

Introduction:

Welcome to the Alice Paul center podcast series, bringing you the latest in gender, sexuality and queer scholarship and practice.

Maria: I am Maria Murphy, interim associate director of the Alice Paul Center and today I am joined by the Alice Paul Center's first-ever professor practice Roz Lee. Currently, Roz serves as Vice President of Strategy and Programs at the Ms. Foundation for Women where she leads efforts to invest in and strengthen the capacity of women-led movements particularly by women and girls of color to advance meaningful, social, political and economic changes in the lives of all women and girls. As Director of Social Justice Initiatives at the Arcus Foundation, she designed and implemented innovative global and domestic philanthropic approaches to advancing strategies at the intersection of race gender sexual orientation and gender identity. She helped develop the global Trans Initiative, a groundbreaking twenty-million-dollar multi-year endeavor to improve the lives of transgender people. Roz was a founding co-chair of the out in the South Initiative, a five-year project with the goal of leveraging sixty million dollars in support of LGBTQ communities in the southern United States. She served on the Steering Committees of Grantmakers for southern progress. She's a former board member of ABFE, a funder affinity group that promotes effective and responsive philanthropy in black communities. Roz volunteers for numerous organizations committed to advancing racial equality, gender justice and LGBTQ equality. She lives with her spouse and daughter in New York City. Roz has dedicated her career to advancing racial, gender, economic and LGBTQ justice through philanthropy community organizing, legislative advocacy and popular education. She is a social justice leader working both at the community organizing level and within much larger scale nonprofit and philanthropic organizations. I'm honored to be speaking with her today about some of her life's work.

Roz: It's great to be here with you, Maria.

Interview:

Maria: I want to ask you about to try and synthesize some of a very long career of work, but I know that you've worked at the intersection of racial, economic and LGBT social justice within institutional structures and within, or as part of grassroots community organizing. Your advocacy, your organizing is span legislative and governing bodies, but you've also demonstrated again and again how social change is effected through community work, a bottom up rather than top-down strategy, or what you described as "a fringe to center approach" that really drives change. Can you talk about this organizing principle and how it's impacted the work that you've done.

Roz: Sure. I became interested in social change, community organizing, making it a difference, in terms of advancing equality and promoting justice when I was in high school. Toward the

end of my high school years and once I got to college. I was, I'm of an age that there was a lot of organizing going on in my college campus, particularly around divesting and apartheid and changing society for the better in South Africa. And so, I was taking classes with South African students who were also part of the African National Congress and I was really inspired by them. They were making incredible change in their own country and they were on this campus to get all that they could from the education in the U.S. to take it back to South Africa to help make their country better. So, I was inspired by that, me and other students on our campus were inspired by that and we led a campaign with their support, that gave us tools, they really teamed up with us. We want our campaign on campus to get our own campus to divest from the South African government and that was the start of my love for community organizing and social change work all kinds of different tools and practices because I knew that you could affect change.

Maria: That's amazing to hear. Here at Penn, there are so many, I mean, Penn students are really at the forefront of agitating for the university to divest right now from fossil fuels and also to kind of pay attention to wellness and mental health in a real way. So, I'm very much interested to hear a little bit more about hitting the pavement, ground-level work. How those techniques, if you can speak specifically to some of those techniques and tactics, that you learned in that situation and have brought forward into your current, you know, activist practice?

Roz: Sure. So, I am and I will be forever an activist. So, in my personal life, I'm active around a variety of issues that really are important to me and effect the people around me: family and, you know, my own community. But you asked me earlier about kind of "fringe to center", you know, approach and for me, it really... I gave the example of the college campus campaign when I was just, when I was still in my teens. Because that was what moved me to join, was because if there was an opportunity where there was a mass of people whose lives were impacted on the daily by injustice, who also had the solutions, who were invested in their country, invested in the future and mobilizing themselves to affect change and that, to me, is what I talked about in present day when I'm teaching. So, I moved from doing the organizing as my career to, doing whatever I could to help people be able to do that for themselves. Right. So, before philanthropy, I was a teacher, I was a trainer, I was a facilitator, equipping people with the knowledge and expertise to fight on their own behalf. And the "fringe the center", for me, is really linked to the idea that people are at the margins or marginalized because they choose to be people are pushed to the margins. No one chooses to not have what they need. No one chooses to be disenfranchised from a society. But, a society can push you to that place and just as a society can push you to that place, you can move and push yourself in that society to center you. So, that's really my philosophy. It's not just my philosophy. It's what I learned through teachers who came before me, educators who came before me, that if there are margins that the margins are not good for any of us, and if there are solutions that the people, who are most equipped to help us advance those solutions, are the ones who should then be at the center.

Maria: What are some of the starting points, you know, for folks who are trying to advocate for themselves and organize? What are some of the building blocks in your past teaching and facilitating experience that you bring to the table to help get that work going?

Roz: Well, it's really being on a college campus, again, which is great. I love being here and I love the energy and just being surrounded by so many different types of people. When it brings me back to when I was in college and I was also learning, so, in addition to the, you know, being out there on the frontlines, I was also in the classroom, soaking up everything that I could soak up. One of the educators that had a huge influence on me was Paolo Ferrari, a Brazilian educator. He wrote a book that's stayed on my shelf my entire adult life, called *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and the idea that of popular education. So, when you know a lot of the tools that I'm talking about really relate to participatory practice: putting people at the center or recognizing that we all have knowledge, and that we can apply that knowledge in many different regards but also to community change. So, some of the tactics that and tools that I've used over the years have really been taught, so I've been trained in these practices. So, let me not take credit for what precedes me, but really being in dialogue with people to understand what their hopes dreams and desires are and that's not pie in the sky. You really do need to understand what would make a person's life better and often that means what makes the community around them better. Because most people are not operating from the place of if life is improved for me individually, then, I'm good to go. I mean, that is possible. I mean, we live in a society that we're pushed to think as individuals. But if we are going to be at our happiest and most equipped, we ideally want to be in relation to others. So, Ferraris practice is around acknowledging that the teacher and the student, both have knowledge and both have experience that they bring to the table. And that is more of a horizontal relationship to versus a vertical one, where the teacher has all the knowledge and the student is just absorber of knowledge and information. So, taking that into community organizing practice or mobilization or any kind of advocacy, from legislative advocacy to grassroots advocacy to grasped tops advocacy, but recognizing that the people who are most impacted by problems, also are the ones who are experts in the solutions.

Maria: Absolutely.

Roz: And that's a driver and so some of those solutions may not be obvious. They may involve arts and media and culture work to help people understand the problem or be moved to show some compassion or recognize that there might be an inequity present. It could involve political action. Right. It couldn't... I was just reading a friend's social media post today about what has happened, where we could be in a state of war and people are not in the streets. Right. Like people are just not protesting every day like they did when Americans became uncomfortable with all the loss in the Vietnam War. But that we could be in a place where we all question and suffer in silence instead of coming out publicly and whether it's consoling or grabbing each other up, but objecting to something that when you think about the century we're in. We shouldn't be in favor of. We should not be in favor of the loss of life because we're not willing to be in dialogue with each other.

Maria: It makes me think about or what you're saying brings to mind like this sustained work in the street. So, you know, for example, like in Philly recently, just last week, Soleimani was assassinated, you know, there was one day of protest, you know, at City Hall. And the next day there was nothing organized. And I want to ask you because you have, I'm jumping ahead a little bit, because you had such a long career and have obviously had to kind of really call together so much sustaining power to continue this type of work, from community organizing and at this, you know, much broader scale of philanthropic work. How do you kind of either personally or in organizations that you work with work toward more sustainable action? You know, I was really impacted by, you know, the one day everyone's there at City Hall in the Streets, doing kind of making your voices, heart-hurt to speak. And the next day there was nothing, and of course you know, other things are being organized. But it's not the day-to-day show of protest in the streets that perhaps would register a different kind of change, a more impactful one.

Roz: Right. Well, I know, you know, it is cliched as it sounds, social change of this type: progressive social change, is a long haul.

Maria: Right.

Roz: I have been around for a while, although I'm still very young too, if anybody who's listening to this podcast. I believe that I've witnessed change.

Maria: Right.

Roz: So, I'm someone who grew up in the 70s. My parents lived in neighbor(labor). You know, themselves were became neighbor(labor) activists through their own unions. My family members were all, you know, black power, power to the people. And it was a beautiful time to be growing up. And I didn't know any queer people. Right, like there were no queer people or anything I ever about LGBT folks wasn't good at all. Here I am, in 2020, identifying as a black lesbian feminist, a leader in my own family and engaged in all kinds of social change movements, now having an opportunity to teach a class, working at the Ms. Foundation for women. And so, if I were to sit here and tell you that I haven't witnessed any change over the course of my own life, then that would not be a true story. And so, that is really a part of the personal sustainability and it also becomes a part of the movement sustainability. You will hear activists talk all the time about what a friend of mine calls, what your purpose is and then what your joy is. And if we're moving toward a vision of a society that is more beautiful than the one that we have now, then we have to imagine and practice that beauty on the way toward it. And I see and I get a chance to support organizations that do that, that sometimes need to be reminded to celebrate the work that they're doing. But more and more are taking it upon themselves to celebrate the work that they're doing. And more and more saying, this is what I do, there are these five things that need to happen to advance this issue to get the change that we want. But this is our part of it. And our collaborators, this is their part of it, or let's find the collaborator,

that can do this other part. Earlier, we were talking about tools and I'm about arts and culture that don't always get the kind of respect that they deserve in changing people's mind. You can have mobilization when you do have people out in the streets. But, there is something that happens to the next day where there are other actions that are less visible that are happening. So, even in those mobilizations, there are organizations and leaders asking people to do the next thing and it helps people like me, who then are able to do something every day. I have come to the place of real just placing a lot more value on the storytelling, the narrative, the stepping away from the assumptions that people do understand with the issues are. And stepping away from the belief that everyone believes that change can happen. Sometimes it really is about giving people examples of change that has happened and letting that be the model forward, for what can I take from that, what are the things that happened in that campaign, or in that action, or in that sustained set of actions that can help me do something in this present time. Not duplicate it, but take from what, from it, what you can use and then also be very open to the fact that every social change movement in the history of the world has added new elements to it. So, it had you have to be open to new ideas, you have to be open to new opportunities and I think we're in a time where we are witnessing some of those innovations and rather than debating the value of them, accepting that they're connecting with people.

Maria: Yeah, I want to ask you more about this kind of like a popular education, as this, it sounds like from what you're describing that crafting a narrative or like cultivating some other kind of like cultural work, can be a way of really making some of these social justice issues accessible. So, I'm wondering can you talk about I know, I think it was with our **custom and a**tion that you were doing more like, I guess, multimedia work things. I wondered if you could talk about how that connects with popular education or perhaps some of your experiences.

Roz: So, for some of the work that we got to do a lot of experimentation when I was at the Arcus Foundation, maybe, a lot is an exaggeration. But some, it was a significant amount, in all ways through partnerships. Because it wasn't our expertise, film or media, but we put one project that I got to be part of and helped develop. It was a partnership with the Sundance Film Institute and our focus, as a foundation that, was focused on LGBT social justice and equity was to focus on those populations to a global lens. Because it was a global foundation and we knew that some of the stories. In some of the places in the world, where the conditions were the harshest for people who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex were also the places where people had the least access to accurate information about who the communities were, what their...what identity, what are those identities met. Because I'm hesitant, I almost said what the problems or concerns were, but really what we're talking about is how we humanize identities. Right, and so, for that, that project, it was really to be able to lift up some of those stories to support the development of those stories, in the dissemination of those stories. So, the project excitingly supported some film, but it also supported other forms of digital media, some of which was completely experimental, who knew what might happen with it, but that's where society was moving, and continues to move, and kind of fast forward doing that project. It's now been, you know, that was like four or five years ago that we did that project and there's some of those films made it into the world and had a huge impact. Right. But

films themselves, you can't predict how they'll circulate. So, our, most of our resources were really focused on not necessarily creating the film, but once those products were ready to support dissemination and outreach strategies, so that they could get to people. Not every film is going to be in theaters all across the country, so those strategies were really about helping organizations, community, activists and leaders tell the stories in the places where they felt it was going to make a difference, whether it was in the US, in a particular State, or in the city, or if it was in another country and on another continent, where the stories could be used in the middle of a village where something could, or transmit it through... because everywhere in the world, people have access to mobile technology. So, we know that, there are platforms and I think about my daughter who is 14 and her friends who are very concerned with climate change, and they had so much information about not only the issues, cuz they're in school, so they're learning, but they knew the activists were and the young activists, like the kids like them. They knew all those folks way before it was in any newspaper in the US, on any broadcast in the US. I remember, my daughter telling me. She's like, yeah, I've known about that for a really long time. And imagine if some of us adults.

Maria: Right!

Roz: Asked our kids, from the Paulo Ferreira place, what do you already know about this versus let me tell you.

Maria: Right. Your commentary about travel and sort of like the international scope of some of your projects. I wanted to ask you specifically about the global **trans-initiative**, which I mentioned in the intro, is a huge project 20 million dollars multi-year. And I really want to ask you about the goals of the project, but also some of the nuts and bolts of how this project came to be. I know you were involved in a working group, possibly in Berlin, Istanbul, maybe some other places. So, this was truly like a global coming together to put forward this initiative, so I wondered if you could both talk about the goals of the project, but also some of that nitty-gritty of how something that large-scale comes to be.

Roz: Sure. I mean, I will say, the first thing I need to say, and I say with tremendous humility is that, it was very activist driven.

Maria: Right.

Roz: It was driven by trans-leaders from across the world who rightly noted that they were not receiving resources to act in their own behalf. Sometimes you find when there's an issue, or there's a population that hasn't had access to resources from philanthropy. That philanthropy can just, sometimes, be a culprit. Sprouting money around to where it thinks the money should go versus looking directly at the people who have been asking you for money and you know what the work that they're already doing.

Maria: Right.

Roz: But not necessarily having to do it all for free. And so, that an initiative really grew out of years of conversations among activists and in philanthropic organizations, not just the Arcus Foundation, about how we could do better at the foundation while I was there. Our giving was very small to work that was led by and for transgender communities and we didn't do that on purpose. We discovered that we were supporting a lot of LGBT work but the "T" was being dropped. So, that was the realness of it, and so how could we how could we change that. So, that was really a group effort and it became a partnership between trans activists from around the world and philanthropic institutions who were committed to transgender communities. And it wasn't just about giving money to organizations to do the work, although that was a critical component, because filling out the PIA is about distributing resources, but also recognizing that there needed to be some narrative change because we were in societies where people did not understand transgender identity. And because they didn't understand it, they feared it and they committed acts of violence against transgender people, simply because they were transgender. And so, it had to be an initiative that both got resources to activists, but then also helped people understand transgender identity and then, also equipped philanthropy, itself, to be able to better support transgender communities. And not just a handful of foundations that were comfortable and felt equipped to support those communities.

Maria: I wouldn't ask you, given that you have done a lot of work in different avenues and, the kind of like private philanthropic work has in some ways different or even maybe fewer limitations than like the public sector. The way that you talked about your background, your familial background and labor and what I imagine might be a commitment to some sort of public provisions. Like how do you negotiate those different worlds to continue some of this work and that, you know, obviously there has been a need. Because sort of governmental or broader sort of public support has left so many communities behind, for like, lack of a more nuanced, historical trajectory there. But, you know, I'm just really curious to hear, given your experience in these different sectors, what do you see going forward? Like, obviously, there still is a need for sort of this larger scale philanthropic work to do some of these distributions when social programming doesn't provide such opportunities. Is there a world that we can imagine where that shifts where it changes? Is that too optimistic?

Roz: Well, I have a couple thoughts about that. My pay job is to... I work in organized philanthropy, so I've worked for philanthropic institutions from private ones to public charities, to community foundations for more than 15 years. And it wasn't my plan to be in philanthropy, but somehow I got here. And so, when I got here, I said, "let me keep being organized to organize resources for those who have the least access to resources". So, when we're talking about transgender communities, or LGBT communities of color, or women of color, you know, organizations led by women and girls of color who are doing work through a feminist lens. Those are... That's the kind of work I'm gonna be doing. If there's any other kind of philanthropy that you want me to do, I'm gonna say I'm not the right person for that. Because

this is what I do. But philanthropy itself really belongs to the people and the people give more than any philanthropic institution would ever be able to give. Individuals give more money. And the U.S. is filled with philanthropist. If you define philanthropy that way, then all of us are giving in some in some shape or form. But a lot of people are giving money whether it's the \$1 contribution or what, or if they're able to give millions. Then, we have resources that we really should be taking control of as a society and those are the resources that our government manages. They are also coming from the people.

Maria: Right.

Roz: Right, they are our dollars and we shouldn't be giving up that control to people who are not acting in the best interest of the people and that's all the people. We don't get to pick: I only want to help these people over here because we're a society. That's bound together. And when some people are not doing well, you can try to make a case for yourself and that it's. But, I'm OK because I'm doing well.

Maria: Right.

Roz: But that's not the...that's not my vision for the world. Even for people who are far farther apart from me, in terms of the kind of change they see, or the vision that they have for the world, I still consider myself bound to that. Right. So, we are bound together. We're gonna have to figure out how to struggle forward together. We're all not planning to go anywhere else. Right. There's, at this time in place, there's no other planet for some of us to go to and some of us stay here. So, we're gonna have to figure out to how to sort it out. We're eventually going to have move past the conversation about whether or not climate change is real. But, we all do have people who are coming up behind us and a lot of people are driving this conversation: their parents, their guardians of others. And we have some, we should feel a sense of responsibility and obligation to them. And if we don't, they're gonna take the charge anyway.

Maria: Yes.

Roz: Right, and push us aside and say “we're gonna, you know, I'm sorry. But we're gonna have to take care of this business right now. Because we're gonna continue to live on this planet.” And we're seeing that.

Maria: Yes.

Roz: We're actually seeing that play out now. And so, I think when I think about philanthropy, I think about what are our government resources and I'm right now talking in a U.S. context.

Maria: Sure.

Roz: What are the philanthropic institutions that are committed to social, supporting social change, because many philanthropic institutions are supporting very good causes or interesting causes but not necessarily social change or social justice causes. That's the majority of organized philanthropy is not supporting social justice related work. Then, what are our service institutions doing because and how are we making sure that what they're doing is mapped most to the needs. Because we will always need to provide some level of service to people in the absence of solving all of these problems. People will need help and so let's make sure that we have all the right systems working for all people. And then, it will require and this is probably the closest I'll come to a controversial statement. At least today, when you think people, some people have to give something up. When you are in a reality where some people have so much and overwhelmingly so and too many people have not enough and overwhelmingly so, then something has to give. And if you believe in that change, you're going to have to give some a bit up and it's not just money, it's power, it's control and control over other people's life without any interest in the betterment of all of our lives. We, my family, our little family: me, my partner Beverly and our daughter Stella. We are givers, you know, we are not millionaires or billionaires and we're not worried about being that. We want to give more than our fair share. Right. And the way that you know that is you feel some change in your own life. If I am able to do every single thing that I want, to go in the multi vacations, to get my almond milk cappuccino every other day, then I'm not giving enough.

Maria: I mean, I totally get what you're saying about the exchange being like. You know, some type of sacrifice. And I also think that doesn't necessarily negate or contradict like, I mean, like I'm a real sort of "bread and roses" socialist deep-down, so like welcome, like a dialogue about sacrifice, well, also like being invested in retaining, like, public pleasures.

Roz: Yes.

Maria: You know, as like actually really wonderful replacements, for some of these other types of conveniences which I also think, you know, there's so much discussion sometimes from, I guess, I'll just venture to say the right, but also like very centrist liberals about sort of the the unwillingness to give up. Because there's less of an understanding of what's to be gained, which sort of like comes from this more, like a communal perspective, that you were putting forward when we first started talking.

Roz: Yes. You know, and I think that, for me, I'm also kind of recognizing that there is many of us have some degree of privilege and so I'm acknowledging some of my own privilege around some of the choices that I get to make. And I'm not a big person on, you know, sacrifice yourself. Just you know, I don't promote that. I meet people where they are and hope that we can see through something together. And so, it's, the talking about the sacrifice really was, for me, more acknowledging that I do have something to give. And I have probably from multiple platforms something to contribute to society or give back to society. So, that is a driving force and, as I said earlier, I believe in joy, I believe in pleasure and I don't believe in trying to be all

things to all people and so I'm not aiming for perfection. But I am trying to do, as I say to my kid, the best that I can and you talked to earlier, Maria, about, you know, that kind of spectrum: people put themselves on the political spectrum, this is where I am, I'm left leaning a moderate I'm... You know, I'm more conservative, so I'm moving to the right. That people look for their spot where am I in that spectrum. I feel like recently, in recent times, I've really not wanted to label myself or have that conversation with people. Because I think we stop listening to each other based on what the response to the question is. It's not easy. People will label you for yourself of, you know, I have something to say about it. But I'm okay with that.

Maria: True, self-label and it doesn't fit it all.

Roz: It doesn't fit it all. This is me. I'm like "really, it doesn't, if you're doing that, I'm not sure." If they're gonna accept you into that club. But, I do feel like it's been really interesting to have so many conversations with people in and outside of the US whose experiences are so different from mine and we were forced to talk to each other not from political talking points, not from the clever statements that we're all able to make, but really from a values perspective, like really, what do you care about, what do you want for your family, what was the thing that made all the difference for your parents or your people.

Maria: Right.

Roz: Right and those conversations, 9 times out of 10.

Maria: They go so much better.

Roz: They go so much better and there's so much more of an understanding. And sometimes, the biggest change that we can see is just an ounce of compassion for somebody else's.

Maria: And meet the merit as I said earlier, which I think is like a quite a brilliant organizing principle that maybe doesn't get recognized as such I think it really is.

Roz: And it would be cliché if there was more of it actually happening. Right. But because we know that there's such limited demonstration of compassion. I was on the train, a subway yesterday. And sitting across from me with somebody who was wearing a hat that said no fucks to give. And I get it, yeah, I totally get it. I actually know what that feels like to be in that frame of mind. And yet, even if we had the same perspectives on things, it hit me the way of care are we accessible and are we approachable to each other. Right. And you know, that's something and I'm not putting that forward as a judgment of this person who I didn't even know this person. But I am putting it forth of like what I am seeing, happening where we're not even trying to communicate with each other. You know, we're kind of putting up, right up front a font of "don't approach me, unless you're down with me", but I don't even know what you're down for. So, I can't. We can't even get there. and I, and certainly that has been promoted by the current leadership in the Oval Office.

Maria: Right.

Roz: That, you know, I don't care what you think, I don't care what you have to say, I don't care what you value, I don't want to hear it and if I hear one thing that doesn't hit me the right way, then I'm gonna attack you. Right. And what we're seeing in society is some taking up of that of "don't come near me. I don't know where you're coming from, I'm gonna attack you before you attack me".

Maria: Yeah, it's a sort of like mode of governance, like just a fear basically.

Roz: Right.

Maria: In many ways.

Roz: Because...I guess like what, I'm not doing the best job of explaining, is that I don't want. That's not how I want to participate in society, I don't want to processes. But if I say, it's not true of who I am to say that I have no fucks to give.

Maria: Obviously.

Roz: And what I do feel is, without knowing you, I care about you. Right. I care about people. I became an organizer and I stayed an organizer, because I care about people. And people are not causes, people are people.

Maria: It seems to me like just what you're describing and I will absolutely be transcribing these sentences for several interactions in the future. But like, to me, it just sounds, what you described, it's like, this the position to meet people where they're but to communicate and these more like solidarity terms. Right. Like about asking, you know, "what made all the difference in, for your parents, or your family, or your community, or your people, or you know whatever the frame is, which just seems simple but also it's really sort of blowing my mind right now to think about, as just you know, to move in that direction.

Roz: Well, times does give you a little bit of that and that's...I've learned some lessons over the years. I still have so many more lessons to learn. But I honor the ones that I have learned in and even when I talk about my family and, you know, and where my family may have come from. You know, I'm the oldest daughter of parents who were teenagers when I was born. They had family that supported them, that helped them find the time and space so that they could actually pursue their dreams. My mom became a chemistry major and went to college when I was eleven years old and I had the experience of her taking an active linguistics elective and showing me what she was learning that made me fall in love with language and opened the door for me to become an English major when I was in college, which was the perfect thing for me to be doing. And now, looking back at having the kind of unexpected career that I have and

what all of those things meant was that there was a tremendous amount of generosity in our lives. There was a tremendous amount of I talked a lot about not making assumptions. Because if there were assumptions, then there would have been no opportunity for my parents. Because they would have just been pushed to the margins and forced to stay there. But they didn't see themselves as that and instead of just getting to a particular place in life and saying "well, we've achieved this and let's let go of our past in our history". They taught me and my siblings and other people around them that it meant you throw it back into the pool and that's how they became activists in their unions and those, and that, impacted me and that will impact all of the young people who come into contact with me and the not so young people that come into contact with me. So, I see a lot of what is true about me as a continuum and that we have the ability to add more people to that ring, that continuum, that circle. And if you think about it as a circle, then there's no question that we will win. You think about, like if you think about circles and you think about universes and galaxies and I'm totally a Trekkie. That's an expansion. That's not a collapsing onto yourself, vision of the world.

Maria: the Trekkie politics. This spring, you're teaching a class that you've developed, called Money, Power, Respect, which is a seminar about how to apply a race gender and LGBTQ lens to support contemporary social justice movements in the U.S. and globally including black lives matter, hashtag MeToo, transgender equality and disability justice. And in the course description, you seem to really prioritize exploring, but also practically applying intersectionality as a theoretical framework to support social justice organizations and leaders and to find social change. So, I'm wondering you know what are you looking forward to about being in the classroom. What are the takeaways? What are you hoping that your students, you've already said you are going to certainly be bringing in their experiences and their own knowledge into the classroom, but what are you in line with that also hoping to share.

Roz: Absolutely. Well, I'm very excited about the class. But I will say I got some really good advice from some of the other professors here. And they said to me they said you know the students here, they take courses all the time, they're assigned books, they're assigned all of these all of this reading and certainly they're gonna read some of the stuff you've put in the syllabus. But, they also really want to hear from you, they really want to have an experience that is not the everyday experience that they haven't in at the university. I mean, I'm sure they have great Experiences, no disrespect to any other instructors. But, the whole idea of being a professor of practice is I'm practicing every day and then I come to the classroom and we spend those three hours together and we get to practice some things together, we get to talk about some things, I'm bringing some of my activist friends to the classroom who can talk to you about what's really happening in the moment, how they're doing things. Intersectionality comes leaps off the page and becomes not just a theory but what is it what how is it in practice. So, that's what's gonna happen in our classroom, we're gonna have some provocative conversations. Those the provocations are not only gonna come from me. I'm imagining they're gonna come From students, there will be...People will be able to ask any kind of question that they want, I don't have to promise that I will have the answer to that question and I will absolutely promise that sometimes I'm going to turn that question around so that we all try to engage it together.

There's also going to be some poetry, there's gonna be some music. The course is called Money, Power Respect, and if anybody listening to this podcast loves hip-hop, they know that's a **lock jam**. Hip-hop jam: money, power and respect. So, that's where the title comes from. So, that's gonna show up in the classroom as well. Because it's a class, there's going to be a couple of assignments. But I can guarantee you that they will be great and I think I wanna underscore the moving from the theory to the practice. It's really, it's really helpful to have understandings of some theories and some practices that you may not know a lot about, or maybe are being introduced to. And at the same time, it's also really helpful to be talking to practitioners, people who are not...we're not PhDs, we're just doing as you know them. We're just doing the damn thing.

Maria: Yeah.

Roz: Yes. That's what's happening. That's what's up and that's what the classroom is gonna be like. I had a lot of fun thinking about this course because I love to teach. My other degree is in education. All right. So, I just practice it in my everyday life. You know, I think we talked a little bit about popular education. So, I think about the classroom is that as well and not everybody needs to be the same kind of teacher. So, you know, I tell you I'm interesting kind of teacher.

Maria: Yeah.

Roz: So, it'll be fun and they'll be like you're gonna have to think about some things and where you land on somethings. But, there's no, you know, I've been talking a bit about where people politically identify whether or not they consider themselves to be moderates or liberals or conservatives. We're gonna kind of have to set that aside a little bit in the classroom. Because that stops the conversation, when you get to just push yourself into a "this is my position", then you're not probing, you're not questioning, you're not debating and, ultimately, you're not listening to anybody else but yourself. And so, I am committed to be listening to my students. Right. And I feel like I'm gonna really be interested in what they have to say to me.

Maria: I was really excited to see your syllabus and to see that there's so much, there's just so many different methods and literatures and art forms that you're bringing into the classroom. So now I have to ask you what Nina Simone are you going to be listening to? Do you have ideas of what you'll be assigning?

Roz: Yeah, I do have some ideas and actually I'm a vinyl record collector. So, I have quite a lot vinyl collection and I have my own turntable. So, it's actually not portable. But, I also have lots of other ways to play some of the music. You asked me a question. Yeah, Nina you asked me about. Nina will definitely be heard in the classroom. But I actually have not decided what's Nina, cuz it's so hard. I was just listening this weekend to a couple of new a recent addition to my vinyl collection which is an album called *Nina in Concert*. *Nina Simone in Concert* and it's the album that has her singing Mississippi goddam as well as *Pirate Jenny*, which is another

favorite song of mine. A plain gold ring which is not a political song, but it's a one that I really love.

Maria: I want to close off just by asking you what you initially introduced when we were discussing, when you were talking about knowing what your purpose is and knowing what your joy is? So, I wondered if I could, if you would indulge me, if you could talk about what your purpose is and what your joy is?

Roz: Well, a lot of what I've talked about today has taken me a little bit to completely, a little while to really understand my purpose. But, the simplest thing I can say is that it's absolutely to keep on doing what I'm doing and to do it as authentically as possible without stopping too much to think about what does it all mean. Right. Because for me, I mean, it varies for different people. But when I spend too much time doing that, it makes me feel like I'm being less in the moment and less authentic. And so, if you ask me a question, I'm gonna give you an honest answer to the question, I'm gonna give you my real thinking behind it and I feel really comfortable with that. And I can also do it in writing and so because I'm a writer and I like writing but I'd rather talk to people. And so, I'm gonna keep doing that, I'm going to keep finding ways to teach, and facilitate, and support the work that other people are doing. What I do know about my purpose that I enjoy is really facilitating, helping other people advance and achieve their goals. That gives me a great deal of satisfaction. It doesn't necessarily give me a lot of recognition and so I kind of do like.....One of my favorite novels is Alice Walker's *Meridian* and I relate to a character in the novel who says "I'm the one who supports the leader. I'm there in the movement doing the work. But if the end really kind of being anonymous. All right. But if the leader in front of me should fall down, I am ready to step forward." And that's kind of how I like to operate. My joy is in music, but especially in my family. I have a wonderful family, biological and chosen. But I especially have the sweeties which is what I call my partner Beverly and my daughter Stella. They're the sweeties and the sweeties are everything to me. And I would do anything for them and I think that that's always a really big deal when you know that there's nothing you could imagine that you wouldn't do for them and they are those people for me.

[music]