

Simon Mainwaring:

Humanity versus the planet, us versus them, zero sum game. Too often, that's how the climate emergency is described, as if humanity is hell bent on its own destruction, but nothing could be further from the truth. Efforts at scale are underway to make the future we want for ourselves and the next generations possible. But what does that look like? How does it work? And what role can you play? This week's guest is the architect of the largest public private partnership for climate justice in the world, rallying exponential support so we can meet the challenges we face with equal force. And he'll reveal to us what meaningful impact looks like and how business and everyone within it can play a critical role. So if you want to fix our future and find the confidence, courage, and course to get it done, listen in now.

From We First in Goal 17 Media, welcome to Lead with We. I'm Simon Mainwaring, and each week, I talk with purposeful business and thought leaders about the revolutionary mindsets and methods you can use to build your bottom line and a better future for all of us. And today, I'm joined by David Clark, founder and CEO of Right Here, Right Now Global Climate Alliance and CEO of David Clark Cause. And we'll discuss the state of the climate movement and how together, we can course correct our future, and how companies large and small can participate in deeply meaningful ways that will support business and solve for the challenges we face. So David, welcome to Lead with We.

David Clark:

Thank you so much. A pleasure to be here.

Simon Mainwaring:

So David, you've got a fascinating career and now you're in charge of a really, really powerful platform for transformation in the context of climate. But it always intrigues me, how did this journey begin? Where did you start? How did you end up working in and around human rights and climate and trying to make a difference?

David Clark:

Yeah. Well, it's interesting. So, the nickel tour of my career began about 26 years ago. I decided, as an entrepreneur, to focus my talent on creating what I call cause brands, which basically are issue driven, and then build a coalition around them. And one of my first client partners was Muhammad Ali. So, arguably at the time, he was the most famous person on planet earth and he wanted to leverage his fame to promote tolerance and understanding and fight bigotry and prejudice. So, I partnered with Muhammad after a very long, long time working with the lawyers to get that hammered out, as you can imagine. And so we actually came out with a Harper Colin's book called A Healing, A Journal of Tolerance and Understanding.

And really, my job was to explain to Mohammad that everything he talked about in this little book was related to healing, healing racial divides, healing X, healing Y. And healing is a very powerful word for him because his name sat in the middle of it, right? H-E-A-L-I, Ali, N-G. So, creating the World Healing project with Muhammad was really an eye opener, and I saw that I was able to engage with people that I couldn't have dreamed of before, right? So, I had the privilege to introduce Prince to his hero, Muhammad Ali at our MTV press conference. So, that was a really interesting way to start my career. I got the attention of the UN. And initially, they wanted me to produce something around human rights day, and this was about 20 years ago. And my feeling was the most powerful human rights icon at the time was Nelson Mandela. So, he had stepped down as the president. The UN, at first, they were

reluctant to approach Nelson Mandela. And I love that Irish expression, come on guys, pull up your socks. So, I kind of encouraged them to make the introduction.

I went to South Africa. I had the privilege to meet with the president and really explain that he could use his stature to promote human rights in a unique way. Now, he pushed back and said, "Listen, I don't think I should do that because hiv aids is running rampant in my country and I don't want to look like I'm out of touch with my people. So, I don't know." So, my pushback was, "Well, millions of people have died and will die," I said, "because... They're not dying because they're sick, they're dying because they're poor." If you let somebody die because they don't have access to life saving drugs, that's actually not a health issue. It's a human rights failure. So, we reframed hiv aids as the human rights crisis was. We launched with a huge concert at Green Point Stadium in Cape Town. Queen was our house band that day, and we had [inaudible 00:04:49] Beyonce, the good and the great, but it worked.

It worked. And so the 46664 campaign was thriving literally until the time of the president's death. So quickly jumping ahead, the UN said, "Listen, we're having an issue with climate change. We can't get people to care. They can't wrap their mind around it."

Simon Mainwaring:

Sure.

David Clark:

Right? Because your average person, they don't know the difference between megatons, gigatons, different forms of carbon capture, right? So, we thought about it and we're like, how do we humanize this issue? And staring at us right in the face was almost the same dilemma that we looked at 20 years before with President Mandela, is that climate change is a human rights crisis. Women, children, people of color, poor, marginalized will continue to suffer as it escalates. So, our thinking in starting this of literally about a year and a half ago is if we created the Right Here, Right Now Global Climate Alliance, we would reposition climate change as the human rights crisis that it is.

Simon Mainwaring:

And I've got a question about that, because you've had these seminal moments in cultural or global history where there's an inflection point, where you need to elevate an issue to address something that's becoming a systemic problem. How does this moment in time with climate compare, for example, the HIV AIDS moment that you mentioned before and so on, because a lot of people are saying in and around climate, "We've had global challenges before and we'll get through this one again." Or is this sort of different by an order of magnitude in some way?

David Clark:

Yeah, no, I think you hit the nail on the head. It's different by an order of magnitude. Absolutely. It's an existential threat that people now feel, right? It's not just Al Gore talking about it or Leonardo DiCaprio screaming in the forest, "Hey, this is going to happen." People feel it. They absolutely feel it. And I think people understand that it is this existential threat. People have been working on it, governments have been working on it. But I think what we're finding out is that people are starting to come to our movement because they're actually losing a little bit of hope in government's ability to act because of the partisanship, quite frankly.

Simon Mainwaring:

And I want to dig into the movement in a moment, but you mentioned hope there. You have a better line of sight than almost anybody out there in terms of not only the challenge, but what's being done to address. How should we feel, David? I mean, is this the end of time? Should we throw up our hands? Is it cause for alarm, or this is a moment of optimism because we lean into the best of humanity? Give us a sense of how you feel from your perspective.

David Clark:

Well, it's actually a double edged sword. So, I feel that the magnitude of the problem, it should be ringing everybody's alarm bells. But I do believe that you don't sell success with fear. You sell that with hope. And so our goal with Right Here, Right Now is to create global activations, global movement that actually inspire people to act, to come together and quite frankly provides both a carrot and a stick, explaining what will happen if we all work together, but also, if we don't, what's going to happen. So, I think that our challenge is to work with smartest people on the planet, people like your good self to actually come up with messaging that does provide hope.

Simon Mainwaring:

You had the opportunity to go to several COPs, I mean many, many cops in the past. And you were at COP 27, which is the Global Climate Summit that just replaced in Sharm El Sheik, Egypt. We've all read about it in the headlines. Give us a sense of what that experience is like. I've heard everything from, it sweltering heat outside to bone chilling air conditioning on the inside, which is almost like this caricature of the juxtaposition of the issue in some way. But what's it like to be there? Do you feel like there's momentum? Is there rigor to what's going on, or does it feel like a lot of politicking?

David Clark:

Well, the first thing you experience when you fly into Sharm El Sheik for the latest cop that just recently ended is to see the endless line of private jets is really amazing. I think there was probably 400 private jets at this very small airport right off of the Red Sea. So, that was kind of interesting, back to the juxtaposition of the sweltering heat and the freezing cold with the air conditioners. So, there was definitely a sense of urgency with the COP. People, especially at this COP, were really looking for developing nations to pay their fair share, because a lot of the low lying coastal nations and a lot of the developing world, they're doing the least to contribute to the problem and they're bearing the brunt of this catastrophe. So, the thing that was really an eye opener for me is Ian Dry, a special rapporteur for human rights and climate change.

He made a point that people were losing hope in COP because it really turns it into lowest denominator politics, right? Because you have to get all the hundred 93 member states to worry, so what happens if country X or Y or Z, I won't name, don't go along? So, it actually waters down anything that could be aspirational. So, we thought it was very interesting that people are actually turning to Right Here, Right Now and saying, "Listen, we need out of the box thinking we need a movement. We need something that can actually galvanize the planet." So quite frankly, it was an eye opener to hold a press conference there and have people direct their attention towards what we're doing.

Simon Mainwaring:

So, let's dig into that for a second because I think, myself included, some folks might look at, oh, okay, climate action is a human, but what do we mean by human right? Is that sort of some inalienable right or universal for everyone on the planet? And if so, how is it protected? Or is it recontextualizing the

need to address climate, to protect people's ability to live and thrive? What does it mean when you recharacterize it as a human right?

David Clark:

Well, it's interesting. So, that's actually a good question. Thank you. So, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was created 74 years ago after World War II, and it really set out the basic rights for men and women, things that really are inalienable rights. Now, how we infuse those into the climate conversation is really important. So, the last COP in Glasgow, COP 26, part of the continual movement of COP, they're actually recognizing for the first time that the right to a clean and healthy environment is a fundamental human. And if you infringe upon that, you're actually running a foul of the law, quite frankly. So, there was huge discussion by a number of nations to actually drop that language because they started to see that they're liable for their inaction, right? And so that created a huge uproar and actually the language stayed.

So, as a fundamental human, we all, no matter where we live, live, have a right to live in a clean environment, to a healthy environment. So, climate change is actually moving that way. And one other thing I'll add to that is by reclassifying climate change as a human right, it's profound because then all of a sudden people's rights as it relates to climate change are protected in a law that already exists. So instead of actually starting to move through nations to create laws that actually protect people, it just recategorize it so it actually is protected by human rights law that actually exists on the books now.

Simon Mainwaring:

It's such a crazy moment in time for humanity as a species, for all of us around the world right now, because there's this inherent tension, which sounds like it played out at COP, between the urgency of the issue and the culpability of the global north, the developed nations that created most of these emissions. And at the same time, you got the emissions gap. I heard that we're still on track for 2.7 degrees rise in temperature as opposed to the goal of 1.5 degrees Celsius. But then there's the obligation of the reparations to these undeveloped nations or the global south. How do those tensions play out? You're walking around the corridors, language is literally sort of reconstituting itself in the air and it's being pulled in both directions. How does it resolve itself? And what was your sense of... Did we knit out in a good place in the end, because I know there was language around creating a fund to address these issues and so on?

David Clark:

Correct. Yeah. So, I think actually, nobody wanted to walk away empty handed, so I think that towards the end, that there was a good result. This fund is being created, but what we need to do now is we need to fund it, right? So, that's why I think it's imperative to get the public to mobilize, to demand that this actually gets funded, so it's not just [inaudible 00:13:45]. So, I think that's important. I think one of the other things that is important, and one of the things we were there to also help announce, is the creation of the human rights climate commitments. And so what that's going to be is the seminal international document we're creating with our partners at UN Human Rights, and it's going to actually list prescriptively, what are the obligations of duty bearers? And I know that sounds very UNese, but yeah, duty bearers.

What we're talking about is, what are the obligations of national governments, cities, universities, corporations, which is a huge element here, and individuals? And what are the things that they can do to actually help people at large, but especially the marginalized groups of people that are suffering the most. And so that document is being worked on now. It's going to be an iterative process, and we're

seeking the best and brightest to contribute. And then we're going to unveil the very first draft at COP 28 in Dubai. And so that document is going to be a living document that will be continually updated at the Right Here, Right Now Global Climate Summit, because we always need to refresh it with the latest facts on the ground, the latest need, just the latest and the greatest, so the idea is that it's actually always reflecting what's going on the ground.

Simon Mainwaring:

And what I'm taking away is difficult, but positive momentum moving forward, all on the strength of efforts like Right Here, Right Now, and I want to sort of dig into it. Right Here, Right Now is the largest public private partnership around climate action on the globe. How on earth did you build that? When did it start? And help people understand exactly what it is?

David Clark:

Yeah, so again, it's really the product of 26, 27 years of work and understanding how you build the architecture to actually hold lots of different content. And in this case, content comes in the form of different sectors of society. So, working with human rights, we knew that we needed the overall global alliance, and our global partner is UN Human Rights. And then we can actually welcome like-minded people, organizations, governments, into that alliance. And what we're doing now is through Right Here, Right Now music, which we're going to announce shortly. We're going to be doing a series of concerts around the world. And Right Here, Right Now technology, it actually includes Call For Code, which is the largest engagement of developers. It's going to include a sports component, a publishing component. So, we're actually welcoming all different sectors of society to kind of share our messaging and kind of add another tent to make this as sturdy as possible.

Simon Mainwaring:

And is the intention behind it to leverage all of these different sort of expressions of culture around the world to raise awareness, or is it to get people engaged or is it to sort petition for the funding of that fund that was set up? What's the goal?

David Clark:

Yeah, it's all of the above, but I think what people want to hear is they want to hear that you're making impact. And we don't want to do anything that's not driving having impact. The goal isn't to do a concert to just raise awareness, right? The goal is to drive impact. And that's why the human rights climate commitments are so important, because everything we do will map to that North star, right? So, if we're doing a concert, we're going to be enrolling people, we're going to be asking people to donate. Why donate? Because we're going to lay out corporations that are starting that can actually have impact through the technology they're creating. So, everything we're doing, that's the yardstick. How do we impact humans? And how does that human rights element turn into a differentiator?

Simon Mainwaring:

And one of the things I struggle with is it seems like by virtue being sent in conscious human beings at a higher order level than perhaps other species out there, in some ways. It's a double edged sword, because on one hand, we sit there and go, "Well, we know we're in trouble, but you go first," or "It wasn't my fault." Or on the other extreme, if you are part of the solution, you go, "It's my credit. I did the change. We're not doing this all together." How did you resolve getting all of these otherwise

competitive or [inaudible 00:18:05] partners within an industry or a cultural lens to work together to this end?

David Clark:

Well, yeah, it's interesting. That's an interesting question because I've never gotten anybody or any organization to do anything by explaining why it's good for me. You have to explain why it's good for them. And you also have to bring in best in class partners. So, it's like the old adage, right? How do you get people to jump in the pool? You get the coolest person to jump in first. And so with a global partner like UN Human Rights, which is the UN organization that oversees the human rights for 193 member states, it's the gold standard. So then when you're creating the technology play, Right Here, Right Now Tech, you start at the top and you work your way down. So, the first person in the pool, Techstars, an amazing organization, right? The first group that would jump in on the music front would be the Recording Academy.

They produce the Grammys. And so all the way down the line, we seek best in class partners, which actually get other people to excited. And they might join the coalition for their own reason because they want to rub elbows with the good and the great, but that's fine. As long as they're joining and we can market all their time and talent towards one unified goal, I don't care why they came to the party.

Simon Mainwaring:

And is each is the job of each one of these pillars peculiar to what they do. So, Right Here, Right Now Publishing is putting out content, books, materials to that end. Music is rallying people and raising donations. Is [inaudible 00:19:34] play a different role within this bigger tent?

David Clark:

That's exactly right. So, we're really leaning on... It's almost like building a house, right? The carpenters do their thing, the plumbers do their thing, the brick layers do their thing. You need to bring that all together, really like a symphony orchestra, right? And how do you get the different players to actually join your awesome symphony? You explain a common vision that they can all get behind, right? This is the music that we want to create, but we can only create it together. And so the different players start to jump in when they see the people that they respect come in. And it's funny because somebody once asked me what was the most important business course I ever took. And I was a liberal arts major, and my answer was simple. It was child psychology. Stevie wants to play with a toy if he thinks Jane wants to play with boy and vice versa. And so it's just really appealing to the best of these people that actually want a communal experience and they want to work on something together that will work.

Simon Mainwaring:

Yeah, I mean, by virtue of this being Lead with We and so on, I'm so deeply invested that in the idea that the solution turns on collaborative leadership and so on. I want to ask one question though. I mean, one of the concerns around the whole kind of climate movement, but even more broadly, UN activities has been inertia or the bureaucracy or the kind of time it takes to get all the different stakeholders to agree on something. So, it's one thing to get that sort of punitive element introduced when you establish climate action as a human, but to enforce that is another thing. Whether you look at business and corporations participating, how are they penalized for not participating? Is it simply the disapproval of various stakeholders like investors and employers and consumers, or is there now increasingly climate justice lawsuits and they're going to be forced to do it through regulation and so on?

David Clark:

Well, it's all of that. That's the interesting thing. It's all of that, right? What motivates you to do that good thing? Right? Fear of not doing it, getting in trouble, being incentivized. So, there really isn't one thing, it's all of those things. And so depending on who you're dealing with or what organization, you need to actually pull all of those different tools out of your tool chest. So, it's all of those things. But I think when you educate your average person and they understand that this company is purpose driven and they're actually doing the right thing, every study shows that even with higher price points, people will select their goods and services, but you have to tell them, right? I remember hearing this interview with Ted Turner that I thought was funny. They asked him what the secret of success was, and he is like, "Well, you know, work like hell, and then you advertise. You've got to get the word out. You need to let people know."

So, what it is it's the ability to badge yourself as an individual or an organization as compliant with Right Here, Right Now, as an example, or you're going to be called out. It's will be obvious who's not. And so we'll give consumers the ability to make choices. And we're going to create right here, right now policy. So, we're not going to tell you who to vote for, but we're going to tell you where we're going to explain what are the policies that we think are going to help move the needle. And then you can compare whatever candidate you're thinking about voting for. Wherever in the world, does that person share your values? But when people are so busy with their average everyday life, they need to have this served up in a way that they can understand, that they can consume, right? So, part of the job is bringing in people that know how to do that, bringing in that expertise. And that's so interesting about corporations. This is really the first initiative I've been working on with the UN where corporations are a huge part of the problem, but also the solution.

Simon Mainwaring:

And let's talk about that. So, how can they participate? Maybe give us a concrete example of a company that's showing up in a meaningful way.

David Clark:

So, as an example, so Call For Code is a developer challenge that lives under Right Here, Right Now Tech. It was created five years ago. The goal was really to create the Nobel Prize for developers so we could appeal to the 24 million developers around the world to innovate for social good. And so in discussions with UN, it was clear that we needed a tech giant that shared our values that could also help us from an operational point of view. And the number one company was IBM. And so we reached out to IBM. We were fortunate they answered the call. And six months after the first meeting, we were in Paris at the VivaTech Conference with the then CEO, [inaudible 00:24:29] and French President, Macron, and IBM put up the first \$30 million to actually implement Call For Code. And so five years later, we get over a million submissions every year.

There's been like 25,000 apps that have been created. It works. But to have the reach of a global corporation out there pushing, making sure that we still have approval over what they do, so there's no greenwashing and there's nobody's hijacking any cause brand, these companies, they see all of the benefits, right? So, it's easier for them to recruit. It's easier for them to retain employees. All of a sudden people see this good that they're doing, and quite frankly, they end up buying more of their goods and services. And so they should because this company is actually doing great work.

Simon Mainwaring:

No, being on the right side of history is going to be increasingly important, but also, you're going to capture those market forces that are increasingly rewarding. Those companies are showing up this way. And what are some of the issues that, for example, Call For Code has addressed? In sort of brass text, what issues to take on, or what are the winning prizes? What do they address?

David Clark:

Yeah, so I'll give you a couple examples. The very first winner was a group called Project Owl. And they noticed that after Hurricane Maria, that clearly when there was a natural disaster like that, or shall we say a manmade disaster, because it's a product of climate change, all communication breaks down. So, even first responders can't communicate to actually go save people. And so then that's where you see those pictures of people in their house writing SOS. And so what Project Owl did is... Imagine, if you will, a little rubber duck. And in that rubber duck, there's hardware and software. And so they created this technology where from drones or planes, you could just drop these little rubber ducks. They start to talk to each other and they create a popup internet. So, imagine when you go to Starbucks, it prompts you to join the network.

Simon Mainwaring:

Right.

David Clark:

Well, that's what happens now in the aftermath of these natural disasters, because this technology was created where we can always create an internet so people can email, people can use it to call. First responders use it. So, it's rolling out. Another one that I thought was ingenious, two years ago, there was a firefighter in Barcelona who actually held his colleague as he died, quite frankly, and he was just... They knew that they didn't know exactly what kind of toxins were in the air and it was a real problem. And so that firefighter talked to an emergency nurse and they brought in three developers and they created this wearable device that in real time monitors a firefighter's vital statistics as well as the air quality. It crunches them down. It's easily visible on a dashboard that the fire chief looks at. And so he can see that Juan is back in the green so he can get back into the fight. Or Susan, she's going into the yellow, into the red. She needs to get out and actually recover.

So, these are things that actually save lives, but it's just because we're creating this platform of hope and possibility, and then we give these developers and innovators tools and then they come up with solutions.

Simon Mainwaring:

I love that. I mean, one of the things I took away from COVID-19, and I wrote about at Lead with We is how brands are becoming first responders. In COVID, we saw them sort of make PPE equipment and ventilators and meals for medical and first responders. So, are you seeing now that corporations are rising to this challenge to almost be like a fourth emergency service where they just show up in meaningful ways? Because it sounds like every year, Call for Code is doing something different. Correct?

David Clark:

Correct. Yeah, no, I think... Well, every year, what we do is we kind of focus on different aspects of climate change. And we've added... In the aftermath of George Floyd's murder, we added Call for Code for racial justice. So as an example, if you're a defense attorney, you can actually go in during sentencing



and you can actually tell the judge exactly what your client would get if they were white, if they were brown, whatever color they are. There's actually big data that is crunched. And so all of a sudden, it's embarrassing to give person X a long sentence because it doesn't jive with actually the data that's coming out. Or with all these laws that change daily, people actually can now get an app where all of the issues on the ballot are easily explained, they're provided with maps to the latest polling places, what the bus route is even to get there.

So, all of this technology is fantastic. And when COVID-19 broke, we were able to get Lady Gaga took them out and promote, "Hey developers, you guys are rock stars, we need your help." So, it's also about making sure you get influencers that people listen to. I think that's important all the way down the line. So even with Right Here, Right Now, we launched it from Glasgow last year, and we were proud to have Leonardo DiCaprio out front and center tweeting and posting about the importance of Right Here, Right Now and treating climate change as a human. So, that's helpful because he encourages politicians to jump on and talk about getting people in the pool.

Simon Mainwaring:

It's all about influence, all about influence. And I mean, I want to click through the ecosystem that you build. And you've got the overarching architecture about climate action as a human, and then you've got the role of corporations can play. And it's one thing that technology can do because it's so little in terms of the impact it can have. But what about the arts, music, photography, so things that are less kind of tangible in terms of their impact? How can we all participate, because we're all anxious about our climate future?

David Clark:

Yeah, exactly. So, we're actually starting to articulate what all these different sectors can do. So as an example, photography. So, we've got Photography for Humanity. We're actually opening up the Photography for Humanity exhibit at the University of Colorado to help launch the summit. And then that exhibit will go to Gallery A, which is outside of the General assembly at the UN in New York. But what we're doing is we challenged... This year, we challenged photographers around the world to show us the people that we're trying to help, to show people that are suffering because of climate disasters, right? So, that the images are just amazing. I mean, the winning image is this man sitting by his house as it's sliding into the Ganges because of erosion.

And you'll see this beautiful young Dinka girl just seeing her village just underwater. So, it's important to actually engage people in all the arts, right? So, what would you do for writers? Well, we clearly need to tell these stories. You need to inspire people by telling stories, by painting pictures with words that people understand. So, all of the arts are welcome to join the Right Here, Right Now coalition. So, I really can't think of any sector of society that couldn't contribute. And I think that's part of it. When you've got this great big potluck and people feel like they're all welcome, they just needed to bring their particular dish, I think it really helps.

Simon Mainwaring:

I couldn't agree more. And my overriding sense of this moment of human history, which sounds very lofty, is that it's not about learning something new, it's remembering what we forgot, which is that we are connected to each other. I live in your home in as much as I live in Los Angeles, but the planet is our shared home. You live in my home. We are all connected to each other and the one planet that we share, and it's almost like we need to take the highest purpose and best selves in humanity to kind of reweave that social fabric and connected tissue between us. And I bring that up because what we're

working against are forces that have pulled us apart. Whether it's social media and whether it's politicking and nationalism and various other things, how can Right Here, Right Now kind of be a counterbalance to a lot of those very, very strong forces that have been working against these solutions for some time? Is it just the weight of humanity?

David Clark:

Well, I think it's the weight of humanity, but I also think it's putting a human face on the people that are going to suffer by the choices that we make, the inactions we take. So, just imagine for a moment where you're sitting in at crosswalk in Manhattan and some woman falls down, the reflex of at least 10 people there is to go help her. They don't stop and ask who's Republican, who's a Democrat, what your socioeconomic status is. They see that human need and they all react. And so one of the aspects of reframing and really rebranding climate change as a human rights issue is it's depoliticizing the issue. Som we're finding that people that have their own brands, like famous athletes and musicians, they're now able to say, "Hey, you know what? We are going to come out for this because it's not just climate, which has been politicized. It's now a human rights issue, so we can all embrace it." So, I think that is just a huge point because I've never seen anything like the momentum that we're getting from that messaging. It's huge.

Simon Mainwaring:

I mean, I was once asked recently, what is the one skill leadership needs to develop with the view to our future, course correcting our future? And something that showed up in me was really empathy. And I think that's innate to us, but it's what you're talking about there. It's our emotional connection to each other and these reflexes that are hard wired chemically and to all of us to care for each other and be connected to each other. Obviously, this ambition then what you built with right here, right now is extraordinary, but there's obviously obstacles in the way. What are the most difficult things right now? Is it going to getting a consensus across either heads of state or government or cities? Is it getting corporations that are otherwise competitors to come together? What are the challenges?

David Clark:

One of the challenges that we face is different organizations in the climate movement. So, if we're not doing everything all at once, they might say, "Well, what about my issue?" or "What about my issue?" or "What about X, Y, and Z?" So, it's making sure they understand that we're going to get there and that they don't start throwing tomatoes because we're not addressing their specific issue at that specific moment, right? Because I think people are kind of jaded. And I also think it's easier to burn something down than to build something. So when they actually understand what we're doing, we find that they're sympathetic, they're empathetic, and they actually join the movement. So, I think the biggest challenge is just making sure that we're communicating properly, that we share their values. But there's also a systematic way to actually get there.

Simon Mainwaring:

And imagine it's a double edged sword, but it's also the positive side, isn't it? All of these issues, climate emergency and biodiversity and ocean acidification and so on, they're all connected in a negative way. But also, if you solve for one issue over here, they're also connected in terms of a solution. So indirectly, by solving for any issue, arguably you're solving for all of the issues, so people can feel less kind of that their issues are being sidelined. Would you say that's fair or no?

David Clark:

Well, that's right. That's right. And it's not like... Our goal is pretty simple, right? We're here to protect people. We're here to protect marginalized people. So, it's not that hard to wrap your mind around that, right? So if you agree with us, come on board, right? So, we've really broken this down into a very common denominator. But to your point, when one wins, they all start to win, all these different [inaudible 00:36:26]. So, I think that's really... The more exposure right here, right now gets, I think the more traction we're going to continue to get. And I see that every day. It's accelerating. So, I'm pretty hopeful that we'll be able to get as many different constituents on board as possible.

Simon Mainwaring:

And the literal meaning behind Right Here, Right Now, is it a message of urgency, is that we've all got to show up individually and this is the moment? Is that what we should take away from that?

David Clark:

That's exactly right. The time is now, right? So, it's not the ponder and think it's like to help that woman who fell down in the street now, right? All little actions that you can take right here, right now. So, woven into the branding is that immediacy, but also this idea that it relates to human beings, right? There's a human being right here. There's a human being in front of you. So, I think we need to make sure that the human element stays front and center so it doesn't turn into an abstract.

Simon Mainwaring:

And how can each of us as individuals participate? I mean, we talked about corporations, we talked about the larger architecture, we talked about the arts and the role for all media or mediums to participate, but here am I, I'm Simon, I'm a dad, I live in Los Angeles, I've got two daughters and I care about their future how can we all participate right here, right now? What can we we do?

David Clark:

So, I think we're going to be... Well, it's really how we time it out. So, what we want to do is we want to actually have a list of things that people can do, right? So, that's why the public call to action has not happened yet. You don't want to do that and have people go, "Well, what?" We want to be very specific and very intentional about, these are the things you can do, these are the micro things you can do, these are things that parents can do. Even through Right Here, Right Now Education, we're actually building out curriculum for K through 12. So even teachers can go, "Well, I don't understand. Oh wait a minute, there's a resource here. This makes sense." So, the idea is to actually create all this content, so parents, kids, whoever can actually go, "Okay, I want to engage with Right Here, Right Now," because these are ideas that we have.

As an example, we have a university coalition. And last look, I think we're a little over 2300 universities around the world that are part of the right here, right now, university coalition. And we're actually coming up with action items for all the universities, right? So, what are we going to ask students in the physics department to do and computer science to do, and business and arts, right? So, everybody can be counted and everybody can go, "Oh wow, I didn't think about that. That's great." And then ask them, "How do you think this can be better?" Right? So, there's something powerful about open sourcing this, so we take ideas from anybody, right?

Simon Mainwaring:

I love that because all of these issues feel like they're bigger than any of us, but they're not bigger than all of us.

David Clark:

That's right. That's right. But that's what gives people hope, when the dance major can see the folks over there working on some code and that the coders can actually see people working on a dance that hopefully is going to move people to action. So when all these different things start to happen, it just really emboldens people and inspires them because they feel like they're part of a winning team.

Simon Mainwaring:

And do you come away from COP, and do you come away from 25 years of doing this, long before the urgency was so real and present everyone around the world... When you look at that narrative arc, when you look at the engagement on a global level, are we at that inflection point? Are we at that point where you go, "You know what? Finally, all stakeholders are at the table and we understand the stakes and we're taking sufficient action." Are we there yet?

David Clark:

Well, we're clearly not taking sufficient action yet, but I think we are at the point where we've got everybody's attention. I've never seen it on a global level. And it's interesting because I think... One are the inflection points what was COVID. Just imagine your life, everybody's life, their live span. When bad things happen, they usually happen to other people, or these people might get cancer or these people have suffered in a drought or a flood. But with COVID, for the first time in our living memory, we all shared a common experience. It didn't matter if you were rich or you were poor, you could get COVID. You had the same fears. You were afraid of infecting other people. You were afraid you were going to get it infected. So, it was a really interesting point in humanity where I think people felt interconnected as they never ever had before. And that actually is very helpful to what we're doing because people now have a sense of community, global community and that things can actually affect everybody at the same time in ways they just never could have imagined.

Simon Mainwaring:

Yeah, I think that shared suffering, as tragic as it was, was a shared experience, as you say, and it kind of broke down all these false separation that were built between each other and of calcified over time. What do you think the future of climate action will look like? Because it doesn't feel linear. It doesn't feel like each year, it's going to get a little bit worse and we're just going to need to do a little bit more. It feels exponential, like it's going to go a hockey stick up. So, what can we expect in the next three to five years, do you think, in terms of engaging around Right Here, Right Now, and how that is infused into identity bias?

David Clark:

Yeah, so our goal basically is to be this global movement. We are the largest public private, private initiative dealing with climate justice. So, I think as it starts to galvanize, you don't just get one new member day. All of a sudden, you start to see this exponential growth. And my hope is that exponential growth maps to what's happening with climate. And so all of a sudden... I'll just take Call for Code as an example. We didn't have 16 developers working on an issue. The ability to actually have 500, 600, 700,000 at a time is breathtaking. And so we're going to apply solutions at scale. So as an example, even using human rights, we're working with a group, Boston Consulting at IBM, and we're creating a rubric

where we're actually going to judge companies their impact, not only on the environmental impact and their financial impact because companies have to be sustainable, but what are they also doing for people?

So, that might sound small, but it's not. So, we're actually bending the discussion with climate technology towards humanity, right? And by doing that, we're able to enroll exponentially more people. So, we think that when you're dealing with an issue as large and omnipresent as climate change, you need to have a solution of scale. And so that's one of the reasons that actually... It's funny, right? It's almost easier because it's bigger. If it was small and it was local, people wouldn't have much hope.

Simon Mainwaring:

Yeah. Yeah.

David Clark:

When they see how big Right Here, Right Now is, how global it is, how we're actually working in every sector, that tells them that the scale is going to meet the issue, right? It's like a world war. You don't want to see the local tire manufacturer cranking out a few tires. You want to see a whole industry rising to meet that challenge.

Simon Mainwaring:

And one of the reasons I have enormous respect for you, David, is you've been doing this work for 25 years. And I think in the abstract, we can all understand what that's like in the sense it must have been very lonely back in the day when people really [inaudible 00:44:24] prioritizing these things and it's like, "Wow, it's really nice that people like you, David, exist, but we're going to go over here and make some money." From your vantage point of 25 years in this work, what on a personal level gives you hope?

David Clark:

Yeah. Well, it's interesting that you mentioned 25, 26 years ago, what did this landscape look like? And when you're talking about corporate social responsibility, nobody cared. Nobody was doing it, quite frankly. It was the two hippies that were hanging out in the room closet. I mean it was wasn't anywhere. So, now it's everywhere. So, it's nice to have been doing it for so long, right? So, we've got credibility. And we've all worked with everybody's hero, right? So, that was the funny thing about Nelson Mandela. He was an amateur boxer, so the fact that I worked with Muhammad Ali was interesting to him because his hero was Muhammad Ali. So, all of these things start to build on each other. And I've hopeful because I've seen real results, real results.

I mean, it was very interesting. So, after our big event in South Africa, Nelson Mendel's grandson took a bunch of us out and he said, "Listen, because of what you decided to do and manifest and get my grandfather involved in, hundreds of thousands of people that would've died will not die. I mean, that is an actionable thing." Right? So, I've seen real results. And so I have no doubt that that Right Here, Right Now is going to deliver the same types of results, especially at the scale that we're operating at now, for sure.

Simon Mainwaring:

A related question, David, obviously there's always an intention inherited these sorts of things between the aspiration of an event or a convening of people and the logistics and the business and the bottom line and the dollars of getting it done. Does that ever get in the way?

David Clark:

Well, that's actually an interesting question because you have to be mindful of all of those things, which is why you never go public with something you're going to do unless you know can do it, quite frankly, right? So, you have to very mindful of the fact that a lot of people are tugging at your sleeve. Everyone's got their own agenda, so you have to really, really focus on your north star and where you want to go so you don't compromise, because it's easy. And so you have to make the rule before you start the game, and then you know how to play. You don't make up the rules as you play the game because it would be dangerous. You have to know where your north star is so you don't lose track.

Simon Mainwaring:

And I just want to say, Dave, much respect for you and what your team and what the partners are building and architecting this cultural architecture. You're building this big tent through which we can all participate. And my great ask for everybody listening is that when you see those opportunities to show up, through whatever lens you look at your participation, this is our opportunity to leverage our collective might to get the results we need that will serve all of our futures. So, thank you for the time today, David. Thank you for the leadership, and we all look forward to participating.

David Clark:

Thank you so much, Simon. I really appreciate it. Thank you.

Simon Mainwaring:

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