

Tharaka Sriram

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SPEAKERS

Tharaka Sriram, Omkari Williams



Omkari Williams 00:20

Hello, and welcome to Stepping Into Truth, the podcast where we take on the issues of race, gender and social justice. I'm your host Omkari Williams, and I'm very glad you're here with me today. Hosting this podcast is such a joy for me. I'm privileged to speak with people who are out in the world making a difference with their day jobs, their programs, their art, their activism. If you would like to support me in doing this work, you can do so for as little as \$3 a month by becoming a member of my Patreon community. You can go to patreon.com/omkariwilliams and sign up. There's also a link on my website omkariwilliams.com.



Omkari Williams 01:01

My guest today works in a field that many of us would have on our list of dream careers, because she gets to be near the ocean a lot. Tharaka Sriram is a marine conservationist, educator and activist for women's rights, diversity and youth empowerment. She is a Blue Park's ambassador for the Marine Conservation Institute. In 2015, she founded the ocean literacy initiative, Ocean Education, giving talks and workshops on marine protected areas in order to fight for the creation of a worldwide network of highly protected marine areas. And I am so pleased to welcome Tharaka to the podcast. Hi, Tharaka, how are you?



Tharaka Sriram 01:46

Hi, Omkari, thank you for having me on your podcast.



Omkari Williams 01:50

Oh, I'm really pleased. This is such an interesting conversation. As I said in the introduction, your work, I mean, the idea that you get to just spend a significant portion of your time, either by the ocean or immersed in projects that have to do with the ocean is really interesting to me. So let's start there. Let's start by talking about your project, the Ocean Education Initiative, and then we can look at the overlap between that and other areas of concern for you. So tell us about the Ocean Education Initiative, how it came to be, and what your goals for it are?



Tharaka Sriram 02:26

Thank you. That's a good question. So I can go back to the very, very beginning, which I came up with the idea when I was volunteering for women's rights in 2008 in Peru. That's where I was working as a volunteer for an organization, which was focusing on women's rights in labor unions or unions, right. So as you might know, it's not always easy for people to get organized, and fight for their rights when it comes to work conditions, salary, etc. And in some countries, for women, it's even harder, because it's frowned upon. So that was the work that NGO was doing. And I was supporting it in the capital, in Lima. And in my free time, I got to travel a lot.



Tharaka Sriram 03:13

And amongst others, I went to visit a little town at the coast. That is called Tortugas, which means turtles. Right? So it's the plural of turtle. And there I met a lady, she was married to a fisherman. So she told me about domestic violence that she was facing. And the reason for the domestic violence was because her husband and the other fishermen in the little village or town, they had a lot of problems with sustaining their livelihood through fishing, because the amount of fish that they were catching got lesser and lesser. And because they couldn't sustain their livelihood anymore.



Tharaka Sriram 03:59

It was kind of a downward spiral of frustration, anger, alcohol sometimes, you know, and this is like a very, how can I say it's a very easy explanation of domestic violence, domestic violence is much more complex. But it's kind of one of the root causes, you know, that the

people were not able to have food on their plate anymore. You know, because it's a very harsh surrounding there. It's not possible to have any kind of agriculture. It's very arid there. It hardly rains. So fish actually and fish and seafood is everything that they can afford to eat, or that they can catch, go out and catch it. So I kind of understood that.

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Tharaka Sriram 04:41

Before that to go back even earlier. From a young age, I started to work for women's rights. My parents are from Sri Lanka, the Tamils. So they fled the civil war or the genocide, depends from which perspective you're looking at it, and they came to Germany in search of safety and to live there in peace. But, of course, when you go from such a culture, you know, like South Asian culture, to a Western culture, you carry all the ideas and beliefs or the traditions with you. And one of the beliefs is that the place that women have in the society or the place that the women have in family, and for my parents, as a lot of people from that culture, they strongly believe that, now it's changing you know, but back then, a lot of people thought that women, they are only there to be mothers, they're only there to be caregivers, you know, they're not supposed to have a career, they're not supposed to be independent, not supposed to think too much for themselves, you know. So that is the kind of belief that I have to face growing up in the household of my parents.

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Tharaka Sriram 05:57

And I learned from a young age that there was a huge disbalance, or a huge gap between the values that I was facing in the German society outside, you know, where it was okay for girls to go out at night, you know, to have a boyfriend from like, age of 16, or 18, just to party and just go for their career. Whereas my parents were like, "Ah, you should marry someone that we're going to choose for you", you know, this whole thing. And I kind of rebelled against it. And it was through literature actually, it was books that saved me, they gave me the peek into the world. And they showed me, "Oh, there are a lot of women who have these kind of similar issues, you know, they have to find a voice, their own voice in a world where not everybody is well-meaning. Not everybody wants you to have a voice as a woman or as a young girl or girl. And through this learning, and through my own experience, I understood, okay, there are more women who have this kind of same kind of struggle. And then when I went to university, I joined a women's organization, and was with them for a lot for a long time. And fast forward to 2008. I kind of understood, "Wow. So there is now this issue of something is going on with the ocean, there's not enough fish".



Tharaka Sriram 07:19

Until 2008, there was not much interest from my part in learning about the ocean. I was like, this was just like hippies do people who are not very, they're not very centered in what is happening in the now. They have these crazy, crazy ideas. They go on boats, and they tried to save whales from being killed. You know, it's kind of it looks kind of fun. But I don't think it's something that is important. So that's how I thought until 2008. And then I understood, wow, there's a link between these two topics, you know, something is happening to the environment. And that is affecting the humans. So that's the first time in my life where I saw, there's definitely a link between humans and nature. So that's how I came up with Ocean Education. That was like the whole founding story.



Omkari Williams 08:10

Well, what you just said, really is kind of perfect, because one of the things that I think is really important is that we pay attention to the intersections of things. And in recent years, something that certainly here in the United States has gotten a lot more attention is the concept of intersectionality, which Kimberlé Crenshaw introduced. It's got to be over 20 years ago at this point, I think, and I don't think that most people think about the intersection of women's rights and marine conservation and racism, when they think about the oceans. But there is definitely overlap between all of those things, partly because the people who are going to most be impacted by the changes in our oceans are the people who are dependent on the oceans for their livelihoods. And those are almost always Black and brown people. And I would love for you to speak a bit more about where you found some well, both inspiration in dealing with those people and also what you think we need to start doing when we consider conservation and bringing those other aspects into it more top of mind rather than, oh, it's in the background.



Tharaka Sriram 09:38

First of all, when I started, so I'm not a marine biologist. A lot of people think that I'm a marine biologist because I you know, I talk about the ocean a lot. So which also speaks for the kind of culture we live in, which is kind of giving each person this kind of little box that you put them in. Say like somebody is in women's rights so they say, Oh, this person must be somebody who has studied it, somebody who has been like some kind of university background, you know, and it doesn't give the possibility for people to start to work in a field that they have not been trained in. And that is also something that I strongly believe in that, of course, there are fields where it takes a lot of training, like say you want to become a teacher, or a doctor or an engineer. But I think, in essence, if you want to change something, and you see that there's a lack, you can educate yourself nowadays,

through all kinds of means be like, podcast like yours, or be on radio shows, or blogs, or Wikipedia, or, you know, every university paper that has been written in the recent, I don't know, let's say 10 or 20 years, you can find it online.

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Tharaka Sriram 10:52

Yeah, so that's what I did. So when I found out about this intersection between women's rights and marine conservation, I went and I did a lot of research on the internet, I talked to people who are into marine conservation or connected to the ocean, and one or the other way, let's say like divers, or sailors, and then it gave me already the idea, or I already could see that there's not a lot of interdisciplinary work going on, you know, there's not much of a holistic idea of what you mentioned, it's like everything is connected in a way. But sometimes it's not so obvious, and people are not looking for holistic solutions.

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Tharaka Sriram 11:34

So one of the things that I quickly discovered was there not a lot of people of color in marine conservation, unfortunately. So normally, when even before that, in Germany, when I was in a room, mostly I was the only person of color in a room, surrounded by mostly white people, or maybe people of Turkish descent or Russian descent, you know, but person of color that was only me and most and then also a woman of color. So that was, I think it's that like extra cherry on top. And then it was the same thing in marine conservation. Whenever I went to a conference or went to some kind of event, or I read about people working in the field, it was mostly male scientists, but mostly white scientists, be it male or female. And there is like, okay, so it's the same thing is like everywhere else, you know, it's not much of a difference.

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Tharaka Sriram 12:32

So 2017 and 2018, I decided I wanted to see for myself how marine protected areas are faring. So that's something that I came across during my research, that most of the ocean, although the ocean makes up about, like makes up about 70-71% of our planet, only a small fraction of the ocean is protected. And these areas are called marine protected areas. But the sad thing is that most marine protected areas are only paper parks, so called paper parks, because they exist only on paper. And in reality, there are so many laws being broken, or sometimes there is not even a law or there is not even a document that says this area has been implemented, you know, or there is an area that is actually the marine protected area itself. Sometimes it's only like, okay, people decide that there is a marine protected area, but there's no document showing that there is really one.



Omkari Williams 13:36

So there's no enforcement of



Tharaka Sriram 13:39

exactly



Omkari Williams 13:39

the few that exist. Yeah.



Tharaka Sriram 13:42

So, that's the word. And so I wanted to say, like, see for myself, what is going on. And I did a world trip, I visited 17 countries in 11 months, and I visited marine protected areas and all sorts of areas of the world. You know, I went to Asia, I went to South America, to the Caribbean, South Africa. And there also I saw the people who are mostly in the field, who are doing the research, are white scientists, not always, but mostly. But the people, as you say, who are affected by it, be it their livelihood, but also people who could be given more work and more of an opportunity to work there and have a real job. You know, and I don't mean like somebody who is going out with the boat once a week, and gets paid like some kind of intern who is somebody from the locals. But the research is always done by people who come from the west. And these are the things that we need to change because the knowledge is power. And in the moment when knowledge comes in knowledge goes and has been taken away this kind of brain drain or knowledge drain. You also don't give the people in the space, that is mostly in poorer countries, in developing countries, you don't give them to power to develop a sense of conservation themselves.



Omkari Williams 15:04

That's a really good point. Because I think sometimes we make a mistake. And we think that the people who live in these places, the people who rely on on fishing, the people who do that work, we sometimes I think, believe that they will automatically take care of their own environment, that they will automatically do the right thing for themselves. And that's not always the case. Because without education about the dynamics of their environment, and what's happening in the global ocean, they can easily be misled into believing that it's okay for them to do things that are making money for someone, but actually ultimately damaging their own immediate environment. So I think that's a really

important point that I hadn't thought about, specifically until you said that, is that something that you encountered in terms of people, not understanding the impact of their own actions. That people indigenous to a place didn't necessarily understand the impact of their own actions on their environment?

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Tharaka Sriram 16:18

Yeah, exactly. That's it Omkari. So, for example, I was in Mozambique, I was in a little place that's called Tofo. So not Tofu, but Tofo which is very popular with divers. Because we can dive with the whale shark there you can see manta rays. So I was an intern with an organization that is called Marine Megafauna Foundation. So they do a lot of photo identification. So you take photos of different marine animals, and then you try to see, okay, have you spotted this individual before? Is it male or female? So these kinds of things, and what I was really excited about was that knowledge is one thing that you need in order to change something.

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Tharaka Sriram 17:03

But the other thing is also skills. You know, it's like skills like swimming, like diving, snorkeling, sailing, and something that I also learned through my personal history, I was 30 years old when I learned how to swim. So even though I grew up in Germany, my parents, they cannot swim, they cannot swim. Until this day, nobody in my family can swim. When I was in school, when we had mandatory swimming classes, because I had this kind of negative feeling. And I was always I was scared of the water, you know, I was scared to death. I didn't have anybody who would go with me to this public pool and say, oh, let's have fun, you know, this is so great, like, give me a positive learning experience. And when I was growing up, in my teenage years, I was always pretending to have my period twice a month, you know, so I didn't have to go swimming.

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Tharaka Sriram 17:55

So I did everything to kind of escape, to have to confront my fear. So when I fell in love with the ocean, a friend of mine, she rightfully said, you know, you can't change anything, just by looking at it from the beach. You have to go in it, you have to face it, and you have to see for yourself what is going on below the surface. And she was right. So then, in 2017, I visited Barbados for a vacation and there I came across a very, very patient, and very good teacher. So he teach me how to swim.

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Tharaka Sriram 18:32

Yeah, so this skill is something coming back to like Mozambique, the story there. So this is also a place which mainly consists of fishermen, fisherwomen or like fisherman mostly, and tourists, or tourism, people working either in fisheries or tourism. And what they do is there they take out the kids, to teach them how to swim. Because mostly to learn a skill that is also, I think, physical and can be dangerous. I think it can be challenging to go with a child or with an adult that is scared of the water immediately into the ocean, unless it's super shallow, you know.

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Tharaka Sriram 19:14

So in the West, you have swimming pools, public swimming pools, where for a small fee, you can enter you can learn how to swim. But in these kind of places, in developing countries, mostly, the only places that have swimming pools are the hotels. So what they did there, they asked the hotels to donate the time in the swimming pool for a certain like, let's say for the lunch break. So they would go with swimming teachers, who were also locals who, before that they were selling bracelets on the beach. So these boys or young men, so they were taught how to swim. And then they gave this kind of knowledge to the kids, you know, so I was joining them for the swimming classes. And that was one of the most amazing experiences that I had is these kids who were before that, either the ocean was a food source, you know, so you would only go out on a boat to get something to eat. But apart from that there was not much of a positive connection. And also, the fear of getting into the water of getting wet, literally, was something that induced a lot of fear. So through having this positive experience of, Okay, I can go in the water, it's not going to eat me, I can go in it, and I can be comfortable. I'm not going to drown because I have faith in my own body, that through a certain movement, I can be comfortable, and I can come become friends with water and with the ocean.



Omkari Williams 20:43

I think it's really interesting that you say that, because I think people assume that people who live right by the water are automatically going to be comfortable in the water, and that they're automatically going to have, you know, they're basically going to be fish.

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Tharaka Sriram 21:02

Yeah, exactly.



Omkari Williams 21:03

And that's not the case. And I think that even people who live who grow up right by the water can have a very disconnected relationship from it. And when you disconnect from something, then you're not going to value it in the same way that you do when you experience it. As your friend said, you can't be sitting on the beach, you have to be in the water. And the magic of being in the water and seeing marine life under the surface is something that you can tell someone what it's like, but to experience it is totally a different thing. And it builds that feeling of being part of something, a small part of something, that's so much bigger than you are. And I think that that is really, really important, as we look at how do we engage with this? And also how do we bring more people who are not white, and male, mostly and wealthy, because it's expensive to be on a boat. Boats are you know, someone described them as a hole in the water that you pour money into. I mean, boats are expensive.



Omkari Williams 22:19

And so I think that shifting some of that dynamic, so that you're shifting the power back to the people in the community is really important. And that that's something I again, I hadn't really thought about that much. But as you speak about that, it feels very significant to just make that single shift and all the things that ripple out from there.



Omkari Williams 22:41

So something else I wanted to talk with you about is one of the things that I'm noticing is when we talk about domestic violence, to go back to that subject for a moment, because I think it's very important. We talk about that as something that sometimes happens because the men do not have sufficient work. And they feel in some way, not even necessarily that it's the fault of the women, but that it's okay to take their frustration and their anger and their fear out on the women around them. And something I'm curious about is in this dynamic of working on ocean projects, and around people who are close to the water, have you had an opportunity to experience any organizations that really try and shift that dynamic of how men and women in these in these environments like in Peru interact?



Tharaka Sriram 23:54

I know of organizations that are focusing on the role of women in fisheries. So they are organizations, I think one of them is called a man jar, like the Candomblé. I think it's Candomblé is this kind of religion*. So it's the goddess of the sea. Okay, what yemanja come from? No. So there are organizations like this, that so first of all, what you said is, of

course, it's too easy. You know, it's too easy of an explanation. And there is no excuse for domestic violence. There's no excuse for any kind of violence. But there is no excuse for domestic violence.

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Tharaka Sriram 24:33

I think sometimes, especially men, like before, when I was working with with women's rights, I saw a lot of this kind of explanation that when in the way of like this, I am a man and therefore the impulses or the way that we are wired is much stronger than any kind of societal train behavior. So therefore I have to rape, therefore I have to murder therefore I have to kill, I have to go to war. So it's this kind of rationale that also says, okay, maybe men are not strong enough, you know, they're not very strong willed. So whatever, you know, there has to be some kind of object that they can take their anger out on. So I know of organizations who, first of all, they tried to, of course, educate the women and the men, that they have the same rights. There is no kind of difference between, okay, men can do whatever they want, and the women, they just have to play along. I haven't pursued human rights in that path anymore. I have totally gone to animal rights, and the whole process since 2008.

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Tharaka Sriram 25:53

First, when I had this encounter with the women, I said to myself, okay, so the problem is, they need food, they need fish. Back then, one of my boyfriend's he was from Bolivia. And it's an Indian country in South America, they don't this landlocked, they have the Lake Titicaca, which is one of the highest lakes, as you might know, on the planet, and they have a lot of aquaculture projects there. So his uncle had one of these aquaculture projects where they raised droughts, and then the women in the local community, they clean them, they call them, they clean them, and then they sell them.

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Tharaka Sriram 26:32

So he took me once there, and I said to myself, before I went, there was like, Okay, so that's what I'm going to do now. I thought, okay, that's the problem fit. There's no fish. So let's make fish with aquaculture. And that's the solution. So when we arrived there, there was a bucket of dead fish on the path leading to to the factory. And I saw all the dead fish. And then that moment, it hit me. I was like, No, I don't want to work with dead animals. That cannot be the answer. Like I want to work towards marine conservation. I don't want to do something that harms any kind of being, you know. That cannot be the answer. And that was it, you know? Yeah. Like that bucket of dead fish as like, Okay, this is not the path forward.



Omkari Williams 27:20

Yeah, it's always interesting how, seemingly small experience can shift the direction that we go in. And I actually want to ask you, because our time is coming to a close, I want to ask you a couple more questions. So one of the things that I'm interested in is, what are the impact of our policies around conservation, when we don't have many women in leadership in that field? And what are your goals, and when you think about bringing more women into the field.



Tharaka Sriram 27:51

So first of all, in general in marine conservation, and that is also the reason why I became a Blue Parks ambassador, is that not much of the ocean is protected, it's only 2.7%, which is strongly protected and implemented. But the goal is, and that is also something that the Marine Conservation Institute is pursuing, to have at least 30% of the ocean to be protected. So the goal for me is to bring much more women into the field, and, of course, much more women of color. As you said, it cannot be that a small fraction of our planet is spreading out and traveling to all these places with their knowledge. But the people who are in the field or who are making up most of our planet, most of our planet consists of brown people, or Black people or people of color, like just in terms of speaking of color. Most of our planet is made out of people who have other colors than white.



Omkari Williams 28:55

Right.



Tharaka Sriram 28:56

They have other, yeah, other values. And I want to show that also these kind of people like my parents, you know, the heritage of my parents who come from an island in the Indian Ocean, they also have a say on the table, they have a place at the table, where they can also bring in their values to protect the ocean. Under all, under the umbrella of protecting marine fauna and flora. And there there is more than one path to make this possible.



Omkari Williams 29:27

Yeah. And I think that just having more women at that table will bring in a different perspective, because it just does, you know, it's just going to bring in a perspective that's probably more centered on family and making sure that your children are taken care of

and that you know, your grandchildren are taken care of, just as things are structured now. And something I'd like you to just talk briefly about. I know you had a trip scheduled for 2020, that got derailed, as did much of life by COVID. But tell us about that and how you've adapted in this environment to make that trip happen in a small way.

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Tharaka Sriram 30:17

So that also connects nicely to the previous question of the question of how women can get more of a say in marine conservation and why they're important. So I'm one of the crew members of Exxpedition, which is a sailing mission with 300 women all together. They sail in different legs around the world, to investigate the question of microplastics and toxins in the ocean. Women are affected in a different way than men by the question of microplastic by toxins, women have a higher content of body fat, and these kind of toxins, they are accumulated in body fat. And also because of the biological role of women in childbirth so mostly these toxins that we absorb, they're given to the children, or to the fetus, to the baby.

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Tharaka Sriram 31:13

So all these questions, and also the question of livelihood that you mentioned, because it is the women who are responsible in most of the countries traditionally, to take care of the family, they're the ones that provide the food, be it in a small fishing village, or be it in a urban setting somewhere in the West? It is the women who have the eye for Okay, what kind of food are we eating? Is it healthy? What kind of water are we drinking? Is it healthy? How much does it cost? Can we afford it?

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Tharaka Sriram 31:46

So all these questions led me to participate in this x expedition mission, which was supposed to take place actually, last year in May, from Fiji to Vanuatu that was the leg that I was supposed to participate. So now unfortunately, after it has been, we had scheduled it for me this year 2021. But in November, December, it was decided that it was going to be canceled totally. As it seems the pandemic is not going to end very soon. And it's not safe, it doesn't make any sense to go out to little islands where they have difficulties to provide medical care already for the locals to come in to spread whatever we bring along. So what we're going to do is to do a virtual mission. It's going to, like the leg that I'm going to participate in, it's going to start on the fifth of February. And it's going to go for a couple of days, where we do visual sampling, to learn about marine conservation and plastic pollution.



Omkari Williams 32:51

That sounds so interesting. I will have to put in a link so that people can find what you all have done. Because that sounds really I mean, you know, given the circumstances we're in, it's the best we can do these days.



Tharaka Sriram 33:05

Exactly.



Omkari Williams 33:06

So before our time comes to an end, I wanted to ask you to give the listeners three simple things that they can do to make a difference in this particular area of social justice, what's something they can do if they want to engage with how we treat our oceans, how we experience our oceans, and make sure that we're doing things that are going to give people an opportunity to heal that particular part of our planet.



Tharaka Sriram 33:39

So one of the things that I'm very adamant about is to stop eating fish and seafood, if you can, especially if you're living in a setting where you can afford all sorts of food. And then you don't have to go out hunting for a fish to be able to survive. I'm a vegetarian, actually, I live mostly vegan, my diet is vegan. I believe strongly that animals also have souls, they have a right to live and freedom and safety as we do. We are also animals, you know, we just got lucky, I think in a way that now we have smartphones with language, and we have a thumb. But apart from that we are also animals. And for me, my goal is to protect them and I'm also gives them the same kind of happiness and safety that we as humans, we claim for ourselves. So as I said, it would be nice to like for people to stop eating seafood, and fish. Most of the ocean has been already over-fished to the amount of the numbers differ, but it's around like 80 or 90% of the ocean is already empty compared to what it was before. And the amount of resources, especially food that we're taking out of it is too fast and the ocean cannot recover. So I think it's good to give the ocean a break. Okay, when you can.




Tharaka Sriram 35:05

The second thing is to think more in a holistic way, like interdisciplinary, like what we embarked on the question at the beginning of our talk is to never stop asking questions. As we go out about our daily lives, we are very conditioned to do things a certain way, we

think it's a certain way, because things have always been done in a certain way. But most of our problems are problems, because we have been taught to think and do things in a certain way. And I wish that especially the youth and the children, they are raised to think critically and in a different way. So never stop asking questions.

 Tharaka Sriram 35:50


And the third thing would be to what I liked about you, and that is also the reason why I'm so happy that you invited me to be with you today is the question of activism. You know, what is activism? And I strongly believe that activism is a way of breathing life into your values, and bring them into life. You know, like you bring them into reality, things that are mostly in your head, you know, that you that are very abstract, like saying, Okay, I think all beings on this planet, they have the right to live in freedom and security, you know, that is very abstract. But when you take a little action, and then you say, okay, maybe today, I'm not going to kill the spider that comes into my bathroom, but I'm going to take him or her outside, and then just let it be like, not freak out or anything, or I'll try to eat less meat. So try to find a small act of kindness that you can incorporate in your daily life. I think that goes a long way, in changing our world.

 Omkari Williams 36:58

I really like what you just said about breathing life into your thoughts, basically. And that as a really lovely description of activism. So thank you so much for that. And I really thought this was a lovely conversation. I'm so glad that we had an opportunity to speak and I really appreciate it. And I will look forward to following your next adventure and seeing where you go from here.

 Tharaka Sriram 37:29

Thank you. And I'm so happy that you inspire so many people, to become activists to stay activists to give them hope, and support and create this network of amazing people who can change the world little by little.

 Omkari Williams 37:42

That's what we're gonna do little by little, thank you so much.

 Tharaka Sriram 37:46

Thank you for having me. Absolutely.



Omkari Williams 37:51

How we engage with our environment has taken a beating under the previous US administration. Fortunately, we are in now what I hope will be a different time, one in which we once again take seriously the environmental situation in which we find ourselves. If this is a cause that speaks to you, I encourage you to take action in whatever way small or large that you can. Thank you so much for listening. I'll be back with another episode of Stepping Into Truth very soon. And until then, remember that change starts with story. So keep sharing yours.



Omkari Williams 38:28

NOTE: "Candomblé is an African diasporic religion that developed in Brazil during the early 19th century. It arose through a process of syncretism between the traditional Yoruba religion of West Africa and the Roman Catholic form of Christianity...Candomblé involves the veneration of spirits known as orixás. "
(<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Candombl%C3%A9>).