversations with other educators. And so when I came to Risa and was offered the opportunity to actually go to a seed training to to be a facilitator. I was able to do that with my mentor, the great Jenny winters, and we were able to go to Wisconsin and be on site. And it was a very intense week. Very intense week of conversations, of ways of conversating, of protocols and how to actually wade into this work where you you're learning but you're also having courageous conversations. And so we were able to come back to Risa. Of course, they had invested in us. So what were we going to do? What were we going to do with it? We thought, okay, great. We'll offer it internally for our resa family our team, so that we we can learn to have those conversations and use some of these protocols as well in our work, we were going to offer it in the evenings from like four to six, but we had a new superintendent, Dr Randy leapa, and he was coming to us from Livonia, which was actually the first district that we had done some of this work with. And so he said, No, this is too important. Why don't we offer it during the day, and anyone that's inside the organization can be a part of it. And so we did, and here we are, 10 years later, still having our conversations and learning, and the critical mass just keeps growing and growing. And actually the great thing is, during covid, we actually went virtual. So and haven't missed a beat. And so with that, we are able to have any and everyone who was able to on their schedule be a part of our monthly meetings for about eight, eight meetings. So we run from September to May. That's it in a nutshell.

Vonetta Clark-Tooles 05:19

Thank you so much. Elyne, that's a beautiful story as a person who has completed seed at Wayne resa, everything that you said echoes and rings true. So I'm thinking about the five of you who currently make up this current facilitation team for seed, and I want each of you to think back, because you all have your own historical narrative. I want everyone to share one moment or activity that stands out to you over these past years that was transformative, or something that still resonates and rings true. And so we will start with our newest seed facilitators. You'll introduce yourselves. Then we'll go to our more seasoned seed facilitators, and we'll end it with you all in so with that, and do remember to introduce yourself as you tell your story.

Lisa Kaiser 06:19

All right, I'll go ahead and get us started. Hey, everyone, so glad to be here. Thank you for inviting us to be a part of this wonderful podcast. My name is Lisa Kaiser. She her pronouns. I am a school culture climate and equity consultant here at Wayne resa, I do have a clarifying question, vanetta, do you want us to talk about a seed activity and moment that was transformative for us. Yeah, I see, I see, yeah,

Vonetta Clark-Tooles 06:47

that would be amazing. Or given that you've just completed the training that a land talked about attending, yes, the moment could also come from there. So any portion of your seed journey that you want to talk to us about that was transformative for you. That's what we want to hear.

Lisa Kaiser 07:05

Yeah, absolutely so. So Terrence and I were in our leader training. We were able to travel to Northern California to experience our training in person, which is very lucky. That's that's that's where it was taking place at the time that we were sent, because it changes location all over the country. And there is an activity in seed that's called the crossover activity. And so there are so many statements, I see you laughing. Terrence, I see it. There are, there are many statements that are that are put out into into the room, and if the statement applies to statements about identity, and if the statement applies to you, when you're in person, you cross over to the other side of the room, and then you make eye contact with people who have crossed over. And the statements about identity have to do with dominant identities, right? So if you identify as a person in this essentially like in this text bracket, or if you are a person without disability, if you are a person, a white person, if you are right, all these dominant

identities is, is a way you can do the crossover activity there. There are many right ways to do it. But they were naming dominant identities. And one of the I want to say, he's a co Executive Director. His name is John Doe Chen of of the national seed project. So dominant identity is we are all we all hold multitudes, right? We all hold multitudes of identities. And racial identity for me is tricky. I'm a biracial person. I am both a white person and a person of color, and I don't choose. I am always both. And so when the statement came into the room, if you are a white person, cross over. And I had already, at this point in the training, had many conversations with John Doe about my identity, and he's an Asian man, and so we just talked about our Asian Ness together and food and family. And we just had had so many conversations. We cross. I crossed over because I'm a white person and and even before they said, make eye contact, John Doe held, held me with his eyes on the other side of the room, and he wouldn't let me go, you know, because you're supposed to look across and you look people with you the he wouldn't let me go. And I saw what he was doing, and it was like he was he was looking at me where I was, but he was also trying to hold me where he was at the same time. And it was so powerful. It makes me emotional every time, because he was like, I see you there, and I honor you there, and I hold you here too. You. And then there was this. There was a debrief, I think, after every crossover, and you just kind of chose your people, and he came marching through that room right at me, and it just was, it was a very special I felt very seen and very held in a way that I needed in that moment. And so yeah, that was just a transformative experience for me and seed. That was, it was my first time being with people who worked for seed. So yeah, that was a that was something really special, and one of the most transformative moments for me in that, in that training

Vonetta Clark-Tooles 10:38

that is powerful, and I have chills, right? I don't want to immediately move from that story, but in the interest of time, my hope is that in some way, we'll come back to that, that holding of you in space, right, that you are both a white person and a person of another ethnic background or community, and I also love that you do not choose, that you are always both, because that embodies your wholeness as a human being. And I honor and respect that in you, we're going to move on to Doctor Scott, please tell us your transformative seed story.

Dr. Terrance Scott 11:17

I allowed, not at you, Lisa, but just because, like, we were always here, like that activity for me was also that moment. So for different reasons, though. So as Lisa mentioned, first of all, Dr Terrence Scott, climate culture and equity consultant here at Risa, almost three years in, crazy how time flies, right? But we had an opportunity, as Lisa mentioned, to go to become seed trainers. And so having experience seed virtually with the team here as a participant, first, I engage in this activity virtually during session, and we were instructed to, like, turn our cameras on or off. I think it was during our crossover experience, virtually and so for me, like the listening to the language that was used to describe the various identities that were dominant, and then being instructed to cross over as a black person, as a person who grew up in poverty, as a person who grew up in a single parent household, as a first generation college student, as all of those things. And my mind, I was expecting to not ever cross over. And so I kind of chilled in the cut in the back a little bit, and was in my feelings a little bit, but then I had an opportunity to cross over, and I felt the way about it. I was like, Wait, I gotta cross over to hold on. So I wasn't I wasn't quite ready for that experience. So I learned something about myself in that moment and about my identities and my biases, even internally in that moment. So I had a powerful moment doing a virtual experience as a participant, then going to the training in person, where I was not expected to bring back and become a facilitator of this knowledge with my colleagues in The work. Going forward, I had this, this amazingly like strong reaction to the physical crossing over in the room, and the time that it took to do it for a room full of people, various walks of life across this planet, um, with varying identities and experiences. It was I got chills thinking about it. It was both beautiful and daunting and immensely important in the face of election season and politics and all that's happening in the world, the global context for me, this work is very personal and global, but I'm also always able to

localize it and bring it back home, where it's most important and relevant for me as well. And so, yeah, the crossover activity is something that I'll never I'll never forget. Always cherish it, always appreciate it, and get chills every time I think about it. Beautiful.

Vonetta Clark-Tooles 14:17

We all have spaces of crossover. So we're going to continue the story of transformation. I don't know who is more junior, Kaylin or Kevin, and so I will rely on you all to jump in, where you are, where you fit.

Kalyn Walatin 14:33

Hi, I'm Caitlin. Will Latin. I'm a multilingual consultant at Wayne resa, and I'm certainly more more junior than Kevin and, of course, more junior than the founder, Allyn. So I will be in the middle today. It's interesting, because listening to you all and just how powerful all that is, I'm just trying to rack my brains. Like, first, I'm not sure there's like. An activity that stands out to me. It's all more about the process, both me being in seed, then training for seed leadership, and now being, you know, behind the scenes, and it's finding myself in spaces like Dr Scott mentioned, oh, I didn't expect to have to cross over. Well, it wasn't true for me, that particular activity, I knew when to I was going to cross over. But I've been surprised at times when I felt discomfort. And, you know, I think, you know, okay, so if it's not clear, because you know me, or the sound of my voice or whatever, I am white, and you know, we have this thing as much as we try to beat it down that, like, we want all the cookies, right? So it's like, yeah, I'm on my journey. I'm getting there. I'm getting there. Allison, it's like, whoa. You know, something will just let, like, come up, and you're like, Okay, well, I am not as ready as I thought I was, right and go back to the drawing board, and I think that seed provides that space. We call them brave conversations. Well, it's wasn't invented by us. I'm forgetting help me cite later. But you know those brave spaces, I think part of the power of seed for me, again, in all of its aspects. When I first was a participant in the group at Risa, then in training is, you know, were those those breakout rooms, and really never wanting to leave them in a way, because the conversation would get so rich in the participants and colleagues and, you know, fellow trainees, or whatever would get so vulnerable in those spaces. And it's just really powerful and really moving, and also just really gives me hope that this is such important work, and really gives me hope that things can change. Because, believe me, even before this election, and you know, now, in the context of everything I'm doing working with multilingual learners and families and the especially the educators who work with them, it is a time to be this one. I can cite poet Syed Jones, who says he's always globally distressed. I'm walking around in a constant state of being globally distressed, even if you know, things with myself and my family are pretty much okay, and those kind of conversations that we're able to have in seed really give me hope that by being in community and continuing this work in community, we really can, you know, create change and transformation, both in our personal and professional lives and in society, so really, in all our spheres of influence,

Vonetta Clark-Tooles 17:49

that's beautiful. Come on, Kevin, what you got for

Kevin Siefker 17:51

us? Okay, it's so interesting that Lisa and Taryn Terrence both chose the crossover activity because that's the one for me too. And see I started, I'm in my 10th year at Risa here on educational improvement against Kevin siefer, first of all, educational improvement consultant in my 10th year, and I engaged in the very first cohort that Allyn mentioned, like three weeks into my time being at Risa. And so I was part of it from the very beginning. I was naturally drawn to it. So when the opportunity was there, I was like, Yes, this is great. But the crossover activity, you know, this, this seed work is is grounded in inside out work. So you're looking at yourself. And so for me, was the the the awareness of how I see myself versus how the world sees me. And so like that activity, when you talk about dominant

identities, you go right down the list, and I had like. I was like, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, for so many of those. But it's along with your own lived experience. You know each person has their own story, and they know their story better than anybody else, so you're not going to tell somebody else's story for them. And so that was the that's the beauty of people from every you know, from, from, from every corner of the country, coming together in the new seed leaders trainings from every background, every varied identity that you could have, all coming together to share their own stories. And we just had a microcosm of that, you know, at Wayne resa, based on who was employed by Wayne resa at the time, and so I've, I've really enjoyed getting to know people and and being a part of that growth in you know, for myself, as well as seeing it in other people and being there in community with other people. I just value that. But. Greatly

Vonetta Clark-Toolles 20:03

beautiful. It just keeps getting better. All right, Alain, please tell us your transformational story of sea

Alyn Eastin 20:10

Well, I mean, all of the activities that everyone has mentioned are transformative. I think one of the things that sits with me the most from my training was the affinity groups, most definitely a space where I was able, you know, you're you go with it's demographically set up. And so those were spaces that I cherished, as well as just being able to learn and talk and really sit at the feet of people who have been doing this work for for since the beginning. I'll mention Mrs. Gail Cruz Robinson, who just retired, and as I was receding this last fall, I was just honored, and it was a wonderful experience to be with her again, and I was just humbled that she remembered me. But I will say that in doing this work here at Risa, one of the things that gets me every year. I mean, there's so many different little things, but in the end, during session eight, when we are looking at the reflection on our journey towards equity and social justice. And we play this, there's a piece by Meg Wheatley called willing to be disturbed, and it really hits home at what seed kind of really is all about, just the the willingness to listen, and if you don't agree, it's okay, you know, where did the Civility go? What kind of world would it be if we just all agreed about everything? Yeah, just would not be fun at all. Right? Be so boring. And so it's it's and then it's hearing from the participants and what they're taking away and what this experience has meant to them, and we can we get so wrapped up in the work sometimes we can forget just how powerful this can be. And so we were always grateful to our leadership that we are still able to have this, and it's during the day, and that, you know, we're welcoming everyone into the space, and that people feel comfortable and vulnerable enough to show up authentically. And I think that is what makes seed what it is here at Risa

Dr. Terrance Scott 22:35

that's awesome. Thank you so much for sharing that Ellen, we can go on and on, just discussing how wonderful our experiences have been with C or how impactful they've been. But this work is very daunting. It can be very emotional work. It could be very laborious, even and very taxing. So thinking about the work itself and what it means to lead seed at work, speaking for myself, one of the videos that stood out in my training we were in California, that we haven't shown here in the bevy of activities that we do, there's this video from a documentary called The color of fear, and there's a black gentleman in a room full of multiracial men, and they're having A conversation about what it means to be American, and in that conversation, the black gentleman gets very emotional, has like, a visceral reaction to a conversation that's being had. I don't want to spoil it, so please go and watch it. It's like from the 90s too. It's like, pretty dated, but for me, I had such an emotional reaction to that thinking about our colleagues here at Risa, I'm curious to hear about challenges and tensions that you faced while implementing seed. And I'm asking that question in the face of what's happening globally, choosing to be brave and courageous in this moment. We continue this work because of how much it means to not only those of us who work here, but also those who we serve ultimately. And so I'm thinking about

tensions or challenges that we've faced and have overcome and still welcome each other to seed. Not everyone has to respond to this question, but I'm just curious to hear any moments that stood out to you over the years where you've had to overcome some challenges. Just with implementation, some challenges with this subject, and we're able to overcome it and still welcome folks to be a part of the space. I

Alyn Eastin 25:10

can, I can speak to it when it when we first started, we did have in the first cohort, you know, anytime you do something first time, there's a few, you know, hiccups and things of that nature. And I remember that there were a couple of sessions where folks were pretty, you know, walked away, as Jenny would say, insolvent. They weren't, we weren't able to get to some type of not closure, but to actually try to take care of what they were feeling so the follow up and those types of things. And we found that, based on how we had put it out to the Risa community, that managers were sending people that they thought needed it, this is something they needed. And that was not, that was not how what we had intended, right? You we still continued for years to push back and say, No, you know, we always get the feedback seed. Everybody who comes and works for research should have to do. See they were like, No, it really needs to be a voluntary, something you want to do, because that changes the whole dynamic, right? You get people pushing back. What do you do? How, what kind of programming or propaganda are you pushing? All of those, all the things. And so we had that issue, as well as being asked, you know, you know how big a part is, the gender identity piece, a part of the training. And so when we laid all of these things out, you know, people still thinking about minefields, political and otherwise, it just, it just all worked out because we were able to say, look, this is what it is, and don't just be sending us your peoples. Come on now that that's not, that's not what it's for, we are hoping and eventually we will get to a point where we're at critical mass. And either you you know what seed is about, or you don't. And there have been people who have been a part of it, they've gone through the foundational pieces. That's the eight weeks, the eight, I'm sorry, the eight month, once a month training and choose not to continue on. But there are more people who have been a part of seed, and they're like, yeah, no, this is not enough. What else can we do? And so therefore, we created the combined cohorts that meets once a quarter. So that's the first thing that comes to mind. If anybody has anything else, please, please jump in.

Kevin Siefker 27:50

And I'll say one of the things people, since it is voluntary, sometimes people speak through their attendance, and if it's too much for somebody to take on at that time they might not be ready for it. And as a Lynn said that sometimes people leave feeling a certain kind of way, but what we try and do is build a community so that we are we as a collective are ready to have the conversations together for when each individual person is ready to dig into that depth. And some people are scratching some people are dipping a toe, some people are peeking over the edge, and some people are just jumping right in. So it's and some people are then, you know, swimming, the triathlon leg of it. So we're trying to be there with and for each person, wherever they are, and trying to meet people wherever they are. I know that that Jenny always said before was, don't dig a hole you can't fill. And I just that stuck with me, not that we can do everything for people. It's not because it's individual work. However you're providing tools and resources and things that you know, and setting the stage and the conditions for people to do their own learning. We while we talked before too, and we've set in seed. We create rabbit holes so as people do their own learning, you know, we've got resources and things for people to go and be curious and learn more about something they might not know, but then have a place to talk about it and and bring back what you've learned so that you can continue to push yourself

Vonetta Clark-Toolles 29:35

beautiful. I put in the chat that seed is a community, and we all have a place in it, recognizing that for some people, that place is on the outside. And Kevin, you name, that very beautifully. Dip a toe, scratch

the surface, dive all the way in. This brings me to this model, and you all have mentioned it a little bit about career. Just conversations, how has that evolved in your work?

Kalyn Walatin 30:05

I can just speak maybe to the setup of the year, right when you're in your initial cohort, and the topics that we do, even though we do meet each summer, and go over both feedback that we got, and just looking at the structure, and sometimes the national seed project might have other things that they would like to share. So we do go over things, and we adjust a bit, but I think the year itself goes to me, it sort of starts for someone who wants to only dip their toes in because we start with gender and we start really with two genders. I mean, we talk about non binary and other roles and things later, but I think that in general, people are comfortable talking about messages they received around growing up a boy or a girl, whatever they were considered in their household, and how that affected them, right? So we start there and again. That doesn't mean that everyone's comfortable with it, but most people do. So they find a way to start speaking to each other and beginning to form that community, and that community is that basis of trust. So then when we get I'm afraid of using really terrible adjectives here. I don't want to say it's harder, but I feel, you know, when you're talking about, you know, white supremacy and naming it down the line, I think at least for white people, that's a lot more difficult, and if they've already felt like they've been able to have brave conversations about other topics, then I think more people, if they're not diving in, have at least waited enough in or trust that you know they're in a place where they they can continue in Kevin's metaphor, they're still touch bottom right. You're not going to drown, or you've learned some strokes and can get there and then are just more willing to have these conversations. I do often wonder, though, for black people, for people of color, for other people who are, you know, targeted identities, if the pace really feels too slow, but so obviously pros and cons, but I do think that in general, the year has been set up that way as it is a new year for most of the people who join us. I only say that because, like Dr Scott and Lisa, obviously, were fully immersed in this world before they joined seed. But, you know, it kind of has a progression that as you build community, you feel that you can be more vulnerable, and you feel that you can sit more with your discomfort, and you trust your colleagues to have these conversations,

Lisa Kaiser 33:03

I think too, that that sort of evolution, hopefully can can begin to translate outwardly within the organization, as people who might be a little bit more reticent to sign up for seed start to understand it as a bit of the fabric of what Risa is, of what Wayne Risa is. And they hear more and more people talking about it. More and more of us have been through it. You know, they might not have been ready at the beginning. You know, we'll always circle back not not Risa as a man or not Risa not see it as a mandate, but see it as an invitation, always right? So it's okay that you're not ready. We're not mad that you're not ready. We will always circle back and say, Are you ready yet? No, still not okay. We'll come back and circle back around and see if you're ready. Now, it's okay, but kind of this as people see more and more folks talking about it more like combined cohorts happening. We're celebrating our 10th Anniversary. Like this is becoming part of who Wayne Risa is, Courage growing from that as well. Like, maybe I should see what this is. My colleagues are, are doing this. Like, this is a thing that we do here, so maybe I will begin to feel ready, or, you know, maybe a little bit more courageous to have these conversations that, you know, I don't know. We'll see that's there's my hope.

Vonetta Clark-Tooles 34:33

That's beautiful. I was listening to you both, and we have a terminology that we call PLC light, where, instead of doing the real, challenging, authentic work of a professional learning community to improve outcomes for students, we kind of get together and we talk about what we might talk about, or we gripe, or we complain, or what. Whatever. Yes. And that comes from Dr Anthony Muhammad in the way forward his book on PLCs, this idea of PLC light. And so as I was listening to you all, I am grateful, and

I hope that you never enter into the space of p of seed light, right. Never enter into the space of seed, light that you continue to honor the deep, courageous work of seed, because that's what makes it meaningful, is the fact that we are not sugar coating the realities that keep us separate and divided, but also united and connected in this world. And so thank you for what you do at Wayne resa, to maintain the integrity of seed, to not have it be seed light, where we just gloss over inequity as it shows up in our county and in our organization. And so I would love to hear more that of what you have to share about

Alyn Eastin 36:08

that that was, you that great way to summarize that, vanetta, and I will say that when we were thinking about, you know, doing this, we we had not experienced covid yet, and so we were in person, and I can tell you, Jenny and I would meet and plan and pray before everyone because, you know, you never know how folks are going to take it and body language and all of these different things. And so when, when the world basically paused and we decided to move to virtual, the virtual space we want. We wanted to make sure that we didn't become seed light. You know, how could we kind of maintain and create that community, that space virtually, so folks could still feel connected, even though we were in a box, right, even though we're in this little visual box, and the conversations I'm people were still vulnerable. And we created protocols so that people, if you need to turn off your camera and take a moment, because people sometimes things, you're remembering stories, and you bring things up. It happens to me when I'm presenting, right? I'm like, whoop I wasn't expecting that. And so but it also affords and shows people that this is the space where you can do that. It's okay if it happens and and I, you know, with this brand new cohort 10, I'm like, oh my goodness, they're out the gates. It's a wonderful thing. It's a wonderful thing. And we just, I'm just very humbled and honored that folks, the way the word has spread, you gotta do this. You know, if you're new to Risa, you should take seed, blah, blah, blah, but that people feel that, and that we can still create that virtually, even though we want to try to bring back a few, you know, things in person. And so we can do that, we are able to create that and kind of get outside of the box as we continue this work. And you need to, especially with this work, all right, we talk about rejuvenating ourselves. And so there, the difference in conversations is that they were still good. In person, they were great. They were powerful. You are able to kind of connect with somebody automatically if they didn't, if you could read their body language and see through seed people. You know, when we're online, I might get a direct message, or someone else might need, you know I need, and then we can go check on or follow up afterwards, and so that that that is a good thing, I think.

Vonetta Clark-Tooles 38:55

Thank you so much for adding that context and nuance. Kevin, please share

Kevin Siefker 39:01

just thinking about you know, how the seed work has developed and grown, and the participants pushed for more that you know, after having gone through for eight sessions, building the the community with folks that you that you see monthly, intentionally and really connect with, you know, they wanted more, and so taking part in the combined cohort, the ongoing work. You know, in my my co facilitators are probably going to chuckle when I say this, because I've been saying this a lot recently, like, you know, taking it beyond as as as we're talking about the PLC light, making me this, the connection I had was, you know, going on beyond performative, because there's a lot especially pandemic time, and as stuff was bubbling up socially that, you know, got exposed and and then a lot of people. We being very performative. And if it's the social media world that I'm just going to do this because it looks right or looks good, and I'm gonna put this, I'm gonna craft the perfect post to be out here and and just for for, you know, for visibility sake, just to put it out there. But if you, if you, if you're taking the time to go through and write something out, if you say it, be about it. And so you know, if you're putting something in writing and crafting statements and acknowledgements and and everything

else, if you say you're going to be about it, then be about it. And that's how you hold yourself and each other accountable to it, and that's what we expect of our young people to think critically and and challenge status quo. When someone's not doing right or the right thing or right by people, right by humans, that's the time that we need to question it, and don't be afraid to question it. And that's what we ask of, you know, we ask that of our students, and we want to grow that in them, but don't quell it. When somebody asks you a tough question, and somebody's question, you know, forcing you to look at something that you're doing, a practice or a policy that might not be the right thing.

Dr. Terrance Scott 41:28

Kevin came through with the bars. Y'all getting serious out here. I want to just, I want this to end. Thank you so much for sharing.

Vonetta Clark-Tooles 41:36

So much fire, so much fire. Ah, okay, come on. Dr Scott, what you got? What's next? What's next?

Dr. Terrance Scott 41:42

Definitely appreciate that. I'm going to take facilitator privilege and both ask and answer my question and then pass it off as the last question for this, for the squad to to respond to. For me, personally, I got into this work because as an educator, I taught in Nashville, Tennessee for six years, but my heart was always in the D and always wanted to support and build space and create space that I didn't have. And so with that context in mind, I got into the work of identity and racial identity development and support, because I wanted to cultivate spaces of belonging. I wanted it to matter for for all children, not just black children, not just children in poverty, but for for every children that I for every child that I encountered. I wanted them to feel safe and like they belonged in the space where they can have ways. We can break bread together, we can laugh together, and we can also learn together. And in my research and in my studies, I found that there's, you know, the there's the bell framework, there's critical race theory, there's cultural responsive teaching. There's tons of literature out there, tons of research out there, turns tons of frameworks out there, and seed stands out to me with a level of intentionality and focus, because I think it does a great job of covering the gamut of identity in terms of Gender expression. And there's all different kinds of difference, all different walks of life. And so it's an honor to lead this work and have a framework for each student in mind. And I'm curious to hear from the team about this building upon that. What are your thoughts on? What sets seed apart from other models, and just to sort of reinforce its importance and value to both welcome folks our listeners who are interested in it and curious about it, and other recent folk who may be interested as well. What are your thoughts on on seed as a model of leading this work.

Lisa Kaiser 44:06

I think one of the things that I appreciate most about seed as a model, did we name earlier that it stands for seeking educational, equity and diversity? I think we did. Okay, sorry if I'm sorry if I missed it. I'm like, do we even name the acronym? We just throw acronyms around in this in this gig all the time, this alphabet soup that we work in, one of the things I love the most about it is that it really it's such a good entry point. No matter where you are on your journey. It is such you just, you can, you can step right in if you've never done a moment of the work, or if you are farther down the road, right? Someone earlier did say, like, we want more. We have gotten feedback in the past where it's like, this is more entry level than I anticipated, and that's okay, right? There is always more to be done. Join the combined co. We have work to do. There is no finish line to this work, but seed welcomes anyone, wherever they are. We all have reflecting that we can always do in all of our identities. It is the i this is true. It is the least. Is this true, the least threatening framework, right? Like, it's the most approachable, like, come on in the water's fine. Here we are. This is a community. You're going to be okay. Here you are welcome here. We're all here together. So that's, yeah, that's, that's one of the things I think, sets

seed apart from a lot of the there have been a lot of pieces that have come out in this anti dei world that we live in now that has just ramped up and ramped up, and a lot of misconception about what dei is. And I've read a lot of these pieces, and it's like, I don't, I don't know if these folks have gone to either gone to anything at all, or they've gone to some that have been set up in ways that are not ideal, or they've been set up in these like gotcha ways, or ways that are centered on blaming and shaming and like these, these things that aren't helpful in these communities, and see it as the exact opposite of that. It's life giving. It's, it starts with love. It's yeah, it's, it's a good place to start for anyone, anyone, anyone, yeah.

Dr. Terrance Scott 46:46

Ewert, thank you for sharing. Lisa. Anybody else have any comment on that? Sure.

Alyn Eastin 46:53

I was just going to say that I love that it see deals with all the diversity of identities. It's not just about race, right? It's so much more than that and and that. It really is about self. Kevin said it earlier. It's inside out work. It is about you reflecting upon yourself and what you've been fed as you go through the many systems that are in place to do what they are doing right and learning about that. And so that is why any entry point or wherever you are on the journey, you're welcome. So Lisa said it beautifully, yeah,

Vonetta Clark-Tooles 47:51

we may have to do a part two. The time is well spent. I want to thank each of you for your contributions, for your authenticity, for your vulnerability, for all that you have shared. We'll do a quick whip around as you think about the future of seed, what is it that your heart most desires?

Lisa Kaiser 48:25

Well, I'll go ahead and start someone mentioned earlier. I think what Kevin was saying earlier really spoke to this idea of accountability and change. And when I think about the work of the combined cohort and people wanting to put the work of seed into action and making sure that the work that Risa does internally and externally stands by what we say, who we say, we are in our equity statement, and we are Living that out in all the work that we do. I want the work of the combined cohort to make that happen. I see that as the work of the combined cohort as a accountability body within loving, loving accountability within Wayne Risa, for both the work that we do within the county and within the institution.

Kalyn Walatin 49:25

What she said, seriously being in community and continuing to do the work together. And I again, getting more action steps with the combined cohort. And the only thing I'll just add to that is, you know, as we continue to go through initial cohorts, though. I mean, again, year 10, that's something to celebrate. You know, hopefully more and more people will continue to want to work in community, to make progress, internally as an organization and in support of all the students and families and educators, we serve as a reset.

Kevin Siefker 50:02

Ewert, and I will say that I my hope, is that the work that we engage in doesn't exist only in the time that we are together and that people take what they've done and what they've learned and and apply it and go go forth and do with others, and that it did, but we can still be that source or that place of respite or support that people come back to, but then continues to take it out further.

Alyn Eastin 50:38

And I'll just add to that saying all of what they just said, and that it becomes something that, as we continue to offer it in our course catalog, that our districts take advantage of it. We've had two districts so far. We've done some Saturdays with us, with a couple of my schools, and the feedback has always been the same, that they just wish more and more people will get it. So hopefully we'll, we'll, we'll get that out into the world beyond just internally at Risa for those that we support in Wayne County.

Dr. Terrance Scott 51:16

Awesome, awesome. Definitely good with everything everyone has said so far, I'll just add a bit of spice and just say that, you know, we can't change the world until we change ourselves. And so thinking about how difficult this work is enough as it is already teaching is the hardest job in the world. I don't care what anybody says. We say it all the time as a restorative practices. Practitioner, trainer, the work of restorative is to heal, and so for me, when I think about the work of seed and the work of restorative practices that I lead, I have a sincere hope to create spaces of healing and belonging so that we can continue to fight like hell, but fight like hell as our whole selves. If we can be whole and fight together, I definitely think that we can be that change that we're seeking to do in this world, and I hope that we can accomplish that and do it in a way that benefits those who we serve.

Vonetta Clark-Tooles 52:20

Yes, Lord, You've been listening to getting to the core. And I'll echo what Dr Scott said. We can be whole and fight together. We can be the change. I'm vanetta Clark, tools, Wayne County, Resa, educational improvement consultant.

Dr. Terrance Scott 52:40

I'm Dr Taryn Scott school, climate culture and equity consultant, hehim, pronouns, thank y'all for being here. We out that's a wrap. Peace. You.

53:00

Moving Forward.