

# BSC | Episode 6 | Final

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## SPEAKERS

Dr. Cheryl Ingram, Dr. Thomas, Dr. Fowles

- D** Dr. Thomas 00:01  
Black Social Capital, Black Social Capital. Today's guest is Dr. Cheryl Ingram. Dr. CI has been training and coaching in the area of diversity, equity and inclusion, also called DEI for the last 18 years. She is the CEO and founder of Inclusology, as well as Diverse City, LLC. Inclusology is a software company that is working to build the world's greatest benchmarks for DEI work. Diversity LLC is a consulting firm that helps businesses build sustainable and fair DEI practices. Dr. CI worked with Netflix, Uber, Foursquare, and at the University of Washington, just to name a few. She attended New Mexico State University to complete her bachelor's, master's and her doctorate of education degrees. Welcome, Dr. CI.
- D** Dr. Cheryl Ingram 01:14  
Thank you beautifully said, I appreciate that intro. Thank you all for having me. It's a pleasure to be in the building virtually.
- D** Dr. Fowles 01:21  
Of course. We always like to let folks know like how we met each other and how we know the folks on our show. And so I'll just be upfront and be like. Hey, this is the first time we meeting. And we met through an amazing opportunity. I was actually listening in on a pitch competition, where Black folks were pitching their businesses to get funding for

different opportunities. And Dr. CI was in the building pitching her company. I was like, Huh, I hit her hit her in the DM sounds like we need to, we need to talk because what you're doing is dope, and I need to know more. And so I'm just excited to learn a little bit more about your journey, all the dopeness that you're doing. And you know how I could ride on the coattails and support. This us us really building our social capital in real time, so I'm excited to see what happens next.

D Dr. Cheryl Ingram 02:20

Yes, I appreciate you appreciate the opportunity. Appreciate you reaching out

D Dr. Thomas 02:24

And shall we Is it okay we call you Dr. CI.

D Dr. Cheryl Ingram 02:27

Yeah, yeah, Dr. CI or y'all call me Cheryl. Oh, even if you like either or is fine.

D Dr. Thomas 02:33

Okay. All right. So let's go ahead and get today started with our intellectual capital segment. This is a discussion of a Black scholars research academic journey or current events in the professional world. Today we are going to hear about Dr. CI's research. So first question, what is the topic of your research and how did you become interested in it?

D Dr. Cheryl Ingram 02:58

Yeah, the topic of my research is called Soulful Words. So it's a dissertation about the how academic and social settings and higher educational institutions, push out dropout or stop out Black students. And so I got started in that work because I actually, my first job in college was in the department of Black programs that New Mexico State University in 2000. And I used to work with numbers, I love data. So I was looking at the retention rates of different racial identities within the institution at the time. And so what happened actually, is that within the department of Black programs, we've all in this thing called Garcia Annex, well, Garcia Annex has all of the multicultural what they call them at the time programs, Chicano programs, Native American programs, individuals with disabilities, all the identities that were marginalized underrepresented within that building. And there was some interesting things that happened. So they used to make us compete for funding at the institutional level, and we used to call cross collaborate

sometimes with some of those departments. And one of the things that I noticed is that students I say Racially Stigmatized Identity, so you know, people say people color I prefer RSIs. So if you hear me say RSI, I'm referring to racially stigmatized identities. And so what I was noticing is that there was trends that they kept leaving. And one of the things that really hit me hard by my third year of college is, when I first went to college, there were I went to college with 13 friends, all from Omaha, Nebraska, all Black. And what happened is only two of us actually graduated. And that was my bachelor's. That was the by the time I got my bachelor's degree, and I was like, okay, it's something to this here. And it was interesting, because when I went to college academically, I was on scholarship. And I started out in Computer Engineering because I've always really loved math and science.

D

Dr. Thomas 04:48  
Okay.

D

Dr. Fowles 04:50  
Come through STEM.

D

Dr. Cheryl Ingram 04:51

Yeah. For a while, and that love has just really, really invested in the way that I run my companies. And what happened is I failed chemistry twice. And so I was I was in fear being on academic probation, I gotten that letter, like if your GPA slip below 2.0 you lose your scholarship. So I was panicking. I went to an advisor, his older white man, and he taught me how to do STEM. He said, maybe, you know, engineering just not for you. And I believed him. first generation college student didn't really have the resources didn't know to call anybody and be like, hey. And I was like, I can't afford to lose my money. Because if I do end up going back home, which is where I definitely don't want to be right now. Not that bad at home, but I wanted to, you know, be in college. Right? And so, I was like, if this happened to me, like at the time, I had a language for it, right, because I was a sophomore going into junior year. So at the time, I didn't really understand what was happening to me in that way. And I remember going into or going into communication studies which I'm grateful for, but at the time, just thinking about that. That process and they just seem like working in Black programs and work in multiculturalism. They just see my Black students especially just kept disappearing and disappear. I was like some more to this. So I did my thesis on that. And in my PhD I followed around nine students for a year in college. So when I put them in groups of three students who were graduate students, students who were in undergrad, who have dropped out of the institution, and students who have been pushed down to the institution, and I captured their stories and I

turned it into a narrative told from their perspective.

**D** Dr. Fowles 06:33

Wow, just the buckets just the buckets themselves a lot to unpack Can Can you repeat those those buckets for me? And then thinking about those buckets? Like what do you want people to learn from the groups of folks that you studied?

**D** Dr. Cheryl Ingram 06:50

Right so so so I used Critical Race Theory and Black feminism was my two foundations that I use my theoretical frameworks And from I use those for each lens to look at each group. So I did students who have been pushed out of the institution. And you know, though the word push out originated with Michelle fine in 1991. And then students who had considered dropped out of the institution, and then three Black students who would actually graduated from from college. And my reason being is there was a few reasons. One is do we could do your curse on the show, because I tend to curse a lot. So make sure

**D** Dr. Thomas 07:28

Aye we grown

**D** Dr. Fowles 07:30

Keep it real.

**D** Dr. Cheryl Ingram 07:31

So so the shit that was bothering me the most was when people say, Well, there are Black people that graduated from college, why can't everybody do it? And it's always usually a non-Black person to ask me that shit. And that pisses me off. So So I wanted to create a narrative for them to understand why, why it's not like, Oh, this person is just a unicorn and other people aren't talented. That is not the case. And so I created a formula for people to understand, here are all the things to why we actually leave schools. Here are different narratives for you to see it because when I started using that language, most people were still just calling us are calling them college dropouts, you know what I'm saying? And I was like, I don't think that's just the only narrative. So I wrote this manual, and told from their perspectives. And then at the end, you know, your dissertation, how you do recommendations, my recommendations page might be, like, 70 pages long itself. And the reason being is because I really wanted I really want higher educational

institutions, especially traditionally white institutions, to wake the fuck up about what's going on with Black students in their settings. You know what I'm saying? And so so I was like, I was like, I'm only gonna tell you what the problem is. I'm gonna teach you how to solve it. And so so I wrote this manual, and I want higher educational institutions to look at it, and understand that there's a formula that creates sustainable success. But first, you got to deal with institutionalized racism. And so you know, I want them to follow the formula that I gave them to restructure their institutions. So they're more equitable, not just for us, but I'm putting us at the front because that's what I did my research on. But the the solutions that I give you not only work for Black students, they can work, you know, across a number of different marginalized identities if applied well. You know what I'm saying? And so that's what I was on, like, Here, I've diagnosed you, I've given you the problem. And now we'll give you an action plan. You don't have an excuse.

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Dr. Fowles 09:21

That's a really interesting point. We're going to take a quick break, and we'll be back right after this.

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Dr. Thomas 09:29

Have you ever felt the need to let people know who you are and who you are not in a professional setting? Well, now you can with a critical race theorist or a culturally relevant pedagogist tee. Get your swag and stay motivated and [staymotivatedandrisetogether.com/shop](http://staymotivatedandrisetogether.com/shop).

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Dr. Fowles 09:53

And we're back. So let me let me ask you this, right. Usually we talked about you know, what's your What's your current job and your role and responsibilities? Right? And I think that one of the reasons that I was super excited to connect with you is because you took a different path in your owning your, your narrative and your journey in launching this business. So, so tell us the story about your businesses, you know, what the launching process has been, like, why even wanted to to be in the space of being a business owner? It's a great perspective to to think about and to, to connect with. So tell us about that.

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Dr. Cheryl Ingram 10:34

Yeah, yes. So I am. my career's is an interesting journey. So when I graduated from college, I applied for 448 jobs. I still remember the number like yesterday, I still got the folder with the applications and I got two callbacks. And from those two callbacks, I got one job offer,

and it was an AmeriCorps VISTA position out of a dissertation job, you know, I'm saying and I was like, I was tripping about the fact that people didn't really want, they didn't want to hire me? And I was like, What is it about me, you know, and they didn't want to hire me. And the fact that here I was writing this manual and in my manual, I talked about diversity and inclusion. Equity wasn't in the language at the time. But it should have been. And so so interesting enough. When I started my business, the existential crisis moment that I had to make a very long story kind of short, is I used to design Diversity, Equity and Inclusion assessments for companies for like example, I do it for nonprofits for their admissions process to make it more inclusive. I do for enterprise companies for their recruitment and hiring processes to be more inclusive. I was doing that work on the side outside of college when I got to Seattle, so I was here I was working as at the Vista and starting to do some consulting work. And then I got a full time job where I was doing the same thing. And so like for 19 years, I had just been working with data. And I need to backtrack a little bit. What really set it off was in grad school, I had a job working for this thing called the Bridge of Southern New Mexico. What I was doing was looking at data to see why Hispanic and Latinx students were not work how much they were costing the economy when they dropped out because New Mexico was trying to build a Early College High School of the I ever heard of those. Early College High School is a four year program for high school students that takes them from freshman to senior year. Sophomore freshman and sophomore year, they earn a ba-, they earn a diploma. And then junior senior year they earn an associate's degree. So students graduate from the program with a diploma and an associate's degree and have a trajectory straight into a four year program if they want it.

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Dr. Thomas 12:36


Yes.


D


Dr. Cheryl Ingram 12:37


So. So so we ran that week, I was raising money for that program. But in order to do it, I had to build a case on why it was essential for that to be a necessity. And so I just kept looking at that I looked at the trends that I was finding in higher education, and then all of the racism and shit that I was seeing people face when I was on the job, and that I was facing myself. And I just had this existential crisis where I was like, This is not going to work for me, because here I am fixing your admissions processes and things, but your fucking retention is terrible. You know? So, for example, the existential crisis moment was we were sitting in a team meeting, and I'll never forget it. So there was a slide that my program director was introducing us to, and he was showing data on how much our admissions process had increased by- for Black students, students with disabilities, women, etc. And

then so I was getting all this praise. They're like, all you killing it, you know, admissions is killing me. I was like, That's amazing. I was feeling great. And then the next slide that came up, busted my bubble. So I looked at it, and it was the turnover rate of the population within a year. And I noticed that 70% of our turnover rate were Black men. And I was like, I've always seen this problem. And now I feel like I'm really not doing enough. And the fact that you know, I was in a space where I'm very I'm a type A personality to my heart. And I consider myself high performing in the most humble way, y'all I am speaking that way humility but also with conviction. And so here I was, I was like, how is it that I'm being so mistreated and nobody's actually listening to me? I was like, it's like, for 20 years, almost 20 years, I have been telling systems what they needed to do. But nobody wants to listen to me. Because for me, it was harder to change an institution while I was inside of it, you know, like Audre Lorde tells you about the master's tools. You know what I'm saying? So I was like, I'm done with this shit. So one day, I was driving to work and I was so fed up with what was happening and that that slide was on my heart. And I broke down crying in the middle of the street as I was driving to work. And that's when I knew it was time to go. So I'm not very religious, but I am spiritual. And I got to work. It was 6:30 in the morning, I was the first one there I normally was. I was in my cubicle. And I start praying. I was like, if this meant for me to do this job I need a sign. And so something told me something whispered to me write your resignation letter. And I was like, Alright, so I wrote it. I just started to start writing, I open the computer start typing within like 30 minutes. I have four pages of reasons why it was time for me to leave that job.

 Dr. Thomas 15:21  
Oof

 Dr. Cheryl Ingram 15:23  
Right! I didn't even think twice about it. I just hit submit. And I sent it to my boss and said, I'm leaving. And I had a small 401k. I had been there for three years. So I had \$7490 to my name. And I said, I'm gonna go a launch to business, I found SCORE, which is the free business mentor program. I know who head first. And within three months, I knew I had my business license knew how to start my business, and it was the last day of my job.

 Dr. Fowles 15:49  
Come on freedom papers,

 Dr. Cheryl Ingram 15:50

Right, right. It was like ugh like my declaration.

D

Dr. Thomas 15:54

What happened after you left? We- tell us all

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Dr. Cheryl Ingram 15:57

So I was like, oh, Go on to score I had like to sacrifice, right, because I went from making a lot of money to not having no money. And so I had moved out of my condo, I was, you know, I rent a room out of a house. I live in Seattle, one of the most racist places I've ever lived, besides Omaha, Nebraska was where I'm from. And I didn't know what the hell I was going to do. I just knew I had a really good idea. And that out, it was gonna be successful. And I had to believe that, you know, I'm saying, and so I-, what was the first thing I'm trying to remember back to what I did. So at first I started like with my business methodology while I was in the process of training, and I knew that I did not want to offer a company that was just going to do training and think that that was going to solve a much greater systemic issue. And so you know, that was the methodology in both of our companies and we live by that. And so I had designed this methodology and I kept thinking, How can I make it more sustainable? How do I make sure I'm designing something that's sustainable? within like a month I had my first client. I ran my first assessment. And it was extremely successful. And so it was interesting to see like, within a nine month time period, I had a year long engagement with them. We had run this assessment, we really we rebuilt their admissions, we trained their teachers, and immediately they have some of the most diverse classes they had ever had. And then not only that, but the retention and improved significantly. So I was like, I'm on the something here. Now it's time for me to grow and scale it. You know what I'm saying? I couldn't find no funding y'all didn't nobody want to give me nothing. And you know, you Black, you come out of a Ph. D. program, you come out of college, you may not not for everyone, but for me, I didn't have the resources or assets to have financial leverage. So I figure out how to build it from scratch. And so, I started um, I started with my first company. I was hustling. I was doing talks for free. I mean, I was on every podcast, I could get on. I was learning, digital marketing on social media. I was every position in my company for a year, almost a year. And now as I was doing these methodologies, there was one thing that was really on my heart that was bothering me, because DiverCity was started first, which was prevent the professional service company. So you know, when you do a diversity, equity and inclusion audit, it can take up to a year to audit a company. Well, if Black people are leaving the company within a year, and I'm doing an audit in a year, that means that they're still suffering while I'm trying to fix the systems. And so that takes too long. And so I said, I'm gonna invent a technology that speeds that up. And so while I was working at



my first job, I had actually gained six technical certifications. So I started to get an intro back into engineering, and well not into engineering but into networking and technology...

**D** Dr. Fowles 18:52  
There you go.

**D** Dr. Cheryl Ingram 18:52  
I was falling in love with it again. And so I was like, I'm gonna build a system that does what I needed to do much faster. And so I launched Inclusology which is my C Corp. And we started immediately to build an automated version of what we were doing manually. Because I was using my Tableau Google Forms, Survey Monkey. And none of those had the features that I really felt like I needed to assess DEI sustainably.

**D** Dr. Fowles 19:18  
So, for our listeners real quick to tell them what a C Corp is, and, and why, why you chose that platform to sell your business around. Just give them a little nugget.

**D** Dr. Cheryl Ingram 19:32  
Yes, also, I we picked the C Corp because what that was is a corporation for us because we were a technology company. So like a limited liability company is managed a little different than a C Corp, like different articles of operation and bylaws that caused us to operate differently from an LLC. And the reason being that we picked a C Corp is because especially with tech, all of the different federal restrictions that we're going to come through our company are easier to manage through a C Corp. But you when you go to when you go to to certify your business, you have a number of options. You have LLC, you have a sole proprietor, you have managed LLC, you have S Corp or C Corp, you just have to think about which one fits where it is that you're trying to go. And for me, like with a limited liability company is easy, easier to cover liability with a professional services company, as opposed to a C Corp. You need more options.

**D** Dr. Fowles 20:27  
Got it? Yall better be taking some notes.

D Dr. Thomas 20:30  
I know I am.

D Dr. Fowles 20:34  
So go ahead. You You build this platform to get exactly what you need. And that's where we are today. Tell us tell us what that what that that platform is spitting out what's what's the, what's the numbers, the figures the action

D Dr. Cheryl Ingram 20:52  
I get on my inner geek. So what inclusology is is it's a software as a service that's based on annual subscription. Now what we've done is we've created a diversity Equity and Inclusion question bank and the reason being, because the software is based off of finding trends for demographic identities. So what happens is we have a question bank built into our system because the system is literally literally helping to train directors of HR, etc. So they can run DEI themselves and hire the right people to do it. So let's say you in a company in 100 employees take a survey, well be built into every survey because they can customize it is a- a 15 questions to collect different identities that we have. So race, age, gender expression, sexuality. When I say gender identity, education level, where you're from, veterans, people with disabilities, we asking you all kinds of shit. And so what happens is, the first half of the survey is questions to analyze your company now it's based on the Global Diversity and inclusion Benchmark. Have y'all seen that? Okay, so if you haven't what the GDI B does is it breaks Diversity, Equity and Inclusion down into 14 categories across the company. So the categories go everything from product and development to building sustainability and culture, leadership and accountability etc. Job compensation, you can even do pay equity with it, etc. So we built a question bank cap summarizing all 14 of those areas, all those questions are weighted. So what happens is when a company takes a survey, and they get back the data, we automatically are doing a comparative analysis to look for trends to see, okay, if 100 people in your company are experiencing it this way, are there any significant gaps that show that different identities and their intersections experience it differently? And so we're building an algorithm to automate that process. Once that happens and you get the data back, we rank you based on the way that your employees answer your questions. So So with the way to questions, let's say for example, it says out of 100 companies, you're in the 40 percentile in this area for diversity, equity and inclusion. So the goal is to to assess you to diagnose you. And then the next step is to help you solve the problem through automation. So So once we build the benchmarking for each area, and we look to see where the trends might exist, and the the score happens, that automatically generates into the next phase of our system, which says, Okay, here's a strategic plan for how you approach diversity, equity,

and inclusion and all of those areas. And here's things you can do immediately. And here's what you need to be thinking about long term over the next three years. And so now, the system is also built to track those goals for them. So we capture those metrics, because we store that data to continue building the performance benchmarks to show people what successful diversity, equity, and inclusion looks like. And so once you get the automated generated solutions, you know, then usually in the company, you got to go find who you can get to solve those problems if you don't have the capacity to do it. Well, I'm cutting out the middle person and actually allowing companies needs to advertise and promote their services on our platform. So it recommends potential services to you that fit your needs. But we vet the company to make sure they're actually good at their job.

D

Dr. Thomas 24:14

I bet when you tell people what you do they say can you come to my job? I bet you hear that a lot. Yeah, cuz I want you to, I want you to come to my job. Okay, I took I took some notes because I'm about to be like, Hello, leadership. I know about this thing. I need to yall to do the things.

D

Dr. Cheryl Ingram 24:38

It's going to be revolutionary for our field when anyone that's working in social impact.

D

Dr. Thomas 24:45

Alright, let's take a break.

D

Dr. Fowles 24:52

Are you tired of bland Eurocentric fashion accessories? Do you want to feel seeing when you step out? Well, then Huey Son's is the brand for you, Huey Son's is a pro-Black accessories company that focuses on Millennial style and Afrocentric values. They have a variety of products like lapel pins, buttons, hats, apple watch bands, and more. I have the Huey P Newton pen, and I wear it all the time. You'll definitely find something for yourself and all your friends and family. Check out HueysSons.com for the latest drop today. And we're back.

D

Dr. Thomas 25:26

I'm super juiced. I'm wondering if you could maybe, you know, being an entrepreneur. There's a lot of lessons you learn, right? And a lot of the Yeah, there's a lot of, you know,

individuals that will interview on this show. And you know, like myself, they work for an institution. And that's a whole different set of lessons that we learn, right? So I'm wondering if you can maybe tell our listeners a story right is is there a time you took some good advice? Is there a time you were super scared to do something? I know when you're entrepreneur, you scared to do everything because you want to make everything right. But you know, is there is there a story that you could tell that our listeners can, you know, use to sidestep, you know, a mistake or be more confident in something they do?

D

Dr. Cheryl Ingram 26:20

Yeah, I remember I always tell the story because it's the first thing I think about, I'm actually doing a documentary about it. Right now talking about what it means to be a Black entrepreneur and the lessons that you learn. And the the documentary is named after this moment. So I was at a company in Seattle, I was in a large tech company and I was doing a presentation like explaining diversity, equity inclusion audits, like I'm explaining to y'all. So I was running this company through what the potential was because at the time, I was trying to sell them an assessment. And it was, it was nine people in the room. Me, another white woman, and seven white men all VPS or people on leader in leadership. I did the presentation. And once it concluded, why guy stands up, I think VP of strategy and growth. And he says that presentation was excellent. You smarter than you look.

D

Dr. Fowles 27:12

Wow.

D

Dr. Cheryl Ingram 27:13

Right, right. Let me give you the backstory, I'm very transparent. And also, I tend to not let people get away with a lot of shit. But I haven't always been that way. This moment was like a defining moment for my authenticity, right? Because as I was standing there, like within a 10 second, you know, how you process it so quickly, then in 10 seconds, my mind had already went to, you can say something to him, and you probably not going to get this account. Or you can walk out of here feeling bad about the fact that you never said anything to him knowing that he could potentially say that to somebody like you again. And I was like, You know what, I'm gonna take the risk, because there's no way I'm gonna be able to hold my head high and walk out that door if I laugh off what he just said. So I looked at him and I said Excuse me, sir, excuse me for a second. He stopped. I said Here's why you should never say that to anybody. Because I'm trying to figure out what about me doesn't seem intelligent to you. I said, so either you look like a racist. You look like a

sexist. You look like a sizist, or all of the above. And he looked at me, I said in the future, if you like that I've done a presentation and I've impressed you, say that instead. So he got- turned bright red. He was like, I didn't mean anything by it. I'm sorry. And he walked out the room. And everybody else was dead quiet. And then they got up and walk out the room and the one white woman was in the room. She walked up to me afterwards. She said, You're not the first person he said that to, but you're the only one who's ever given him that kind of feedback. She said, and I appreciate it. And me. I was already mad. Right? I was angry. I said, Why haven't you ever said anything? I said And then I'm curious as to in this moment, why you didn't say anything. And she looked me in the eye, and she said, not being in a position, or she said, power makes a difference. And she walked out the room. And so in that moment, I was just sitting there thinking about what does it mean to have power? Right? So, you know, in after that moment, I always and I, this way to my heart now, I never bite my fucking tongue. It's just, you know, I'll meet you where you are, know when to leave you there. But I'm always going to say what needs to be said so that you can understand it you feel me?

D

Dr. Thomas 29:38

Yep.

D

Dr. Fowles 29:39

I think that's a perfect, perfect story, right? where a lot of times people are like, How can I be? How can I be a better ally? Right? And it's, it's in that moment, right where, where, where you hear somebody stepping up, and but also know because of power and dynamics if they can't step up all the way Yeah. Right. And, and that ally needs to be the person to step up to the line, right? We always talk about step up, you know, step back, this is where you need to step up, especially when, you know, times call for it. Now, the question is, did you get the account?

D

Dr. Cheryl Ingram 30:19

No, I would- theinteresting. First year, we did not. They came back to us a year and a half later.

D

Dr. Fowles 30:26

Man I'm chewing on that story like.

D Dr. Thomas 30:29  
Right.

D Dr. Fowles 30:30  
And you know it's so much lived experience that informs why we launch businesses, why we're in fields.

D Dr. Cheryl Ingram 30:37  
And you know, I remember after that moment, I just looked at my wrist. I've got this tattoo, and it's a Black Panther. And underneath that it says courage. Because you know, I have a habit whenever I'm in a moment where I need to be courageous. Y'all can tell when I'm thinking I look down. And so I'd have something in my you know, hindsight, that always reminds me to be courageous. If you are an outlier Especially in an area where there's racial tension, you really need to understand what it means to do bystander intervention. And so you know, I put that term out there hoping that y'all will go look at it. Because if that woman had had that, in that moment, she wouldn't have been able to respond better or any of the other seven people in the room. And so, I'm telling you now to go and look up bystander intervention training, it's a ton of stuff online, a lot of access to it, because if you think it's hard being an ally, imagine the group that is advocating for themselves. You know what I'm saying how hard it is to be them. So if you're going to step us you got to understand that this is a we're in a- this is a battle for us. So you gotta come prepared to fight with us.

D Dr. Thomas 31:42  
Last question. Can you tell us about, um, you know, especially as an entrepreneur, right, like, Are there any professional orgs or social orgs are important business contacts that have been able to help you professionally or to help You, um, you know, give back to the community connect with the community? What are those orgs that you maybe have been a part of?

D Dr. Cheryl Ingram 32:08  
Yeah, there's quite a few actually, um, well, a good handful. The first one is called Fbomb. And it's a network of professional women, or female identified person and non gender binary identities. And they helped me a lot to first build my platform and get recognized. YPO young professional organizations, there's YEO, which is young entrepreneur

organizations. I'm a member of SCORE, which which was extremely helpful my first year in business and I am willing to be a mentor for other entrepreneurs. Not that I know everything. But if I'm further along than you are, I'm happy to give you what wisdom I have. And so so I'm a part of those three, and-

**D** Dr. Thomas 32:50  
The board of directors for Un-loop?

**D** Dr. Cheryl Ingram 32:53  
Yeah, you know, actually, I just walked away from that. But I'm in the midst of joining another organization on the board. But Un-loop was unloop was groundbreaking for me and still is I'm still affiliated and support them. But they're in Seattle and I'm in LA. So I started to to step away just recently, but they, you know, Un-loop to give you some more insight, they go into prisons, and we do software development for for people who are incarcerated and then help them find jobs after they get out. And they get college credit for taking our courses.

**D** Dr. Thomas 33:25  
Yes, that's what needs to be happening. Yes.

**D** Dr. Cheryl Ingram 33:29  
So you know, the first time we went into a prison, we went into this prison called Party, which is in Washington State, and we were working with this women's prison. And I remember walking into a room of these 30 women, and most of them was white. And I was like, Wait a second, like, How the fuck does that happen? And so interesting enough we were in a room with all windows all around us. And all I could see was a racially stigmatized identities walking past the window looking in and so I remember talking to the Director Education in the prison. And I was like, how's that happen? And she said, um, well, and in our founders were talking to her at the time, she said, we have a system where depending on the length of your sentence, you get to participate in these programs. And I said, Well, you know, race women with racially signifies identities on average get longer sentences. That's systemic racism. Right. And so I was like, how is it that I was like, if you keep continue to build programs like that, with those kind of rules, you even perpetuating systemic racism in your institution?

D Dr. Thomas 34:34  
Right.

D Dr. Cheryl Ingram 34:36  
So you know, we now that was like a new lens for us to understand that that was happening inside of institutions of incarceration. So it's been interesting, but yeah, Un-loop helped me out a lot. To just to understand how to get back into the community, we donate a certain percentage of our revenue every quarter, to whoever as a team, you know, we started this process where we sit down and vote on which organization gets it during that time. So we will do things like that. What really helped me was referral partnerships. If you are a solo entrepreneur and you launching your business or even if you have small group, create you some referral contracts, that says you partner with the business, and they bring you in and refer you but do it for business that's in your lane. So for example, most of my referral partners either work in recruiting and staffing or human resources. And so when they I work with them, and they bring me in on projects, and they refer our company, and that's how we gained a huge amount of revenue at the beginning of the second year.

D Dr. Fowles 35:37  
A super dope.

D Dr. Thomas 35:39  
Yeah, that is that wrote that down.

D Dr. Fowles 35:42  
You mentioned board leadership, so casually. Tell us, tell us a little bit about how you become a board member and what has that changed your sphere of influence?

D Dr. Cheryl Ingram 35:57  
Yeah, yeah, you know, board Boards of Directors always have very powerful very connected people on them. And so I was I was actually recruited, but I want to tell you on I'm telling you all this, honestly right now finger up and everything. Now is the time to get on a board of directors for institutions and get a paid board position. Like if you're gonna work usually for nonprofits, if won't pay you, but enterprise companies, healthcare



companies, etc, that are looking for specifically Black people or people with competencies on Black communities, you can get paid. So go online and Google like executive recruiting firms and things that recruit for board positions and put your resume in. Because you can get the you know, you could get a whole salary off of that and not even have to work even though you know, I hope you are or if you don't need to you're retired, whatever. But to just go look for some pay board positions. You you get recruited through boards because I have all these platforms on social media people see me I'm kind of out in the world. People can tend to contact me about boards. And so I, most of my board positions have come that way. But I also recently just got connected to a person who does recruiting for paid positions for women, for example, for different boards of directors. And so if you get a chance, it's great to one be on those, but also to get connected to very powerful people who also help you open up doors for you. Because my business has grown significantly, especially Inclusology because of our board. What we don't want is that people see a huge need for us now because we're in this heightened awareness of building an anti-racist society. But don't you let somebody tokenize you on their board? You know what I'm saying, you want to make sure when you go talk to them, ask them what does representational equity look like on this board? Right. And some boards will give you stock in their companies. And so make sure though, that you have your competency because you also there to serve a purpose. And there's different kinds of boards, there's advisory boards, there's technical boards that people have technical position on their boards of directors, people with human capital so our social impact so make sure that you you do your research and know that it's going to be a good fit for you. And you're going to be a good addition for them.

D

Dr. Thomas 38:14

Can you tell you can you tell our listeners, your socials, your contact? How do they How do they find you cuz I know after this interview people gonna be looking for you.

D

Dr. Cheryl Ingram 38:25

I'm Dr.Clofficial on all social media platforms. So you can find me on Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, I'm Cheryl Ingram, PhD on LinkedIn, and on Facebook and Twitter. I'm Dr. Clofficial, and I have a YouTube channel that's Diverse and then the word City LLC, and it's got all of our skits and things on there and it's a bunch of content around helping people navigate issues of diversity, equity inclusion, so y'all come find us and check out and Diversity LLC and Inclusology that's all of our handles on every social media platform, including Facebook, and LinkedIn.



Dr. Thomas 39:06

I'm just really blown away by this interview. Just thank you so much for your time. It's just I just feel like your time is so valuable. Your energy is so dope. Yo passion is gonna get us everywhere. I just you are going to help so many people. Cheryl, I'm so glad. I'm so glad we got to spend this time with you.



Dr. Fowles 39:29

We out peace. We hope you enjoy today's show. Remember, the way we build social capital is to build self and build others. We're sure you got some notes on your tablet, computer or even using a pen and paper. leave us a review. continue the conversation on social media and [blacksocialcap](#) and share the show with someone you know Until the next episode, stay motivated and rise together.



Dr. Thomas 39:59

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