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Working in Theater
Friday, November 6, 2020

>> L.J.: Hello, everyone out there watching and joining us live, and also hello to everyone who is watching on the replay. My name is L.J. I'm Founder of Maroon Arts and Culture, and this is our weekly Working in Theatre webinar co-produced by Maroon Arts and Center Theatre Group. Every week we discuss a topic on what it's like to work in the theatre in 2020 with all of the new circumstances, new technology, and new approaches that we have out there.

This week I'm really excited to welcome two guests to discuss networking versus community-building. But first let me just say that we do have open captioning available. So if you need to access the open captioning, there is a link in the chat. And we also want to thank the California Arts Council, a state agency, and the National Arts and Disability Center at UCLA for supporting open captioning.

My guests today are Michaela Bulkley, sorry, and Cristina Pacheco. And please both of you correct me if I said your names wrong. Michaela is a freelancer and a producer. And Cristina is a strategist and she is CEO of her own company. You can find websites on the Padlet. Her company is called FRCE, F-R-C-E, but the web is in the chat. You can find their websites on the Padlet. I will let them introduce themselves and say a little about themselves. Michaela, do you want to go first?

>> MICHAELA: Sure. Hi, my name is Michaela Bulkley. I work in mostly arts service organizations, specifically theatre-related. So I've worked with LA Stage Alliance, Emerging Arts Leaders Los Angeles, and I have really focused on kind of, like, leadership building and strategic planning for both of those things. I'm really excited to be here. I was also a CTG intern several years back. So it's been fun to come back and have this conversation.

>> L.J.: Thank you. Cristina?

>> CRISTINA: Good to be with you all. I'm a long-time fan of CTG. I'm the newest fan of Maroon. So glad to be here and glad to be in conversation with you all. My career has evolved over the years. But in the Los Angeles community I was formerly the Director of Programs for Arts in LA, did a lot in the world of art and advocacy and transitioned to my own consulting practice, and now my own company where I really worked at the intersection of arts practice, social justice movements,

and civic engagement.

And so it's taken me a lot of different directions, but I get to work across sectors to really advance initiatives, projects, campaigns, and events. So happy to be here.

>> L.J.: Thank you both so much for joining us. I'm so excited to discuss this week's topic. I framed it as networking versus community-building, but I think that that was my own insecurity and fear of the word "networking." I have always felt that the word "networking" is a little scary and involves things that I don't know how to do. But as I think I mentioned on this webinar before, the book *Emergent Strategy* by Adrienne Maree Brown helped me change the way I think about building a community in support of my arts organization.

So in order—so let's just jump right into it. Before we came on live, Cristina, you said something that I thought was really interesting. You said everything is relational. Can you tell us a little bit what you mean by that?

>> CRISTINA: That was a motto that my mentor always said, "everything is relational." And I really held it to be a personal motto of mine. I have found in my work that everything that we are able to do that really moves the needle is a great production we are proud of, is any major accomplishment that we see in our professional world has a network of relationships that's required in order to make that thing successful. We rarely are lone wolves or on our own island. So we think about the required network, relationships—it all has a relational component to it. And so being strong in our ability to both build and maintain our professional and personal relationships is, like, been essential to me in my career.

>> L.J.: Absolutely. I think that's what we are working on right now as I continue to build Maroon Arts and Culture. I know I confessed to both of you that I am just, you know, this is just a part of the job of a founder that I'm just the most uncomfortable with, you know, partly because I don't can—it makes me nervous to talk about myself, but also because I just don't even know what I'm supposed to be doing.

So networking, community-building, are these two things the same thing? Do you consider them to be the same thing? And if not, what are the differences?

>> MICHAELA: I mean, I think networking and community-building are not necessarily the same thing. I also don't—I'm not personally nervous by the term networking because I just shifted it differently in my mind when I'm going to networking events. I think community—I mean, they are both extremely relational. I think it depends on kind of where that person is in your relationship, and the boundaries you set with these people.

So I know I have people that are in my network that are not necessarily in my community. And being able to know the differences between these helps me figure

out what resources I need or what resources I can provide. Not only to protect my boundaries and protect to make sure that I'm not getting taken advantage of in a transactional way, but also to know just what is my bandwidth as a personal producer, leader, community member as well. So I don't think networking and community-building are 100 percent the same thing. But I don't think either of them are a bad thing. (Laughter)

>> L.J.: What do you think?

>> CRISTINA: Yeah, it's a great question. I do think networking's connotation tends to feel a little bit more stuffy, or maybe like you got to put on a show and, you know, show up in a certain way in order to be received and/or build relationships. And I can certainly understand where that—someone wrote in the chat disingenuous or it feels like you are trying to fake it.

So I think I rarely use the term networking for myself. To come back to relationships, relationship-building for me is kind of what I always think of. We have relationships for all kinds of reasons. You know, and I think one thing that I think is really important regardless if it's for the purpose of building your own community, when I think of community-building, for me that's, like, a network of support. That's where I'm going with a level of, like, vulnerability or I can be my full self in a community of people that I've built that I trust.

And I think that is an incredibly important part of our professional career. I think we think about community-building a lot in our professional levels, who is my community? But it's also important if you are freelancing or if you are advancing in a sector to know who are all the players and who are people who are my peers in other organizations? Are my peers doing similar kinds of work?

To come back, the relationship-building thing is, I haven't been able to move anywhere in my career without having leveraged or gone after certain relationships, or people have sought me out for my relationship to others. And I think I don't could hold cards super-close to my chest in that way where I'm, like, hiding the rolodex. I like to think of it if we are all in it for the same common purpose, we have something to offer for our common network to one another. How does that land?

>> L.J.: I think that that lands great. I think like you said, it comes back to relationship-building. Like, everything is relational. So let's get into it. How do you find these relationships? How do you identify individuals or organizations that you need to have a relationship with? Any advice for that? I know that's a super-broad question, but that's what we are here for.

>> CRISTINA: I can answer that first. I think well, actually, Michaela, do you want to answer first?

>> MICHAELA: So I think when it comes to where do you find these

people, I think sometimes it's a little bit of, like, being in the right place at the right time and sometimes it is just trusting someone. I think all of these things build on each other. So I can very much kind of, like, contact trace like how I got my last job was based on, like, if I root it back enough to my sophomore year theatre history teacher, promote, like, getting me a job with her friend who then helped me get my internship who then helped me get my job.

And it's just, like, when you start building these relationships specifically as a younger person in your career, you can be really surprised or at least I was really surprised to see how they grow. And so, like, my specific example is when I was an intern at CTG, the person that was working in the same department with me then co-produced the Ovation Awards with me last year. And so to be able to see that relationship grow and from him going as someone in my network who I didn't necessarily have a close relationship with because I was an intern and he was a professional, and to have my professional career grow and to be able to then build that into a real relationship, a real professional relationship was something that was really important.

And now we are constantly, like, pitching each other ideas, pitching each other projects because now he's, you know, part of that community that I feel like in, like, hey, here's this really weird stupid idea. What do you think? Where I wouldn't have done that when I was an intern, if that makes sense. Like, it all depends on just kind of showing up and taking those risks and being you were vulnerable to be able to continue to show up.

So, like, you know, sometimes it's volunteering at an event with your friends. Sometimes it's going to a mixer, you know, a networking mixer by yourself. Sometimes it's, and especially now it's a little bit harder but even just commenting on someone's Instagram post, being, like, wow, this is really cool, I'm really proud of this project you are working on or sending someone a DM. Hey, I see you keep working on these really cool things. I just want to say I think that's awesome. It's just about, it's kind of like dating. You just got to put yourself out there and keep showing up and keep being your best self and then continue to build those relationships.

>> L.J.: Awesome. So I hear you saying first look around at who is already in your spaces, right, your fellow interns, your friends who are volunteering with you to do things. And then being vulnerable and open enough to continuing relationships with them and then continuing to engage and interact with them whether it's in person or online through social media and things like that. Cristina, what is your advice for finding these relationships and networks?

>> CRISTINA: I was thinking about it. I agree with everything you shared, Michaela. I think about it in three distinct buckets. There's a network to be built around knowing who your fellow people are. Who are the players in your field? So if you are a producer or you are an artist or you want to be an artistic director or whatever the things are, who are the other artistic directors who are playing a similar

role that you're playing in a different company or a different organization? Do you know each other?

So that's kind of one, building your network of people who are already doing what you want to do, and then the second part of that is be a known person within those spaces. And one of the strategies I found there is to show up frequently. So showing up at the gatherings that are around artistic practice or showing up at the conferences that are around artistic practice. Whatever it is that is your field, your niche, showing up and being a visible player in there so people know who you are. And then the last thing which I think is really an important part of networking and relationship-building is supporting others trying to get in the space—this has been a really important part of my career. As I was able to build a relationship, I was then able to open a door for someone else who also wanted to be in that same field or do something similar, and in doing that, we also expand our own network because then we are also known as someone who has a deep well of relationships for people when you need a contractor for something. You need a stage manager, you need a whatever. And to have a network of relationships it's not just for your own gain, but it's about your contribution to the space in general I think is also a really important function of relationship-building.

>> L.J.: I really love that last piece that allegory of the cave. You are supposed to turn around and help some people behind you. And then that is also a way of growing and expanding your network because now you have created a network of people helping you, but also a network of people that you are helping and yes, continue to go build those relationships. I really like that. So if you have any questions for this topic in the chat, please make sure that you go ahead and drop them now. Cristina has to leave us at 1:00, so get your questions early and we will make sure we get to them.

But I do have a quick question before we get to the chat. So you all mentioned mixers and things like that. And I'm wondering is there still value in things like professional organizations, you know, all of these young artists, young leadership organizations where the whole goal is to mix and mingle? Do you still find value in those kinds of programs in 2020?

>> MICHAELA: So I work with an organization called Emerging Arts Leaders Los Angeles. And I obviously find a lot of value with it. I have been with that group for four years now starting as someone that went to mixers and now actually working with that organization. And I think it really just depends on what your goal is. And so and again, like, Cristina was saying trying to show up in spaces that are potentially being occupied by other people that you want to be like or be around. And so if you are not necessarily interested being in, like, a leadership position, yes, because I think everyone has the capacity to be a leader. You can start by maybe just taking an improv class or maybe showing up in different ways where there's going to be a group of people you are consistently getting to know. I think be careful because there are some groups that are, like, pay \$150 initiation fee and now you

get to be on this, like, whatever. I don't think those are necessary, but I do think participating in an organization whose goal is to try and connect people has values. It also takes a lot of energy away from you. You don't have to find the people. The people are already gathering together.

>> L.J.: I went to an ELA mixer last year before COVID shut everything down and it was a lot of fun. It was a good talk and it was in a very cool gallery. So I highly recommend that you all check them out. And I also really like the idea of taking the pressure off professional organizations and, like, super professional networking by taking an improv class or a writing class or anything that's going to put you in the room with people who have similar interests to you.

I feel like that's a little bit less pressure than I am going to put on my best blazer and go mix and mingle. I would much rather be in a room with other artists that do similar things.

Cristina, what do you think?

>> CRISTINA: Yeah. It's interesting. I think there is a total, I think I am of two minds. I kind of in my personal practices around relationship-building and networking, I challenged myself in the last couple of years. So there are certainly communities that I feel like I'm already a member of this group. You know, we have been doing work together. I know these folks. We gather often.

I need that group to, like, reconnect with my people, right. Oh, my God, I haven't seen you in so long. What are you working on? There's something necessary about coming back to the people we know well or have collaborated with and who understand our experience in some way, kind of that network of people that are like I was talking about kind of in your field, your peers.

And then I really challenge myself to step outside the well-worn path in that way, and be a part of professional networks that I wouldn't have necessarily subscribed to before. So in founding my own company, I'm a member of a couple, you know, founding women's founder organizations or professional networks. And we have a Slack channel and we have an e-mail thread. And I have found it's been so helpful to something that maybe wasn't kind of art practitioners or more of the traditional space that I have been in before to have a new network of people that is a different way that I identify. So maybe it's based on your age or where you live in town or your City Council or your Neighborhood Council. Things that are other kinds of ways that we affiliate ourselves beyond our titles I think is also an important muscle to flex depending where you are in your career and what you want to do. I found extremities value in spaces I know well and that are my people and things that are new that stretch me to see and expand my own self-definition.

>> L.J.: Yes. I love that kind of, you know, like and it's kind of the idea of this is your community and these are your people when you need things and you

need resources and it's your network and these are the new people that you are getting to know and that there's potential to build further relationships there.

So let's get into some questions from the chat and then I will come back to something that I thought that was really interesting. So Lee, who is in our working group, wants to know how do we bridge the gap of relationship-building and job searching? Whenever I'm networking, I'm struggling with transitioning from the dating getting to know you stage to the I need a job stage. So I think that this is kind of making the ask. How do you engage with your community and then, like, ask them for something, ask somebody for something? Do you have any advice for that?

>> CRISTINA: I love to ask or I love when people ask. I think there's certainly things that feel taboo, but I think a piece of advice that I received was asking for something versus asking for advice will always get you a different outcome. So if you are coming to somebody saying I need a job, do you have advice on a résumé, any job boards you know about? Sometimes if the question is uncomfortable to ask directly, can you get me a job, maybe you ask advice. Or maybe you know somebody who works for an organization you want to work for instead of directly asking for the referral, ask are there things I should know about this organization that maybe I wouldn't find on their website so I can be a more competitive candidate?

And you can come into it from a place of advice versus a direct request. But I personally love the direct request, too, and I don't mind it. I have been asked for those things in the past and I find it refreshing. But another way to go about it is seeking advice.

Michaela, do you have vision?

>> MICHAELA: I completely agree. As someone who has been in that position pretty recently looking for work, and it's not embarrassing to be looking for work. It's not embarrassing to be wanting to take on a new challenge or wanting to take on a new path in your career. And I think there is a little bit of, you know, shame or being, like, "oh, I don't want to ask for a job." I want to make it seem like the job comes to me. I want to make it seem like I'm completely sought after. And I think getting over that fear and recognizing that people want to help you even if they can't necessarily hire you, especially that's the point of the relationship-building, and just being honest and saying, "hey, I'm looking for a new opportunity. I was doing projects like this and now I'm hopefully leaning towards projects like this other thing." And recognizing yeah, like you said, you value, you bring value to a team and you don't have to—well, you have to hire me because I'm the best thing that's ever happened to this whatever. But knowing that, like, people want to help you and you can ask. And I think asking for advice even just asking directly, "hey, I thought of the company that you are working for is hiring. I submitted my application. Would you mind putting in a good word for me?" And sometimes that works and sometimes it doesn't. And if it doesn't, then at least you tried and normally they will keep in mind,

like, “oh, hey, well, Michaela is looking for a gig. She didn't get this one for whatever reason but if there's another one later or I hear of something, I will send it her way.” It's just about putting yourself out there. It's scary but you can either sit and not have a job and not get a job and just panic about it, or you can put yourself out there to the people who care about you.

>> L.J.: I think that, I mean, this is something that has come up I think in previous weeks. And the answer is always, like, you just have to do it. (Laughter) The answer is, you just have to do it. You need to find yourself a meditation for courage. Find yourself a mantra for bravery, and then just make the ask. That's what I'm working on now as well especially when it comes to things like fundraising. We are a new organization, so we basically just are existing off of support from friends and families and then, like, hopes and prayers. (Laughter)

And like, that's about it. So I'm just, I'm still practicing asking for fundraising and donations and things like that. Do you all have any advice for that specifically or is it the same thing you just got to make the ask?

>> MICHAELA: Being super honest, I have really bad anxiety. So for me it's always, like, just send one e-mail. And then I realize it's not that scary and then I just, like, go. But, like, just saying, like, instead of making it super-overwhelming, I asked 50 people and all of these people probably don't want to give me money and they probably hate me and what am I even doing with my life? We go down that cycle, or at least I do sometimes.

And so just saying, like, “okay, no, I'm sending this one e-mail. The worst they are going to do is say no.” And then that's the worst thing they are going to say. Not I don't have the money now or I don't have the opportunity now, and then you are going to move on with your life. You are going to be okay. (Laughter)

>> L.J.: I hope so. (Laughter) Cristina, do you have any advice for fundraising asks?

>> CRISTINA: So depends what you are building, right? So if you got a for-profit company, you are looking for some seed money, you are an early startup, I really, I value this, and I think it's a really great strategy of use your community first. There are so many crowd funding opportunities there. There's I Fund Women. There's kick starter Indie Go Go. And platforms that help you through technology reach your community first. So even if it was a group of friends and family that you demonstrated gave you \$10, you know, and you have fifty people to do that for you and then you can come to a funder saying I have a network of supporters, these are people who want to see this work show up in the world, everybody this able to contribute this dollar amount and this number of people have been given consistently or gave a one-time gift, having an immediate backing from your community, I think sometimes it's almost scarier to ask our closer people for support than it is to ask a random stranger.

So start with the exercise of telling people what you are doing. That's the first step, right, of fundraising—invited people into something you believe in. If you are starting up a company or your own consulting practice or whatever it is and you believe in what you offer and what you are doing, tell other people about it. Give them a chance to support you, either by writing you a recommendation, sending in a small donation, whatever it might be, put a quote on your website that says, like, I endorse your work. Cosign on your work through LinkedIn. There are so many ways to ask our immediate network to support us and we can demonstrate value by showing there's a group of people who want to see our work in the world.

>> L.J.: I love that. Start with your immediate community and then use that as a little confidence boost when you go ask people that you may not know. That's great advice.

>> MICHAELA: Can I add something? This happened to me pretty early in my career is that I did find myself in a community of people who did not support the work that I was doing or didn't see the bigger picture of the work that I was doing. And that's not necessarily a reflection to stop doing the work, but to find a new community. And that's just, I wasn't hanging out with the right people. They just didn't have the same big dreams as I did. So they didn't necessarily get the work that I was doing and, like, my options were okay—do I either stick with this community and change my dreams or do I just change the people around me? And so especially when you are young and you are just starting your career and you are probably around other people who are figuring out their career, it's okay to outgrow circles that you are in and find new circles.

>> L.J.: That's really excellent advice, as well, especially as I know some of our participants are emerging artists and when you are in college, especially if you are getting a theatre degree, you tend to be surrounded by theatre people all the time. But depending on what path you take after college or even the other way around if you are into your high school theatre program and maybe you choose not to go onto college, then it's kind of, like, how do you find that group of theatre people once again once you are kind of out of that insulated community? So yes, I definitely think that's great advice. Don't be afraid to outgrow certain circles. And we already talked about how you can seek out other circles and people who are interested in the same thing as you. For example, taking classes in professional organizations. So I'm definitely going to make sure that I add to the Padlet I Fund Women, kick starters and Indie Go Go, so that we can—so that our participants have these resources available.

I did want to talk a little bit about how technology has changed the way that we interact with our community and our network. Crowdfunding is definitely a big thing that I have seen a lot of organizations turn to. Do you all have any input or advice on how technology is kind of influencing our networking/relationship-building?

>> CRISTINA: I don't know anybody who hires that doesn't go to

somebody's LinkedIn and probably their Instagram if it's a public account. So, you know, there's so much value to just keeping our stuff fresh. And if we are, you know, building our own brand so to speak—if you are a consultant or you want to be seen as a director, you brand your public-facing stuff accordingly. Not that you have to exclusively post about, like, theatre or any career set that you are in. But be mindful of the brand you are presenting and think of yourself in that way. So your LinkedIn and being active in different spaces so that your content is fresh I think is valuable in the social space. And then I think, you know, I have found a full revamping. I'm a live experience producer most of the time. So COVID has required a dramatic shift in the way that we do—that we connect with each other as human beings. It can be exhausting to be on Zoom all day and one more thing to be on a screen with our pajama bottoms on. But make choices that feel right to you and honor where you are at. It's valuable to keep showing up even though there can be digital fatigue in this time. Stay with it and find something that has a little bit of a life spring, a bit of a life source to it for you.

>> L.J.: Wonderful. Michaela, technology and networking?

>> MICHAELA: Yes, totally agree with Cristina and also knowing again where your audience is. And so I know I tend to work a lot with theatre producers who are older than me, and I know a lot of times they are on Facebook. So my Facebook looks like my LinkedIn. It has all the professional things that I'm doing. It has blog posts that I write. It has things I'm participating in. And then my Instagram tends to be obviously directed towards people my age or a little bit younger. And so they are all the same content.

It's just how do I talk about it? And on Instagram I'm probably going to be a little bit more vulnerable, maybe talk about, you know, the election or mental health or things like that, or my cat that I just got, Facebook is going to be probably just a little bit more clean and specific about my career, just knowing again who are you trying to talk to? And also something, like, don't be afraid of social media. My friend over COVID has become, like, this crazy TikTok celebrity doing just piano duets. He just missed being able to sing with his friends, and so he was playing piano and letting people duet him on TikTok. And now he has this crazy community. They all duetted each other to do a virtual show choir. You can find a community in a new way and I was proud he found a new community on TikTok which is somebody maybe a lot of us would say no, like, TikTok's too young for me. It's too weird for me. And he just had fun with it and built up a whole community. I definitely agree that Instagram tends to be my business card. If I am in a networking event, I put my Instagram on my business card. I've handed that out to people or if I'm out of business cards and it's something that's probably on Instagram because I feel like you can tell through conversation like you've done and say hey, just follow me on Instagram. That's how you can reach me. I have had people DM me for jobs on Instagram and there's no shame in the Instagram game. (Laughter)

>> L.J.: Oh, my gosh. I actually am having an issue right now where you

know, as I build Maroon Arts and Culture, people are finding me on Instagram and it's not my business Instagram. It's vacation pictures and food that I cook. So I don't know what to do. Do I switch it up and try to make it more "businessy" or get a whole separate account or what?

>> CRISTINA: I have a similar thing. I have been in a similar dilemma. And I do think there's something to say which is that you are allowed to be a human on all of your professional spaces. Be who you are, especially if you are the brand, right. If people are seeking you out specifically Michaela, they want to know what are you about? What are you into? What do you stand for?

And so I think there's a great value to both running your socials as kind of an outlet for your business and what you do and to run your socials just in a really personal way. But that speaks to your values and who you are. I think it's just about telling your story. So what's the story you want to tell? And I imagine this is a great group of storytellers.

>> L.J.: I hope so. I'm sorry. I have to put my charger in. We are live, but this is what I have to do.

>> MICHAELA: And just going off of that as well, I think if you do want to have a difference between your business Instagram and your personal Instagram, I would say put your personal Instagram, don't put your full name. Put it on private. Make sure it's just your friends so people don't accidentally find it. Not that you are hiding anything, but if you wanted to be super clear about this is my professional profile and this is my personal profile, I have tried to have, like, a business one and a personal one. I just didn't want to do that, I'm posting the same content. It was exhausting to do both. Really there's no wrong answer, just do whatever feels comfortable for you where you are in your career, because I am my brand. I don't have a larger company. When I was working at larger organizations, I made sure to pull that traffic towards them, but I wasn't trying to convince anybody that I was both of those things.

>> L.J.: I really love that advice because that's something that's important to me as an artist and a founder. I really feel that I'm going to insist that I be allowed to be myself in all of my interactions. I am unable to—I'm no longer able to code switch. I am no longer able to flatten my air if I don't want to. I'm just looking and feeling that part of the reason why I made my own business and also the reason why we are named after maroons and maroon societies is because people should be allowed to be themselves and find freedom for themselves and not be tied to other people's expectations.

I do think that I'm going to leave my Instagram the way it is. If you like it, then this is a good match. If you don't, then maybe it's not a good match at all. You know, because I am an extension of my business, and I think that that ties in really well to a question we had in the chat. Somebody wants to know what it's like to be an activist

in the set—the line between standing what you believe from and gain connections in a platform that can elevate activism. And then Annie followed up with that by saying specifically situations in which you have a choice between speaking up or not around authority figures or a prolific figure in the industry. So basically, and correct me if I am wrong in the chat, Annie, but I think we are just talking about, like, being able to speak truth to power and how does that affected your networking situation? What do you all think?

>> CRISTINA: Annie, I love your question. I have asked myself this question a lot, and especially I worked for an organization that was, you know, an advocacy organization. I asked myself this often. I have very strong personal beliefs. And I am quite vocal about my activism. And I also know that, you know, progress moves at the speed of trust, right? And so we have to be able to—depending on what we are trying to shift. I believe there's a role for the agitator and there's a role for the bridge-builder. And those are not, like, separate—those are not separate functions—they are not in opposition. They are both a really important function of how we drive change.

So they are going to be people and it's really just, like, a self-determination. Am I in this situation, am I the bridge builder or am I the agitator that needs to really kick up the dust? And you can be both in your career and you can be both in the same week. But knowing kind of, like, contextually, so there have been times in my career where I have been the agitator. I'm outside of the system that I know needs to change. And so my work is around organizing people who are like-minded and finding the opportunities and the leverage points and coming strong and saying, like, this is what we demand. This is what's right, and this is what this moment requires. And, like, I have also been the bridge-builder, but I have never given up the integrity of what I believe in those scenarios. But I have a scenario that said my intention in this is to be able to get the ear of somebody and then sit with them so they can hear my story or the story of the communities that I am working with so they understand what this is and then I have to build that trust which is not foregoing our own integrity, right.

But it is making the commitment that in this scenario I am going to stay in a place of how do I build connection with you so that you can hear me? And the agitators can also do that and be heard. There's a function for both. Long-winded way because I feel passionate about this question. I love that you asked it. It's one that we should be asking ourselves often. But I think knowing what is my intention and what's my outcome? What is the long term gain and who am I representing? Because it's never just our individual voices. It's if we get to sit at a table we are representing so many other people who are not at that table. So what are we representing? What's our intention and what's our hopeful outcome? And letting that drive the decision of how we show up.

>> L.J.: What a great response, yes. Michaela, do you have anything to add?

>> MICHAELA: Yes. So specifically to situations in which you have a choice of speaking up or not around authority figures or prolific figures in an industry, I have a very specific example of this. I was working somewhere, there was an executive director who was not doing ethical or great things, and it got really uncomfortable. And at some point I finally just had to stand up and say, like, you know, this is not great. This is not a sustainable work environment. This is not practical things, and it was a big risk. And I ended up losing that job temporarily. But it started a catalyst of being able to get leadership replaced in that organization. And so even though I personally had to take—and it really did become a conversation with myself of, like, what is my own limitation? What are the things that I believe in and what are the things that I stand for? Had and at what point does this become too much? And so I did find it going against my personal code of ethics, my code of activism and advocating for people like me and people around me. It was a really tough decision but I'm still really proud of the decision I made, even though I did end up losing that job, because it did push for larger change. And I know not everyone could be in that position. Not everyone, especially now, especially can afford to lose their job, especially in the current economic climate. But there are always moments where it's, like, is this relationship actually functional anymore? Is this group—and again, talking about outgrowing circles—is this group healthy for me? And also knowing that, like, everyone that knows me knows that I'm like an advocate and activist for women's rights. So you better not say anything disrespectful about women in front of me, because I will say something. And that's part of my package, that's part of my brand. And I have quit jobs because they had all male boards and it's, like, you know, unfortunately sometimes you just you got to step away from projects, or you know they don't align with who you are or what you are trying to do.

And then people will know, like, oh, if we want to work with Michaela, we better have women and people of color on our board. And if we want to work with Michaela, then we need to make sure these things are in line. So I think it is just about, it's scary to stand up for yourself, but it's the only way to try and implement change around you. Of the and that is very much, like, a leadership thing. That is very, very hard and very, very challenging. But hopefully helps to implement larger change.

>> CRISTINA: Can I add one thing to that? I actually think that it's, like, a perfect illustration, too, of your network, strength in numbers. So if you, you know, I have very similar scenarios where I'm thinking about my professional life where there was a person in a seat of decision making and whether it's within an organization or in your community and it's a policy change issue and it's advocacy to a politician or whatever it might be, this is where this network really is so essential. And it is, like, one of the strongest ways I have built community and relationships is in alignment around issues. So, you know, when I was one of the organizers for the original Women's March in LA in 2017, that was one of the strongest places where I was building network and relationships around something that we were all deeply passionate about. And that continued to then expand my professional opportunities which I had never thought about at the time because I was really just focused on,

like, the issues that we were aligning towards. But as we are, like, contextualizing it in this conversation, I actually think that it's both a function of having a network so that you can engage that network to progress change, and then also, like, what opportunities are expanded in those networks of people you organize alongside?

>> L.J.: I really love this topic because as I mentioned before, this is what my organization is all about. There was a time in my life where I thought I was going to be able to work my way up an artists organization ladder. But coming into the industry when I did during that time period, there wasn't a lot of conversation about diversity or gender equity or pay equity in the field. And so I just quickly found that I just, it's not for me. I'm not—I can't sit in a position where I know that there's wrong being done and not say anything. I just can't do it. And so what that realization has done for me is that it has empowered me to start my own business, because I do think that there is a need for diverse perspectives in the industry. And it has also reframed who I consider to be a prolific authority figure in the field. It's kind of reframed what organizations I believe are the important organizations to pay attention to.

And it's made me reconsider if I feel that the funding is going in the right direction, right. I think you learn a lot about yourself when you are put into situations like that. There are some people who are better designed to do that work than me. That's just my perspective. There are people that have to change from within. Stacey Abrams is getting a lot of love today, she's a person who lost her governor's race for reasons that people don't necessarily agree with. Had that been me, I might have quit and said I have to do something else. There are people who have to stay and challenging people from places within institutions. I'm personally not one of those people, but I do think that there is a need for both perspectives.

I'm just checking the chat for questions. If you have any questions for our guests, please make sure that you add them in the chat. Build your own table. That is the truth. There's no seat at the table. You just build your own table. I think Shirley Chisholm said that.

>> MICHAELA: I would love to add, like, talking about the, like, reframing who, especially now with the reckoning that theatre is going through and being able to see these conversations from the position that I'm in and being able to see how people are reacting to COVID, I'm really recognizing I'm, like, there are some leaders that I was so intimidated by that I was, like, "oh, okay, now I kind of see how this works in your brain and things like that." And so lately it's about reshifting of, like, okay, so you have been an Artistic Director of a theater company for 10, 15, 20 years which is great. You have those skills. I also have a master's degree in nonprofit management. So we both have our skills and breaking down what skills are more valuable in this specific moment. So I do think, like, you don't always have to be intimidated by the person who is older than you just because they are a self-appointed leader in a system they created.

>> L.J.: Here here to that. I definitely agree with that. We did have a question from the chat about moving to a new city. This is something I think I mentioned ahead of time. I'm originally from Texas. I have been in LA for three and a half years now, but all my exes live in Texas. I found when I first moved out here, it was really, really hard to find a community and to find a group of people that I felt comfortable building with. Do you all have any advice for that?

>> MICHAELA: When I moved back to LA after I finished undergrad to start a grad program, I was out of LA for almost a year. It's just going to things by yourself and making—it's honestly just making friends by going to things that you find interesting. So for me, that was actually just going—there was plugging CTG again, there was a young subscribers program for anyone under 40 or 35 or something. And I got that subscription package and started going to these cocktail happy hours and made a bunch of friends. So it's just showing up and then I would volunteer at things and just showing up in places where you like to go and hopefully you will find other people that like those things. And Facebook groups are really helpful.

>> CRISTINA: Yeah. I'm from LA, but I lived in San Diego for about ten years. And when I was coming back, there was a job that I really wanted, and so I went on, like, I think it was on my Facebook and I was just, like, who do I know that might know somebody? Either LinkedIn or Facebook, and I found an old friend from college and I didn't know they were in LA. So I just started kind of seeing you can filter on Facebook who is in LA or on LinkedIn and who might have a connection to the organization. I asked them to go to coffee and just share what they knew about this organization and the field in general. =kjijijAnd it was truly because of that conversation that I had this insight into different things that I couldn't have found on the website, that I couldn't have found on Google, and that really helped me get situated in that opportunity.

So I think back to technology is, like, utilized, you know, even if it's somebody—and I haven't been in touch with them in years and years and years and we were not close friends. But because we had just a sliver of connection, you know, we just utilized that and people are so happy to help you find community when they found it, because we have all been there. We all had to start fresh somewhere and have all been grateful for that one person who was, like, let me bring you out to my dinner party or take you to coffee with this person and introduce you to this person. And I just have been very humbled and grateful every time somebody does that for me and now especially you are then in the seat of having those relationships, you can pass that along.

>> L.J.: Yes. And I would also add to that and say be patient because after being in LA for about three and a half years, I just now feel like I got a network of people that I can start building relationships with here. So, yeah, definitely be patient. I really love that advice of, like, just going on your social media pages and see who is in the area or near the area that you will be moving to. I never even thought about that. But same as you, there have been times I didn't realize that

somebody was living out here. I didn't realize that they had moved. So, yeah, definitely that, being patient. And I would say also don't forget that with technology to a certain extent you can still stay engaged with the community that you are leaving. And maybe it's an opportunity to build a bridge. I did kind of want to come back to technology for a minute. We talked a little bit about how to identify community and how to, like, find networking groups through technology. But for those of us who are starting organizations or producing projects on our own, how can we use technology to stay engaged with our community? You know, keeping people updated? I know that Maroon Arts and Culture has a ton of programs, but everybody doesn't always know about everything. I'm having a hard time keeping everybody in the loop. So if you have any advice for engaging your community and maybe even using technology to do that?

>> MICHAELA: I would say making sure you know where your audiences are. And when I was working at LA Stage Alliance, I kind of had three demographics of people. I had the producers who were members who were very clear they needed to get an e-mail from me to read it and then they also had a Facebook group and then I had the voters who again mostly through e-mail through individual specific e-mail and then we had our larger audience. So it's just about making sure you can't always send a generic e-mail to all three of those groups. Like, even if the information is the same, you need to just change it a little so they feel like they are being talked to as a specific person and a specific group so that they feel connected and it's not just a blanket statement. And it takes time to be able to learn how people want to be communicated with. I know you were talking earlier about a text thing.

>> L.J.: Oh, yeah.

>> MICHAELA: Because your target audience is millennials and they seem on their phones more than checking their mission. Yeah, if that's how your group wants to connect, but then your funders like you were saying earlier, your funders probably don't want that generic text message. They probably want the e-mail. And so it does take a little extra effort, but just really knowing how each individual group in your life wants to be communicated with, and also, like, planning that engagement and saying, like, the first week of the month I am going to e-mail all of my funders, even if I don't have anything going on, just to say hi. And same with just, like, here is an update. Even if it's, like, the update is we don't have an update, but we are still looking, we are still trying, and just, you know, that's what it is. It's just specific content towards each individual group of people.

>> L.J.: Oh, my gosh, I'm so glad at the planning of this stuff, the planning the e-mails and organizing that whole thing. I'm just not very good at it. Since you did mention it, if you like anything that maroon Arts and Culture if you are the type of person to connect with us, you can text Maroon to 474747 and you can be added to our list, our community. Cristina, do you have any advice for keeping your community engaged and even using technology to do so?

>> CRISTINA: I love what you are doing right now. Of case in point, you are displaying it. You know, it's funny. I wrote two things down, Michaela, you said them so I will underscore which is be consistent and plan time weekly. So, you know, and knowing like you said who your audience is and what's the story you are telling. We have to think of ourselves as story tellers all the time—to be consistent, be diligent. Have accountability to yourself or to your teammates or whoever. Maybe you have an accountability group. We are all on the first of the month we are going to get on a Zoom call for 30 minutes and we are all going to plan our weekly e-mail or what do you think of this? Troubleshoot with people doing something similar. Get them to be a proofreader on your e-mail or vice versa. And having that accountability structure of other people who also are trying to work on this I know for myself it's something I work on too, balancing telling my story and also just being in the work. And so getting clear on I value telling my story—I value spending time doing this. It's an important part of what I do and how I move in the world and then once you are grounded in that, like, core belief and conviction, then building the time and then having the accountability.

>> L.J.: I am going to take these notes very seriously because this is an area where I struggle. It's the planning and the implementation. But, you know, I do feel passionate about the story, so I like to talk about the story, but I have a hard time sometimes articulating to people exactly what it is that I do and how I might need their help with certain things. So I'm truth trying to get better about that. Do you all have any advice and really quickly, oh, if you have any last-minute questions for Cristina, drop them in the chat because she's got to leave soon. But really quickly, do you all have any advice for talking about yourself and your projects to people in order to build that community and that network?

>> CRISTINA: I will just say it does not necessarily get easier. I always am, like, how do I want to talk about this? What is this about? There's a great book and is there a great TED Talk, "The Start with Why," Simon Senek. I have tried to come back to that principle a lot, instead of telling people what I do, telling them why I do it and trying to use that as the hook. And it's also good practice for me. By saying it out loud or writing it down, I remind myself why I am doing this work, why I'm spending time building this company or with this organization. I have found it sometimes more helpful for my own sense of conviction and recommitment to what I'm working on. Almost more helpful than it is to communicate to my network and that's totally fine. Sometimes it's that self-reminder and when you take the time to write it down, you reinforce it for yourself.

>> L.J.: Thank you, Michaela, do you have anything to add?

>> MICHAELA: That was such great advice. Definitely start with why. I think it would be really easy to promote when I was working with companies or working at a company because I was, like, "oh, it's not me. It's them." Now when it's just me, reminding myself that giving myself the permission to say I'm allowed to do this. I'm allowed to work on this project that's important to me. And also

remembering that these things are not about me. Like, the projects that I'm working on, and I think this is very true for at least the two of you in this conversation is, like, it's not about me and look at the work I'm doing and I'm so great. We are doing this work because it's important to the future and to the people around us. And even we are trying to do work that helps people we don't even know. So that's what I try to remind myself. I have to do this work, and I have to talk about this work because someone needs this. Like, someone needs this information that I have. And it's not about, like, look how smart I am. It's, like, please, please take these resources that I have for this community. And to me that's always, like, it's about getting over myself and saying it's not about me showing up and telling everybody how great I am. It's me trying to share the information and resources or product or whatever I'm doing because I built it because I know someone needs it and so it's, like, it's about them. Make it about the person you are trying to help and that helps me get over getting stressed about marketing myself.

>> L.J.: Thank you so much. We are going to say goodbye to Cristina for now, but thank you so much for all of the wonderful advice that you shared with us today. We still have Michaela for a few more minutes, so please feel free to ask any questions that you may have in the chat. But for now, we will see you later. Thank you so much, Cristina.

>> CRISTINA: Such a pleasure. And it's so, whenever I get to be part of these conversations, it's just that reminder that we are all in stuff. You know, we are all advancing our own work and working with each other and these spaces and the space that you are offering is so valuable and so grateful to be here. And thank you all.

>> L.J.: Thank you so much. Have a great weekend. And then with Michaela somebody had a really great question that I think you would be the perfect person to answer. They want to know different ways of building a professional-looking Instagram page. So since you mentioned that your Instagram page kind of functioning as your business card, can you give us some advice how we can be as professional as you?

>> MICHAELA: Sure. First I wanted to address someone in the chat I think Annie again saying they are nervous about if they say something, it will ruin their career. If I had a dollar for every time someone said I will never work in this industry again, I wouldn't have to work, because I know that that's who I am. I'm bold. I say things that make people uncomfortable because I am one of those agitator game-changer people. But it's different than being rude. I don't think I'm a rude person. But I have said a lot of things that have made a lot of people in power upset, and that's okay. I'm still here. I'm still making it work.

>> L.J.: Yeah.

>> MICHAELA: I'm still getting paid for stuff. So at least somebody likes me.

>> L.J.: Same here, so just so you know out there. I too have spent some time telling people the truth. And speaking truth to power does not always go the way that it should. Sometimes it gets you put on lists that you know make it hard. But at the end of the day when you have the right thing on your side, not to say you are a moral judge or something, but to echo something that was said earlier, when you are fighting for what's right and speaking on behalf of another group and wanting to do good work, then that will be a reward in itself. It may not come right away, but it will come back around, I promise.

>> MICHAELA: Yeah.

>> L.J.: Instagram page?

>> MICHAELA: Yeah. So I think it's just about how do you want to present yourself? And how do you want to—what do you want people to know about you? So and that's not necessarily just professionally, but also personally. What do you want people to know about you? And so for me, my brand is very much about, like, live entertainment and community-building and mostly it's about theatre. So a lot of things I post do have personal touches to me about why they are important to me. But I will post a picture of me being at a concert. I also think me being at a concert is on brand for the work that I do. And, you know, sometimes it's pictures of me traveling because I think that also is something that's important to my brand and important to just, like, the values that I bring to the table, that I have been out and about in the world. And it's also just, like, you don't have to be hypercritical or censor yourself a lot. But do you really have to post a picture of you, like, you know, drinking at 3:00 a.m. with, like, your friends? You know, we are all young and people and that happens. But it's also, like, if you are consistently posting that stuff, that's what people are going to think about you. Especially when you are young because it's, like, who are you trying to impress and what content will impress them? Because I feel like that's the basic concept of social media is, like, you were putting stuff out there because you want to express yourself and hopefully people will resonate with it. So in what ways are you trying to express yourself, if that makes sense. It's not about, because one, I think this concept of professionalism and looking like correct for the business is 100 percent, like, patriarchal white supremacy. So forget about that notion. How do you want to show up? Sometimes that's concerts, sometimes it's traveling. Sometimes that's going to theatre. But I do think the concept of social media is about personal engagement. So if you are just posting a picture, like, today I just posted a picture of the CTG logo and I was, like, I'm doing a panel. People aren't necessarily going to react to that. But I post on my story, hey, I'm doing this panel, I'm really excited, check it out, link and bio, that's the difference of what you are doing. And so you know, and if you are, you know, if you are an advocate for the cannabis industry and you post a lot of pictures of you smoking weed, that's fine. That's a very legal thing you can do as an adult. If that is not what you are going for, maybe don't post that. You also don't have to post your whole life on social media all the time. Like— (Laughter)

>> L.J.: I feel like you have seen my Instagram page and you are talking to me personally right now.

>> MICHAELA: I am not. I will follow you on Instagram.

>> L.J.: I'm just kidding. I do want to say also that there is an unofficial Working in Theatre Facebook page. If you are not in that group, go ahead, yeah, it's a group, not a page. If you are not in that group, you should get into that group and then let's do a follow-back Friday today where everyone can drop their LinkedIn, their Instagram and their Facebook, and maybe we can start to build some community with, you know, starting with our fellow participants in this program. So it's the Working in Theatre series, there is a Facebook group. It's unofficial, self-organized. But the link for it is in the chat, so definitely go join the group. And then we will do a follow-back Friday and we can start to build community. Do you have experience with Facebook groups at all? Do you find them to be valuable places to network and/or engage network and community?

>> MICHAELA: Yes and no. I do think that they are helpful. I think it depends on, so I'm part of the CTG intern alumni page, and I find that page extremely helpful. There are some other pages that are I think somewhat toxic. So I was part of this other, like, theatre networking page that, like, especially when AD5 was happening and people had various opinions on it, and people got nasty. And it was, like, that's not a group and now I know who to work with and who not to because I was taking note of who was being completely unprofessional and completely rude.

But I also think it's helpful for those moments where you are, like, I need, you know, if I'm, like, hey, has anybody used this text service before, can you help me? I'm interested in doing this. And then you are on that group, too, and you are, like, hey, I just started doing it. Let's chat. So I do find those helpful or finding volunteer opportunities or finding things that you are interested in, especially if you are new to the area. I think those Facebook groups can be helpful. I also think specifically in theatre the boundaries of Facebook can get blurred, because it is a more personal platform. So I like have had people try to DM me, specifically men, at 1:00 a.m., 2:00 a.m. And I'm, like, we are not here for this. So it's finding those boundaries and setting those boundaries. But I do think sometimes they can be helpful.

>> L.J.: Yeah. I struggle with Facebook sometimes because Maroon Arts and Culture has a Facebook page, I will put it somewhere because I'm supposed to be getting better at this. But yeah, once people go to the page and they like it, I don't know that it necessarily turns into, like, it doesn't necessarily make it easier to engage with people. Or in conversations and hear feedback and these kind of things. So, yeah, I kind of am struggling with how to use social media to grow and engage with my community, yeah, in general. I don't even have my link for Facebook ready to go. (Laughter)

So I think that we are probably going to wrap it up here soon. But if anyone in the

chat has any additional questions, please make sure that you ask them now. We got a lot of great resources today, so I will try to add them to the Padlet. And we just want to make sure that—oh. I did have one other question. So oh, Camille's got my Facebook on there. (Laughter)

>> L.J.: It's in the chat now, so y'all, go like us. Thank you. Thank you so much. My question was about COVID-19, which I think we actually covered just a little bit. But do you have any recommendations for people who are wanting to make connections as young theatre professionals emerging theater or arts professionals, do you have any recommendations that people can kind of look to now and so they can start building their network now even though we are still in a, you know, socially distant situation?

>> MICHAELA: Yes. That has been a challenge even for me because I'm such an extroverted person. And I think it is, I mean, the way that I have been making connections is probably the most through Facebook and Instagram just because I have been able to—but also in the last week, I had to get on Facebook because we know what happened this week. (Laughter)

>> MICHAELA: And so I, like, had to delete all my social media for a minute. But start with the people you are comfortable with, because right now networking is more emotionally exhausting than it has been in the past. And so mostly I do Instagram DMs because that's a platform I know I'm comfortable on. I have been trying to reconnect with people I already know and build those relationships as opposed to trying to build new relationships right now. Because I think that that is what is more effective for me at the moment. Because right now it's really hard to build new relationships from scratch. So, yeah, it's been about how do I continue to cultivate relationships I already have, and sometimes that does lead to new relationships. But yeah, Facebook groups are really helpful. Instagram is really helpful. So those are the two most important things I have been doing lately. And cold e-mails. They are old-school, but cold e-mails, being, like, hey, I saw this thing that you did. I have a couple of questions. Could we grab coffee over Zoom? Blah, blah, blah.

>> L.J.: That's great advice. I have been struggling in our new reality. I would also say don't forget to check out Emerging Arts Leaders of LA—that's the organization Michaela works with. Also, too, I wanted to throw out there that see if there are any professional organizations that fits your—the type of art that you do. I am a dramaturg, so I am member of the literary—of Americas association. And I have found that within that professional organization, there have been grant opportunities. They also have things like how much to charge, contract samples, these kinds of things. So I look forward to going to the conference and I have met a lot of people through their Facebook page. So getting specific about professional organizations that might be, like, specific to your area of artistry, that's another good way to find community we also have another question. Oh, here, I will put it up here. Any best practices for networking/building further relationships with professors and

former employers? I always feel weird talking to them about non-class things especially afterwards. Ooh same.

>> MICHAELA: Yeah, so I feel like I have pretty good relationships with past employers minus the one that fired me and past professors. And I think it is what was the most challenging part for me was being able to show up as a new person because obviously someone that knew me when I was 19, I'm a much different person now. I'm almost 26. So recognizing that they, I think the hard part was recognizing they saw me when I was not at the same level I'm at now, and recognizing that they probably still want to work with me. And again, it's always just about reminding myself that people probably like me and they want to work with me and they are interested and especially past employers and past professors because they help teach you and they help you get here.

And so even if it's just like recognizing that and again just showing up and supporting them as well. And so my past employers I still try to go to their shows as often as possible. Past professors if they are working on something, I try to go to that show or like it or share it or whatever, and it's just like any other relationship. And especially once you have graduated or moved onto a different job, that authority disconnect isn't necessarily there anymore. Obviously there's still someone that's a little older, wiser, established in their career, is to you still want to have that level of respect, but knowing that you are growing, too, and they were part of that journey and you can keep them part of that journey. Especially if they are doing work that you are still interested in. I was a producer's assistant for two years and I needed to move on because I just needed a different challenge in my career. And she knew that, and we had a great relationship. And we ended on really solid terms because she knew it was time for me to move on. We are still in touch. I send her e-mails and we meet for coffee and I ask her for advice. "Hey, you know more about my background story, I have some questions. Could you help me answer them?" Continuing that relationship of, like, mentorship is probably the easiest way to stay in touch with those people.

>> L.J.: I think that is so important. Once you are graduated out of your program, your professors are now just really valuable resources for letters of recommendation—this is assuming that you left a good impression, right. And the same with former employers, not necessarily professors for those of us who didn't go the traditional education track. But letters of recommendation, they can help you find new jobs and new career opportunities. In my case, building an arts organization, I actually have a few of my—two of my former professors on my Advisory Board because they have always given me, they gave me great advice while I was in my Master's program and I just got to continue to get good advice from them and also on the other side haven't been a teacher and haven't taught at University level. You just expect your students to reach out to you and contact you after you are finished. It's kind of part of the job—it's a fun part of the job. You get to see how you impacted people. I used to teach 8th grade. I don't want to age myself, but I used to teach 8th grade theatre. And the other day, one of my former students found me on LinkedIn.

Mind was blown but I was happy to see them and hear from them and know what they are up to and if they needed anything, I would be happy to engage. Don't be afraid. There's nothing to it but to do it.

We have a few more questions. Some people were wanting to know if you will look at their page and give them impressions. We don't know if Michaela will have time for that, but you can always put your handle in the chat and if she can, she will. For a panel that was wanting to know how can one get over the feeling of being—how can one get over feeling too old to build a social media platform/online presence?

>> MICHAELA: I try to remind myself that the rules aren't real. Like, these social constructs aren't real. Especially when it comes to social media, like, TikTok, for example, that I mentioned earlier, most people are saying they are too old for TikTok. Where is this law that if I'm 25 and on TikTok, someone's going to come to my house and steal my phone? And I think it is just again about we put so much pressure on ourselves to show up on social media or to follow these rules that we think is this specifically for social media. And I think, you know, you are not too old to build a social media platform. Honestly, like, just do it and put yourself out there. And it's really hard to put yourself out there, especially in social media because when you just get started, it feels like you are screaming into the void. But eventually people will start to respond back. I think the biggest thing about networking and community-building and people forget about this with social media is that these are long-term things. They take a lot of time, and they take a lot of patience. And so this relationship that I have with my professors has been seven years in the making since I started college. And these relationships that I have had with the person that I mentioned earlier that I co-produced a show with, that's a four-year relationship we have been building. It takes time and that's okay because you are going to grow and you are going to learn and you are going to start to learn what you want to do in this community. And that also might change. When I first started in LA theatre, I thought I wanted to be a stage manager and then I realized I much prefer working in an organizational level. And now I like working with arts service organizations. And so, but those past relationships when I was a stage manager don't just go away and they don't just stop counting. So I think it's just patience and continuing to show up even when you don't want to, because someone might appreciate it that you did, anyway.

>> L.J.: Yes. And just know that there will be a learning curve, too. Don't be intimidated by the learning curve. You may not get it overnight, but like Michaela just said, patience is so important. Yeah, it's just one step at a time, but follow your instincts. If you feel that your project, your organization, you as an individual artist, if you feel like you would benefit from a social media presence, then go for it and invest the time and the energy in creating it, because people may tell you that you are too old for it or it's a waste of time. But they will be sadly mistaken. It's just the way, the direction that we are all going. When I think of the accounts that I follow, there's no age limit on the people I follow. I follow Beyonce, but I follow Beyonce's mom, too. And her IG is just as interesting if not more so. Yeah, there are

people of all ages on social media. Definitely get comfortable.

I think that's all of our questions for today. Thank you so much, Michaela, for spending time with us today, giving us great advice and resources and nuggets. I will try to remember to put them all on the Padlet. Don't forget we are going to the unofficial Facebook group for followback Friday. So you can drop everything there.

And please make sure that you join us next week. Next week's topic is What's Your Budget? Because as you build these strategic partnerships, develop this community and develop these networks in order to make your art, a lot of people the first question is going to be, well, "what's your budget?" And so you are not going to be answer that question unless you know exactly what goes into creating a budget. I know for me, I'm filling out grant applications all weekend and I almost wish I would have scheduled this panel for today because I could use some help. But I am going to take my experience and bring it with me next week and we will discuss.

So thank you all so much for joining us. And I will see all of our participants next week. And thank you very much, Michaela.

>> MICHAELA: Thank you.