

Julia Winston:

Take a look around. You'll notice them everywhere. Facilitators, people who guide other people, create connection and make tough things easier. This is Facilitator Forum, where we meet a magical mix of people who offer us insights and inspiration through the stories of their work in the world. I'm your host, Julia Winston. Welcome.

Julia Winston:

Happy New Year, my friends. We're already about three weeks into the New Year, but this is our first episode of 2022. So I wanted to start by sharing my heartfelt hope that you, your friends, and your family are safe, healthy, and even happy as we launch into a New Year. I know we're entering year three of the COVID pandemic, and there's a lot of strife that comes with that. But my wish for all of us is that we are steadily learning to ride these waves of change and uncertainty with more inner peace, and even getting stronger in the process. In that spirit, before we get going with today's guest, let's just take a breath together. Take a nice big inhale, and a deep, full exhale. Starting slow is a valuable takeaway I had from the conversation you're about to hear. I learned a lot from today's guest.

Julia Winston:

Vickie Oldman is a Navajo woman who's recognized nationally as a skilled facilitator, trainer, and speaker. Vickie specializes in culturally relevant approaches to organizational development, and is a founding and managing partner with a national community development consulting firm called Seven Sisters Community Development Group. Vickie has over 23 years of expertise in strategic planning, board development, leadership training, team building, asset building, and executive coaching to native and rural communities. She's also creator and host of the podcast, Real Native Roots: Untold Stories. She also podcasts for the State of New Mexico, the National Council of Urban Indian Health, and the CDC. This conversation with Vickie truly felt like a transmission of native wisdom. I was humbled through many teachable moments, which you'll witness and hopefully grow from as well. I guess humbling moments do tend to happen when you encounter a master like Vickie. So take another breath and away we go.

Julia Winston:

Vickie Oldman, it is a real honor to have you with us today. Hello?

Vickie Oldman:

[foreign language 00:02:38]. Julia, how are you?

Julia Winston:

I'm doing okay. Today's one of those days where there's some tough things happening in the background, and there's some lovely things happening too. So yeah, feeling probably more layers than I usually feel in a given work day. How are you doing today?

Vickie Oldman:

Well, first of all I just want to say [foreign language 00:03:02], beautiful. Thank you for just opening up and sharing where you're at. Whatever you need, let me know. I'm feeling good. I'm feeling also [foreign language 00:03:15], which is beautiful in my language. I'm a Diné woman, a Navajo woman. Earlier I had said, [foreign language 00:03:25], and I wanted to explain that to you a little bit. Basically that means

hello in Western CliffsNotes, and in the Diné language, [foreign language 00:03:35] Navajo language, when we say [foreign language 00:03:39], that really means I see you, Julia. I'm honoring you. I want good things for you. [foreign language 00:03:46]. It's like, "Be well." So given what you shared with me just now, I just say [foreign language 00:03:51] to you again.

Julia Winston:

Thank you, Vickie. I feel seen by you already, and we're already learning some really beautiful parts about you, and what you bring to the world through your language. I'd love to start by asking what are you here to facilitate in the world?

Vickie Oldman:

Before we jump into that, I'd like to actually introduce myself to the listeners because I feel like this piece is important, and facilitation, especially when you had said, "I feel seen." So how I was raised by my elders, my parents, my relatives, they always say you need to stop and make time to connect and witness everyone, to see and hear everyone. I know folks can't see us, but I want to say [foreign language 00:04:39] to everyone. [foreign language 00:04:41] Vickie Oldman [foreign language 00:04:43], and that makes me the woman that I am today. So what I shared with you all are my four clans. So for the Diné, the Navajo people, we honor each other. We recognize who we are by clans. It's very complicated. There are many clans. We're a matriarchal society, so we always introduce our mother's clan first. My first clan in translation is [inaudible 00:05:14] The Forest People.

Vickie Oldman:

My second clan is who I was born for, and that's my father's clan, and that's Mud People. My third clan is on my mother's side, my grandfather on my mother's side, and that is One Who Walks Around. Then my grandfather on my father's side is the last clan, and that's Folding Arm People. Those are my four main clans. Anytime I'm anywhere, I always introduce myself there because you never know if there's another Navajo. What happens is if there's another Diné person, another Navajo person who may have one of those four clans, we automatically know how to acknowledge each other, like, "Oh, hi sister," or, "Hi, grandmother," "Hi, relative." We've already formed, even though I've never met them, but also we use that for going to date or marry. You can't marry anybody of the four clans because they're relational, and these clans are a quick, I always like to say like a biosocial history.

Vickie Oldman:

There's characteristics. They come from different places, and so they mean a lot more than just part of my identity. I just sort of summarize a little bit about who I am, and that really makes me the woman that I am today. I feel like even these clans to some degree, the characteristics of it, has helped me to really build connections and facilitate in indigenous communities, and also non-indigenous communities. So really how folks slow down, like this rhythm of slowing down and connecting, because we can get to the hard stuff, the black and white stuff right away, right? But what really forms relationships is to really slow down, and connect, and learn from one another about who are you? Where are your roots? Where are your people from? Then that I believe creates a really deep, deep connection, which really when you think about facilitation helps to establish trust right away, right?

Julia Winston:

Yes. Wow. You're already teaching us so much just by being who you're being and starting how you started. I agree. As soon as you said it, it's like, "Wait, we don't need to jump straight into the content."

We can connect first. We can connect and acknowledge." So thank you for acknowledging our listeners. I'd love to continue on the path of acknowledging you and the woman you are. You shared about your background in terms tribes, and I'd love to hear more about your upbringing and your story. Where did you grow up, and how has your culture played a role in your life, Vickie? Maybe give us some highlights about what's led you to do the work that you do today.

Vickie Oldman:

All of a sudden I got this rush of emotion because I want people just to honor this pause because I am a makeup, I'm a continuum, of my ancestors far back, right, up to this point where I'm at. Also, my children are a continuum of me going forward. So this moment of time, how I came here really, it got me all emotional because when you said that, visually what happened was I could see little snippets of my childhood, but also hearing stories from my mom and my grandparents, and how they all got to this point, and I'm here. My great, great grandfather actually did the Long Walk. It's like a Trail of Tears, but for the Navajo, for the Diné people. He survived that, right?

Vickie Oldman:

For him to survive that, I would not be here. Right? For my parents to survive boarding school, because they were pulled out, placed in school. My mom was removed from her home, not willingly removed, and placed in a school, she was in Arizona, all the way up to Oregon, right, at nine years old. I mean, can you imagine? That just blows my mind still. So she experienced that. Just giving you snippets, right? And then how my parents met was because of policy that United States have created about, "Well, let's relocate these Indians, and let's get them an education. Let's westernize and let's colonize them." So there was this program where a lot of these [inaudible 00:09:49] they pulled them off. They went to school, and they relocated them in different parts of the United States, in different hubs, Chicago, Phoenix, Seattle, Denver, these major hubs.

Vickie Oldman:

So in these major hubs you will find a lot of native people living there. There are urban Indian centers and just smaller communities. So my parents ironically were placed out in Cleveland, Ohio. I don't know how they found each other, but they did. It was actually because my dad was heading to the YMCA, my mom was leaving the YMCA, and they were at opposite end of the street walking. My dad and his friends saw those two native women across the street. What I heard was he did the Navajo native love call, which is [sh-sh 00:10:38], and then when someone does that you turn and look. So we always joke like, "Oh, if someone does sh-sh, you know you're native." So the rest is history. They met, and so I was born in Cleveland, Ohio. Was not born on the Navajo reservation. However, majority of my life, all of my life, I grew up on the Navajo reservation. I went to res school, public school, product of that, and then found myself wanting to do more work.

Vickie Oldman:

I wanted to help people, and so I found myself in the social service field, became a social worker. I worked direct services, worked for different tribes, worked for my own tribe, and then I had a great job opportunity that led me to New Mexico to do more community development work. It was the first time I've ever worked for a non-native tribe, non-native organization. That just opened my world, opened my eyes, because things were done so differently. I was so used to the nuances of native communities, and how they navigated, and how they did things. That, I feel like... I mean, I feel like I've done facilitation in

a lot of different places, but as I really understand this sort of modality, I realize I've been doing this for a long time.

Vickie Oldman:

I'm the oldest in my family since I've had siblings, and I feel like I still am facilitating these things with family. But that's sort of a quick summary of thinking about honoring all the people before me, and what they've done for me, and what they've survived, and what hardship that they experienced to have me be here at this moment. I have much gratitude for that, and then I hopefully to instill this wisdom and knowledge for my children, and so that they carry that going forward as well.

Julia Winston:

Thank you. I can see the arc that you are drawing for us from before you were born, leading through your life into the place that you are now. When you look at your life in this context, in this bigger context, in this bigger picture, what is it that you feel that you are here to facilitate in the world?

Vickie Oldman:

Yeah, I love that question. Immediately for me, I feel like it's about bridging. I feel like I've always been a person to help bridge connections, resources, and even to bridge differences, and to acknowledge what are these differences, and how do we honor them? I feel like that's my purpose, has always been trying to pull people together and help to figure out how can we move forward collectively. That would be my short answer to that.

Julia Winston:

So what are some of the things that you are bridging through your work at Seven Sisters and through your podcasts?

Vickie Oldman:

I feel that it's really... It's interesting because I feel like how we opened up, and what you had said is sort of what I am trying to do, and that is to help people be witness, to help everyone feel like you do matter. You have something to offer, that everybody has to help with the lift, and also to just put light on folks who feel like they're carrying it all. What does this mean? If this is what it feels like, what else could possibly happen to help you not carry the full load, right? So just helping people to recognize, and be seen, and to honor, and also to shed light on things that maybe they don't really see. Right? I feel like that's sort of our role as facilitators is like, "Oh, I'm curious about what's under here," or, "What would that look like?"

Vickie Oldman:

And to help people expand their thinking, and their thought process, and their beliefs, my goodness, their beliefs, and to even question certain beliefs. Right? I think the other thing in terms of this gift I find myself in when I'm facilitating or whatever, I really deeply to my core listen to my intuition. I feel like that is the foundation of everything that I do, my podcasts, Seven Sisters, when I'm working with a group on site. If I'm not sure, I sometimes just close eyes, take a deep breath, and I just pause. What is my body saying at this moment? And my body's like, "No," or, "Yeah," or, "This way." So I find that that is really what is my foundation in everything that I do. A lot of times when I'm facilitating, I feel like I'm just a channel.

Vickie Oldman:

I feel like that's why I try to listen to my intuition. I feel like spirit is working through me to facilitate space. When the facilitation is over, I sometimes don't remember, and I feel like it's because I'm a medium to do spirit, to do the good work. That's why, like, what do I need to do now? How do I pivot? What should I do here? There's something not happening over here, and then I get the messages. You need to go over there. You need to do this exercise, pull this one out of the other toolbox. So I feel like I'm a conduit in that way, a conduit to make whatever spirit wants me to do at the time. So even this conversation you and I are having, right, I'm in the moment with you. I'm just allowing the information to come through me, and I'm just feeling it, and at the end I don't really remember. Like, what did I say? I don't know if that resonates with you.

Julia Winston:

It resonates so much, even the language you used. I've used that exact language before. When I used to talk about teaching yoga, I would say, "I feel like a portal through which an experience is happening that connects this person to themselves, into source," whatever that may mean for them. For me, I've really done my job if, even if I'm at the front of the room, I've disappeared. I am a conduit through which whatever is meant to come up, comes up. So I feel the same exact way. It resonates deeply.

Vickie Oldman:

Beautiful. [foreign language 00:17:04]. I'm glad to hear that. I always was very intuitive, but I think linear thinking Western way of how I was educated... It's interesting. I felt like they... I don't want to say they, but it felt like the learning was like it has to be ABC, black, white. They take out the intuition. They take out the emotion. They take out the feeling, right? And that's all I've ever known since I grew up is it's about what does this feel like? What do we need to do? Let's be quiet and think about this.

Julia Winston:

And it sounds like that comes back to your tribe, which you said was matriarchal.

Vickie Oldman:

It is matriarchal, but I also feel like it's the people that I'm around, like my grandparents, right, and my relatives. They are so comfortable with silence. I do this a lot in facilitation. This is what I do. I'm like, "Okay, let's just stop, and let's think about this." A pause like that makes a lot of people uncomfortable because they want keep filling. The thing that's important with facilitation is you need to allow some really deep pause for people just to sit with it. What it is I feel that people are afraid to like... that whatever the feeling is coming up, right? Like, "This is uncomfortable. What are we doing?"

Vickie Oldman:

So I find that my relatives... that's why I just always want to honor my relatives that have got me to this point. They've been teaching us how to listen since I was yay high. For us, it's all listening. You listen, you heart listen, and the heart listen to me is like, you can feel it in your bones, right? You get good goosebumps when someone's telling a story, or someone's saying something to just listen and less talking. Less talking, it's all listening. When you do have an opportunity to say something, that it's not been already said. You're not reticulating what someone else said. You're really offering something in addition to what's been on table.

Julia Winston:

I just got goosebumps actually when I was listening to you talking about how it can give you goosebumps to just listen and be with.

Vickie Oldman:

Yeah. It's like when you think about cooking, right? The essentials is... You've got to have salt. That's an essential. You can have all kinds of spices, but if you don't the salt, your dish will be meh. I feel like for facilitation, the core of listening and pausing, it's an essential. It's like salt. I feel like it's rhythm, right? It's rhythm I feel like is important. When working with groups, even working with families or whomever, if I'm connecting with you for the first time, I feel like we were also kind of... I was trying to find your rhythm.

Vickie Oldman:

What's her rhythm? I wanted to be in sync with you, and I know you were wanting to be in sync with me, so you're like, "Okay, let's slow down. Let's start from here," right? So for me, I find that that's important. A lot of times I feel like... and again, part of that is you have to stop, and listen, and feel what your body's saying, and like, "Okay." And I also think vocalize. "Yo, let's slow down. Can we back up a little before we go forward?" What's that saying? To go fast you got to go slow sometimes. I think that's [crosstalk 00:20:40]-

Julia Winston:

Right. Like, go slow to go fast, something like that.

Vickie Oldman:

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Julia Winston:

Yeah, absolutely. It can be hard to go slow. It can be really hard to slow down in our fast paced world. What role do your roots have in helping you slow down, tune into your intuition, and listen more?

Vickie Oldman:

Oh. I feel like I'm going too fast now. When I know that I am, I can tell by certain behaviors or even my thinking, and how my thinking is scattered. Like, "I need to do this." Everything is a priority. When I'm starting to feel that way, then I know I need to go home. When I say go home, I say go back home to the res to be with my dad, to be with relatives, because the pace is so different. It's like everything else beyond is irrelevant. It's like just being out in the lands, like going out in nature when you go hiking, and you're just by yourself. You're really syncing with Mother Nature. That groundness, I feel like that's what my relatives, my parents, my grandparents, that they all taught.

Vickie Oldman:

You need to be mindful about that, and you know when you need to be grounded, and then you go... There's several ways to do that. You go home. You be with family, have ceremony, get back to a rhythm that you need to. Sometimes it means even abruptly you need to just cut off everything and go, right? Sometimes I've done that where I just like, "You know what? I'm going to go take a whirlwind trip to

home." Even if it's just for a day or overnight, that really helps me to just be able to finish through before I need to do whatever.

Julia Winston:

Can you maybe give us some examples of some of the type of group facilitation work that you do, and how do you tune into rhythm in the moment?

Vickie Oldman:

I really believe a lot has to do with how you just start, right? So in a lot of... I'd say 90, 95% of our portfolio, the work that I'm doing, is in indigenous communities with native communities across the country. For example, the first thing to get in rhythm, to sync, to come together, we always, always, 99% of the time, always start with some form of prayer, some form of song, sometimes even smudging. Even with the virtual platform, we've had an elder come, and set the tone, and pray in their language, and will smudge virtually. It's funny because you know how you can smell. Even though it's not there, you can smell, or people will bring their own bundle and smudge their space.

Vickie Oldman:

That to me, if you think about it, slows things down. It calms everybody down. It syncs everybody, right? We're all synced. That's the very beginning, before we even jump into the introductions, before we even like, "What our purpose today is." It's, "Let's ground. Let's sync. Let's do this," and then we gear up. Right? The other thing I think in terms of rhythm, for me what's really important connection. I want to know who Julia is. I'm curious where Julia's roots come from. How did Julia get here, right? So with any group, for me it's important to do lengthy, at the beginning introductions before jumping into the content. I've always known introductions are important. Earlier in my career, I'd say I was like 26, and I was facilitating a group of Navajo women. They were all Navajo speakers. I was late. I was driving fast to get to where they're at, and they had their meeting in a little hogan.

Vickie Oldman:

In Navajo [foreign language 00:24:43] means a home. It was a home, but it was a traditional home. It's like mud and wood in a circular form. Anyway, they were all there. I was late. I rushed in, and we're all sitting there, and then I just jumped right to it. I'm like, "Okay, I'm so sorry I'm late. Da, da, da. Let's get started." Then the elder woman said, "[foreign language 00:25:03]." Oh, and that means my little one, "[foreign language 00:25:06]," meaning wait. Then she says, "We always start with prayer, and then I want everyone to introduce themselves to you." I got so flushed. My face, my ears, got so red because I knew that protocol. I know that, but because I was in my head, and I was like, "Oh my gosh." I was rushing, and ever since then I always try my best to always make sure we do that.

Julia Winston:

I feel humbled having this conversation with you because I'm reflecting back to the beginning of this conversation, of this interview, when I wanted to jump straight into, "What are you here to facilitate?" Actually the whole thing was a slowing down, and the way you did it was so inviting too. I didn't feel shame. I don't feel shame about it. I just feel like it was a teachable learning moment for us to start connecting and getting in tune to each other's rhythm before we even talked about it. And of course, the content is coming through in the conversation anyway. It seems like that tends to be how things go. You're a bridge. So for the 10% of time that you're working with communities who are not indigenous communities, maybe there isn't an established, shared understanding that we're going to start with

prayer, or with a ceremony or ritual of some kind. What are some of the ways that you like to slowly make your way in?

Vickie Oldman:

I still do it. I love that question because whoever sometimes I'm working with, they're like, "I don't know about this group. I don't think they're going to..." I'm like, "Well, they hired me, right? They wanted me here for a reason. This is what I do, and this is the medicine I bring, and I'm bringing it." Part of that I think is also the wisdom of becoming older, and being confident in who we are, and what we do, and what we bring. Right? So when I'm working with non-native groups, particularly when I do, it's usually groups who want to do work or be engaged in our communities. So I'm very adamant about making sure that they understand, they need to feel and experience this too. Because if they're going to do this work in our communities, they're going to have to be prepared to know like that's what's going to happen, right?

Vickie Oldman:

That you're coming to visit. You're coming as a guest, right? So the rules change a little bit. I feel like a lot of our people now, we push back a lot now. Like, "Wait a minute there." So where I'm going with is with non-indigenous groups or larger intermediaries, foundations, banks, whatever, how I ground is like, "Okay, before we get started, everybody just sit comfortably. We're going to do some deep breathing." I'll say, "If you don't want to close your eyes, look down." I give them the posture, and I tell them hold their breath for four seconds, exhale. We'll do a couple of those things. I'll also have them maybe touch their heart and their belly, close their eyes, and I just say, "Connect with yourself. Connect with everybody around. Just remember everybody that you saw on the screen," or when we [inaudible 00:28:14] be in person.

Vickie Oldman:

But I make sure we do something to slow down before we jump in, or, "Let's do a quick circle of why are you happy that you woke up this morning today." Just a quick way to connect and ground before we jump in, and they slow it down. That means, again, this is I think a thing for facilitators to be thinking about, particularly when you're doing groups, is that you've got to have the beginning chunk, especially on the first day to build trust relationships, slow the rhythm, get everybody in sync together before you jump into the content. That's the going slow so you can go fast, so then you jump into the work. People starting to trust each other. They know they can make decisions faster because they understand each other a little bit more than they did when they came in.

Julia Winston:

Yeah. A lot of what I'm hearing you say in addition to just the slowing down and creating space to connect up front is to own it. To own whatever it is that you are bringing as a facilitator, whether it is your culture and your roots that's leading you to want to create the type of space you want to create, or just all the things you've learned and accumulated throughout your life leading up to this point where you can yourself that you're holding the space.

Vickie Oldman:

Yeah. The other thing that, if you notice, I really try to integrate is language. I think language is so important. What I've learned... and even elders have told me this, because sometimes I've brought in a non-native person to co-facilitate or be with me in the space. I remember this wise, wise older

gentleman, he came up to me at the end. He goes, "This is a really good session. The one thing I'm just going to leave with you," he says, "when you bring in somebody, you should at least teach them how to say hello and thank you in our language so that helps them." I felt so much gratitude. That just stuck with me all the way my drive back home. I was like, "How could I not even think about that," right? With that wisdom, there was so... I mean, I still carry that because he's also saying, "I want to connect with her. I want her to be able to connect with me."

Vickie Oldman:

So if it's even a form of just her saying [foreign language 00:30:32], which is hello, or [foreign language 00:30:34], which is thank you, then I know she has some interest. She's connecting with me with language. So I find that language is really important, like the rhythm, right? The language, the listening, the pausing, those are real... You think they seem pretty basic, but they're things that I think a lot of times go out the window, and we forget to do that. So when I'm working with different tribes, I always like to have... I always ask them, "How do I say this in your language?" I always like to surprise them, and I try my hardest to say certain things in their language when I'm facilitating there, or we try to incorporate music in the beginning when we're coming in.

Vickie Oldman:

That's another way of grounding and connecting is playing some of their indigenous music as we're starting, or at break, or at lunch because you're creating this connection, this environment. Talk about rhythm, right? The music also helps with that. Those are some things that I've think about that are important is... I want to just kind of underscore the language piece, because we get so caught up with acronyms and big, big words. Okay. Okay. So I feel like the language piece for me is about level setting so we all feel like we're a united front walking collectively together, right? We're not leaving anyone behind by using elaborate words or whatever.

Julia Winston:

Yeah. Well, in the spirit of shared language, I'd love to learn from you, how can we say thank you in your language, or any other parting message?

Vickie Oldman:

[foreign language 00:32:15] is how you say thank you.

Julia Winston:

[foreign language 00:32:18]?

Vickie Oldman:

[foreign language 00:32:19], very good.

Julia Winston:

[foreign language 00:32:22].

Vickie Oldman:

[foreign language 00:32:22], yes. Beautiful. I guess parting words, I would say... I'm just thinking about what we've been talking about so much, Right? I think it's important for us to honor the people before

us. You, Julia, you also have a story. There are many people before you who've helped you be in this place. So I think honoring that and gratitude, right, but also keeping in mind whatever our role is, and how am I seeding this wisdom so it can continue, the continuum can go forth. I think that I really believe when we do that, it really fills ourselves, and how we want to move forward. I also feel like as we facilitate, the connection is important. Like, how did Julia and I like... Let's ground. Let's connect. I see you as human. I'm human. Let's do that first before we do the good work, right?

Vickie Oldman:

And then just to be mindful about all those other things that I've mentioned about rhythm, and about pace, and about language, those are all important. Making sure people feel witness and feel like whatever their contributing, whatever amount that is, it's all significant. I think where we're at right now in this pandemic, and so much going on, one of the things I always tell people is to just take care of yourselves. Be gentle. Be gentle with yourselves because we beat ourselves up so much with work, as parents, as siblings, or whatever role that we're in, we beat ourselves up so much. So be gentle with yourself. Take care of yourself. Love yourself. Give yourself a break. Give yourself some grace. Yeah, that's what I want to say. That's what's speaking to me right now.

Julia Winston:

Thank you, Vickie. My last question for you is really about taking care of you. If you could have someone else facilitate something for you that would help you feel taken care of, or to make your life feel more easeful, what would you want to be facilitated?

Vickie Oldman:

At this very moment I would say, because I just moved into a new home, I would like a handyman. Can you put that shelf together? Can you put that there? It's basic, right? Honestly, I see myself as a whole person, and what do I need spiritually? Right? What do I need physically? What do I need financially? What do I need relationship wise? If I were to look at that, I would love a beautiful facilitation team that can help nudge in all those areas. Even if it's one little step, because I'm a whole person. I'm not just one element, right? I should say there are all these elements in my life, and it'd be great to have a facilitator in all those categories to help me move forward. Yeah.

Julia Winston:

Vickie, thank you so much. I'd like to say it again in your language, and I'd like to say it correctly so maybe please repeat it so I can say it with you?

Vickie Oldman:

Yes. [foreign language 00:35:37].

Julia Winston:

[foreign language 00:35:37]. Vickie-

Vickie Oldman:

Beautiful.

Julia Winston:

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... [foreign language 00:35:40], thank you so much for sharing your wisdom with our community.

Vickie Oldman:

Thank you. I appreciate it. Thank you for this time. I hope we connect again another time.

Julia Winston:

Me too.

Vickie Oldman:

All right. Take care.

Julia Winston:

I'm taking a deep breath over here to close out and try and end as slowly as we began. I'm so grateful for this conversation with Vickie. I learned so much here. One special thing that I took away from this conversation was the way Vickie integrated her native language throughout the interview. When she started talking about language as a way to level set, I knew exactly what she meant, especially when she mentioned acronyms and fancy language. When I worked in finance, I suffered from major imposter syndrome for many reasons, one of which was the language barrier. There were a lot of acronyms, business jargon, and sports analogies. My God, the sports analogies. It took me a long time to learn their language so that I could be seen as part of the group, as relevant, as credible, as a leader. I can't even begin to tell you how much sports analogies helped me in my career, which is hilarious because sports is so far outside my realm of interest that I really had to stretch myself.

Julia Winston:

Over the years I noticed that everyone who came in, even if they had been college athletes or gone to business school, struggled with imposter syndrome because of the thick language barriers at this workplace. Eventually I ended up collaborating with a new employee to create a jargon handbook to help everybody get on the same page. I think it's important not to get lost in the languages we see speak that help us get ahead lest we inadvertently marginalize other people, or make them feel less than. The way we do that is to recognize the languages we speak and the ones we struggle with. What languages do you speak, design, company jargon, another language altogether? And what are some small things you can do to bring people along and invite them to share these languages with you? How can we build bridges more consciously through the languages we speak?

Julia Winston:

That's it for today, everyone. Check out facilitatorforum.com to get the show notes for this episode, including more information and resources about Vickie Oldman, Seven Sisters Community Development Group, and her podcast Real Native Roots: Untold Stories. Big thanks to Gasoline Tequila for the original music, Massimo Lusardi on guitar, and Caleb Spaulding on percussion, and check out our last episode to hear more about Caleb and his drumming facilitation. Thank you to Adam Rosendahl for original artwork, and of course, thank you for listening, for being with me on this journey. Good luck getting into it with 2022 and stay tuned for new episodes the third Thursday of every month. See you next time.