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From high school computer science classes all the way up to VC partner meetings, women and people of color remain underrepresented in the technology ecosystem. Even so, diversity-focused social scientist and venture capitalist Freeda Kapor Klein is hopeful about the future of technology and entrepreneurship. As a partner at Kapor Capital, she provides seed-stage funding to technology startups that make a positive social impact on low-income communities and communities of color. Drawing on her work both as an investor and a diversity researcher, she offers strategies that founders and funders alike can pursue to make the tech world more diverse and inclusive.



## Transcript

(pensive synthesized music) - [Announcer] Who you are defines how you build.. - So I wanna talk about the current situation in the tech ecosystem.. This is Ryan Craig who's Managing Partner of what used to be know as University Ventures and recently changed their name.. And he says, those of us under age 50 have known nothing but a bull market in inequality.. Little bit, wake you up, make you think.. And our next quote.. Genius is evenly distributed by zip code.. Opportunity is not.. So that drives a lot of what we do at Kapor Capital and the other organizations that I'll be talking about briefly.. So I wanna talk about a few things here..

I wanna talk about our current climate.. What we're seeing in tech especially in employee activism, in CEO activism.. #MeToo, how that's come into the tech ecosystem.. Challenges, access and inequality.. A question being raised very recently, who is indeed self-made? Is this country, is any educational institution including the one where we are now, a real meritocracy? And why or why not? Wanna talk about a leaky tech pipeline.. There's lots of debate on is there or is there not a pipeline problem.. Talk a little bit about a study we did about who leaves tech and why.. Then I'm gonna go into Kapor Capital.. Our investment criteria, our founder's commitment.. Who we are, a little bit about who's in our portfolio..

And why I'm incredibly hopeful.. POT Companies is not what you think although we did our first cannabis investment recently.. POT Companies, People Ops Tech.. We have, this will be the fifth year.. We're running a People Ops Tech pitch competition looking at seeds stage tech startups that are leveraging that technology to mitigate bias in all aspects of sourcing, hiring interviewing, promotion, compensation performance review, succession planning.. And then SMASH.. SMASH is a Summer Math and Science Honors Academy program I co-founded 16 years ago.. Has a chapter actually on this very campus.. And then some ideas to ponder as we move into questions.. So here's some things that have been going on very recently in our tech ecosystem..

We had 20,000 Google employees walk out in November over responses to a sexual harassment situation about someone who left with a 90 million dollar severance packet.. And also, more recently, challenging a board member for the AI organization and 2,500 Googlers signed a petition to get that person removed.. We have a very new climate of employee activism in tech.. I would not have predicted that and it's popping up lots of places.. This is the new AI council where the 2,500 employees this is within the last week demanding this person not be present.. Then you've got CEO activism.. You've got somebody saying I'm gonna take a hit to my profits.. I'm not gonna sell guns anymore.. You've got executives seeing positive impact on their companies for taking what they see as a social values-based kind of stand.. Nike, in promoting Colin Kaepernick took a bold, clear stand on a divisive issue and earned six billion dollars in the process..

And we're seeing both what are seen as blue and red companies CEOs are saying that they can't sit on the sidelines.. So used to be that our workplaces were a little bit of a safe space from politics and now they're sort of right there in the middle of it which poses big questions for you as engineers as leaders, future leaders about what stand do you take.. What kind of company do you work for? So we've seen a lot going on.. #MeToo, there's a new group.. Actually our foundation is one of the 11 foundations that we've pooled 20 million dollars to go support the on-the-ground work of women organizing domestic workers, hotel workers, farm workers tech workers, Hollywood.. So we're seeing a lot going on in individual workplaces in reaction to #MeToo.. Those of you who've been looking at it in the tech sector you know that CEOs have lost their jobs, like

SoFi because of harassment.. You know that venture capitalists have been kicked out of their firms.. Firms have imploded, like Binary.. So these are current and troubling issues..

We've got this either or view of diversity and inclusion in the tech ecosystem.. For any of you who are on Twitter you'll see these debates about there is a pipeline problem, there isn't a pipeline problem.. It's a tech culture problem.. I think that's the wrong framing whichever way you look at it.. I think we've gotta set of systemic biases and barriers that explain our pipeline problem and that explain the ways in which tech culture are not really inclusive to everyone.. And we're not talking about bigots.. We're not talking about intent here.. We're talking about what has grown up and the ways in which biases have gotten filtered into our systems which is what got the Googlers riled up about AI because of the fears about the bias that gets built into AI.. We have something going on now.. You may have seen Kylie Jenner described as a self-made billionaire..

And a lot of people said, what? What is self-made about what she's done? She was born on 3rd base.. She didn't hit a home run.. She might have gotten walked in.. And then we see things that are actually affecting this very campus with the college admissions scandal.. So we're trying to figure out what is a meritocracy.. We can have the aspiration to be a meritocracy.. There's some very interesting, rigorous research on that second headline there.. Meritocracy doesn't exist and believing it does is bad for you.. There's some really interesting, it's mostly out of the field of social psychology about what happens when companies put in meritocratic processes.. There's a professor at Sloane School at MIT who's written about the paradox of meritocracy and what happens when meritocracy is an explicit goal of a company..

Managers make less meritocratic decisions because they think somebody else has taken care of it.. Quite fascinating.. So here is an interesting thing when we look at are we self-made or not.. This is, is success determined by luck? And the percent who answered yes by income.. So the higher your income, the less likely you are to say that happened by luck.. The more likely you are to say, I did that all by myself.. The less income you have, the more you will say luck is a huge factor there.. So I wanna walk you through a couple of composites.. I have been working on college admissions.. I've been working on college access programs for a few decades now and I wanna illustrate this issue about the biases that underlie things that get us to have a tech system that looks like what we do..

So let's take a couple of composite characters.. We'll call 'em Brandon and Juanita.. And this while they're in K12 education.. So somebody's got high tech computer labs in their school.. Somebody's got no science labs, no computer labs.. Completely accidents of zip code.. I don't know.. Anybody in this room choose their parents? Anybody choose the zip code in which you were born.. That's what these issues that we're wrestling with today are asking us to think about it.. So when does the teacher think you're gonna succeed? We know you're gonna go far..

When do you get those messages of encouragement? And when do you have low teacher expectations? When does the teacher say I think that's too many AP classes for you.. Uh, I don't think you're Stanford material.. That gets said every day to high school students from low-income backgrounds.. So going about how many AP classes are taken.. I'm working with a bunch of college admissions officers now to look at, we ought to be thinking about the denominator of AP classes when we're looking at college admissions.. If you took three AP classes in high school and you're up against somebody who took 27 I wanna know if you took all three of the ones offered at your school and the one who took 27 took half of the AP classes.. It tells you, gives you a whole different vantage point on those students.. So we wanna make sure that we are indeed rewarding merit or achievement not rewarding access or privilege.. Who's got afterschool STEM programs? Who works after school? Whose family hires them an SAT coach? Who can't afford an SAT class? Do any college admissions applications ask how many times you took the SAT? Maybe we oughta think about ways that we could actually do that.. Try to move along here to college..

Go to a Top 10 school.. Go to the community college so that you can save money and live at home.. How do you pay for school? If your family, if you're lucky enough to have your family pay for school, which is wonderful it means you can participate in lots of things.. It means you can take a job at a startup.. If you're graduating with six figures in loans you're not going to be able to afford a startup salary.. So we right away determine by birth who has access to what kind of future.. Who can afford an unpaid internship? Only somebody who's got somebody else to support them.. So there are many folks that are now trying to make unpaid internships illegal, if you will.. Or not permissible.. Who's gotta work part-time over the summer to put food on their family's table? Who has a role model? There's a lot of fascinating literature..

There's a Professor Buju Dasgupta at UMass Amherst who's done a study for women of color, any racial minority woman, if you have one professor in four or five years that looks like you it makes a statistically significantly difference in your major and your grade point average.. So we ought to think about just who is it that you're exposed to as role models and how different that makes the outcome.. Who can hire a tutor? Who can't even go to the free study session because they gotta have a work-study job.. And so we just forget about all of these subtle barriers that nobody put in anybody's way intentionally.. Nobody said, aha, let's make it much harder for Juanita than Brandon.. But day-to-day life is indeed much harder.. So let's look at what happens as we go to the workplace.. Who sends recruiters to your college? Recruiters don't go to community colleges.. Who submits resumes cold? Who taps a personal network? Who doesn't know anyone? I'll talk a little about our SMASH program but most of our SMASH scholars from the Bay Area don't know anyone who works in tech.. That's pretty amazing..

Coming in via employee referral.. Employee referral is one of the most biased hiring mechanisms that exists.. Because in this country our friendships and there's a non-profit that's done a lot of research on this all of us tend to have friends who look like us whatever group we are in.. Which means if you've got a perfectly diverse workplace an employee referral system is great because it will continue that.. If you don't have a diverse company, employee base and you put an employee referral system in it's actually just gonna replicate who's still here.. So the same thing.. Who feels like they can, the salary differences.. We're getting a lot of attention paid to pay equity these days.. Who feels like they can negotiate? Who gets punished if they negotiate? Who feels at home in the workplace culture and who feels like, I don't really fit? Who gets promoted in the first year? And who becomes a leaver? And that's what our tech leaver study was all about.. Who leaves tech and why? Single greatest reason that women of color leave tech is being passed over for promotion..

For those who aren't quite sure about is there a pipeline problem or not let me just very quickly show you AP Computer Science Test Takers by Race and Ethnicity.. And so you've got, the darker bar is the K-12 population and the lighter bar is AP Computer Science participation.. So you can just see, for white, for Asian.. You can see the differences by racial and ethnic group about who has access to, who takes AP Computer Science.. So by looking at that we understand we don't have a steady pipeline.. So if you combine Hispanic, Latinx, Black, African-American grand total is 16%.. Gender, AP Computer Science Test Takers.. Just under 1/4 are women.. That is the pipeline problem.. What explains that is the bias problem..

Technical Employees by Race at top tech companies.. Large tech companies in particular.. Venture-backed founders by race and ethnicity.. Latinx don't even get, come up there.. So, Pre-K12 education.. This is about women and girls of color in computing.. This was a big collaborative of about 15 researchers that we are participating in.. Melinda Gates' Pivotal Ventures group is participating in.. Researchers from across the country trying to figure out how to get more girls and women of all backgrounds into computing, and getting in tech, and staying in tech.. Among all women employed in computer and information science occupations only 12% are Black or Latinx..

And you see the tech companies spending a lot of time and a lot of money trying to work on diversity and not having the baseline data to work from.. 80% of new small businesses are started by Black women but they account for less than 4% of the VC money.. So again, it's not about a lack of an entrepreneurial appetite.. It's again an access issue.. So the tech leaver study that I mentioned that you can get, you can just Google it.. It's on the web for free.. Couple of thousand of engineers, who leaves tech and why? It was done two years ago.. Four findings.. Unfairness drives turnover, costs billions a year.. Experiences differ dramatically between groups but specific initiatives can and do make a difference if they're formulated accurately..

37% said that unfair treatment was the most frequently cited reason for leaving.. Twice as many left because they felt treated unfairly in their workplace as were recruited away.. And that's across all groups.. And the unfairness differs.. 40% men of color were most likely to leave due to unfair treatment.. Experiences differed dramatically across those groups.. And this includes things that are not about race or about gender.. These include things like bullying.. One in 10 women experienced unwanted sexual attention which has, as we talked about, been getting more attention.. 30% women of color passed over for promotion single greatest reason..

Turnover, 16 billion dollars for unfair treatment in employee replacement costs annually.. And that's just the turnover costs.. It's fairly standardly and conservatively accepted what is the cost to replace a person.. So it'd be cheaper to fix it.. We also asked the leavers what would have made you stay? And we asked them how their experience impacts their willingness to refer a friend, a family member someone else to that company.. So, 35%, slightly more than a third, said no.. Based on my experience I can't recommend that company as a place to work nor can I recommend its products and services.. So you wanna try to calculate that cost that is one that is not in the 16 billion.. Economists don't agree on how to calculate that kind of reputational hit.. But the good news, a comprehensive approach can and does make a difference both in reducing unfair treatment and in increasing retention or reducing turnover..

So the majority, if you ask people, what would have kept you? They have an answer.. The majority would have stayed if they felt like there was a place to go to get their problem fixed.. And we're not talking about a formal complaint.. We're not talking about a lawsuit.. We're talking about practical problem-solving mechanisms where they feel like who they can go to is impartial an impartial third party, for instance.. There were five specific measures we tested for.. Having a head of diversity and inclusion.. Doesn't make a statistically significant difference either in the amount of unfairness or the amount of turnover.. Second thing.. Here are all the ones we tested for..

Setting explicit diversity goals.. And under-represented employee referral bonuses.. Actually those two independently make a statistically significant difference.. Conducting unconscious bias training does not.. How many of you have gone through unconscious bias training? Didn't make a difference, right? Wasted some time.. Might have been fun, might have been interesting.. Doesn't make a statistically significant difference in reducing unfairness or increasing retention.. Employee resource groups.. Many companies, virtually all tech companies including young startups have employee resource groups.. And indeed, those can be great ways to meet colleagues compare notes on who's a good manager how do you get promoted around here..

But again, doesn't make a statistically significant difference.. What does make a difference actually besides these two

individual kinds of initiatives is all five together.. All five make more of a difference than just those two independently.. So I wanna switch to something else which is how do you create companies that take all this information into account? So I know you're talking about social impact companies you're talking about SPARKS you're talking about sustainability.. There's a prevailing view that social impact is separate from economic value.. And that investing in social enterprises means is concessionary towards returns that you're giving those up.. We actually don't think about that at Kapor Capital.. We think the other way to think about it is that the overlap of social impact and economic value you can find that both are driven from the same source.. So here are our investment criteria.. We have about 130 companies in our portfolio..

We're going to be releasing our returns for the first time ever on May 8th.. We do seed-stage tech startups.. The core business, not the philanthropic effort not the CSR, not a side effort.. The core business closes gaps of access and/or opportunity and/or outcome for low-income communities and/or communities of color.. We have not found any problem with deal flow.. People were very worried about that.. We had more than 3,000 deals come across our desks last year.. And we invest in somewhere between 10 and 15 a year.. In 2016, we became the first venture capital firm to implement a founder's commitment.. That was January of 2016..

We don't write a check unless the CEO makes a commitment to building a welcoming culture and a diverse team.. We are not prescriptive at all.. We say to our founders, depending on who your customers are we think that your aspiration should be that your employee mix matches your customer base.. And if you think about it it sounds like a good business practice.. So if you're selling into public schools in the U.S.. K12 you're gonna have a very different demographic than if you are a fintech company and you are a B2B company and your clients are Wall Street.. So all of this is on the website.. Those are some of our companies.. You might recognize some names there.. So when we ask them how to implement this we ask them to look at four things..

And there's an acronym of G.I.V.E.. here.. Set goals, and again, they set their own goals.. We're not prescribing it.. We're asking them to set goals that help them realize their business goals.. We ask them to invest in tools and resources and training that are gonna help them mitigate bias in their product development, in their hiring that again is just gonna make them a better business.. We encourage them to volunteer with either underrepresented communities or encourage their employees to or especially to figure out how their employees can volunteer with groups that are representative of their customers of their customer base.. Part of basic customer development.. And then the final one is about educating oneself as a CEO, as a founder, as well as your workforce.. That is our team..

We will tell you, I will tell you in a minute.. Half of our partners are African-American.. Not your standard VC issue.. 3/4 of our investment team come from underrepresented backgrounds either Black or Latinx.. Another one here.. We're slightly more than half women.. Over half of our investments have a founder who is a woman and/or a person from an underrepresented background.. It skipped it.. The last one said, an independent study something called Project Diane listed us as having invested in, there it is, having invested in more Black women founders than any other venture capital firm.. Which is kind of sad because we're small..

And it's not just by percentage, it is by absolute number.. So I'm gonna give you some examples of three of our founders and their businesses.. That's Phaedra on the left, Ellis-Lamkins, CEO of Promise.. Was a YC company.. We were her first investor.. She is looking at alternatives to cash bail.. That's a very prevalent issue in our criminal justice system debate right now.. That's an issue.. Criminal justice reform is a bi-partisan issue.. A majority of Democrats and Republicans are supporting massive criminal justice reform including alternatives to cash bail..

The overwhelming majority north of 70% of people who are sitting in county jails are there because they have not yet been arraigned and they couldn't afford bail.. So what happens while they're sitting there for a couple weeks? They lose their jobs.. You lose your job, you're not paying your rent.. You lose your home, you lose your kids.. And a significant number are there for unpaid parking tickets.. There are just these systemic ways in this society that just are the snowball effects.. So Promise is working on many things.. Bringing some efficiency to the criminal justice system.. Interjecting some tech in there.. What she's found traveling around the country talking to places right here in California..

Criminal justice system uses FileMaker Pro.. I don't know if any of you even remember FileMaker Pro.. People are sitting in there waiting for their drug test results.. And they can be waiting for a couple of weeks because the systems don't talk to each other.. And somebody has to get the drug test result back on a piece of paper and they have to re-input it and then they print it out and then they fax it to the jail.. All of this could be done, of course, instantaneously.. It could save taxpayers billions of dollars and most importantly it could save lives.. It could save livelihoods, it could save families.. So that's what Promise, that's what Phaedra is all about.. Genius Plaza, Ana Roca-Castro is the founder..

She is currently serving more than 15 million of the world's poorest students children around the globe.. She landed in Cambodia today, she just texted me.. She was in Africa last week.. Her platform is available in more than 100 languages including tribal languages around the Amazon and tribal languages in Africa.. She has a lot of non-dilutive funding from places like the World Bank to do things in different languages.. She is highly profitable while doing amazing gap-closing work.. Her company is based in Miami and she literally has Sand Hill Road VCs hopping in their private jets, showing up at her office saying I brought my checkbook and I'm not leaving until I invest.. And she says, tell me about the diversity of your

partners.. I don't take money from VCs that don't have a diverse partnership.. Ana's aspiration is to go public and I'm on her board and she's got the revenues to do it this year..

She's not going to go out this year.. But I'll tell ya when all three of these become household names and the other dozens in our portfolio some different firms will sit up and take notice.. Donnel at BlocPower is doing energy retrofits in core urban community buildings.. Churches, schools, community centers, housing projects.. So he's New York-based.. Ana is Miami-based, Phaedra is Oakland-based.. Just three examples.. I mentioned our People Ops Tech pitch competition.. These are examples at some of the companies in our portfolio that are building companies using tech to mitigate bias at scale.. So everything from Compass, which is a fairly new investment on our part..

Compensation, everything.. Stock, bonuses, base pay, everything into one system.. 'Cause again, those are computer systems.. HR is running something different than payroll is running something different than succession planning.. How do you do that and how do you monitor for pay equity? The one above it, tEquitable is a tech-enabled ombuds.. Way to get practical, neutral, confidential problem-solving advice.. SMASH I mentioned.. Our Summer Math and Science Honors Academy.. Started 16 years ago.. Stanford was our second campus..

Berkeley was our first campus.. These are kids from public schools.. 40, 50, 60% drop-out rates.. 16-years in we have 100% high school graduation rate.. We have 100% acceptance to four-year colleges rate.. We are twice the national average.. Our kids, all underrepresented, half girls since day one.. Our kids are pursuing STEM majors at twice the national average for all students.. We're launching in Chicago at the Illinois Institute of Chicago.. This year we're in Carbondale and we're opening at Northeastern in Boston and trying to change tech..

Some ideas to ponder and some things to spark your questions.. This is my last slide here.. So what if we measured distance traveled instead of just finish lines? What if we could actually measure how far you got on your own steam instead of how many degrees, how many certificates how many points on a test you got? And wouldn't we find a different kind of trait? Certainly where I sit, I understand that SAT scores and GPAs are not predictors of successful entrepreneurs.. I'm looking for what are those traits that predict successful entrepreneurs.. We talked, what I showed you in the stories of Brandon and Juanita is in essence really a leaky tech pipeline.. Where are all the places that talent leaks out? We've got more than a million unfilled tech jobs right now in this country.. And as we clamp down on immigration we are slowing our own GDP we are slowing our own innovation by letting talent leak out of our homegrown system.. What if we started measuring capabilities instead of pedigrees? What if we looked at, as we do on our investment criteria what's a gap-closing company versus a gap-widening company? A very prominent local VC reached out to me about two weeks ago now and said I've a company I think you're interested in.. Founded by two women.. I said, great, tell me about it..

Organic baby food, margins north of 50%.. What's the business model? Affluent families.. Not gonna touch it.. That's gap widening.. When you run a business that promotes health disparities I don't want to help you.. If you start a business that promotes disparities in educational outcomes I don't want to help you.. I want people who want to close those gaps not widen those gaps.. And again as we think about this whether you're a founder, an aspiring founder an investor, a limited partner, an employee an aspiring employee at a tech startup I will assume that everybody in this room is well-intentioned.. That if I asked you do you want to make your co-workers' life miserable? Do you want to exhibit bias towards your colleagues every day? You would say absolutely not.. But what we need to start focusing on is the impact..

It's not enough to just be well-intentioned.. We gotta look at the outcomes.. If we have people leaving, dropping out of the pipeline dropping out of tech companies dropping out of the entrepreneurial journey in such disproportionate numbers I'm a researcher, there's gotta be a reason and we need to figure out what it is.. And so we're not accusing anybody of anything.. We're saying, let's look at the impact.. Let's look at who our educational institutions and our workplaces, especially our startups are designed by and for and see if we can fix that.. Okay, time for questions.. Those of some of our SMASH Scholars.. Thank you.. (audience applauds) Toby, kick us off..

- [Toby] How much blowback did you get for your [Uber letter and what were your lessons learned? - So, does everybody know what he's referring to? Got a lot of heads shaking no.. So we are a seed-stage investor in Uber.. Not a bad position to be in.. And two years ago, after Susan Fowler wrote her blog post about what it was like as a woman engineer to work there we wrote a public letter.. We being my husband and myself.. My husband is the founder of Lotus Development the creator of Lotus 1-2-3 spreadsheet founder of Electronic Frontier Foundation founding board chair of Mozilla.. So, Mitch and I wrote a letter that said this is not okay.. We've been talking to you about these issues for a long time.. You call us every time there's an issue.. We give you advice and you don't follow it..

If an employee writing that blog post isn't enough your investors, that all of us need to take a stand on what kind of companies there are.. The blowback we got.. So first of all, we got a lot of positive.. We got a lot of people saying thank you for saying it.. I've been thinking that but I wouldn't stick my neck out.. Which, you can just put those folks over in a group and decide if that's okay or not.. But what was fascinating is Ana, the one in the middle Ana Roca Castro of Genius Plaza of three of the entrepreneurs I profiled for you.. Ana, I was onstage with her at South by Southwest dot EDU two years ago about a month or so after we had written that letter and she said, she popped this surprise thing in front of the audience on me.. She said, so what would you say.. A prominent investor whose name you would all recognize right here came up to me at a

meeting last, came up to Ana at a meeting last week and said you oughta remove them as investors..

They'll turn on you the way they turned on Uber.. And what Ana said is that's why I wanted them on as investors and I will never let your firm invest in my company.. Is what she said to that person's face.. So when we all take a stand, we know who we are.. And entrepreneurs, we say to our entrepreneurs every day of the week be really careful about who's on your cap table.. It's a different kind of marriage, it's a marriage.. They're there as long, until you have an exit and they're the ones that can throw you out.. - [Man] Given what you've told us about your criteria for investment, gap-closing rather than gap-widening why would you invest in Uber in the first place given it's gig employment model which is arguably gap-widening? - Very good question.. So, we invested in Uber in 2009.. We became 100% gap-closing investing in 2011..

And our returns that we're releasing are 2011 through the end of 2017 100% of a gap-closing portfolio.. And we ask ourselves a lot would we do that investment today.. Knowing what we know now, no.. But at the early part, we're not sure.. One of the earliest studies that was done of Uber was that African-American men who are physicians who are lawyers, who are getting out of the hospital leaving a law firm at midnight in New York City, could not get a taxi.. Uber became an incredibly important way for communities that were ignored by the taxi industry to get a safe ride home.. That's important.. There are all kinds of other things.. I mean, as my husband often says about Uber.. It's a great second job, it is not a great first job..

So I talk to Uber drivers all the time who, and any of you who use any of the ride-hailing companies they've become a bit of commodities now and most drivers drive for Lyft and Uber in the U.S.. And you ask 'em, and a lot of them are saying somebody I had recently said, look, I'm studying to install solar roof panels.. And when I was a contract car service driver I couldn't do that.. I had fixed hours and if I didn't like my hours and so I could never get the classes I needed.. Now, I can take my classes, I can drive when I want.. During finals week I don't drive at all and I am on my way to that degree that I could get no other way.. So you have to think about all of the trade-offs and I think that your point is well-taken.. Yes.. - [Woman] So one of your first slides was about people under the age of 50.. And do you have a long-term view of what's happened? I worked in the industry 30 years ago and from what I'm hearing now things have gotten worse for women in a lot of ways..

What's your perspective on what's changed what happened, kind of like your diagnosis of that and obviously you have great ideas about how to fix stuff.. But things got worse in this area.. - Things got much worse.. So there were more women getting computer science degrees and working in tech in the 1980s then there are now.. And there are a bunch of reasons for that and a lot of people have written about that.. And if you want, I know we're trying to watch time a little bit here but if you wanna talk about that I am happy to talk about it.. And a lot of things are being published now.. A lot of folks are saying.. So first of all, startups, Internet startups.. It's a whole different kind of culture than the companies that were around in the '80s..

I mean, we were sort of one of the first software.. Back then it was packaged software, right? Sold in computer stores.. People don't even know what that is today.. But if you think about the hardware companies.. If you've seen a movie like Hidden Figures you know that the early, early, early work of computer scientists, programmers, it was women's work.. It was thought to be clerical.. And so there's a whole, what happens during wars and women getting recruited in and then pushed out of the workplace.. So there are many, many, many factors.. But your point is important.. There were many more..

The proportion of women technologists, computer scientists in companies, especially in large tech companies was much greater and has gone down steadily.. It's on an uptick again because of all of these programs and all of the attention to it but that's a very recent uptick.. Another question, yes sir.. - [Man] There's a lot of focus on diversity and inclusion in the tech industry.. Is that objectively worse than in places like Wall Street or other types of industries or is that there is just more awareness in there? - The numbers, the representation in tech is worse than just about any other sector.. It's also a sector with huge opportunity.. With more than, as I mentioned, more than a million open, current jobs.. So it is an industry that needs to attract talent.. So that mismatch is even greater.. Yes..

- We have time for one more question.. - You're it.. - [Woman] So this is kind of a loaded question.. But.. - Good.. - I am kind of, you're talking a lot about diversity and inclusion and speaking in terms of poverty I think that a huge issue that comes with this is the widening wealth gap in America and how much wealth people actually control which could be generational wealth or for other reasons.. I know Steve could probably talk about this forever but what do you think are the clear next steps that we should be taking either as individuals or like as a country towards tackling the huge problem which is so big influence even if you are investing in the companies that you are you are still being born into these inputs that can't get them into a school's districts very well.. - I think it's a great question and I think it's a perfect thing as you kick off a whole look at values.. I think the tech ecosystem as a whole needs to hold up a mirror on many of these issues including our, I'm not saying that I haven't been part of it I have, for decades the tech ecosystem's responsibility for hastening and exacerbating wealth inequality in this country and therefore I would say a heightened responsibility to fix it.. There are a lot of very specific things..

I mean about as unpopular with venture capitalists as our Uber letter was our public statements about getting rid of carried interest.. There's an awful lot that can and should be done that would begin to close some of those gaps.. But again, as a researcher or if you wanted to look at it as a lean startup perspective understanding the breadth, depth and nuance of the problem is really the first step to solving it and I think we haven't done that in a real deep thoughtful, nuanced, iterative way..

(audience applauds) (synthesizer music)..