



# LEADING CHANGE: BREAK DOWN BARRIERS TO EQUALITY

## VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

### **JIMMY ETHEREDGE 00:10**

I guess the question I've got is, can you share with us like, what have you experienced in the business world? What's your sense of what needs to change?

### **will.i.am 00:18**

Well, if you think of like NBA and NFL, if you were to look at them as a philanthropic charity organisation, they do awesome work. Because in every single junior high school, other high schools and even elementary schools! There's a basketball court to learn that skill set in every, you know, privileged neighborhood in every, you know, developing neighborhood, basketball courts are everywhere! And if the like tech business can learn from making sure that skill set or their skill set is like democratized, and everyone has access to it, the way the NFL does, the NBA does, the MLB does; I think we would have you know, a stabler tomorrow.

### **JIMMY ETHEREDGE 01:08**

I think technology can help address some of these issues of inequality. But you know, it can also create further divide, it can create further challenges for unity and equality. And having someone like yourself, who is able to really work across so many different fields, and share, you know, your perspectives on the ways that AI and technology and autonomous technology are going to change. What that means for the next generation? And how we make sure we don't have others be left behind is really important. So, we really appreciate everything that you do in that space Will.

### **will.i.am 01:51**

Thank you so much, Jimmy, and thank you, throughout the years, that Accenture has been there to help with our efforts. So, Accenture has been great partners, great collaborators, and great doers of good. So, thank you guys!

### **JIMMY ETHEREDGE 02:06**

Well appreciate it. I mean, I think, you know, if you're going to talk the talk, you've got to walk the walk. And I think that's why we've been very transparent with our goals around diversity within our organisation and continuing to try to, you know, raise our game with that. But I know when I'm out talking to people, and we do these, we call them building bridges sessions. What seems to impact people the most is really to hear from others about their lived experiences, about how they have experienced racism and inequality. And it's one of the ways that I think really helps educates those that are not around as much of a diverse community. Is there anything you'd like to share kind of about your lived experiences?

### **will.i.am 02:49**

It's gotten to the point where, like, you grow numb to it, because you're so used to the way the police are trained in your community, and how aggressive they are. And you really don't know the difference until like, what growing up in the 80's up until Rodney King, I thought every neighborhood had that, you know, police force, with an over exaggeration of the word force



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I thought every neighborhood was that way I thought people in Brentwood were afraid of the cops the way we were afraid of the cops in Boyle Heights. But that's not the case! So, my experience with racism was fear of your protector, that's a weird thing where the people that are supposed to be protecting you, you're afraid of. So that was the haunting the consistent haunting of racism. And then, you know, as I got older, looking at the way the neighborhood was configured with liquor stores, check cashing on the same block as a motel as the same block as the bad food. Right, so that zoning is not in Brentwood. It's not in Santa Monica, how toxic it is in the hood. So that system at that systemic zoning is connected to the trials and tribulations and the hurdles that people of colour have to, you know, undergo. And then the amount of money that is that is invested in a child's education in the hood versus the amount of money that's invested in a kid's education in Brentwood or other communities that are affluent. And so just as I got older, I saw the business of racism! The business model is inhumane!

### **JIMMY ETHEREDGE 04:57**

Yeah, I completely agree with you Will, and we did some analysis looking at Atlanta, for example, with where's innovation happening? And what you saw is almost all of the incubators, labs, startup environments, were all in the nice neighborhoods. And there was a real divide with others for entrepreneurship.

And some of these challenges, these systemic challenges that are not limited to just as you said, health and education but other areas. What do we need to do to help pave paths for black entrepreneurs?

### **will.i.am 05:35**

I would say we're not waiting for people to empower us. We're waiting for the roadblocks to be broken down. And there's these like invisible walls, these glass ceilings that you don't really realise that are there. Except for entertainment and sports, Michael Jordan, loving sports to being the best at sports, to, you know, Jordan attire and Jordan apparel to owning a team. We've shown that we can do that. But for some reason, then there's like, anomalies when it comes to our community. It's like one of and that's enough, one's not enough. We need more Jordans! Right. And not only that, but we also need it in the tech sector. We need to go from I love tech, to I am the best at Tech, to I own this tech. And we need more of those because we haven't even started there. We started with Beats and then we sold it to Apple. Look what we can do with headphones! Look what we did with the brand Sennheiser, didn't realise that, you know, an urban brand can outsell them in headphones. Sony didn't see us coming. You know. So, we we've shown that we can become entrepreneurs and do extraordinary things and all these different sectors.



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There are just these invisible roadblocks. Diversity is not only you know we need to diversify our workforce and have more people of colour there. That's awesome and that's needed. But we also need the other and that is we need black successful companies!

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