

# Guest Speaker Anuradha Kowtha

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## SPEAKERS

Christy , Anuradha K

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**A** Anuradha K 00:02

All right, I'm so excited. All right, this is the last session. It's the wrap up session. And instead of me, being in the interview seat, I get to be the one being interviewed today, which is a little bit uncomfortable if I'm honest. And Christy is going to be asking the question, so I'm gonna pass the mic on over to Christy.

**C** Christy 00:24

Wonderful, thank you for letting me do this. I know that we have had a lot of conversations in the last year, and I'm excited to have one where I just get to hear about your work from a viewer perspective. I'm usually on the inside with you solving problems. So yeah.

**A** Anuradha K 00:43

Very different place.

**C** Christy 00:45

It is. I have tons of questions. We'll get them all in in 20 minutes. So I just as a start for people who have made it through this the closing session, is that correct? Yep. Okay, so for people who have made it through the week, and are confirmed with their idea that they need to be more, you know, prepared to thrive, that they're not maybe thriving, what does your work bring in to that conversation?

**C** Christy 01:23

Wow, I know I went, okay. Yeah, that's good. That's good.

A

Anuradha K 01:28

Good, big? Well, a lot of the questions I'm asking in my work, whether that be in the courses or private, privately working with me, or some of the tools and videos that I'm sharing, that there has been a theme throughout this whole event where we're talking about really talking about priorities, really getting clear on what our needs and wants are really getting clear on how anti oppressive work in general intersects with all of these things, right. If we are marginalized, historically disenfranchised in some way, then the way that we might have to go about getting things done is very different. And that's nothing wrong with that, but being clear on that. So that's the bigger picture, I think the thing that I really help people do is a, it normally takes a few years. So like we're starting the relationship of planting seeds. And this is often happens to me that I will see a client two to three years later, after we work privately or in Seeds, or even sometimes, occasionally, it still happens, even though I haven't been in the classroom for 15 years. Occasionally, students would reach out to me via email, or find me on Facebook or something and send me a message and tell me, you know, thank you for being in my life, thank you for doing, you know, whatever, I didn't see this for myself, and you saw it. And now I know how to practically integrate it. That's really, the kind of things that I want to stand for and have traditionally tried to do is personalized solution. So it can't just be something we all can do. We need to take the solution and modify it. So it fits in our work. And then this integration piece, so very practical, grounded ways we can start to do that. And sometimes it starts out with trial and error and experiments. Being a scientist, I'm okay with that right background in science. But as we grow on that, as we build those muscles, which are really common things, it's not like I'm going to teach you something unusual that you never heard of, but it's a way of viewing the world in a way that you never had. Like Gloria Amsel dua has a great quote. And I don't know if I'm gonna say it exactly correctly. But if we have never imagined the world we want to create in our mind in some way, then we can never hope to create that in real life. And that's paraphrasing her quote. That's what I think I help people do dream, there's something different, that we can have a different vision for the world for the collective.

C

Christy 04:20

Great, wonderful. And do you find that most of us already have a desire to do it different when you encounter that, you know, clients, like we want it to be different. We're just stumped on how to make it different. Right? That's kind of where people usually find you.

A

Anuradha K 04:37

Some sometimes I mean, I think the people who are you know, excited ready to work with me probably are in that space. Sometimes more skeptical people might need the paradigm shifting work that comes before that right grounding into some principles grounding into, you know, having a baseline understanding of antiA Question work. Normally, I don't work with a one on one level conversation like a university level one on one conversation, I can do that. And I have done that. But I'm moving more to a little bit more of a in depth understanding. But sometimes people need that taster to spark and then they come back, you know, they'll kind of be with that for a time, and then they'll keep revisiting when it's time to go deeper.

C

Christy 05:25

Okay, great. That's sort of my perception of you. There was a time like, as a white woman who lives in the United States, like, there was a time when I didn't even think about race, I didn't think about anything, like I was just moving through my life with enough privilege. At the time, I even thought I was straight. You know, like, I was moving through my life with enough privilege that I what these things weren't even on my radar. And for me, it started to shift when Trayvon Martin was killed, because I had a son at the time, who is a similar age who literally wore hoodies all over our little rural Tennessee town and buys tea and Skittles, and like it was so in my face, that the sameness on those, you know, qualities and characteristics as Trayvon Martin was that I just was like, Oh, I missing something that was, you know, so long ago, and now I'm here, and I'm doing work that I feel like is absolutely aligned with what you have to offer. And I'm still like, focusing on how to survive myself. And with this business, keep it open. And I'm craving to do more in terms of like, ethical business. And now I'm coming to you and saying, Hey, how can I do this? When I'm already a, you know, queer woman with ADHD and all these other things that I now understand that I am? How do I do more outside of my own life outside of my own business? That was when I came to you. Is that your favorite place for people to be is when they want to go beyond just thriving in their own lives? But figuring out how to do that thing out in the world?

A

Anuradha K 07:23

Yeah, definitely, there's certainly a piece to that where, you know, you using consent is really important. I was a teacher for a long time, and students not necessarily on board with what I'm teaching, I was the tiny Asian person, I wear high heels in the early days, right? To be a slightly taller because a lot of my students were taller than me. I mean, I was 22, 23 my first teaching job. And already high schoolers were taller than me, you know, so I wear the high heels. And you know, really, the idea being, hey, we're all here to learn, but not having the same opportunities, not having the same experience, oftentimes being labeled as difficult or, quote, unquote, stupid, you know, things like that. This is the messaging, they had gotten very different than the high school I had gone to, for instance, where there was support for honors kids, a lot of the students were college bound or University Bound. So I believe in that consent, I want the people to be ready in that environment. We don't necessarily get to work with that. But it's a similar thing of preparing them to say, you might not like to write, but when I taught English, for instance, what you know, we're not, if you can write a text message you can write, so let's dig into that. You know, like science is what's happening in your kitchen during some cooking, or when you're curious about, hey, there's earthworms over here. And not over here in this patch of ground what's going on? Right? That kind of curiosity is where the scientific inquiry comes from. And that is science. So really having to undo a lot of that, you know, you need to be super smart, you need to be you know, I had students who were pregnant, who were not able to read, you know, and honest with me about their situation in life and how they hadn't had the support. So, really, trying to engage them in this. And the attitude was very different in this classroom, to how they would treat me versus how they were behaving in other people's classrooms because I saw them and respected them. So, ideally, we have people who are ready excited to do the work. Sometimes we have to do a little bit of, you know, you know, wherever we might need extra work to catch up in certain areas. But what does, I guess what I'm trying to say here? As I want to receive people as they are. So if you're ready to come and show up and do it, then let's do it. And a big common question I have is I don't have the extra funds to be like distributing lots of money, and so on. So how do I do it? And this is where we, where we start the discussion. So many people, especially individual business owners, when they're

working with me, this might be their stance, oh, I don't know how to do business differently. And oftentimes, in the early years of business, especially before we've kind of hit till we have a bigger team, and we're a little bit more stable in our business journey. The early years, we're already exploiting ourselves. So how much more can we be exploiting ourselves, right? That's a common thing of not being paid enough. overworking ourselves, if we're unruly, as we've talked about in your session, right? If we're neurodivergent, if we're queer for, you know, we're just fighting against how we are expected to show up versus the reality of how we can show up not honoring the gifts or our differences, or what we can offer, always told we can't fit in in the world, and that we're not measuring up in some way. That's a really hard thing to then say, you know, I realize I'm privileged. And how do I make a difference now, like the unstrapped, how can I do more? And that's, that's a common starting place that I see.

C

Christy 11:29

Yes, I know that with I think in part and exposure to your teachings. I started to challenge how ethically I was treating myself as a resource with this business. And it resulted in a big change in the IP structure. I'm just moving into my 14 year, or I guess, my 15th year, but I really had a big transition where I reimagined the business in a way that I feel like is more respectful to me and my time and my energy, and where I can still do the work I want to do in the world, but without exploiting my own energy and pushing past the limits of my body and my, my relationships. Do you? Have you experienced that, too?

A

Anuradha K 12:25

Yeah, absolutely. I mean, I've pivoted the business a couple times, two or three times over the years, I've had different business names. But 2021, I really embrace, taking on my last name as the name of my organization, that was a big shift to own that part of myself. So not only does another mean, one of the stars in our Jo thick astrology. So it's one of the names I wasn't born under that star for clarity, but that my work is so multifaceted. So why am I trying to pigeonhole myself into doing this one work? So I thought the constellation metaphor really made sense. So that was one of the big shifts. And I feel like that was honoring the place I came from, in India honoring my ancestors on honoring that land. Even though I've only been to India a few times, maybe live there for a year, total in my life. It still shapes who I am, how I show up in the world, and I hated my name, my first name for a long time, right? I just, I really did because people would never pronounce it. I say, I'm gonna butcher it just just never say it. Right, this would be the conversation. So seeing hearing my name improperly pronounced most of the time, or, you know, not, I think, I think I was maybe 20, when I met a cousin who had a similar who had also the name UNRWA. I'd never met anyone with that name before. It's uh, you know, it's a kind of a famous name in India, a Hindu name, but so it was like a reckoning to accept that part of myself. And then, as you're saying, pivoting the work into working with more organizations. Previously, in other iterations of my business, I was doing a lot more personal or interpersonal work with people, so still with the same anti capitalist focus, but how can we set things up in a way that makes sense for us using the same leverage pieces that a lot of marginalized people have to think about? You know, similar to you in terms of a lot of the people working with me in those times were disabled or chronically ill or someone and we have to make adjustments of how we can show up and still do what we write that are purpose are these bigger questions of what we want to do with their life. So that was that was there still with the same realities? Now? I want to focus more on organizations and I have been so we've

been pivoting Sewing Post Capitalist Seeds, which is a course I do to include more resources for business owners. So that's continuing to be there and working with some organizations who are ready to do trainings, ready to do this work of changing the culture, making it more inclusive, changing how we show up with equity in the organization, how can we reestablish equity, with gender pay gaps, or racialized pay gaps are thinking about our community members changing our pricing structure to make things more accessible, right, and I've had to make hard choices because as much as I love, love to do, you know, make things accessible, they weren't being accessible to me, I was giving and giving and feeling exhausted and depleted. So I've really had to rethink how can I create delivery models that make sense for me?



15:56

Yes, it's remarkable to recognize that as the people who are teaching other people how to do these things, that we're also having, to learn to do these things for ourselves. You know, I It's, it takes individual people to change culture. But obviously, if we get past just individual people and look at people with more impact potential, so leaders of organizations, you know, people who have larger followings, I think that's a place where, where at least, I have been able to it's a bit exhilarating to me to think of instead of just the one on one that if I have this relationship with a, you know, someone who's a thought leader, even that that can impact every single person who listens to what they say every single person who reads their next book. The power for that ripple is, you know, infinite, I think, to cultivate change.



Anuradha K 17:02

Agreed, agreed. I'm finding that for myself, too, that the circles have, like the ripples get larger, more and more people can see that message in some way.



Christy 17:15

Great. So I have one more question. And that is a quick one, I think. I don't know who all will be here and watching. But I know that for me, I am fitting firmly in that category of how you have a business, I have a community that I work with, and I support and I've been, you know, sort of righteously I think pushing some of these ideas about being more ethical, like people in our world. And definitely, it's coming over now into the business and teaching people how to do this more with their businesses. Where is the simple next step that someone might be able to take, if they're in my position of doing a way better job ethically, with myself? Still keeping it accessible as much as I can for my community? Tell me one thing that comes to mind that you would say is this is a next step that people who are here who are struggling with your own Bing potentially can take to show up professionally in a more ethical fashion. That isn't gonna cost a million dollars we don't have in our pocket.



Anuradha K 18:34

That's that's the that's the real truth. Right? We don't have that million dollars in the pockets. I think there's there's so many things I hesitate to pick one, you know, unruly brain, my brain already we try different directions. So let me give you a flavor of looping. Yeah, you doing? If

you're engaging with money at all in your organization, can you think about starting to divest some of your money, whether that's through investments, what banks you use moving your money to Black owned banks, or more ethical banks, you can look at your supply chain, and start to think how can I invest more in terms of less giving to charities who often have the same problematic, you know, thing where the people on the top making significantly more? Not a lot going to the cause. Right? So we still have the same issues there. Can we be giving to mutual aid? Can we make sure we're hiring queer owned or trans owned businesses or Black, Indigenous, people of color run businesses? Can we include them in our supply chain? Can we uplift them in some way? So that's, let's like dealing with the money piece with the inclusion piece. I think a big thing I see so many times is that people are already Yeah, there's this assumption that nobody in my community or nobody on my team, or even myself, not disabled, not someone UK statistics, a one in five people have a mental health thing and one in five people have a disability. So, in an organization of 20, you're gonna have four or five people already, whether they've self disclosed or not, they're already going to be in these other categories. So really look at the stakeholders, look at the people in the room, look at your team, look at your clients, look at your communities, have an open dialogue of how am I excluding them? How am I how can I make things easier for them to show up. And sometimes we can't do all of it in one day, that is certainly the case for many of us. But can we have a several year plan of how we can start to do this, so we can deliver against that sustainably. And it often means coming up with creative solutions, getting sponsors, having trades, you know, finding these things that are free, like a lot of people watching this, maybe using Zoom, and don't know, you can have closed captions for free now, through zoom. So that's something we can all go in. There's a couple tweaks you have to do on the back end to make that possible. And then you set it up on the front end, when you go live, when you're in a Zoom Room, you can turn on those closed captions in certain languages. So that kind of thing. There's so many tech techie bits we can be doing to be thinking about that, right? And really, instead of trying to make things for fictitious people who might be asked the people who are right there with you, ask yourself, what would make this easier, right? Yeah, and a lot of times, these adaptations don't cost a lot. It's mostly just a paradigm shift of how I'm going to show up in this space. So one of the conscious things I do is when I'm taking private clients work, or in my courses, I encourage people to say, sometimes your knowledge might be intellectual, and that's great. But sometimes that's not the way your knowledge might come out. It might be a poem, it might be a video, it might be an audio, so like encouraging multiple intelligences, encouraging multiple ways to process and share our our wisdom, right in a way that suits us. And that doesn't really tend to cost a lot. So but it's an attitude shift.

C

Christy 22:30

Absolutely. attitude shift, it's, it's thinking outside the box, because we were all taught not to do that we were all taught this one conventional way. And sometimes even if we're neurodivergent, we don't even think about or disabled, we don't even think about the things we could do to make it easier for other people. It's as simple as I actually just changed my CRM to a system that allows for email reminders. And so instead of sending everyone email reminders about appointments, or no one email reminders, I just started asking my clients, would you like email, reminders of our appointments? Would you like it a day before? Or, and or an hour before? And I have had people choose None. I have had people choose both. And I've had people choose one or the other. And that's a thing that I got from you is just thinking about, like, it's actually literally no effort for me to say, what kind of support does your brain need

without assaulting everyone? Because I have other clients that those two reminders would feel like an assault. So little things doesn't cost me a penny to do that. And I never thought about it. I've been in business 14 years.

A

Anuradha K 23:40

Yeah. Oh, that's wonderful. I'm so glad. And it helps people self select, you're building that trust in that, you know, this part of the client journey, right? How do you want to be in the world? And how do you help because we're wanting to deliver on this big promise. And to be honest, liberation isn't going to be delivered in our lifetimes. I mean, I would wish it would be so but you know, and maybe in my teens and 20s, I had some high hopes. But you know, I'm in my 40s. Now, I don't see that happening. In fact, I see things kind of going the other way in many situations right now. But so we have to keep this fire alive. We have to keep passing the baton on to the next generation. But what are our wins we can have right now. And those are these touch points. These are these many choices, we can cumulatively start to make

C

Christy 24:32

Yes, yes, perfect. It always sell seemed out of touch for me before I met you making a difference in these ways for a ethical business. It felt because I was still struggling with some of this myself. It felt like I just wasn't at the point yet where I could care about other people. And the gray area here between those two extremes and doing nothing and doing everything is much, much more accessible than I imagined.

A

Anuradha K 25:07

And honestly, that's how it's going to be for some time as we are continuing to push forward with new, you know, with pushing for justice, and so on. We also need to take care of ourselves, but we can't do one without doing the other. Right? They can't be mutually exclusive. They have to happen together.



25:28

Yes. Ah, what a lovely, gentle reminder about what's possible. Thank you for that. Is there anything that you want to put on the table that we haven't stumbled upon yet with my questions?



25:46

A

Anuradha K 25:48

I think I just wanted to say not me, whether you take Sowing Post Capitalist Seeds or not in the world, I really want people to be thinking about something that the narrative, the indoctrination

that we have received, that is not the be all end all. There is something possible on the other side of that, and we're so close. And that's why our indoctrination our media gets so skewed, we just we're not reporting on protests for a reason. We're not talking about the winds, we're not talking about the solidarity building on the ground that's happening everywhere. So what I want to say is we can dream into something else. And enough of us pushing for that new reality pushing is what's gonna tip. Tip things in that way.

**C** Christy 26:40

Wonderful. How do people continue this work with you after this event is over?

**A** Anuradha K 26:46

Yeah, there is going to be there is going to be a ask Anuradha, anything session that people can sign up for that is related to this event. And that's live. And so you can you can join that. And always your if you're already here, you're watching this on my YouTube channel or on my website. So you're already here. There's events, there's the ethical business network, there's other things that I try to provide free or low cost, but then oftentimes, many courses that pop up, like we're going to be teaching, the Future is Accessible, and Sowing Post Capitalist Seeds, and so on, so those might be of interest to you, and in your journey.

**C** Christy 27:33

Perfect. I would say if if as a person who's in your audience, I would say that if you're not already, just start reading what Anuradha writes, because it helps. It's helping me to conceive of a different life. And that vision is priceless.

**A** Anuradha K 27:53

Thank you so much, Chris, for that.

**C** Christy 27:55

Yeah. Thank you. All right. Well, this has been wonderful. Thank you all for listening. And I will hand it back to you. Anything else you need to say to people as we close?

**A** Anuradha K 28:10

Thank you for that reminder. Yes. So I'll take that back. And I'll just say, thanks, everybody, for joining us for these seven beautiful sessions. And I hope that you have learned something that you reach out and ask for the help you need, build the systems that you need to be able to thrive, and really think about setting the stage for thriving as the way we've described it. It's not selfish to take care of ourselves in that way. And as we make time and space for that, how can we then give, share, uplift other people, right? So with both hands, right, that we're, we're

building, that setting the stage so we can thrive, but then we're also helping it so more people in the world can thrive as well. So there's both it's a both and kind of conversation. So I hope that you've enjoyed it and there will be a chance for you to give feedback and it would be awesome for you to connect with all of our speakers as well.

 Christy 29:12

Wonderful, this all feels so gentle and loving and also a bit like a life preserver in an ocean of chaos in our world. So thank you for having this event and reminding us all how to get it taken care of ourselves as possible. We have to you