



USER FRIENDLY

Supporting racial equity in tech, media and telecom

Host: Hanish Patel, User Friendly host and Digital Transformation leader, Deloitte Consulting LLP

Guests: Alma Derricks, founder, Rev
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Hanish:

Racism in the United States is nothing new, but the global pandemic and recent instances of violence towards black people have put a spotlight on racial inequalities and brought conversations about race to the forefront. The tragic killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery are sadly just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to systemic racism that black people face on a daily basis. It all highlights the need for organizations across industries, including tech, media, and telecom, and their leaders to better support their black workforce especially in this moment. Today I'm joined by Alma Derricks, founder and managing

director at Rev, also a Deloitte alum, and Ayo Odusote, consultant and managing director at Deloitte, to talk about furthering racial equity in the TMT industry and beyond.

Hanish:

Before we dive in, I want to be clear that today's podcast is just one of the many important conversations that tech, media, and telecom leaders should consider for their own organizations as numerous other groups also experience discrimination and systemic oppression on a daily basis. And with that, Alma and Ayo, thank you for joining me today. I'm so glad to have you on the pod.

Alma Derricks:

Thanks, Hanish.

Ayo Odusote:

Thank you for having me.

Hanish:

All right, then. So, Alma, to start with, let's lay the foundation for our conversation today. Why is it so important to talk about race? And do you feel that having discussions about race is different now than it has been in the past?

Alma:

It's a great question, Hanish. I think certainly it's hard to talk about race. It always has been hard to talk about race, but what's changed recently is a certain openness about the conversation. I think we're hearing the issues differently. I think we're hearing each other a little bit differently, and I think that's a real opportunity to go deeper in the dialogue. Race is something we've avoided because it makes people uncomfortable. But in reality, equity is a team sport. And I think that because it's about more than just giving me space to air my grievances as a person of color. I can call it out, but the power to dismantle racism is in the hands of those in power. And so we need the conversation, we need the discussion, and we need a shared base of understanding. So it's important at this moment to spend time to reframe what this conversation is really about, to have a shared base of facts about racism in America, from slavery, to Jim Crow, to the double standards that persist and that aren't a thing of the past, they aren't a relic of the past.

Alma:

Understanding that the privilege isn't just about coming from a wealthy or powerful family. It's about advantages and benefits that are given automatically to some people and not to others. And one of my favorite things, and I think this has always been true even before this in-depth race conversation, quite frankly, really questioning the idea of what we call normal, everything from nude-colored pantyhose and Band-Aids to what hairstyles are appropriate in the workplace and really understanding the downstream impact of what happens when people are marginalized because they are further and further away from what is considered normal and how that has impacts not only on them, on the culture and the business, but also how it then plays out in the workplace and how it shows up in front of clients and customers and things like that. There are impacts that cascade through the system that are important to talk about.

Hanish:

Thank you for that, Alma. And you mentioned privilege and one of the things we like to do here on User-Friendly is just kind of break down some of those terms, and you described the privilege one. So, what I want to do is also—and, Ayo, I'm going to turn to you for this one—is cover some of the key terms and definitions to make sure all of our listeners are on the same page. So, Ayo, I'm going to reel off two or three of these, and I'd love to get you to really kind of help break those down in terms of what they truly mean. Firstly, it's systemic racism. Second, equity. And finally, allyship.

Ayo:

All right, thanks, Hanish. How much time do we have to cover these three topics? Thank you for the opportunity here. So, let's start with systemic racism, which is a form of racism expressed in the practice of social and political institutions. It is reflected in disparities regarding wealth, income, criminal justice, employment, housing, health care, political power. In some circles, there is a debate as to whether or not systemic racism exists, but I think that's a distraction, right? Whatever you want to call it, the numbers out there just show a huge disparity between the black experience versus others in our society from childhood onwards. Deloitte recently published a white paper titled "Support Your Workforce Now" and it's really fascinating, and I'll encourage your listeners to search it out. The paper discusses the compounding impact of a complex system of laws and policies and behaviors that disadvantage black people and presents a barrier for the black community not faced by other identity groups in the same way.

Ayo:

And there's barriers, and this systemic racism plays out. And there are some stats that are called out in this report that were just really scary to me. For example, Hanish, did you know that black women are 243% more likely to die in childbirth than white women due to lack of access to sufficient



health care? Or did you know that black babies are twice as likely as white babies to die before their first birthday? Or did you know that black students are suspended three times as often as their white peers for similar behavior? And as a husband to my beautiful wife, as a father, this has really, really haunted me about the disparity that my children as black children may have and are growing up in this country.

Ayo:

The second point you brought up has to do about equity. What is equity? And I think equity has to do with fairness. It's both an outcome and a process, an outcome in the sense that we want to get to a state where race, whether I'm black, isn't a predictor of my success or your success in any organization or in our society. We want to get to a state where everybody has a fair and equal chance. However, just given the conversation we just had about systemic racism, black people don't have an equal chance. And the question is for our leaders, how do you create that equity to make it a fair game? What responsibility do we have in creating processes and practices to even out the playing field?

Ayo:

There's a famous cartoon that maybe some of your listeners have seen, which kind of sums it up very nicely. It shows a white man and a black girl starting at the starting line of a hundred-meter race. In the white man's lane, in the gentleman's lane, there are just two hurdles to get to the end of the race. But in the black lady's lane, she has all kinds of obstacles. From a small pond, to a barbed-wire fence, to a bush on fire, and even a crocodile that happened to make its way there. And as if that wasn't all enough, there's a hundred-pound weight shackled to her ankle, and the caption reads, "Right? It's the same distance. What's the matter?"

Ayo:

And that's a reality for many black people. It is the same distance, but we have crocodiles. And the third point on allyship, and I think this gets us to equity, right? We

need allies. And that's a very, very powerful term that people have been talking about now. Like black people, BIPOC people, black indigenous people of color need more allies to help them get around these obstacles. And allyship is really about that intentional and consistent practice of supporting members of a marginalized or mistreated group to which one does not belong. It's not simply an intention, though. It's part of your everyday behavior and actions. It's about leveraging your influence to support others when your personal identity is not impacted. Allies take on the struggle as their own, they stand up even when they feel scared, they transfer the benefits of their privilege to those who lack it. So, I think overall to get through what we're going through right now in the workplace, in society, we need more allies. So that's kind of a brief summary of my perspective on those three terms.

Hanish:

Thank you for that, Ayo. And I really appreciate even just the vivid example you gave there on equity with the hundred-meter race. That so brings it home and just reinforces what we know, that racism is such a structural problem and the impacts are far reaching, but often I feel that it's felt at the individual level. So, what I'd like to do is pivot, and if I may, really sort of ask the both of you a question on a very personal level. So, Alma and Ayo, my question is, how have you experienced racism in your own lives?

Alma:

It's interesting. I think that it's the day-to-day thousand cuts, Hanish, that really weigh you down. And I think they're also the most invisible forms of racism that happen to you every day. I also think it's ironic that in some ways I'll never know about the worst forms of racism in my life, of jobs or promotions that I didn't get either because of my race or my gender, but you definitely feel the bits and pieces on a daily basis. So, everything from being told that you're different, or being complimented for being so articulate, assumptions that one of my white colleagues is the one that's the most senior in a room or in a meeting and not

recognizing that could possibly be me. Being treated differently when I'm in jeans versus when I'm in a suit. I remember that specifically in my days in New York that I would have a decidedly different day going throughout the business day, depending on how I was dressed. It impacted how people perceived who I was. Other things that are even tougher, like these no-win situations that you get into. Things like being challenged about how you know certain things, which is just a strange question to ask when you're answering a question. How do you know that? Why would you know that? Even being challenged by a police officer who didn't believe I went to the high school that I went to. And what do you do when that's the truth, and you're answering the question, and the person on the other side is getting angry because they think you're making things up or joking with them.

Alma:

And even day-to-day kind of routine things in logistics and in business and planning meetings, not being able to take geography for granted. I remember one time I had to make accommodations and really lose what amounted to an entire business day because I had to drive from Atlanta to Auburn, Alabama, by myself. And I had to do it during the day. I did not feel comfortable or safe making a drive hundreds of miles between Georgia and Alabama in the dark by myself. And I also had to spend the entire time on the phone with a friend of mine who wouldn't let me drive without being on the phone the entire time. And I'm not sure that's something that someone white would have had to have thought of or planned for.

Alma:

The other interesting thing is the microaggressions and things that I've been witness to that are about other people as well, Hanish. It's really an interesting thing. I had a boss early on who used to go on racist rants about Mexican people and didn't realize I was half Mexican, which was sort of fun. Or even watching other groups accept this, because things would be said or done in my presence that didn't seem to impact

me or wouldn't seem to be something I'd be upset about, like scheduling team dinners for mostly Hindu teams at steak houses or scheduling meetings on Ramadan or on Jewish high holy days or things like that. So it's everywhere and you're constantly on guard and it really does take and pull a lot of your attention and a lot of your energy and emotion on a daily basis when you're having to either correct it, go back and rework it somehow, or address it and have these very difficult conversations with people to call these things out.

Alma:

So, it's just a constant drumbeat, a constant hum that's in the background, I think for anyone who's of color in a majority setting like that, there are things like that that you're always subject to.

Hanish:

Wow. Alma, I really appreciate you sharing that. It's such a moving piece that you talked about there, and, Ayo, if you feel comfortable, I'd love to hear your personal story or one of your personal stories around that as well, please.

Ayo:

Yeah, I think like you said, and like Alma shared, racism is very personal. Most people that hear my accent on this call will almost immediately recognize that it isn't American. I was born in Nigeria, but I've lived here for the last 17 years. I'm black, I'm an American, and my children were born here and they, like I, call this country my home. But that said, my personal journey and awakening has been very different from most other black Americans that grew up in the U.S. Because growing up and for the formative years of my life, I was never treated differently, like Alma just described, because of the color of my skin. That never happened to me in high school.

Ayo:

And arriving here 17 years ago, I knew what racism was, but I just didn't understand the extent of it. And in many ways, I was blind, in self-denial, maybe even gaslighting myself

because when I walked into a store and someone followed me around, I was like, "You know what? That's normal."

Ayo:

Or when I got stopped by cops frequently, I said it wasn't because I was black. Or if I go to a restaurant and they treat me poorly or give me the very worst table in the back of the room, I tell myself that that was the last table that they had. And then three years ago, we moved into a new neighborhood that was 97 percent white. And my daughter is the only black person in her class.

Ayo:

And she was about seven years old at the time. And in the second week, there was an incident in school where the teacher assumed there was something at home, made all kinds of generalizations. And she decided to call social services first before even giving the parents a call. And even in that case, I rationalized that the teacher's actions were because she was doing her job.

Ayo:

But after reflecting on that moment, after reflecting and having conversation with my wife, I realized that if it was a white girl that that happened to, such a small incident, they wouldn't have made such assumptions and they would not have called social services on the parents. And the answer is just no, and I came to realize that in this situation and in many other situations that I'm now aware of, I'm treated differently because of the color of my skin.

Ayo:

And it got me really thinking about all the various acts of discrimination, like Alma said, some that we'll never know and are not visible to me, but also there are some that I cannot just rationalize away, but today I know a lot better. And more recently, a friend of mine, and this was after kind of the recent civil protests following the murder of George Floyd, we're having a conversation about everything, then she said, "How can you say that you experienced racism when you've been so successful? What is all the

fuss?" And she was like, "I don't think black people are treated differently. I don't see color. And I treat everyone the same way." And in my mind then I realized that, look, she just doesn't know any better. She's rationalizing, she's taking a set of facts and trying to rationalize racism. Looking at me and saying, "Hey, there's no racism because you're successful." Not recognizing the obstacles I had to kind of cross over to get to where I am, all the obstacles that other black folks out there have to kind of cross and the fact that many don't make it across those obstacles because they are just in their way.

Ayo:

And it was just so surprising to me. Suffice it that we had a very long conversation, I educated her, I sent her articles to read, and she gets it now, at least I hope she does, but I feel like now more than ever our colleagues white or non-black are ready to listen. Really ready to listen about what's going on. And I personally have taken a responsibility to educate and have that conversation. I don't have all the answers by no means, but I'm happy to share my experiences like I'm doing right here. My experiences as a black man in corporate America, often the only black person in a meeting room. My experience as a black father, trying to figure out how best to discuss the issue of race with his 10- and 12-year-old son and daughter.

Ayo:

And having to tell them that, "Look, you will be treated differently because you're black." And as a black husband, trying to be strong and protect his family from harm. So, racism is very personal. We all go through it. And I'm really hoping that in this moment and with these conversations, that the future is going to be very different.

Hanish:

Thank you so much for sharing your personal story as well. I know it cannot be easy for the both of you to share that. And I really appreciate that you've allowed me to ask you that question and you've shared it. The personal side of things and just the

moral impact of the racism is just, again, hard to really quantify because it's just so prevalent, so huge, but I want to shift gears a little bit and kind of pivot to the bit around why is it that businesses and specifically the leaders of these businesses should really care about it. So how can addressing racism really impact the bottom line for companies, including our listeners in the tech, media, and telecom space? Alma, I'd love to pose that one to you.

Alma:

There's so many ways that TMT companies are in the center of this, from the way that people are characterized and represented or not represented in media, in programming, in the job opportunities that are behind the scenes and the people making decisions at the networks and at social media platforms and places that control and are gatekeepers for the images that we see.

Alma:

It's not only just about seeing yourself represented, it's not only the importance of being validated by the equity of being seen as equally as other people, but also those images are things that are educating other people largely about you. And so, if the only images that you see are negative or stereotyped, or more often than not the thing that really frustrates me is how two-dimensional the portrayals are. It simply tells me behind the scenes that there are people that have very limited experiences with the people they're portraying.

Alma:

And at that point, that being unseen is something that's damaging because you start to take that as reality. I was listening to a young woman just last night, as a matter of fact, Hanish, who's Indian, who said she grew up listening to groups like No Doubt. And the bassist for No Doubt is actually Indian. And when someone told her that, her first reaction was, "Is that allowed? Can you be an Indian guy in a rock band? I didn't even know that was, like is it against the law or something?"

Alma:

And it was just such a revelation to her. And she talked about how No Doubt became her favorite band when she was a teenager because of that. But just the shock and amazement that that was even a thing, that she could even see herself in that, it impacts how you think about your possibilities and about your future and about what's possible for yourself. So, I think that representation piece, especially on the media side, is incredibly important. But then I think to your question about the impact on business, I think of categories like advertising. The entire advertising business has been segregated historically, largely because the media channels that they were working toward and servicing were also segregated.

Alma:

So, you had mainstream radio and black radio and Hispanic radio. And so, all the agencies were formed in that same image, but the problem is that the people on the backside typically don't cross those lines. And so it limits the opportunities for people of color in mainline ad agencies. So, if you're working on a fast food restaurant, you get to do all of the advertising to black audiences or to Hispanic audiences, but you never get to do it for a Super Bowl spot or for a mainline audience. At the same time, you see it reflected in some of the advertising messages that come out that have been so tragic over the years, where clearly, there was just a ham-fisted view of the audience you were trying to reach.

Alma:

And clearly, you could tell by watching it that there really wasn't the right influencer diversity behind the scenes, because someone would have caught some of the mistakes that we've seen that happen. And right now, I think for businesses, it's critical to recognize that those impressions that you leave are lasting, that they're meaningful, that there's more transparency in the marketplace than there's ever been before. How is it that we

know where things are manufactured by certain companies? We know vendors that are three layers deep that we wouldn't have known 20 years ago because of social media or because of the internet. Those kinds of things really shine a spotlight on companies, and there's an ability to really check where a company's coming from, to check whether what they say matches what they do, and whether there are leaders in place inside those companies. That makes a huge, huge difference.

Alma:

There's also another piece of this that's really important, which is about, we talked about allyship earlier, and I think Ayo gave a great overview of what it means to be an ally. You can't replace the opportunity to put people of color in positions of leadership inside companies, because it's the kind of thing that really allows some of the problems that we're talking about to resolve themselves on their own. Nothing replaces having a team and a budget and an ability to spend money in ways that makes sense to you, to hire vendors that make sense for a project, to open the pool of people that you're recruiting from for different roles. If you put people of color in those seats, not just rely on allies to keep an eye out for you, but put people of color in those seats, it changes even the tone of the workplace.

Alma:

There are things that might've been said in another environment that will never get said when you're in control of that team. And so I think all of those things together cascade into making sure that you are not only taking care of the moral imperative that we've talked about and minding the moral imperative for your own soul and for your own personal satisfaction and personal sense of integrity, but realizing that you're impacting the culture inside the company, you're impacting the potential and possibility for innovation inside a company.

Alma:

And most importantly, downstream, all these things that we're talking about are visible to your clients, to your stakeholders, to your investors. It's all becoming more and more visible these days. And so, if you're not minding all three of those things simultaneously, you're missing a real opportunity.

Hanish:

So, I'd like to stay with the thread of one of the items you mentioned around just kind of leadership positions. And, Ayo, you touched upon it earlier with that Deloitte recently published the perspective called Support Your Black Workforce Now, that addresses much of what you and Alma are talking about today. What does the article say that executives who are in a position of power can do to combat racism in their own organizations, and frankly, what should they avoid?

Ayo:

Yeah, thanks, Hanish. I thank you for letting me talk about that white paper, because I think it's really powerful and really helpful, and also quite instructional in terms of how to support your workforce and how to do so now. So, let's break your question into two parts, what should leaders do, and more generally, what should organizations do? I think from a leadership perspective, there's a framework that we call the six signature traits that we believe leaders need to adopt to show that they're being inclusive, right? What I call the six Cs.

Ayo:

And the first is commitment, commitment to diversity, commitment to equity and inclusion. Recognizing that the issue is both a moral imperative, as well as a business imperative. I think Alma touched on that because those two dimensions are very, very important. And then ultimately, choosing to let people know where you stand. Don't assume that your workforce knows that you are committed as an

individual, as a leader, to diversity, equity, and inclusion. State it, show it, be it. So that's the first C, commitment.

Ayo:

The second is around courage, courage to stand up for what's right, courage to educate, and I think the last bit about courage is to be vulnerable. I do think that our leaders need to be more vulnerable. I've seen the power of vulnerability, especially in the last three months. As people or leaders in my organization at Deloitte and myself have chosen to be vulnerable about our experiences, it's opened the doors to all matter of conversations that have helped us begin to grow together and address the root causes that plague us.

Ayo:

The third is cognizance. So, I talked about commitment, courage, this is the third one, cognizance. Cognizance of bias because we all have biases. I don't care who you are, where you're coming from, your upbringing, your experiences shape your point of view in life, your perspective, and that plays out in certain biases, right? And it's not a bad thing. The important thing, though, is as an individual controlling for those biases and making sure they don't affect your business decisions and how you treat your employees.

Ayo:

The fourth is around curiosity about other identities. I think this is very important and goes back to the point around allyship. I think everyone needs to be willing to learn about other identities, their experiences, and be willing to self-educate. I know that I have, like I said earlier on, not growing up in this country, moving here, I have chosen to educate myself, understand what's going on, everything that's happening. And in the last one to three months, I've become much smarter about the issues as I've listened to other of my black colleagues, as I've listened to other different people share their experiences. So, I encourage people to learn and self-educate.

Ayo:

The other two I won't go into in much detail, cultural intelligence and collaboration. Anyway, these all make up the six Cs, and that's for individuals. For organizations, the article talks about four areas that organizations need to focus on as they respond to what's going on today. It's a simple framework: lead, listen, engage, acknowledge, and do. On the list in front, organizations may be anxious for answers right now, and eager to take swift action without fully understanding the breadth of current challenges. I think organizations need to listen more. And those organizations that listen will provide [inaudible] for black workers to validate their experiences. They will create safe spaces to process the emotional trauma and encourage the non-black leaders and workforce to educate themselves.

Ayo:

The second one is around engagement. Workers of many races and other identities may seek, they want to engage in a conversation, they want to spark in an action. So, we encourage organizations to bring people together, be more deliberate about how you do that in terms of who you bring together, how you bring them together, the frequency, et cetera. The third way is on acknowledging. And this is a big one and one that actually brings me joy to see because in the news, we see many more organizations acknowledging this issue. For many years, we've been discussing it, but there's been some discomfort or fear, but times are definitely changing. And we encourage more and more organizations to say something, speak quickly, be authentic, name the victims next time that you can.

Ayo:

And the last thing is do. Organizations must pivot. It's not just enough to say something, but we must pivot to action very, very quickly. And there are actions that you have to consider that are both in terms of your workforce, in terms of how you support them, but also what actions

are organizations or should you as a leader in an organization take to your external community. And so far, I'll say that I'll give our industry a good solid passing grade on listening. As I talk to other leaders in other organizations in TMT, they are listening, they are engaging. But on the do part, there's a lot more left to be done, and that's where we as an industry need to pivot to.

Hanish:

So, I have a follow-up question for you on the do part, and particularly, given your role as the diversity, equity, and inclusion leader within our Deloitte Tech, Media, and Telecom practice, what actions is Deloitte specifically taking?

Ayo:

Yeah, I think I'll break out our actions into that framework. So hopefully, it resonates with the listeners here. I think on the listen part, which is the first L in the lead framework, our leaders, overall, our most senior leaders embarked on listening tours, they listened to black voices at all levels. And I was in one of such sessions where they just listened and did very little talking. And over the last few months I've said, look, I welcomed a number of emails from everyone. And honestly, I think just this listening has set the tone for everything else to come. They also engaged. We as a firm engaged. We created safe spaces for dialogue to allow for opportunities for all manner of voices to be heard in more informal sessions. We had our leaders host several small group conversations over a number of weeks. And during these sessions, people shared their experiences, raised their concerns, their ideas, and we had the opportunity to just listen and learn from each other, which I thought was very powerful. I think the third is we acknowledged. And I'll say for the first time in a very powerful way, our leaders kind of posted a number of messages internally and also externally on LinkedIn, where we condemned the actions and we talked about our perspective on this issue

and our commitment to making a change. And then we also did something that I thought was very moving and powerful. We hosted a moment of reflection. Again, two webcast sessions where we all as a firm, all of us, took a moment to pause and reflect and honor the victims of racism or racial injustice. I thought it was a very beautiful and powerful moment.

Ayo:

Externally, in the do part, there's a lot that we're starting to do right now. We're starting to take more action ramping up our investments, including contributions to pro bono commitments, et cetera. So there's a lot we're doing right now. And we're making more commitments there. I think internally, though, over the years, and I'll say in the last five years specifically, we've invested a lot in programs to recruit and retain and advance our black professionals.

Ayo:

But that said, there's a whole lot more work that we need to do. And we are investing and expanding and strengthening those programs in recognition of the fact that there's more work to do. And we're looking to make bold commitments. And I'm really, overall, just really optimistic about what the future holds for black professionals at Deloitte, but just black professionals in corporate America just given this new awakening. So that's kind of my perspective on this issue at this moment that we're in right now.

Hanish:

So, let's talk about the future. You just mentioned it here. So, Alma, I'd like to turn to you for this one. What gives you hope that we're headed in the right direction and the shifting conversation we're seeing right now will be sustained?

Alma:

Yeah, I agree with everything Ayo laid out, all the conversations especially have been so, so important and the listening. I think

that the stress honestly of COVID has really opened hearts and minds in a way that we haven't seen and haven't had an opportunity. We're all asking really deep questions about our futures, about our health, about what matters to us most. And I think the combination of that openness and this darkness of George Floyd's murder really struck a chord in a way that has opened the floodgates in a way that I think is unprecedented and really does give me hope, Hanish, that we will continue to have these dialogues, as uncomfortable and tough as they are.

Alma:

I think that it's a moment that we all have to step into. And Ayo mentioned this, that all of us have work to do, some more than others. But even people of color have an opportunity to have more conversations, to not get exhausted by more listening and more talking and more explaining, to really stick to it and along the way to try and bring our allies along and to really help educate people who really now are asking questions sincerely. I also am heartened by the fact that I really have a strong belief and faith in younger generations and the points of view they bring to the table. They're increasingly diverse as a cohort, they're increasingly tolerant as a group. And I think it's been very interesting to watch the activism really take hold. Especially since young people can often be characterized as being apathetic and not being engaged in a way that's useful.

Alma:

I think it's been amazing and humbling to watch them really step into this moment as well. And they bring a perspective about the future, and they bring an openness to this entire topic that really gives me quite a bit of hope. And then finally, I think it's important to say that the decentralized nature of technology these days, the democratization of technology, everything from camera phones to social media, has really changed the way we communicate and share and document this moment as

well. And I don't think without all of those things coming together at one time in this weird planet lining up moment that we're having, I really don't think that we have the opening en masse on a global scale that we have right now.

Alma:

So, I can't help but be hopeful. I can't help but look ahead and be positive about the fact that we're going to make a massive lurch forward. Will we solve it in this one moment? Probably not. There's a lot to do, but can we make tremendous progress? I really do believe that we can.

Hanish:

Alma, Ayo, after everything that you've said, it's a tough one for me to wrap up. But I'm going to close with this. Certainly, the increase in focus on racial injustice to black people around the globe has made it unavoidable for organizations to ignore the call to meet the needs of the black workforce and the black community. And it's up to us as individuals and leaders in our organizations, in the tech, media, and telecom industry, and frankly beyond, to listen and to take action across all forms of racism in order to create a more equitable world for all.

Hanish:

So I really want to thank you both, Alma and Ayo, for joining me today, sharing your perspective and your personal stories on an incredibly important and emotion-stirring topic that we all need to do our bit to address. So until next time, happy and thoughtful listening.

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