

Down for Change: Envision a Different

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SPEAKERS

Ravia Saeed, Emily Loui, Amy Liu, Olivia Michael

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Olivia Michael 00:12

I'm passionate about community health and well-being.

Ravia Saeed 00:16

I'm passionate about refugees.

Amy Liu 00:18

I'm passionate about addressing health inequity and ensuring that everyone has access to health care.

Ravia Saeed 00:23

I'm very passionate about health in lower income communities.

Olivia Michael 00:27

I'm passionate about basic needs.

Amy Liu 00:30

I'm passionate about advocating for women's rights.

Ravia Saeed 00:33

I'm very passionate about getting resources to lower income communities in America.

Olivia Michael 00:39

I'm passionate about good health.

Ravia Saeed 00:41

I'm very passionate about people in other countries who don't have access to resources such as food, water, and education.

Amy Liu 00:51

I'm passionate about fighting against systemic racism.

Olivia Michael 00:54

I'm passionate about mental health.

Emily Loui 00:57

Hi, and welcome to Triton Tools and Tidbits. My name is Emily Loui and I am a Triton Changemaker. Today, we are going to talk to three other Triton Changemakers, Olivia Michael, Ravia Saeed, and Amy Liu. But most importantly, you're going to gain an insider look at what it means to be a changemaker, how you can become a changemaker and learn additional tips.

Olivia Michael 01:23

Project-building always starts with the passion. Hello, my name is Olivia Michael, I use she/her/hers pronouns, and I'm a third year from Muir College. I'm studying cognitive-behavioral neuroscience and global health. I got started in changemaking primarily through my work in the Center for Student Involvement. But it's kind of blossomed into a couple other things, just through the different communities that I'm a part of at UCSD. And I've just been learning more about it over the past three years at UCSD. I'm definitely the kind of person that will see something and want to do something about it. And then my personal abilities will just kind of fall into place within that. And so, for me, yeah - it's identifying my passion and what I want to do, and then using my specific strengths to help me achieve those things.

Ravia Saeed 02:13

I'm more interested in projects. There are certain concepts or ideas that I want to see going forward. There are so many issues that I see in our world today. And I've been exposed to certain areas of concern that impact our world. Hi, my name is Ravia [?]. I'm a fourth-year public health major at UCSD completing my Bachelor's this year. I'm very involved in projects that I really want to succeed, that I want to be out there, and even better in the future. And that's why I might be involved in this process. I feel more like a middleman and intermediary, if anything. And I think that that's something very critical in changemaking, is having something you're very passionate about. Because it really helps your drive. It helps you not burn out when you're working towards something because you see - even the smallest reward is a huge change. And that really satisfying.

Amy Liu 03:10

What I feel is the most important skill set for you to really have is perseverance and passion for your project. Despite all the bad things going on, is your project what you wake up to, and think "Wow, I'm so passionate about this. I love what I'm doing - I will just get through all these bad things and just keep going,"? Hi, my name is Amy Liu. I am currently a first-year medical student at UCSD. And I guess I was involved in change making. I have my own startup [through which] I'm trying to increase access to health care for everyone. That's how I got started.

Emily Loui 03:53

The United Nations puts out a series of goals called the UN Sustainability Goals. The Sustainable Development Goals or Global Goals are a collection of 17 interlinked Global Goals designed to be a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. If you're interested in seeing the goals, please feel free to visit the link to the UN Sustainability Goal list in the episode description.

Olivia Michael 04:21

My issue and what I've been passionate about for the past three years—and I started when I got to UCSD—is really just well-being within a community; health and well-being. That started when I first got here - I got involved with basic needs on the UCSD campus. And that has evolved into many different things. I was definitely in the place when I got to campus - googling "what are basic needs," "what is community well-being." I had no idea. I've definitely grown a lot in that mindset since I came to school, but it definitely started on Google. My passion falls under a lot of UN Sustainability Goals because health is such a broad topic, and a lot of them cover good health. But specifically, goal number three is good health and well-being. So, I would say that that's the one that corresponds most to my change-making events and activities.

Ravia Saeed 05:15

It all started with my major. My major is public health. I chose that major because I knew I wanted to be in the health field. I knew there were so many access issues, just seeing my family and many other low-income communities. And I knew that there needed to be some change. I knew right away that I wanted to focus on refugee health. Research helped me even understand that "Wow, there really are not that many resources for refugees, who would be in reduced inequalities, as well as quality of education."

Amy Liu 05:48

My startup partners in life - we're working on an on-demand, geo-located mobile app, so that we can help coordinate healthcare providers. What that means is that - say that you're in your home, and you want to see a doctor, because in the time of COVID you might be thinking "Oh, I want to see a healthcare provider because I'm not feeling so good. But I don't want to go out right now I don't feel super comfortable." It could be 3am, and the only option is the ER, and that's expensive. Or you feel so anxious that you don't want to wait the next day for urgent care. So, with a tap of a button in our app, we have a healthcare provider come to you. So, you can think of it as Uber for health care. The one that fits the most for me is the good health and well-being. I think that was a good [?]. I think all their goals are great. But I think this is where ensuring healthy lives and - promote the wellbeing for all, at all ages. And I totally think that's what we're trying to do.

Olivia Michael 06:46

I think change is necessary because without it, we get stuck in a cycle of things that don't allow us to move forward, don't allow us to adapt to something new. For me, a change-maker is someone who sees something that needs to happen and doesn't sit idly by. They don't learn about something in class and think "Oh, that's cool. Okay, time to go eat lunch," but they try to - they go on Google and they search, "What's being done about this? And how can I change this?" And then maybe they'll find something and they'll click on it, and they'll find a way to become involved. Or they'll go talk to the professor after class and ask if there's anything going on campus about it. I think a changemaker is someone who becomes active when they hear something and it gets their wheels turning - not just gets the wheels turning, but also gets the car moving, so that they actually want to do something instead of just sit idly by and let it pass them. When I first heard about changemaking during my freshman year, it honestly sounded sort of big and scary - like this huge thing that you had to do in order to be a UCSD student and accomplish all of these things. But I think as I learned more about what changemaking was, and how different it is, from person-to-person, I learned a lot about how unique changemaking was, and how it really can be so specific to what you're passionate about, and what you want to do. I

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think that over the course of the past three years, I've been able to see that changemaking is really finding something that you're excited about, that gets your wheels turning, and then just doing what you feel is necessary to make something happen for the better.

Ravia Saeed 08:32

I do like to focus on my community and local. Working local is something that I really tried to stick to, which is why I'm not looking at it in a global sense yet. I am really focusing in on the San Diego community in LA, and just in SoCal currently. So, I'm starting very, very local. And hopefully in the future, I'll be able to see this in a more global sense.

Amy Liu 08:55

I guess I didn't really consider myself a changemaker. I think that was a relatively new term for me. And then I think I've heard people saying things like, "Oh, you're kind of trying to change the world." When I started, I was thinking "I'm going to disrupt health care. Right now, the way health care is, you just need to change the status quo." I didn't really coordinate that with changemaking. But then now it's starting to click. And I think in the end, what I really think about changemaking is just really doing everything you can for the better of mankind. I think I've just been like, "Oh, I guess changemaking is part of the process when you're trying to disrupt any sort of inequality, or any sort of systems that are in place are not fair to everyone."

Olivia Michael 09:36

Change is a scary word because it makes it seem like you have to solve every little element of a problem in order to contribute. But I think it's important to understand that change isn't a one-and-done thing. It's a lot of little elements that go together in order to do something. I think it's important to realize that you're not making change to fix the entire problem, but you're contributing to a larger solution.

Amy Liu 10:02

I definitely get a lot of impostor syndrome. I think it's very common among women, people of color, to feel impostor syndrome. I'm pretty sure I - at least - have impostor syndrome. If not every week, then maybe a couple of times a day. But I think in the end, it's really kind of reminding yourself, and just talking to other people - your friends, your family, mentors that you might have - just letting them know what you're doing. And then I feel when they say "You're genuinely doing a good job," I think you should take it upon yourself to believe that you are doing a good job. It's definitely out there. I am definitely not always as confident as I seem to be. And there are times that I'm like, "Oh no, I don't even know if I can do this." But I think it's important - especially as a changemaker - to find people who are very supportive of your goals, your dreams, and what you want to do for the world. And actively reach out to them if you're ever feeling down to give you the strength to just keep moving on.

Olivia Michael 11:19

Asking for help is okay. If you feel like you don't know what's going on, or you feel like you're just not doing anything, or alone in a process, you can always reach out to people, even if you don't know them, and ask them what they think about your project, ask what they think about what you're doing. It always turns out really great. Humans love to support each other. And they're not going to say, "Oh, I don't want to help you with this project." They're always going to want to help you move forward. And you can even talk to your friends who have nothing to do with the project that you're working on, and ask,

"Hey, can I run a couple ideas past you?" Because they'll always have ideas too. Just being really open and ready to hear feedback from people is something that I wish that I knew would really help me. And not being afraid to try new things and jump into things. And just starting small with bouncing ideas off of people, and then trying them out, and just pushing forward through everything.

Ravia Saeed 12:23

I really want to find people who have resources for refugees. So obviously government employees - those are very useful to have some kind of partnership there. Because the more you inform them, the more they'll know where to allocate funds. Especially for me, I have met so many people, and I keep in contact with them because I know that each and every one of them is so important in this school.

Olivia Michael 12:48

I've never sent more emails in my life than when I'm trying to build partnerships and connect with other people. And I will say email is a great resource. Reaching out is the first step to building those community partnerships. And then really fostering that relationship and keeping in touch with people is a great tip, too.

Amy Liu 13:07

Obviously, in the beginning, I was like, "Why is everyone rejecting me?" And it's normal. It's normal to be rejected, as sucky as it is. But eventually you will find that one person that will just be like, "Wow... this is a yes for me." In terms of skills, I think it's really important for you to put yourself out there. I really put myself out there. Over time, you just kind of get used to that - you face a lot of rejections - but you will find that one person and I have found those people. And there have been no's, and they do hurt, but it's not personal. Don't ever take it as personal - you just kind of move on.

Olivia Michael 13:46

Google is a great resource. I definitely heavily rely on Google because it will bring me to places on, even our own university website, where I can find connections to the issues that I'm passionate about. It brings me to articles where I can learn more about what's going on. It brings me to YouTube videos. And so, I think Google is important because it's a great connector.

Amy Liu 14:10

At UCSD, The Basement has been, definitely, the best resource for me. A lot of my mentors were from The Basement, when I did the Converge Incubator, which is also part of The Basement. I'm the Innovation Ambassador for the UC Big Ideas program. I people are interested in making social impact, that's definitely a good resource for them. CGIU is definitely - the Clinton Global Initiative - is definitely a good resource. And there's other incubators at Rady as well. My startup - XX - are, so those are definitely some options.

Ravia Saeed 14:45

What is your passion? What do you want to do? What is something that will make you feel the most like you have truly accomplished something? That something has changed in your life and someone else's?

Emily Loui 14:57

Triton changemakers - if you are unsure of the next steps, here are a few things that can get help you get started. The first step is that you want to assess yourself. What are you passionate about? What do you care about? And if you're feeling like there's so many things in the world to be passionate about, and don't know where to start, start with the UN Sustainability Goals. That can help give you some ideas. Think about what characteristics you want to emulate. I noticed that all the changemakers that I admire are courageous - they all stood up and went against what the norms of society were, for that time. The second step is to assess the community that you are hoping to address. Before you take any actions, the most important step is to really understand the community that you're going to be working with. You also want to understand what's already being done - you don't want to recreate the wheel if another entity is already doing that. The third step is to find resources. Now, there's a plethora of resources at UC San Diego. But luckily, a lot of them are compiled on the changemaker website. Look in the show notes, and you will see the link to that changemaker website. And the third step is to create an action plan.

Olivia Michael 16:17

One of my strengths is I am an absolute planner, I love planning with all of my heart. And that really helps me to keep the big picture in mind. I constantly make lists and have goals and plans of everything that I want to accomplish. But I'm also extremely organized and know what it takes to accomplish something larger. So, I have lists of little things that I need to do in order to reach the next step. And that's something that I found extremely useful for visualizing what I want to do within changemaking.

Ravia Saeed 16:48

For me, it's being very flexible. I think that I'm someone who - as soon as I join any kind of new job - I settle in very quickly. I'm the kind of person who will try to ask questions, or try to read up by myself, just to figure out what exactly is going on - how can I help?

Amy Liu 17:07

The qualities that I had growing up, which I brought onto my startup is being proactive. And, as weird as it might sound, learning to be ambitious. I think I had to teach myself and learn that it's okay to want more, to do more. I started off having no skills. I'll put it at that. I didn't start off with any skills. The first interaction I had was a total fumble. I was in the process of introducing myself and then I just froze. There I was, just a statue, and they were staring at me for a good time. You don't have to start off having a very large skill set in terms of networking in general. I think you develop those over time.

Olivia Michael 17:49

One of the strengths that I've learned in my changemaking path has been community organizing, and depending more on people within my community. Before coming to UCSD, I'd never really worked on large-scale projects where I was asking other people within my community for help or collaboration. One of the strengths that I've developed is reaching out to other students, professors, mentors, and even people within the larger San Diego community, and asking if they'll help. And sometimes people will just fall into place. Once I have those people who are willing to help, or want to help - then establishing how I can have them contribute to the project, following up about what they can do and how we're working together to create something.

Olivia Michael 17:52

When you see how bad it is for someone, and then you see any kind of progress, it'll inspire you to see how lives change. And I think that that'll push someone... they will begin to [practice] time management. They'll begin to have good time management, they'll become flexible, they'll be very responsible, they'll work it out, they'll make sure that everything goes into their schedule to make things happen.

Olivia Michael 19:05

Some of the things that I'm still trying to work on are making my projects more large-scale, reaching out to more people, and trying to take steps forward with the work that I'm doing. I think it's easy for me to create a project, start working on it, and then not try to innovate ways to change things up or try something new.

Ravia Saeed 19:33

I definitely believe every UCSD student can be a changemaker. I think that every student here at UCSD has it in them. They all have something they want to change

Amy Liu 19:45

Right now, I feel like there's a lot of systemic inequality, so not everyone will really have the opportunity to be a change maker. Because for some people, there just might be so many more barriers that they have to overcome to get to the point where you think that you can become a changemaker. And so, with that said, I think it's definitely possible to reach that goal that every Triton is a changemaker

Olivia Michael 20:10

100%, every Triton can be a changemaker. Changemaking doesn't mean that you're solving a huge problem on your own and doing all of these huge, miraculous feats of wonder and change. But I think changemaking can be something that every Triton can accomplish. I think it takes support from other Tritons, who are changemakers, or other Tritons within the community, and conversations about changemaking, and starting projects, and doing things, because there's a lot of support that comes from comes from a horizontal view. If we each support each other and work on change together, it makes the whole process a lot easier.

Amy Liu 20:56

I think right now we're in a time where a lot of change needs to happen. You might be stuck at home right now, but I think even if you are, it's still a place where you can start creating change for the world. I think a lot of great stuff that is out there in the world have come from people's basements. And so maybe what comes - it could be you, and it just came out of your bedroom, your house, your apartment, wherever you are. So definitely, if you are passionate about something, give it a go.

Ravia Saeed 20:59

Change never starts at the highest skill. Nothing starts immediately and is completely solved immediately. Right? There are always small changes that happen, small victories that come through before the final victory or even a very huge triumph. There are always these small things, and we can't forget about those victories. Those are very, very critical. And I think a lot of students - even I lacked confidence. We think, "I didn't really do much at this at this time. This entire month. All I did was one-on-one meetings with this refugee, I didn't create some large-scale impact." But even the small lessons

that we have - we see that there's definitely a change, even if it's small. There is a change, and that will build your confidence. Don't lack confidence, be you, and you will definitely create change.

Emily Loui 22:27

Thank you so much for joining us on this episode about changemaking, and I'd like to give a special thanks to Triton Changemakers Olivia Michael, Ravia Saeed, and Amy Liu. If you're interested about learning more about changemaking, or getting more resources for your changemaking work, please visit the changemaker website that is in the episode description. I've been Emily Loui for another episode of Triton Tools and Tidbits. If everyone is a changemaker, there's no way a problem could outrun a solution. Have a wonderful week changemakers.