

Episode 3: Transitioning and Gender Affirmation
Released on January 18, 2019

Cornell Woodson: Hello, hello everyone, welcome back to yet another episode.

Sherron Brown: Here we are again.

Cornell Woodson: Of the Inclusive Excellence podcast. I am one of your co-hosts Cornell Woodson.

Sherron Brown: And I'm Sherron Brown and we have two fabulous guests today, we have... You got to understand Cornell and the community, I nailed this just before we got on air and so now I'm all nervous because all eyes are on me but that's okay I'm going to get through it. We have Christopher Lujan, who is the director of Cornell's LGBT resource center here at the university. And we have Luca Maurer from Ithaca College, who is also the director of the LGBT resource center there. Welcome and welcome.

Cornell Woodson: See that was good.

Sherron Brown: It just takes practice.

Cornell Woodson: So today we're talking about what it means to build and create an inclusive space for trans individuals and trans employees in the work place. We decided to do this particular topic because we just released the transgender guide on transitioning and coming out and gender affirmation at work. And really thought that this was, we've gotten so much feedback around that particular tool and excitement around the workshop that our department offers, that we thought okay people really have questions around this, so we thought let's have a conversation about it and kind of jump into that. So I think my first question and this is for all of us, and actually we forgot to do our question of the month.

Sherron Brown: Oh, before we'll do question of the month?

Cornell Woodson: Yes.

Sherron Brown: Okay, we'll do the question of the month and then you are just going to give us a quick overview of what the trans guide is.

Cornell Woodson: I'm going to do that afterwards.

Sherron Brown: Okay. All right bring it.

Cornell Woodson: So the surprise mystery question of the month is...

Sherron Brown: Oh Lord. You guys ready?

Luca: I'm ready.

Christoper: Yeah I think so.

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- Luca: Lets do this.
- Cornell Woodson: What makes you feel like you can be your authentic self at work?
- Sherron Brown: I think we're all stumped, the room is stumped.
- Cornell Woodson: What needs to exist and happen for you to be able to bring your full self to work?
- Sherron Brown: Do you guys, any of either of you want to jump in first?
- Luca: I will, sure.
- Sherron Brown: Okay, again this is Luca.
- Luca: Yes hi this is Luca. For me one thing I think that's essential is having an idea that I'm in a space where its possible for people to show compassion for each other, where its possible for me to have self compassion and where we are, again, in a space where we are not trying to be perfect, but we are trying to be reflective and supportive and affirming in a way that recognizes our common humanity.
- Cornell Woodson: That's very good, anyone else?
- Luca: No pressure.
- Sherron Brown: Yeah so what he said, plus I think that for me I need to see the human side of the people I'm working with. I need to know that I am dealing with people who can be vulnerable when it's time to be vulnerable, people who show that they are not perfect. It's important for me that I have room to not be imperfect myself, and that way I can bring my flawed self and my fabulous self all on the same day and just have a fuller experience of the people I'm with, I think that's important to me.
- Christoper: I think I could piggyback off that. As someone who's new to Cornell, been here for maybe up to four months, trying to figure out how I can be my authentic self has been something that's been a little bit of a challenge for me. I think when it comes to the vulnerability piece, I think it's important that spaces are built, so that trust is able to be built in those spaces, right?
- Sherron Brown: Yes.
- Christoper: So you can't really come in to these spaces right of the bat your full authentic self, you need that trust within the people you work with. So for me, as someone coming in to a new space, it's like how can we build that trust together.
- Sherron Brown: Absolutely.

Cornell Woodson: That resonates with me a lot, and for me, it's more about will people use my authentic self against me. When I choose to be me, will they accept it or pretend to. I've been in spaces where people pretend to like me for who I am, but then they go off and talk to my boss about something, so being very careful about who I choose to allow to see me in my totality, the wholistic part of Cornell. And so that trust is really, really important for me particularly in this area of my career. Even just being able to talk about the things that frustrate me, as opposed to just letting the things go or only going home to talk about it, being able to do that with colleagues is a part of me being authentic, but I have to trust you, to feel like your not going to run of and tell people, that I just had this frustration about an individual or whatever.

Sherron Brown: Then for me, I'm just going to go a little bit further with that, because although we were using the word trust and authentic self and things like that, what keeps ringing back to me is the word of safety. I need to feel safe, whether its emotionally safe and of course physically safe. I need to feel like everything is not on the line all the time. If I bring my authentic self I need to know that I am not putting myself to much at risk, I still feel safe enough to be who I am all the time, and of course be appropriate. So I think for me the underlying tone is safety in addition to vulnerability and imperfection, I need to feel safe.

Cornell Woodson: Yeah absolutely, that's good, yeah. So jumping into our topic about creating inclusive spaces for trans people. I think the big questions that I get a lot from managers and supervisors is, what does that look like? What does an inclusive space look like for trans people? Because that's different for different types of identities, but there also might be some similarities. So what are the various components of a space that is inclusive of trans people? And anyone can jump into that.

Chritstoper: I think one of the first places to go is language and how we're using it. And how we're respecting peoples pronouns, how we're respecting a persons preferred name to use, whether it's legally change or not, I think that's one of the basic things of how we can create that inclusive space. What does our language look like in our forms in our presentations that we make? How are we making sure that we're not living in this binary world of just using our male or female pronouns, or just language that uses that binary. So I think for me that's one of the basic places to start when creating inclusive spaces, looking at what that language looks like.

Cornell Woodson: Yeah, right. I know one thing that I tend to tell people when I do workshops is the act of asking people pronouns. Even cis people asking each other there pronouns, and I think that's appropriate to bring up because yesterday was International Pronouns Day, and normalizing that. I love that well Luca, your a big part of starting that, I was trying not to shot you out without...

Luca: Only one part of it, yes.

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- Cornell Woodson: Right but you were a piece, a part of that group that started the International Pronouns Day. And when I tell people it's okay to ask people their pronouns, but ask everyone their pronouns, that's so awkward for people, people are like "wait, what" and I think because we live in such a world where we're taught to mind our business, but yet we still don't mind our business, right?
- Sherron Brown: Mind your business under certain circumstances.
- Cornell Woodson: Right, but the one moment where I said, ask people their pronouns to make sure that we're referring to people in the appropriate way, is one big way to show that were inclusive in that way.
- Luca: Oh absolutely and again, yes were flush on our successes from the first, International Pronouns Day which sought to normalize asking pronouns, sharing pronouns, as a piece of again showing our common respect for each other as human beings. And at the same time I feel personally challenged because it should not just be the one day, right?
- Cornell Woodson: Yeah.
- Sherron Brown: Yes.
- Luca: That on day was to raise awareness and that's great, and I'm already working with students around how can we carry this forward every single day. Yes, there seemed to be a lot of support and a lot of participation that one day, also there's the 364 other days. Where again we want to validate that people are doing that, normalize it for everyone, as you said Cornell, especially for cis gender people. That again people have different levels of risk or privilege when they share, and its important for folks to have an understanding of what that would be like depending on your position of power or privilege.
- Cornell Woodson: Absolutely and since we're on the topic of pronouns in particular, because I think it's such a big indicator of the space might not be perfect, that doesn't mean that there won't ever be a moment where transphobia comes up, but that there's a sense that people are trying and people get it to some degree, that there might be some level of safety here, but at least you're doing that. I get a lot of pushback on the they, them, theirs pronouns.
- Sherron Brown: Well that's just the grammarian in me.
- Cornell Woodson: Right, and not that it was you Sherron.
- Sherron Brown: That's true it wasn't me but...

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Cornell Woodson: But it's usually the people who are like, "that's not grammatically correct" how does one respond as directors of centers where this is a part of your work. How do you respond to that kind of pushback?

Luca: Luckily I used to have a paragraph that I would use to describe this. Now luckily all I can say, you should refer to the tweets that the Oxford English Dictionary sent yesterday and Merriam-Websters and Dictionary.com, they all got in on Pronouns Day by tweeting the fact that using they, them as a singular pronoun has been in use since the 17th century or earlier.

Luca: And that again if we are really promoting that people have the ability to self determine, to have agency, to advocate, to be referred to in the way that is most authentic for themselves, that even if we experienced trauma from our 6th grade grammar teacher, and I'm there with you when the red pen is all over, I know that feeling. That still people being able to be in that seat and determine for themselves the most respectful way in which people should refer to them, that is of the utmost. And if we do need to hash out for ourselves the fact that that is difficult or complicated or confusing that's fine, and not doing that directly to the person who's using the pronouns, but finding people outside of that circle to go through that conversation with and get support from.

Sherron Brown: And I think as individuals we do get to say what we want to be called, so whether it's a pronoun day or not or the other 364 days in the year, a perfect example for me is, I'm a cis gender women. I went to the dentist not too long ago and my name is written down, and I think my name is phonetic, I think my name sounds exactly the way it looks in writing and they insist on calling me Sharron instead of Sherron. And I'm thinking to myself, "you don't get to call me what you want, I get to make that decision" and I feel like this is all part of owning myself, this is who I am. I get to tell you how to pronounce my name and you don't make an assumption. So this is essentially an extension of don't make an assumption, please feel free to ask me how to pronounce or ask me what my pronoun is. It's all part of the same for me, it's my identity, it is who I am and you don't get a choice in that.

Cornell Woodson: And to me that's empathy, right? Because as a cist person I may not understand or have ever experienced the being misgendered or having the wrong pronoun, used but I can understand, I can find some space of understanding the feeling of, I don't like it when people choose, "oh I'm going to call you this, because I can't pronounce your real name."

Sherron Brown: Oh yes. Oh my goodness

Cornell Woodson: So I understand the emotion even if the scenario is different. I think if more people did practice that, like I don't understand what that's like but I hear you telling me that it makes you feel invisible, or that who you are doesn't matter and that's where we can connect and I wish more people did what you just described.

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- Sherron Brown: I actually told them to, "can you please write it down on the chart so that when you see me again in six months we don't have to have this conversation yet again." And I was really nice about it but I was clear and they apologized and everything like that and I'm like, "dude, I've been coming here for quite some time now, and I know I tell you this almost every time I come." I don't feel valued and nobody wants to feel devalued no matter what the scenario is and I think if using someones pronoun or calling them by their right name, that's not asking too much. I don't think that's an unreasonable request.
- Cornell Woodson: You don't need to understand transgender issues in order to do what a person has asked you to do. Call me Tom, call me Sarah, call me, or nothing at all.
- Luca: When going back to creating the inclusive space and what this means for those of us who work in positions where a relationship building is everything to what we do.
- Sherron Brown: It's crucial, yeah.
- Luca: Something as easy as questioning someones pronouns takes away that respect, takes away that trust and leaves us in the space where we're not able to do our work fully and wholly with these individuals. So it's really important that we're able to have these conversations about honoring and respecting what this person wants regardless of it's a grammatically incorrect or not, right? Our job is to provide a service, provide a connection and we're not doing that properly if we're not respecting each other in that sense.
- Cornell Woodson: Absolutely. So I want to move away from pronouns after this last question. The trans experience is more than just pronouns, there's some other things. But one question I get often too is, is it just as simple as walking up to someone and saying what are your pronouns? Is it just that, what is the appropriate way to do that. I have my thoughts but I wanted ask other people is it that simple?
- Christoper: I usually suggest that the person model by introducing themselves and saying, "my name is Luca, my pronouns are he and him, tell me about you." And it needs to be voluntary, so again I've sometimes been in situations where people do that very well and in a very affirming way and other spaces where it seems like folks are getting the impression that its mandatory that they share them, and so I want to encourage people to set the tone and then allow people to share what they feel safe sharing to go back to what you were saying.
- Luca: That's the same model that I use when I introduce pronouns to individuals, but it is kind of that easy as far as just modeling that behavior. I think something also to mention in that though, is that also validating the feeling that that may feel really weird and different for someone who doesn't consistently practice that. I think sometimes myself and you may

feel this too, I tend to live in this bubble, this LGBTQ+ bubble where pronouns is like breathing it just happens everyday, right?

Cornell Woodson: Yes.

Luca: So to go into a room of professors who have been at Cornell for 30 years and tell them this practice that's going to feel really different for them, so you have to also validate that you're going to feel a little bit different when you normalize and practice that.

Cornell Woodson: Absolutely, what other aspects of a space makes it inclusive for trans people. Luca, did you have anything you wanted to add to Christopher's list.

Luca: I think, again I would encourage folks in any kind of environment, particularly in higher ed but in any kind of environment, to do an environmental audit. And you all have raised some of these issues already around forms, do your forms reflect that people have different family structures? Do your forms have space if your asking people to give demographics. Is there space for people to really disclose who they really are or not? Look around the walls, what's up on the walls? What languages is stuff in? Is there music playing? Who are the artists? Any of the artists LGBTQ? Are any of the artists people of color? Are any of the artists singing in languages other than English? And so again, sort of looking around if your entering a space and really taking in what you see, hear, smell, taste maybe if there's some snacks. And does it reflect the community in which you are and in what ways does it reflect again powers structures or privilege, and how can you break those down?

Cornell Woodson: The language has come up a couple of times so far, can we unpack it a little bit more, what do we mean by, language that we use in workplaces that could be, make someone that's trans not feel good personally?

Sherron Brown: Well when you say something, your talking to a cisgender person, lets say a cis female like myself and the question is well, "what does you husband do?" that is the language. It's automatically assuming that if I have a spouse it is a male. So that's part of the language that needs to be checked in.

Sherron Brown: Where to a person who is not aware of what it means to be transitioning, they clearly wouldn't understand that that language may be problematic by just making the assumption that, "I'm talking to a women and she's indicated that she's married, so I'm going to ask her what her husband does" they won't automatically assume that somethings wrong with that, so it's just offering an opportunity to take a minute and understand that there is a chance that the person in front of you may present one way, but there narrative is something else. So leave room in how you speak with this person to say, "are you married?, what does your spouse do?" So that little different right there it's just a slowing down and taking in and

understanding that there's room for something to be different to what it may be on the surface.

Cornell Woodson: You inspire a thought that I constantly have when people feel a need to even ask certain questions. I always tell people, "stop, why do you need to know?" Why is that important and I get it, I get peoples well intention of, "I'm trying to find a way to connect."

Sherron Brown: I always want to know how old people are [crosstalk 00:19:15] that's just my own personal opinion.

Cornell Woodson: Why do we need to know. And so even when you're asking someone their gender, why is that important in this moment? Does it change our relationship? Are you my doctor? You could be in a forum, are you writing an article about me where, you need to know those things? That to me is always the first question, at least I try to ask myself, am I just being a nosy or do I really need to know that answer?

Luca: And I understand that people want and need to connect, I completely understand that and at the same time as you said I think that there is a lot of situations where people are well meaning and don't think through, do I need to know this information or what might this feel like if, this person has several social identities that are not dominant and I'm really putting them on the spot as opposed to someone else answering and it's like, oh sure here's a picture of my wife on my desk.

Luca: I'm thinking of I had an interaction with a lovely, well meaning person who was wanting to connect with me and some other folks that I know and she is a cis person, she is a heterosexual person, she had just read a book she loved, by Sara McBride and she was recounting the book and I was like "yeah, I'm familiar with it talking about ..." and she got to this point where she was like "and I just thought", I said what did you like best about it and she said "I just thought it was so perfect that her husband was also transgender like that just sounds perfect" and she was well meaning and in my head I was again assumed all transgender people are heterosexual which were not. It also sort of put... she did not mean it this way, I took it in a demeaning way because it was sort of like, oh that's perfect transgender people will pair up and like Noah's Ark.

Cornell Woodson: Because you all know each other.

Luca: And then cisgender people will not have to be... everyone will be happy in their separately gendered marriages and it's not messy or complicated, as if two transgender people marrying isn't as complicated as two cis gender people, but again she was trying to connect with her best self.

Sherron Brown: And I also think that also lends itself to how we communicate with each because, if I'm in a position where I have some kind of re pour or relationship with a person and I genuinely want information about

something I know nothing about, I think it's very important to be mindful about how we are engaging. And let me go a little further to come out of nowhere and say Christopher what's your pronoun, it's out of context and it's uncomfortable but if, like Luca said earlier to model the behavior, to offer my information, and then that helps to establish a relationship so that when we have the harder conversations they become a little easier to have because the fact that we've already set some ground work I've model behavior and Christopher can see that I am genuinely interested in doing better, learning more, changing some behavior of my own, so I think that's all part of it.

Cornell Woodson: And some of the language pieces that I often think about too, is the "hey guys" or "boys and girls" and "ladies and gentlemen" like those kind of things that are so colloquial when we're addressing groups of people, even if there all cis people in a room that is still problematic too. Just some of those things that we don't think about that have a deeper context that could make certain groups feel like, "okay like huh, what if you're not in the binary there and now you clearly not be talking to me, so must not need to be at this whole staff meeting" so I'm like, "I'm out, because I wasn't included in your..." and that as well. What are some other examples of every day language that people tend to use that really could be, I don't want to use the word problematic but if that problematic?

Sherron Brown: You could use challenging.

Cornell Woodson: Yeah challenging.

Sherron Brown: Well that's a good question, let me think of that for a second.

Cornell Woodson: I feel like people are probably thinking of like, "what are those everyday things that I do that I potentially could be..."

Sherron Brown: I know what I do, it's terrible it doesn't happen as often in a formal work setting but among friends I be like "girl blah blah blah" or "boy bye," or something like that so I guess that is slang behind it, that might be something that I can check in with myself about, how often do I use it and to whom?

Cornell Woodson: And are you checking to whom you're doing it too. And do you know that's how they identify, that's problematic, right? It's funny, I laugh because me and my mom have been best friends probably since I was five and I grew with her going, "girl, let me tell you" and so I'm like, "yep." And she still does and she's like "I'm sorry" and I'm like "I'm fine, there's nothing wrong with being a girl so."

Sherron Brown: And I just say it because it's just easier, it just falls out of my mouth but I understand that some people will be like "don't call me that" and I get that.

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- Luca: I think it may be important just for individuals who are listening, who may not really understand what, not within the binary, means I think often times we assume people know this language that we use again.
- Sherron Brown: We make assumptions.
- Luca: It's that bubble we live in, right?
- Sherron Brown: Yes.
- Cornell Woodson: You're so right.
- Luca: So when we talk about non-binary, were talking gender non conforming individuals, were talking non binary folks, so individuals who either are fluid within their gender or fall outside of the non binary, so really making sure that we're using our language... it doesn't fall within that binary if that makes sense.
- Cornell Woodson: So that there are individuals who may not identify as male or female. And that there are individuals who, when you use the terms fluid, that there are days where masculinity is more, then there is question, there is days where femininity is more and there is days where they wouldn't assign anything to it, just to go even further in terms of that's [inaudible 00:25:19]
- Luca: Well, and I really wanted to underline that embedded in those notions, there are tons of assumptions, that's a very... to have to describe non binary identity and non binary experience as if the entire world is ordered that way and all societies and all cultures see things in either or, black or white, male or female, ways that is not the way it is in all cultures throughout the world, in fact the land in which we are sitting right now doing this interview is stolen land, of peoples and cultures who had very different ideas about many things, across binary things that the dominant American cultures sort of sees as binary. So I think it's really important to acknowledge that and what does that mean, when a society has this whole view but not everyone living here and certainly not historically indigenous people from this very area had different ideas about that and different ways of looking at the world that more reflect, folks lived experience,
- Cornell Woodson: Absolutely so we've discussed language, we've discussed pronouns, even this kind of question that we tend to ask, the assumptions we make. We didn't talk about bathrooms.
- Luca: Oh we didn't.
- Sherron Brown: Well let me just put it out there, listen, in my house I have toilets and you are free to use whichever toilet you like.

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Cornell Woodson: And how does that translate in to the workplace, where we tend to have men's and women's bathrooms, why is the bathroom issue... why is it an issue, I think people tend to ask well just go but why is that such a big topic particularly for trans individuals.

Luca: Well should I?

Sherron Brown: Please, please do.

Luca: I mean I think there's a couple of really important things when were talking about... I thought maybe we'd get through a half hour without talking about bathrooms, so oh well.

Cornell Woodson: I'm sorry, oh no.

Luca: No it's okay, like 85% of my job now, is bathrooms, who knew and yours too, right?

Sherron Brown: Who knew, right? 2018.

Luca: I know, but there's a couple of really important things to think about and one is the way that many bathrooms are set up, especially in work places and public spaces rather than our home is that frequently they are sex segregated, there is one for men and one for women. That sets up a couple of dynamics, one it means that some folks particularly in transgender and gender non conforming folks can be in a situation, where they really are trying to make a choice between two spaces in which they will at best, be unwelcome and at worst, they may experience discrimination or violence and that is not okay if you can't use a restroom, you can't go to school, you can't go to work, you can't do your errands, you can't look after your family, you can't be in the public sphere. The second thing that I would say is, this is not the vibe is really turned up on this right now politically and socially, this is not the first time that the issue of restrooms in public facilities has been used as an agent, as a tool for social control, I don't know if I'm getting to far [crosstalk 00:28:33] right?

Luca: But it's a means to restrict some peoples free movement in society and so, other example of things like this that have happened throughout history include segregation again, include in the early days of the HIV epidemic laws and policies being passed to try to restrict people who where HIV positive using restrooms, around the ERA again lots of worry and questions about wait a minute if women are fully in the workplace what will we do with bathrooms? And again as people have restrooms in their homes, there don't seem to be any incidents around these so I think it's really, again important to look at that legacy of using the restroom issue as a tool to try to control who is allowed in public spaces which is basically who is allowed to exist. So that's one thing and the other thing that I would say that's incredibly important is when we do have some all

gender restrooms, single occupancy, private restrooms with grab bars that have door buttons that will open for you.

Sherron Brown: And baby changing stations.

Luca: Thank you and baby changing stations we are using universal design to create restroom spaces that suit people in many different situations which might include transgender people and might not, which might include people who are fearful they might be in a restroom with transgender people there's solution right? If you are terrified that you might be in a restroom with a transgender person you can use the single occupancy restroom and you will know that you can lock the door and have your privacy. So again I'm really interested in how to get the common denominator of how do we insure access, because if you don't feel safe using the restroom and there are no facilities for you or your baby that you need to change, what your workplace communicates is, you do not matter and you do not belong here.

Sherron Brown: That's true,

Cornell Woodson: So we have a couple more minutes left and I want to talk about the trans guide that we created at Cornell University and human resources. And the guide was really meant to, in all honesty was geared toward transgender employees here at Cornell University in order to create a much easier access to information, around changing information and all the systems that we have our information in mainly work day, but I think when I got here I noticed we had a website and it used to live on the LGBT resource center page, that talked about ways in which trans people can change their preferred name and things of that sort and it was just so unorganized.

Sherron Brown: It was disjointed and disconnected.

Cornell Woodson: And not friendly in terms of how you're accessing things of that sort, so we need a guide that expands on that and so this guide really unpacks all those different... and gives step by step directions of, here's how you change your preferred name, here's how once you do change your legal name here's how you do it in the system and initiate that process, here's how you have a conversation with your supervisor, here's some things you might think about, what might you need in terms of support, what does support look like for you when you have that conversation with your supervisor. And then...

Sherron Brown: And it also offers a suggested list of things to do and in what order, because certain things might have to come first and you get to choose who you want to share this information with first, second and then you have a conversation with your supervisor, how do you want to tell your team and so on and so forth. So it's really full of great suggestions nothing is written in stone because transitioning is extremely personal to the individual, but the guide is chocked full of information and links to

organizations on campus and outside in the community that may have resources.

Cornell Woodson: Yeah you hit on something that was important for me, particularly as a cis person writing it. And I engaged trans people in turn of them looking at it and giving their critiques on it but one thing from my perspective that I really wanted to make clear that you just said really well, was that this may not be how your transition looks, and you really have the power and I think that's one of the opening lines, this is your decision how this looks, here are just some things that you can think about to get you started, to get your mind thinking about what do I want to start doing first and things of that sort and then creating a plan, if you plan to medically transition will you need time away what does that look like and access to benefits and reading the benefits and do your benefits support you.

Cornell Woodson: And things like... so just trying to make sure that trans people feel like wow somebody thought enough and that's it, that you thought about me before you even know I was here. You prepare and Christopher you said this before, you prepare the space for me and I was thought of before that to me...

Sherron Brown: That is inclusion.

Luca: Yeah. I'm just so appreciative that you've put this together and I think it's going to be a tremendous tool and it really signals, welcome we expected you.

Sherron Brown: And it's including you.

Luca: And that's amazing.

Cornell Woodson: Yes, absolutely. Why, okay, Christopher...

Christoper: I was just going to say the biggest piece of this for me and why I think it's such an amazing tool is, even just reading it, that whole process is challenging and there's a lot that goes into it especially like Sherron said it's a process that's different for everybody, right? You connected this with your office, you've connected this with yourself, I think what individual... I've worked in this field of career development specifically working with trans individuals before in Los Angeles, and what people really need to know is that yes this documents there, but there's someone on the other side of that document to connect with and I think that's the really important piece. So I'm so excited that this is here and I'm so excited that it's also connected with the office that you all are in.

Cornell Woodson: That's a really good point, I love that and it even as a cis person does me joy to know that I work for an institution that will go yeah lets do that.

Sherron Brown: It's exciting to have it happen.

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- Cornell Woodson: There was no question about it, like yeah absolutely this must happen, so that was...
- Sherron Brown: It's the human in human resources and that's really important.
- Cornell Woodson: Seriously no, that was really important and then making sure that it's accessible. Even Sherron when you were giving some feed back on the links for a person who's reusing a [inaudible 00:35:04] and even when mentioned the bathroom, accessibility is in composite of a lot of different people and making sure that even that document also existed even in that space as well.
- Luca: And it also recognizes that transgender people are people with disabilities, transgender people are people of color, transgender people are...
- Sherron Brown: Talk about the intersectionality of all identities they can come together and anytime we have anything new created here or updated the ideal would be to have universal design, whether it's a document or it's a restroom. Universal design, who would ever push back against that, that means that everybody feels welcome, feels included, feels just like you guys said, "we thought about you when we were making this happen" and ideally that's what we would want, we want to universally design ourselves out of a job and that's what we want to do.
- Cornell Woodson: So I can switch careers [crosstalk 00:36:01] but I think something else you mentioned Christopher too is sort of the human connection piece of it because a part of my role as the diversity inclusion programs lead is to support the LGBT community here on campus. And I've had the privilege and honor of particularly supporting trans people as they've begun thinking about, "I'm ready to transition and I want to be doing at work", and helping individuals navigate that and they've mentioned that same thing, having someone I can come and talk to, and vent to about what's not going right and what is going well is really helpful in that process. So that's been an honor for me that people felt like they could trust me with that information and come back, time and time again.
- Sherron Brown: And that brings us full circle to where we started about what we need to feel like we're part of it here and at least we talked about trust, we talked about safety and things like that. Full circle.
- Cornell Woodson: Well any final thoughts? Anything that we didn't mention that we want to make sure it's gets said about creating inclusive spaces for trans individuals?
- Luca: I think again, each one of you have said this in different ways, I think I would just reiterate, if you're not a transgender person and you're wondering how you can show up in the workplace, that there are a couple of key things and one is to ask how you can be helpful. And then a

second thing of course is to do it. And I think again, in all your work that is what you do and that is what you model, "here's my idea and tell me is this helpful to you, can you please give input into this process. What should be here that we're not thinking of." And also, "what causes do we have in common" and so again thinking about the needs of transgender people isn't something special or added on, or separate. When you meet the needs of transgender people you have the potential to meet the needs of many different kinds of people, and that's what's important.

Cornell Woodson: Absolutely, darn it you brought up some of those to you, so you said two is do it, one and a half is listen.

Luca: [crosstalk 00:38:05] listen, that's my optimism.

Sherron Brown: You made an assumption.

Cornell Woodson: Taking out the lion king, lion king one and a half, right? Actually listen and be vulnerable enough to take in. And I think for me and my cisness is acknowledging and we should probably define cis gender too, that I identify with the gender that I was assigned at birth, and so also acknowledging when I have been complicit in transphobia, when I had been complicit in a workplace not being inclusive of trans people. Sometimes we avoid that acknowledgement, it doesn't mean your a horrible human being, now you know what do you do with that how are you vulnerable.

Cornell Woodson: Taking after one of my favorite writers, Brené Brown, which talks about vulnerability and being vulnerable enough to, I'm not a horrible human being, I'm not no longer worthy of love it. It just means that I have some behavior that I need to check and do better and watch what I do. How do I make my way down to Cornell and Sherron and Angela Winfield and ask them questions and Christopher Lujan. And ask them, "what do I do, I want to fix this?" And I think a lot of our supervisors and managers have been doing just that I getting a lot of emails where they'll be like, I had one manager write to me, " Cornell, I know nothing about what it means to be trans, but I want to get this right, what do we do?"

Sherron Brown: That is absolutely what you want to hear.

Cornell Woodson: And I was like, "one step almost already there." So there was so many more I want... you always do that Luca, you spark so much, but thank you so much for joining us. Thank you for being a part of this episode. I hope there will be other topics that we'll bring you back for, because I love the conversation, and as always thanks for listening and share this episode with as many people as you possibly can, family, friends.

Sherron Brown: Put it out there.

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Cornell Woodson: Put it out there. Your colleagues, and hopefully we will have a actually live in person workshop around this topic as well, Sherron.

Sherron Brown: And if you are listening on sound cloud, please go ahead and put your comments there because we really want to here that what you are hearing from us. We want to know what you're thinking, what's coming up for you as you listen to us have our conversations. So go ahead and comment, it's okay, if we respond we'll be very kind, I promise.

Cornell Woodson: Yes or you can email us at ie-academy@cornell.edu. As always thank you and have a good rest of your week everyone.

Sherron Brown: Thank you so much for playing.