



Raymond A. Mason School of Business

WILLIAM & MARY

DIVERSITY GOES TO WORK PODCAST

EPISODE 24: ALMA ZARAGOZA-PETTY – CHINGONA: HEALING, JUSTICE, RECLAIMING

Phil Wagner

Hey, friends. Welcome to another episode. Just a quick warning before we jump in. Today's episode contains some adult language which we have not edited out. So if you're listening with littles or you just want to tune out for today, come on back next time. We're excited to kick off Hispanic Heritage Month with today's guest, Alma Zaragoza-Petty. Get ready; you're in for a great listen. Hello from the halls of the Mason School of Business here at William & Mary. I'm Phil, and this is Diversity Goes to Work. Buckle up because we're getting ready to take a deep dive into the real human lived experiences that shape and guide our diversity work in the world of work. Should be fun.

Phil Wagner

Welcome, listeners, to another episode of Diversity Goes to Work. Today I'm joined by Alma Zaragoza-Petty, who is a Mexicana social justice advocate and scholar who teaches equity to create change. Gosh, I love that so much. Alma was born in LA but raised in Acapulco, Mexico, for much of her childhood. She's the daughter of immigrant parents, a FirstGen high school and college graduate. She's got a master's degree in counseling, a doctorate in education, and she's worked in higher education for more than 20 years. She has served as an academic advisor, as a professor, and in research and evaluation for a non-profit organization. She's the co-founder of Prickly Pair Collective, a trauma-informed faith-based community organization, and co-host of the Red Couch Podcast. Go check out her podcast with her partner, hip-hop artist Propaganda. Alma, I'm really excited to welcome you here, and I want to talk a little bit more about that background, but I also want to talk about a new book. It's coming out. I've got it in my hands. It's got your name on it. So to kick things off, would you mind just telling our listeners a little bit more about who you are, what you do, and the exciting work that you're about to release out into the world?

Alma Zaragoza-Petty

Sure. Yes. So, again, my name is Alma Zaragoza-Petty. Most people call me Alma, the Doc. I don't really like fancy titles, and yet I got one, and I've had to learn how to what does that mean? What does that mean in terms of power dynamics? In terms of just wanting to still remain sort of humble to my beginning, which you've kind of laid out a little bit. And so I let my students call me Alma or Doc ZP or the Doc.

Phil Wagner

I'm with you. Right. Equity-minded professionals, you got to normalize those power imbalances just sort of falling by the wayside. We're just people first and foremost, right?

Alma Zaragoza-Petty

Yes, exactly. Yeah. And so these days, I'm planning my book launch. So my book launch will be November 5th in the LA area in Lincoln Heights. It will be a free event. You can also pick up a copy of my book. You can also have a VIP experience where I'll be talking a little bit more about the writing process, but I'm super excited because it's basically an opportunity for me to redo my quinceanera, which really sucked.

Phil Wagner

Yeah. Okay. All right, so tell us about your book. Tell us title and where we can pick it up once it comes out. And then I really do want to delve in and talk about what you've written here and how you have fleshed out the whole process of really reclaiming. You've already teed that up here, but I think that's such a significant theme. So I want to dig deeper. But tell us a little bit more about the book.

Alma Zaragoza-Petty

Yeah. So the book Chingona Owing Your Inner Battles for Healing and Justice really came out of my own personal journey of finding out what equity meant for me, what it meant to live authentically as a Latina. But that works with just a diverse group of people, and that loves different cultures and that wants to learn from others as well and really trying to understand and write a story for someone who is going through some hard, messy, chaotic times in their lives. Both as professionally, personally, and that care about this topic of equity. That was really my intention behind it. And I like to say that I was writing it for, like, 20-30-year-old me who wish she had madrina, that knew how to navigate her through life and these questions. That was a little hard. When you're first generation to a country, you can't really rely on your parents for the lowdown on stuff like that.

Phil Wagner

So it's always exciting to me when I get advanced reader copies. I still see that as such an honor. So I got one. Number one, the artwork is incredible. Number two, I love the title. So it's Chingona Owing Your Inner. I'll say BA because my mother listens. So owning your inner BA for healing and justice. Now, I know BA is one of those cheeky terms. It doesn't always resonate with everybody, but forgive my ignorance with the last name Wagner. You probably know, like, Spanish isn't my first language here. Isn't Chingona kind of like a vulgar term in most contexts too? Talk to us a little bit about that word and your reclaiming of it. There's such power in reclaiming, but I want to hear how you got there and how you decided to really lead with that and embrace your inner Chingona.

Alma Zaragoza-Petty

Yeah, it definitely is. The Latino community, or the Latinx community, I should say, is very diverse. Right. There's a lot of heterogeneity in the population, and depending on which context you're in, it's a little bit more vulgar than other contexts. I grew up hearing this word. I grew up not in the nicest way it was meant to be derogatory. Kind of like son of a ABs. I'm kind of following your cues of not cussing as much.

Phil Wagner

No, this is an open pocket. No, my mom can hang. There's a good host of people who've come before you who have really set the bar. You can go wherever you want to, my friend.

Alma Zaragoza-Petty

Yeah. So essentially, it really depends which context you're in. I would say that in the early eighties, nineties, which is when I grew up, most of my development happened as a kid and teenager. This was not what it means now. I think now, in the ethos of folks that are Latinx in background, it really is like a positive reclaimed term that we call each other, that we call things we do, that we call almost about anything. It could be a verb and adjective. Whatever it is, we just totally have reclaimed it. But when I was growing up, this was something that was tossed around, meant to kind of put people like me, quote-unquote, in my place, usually by people that looks like me. And so it was really a word to just kind of calm down, stop being this really too much of a woman, taking up space, let the men lead, kind of fall back. And for me, it really became like this genderized term that I, as a kid questioned a lot and was really impacted by it.

Phil Wagner

So when I read the first time, I think I made the parallel to a word like queer, which is also one of those similar terms that has been reclaimed by members of the LGBTQ plus community. But you speak of this term more as it was used to create power structures within the community that you were within. Is that more of an appropriate, so this is a little bit different than how we might think about other reclaimed terms?

Alma Zaragoza-Petty

Yeah, I like to actually compare it to the word cunt. I feel weird saying it out loud now, but it's kind of vulgar. It kind of could mean nothing if you, like, take it out of context to some folks. And I think that's what Chingona does for a lot of Latino populations. Like, for some Latinos, it's like, what that's such a common word, like shit, like, it's fine, you know. For others, it's like, whoa, that's really not okay to say that word. It's very vulgar. Too out there. And so I hate to speak for everyone, but in my experience and my family dynamics, it was not a reclaimed word. It was a word to kind of calm me down and sit me down and kind of get me to listen, basically.

Phil Wagner

No, that's super helpful and super interesting. So one of the things I love is you're very clear you're trying to push people outside of their comfort zones here, and you do so with great intentionality and with great framing. As I read your book, I was so struck by the central role of storytelling. So often, you bring your story and stories back to what you call, and you said it earlier, right? Your hard, messy, chaotic narrative. In chapter two, you open, you reflect on an interview question we hear all the time. I don't know if you remember this, but you talk about tell me about a time you failed at something and how you handle it. And you note that you had this unrelenting pressure to be your best, quote-unquote, white professional self, and you gave a neatly folded, kind of happy ending answer. I'm wondering what advice you might have for folks out there, particularly black and brown women, as I know you speak directly to them, I should say, throughout your work, about how you give yourself permission to own and maybe even lead with that complicated, messy, chaotic narrative.

Alma Zaragoza-Petty

Yeah, I think that a lot of this has to do with the environment that you're in, right? There's like certain cultures and DEI work, diversity, equity, inclusion work in organizations that has been done, that has laid down the work for other people to come into those spaces and really question and really be curious about even maybe the questions that are being asked or the ways that you're being asked to show up. And so if I were to give someone advice, I would say only within this context am I giving this advice. Because I also recognize that there's a lot of context where it's not safe to show up as your full self. It's not safe to you need to figure out how to show up as your best white professional self and figure out quickly if that's the kind of environment that you're willing to kind of grow with, grow on.

Phil Wagner

That's such a good point.

Alma Zaragoza-Petty

If not, find another direction or whatever. But within that context, I think that it is okay to let some of our experiences lead the reason why we're even interested in some of the work that we do. For me, that has been, I think, the main sort of throughline in my work. It's been me kind of finding out what is equity mean, for instance. That was a question that I was plagued with. And I talked about it in my book very early on because of the different representations that I saw. Living in a predominantly immigrant Latinx community but being bused into a predominantly black community. I had to really question for myself. For instance. What it meant to see black people represented the way they were in television and through like Spanish syndicated television and the way that I heard my family talk about this versus the teachers that were also predominantly black at the school that I went to. And the way that they asked me to kind of peel back the layers of who's telling the story? Why are they telling the story? What purpose does it serve? Who is it serving? All of those questions. And because of that seed that was planted in me so early, I think that's how I've navigated my life in terms of just leading that curiosity kind of lead me and eventually kind of finding a place where I could

bring that whole self, that whole how I view the world into this space, into my workspace. And it's a value-added because other folks who haven't had that experience are now thinking about things and maybe in a little different way. And I also received that from others. Right. I also think there's a lot to learn from others. And that's another thing that I will say, like, depending on where you are in your own sort of reconciliation process, as a person of color, you may or may not be ready to listen to the other side. And that's okay.

Phil Wagner

Yeah. I think you give such important caveats that should be obvious but often aren't. We talk all the time about bringing your full and authentic self to work, but those safety cues, or just like the organizational culture that, may not be right for that. I think it's so important to factor in here. Talk to us a little bit about the flip side. So if it's clear that we need to lead with those messy, chaotic, hard narratives, and we also know that they don't often fit within, like, the gamification of the interview process, right? Often interviews aren't really interviews as assessments. It's can you play the game appropriately? Tell me your weakness. Don't really tell me your weakness. And if you do, shame on you. So how can you speak some tough love to managers, interviewers, executives, HR practitioners on how they can create better spaces for people to be their authentic self and share those tougher narratives? Because, as you know, they have value. They bring something unique. Any tough love you can give to hiring managers here on how to create space for that?

Alma Zaragoza-Petty

Yeah, I think that, unfortunately, when that is the case, when you're in a culture where you really are trying to more figure out if this person is a good fit, as opposed to thinking about it, as how will this person maybe what value are they bringing to our organization to help us with blind spots? Which is another way to think about maybe the approach that managers and executives might want to think about it. I think that it really just says two different things, right? Like, one of them is you're going to continue to attract the people and the thoughts and the ideas that's already probably represented in your community, in your work community, as opposed to being much more asking random questions quote-unquote or just kind of more off the cuff kinds of questions. So one of the questions that I really like to ask, I actually got this idea from a co-worker, and it really tells you a lot about the person, but in a way that I think is still kind of safe because it's meant to be fun. And it's like, if you were fruit, what fruit would you be and why? I know it sounds so like

Phil Wagner

I'm all about those ridiculous creative things, though. I really am. I'm here for all of it.

Alma Zaragoza-Petty

I think they're fun. I really think they're fun. And I get how they could be so frustrating to someone that's like, what the heck does this have to do with my job, with this job description? And, like, why? But I think one, it lets you know when that person is not okay with the script, because if they're, like, more sort of, like, taken aback by the fact that you even asked this

question, you're just like, oh, this person is really struggling with bringing in things into an interview that's meant to be much more quote-unquote professional or, like, some legality around it. I don't know much about the legal aspect of HR, so I can't speak too much about that. But I know that there are some questions you just cannot ask, and so please stick to that. But as far as the legal ramifications, but questions that sort of elicit this, like, hey, it's okay. You could be playful and fun, but also, we're people. We're going to think about things differently. We're going to bring up things that might be totally maybe off base with how other folks think about it. And it's okay to invite people to start sort of feeling comfortable with who they are and why they might bring up things. I also think this question is great because the times that we've asked it, I've noticed that a lot of folks are very culture, kind of dependent on this question. So, like, Vietnamese folks will mention fruits and vegetables that I'm like, whoa, I've never had that, or I've never heard of that.

Phil Wagner

That's interesting.

Alma Zaragoza-Petty

Or just like, tropical fruits. And I'm just like, oh, yeah, I totally would have thought of that fruit as having that kind of a personality or whatever reasoning they gave for why they chose that fruit.

Phil Wagner

Oh, that's cool. That's great insight. So when I was reading your book, I think it might be because I was also navigating through some other works from particularly indigenous authors at the time. And really, the central theme stuck out to me across the works that I was reading, which is on the role of space and place. And I think you just alluded to this in your last question, space, and place in our overall sort of self-concept, you know, in your book that you grew up I think it's by research, you even cite you grew up, quote, unquote, in one of the most miserable cities in the US. And you kind of deconstruct that narrative a bit, too. I'm wondering since space and place played such a huge role in your story, can you tell us how to better factor in things like place, space, heritage, native lands into our conception of a more just world? I think DEI practitioners get so lost in the weeds, but you take us home in the truest sense. Talk to us a little bit about space, place, and the role it plays in your own narrative.

Alma Zaragoza-Petty

Yeah, well, if I'm understanding the question correctly and feel free to.

Phil Wagner

Who knows? I get started, and I'm like, where did we even land?

Alma Zaragoza-Petty

Why did I even ask that?

Phil Wagner

I know.

Alma Zaragoza-Petty

Space and place, which is another way of thinking about intersectionality, right, has so much to do with who we are. Whether you want to accept that or not, just research just proves that. And I also understand that research itself is not unbiased. Right? So a lot of as a researcher myself, having gone through a Ph.D. program and having been taught sort of more mainstream ideas about education and how I should be approaching questions and thinking about questions, I totally had, like, rebuttals at every corner and turn because I was like, what? This doesn't make any sense, but what about this? But what about that? I just constantly have always, because of my own social location, have been privy to certain kinds of ways of thinking about things that, I guess to much of the chagrin of my own professors, really hard to navigate through grad school because I did want to keep bringing us back to that. I did want to keep sort of saying, okay, well, if we're going to say, for instance, like, there's an education, there's this big idea about Latinx parents not being as involved as parents in the educational journeys of their children. For me personally, I knew that was the case because, in Mexico, it's not free. Education is not an expectation, right? So you value the teachers, and you value the administrative staff because they have dedicated their lives to this work that you're paying for. And it's a lot of money. And only people that really have money can go through school in Mexico. And it's by no means something that everyone gets. And so if you bring people like that and put them in a context where education is free, clearly teachers are devalued. Like, we don't pay them enough. And also, we think about parent involvement as like, making the teacher's job easier. So I'm going to deal with the social-emotional development of my child at home so that when they're in school, the teacher teaches and is able to do the things that they're supposed to do. And it's their job, not my job, right? So it's almost like a respect. It's like there are boundaries, and this is what's respectful for you to do, and this is what's respectful for me to do as a parent. And I'm not going to cross those. But we see that as, like, parents not being involved in education or care about education because they're not at the PTA meetings, they're not here when there are fundraisers without thinking about, like, well, can people afford to take off time off work? Do they have PTO? Do they have paid time off? Do they have opportunities to be able to come in to volunteer after working one or two jobs to make ends meet if they're from a lower-income population, for instance? Right. So there's, like, all these things that just make parent involvement such actually a very tricky thing to talk about in a very pluralistic kind of society, which is what we are.

Phil Wagner

Yeah.

Alma Zaragoza-Petty

I'm with you on that. Space and place is definitely something that I'm always thinking about. Yeah. It really shapes the way that we think about shapes our own experiences, the way that we show up for other people's experiences, the way that we think about concepts.

Phil Wagner

Yeah.

Alma Zaragoza-Petty

And it's just a lot there to be miscommunicated and misunderstood.

Phil Wagner

It's such a helpful lens. Also, I think it's a call to travel, right? Like, you become less bigoted the more of the world you see. Right. And you realize that your own unique experiences are just a small pocket of what exists out there. But I think that's probably a conversation for another time. Look, I want to talk a little bit about the role that you play as an author and an educator and a researcher and a practitioner because I think you kind of clearly situate yourself, and I love how you do it. You're clearly in the business of good trouble, right? You own your position here as a rebel and as an agitator, but like, a good one, all for good. So one of the things that I think gets a lot of critique is that in the DEI industry, everything has to be so neat and sanitary, and palatable. So you get the most buy-in. Right? That doesn't seem to be your approach. You challenge the narrative. You lean into what you say, hold your ears, mom, is your inner badass, and you kind of give us a higher order call to stir the pot a bit. Talk to us about that approach. How did you find yourself there? Is that just your default? Did you get there over time?

Alma Zaragoza-Petty

I think part of it is a little bit of a default, and I also talk about this in the book. I've always seen rules as, like, why? When I see a rule, I don't think, like, yeah, let me make sure that I stick within the boundaries of this and not get in trouble. I want to know why. Who made this up? Why did they make that up? Who is it serving? Who is not serving? In a lot of our society, the rules that were made up were meant to serve one group of people a long time ago. So it's even old for that group of people. They don't even like it, I think, anymore. It's just very, in some ways, very sanitary, clean. But it's. Also, I think, very dissociative. It just creates more division in the way that it's even laid out. Because we're finding ways in which we're not getting along as rule and making up rules around that. As opposed to ways that we harmonize and we do great, and that's not really. Like. The ethos of our, I mean. Most rules and laws are around. Like. Which boundaries are annoying to us when other people push it. And so let's make a rule around that instead of like, hey, we're really good at this. Let's make a rule about that. I guess I've always kind of questioned that. A lot of that probably has to do with having a lot of rules as a kid. I think I'm kind of telling a little bit on myself, just being governed by super traditional machista men in my earlier years. But some of it, too, I think I'm all about. Even in the work that I do as a DEI consultant in the schools and in the educational environment in which I work. I'm all about how can we humanize our experiences. Even as a professor, I quickly introduce my background. I'm very comfortable sharing, for instance, like, what my pedagogy is, like, why I think about learning in this way, and sort of like, the need for rest that's part of my pedagogy. Like, you need to rest. We're just made to rest. Like,

Phil Wagner

Say that.

Alma Zaragoza-Petty

if we don't know that by now, I think as adults, we spend like, what, two-thirds of our life sleeping, like, we should know that we are meant to rest. And so because of that, I structured the work and the demands of the class as having a lot of breaks. Having a lot of time for you to just reflect and to think about the stuff that you're reading and not just like. Let's read five books and give me an analysis of it. But let's just really stick with this and think about what we mean. What we understood. What came out? What resonated with us because of our own lived experience. Our social locations. And so I think similarly. In the more in the other professional work that I do and non-profit work. I really invite folks to name those things. To talk about the things that make us human. The things that are taking up space outside of work that are maybe affecting the way that we're showing up to work and ways that we can support one another through those changes. I'm kind of recalling right now a time when a young out-of-college Latina joined our team, and she was very much in a very antagonistic place where she was just like so upset about white culture and sort of like her own experience and being in college and having her experience be very what she called like whitewash. Like not learning about her own history or about just history in general. That was just more complex. Right.

Phil Wagner

Right.

Alma Zaragoza-Petty

And I remember a lot of that would show up in our meetings and our collaborations and her really pushing back, really getting very antsy and kind of almost aggressive and more beyond assertive, beyond comfortable now. And I remember just kind of stepping aside with her and being like, hey, there's like a lot going on. I get it. As also Latina who has to go through a similar educational system, I get all that that could happen. What are you doing to take care of yourself? What are some of the boundaries that you need and work to be able to do that? Who's maybe showing up and representing that evil white capitalistic, all of the things, who has become that's the person that's like, in my mind, that's what I associate with right now. Because sometimes it's not even that person, right? Like that person might be just minding their own selves and living their own lives, but we do that. Sometimes, I think too in our own as we're growing and sort of finding ourselves in that journey. And if we're not being very good about taking care of ourselves and our whole selves, how can we expect others to basically show up in this way that we need them to if we don't even know why you're even showing up in this way, basically? So I love conversations like that. I know that they can be very uncomfortable to folks, and I think part of why I'm much more comfortable at them now is because of practice and because of messing up so many times and having to, like, hey, that's not what I meant. What I meant was or misgendering people. I've just done it all.

Phil Wagner

And me too.

Alma Zaragoza-Petty

I think that as long as we can come back and say like, hey, my apologies, what I meant was this or that's not on you. This is something I need to learn. Thank you for your patience kind of thing. And I think we need to learn more about how we're going to what are we going to say when we mess up. I think sometimes we're so hard on ourselves and don't want to mess up.

Phil Wagner

I agree.

Alma Zaragoza-Petty

That we shy away from so many true, authentic conversations, and instead, I think we should start developing like these brave spaces where you're just like, hey, I'm going to mess up. I'm probably going to say something that is going to feel hurtful that I probably did not mean but that I still need to hear was hurtful because otherwise, I won't grow as a person, and you won't be heard.

Phil Wagner

Absolutely.

Alma Zaragoza-Petty

I think brave spaces has been a very hot topic word in DEI work right now. As opposed to like, safe spaces, we don't want safe spaces. We want brave spaces.

Phil Wagner

I agree with you. I agree. And I think those opportunities for correction, in my experience, I have had many of them. I own that. I have said and done the wrong thing. I totally get that. I have found that most of the time, when the party whose dignity I have violated, albeit non intentionally, brought those forward to me, it was always so gentle and so kind. If I've gotten grief from anybody, it's those sort of like DEI whistleblowers on the side, the social justice warriors who want to call you out on your stuff. It's never been the actual person. Those real human conversations have a way of reinforcing shared trust, shared values. We all drop the ball from time to time. Give yourself grace, apologize, own it. Don't brush it under the rug, and move on. I want to talk about going back to the flip side of the question we just addressed. You talk about owning your stuff, and in the context of the world of work, there's something I took from your book, which is the part where you challenge folks to insist on telling their story. And I think that fits with insist on drawing margins and boundaries. And I think this is really important in an organizational context, but I also know that it comes with risks, right? So how do you suggest going specifically to brown women here? How do you suggest those historically underrepresented or minoritized or exploited folks in the world of work successfully navigate that risk environment when they're pushing or rebelling or insisting or

provoking others towards good? I know what the imperative is to folks who look like me. It's to create space for those narratives to bubble up, to be represented. But how do you recommend folks who are insisting and pushing and rebelling and provoking? How do you recommend they do so in a way that doesn't upend their whole career or their whole professional livelihood?

Alma Zaragoza-Petty

That's a really great question. I've upended my career a couple of times because coming in. I'm just upset you all are going to hear it change the system right now. You know, and interestingly enough, like, I think I've learned how to navigate that with more wisdom through my own sort of reclaiming of my story. So when I look back, and I looked at sort of my history and rather than seeing myself as the oppressed mestiza and looking at myself as a surviving Indigena and Afrodescendiente, so, like indigenous and Afro-descendant, when I started to see myself, I'm not oppressed. I am a survivor. I come from a line of survivors. This is what my whole, like, all of the four mothers before me were about. I need to channel that one in. And I think sometimes when we're still in the very oppressed, when we're only seeing the ways that we are being minoritized, the ways that we're being held back because we don't look a certain way and promotions are happening, and we're not part of that or whenever that's coming up into our space, and we start to feel like, man, this is like, oppressive energy. And yet somehow imagine how much our ancestors went through that to, like, a zillion degree right, of, like, literal murder. Like, they were murdered, and yet, we're still here. Like, people like me, you are still here. That's the history that I want folks to, like, start to find that through line with, because I think once we start seeing our real ancestors, which what they were survivors of genocide, survivors of you name it, we start to see like, oh yeah, I can do this, I can heal from this. If my ancestors healed from this, I can also heal from this and find a way to be true to myself and not become someone I don't want to be, but also find a place where that's going to be valued and a place that's going to want that for me and not see me as sort of like a risk factor in this situation. So that's kind of my kind of, I guess, note to folks that are in those spaces right now.

Phil Wagner

So powerful. So I have really two final questions. This is the last, I think, bigger one, and I want to go back to something we talked about earlier, which was about bringing the quote-unquote full and authentic self to work. In so many ways, I think your book explores how complicated those full and authentic selves are, right? You talk about their selves with scars, selves whose dignity has been violated, selves who are working through healing and reimagining their futures and their possibilities. How might your frameworking to go and help us rethink what it means to bring our full and authentic self to work in this sort of reclaimed way that you set up in the book?

Alma Zaragoza-Petty

Right. Yeah, that's a great question. I think what Chingona offers is a way to start looking at your narrative at your story. And really hone in on what are some of those mental barriers or actual physical ones in your context that are really stopping you from being what you might

imagine when no one's listening when you're kind of on your own like that person that you want to be. Like that ideal self or that self of like I really want to do this or I want to get to this level. A lot of times, I think I talk about this as well in one of the chapters is, The Colonial Mindset, right? Because we come from a colonized community, sometimes we take on this colonial mindset, which is what I call imposter syndrome of not feeling good enough for what we're here to do or what we can offer the spaces that we're invited to and owning that and kind of stepping in into those spaces bravely. And I think that's real. I think that's so real for a lot of highly educated Chingonas out there, highly motivated professionals. Sadly, that's part of sometimes what we come with, too. And I think that the sooner we start to really listen to ourselves, listen to that voice that sometimes are called like negative thought patterns. I think the sooner that we can understand ourselves in that way, the faster we're going to be at not letting others people's words corroborate those lies in our minds. This is why what really excites me about the reframing that I do is really going beyond, like, yes, we're about equity. Yes, we're about justice, but we're also about healing. We should be coming from a place of healing. We should try to get to a place of healing, whether to you, that means, like, your spiritual life. If it means mostly, like, physically trying to get to a place of healing or mentally or all of the above, there's just so much healing that can happen. Both, sadly, but also, I think it's also, like, a really amazing way that we can celebrate who we are.

Phil Wagner

Yeah.

Alma Zaragoza-Petty

It doesn't have to just be like, man, well, I wish I didn't have to work on myself so hard. I've definitely been in that place, right, where it's like, well, yeah, but that sucks cause that's a lot of work. And I could be spending that time moving up in my organization or doing better things with my time or whatever. And that's true. That is absolutely true.

Phil Wagner

You just described every conversation I've had with my therapist. That's it. This takes so much effort.

Alma Zaragoza-Petty

Yes, it does.

Phil Wagner

It's worth it.

Alma Zaragoza-Petty

And that's the thing. Like, we can't fall, I mean, I'm guilty of this and kind of digging myself out of it, but we can't fall into that depressive state for too long because then it really starts to shape who we are and will get us farther away from what we want to become or who we want to really be. And that's, I think, what Chingona means to me. It's like it's a lifelong marathon.

It's a thing you're going to work on every single day. It's not something that's going to be, like, magically, you're now a chingona, and you're all about healing injustice. No, this is a lifelong work, and it's about how to be a co-conspirator with other women in other oppressed communities. And it's about also reimagining what the future could look like beyond what we've been told. Beyond what we, the limiting beliefs of other people have imposed on us. So, yeah.

Phil Wagner

Love it. So if you're listening and you are not absolutely salivating to get your hands on a copy of this book, what's wrong with you? It's so engaging. It's fun for as heavy a themes as you discussed. It's also a fun read. Your voice is so well represented here, and it's truly enjoyable and it teaches me, it gives me a new lens, it gives me a new framework, so I appreciate it. Final question for you is tell our listeners how they can find you, get a copy of the book and support your work.

Alma Zaragoza-Petty

Yeah, so my social handle is thedocZP. So the doczp on all the socials I kept it very easy so you can find me. That's also my website. Very easy. And you can find a book anywhere that books are sold. I prefer that you go through the link that I have on my Instagram because it supports local bookstores, and I think that's also really important where we're getting our merchant. For me, it is. And I know that we can't all do all the things all the time that are about pushing social justice forward because it's also a lot of work. But one of the ways that I'm asking folks to support my work is by buying from smaller bookstores and finding places that are women black-owned to buy my book from.

Phil Wagner

Love it. Book drops November 2022, right around the corner. Get your pre-orders in now. Alma, thank you for an engaging conversation, a real and raw conversation. I so appreciate you, the work you do, and the time you've spent with us here today. Thanks for joining us.

Alma Zaragoza-Petty

Thank you for having me.

Phil Wagner

Thanks for taking a second to listen to Diversity Goes to Work. If you like what you heard, share the show with a friend, leave us a review on Apple podcast or wherever you listen to podcasts, and reach out because we're always looking for new friends. And if you'd like to learn more about any of our programs or initiatives here in the business school at William & Mary, be sure to visit us at mason.wm.edu. Until next time.