

# Ep.108: Exploring Civility, Discourse, & Hope w/ Danielle Lee

[00:00:00]

**Dan Dissinger:** Hey everyone, I'm Dan Dissinger from The Writing Remix, and today's episode is a special one. It's for the fifth annual Big Rhetorical Podcast Carnival, and the theme is Politics and Rhetorics, Navigating Civility, Culture, and Crisis. Now the carnival takes place October 28th to the 31st. This is the fifth annual one.

And I've been so happy to be part of, I think each one. So shout out to Dr. Charles Woods for, um, inviting everyone and for putting this together. It's such an amazing event to kind of have all of these, um, intellectual conversations all collected within his podcast, a big rhetorical podcast. So definitely check them out.

And also just support these indie podcasts and these indie podcasters and the humanities. Um, it's a great event. And when you are listening and you're on social media, definitely continue to conversations with [00:01:00] hashtag TBR podcast carnival 2024 and hashtag TBR political rhetoric and the keynote interview will be featured on October 31st.

So check that out. Definitely. Today, on our episode for Writing Remix, I'm joined by someone that has been in my life as friend, academic, artist, um, she's been on the Writing Remix definitely before, helped hosted an episode that actually, one of the most downloaded episodes actually, um, thanks With Oh God, I know I'm forgetting the episode, but it was on hip hop rhetorics and everything is you got to check that episode out.

Oh, it was, it was huge. And I feel bad forgetting who was on that because I don't have it in front of me, but shout out to that person. And I will put that in the show notes and check that episode out. Um, I'm here with Dr. Danielle Lee, who. Now, since the last time [00:02:00] we were, uh, together, has an amazing, uh, has some amazing new positions.

So Dr. Danielle Lee, SUNY, at SUNY Old Westbury, Director of the Social and Environmental Justice Institute and the Associate Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, Danielle. Thank you for doing this and for being on this episode.

**Danielle Lee:** Thank you so much. You know, I'm always going to be here for this, for you and for this podcast.

I love these conversations. Um, these are important conversations and, you know, it's just so, it's fun to do and to be having it in this space where we can kind of just be relaxed, right? Kind of out of the office, away from campus.

**Dan Dissinger:** Out of the office, away from campus and also just, it was funny, uh, I've been doing podcasting now for about four years and I always feel like the conversations before the podcast, I'm like, I should have pressed record because we were having a killer conversation prior to this, but I know it's going to continue.

Um, And because we were [00:03:00] just even talking about the topics title, like the title of this year's podcast, carnival crisis, culture, and civility. And you and I were really, um, digging into those ideas on civility. Um, because it was something that I was thinking about prior to coming on and I know crisis and culture are part of it, but civility was so.

It was coming out so much to me and I was just like this is the real core issue like there's a crisis and then there's a culture that of crisis, but the civility part is really where we are failing and like we were saying a lot of amazing things about it, but I was wondering, um, you know, we both were talking about why civility was coming out for you as well in our prior conversation.

**Danielle Lee:** So, um, I feel like it's a, the issue that we're seeing culturally, right, we see it across social media, we see it in the news, you know, we've [00:04:00] seen a lot of ridiculous things, right? And what has always bothered me is, you know, we are so split, right, as a, as a country. And when I watch either side, right, um, you know, have their talks at their base, um, the people that, that follow either side, if you look at the conversations or put them side by side, right, They are vastly different.

And, you know, what we were talking about before is, I really think this is a testament to education or lack thereof, right? And the fact that, you know, you see people like Jordan Kepler from The Daily Show, um, you know, interviewing people in the streets, and they can answer simple questions, right? But they have all this fire, right?

And it's on, it's on both sides. You know, there's like this righteous fire, and then there's another type of righteous fire, right? And [00:05:00] even in, in both,

you know, senses of both groups of righteousness, righteousness seems to have been really bastardized, right? And now we have this lack of civility. Okay.

So before, you know, we, we, uh, just, just for the audience, right. We were talking about what I brought up was I'm 52 years old. I grew up on Archie Bunker, George Jefferson, you know, um, you know, what was that one? Oh, Sanford and Son. I had to do this. I had to do the theme song to remember. Um, so then we have, uh, you know, these shows and these shows as I was growing up.

Is how I learned civility when dealing with racial difference in conflict. So I know that sounds weird, right? But if you go back to like all the family, you go back to the, to the specific episodes where Archie bunker, George Jefferson, we're talking, right. Both of them had racist views, both of them felt very vindicated in their views [00:06:00] based on their individual experiences, right?

And in this show, even though these two, these two differences were forced to come together, they could still have an honest conversation about white people, about black people, right? They could still speak to each other and never once in the show did we see violence. Never once in the show do we ever hear about needing to incite violence and Archie Bunker even at his, at his, at his worst social justice nightmare, right?

Um, it never tipped that, it never tipped that line, right? And I grew up understanding that we can have differences, right? But there was a civility, there was a respect because you needed To out civilize your opponent. And now it seems like to me, we have lost that sense of, even though what you believe [00:07:00] terrifies me, sickens me, even.

You still have a right to it, still have a right to it, I still have a right, and I think when we get, and I've heard some horrendous things about, you know, reproductive injustice, for one, and as a black woman, knowing the stats for black maternity, and black health in general, I mean, I've had my own experiences with the healthcare field, being a black woman, and, and all that, and having to use my title in order to get, um, you know, service, right, in order for the doctor to see my humanity, if you will, right, About all that type of thing, but it's never, it's never occurred to me to start slapping people around.

It's never occurred to me. To that, if somebody that I work with in the same institution, if they have a different view that I'm going to go around and say, do you know that person's a, and then create this other, this other layer. Right.

[00:08:00] And that's part of the culture too. We have this, we have this hate layer, right?

It's like, I can out hate you and the out hating is justified. By right and wrong. You know what I mean? And for a lot of people, it's clear for, you know, it's, it's very clear for me who I want to support, but I see that both sides have accountability for the disintegration of civility and so much is on the line.

And, and when I watch a lot of this stuff, I always ask myself, doesn't anybody. Ever have like a behind the scenes conversation and say, can we just drop this and just fix some things? Which sounds really naive, right? And very simplistic. But if we, if we think about the lack of civility and how that impacts rhetoric, how that impacts discourse, and this is the thing too, right?

Now we have social media, we have Tik TOK, right? Just to, as [00:09:00] an example, the political Conversations and discourse, right? People just, you know, regular everyday people is astounding to me in terms of the various levels of hatred, um, hate rhetoric. Um, you know, I, I think it's bad that you hate that you hate me.

So I hate you for hating me, you know? So when I, when I listened to these conversations, it, it also, this is the other thing we were talking about. I wonder how education as a body has failed.

**Dan Dissinger:** Yeah.

**Danielle Lee:** How have we collectively, right, administrators, teachers, instructors, adjuncts, K 12, all this stuff. Where did we, where did the hole in the ground open up, this chasm, right, between education and common sense?

They used to go hand in hand. But I, I might be an old lady, but [00:10:00] they used to go hand in hand. So I don't, I don't understand how marriages are splitting up. I don't understand how relationships are splitting up. Families, all these things are splitting up because we can't establish a civility. Number one.

And number two, I can only be civil with you. If you believe what I believe, I don't have space to consider your very different views. So therefore, bounce.

**Dan Dissinger:** Yeah, it's like, it's interesting. I, so this semester I've been teaching, uh, bell hooks, his book all about love. That, that is one of the texts in my writing class.

Right. Yeah. And it's, When I was preparing to talk about that book, I was thinking about how weird is it going to be for these few weeks that we're talking about the book or so that we are going to be talking about love [00:11:00] in the education, the higher education space, especially, especially a college like USC, right?

Because USC is a gigantic, Machine. Okay. On the West Coast. It is a big school. It's a very, I don't even know how to say it. I guess I'm going to put quotations around famous school for lots of reasons. Right. But, but look it up. So I think like what the thing is about like talking about love in the classroom.

My students were thrown off like right away being like, okay. Because it's like, they're expecting something else in education, right? You're expecting to learn to write. Okay. You're learning to write. We're doing that. We're writing, but we're also going to read this book and we're going to talk about this book.

Right. And I think love is so much part of what. Especially in this conversation of like crisis culture and civility is because we don't know how to practice that thing that bell hooks [00:12:00] talks about. Like it is a practice. And because we are out of that practice, like we are so out of the love practice for a very long time at this point, we.

Having the dialogue that like even Frere talks about, and I was looking at Pedagogy of the Oppressed because it's a book I go back to and talk about on this podcast probably more times than anything else. And I was like, Oh yeah, in chapter three, that's where he taught, he starts talking about dialogue and he says like, quote, dialogue cannot exist, however, in the absence of a profound love for the world and for people.

And that's just like itself, right? Like, right. Oh. And because he says love is the foundation of dialogue, right? So like, if I look across at the person from me and I'm talking to them, if I don't have a profound love for their humanity, right, as a whole, as being human and a person, then I'm [00:13:00] already at a loss.

I'm not going to be able to do this thing that I want to do, whether it's teaching or Or if it's understanding, or if it's, I don't know, even going to the grocery store and maybe getting a refund that's late, like, you know what I mean? Like, if I'm not Processing those, that dialogue in the, their humanity, then guess what's not going to happen.

They're not going to see my humanity, but I will also then continue to dehumanize. And if it's easy to do it there, it's easy to continue to do it. So I

think in terms of the crisis, we are in a super huge crisis of dehumanization because. Where both sides are using dehumanization as a defense tool to be like, you are dehumanizing me, so I'll do it back.

And so like, and it, it's not even to kind of go to like, oh, okay, this person's, it's like, this is what's happening. It's not even to go and lay blame. It's like, this is the issue that's at hand. The way back is [00:14:00] difficult. It's difficult to like, see someone's humanity. It's because it's difficult to be civil, because we don't.

We are in a survival matrix of like ourselves and not a community. Cause after an election, guess what? We all have to live together. Like that is the key. That is, that's the reality, you know?

**Danielle Lee:** Yeah. Um, if I feel like people have this expectation that there's going to be a seismic shift once the election is over, regardless of, of what's going on.

And I do believe that to an extent, but I believe it in the way that, you know, if it shifts one way. As a woman of color, as a black woman, as a woman of many nations, I anticipate violence. That's what I'm afraid of because I, cause I treasure my own humanity, right? And my children and you know, the people around me.

And if it shifts the other way, guess what? There will still probably be violence. [00:15:00] Right. And the, the lack of, of the, the, the gross dehumanization, right. I think there's, there's another part to that, right. Is that we're in a period where we have these younger generations that have so much more access now to adult discourse, right.

Because you can flip through anybody's account saying anything. And, you know, just to use an example of TikTok, the age range is, is quite vast. As to who's commenting on social matters and stuff like that, right? So I also think that part of the dehumanization is we have more of an opportunity not to speak directly to each other.

I believe You know, well, well, social media is supposed to bring us together and it does in a lot of ways, right? But the other way is that it also feeds into this into this beast, right? Into that hole in the ground that we're all falling [00:16:00] in and just to go back to what you were saying about about love, right?

I agree with that 100 percent because I don't want anybody to be hurt. I don't care how much I loathe you. I don't care how much I disagree with your values. I might not want you around me because of, because I believe you think a certain way about me, but I would not step over that person's body. You know what I mean?

I still have a respect for an opposing view as a human being. That's how we, that's how we grow. And that's how we learn. Right. So I think the other piece to love. It's hope. And I think we, as a society, that our hope meter is pretty, is pretty low. We're almost bankrupt of hope and love and hope. So I see love and hope going together in a sense that if I believe in humanity, and if I'm saying I want everybody to be okay, I want people [00:17:00] to have what they need and access every, all that stuff, right.

If I can say that, and if I've dedicated my career to doing that, and to providing access and to educating people, how can I only love one faction of people and not love humankind? When we, when we learn where we are from each other, you know what I mean? There's, there's, there's a lack of hope, hope is declining.

And I think when you dehumanize, you lose your sense of hope, right? Because if you're dehumanizing someone and You know, you're ripping them to pieces and doing all of the things you have hope, hope for what hope for their destruction, then that's not hope.

**Dan Dissinger:** That's, that's exactly because that's where it's go.

That's where it goes. Right. Like you, that is, I think the biggest challenge with Frere and bell hooks. Like when I look at those two and I read like teaching to [00:18:00] transgress or pedagogy to the oppressed or, um, all about love. Right. And even like one of bell hooks is other books that I've read, um, Um, the will to change, which is all about masculinity and things like that.

The key is like literally that looking at the world and not an accepting, but accepting the humanity of people because they also have been wounded. And if I understand that, okay, they wounded me. Okay. That is not great. What got them to be the, the wounding, right? Like when you look at frayer, it's like a good oppressor.

They are oppressed because their humanity has been stripped enough so much so that they see you as less than human. You can't do, you can't have someone who's going to do that work, that oppression. Without them having less

humanity to see another person as less than human. You have, [00:19:00] if they see you as human, that they have their full humanity.

I have to get that out of them in order for them to dehumanize. Right. So it is like, we are so far down the road in terms of like a culture of uncivility, right? We are so in that space that we are trying, we are like spewing. I think like. Empty rhetoric that has no practice. And that's what bell hooks and teaching to transgress has like warned against over and over again, that like, if you remain in the mind and you remain just saying theory, theory, theory, whatever, right.

Or in this case, like, especially in the case of like elections and stuff like rhetoric, rhetoric, rhetoric, and there's no practice, right. Or it is no practice of anything. We're just like spewing nothingness. Then whatever. Like we'll never get to the practice part. It's going to kind of just always be words and words then can create constructs and those constructs [00:20:00] create violence.

And that's where we're at. That's the practice, right? We're not going to get to the practice of our humanity. And I feel like when you were talking about education failing, I really feel like, especially at a school like USC, the students are so burned out. It. Trying to succeed, they are, there's no ability for them to see what, why they're doing what they're doing and also that they can actually self realize in different ways and the professors are burned out as well.

And then you get all these burned out people. And that's perfect in order to continue like business as usual, right? Because everyone's too tired to switch it, to switch gears and they're afraid to switch gears, like afraid,

**Danielle Lee:** terrified, right? Because you know, you have a [00:21:00] generation, a couple of generations after, after me, after you, that are not bred for the hustle, if you will, right.

You could. And I mean, you know, I know we talk a lot about privilege. We teach about privilege and stuff like that. But even with privilege, some college students can't really get it together because privilege means access. Yeah. But that doesn't mean that what they're learning is practice anywhere in their world.

So, you know, I think practice is, is multi is this love a lot of levels of practice, right? So if. If we're teaching Frere, and Hooks, and Hughes, and Baldwin, right? Eh, you know, uh, I was just working on a chapter and I'm talking about Derrida, there's a chapter on race and stuff like that, right? Those conversations, all of those people that we did, we just mentioned, that we learned about in

[00:22:00] grad school that ends up teaching, those were still res conversations of resistance.

**Dan Dissinger:** You

**Danielle Lee:** know what I mean? Um, so when we're talking about love, we're talking about hope, and we're talking about decolonizing education, and we're talking about dehumanization, it's all part of the same machine with many cogs, right? And I think what drives the machine Is that as a society, we've gotten away from learning fact and education to I have to learn so I could pass this class so I could get this degree so I could get this job, as opposed to.

I don't know what the hell I'm doing. I'm going to, you know, get this education and figure it out, try to get the most out of it as possible so I can have a horizon. And I think most students are now pushed not to have the experience of school, but to what are you doing for a living? Because you're not going to [00:23:00] make it in the world.

So that survivalist rhetoric also exists, right? And it's, and I get it, right? Because I feel like. I'm still in a hustle, right? I'm still working and try to hit all the, all the targets and have a life. But then if you think of the people that are in different classes, right. Um, whether it's a lower, lower class or like a really high class, we're having the same struggles, just in different ways, because money doesn't solve a lack of education, but it doesn't solve.

Civility money doesn't solve a lot of things because you cannot eat money. You cannot make a house out of money. So when you have people that are housing insecure, um, they're financially insecure, um, they're worried about school, all these things, right? I, I wonder where in there are we teaching them civility for their own self care in a sense that [00:24:00] know who you are, stay strong in your values and beliefs, but also.

Allow space for people to think differently. And if you feel that that opinion is, is detrimental to your being, there are ways to go about it to push back against it. Right? But, you know, all these horrible, like, stereotypes that are being thrown into the media, right? You know, and I hate to go back to it, but it's a perfect example of eating dogs and cats, right?

Now,

**Dan Dissinger:** that

**Danielle Lee:** could have come out of anyone's mouth. That's the thing.

**Dan Dissinger:** Yeah.

**Danielle Lee:** And I'm not defending the speaker of those words at all. But I also realize that this person is also part of this rhetoric. This person didn't create the rhetoric that comes out of their mouth. We did. Didn't create it. So [00:25:00] how come no one could just take a minute and say, wait a minute, what actually am I trying to say?

What am I actually hearing? Am I willing to have a conversation, an uncomfortable conversation with this person just to see what's coming up for me that I'm so full of rage and so full of hatred. And all of these things, and I'm going to, I'm going to press on to make things as uncomfortable for you because you think so differently.

There's no civility.

**Dan Dissinger:** No, and I think, like, it's interesting, like, you bring that up because when I heard that, it was gross and horrifying, and it's now created other violence and stuff like that. And then I was thinking, hmm. What are other parallel converse other parallel things that have been said like that about other groups, right?

And I was thinking how you people especially in New York being from New York like and you living in New York as well Like living in New York in the lower, New York like Long [00:26:00] Island New, uh, you know, the five boroughs, right? Those, us as New Yorkers in those spaces, we have used rhetoric like that against upstate New Yorkers.

We have talked about them as if they were like people out in the streets eating squirrels. And we have said these things. And, and then I'm like, okay. None of this is okay. Like, I can't stand here saying that I am unblemished by the things that, like, I have no blemishes, like, saying things in, in those ways.

Right. And that is, again, not to defend, but being like, okay, if we're going to have the civil conversation, I have to be open to the fact that this rhetoric, like you said, is nothing, is not new, it is rhetoric that has been recycled over generations, and everyone has used very, like, Similar rhetoric against each other.

So this isn't like we understand it. We are hit by it because we've either use it or heard it on other ways. So [00:27:00] we are, we are in a cycle of dehumanization, dehumanization. We do the civility part has to be retaught. And I think like in a university setting and in schools, we are so bogged down at this point by trying to get students, like.

USC, like as my brain has gone, my brain works much faster than my mouth. So this is the way the podcast goes. Sorry. Yeah. In a writing program at USC, we're teaching writing rhetoric. We're teaching writing the essay, whatever. This semester I incorporated two books into my, into my curriculum. Now that seems like, oh wow, like, that's not that bad, because when I taught at SUNY Westbury, I taught four books, right?

Because like, I was, it was literature based, right?

**Danielle Lee:** Depends on the book.

**Dan Dissinger:** Yeah. So, it's funny, like, I've been having conversations with my colleagues, telling them like, They're like, wow, you're doing two books. I'm like, yeah. They're like, how do you find the time? And I'm like, I have to subtract from the things that I'm [00:28:00] like, well, why am I spending so much time with this?

What am I doing here? And also my students need the help to kind of. Read a full book because they don't, I've asked students before, they don't read full books that much anymore in school and that's not their fault. Like that is the education system shifting.

**Danielle Lee:** Yeah. And so like

**Dan Dissinger:** I, and so it's like, if we go back a little bit, right.

If we like take a step back and kind of go, what can I do with a book? Right. I've read so many books when I was in high school and in college, and that helps me understand. Because we have conversations and you hear people like we are not. We can't, if we don't, if we want people to talk in a civil way and practice a culture of dialogue and practice a culture of civility or practice a culture of like, I don't know, humanization, it has to be practiced.

You can't just theorize about it. I can't just give them a book, a paper and be like, see. All right, next one. [00:29:00] Yeah,

**Danielle Lee:** it doesn't, it doesn't work that way. You have to

**Dan Dissinger:** make choices. Like, and I think like, it's okay to choose one thing over another. And I think for me, my, the choice now has been like, I've been here, I can do this, my students are still writing projects, they're still doing that thing that they're supposed to do.

But there's got to be a better way because this is why he's not working. It's obvious that it's not working. I mean, it's absolutely obvious. So, like, we are screaming outside of ourselves. I feel like sometimes as a teacher, I'm always like, look at how bad the world can be. But then I'm like, what am I doing?

On my end, can I do something different? And it's like, if, I have to stop thinking, and we said, I said this before, before we started, like, Brera's telling us in that, in Pedagogy of the Depressed a lot of times, like, no one's gonna come save you. Realize that. So take control. Lord says that

**Danielle Lee:** too. Yeah, save yourself.

Yeah, I'm sorry. When you said [00:30:00] that, like, she popped in, you know, um, And that's from, um, the transformation of silence into, into action, right? Where your silence will not protect you. Right. And it's like, so I taught links and Hughes is, um, mulatto play last semester for my Harlem Renaissance class. And what I was shocked and surprised to learn is that how many of my students.

Didn't understand the whole biracial dynamics in slavery and, you know, how that manifests in this, in this actually one of the main characters, Robert, right. Who looks just like his slave, his slave master father, right. So he's biracial, he's white, he looks like his dad, but he's not afforded any of the privileges of looking like his father, right.

And my students were astounded by this and i'll give you one better [00:31:00] One student and this this person was a senior right at this point said I got a separate email saying I just want to let you know That i'm i'm really thankful that you're teaching this book I'm biracial and I have never in all my years been in a class where we even talk about it

**Dan Dissinger:** And

**Danielle Lee:** That person lives in a pretty swaggy district, right, where you would think they should be, but there's not.

So it's, it's like, wait a minute, how are you that disconnected from yourself? How are you not, and it's just, it just never occurred to her to delve deeper into finding other types of representation, right? Um, but that's also not the first time I've had that experience. And then I'm like, what are you learning?

What do you, what do you read? So by the time we get to the end of the play, which, you know, ended a really violent way and the whole thing, by the time it gets the end, my students are traumatized. [00:32:00] They're traumatized, right? So my thing is always at the end of class when I hear, God, Dr. Lee, why I'm so exhausted after your class.

And my thing is go watch Moana. I don't know. I don't know. I don't know what to tell you because this exists. It's right now, take a Drake and

**Dan Dissinger:** Kendrick.

**Danielle Lee:** So I gave them an assignment. Tell me what you think. So the assignment, the extra credit assignment was, I want you to listen. It was a particular, I don't know if it was a third or fourth diss track that Kendrick sent out.

And I said, I need you to explain to me why Kendrick Lamar's calling Drake white boy is violent. Mm hmm. Mm hmm. Yeah. And that was the extra credit assignment. And I was stunned at their responses, right? They only had to write like a couple of sentences. I got papers of, of how violent it is. And they never thought that of calling someone a [00:33:00] white boy was violent because they're so used to it being on the darker side.

Right. And so students couldn't wrap their brains. around it. And then they were like, you know, after thinking about what we learned in class, blah, blah, blah, I actually realized now that is rather violent because it was trying to dehumanize Drake, right? Um, to devalue his white side, right? And kind of bastardize his blackness.

And that's a, that's a Rapper so what are we, so you, you know, my point is this, we have students, we have people in society that are getting these messages over and over again because they have access to these messages. And we also live in a culture where in civility, right, is the smart, smart way to be.

And so the, um, civil people on civil people, um, use their performative civility based on class, based on money, based on a lot of different things, race and gender [00:34:00] too, right? They, they use it as a, as a weapon to further

marginalize, but at the same time they're marginalized, marginalizing themselves. So for me, it's always been like the more, more idiotic things you say, the more hostile, the more violent, the more racist, the more homophobic, xenophobic, all the things, the more you say it, the more you have dehumanized yourself because you've now outed yourself as someone that does not have a profound love, hope, or respect for all of humanity.

**Dan Dissinger:** And that's,

**Danielle Lee:** I

**Dan Dissinger:** mean, that is the biggest challenge, right? Like that, I think is when we, when I teach, when we talk about like pedagogy, depressed my students, like, well, how am I supposed to do this? I'm just like, well, I mean, that's the challenge. It's a lifelong journey. I'm like, you are constantly like Frere tells you, you, you practice, you reflect, you reflect.

And then you do it [00:35:00] again and it's reflection and praxis, praxis and reflection constantly like, and it's not going to be perfect and you're going to mess up and you're going to screw up. I mean, look, I mean, I'm a, I'm a white cisgender male, straight cisgender male from Long Island. Like I have, I mean, I've messed up, like, that's the way, like, that's the world.

Right. Like, but you then reflect. And then you listen, you reflect, you practice, you mess up, you reflect. If I rode a bike, and got on the bike, and fell off the first time, and then was like Never got back on again. I'd never learned to ride a bike. Right. But like you fall, fall off, you cut yourself, you mess up, you crash into people, you do a lot of different things.

Right. Like, I think we've come to a point where like purity is becoming this thing of it's getting in the way of our civility that, that we're, everyone has a purity test and there's no way to pass it. There's no way to pass it. Like you can't [00:36:00] pass a purity test. I mean, even bell hooks, some people like, Oh, you know, bell, you could probably find something that you don't like about bell hooks or Paulo Freire or any writer.

You're going to find something,

**Danielle Lee:** any writer,

**Dan Dissinger:** any writer. I mean, even, you know, What was his, was it Baldwin? You know, we've read Baldwin's essay on being white and other lies.

That was Baldwin, right? Yeah, yeah. Even in that, there's a couple, there's a few sentences or so where people are like, ooh, that sounds you know, a little this, a little that, like, you know, kinda, you know, and I'm like, yes, but if we do that, All the time to a point where like, we're never going to, we're just gonna have to sit isolated in our little spaces that I can't live in an echo chamber, like, and I think the messiness of.

And maybe this is just me now being 42 and like putting on like my old man pants and being like, there was a messiness in the nineties that I liked, you know, that was [00:37:00] just like, it was messy and terrible, but like, it was just like, when I first started teaching that in the early two thousands, mid two thousands and stuff like, you know, I was like the students.

Or we're willing to make the like, we're willing to take those risks because it was going to be okay. Right. And um, now, civility is a purity contest and it's just impossible to pass that. And I think like, we don't want to be, I don't want to be perfect. Like, then I have nothing to learn.

**Danielle Lee:** For real.

**Dan Dissinger:** And civility is about learning.

**Danielle Lee:** Civility is about learning. And I think what people fail to realize is civility, and you've said as much before in this conversation, that Civility also defines our individual humanity.

**Dan Dissinger:** Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

**Danielle Lee:** So if, if I'm gonna walk around hating this one, that, or the other thing, that has a direct effect on my, [00:38:00] my personal affect, how I treat myself, how I treat other people, how I treat my immediate friends and, and, and family, right?

Um, all of that, like, kind of, all of that is, is effective. So if I walk around, so as a black woman, Right? You hear a lot of people talking about living in a hostile world. That we live hostile lives. Because society is still, after all this time, hostile about us, right? So, you know, it's the classic trope of if I'm angry, I have to moderate how I express my anger because I'm a black woman and I don't want to be the angry black woman, right?

That alone has stripped away my humanity. That dehumanizes me because it's an expression of dis, of displeasure. You know what I mean? That makes me,

yeah, I am black. And I might be angry about that topic, but I don't stay in that space because I also love, I also [00:39:00] respect, I also fear, I was all the range of human emotions, right?

And I think for, for students now, it's less about the experience of higher education and more of where higher education is going to get me. And don't forget, we're also coming to this, this election cycle and all the things. You know, where people are still grieving from COVID, right? And that, I think the whole having to be isolated at home and all the things that we, we experienced that was dehumanizing too, because of our lack of agency.

And then we became suspicious of the person standing in back of us at the CVS. And I'll be honest with you during that whole time, I was like, man, why are you standing so close to me? Why aren't you no standing on your elbow? [00:40:00] Like it's basic! And I noticed, I was like, they're too close to me. And you know what?

I've kind of kept that and I think most of us have, right? Yeah. Where if I'm in line at CVS or wherever it is, and there's a whole bunch of going on the back of me, I'm doing this as if it's protecting me.

**Dan Dissinger:** Yeah.

**Danielle Lee:** Right. Um, so I think we have a few things going on at the same time, I think people as, as a, as a society, we still haven't healed.

Um, we haven't healed from online learning. We haven't healed from not getting together and becoming, you know, it was an era of the introvert, right? Um, in that, in that era, it was fine. And I benefited from that error, right? As an extroverted introvert. But I still, once, you know, life went back to normal, as they say, I still reached out for other humans.

I was still so happy to see other humans in, in person, right? So, but there's the other [00:41:00] people. That are like, ick, humans. And I've had that moment too. So, there's so many layers, right? We're coming out of, Being uncivil to family members that don't believe this, that or other thing, whether it's a vaccine, whether it's a treatment, you know, the whole range of the conversation is still ongoing, right?

And then smack dab, we have all the stuff that's happened. We have Gaza, we have Israel, we have Congo, Sudan, uh, you know, Appalachia. We have all these, all these things now that are so in our face. And I just think that

sometimes, and you said it before. More people are about self survival, but if you're trying to survive, don't you do it because you hope to get to a different place or is hope now just private property?

**Dan Dissinger:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Danielle Lee:** I hope I'm making sense.

**Dan Dissinger:** No, I mean, I think that the thing about even the topic of crisis culture and [00:42:00] civility in rhetoric is that I think what's interesting is that as a professor in writing and rhetoric, that we are. Having these conversations and thinking of rhetoric in this way where like, when we were grad students in, in school, like, you know, the idea was to teach, how do you do this thing, go into a classroom and teach writing, right?

That, that was like, that's what everyone, that was the thing, right? Like train to do that, right? conference papers and you know, whatever, go to conferences and stuff like that. Right. And add to your CV and whatever publish. Yeah. Right. Publish in a very specific way. Right. Like, yeah. Yeah. So, but you step into a classroom now, It's like a whole, it's a whole other world.

I, I've watched the classroom change from when I started teaching as an adjunct in [00:43:00] 2009 at Old Westbury to where I am now, 2024, being in a classroom and being like, this is a whole other world. And of course, I mean, look how, I mean, that's a lot of time passing, but still, like, even when I think about. How to approach all this while trying to stay hold of my own well being and then also Create a community of well being in my classroom.

There's no way to train for that. Like there's I mean

**Danielle Lee:** There is no way to train for it

**Dan Dissinger:** and then professors go into those classrooms and they don't care about that Or, you know, or in the workplace, there's like a wellbeing, forget wellbeing or in politics, forget wellbeing or this, like, because we have yet to be able to practice that for ourselves, we are constantly.

You know, productivity is the word that I want to like [00:44:00] cross out in the English language.

**Danielle Lee:** Yeah. Yeah. Because that's, that's, that's the, that's the rule that we live by as academics, right? Our productivity, our productivity. And just to,

just to go back to what you're saying about students. So I started teaching in 2011, right?

Um, so damn, that's 13 years now. And, and you're right. There has been a, there's been a definitive shift in students since then to now that I don't, when I started to where we are now are vastly different, right? And how I manage my own civility and how I manage my own humanity in the classroom space. I start with acknowledging everyone's humanity, and I warned them that we're going to learn about topics that are going to be really uncomfortable, but it's the discomfort where [00:45:00] magic comes from, right?

Magic happens. So let's talk about that, that discomfort and what we're talking about. So to go back to Hughes's play, Mulatto, um, my students were deeply, um, Disturbed. I also taught, um, Angelina, um, Grimpy Weld's, um, Rachel, right? Um, do you know that one?

**Dan Dissinger:** No, no.

**Danielle Lee:** So, uh, do you know Hughes's Mulatto? I should have asked you this before.

**Dan Dissinger:** I don't think I've read that one. I'm gonna have to read that.

**Danielle Lee:** So, the play is about this woman, Cora, Who has, I think, four children and her oldest child is Robert, and she had these children because of her, her sexual relationship with her master, with her slave master. So she ends up being in the house that the house made.

Right. Which is a really privileged position because she could sleep in a bed. Right? And all the things that slaves out in the field get, depending on the. The class of the slave master, right? Um, so Robert, like I was saying [00:46:00] before, is in this really intense identity crisis because I look just like him.

I've got gray eyes, but all you see is a tan because my mother is a slave, all this type of stuff, right? So my, my students really wrestled with this play because of how Cora, the mom, the slave, the mistress of the slave master, because of how she threats. About the slave master. She frets about her children too, but she talks about having a this love between herself and the slave master.

And my students were all about, oh, it's this, it's that, you know, it's a slave master in dynamics. And I go, but what about Cora? What about Cora? What's problematic about Cora's interpretation of her relationship with the slave

master? What's problematic about Hughes? Crafting this, this situation for [00:47:00] this, this black woman, right, who then by the end of the play is completely dehumanized because of what happens to her son as a result of racism and xenophobia and all that, right?

So my students get very confused. about A, Cora's love for Colonel Norwood is his name. And they also get very confused about whether or not it's okay to criticize Cora as a character because she's a black slave. And it's like, of course, because she's a human being. I think students have been taught like, Oh, don't talk about sleeves like that.

And it's like, you don't want to seem racist and all these things, but it's an honest conversation about what's happening. Right. Um, and then what was the other one I mentioned that that's the old age? What was it? Thank you. Rachel Rachel is the one that completely decimates my students because it's about this black woman.

Um, it's turn of the century in Harlem [00:48:00] and the way that Grimke writes this black family is there's no, um, slang. Everything is standardized English, very, you know, well educated, yada, yada, all the things. And over the course of the play, we see Rachel disintegrate from this very, very loving, warm, affectionate young woman that only wants to be a mother until the end of the play, when she realizes for herself that having bringing any more black children into the world is actually working for the devil and God has no, no place in it.

And my students are deeply, deeply affected by that. Some cry, you know, is no difference in the response between male and students, which I feel is really interesting, right? Because both And those in between, right? Gender fluid, non binary. There is this, [00:49:00] there is this deep sense of, um, what's the word I'm looking for?

Of despair? There's this deep sense of, of hurt for this character. But what's the difference between Rachel and Cora? Yes, one is in Slave Times, one is in Harlem Renaissance, but they're both, they're both marginalized. In very similar ways for the same reason, which is the system, which is the structure, the social structure.

And I try to spend as much time as I can kind of breaking down this system, breaking down things like intergenerational trauma, which blew their minds and, you know, it blew their minds about it, which I was, I was, I was so

stunned. I just did a regular diagram of examples of intergenerational trauma in either of those stories.

And I heard a student actually yell, that's what generational trauma is.

[00:50:00] Oh my God, I got that. And then there was a conversation among students about their own personal forms of that. I was, I was, I was stunned and excited. And turned on at the same time, right? Because I was like, Now we're getting somewhere.

Now we're finally getting somewhere. And then we could have that conversation about structure. I could go back to it and say, Okay, now do you understand what I mean about structure? And deconstructing the structure? And what that looks like for you? And all this other type of stuff. And they got it. But most of these kids were seniors.

You just got that now?

**Dan Dissinger:** Yeah,

**Danielle Lee:** you just got that now a semester before you're going out into the world or going into grad school You just got that now. So it's like I have a lot of hope I'm a person that believes in hope but I will say That in this current era we're in, it's really hard to hold on to it, [00:51:00] isn't

**Dan Dissinger:** it?

**Danielle Lee:** And the more, the more, you know, conversations that I witnessed or listened to, I noticed the more internally the Ajita creeps up. And then at some point. I have to disconnect. I have to, for my own mental health, for my own, my own sanity, you know, I had a conversation with my partner about all of this and he's like, you know, what do you think?

And all this type of stuff. And I said to him, I live, do you not see what I look like? And he, he kind of looked at me and I go, I cannot step out of my dehumanization. I mean, I can in my own personal space. I live it and I need a break and I think that's part of the problem too Why people are so uncivil is that because that's what you were saying earlier about people [00:52:00] really feeling beaten down And if you look at a lot of the people that go to these these rallies And talk about their views and all the other views that have popped up that in my opinion do nothing but perpetuate Hate and bring us backwards as a human society When I, when I want certain things, I wonder about that person's humanity.

What happened to you? Seriously, who hurt you? Who hurt you so bad that you accelerated, you use that to accelerate you all the way up to this position that can impact lives and rather than helping people because you've been hurt, you decide to turn your hurt into more hurt. So for me. There are, and I've said this before, there are a lot of layers and there are a lot of [00:53:00] issues that I think were, you know, born from self hatred, fear, lots of ignorance and miseducation.

I think there's also a level of self hatred, right? Because I've looked at myself and said, did you, did you do enough? What have you, what have you done? You teach this, do you, do you, do you actually practice it? Right. So I think it's, we'll be thinking about civility and rhetoric. If we don't have money, if we don't have housing security, if we don't have all the things that we are insecure, when I look at people that demonstrate wealth, I always wonder, what did you have to sacrifice of yourself in here to get that?

Because I'm not willing to go where you are. To be in that position Right. So [00:54:00] when you think about hurt and I I look at these people and I see how how they're dressed on both sides How they're dressed what they're saying I try to see into that humanity And I always say oh my god, what happened to you to get this way?

And I wish more people and i'm not justifying Any rhetoric i'm not justifying You You know, any, any hate or anything like that, even, even my, my view, I still hold space for humanity. I said that before. Right. But when I look at these people, aside from the disgust of certain things I hear, Oh my God, what happened to you?

And I wish we were having more conversations about, you know, larger conversations about what has happened to us. that we are so hurt. How do we, how do we [00:55:00] repair that hurt? Approach the hurt? How do we open a forum about hurt? Because this is a thing. I think people are so hurt. I know I'm not qualified to have most of these conversations.

**Dan Dissinger:** Right. And in higher ed they, they kind of like are, are, uh, we are unqualified, but yet we become the, we become the, the, the receiver of, A lot of it, especially in rhetoric and English, like I feel like it's, it's just comes with the job unofficially,

**Danielle Lee:** which is, which is, which is, which is terrible, right?

Absolutely. Because I wish an intro to the profession that there was a unit on all the stuff that goes on. Um, When we engage with each other, when we engage with administration, when we engage in, and I'll, I'll tell you, I'll tell you this since I, I mean, I'm still faculty, but, um, now that I've become a faculty administrator, I have [00:56:00] had the unpleasantness of a rhetoric that says, Ooh, you went to the dark side.

And, um, I, so I finally, after I heard that several times, I got really pissed off, I'll just say it plainly. And I said to somebody. Let me ask you a question. Why do you want me to be unhappy in my position? And oh, oh, oh, I don't, I don't, I'm like, no, no, no, no. Because you didn't come here to say, Hey, how are you liking what you're doing?

Are you having a good time? Are you enjoying it? Are you getting support? It's, Oh, he went to the dark side. And then some people won't even speak to me. So when we're dealing with incivility, where we get our bread and butter every day, You know, it's going to have this exponential effect. Right. And, uh, and it, and it takes, it takes a lot of [00:57:00] fortitude to not go in that direction.

You know, I, I love everybody and all that type of stuff, but that takes a lot of energy and it takes a lot of work

**Dan Dissinger:** to

**Danielle Lee:** hold that space for someone that I've, that, that has said something so disgusting or whatever, however I feel it is. Right. Yeah. It's, you know, It's, it's rough. I don't, I don't know that there is a solution, a satisfying solution to what we're talking about.

**Dan Dissinger:** But, you know, I've been thinking as you're, you were talking and I'm like, okay, what can I like, there's gotta be a question as we're winding down that I can ask to be like, not as a solution. Because even with, Even when we get to the end of like Pedagogy of the Oppressed, my students are always like very unsatisfied with the book in a way.

Well, there's two ways of looking at it. There's no like middle ground. People usually really love it and people usually are like, I don't know what this is because like he doesn't give you any solution. And I'm like, well, that's [00:58:00] the core of what he's saying. Because if he tells you how to liberate yourself, he contradicts everything he just wrote about.

**Danielle Lee:** Everything.

**Dan Dissinger:** He is telling you, you have to do it. And that's a lot of work and the work is going to come within. And I've been like switching how to teach that book from like, we're not using it as a cultural critique all the time. You have to use it as a self reflection because you're part of the culture.

And I think sometimes higher education does this thing a lot of times in classrooms where we. As critics or academics or I don't even like that word academic anymore. I just try to like, not use it, but let's use it. So academics, like we, we do that thing to critique the culture around me as if it's in a Petri dish and as if I'm not part of the thing, right?

Like, it's like, I don't, it's like, it's as if I don't play a part in it. [00:59:00] If I like truly look at it, I have to be part of it. Cause whatever I do is going to affect the next person and will affect the next person and my actions makes people either make people upset, sad, or happy, or it will just, or I can, or I might hurt somebody or my silence hurt somebody or, and these are all things I do.

Right. Like, and I think that's the part that we have to, that's hard to accept in terms of like the culture of crisis we're in and this place of uncivility is incivility is that like we. Sometimes we don't want to accept the fact that we play a role in it and that I want to be like I'm not the problem.

It's like, but you don't live isolated from the culture. You are in the culture. So your actions play a role in creating other actions a year. And so like, when I think of higher education [01:00:00] as a whole, um, I'm like, well, like, let's put it out there. Like, as our last question, kind of being, If there's one thing, like if there's something that we could change or something that like we feel like would be part of and now, you know, as you're in your administrative role and you're in your faculty role and everything like, and you see all these sides, right?

And I feel like what is something that we either see that you might see missing that we can incorporate or things that are something that's like, even we could take away, right? Because sometimes it's not about adding, maybe it's something we trim from what we believe has to be done. Like, do you, is there something that maybe sticks out?

To you or something that I kind of go, Hmm, maybe we can, what would be something? And I know that's a large question.

**Danielle Lee:** It's a very large question, but let me ask you this. I'm going to, I'm going to answer your question with a question. Why do you, or why did you, when we were in our program at St. John's, right? [01:01:00]

Why did you want to teach?

**Dan Dissinger:** Yeah, I will.

**Danielle Lee:** It'd be a question, right? It's a big question. I'm asking for it, but I'm, um, I'm asking it in response to your question for a reason.

**Dan Dissinger:** I'm going to answer this with like, kind of an anecdote a little bit. Okay. So a little one, minus any names, right? So the first time I walked into a classroom, I was told, you're, you know, everything, the student knows nothing, you'll be okay. And I was like, okay, right. That was like a very, like, it was interesting because I was coming in three weeks into the semester.

So I was very nervous about the whole thing. I'd never taught a class before. I tried to be someone I wasn't and I had to change very quickly. When I did that, I [01:02:00] started to see students like light up and I was like, whoa, that's, that's amazing. Like, that's really great. And when I got to St. John's and I like chose this really much more chose this career more because as an adjunct at an MFA, I had yet to choose.

I feel like going into the doctoral program, I feel like I made a very specific choice in career. I felt like I wanted to be part of something that I felt when I was a student. Oh my god, I guess this is really why. In many ways, failed me as a majority, in majority failed me. Like, I had a collection of teachers that were unbelievable teachers and I will, they are precious to me forever.

But on a whole, I feel like, I was failed and I knew I can do it better and there were things that I needed that weren't [01:03:00] provided and I was like, I see that I want to do that. I can do that. And I felt like that's probably, that is why I do this. Why I continue, even when I question what I'm doing every semester, sometimes I'm so exhausted being like, what, why am I here?

Why am I doing this to myself? Because sometimes I feel that way. This is a job where like, sometimes like I'm choosing to do this to myself because I don't have to teach the way I teach. No one is watching me do that, but I do it. Why do I do that to myself? And I think that's. That's where it comes in.

**Danielle Lee:** So I think the reason why you do it.

It's because of hope, hope is such a really misunderstood word, I think it is a misused word.

**Dan Dissinger:** Yeah.

**Danielle Lee:** Um, and I only, I only came to this, to this position. Um, you know, um, I worked on a book with Nicole Sieben, a little Westbury, right. That

**Dan Dissinger:** out.

**Danielle Lee:** Oh, shout out to the call Sieben, [01:04:00] um, who works in hope. And it wasn't until I started working on, I wrote that chapter that I was like, that's what hope is.

I think hope is at the basis of it, right? And I think people think the word hope is really hokey, but it's not because when I started teaching, right, I remember the first time I walked into a classroom, I was driven to help students see themselves as more than just. So my rhetoric has always been, you're not just a student, you're not just 19, you are already in society, you are already a member of society, you're already practicing all the doctrines and the limitations and all that type of stuff that society comes with, so you gotta cut that crap out now.

And over the years, I've realized that not only, not only am I trying to get [01:05:00] students to see themselves, but also, I'm also trying to see more of myself.

**Dan Dissinger:** Oh my God. I was just thinking in my head. I was like, that's the other part. To

**Danielle Lee:** see more of myself. I remember being so hungry and I still am hungry for knowledge.

I still am hungry to learn about other cultures I've never heard of before. I'm still Indiana Jones in a lot of ways in my head, right? I just don't have giant balls chasing me, right? Thank God. So. Um, but my curiosity and my, my drive to see a student's eyes light up because They've gotten something because I remember what that felt like.

I remember walking into old Westbury feeling like, how the hell am I going to get through college? Am I smart enough? I don't know enough. And that sentiment lasted all throughout my graduate, you know, education, regardless of having the PhD and all of that stuff. Right. And it took [01:06:00] me many years and it was only recently to realize that I'm trying to reach myself.

**Dan Dissinger:** And

**Danielle Lee:** when I hear back from students. feeds me and shapes me and influences me because I try to absorb as much of what my students are sharing with me personally offline. And as we're reading these texts that deal with these really, really, really heavy topics. And I have a diverse classroom of, you know, gender identity differences and race and biracial and all these things, age, all of that.

And it's like, for me, it's like looking into a timeline of my own life. So where do I want to be and, and how can I help students identify place they even might

**Dan Dissinger:** want to be?

**Danielle Lee:** And I don't, I don't know how many of our colleagues. Specifically our burnt out ones. I don't [01:07:00] know how many of our colleagues in this industry have that much strength.

It's students and it's faculty and it's staff and it's administration, because everybody's got the world on their shoulders. And COVID, the pandemic really, really, really, really, really messed with people's sense of the, or their fragility about humanity. And then their own fragility. So you have people feeling fragile, traumatized, trying to recover.

Things are changing, you know, and economically for people. And you have all these layers of trauma and hurt, right? Happening. What, what, what hope does hope have for me? It's education because this is what I do. And I don't know how else to help my own humanity. And bring somebody along with me, much less [01:08:00] a classroom of people, but we try, don't we?

Because if we stop trying, then we've given in to that incivility, I think. If I, if I, if I walk into a classroom, like, or if I'm thinking about my class, like, Oh God, I got a T dial. If I have any of that, I've already filled myself in them.

**Dan Dissinger:** So one more question, then we're going to wrap up because we're It's a

**Danielle Lee:** lot, but I love it. I love it.

**Dan Dissinger:** If you could, uh, if you bring one book into the cloud, like if you could recommend the audience to this podcast carnival, and again, shout out to Charles woods for putting this together. 5th annual podcast carnival, big rhetorical pit pockets for carnival.

**Danielle Lee:** It's awesome. Thank you.

**Dan Dissinger:** Great event. Everyone check out all the podcasters that are doing this to this, go back, keep going back. You can go back to the first one. They go and listen to all of them. They're so great. Um, and, um, [01:09:00] and just. Check out the keynote on October 31st. So if you could recommend a book or anything, it doesn't even have to be a book.

Do you feel like something in terms of this conversation that, um, they could take away with them or something that they could do, or like in that case, what could you recommend? You feel like

**Danielle Lee:** yikes.

As I look around, I don't, to be honest with you,

my recommendation is not about, you know, a book. Or song or anything. My recommendation is this for all the listeners out there, for those of you, for those of us, right, that have an emotion that pops up when we're [01:10:00] hearing something in this climate that we disagree with, I implore people to feel and then reflect and then decide what their practice is going to be.

And more importantly. When you decide on that practice after your reflection,

what decision are you going to make? Are you going to make the decision to jump into the fray to help realign the discourse so that the discourse is productive? Or are you going to join that, that other side because that discourse appeals to you? And I implore you to ask yourself what hurt space is that coming from?

What hope space is Is that coming from? That's [01:11:00] what I would recommend. It's all internal. And it's not even about what your grandmama taught you, what your nana, what your nana, what your mimo, and all these things, right? It's not about that. It's you as a human being, in this reality right now. Where does your hope sit?

Where is it? And when you feel these really strong emotions, is there a better way to process it? Or is there a different way to process it so that you're not perpetuating more hate? Into the world and what I, and as I say this, I'm thinking of, um, Octavia Butler's, um, parable of the sower. And I really feel, I mean, I guess that's a recommendation, right?

But I would recommend the graphic novel version. Of that because what's happening in that graphic novel in that novel is going on right

**Dan Dissinger:** now

**Danielle Lee:** Right, and I think it's useful to read a book like that as you as you follow the protagonist's journey through all the things that we've talked about incivility and race and economics and Since [01:12:00] the breakdown of society all that stuff.

This book was written. What was it? I don't know 20 30 years ago. I forget exactly when it was written. I should know. Um When you read that book, it is so disruptive to whatever matrix you choose to live in. I'll just say it that way, but I would rec, I guess that's a recommendation, right? Yeah. I don't know how you feel.

I want to, I want to end with knowing how this conversation has affected you.

**Dan Dissinger:** Hmm. Oh me.

**Danielle Lee:** You, yes, you, you,

**Dan Dissinger:** I've been, uh, well, one, it's just, I'm just so happy to be talking to you. Cause it's been a while. It's been a

**Danielle Lee:** while. My friend.

**Dan Dissinger:** And, um, and I feel like when I, when I feel it makes me, it refills the well of hope for me.

Right. Because like, there are people. Yeah. Like you and [01:13:00] my other colleague, it's lots of colleagues, but let's do a shout out Stephanie Renee Payne, who, you know, we did the podcast with, and she's been on so many episodes, you know, go ahead, listen to episode two or one. I don't know if it gets, it's one, the first episode we did of writing remakes where she, she did the very first episode, but that we are out there.

Doing this work. It's hard work, but I feel like when I talk to people that are, that are doing work like this, not just like in the classroom, but also we're, we're open enough to know that we have to do this work for on ourselves, like, and knowing that, like, there are people like aware of that. I'm like, okay.

We're gonna get through this like we're gonna get through this no matter what happens. We're gonna get through this. We are Here we're going to help each other. We're going to love one another and as community out there I'm not alone right that that's like [01:14:00] especially as an educator. Sometimes you feel like am I the only one?

Like what is happening and we're not like, it's just the way it feels sometimes, like, especially with the rushing around and you don't sometimes see colleagues and like, you know, the, you don't get to have those communal conversations, especially after COVID, like a lot of meetings. So like, it's like, well, we're out there and we can create that community.

We're still there. And so it gives me that. And I'm, I'm hopeful and happy feeling and just know that, okay. I'm also doing, this is why I'm also grateful for this podcast. Like this podcast has been my way to kind of hopefully give people access to these ideas that can't call into my classroom in a very privileged place.

Not that my classrooms are privileged. Privileged place to school is, you know, it's like to get past the fence and the walls of USC, it's, it's a lot to get there, [01:15:00] but I'm glad that I have this and I can share these ideas. And, you know, and with everyone and all the people that are really awesome that I've met my life and people like you, who've been in my life for this long, like, I'm just happy that I could do this for, for, for everyone.

And just also for myself and for us. So it just gives me that hope as we're moving into a place where people feel like less hopeful. It's a thing in the end. The next day, every day we wake up, we still have to live with one another and it's going to be there. Danielle, thank you so much for doing this.

**Danielle Lee:** Thank you. Thank you. I, I, I feel so hopeful and I feel rejuvenated by this conversation.

**Dan Dissinger:** Yeah.

**Danielle Lee:** And I hope that, you know, people who listen, you know, hopefully reach out, say something. You know, I'm happy to engage in conversation. I'm happy to, you know, like, so thank you Dan for creating this space.

**Dan Dissinger:** Yeah.

**Danielle Lee:** Right. And I think if people want to have conversations like that, they should [01:16:00] just reach out.

**Dan Dissinger:** And I think that's the thing. I think it's okay to have these conversations. I think, and I, it feels very cliche going, like, we need to have these conversations, have these conversations. I think I've heard the words and phrases.

We need to have these conversations so much in the last four years, eight years, probably Hey.

**Danielle Lee:** Hey. Hey. Hey. It's like.

**Dan Dissinger:** Well then it's time to have them and have them so we could have like just do it like and I think that's a Whole other practice, right? But I'm so happy that this episode is gonna come out Thank you again, Charles Woods and the big rhetorical podcast and you can follow writing remix on instagram at writing remix pod I do have an ex account, but I don't know how to get into it anymore.

So Instagram, Instagram threads at writing remix pod and, uh, follow, share this episode in a rate and review. That's really helps a lot. And, uh, if you want to listen to something. Funny and less serious or sometimes [01:17:00] serious. You could listen to my other podcasts and nostalgia has podcasts, which is

**Danielle Lee:** awesome, by the way,

**Dan Dissinger:** it's crazy.

We're also on our way. I don't know when this is, when this comes out, we'll not sure if those episodes, the other episodes will be released, but we're starting a Metallica eras podcast. Uh, series. So we just did the thrash era and we're going to move into other eras of it. Um, after thrash, that's going to be really difficult, but I think like, um, we have that up at that podcast and also shout out to my colleagues and everyone at the humanities podcast network.

Um, in November, we have our symposium virtual symposium. Check it out on invent bright register is free and then they'll all be recorded and released. But thank you everyone. and hopefully listen to everyone else on the Big Rhetorical Podcast Carnival. Danielle, thank you.

**Danielle Lee:** Thank you.