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Nina Strassner: If you search inside yourself, I think each and every one will find situations where he or she felt like the other person or not normal. And this is what we want to eliminate. Not that everyone is like the same, but that everyone has the same sense of belonging in all this. So this is how the journey is progressing.

Ezequiel Massa: Just use your voice to stand up for those people who have been underrepresented for so long and still are because many of them have been silenced for too long, not because they don't have their own voice, but because no one's willing to listen. So you have the power to make that change happen.

Elisabeth Riemann: Welcome to a special Thought Leaders episode for Pride Month with Nina Strassner and Ezequiel Massa, we talk about what Pride Month means to us as individuals, as a community, and at a corporate level. We also focus on personal stories behind the rainbow, the activities of the Pride@SAP community, and learn what we can do to make the world a brighter place for us all. I'm your host, Elisabeth Riemann. Let me introduce you to Nina and Ezequiel. Nina Strassner is Head of Diversity and People Programs at SAP SE. Nina is responsible for diversity measures and HR programs for SAP employees in Germany. Before joining the SAP management team in 2019, Nina previously worked as a lawyer and specialist in labor law for almost 12 years. She's a lecturer and business editor, has published a book on family and labor law topics. She writes columns in Brigitte MOM and Wirtschaftswoche and has a golden blogger 2018 badge on her backpack. Ezequiel Massa is Head of Diversity and Inclusion for SAP Latin America and Caribbean. Ezequiel started his career as Senior Finance Operations Specialist at SAP Argentina back in 2011. His passion for equal opportunity and creating a sustainable corporate culture led him to join SAP's Diversity and Inclusion initiatives in 2015 as a volunteer. In his six year tenure with D&I, he's helped nurture a welcoming work environment for all, irrespective of gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or its expression, ethnicity, race, generation, culture or ability. Since April 2020, he works as Head of Diversity and Inclusion for Latin America and the Caribbean. Let's say hello. Hello, Nina, and hello, Ezekiel, welcome, both of you to openSAP Invites Thought Leaders.

Nina Strassner: Hi, Lizzie.

Ezequiel Massa: Hi Lizzie.

Elisabeth Riemann: Employees are the heart and soul of any company, and this is so true of SAP, too. And like many others, I'm really proud to be part of a globally diverse workforce. Companies, though, as we know, are often criticized for using diversity and inclusion as buzzwords. So while talking, the talk is one thing. Actually walking the talk can pose significant challenges and this is one of the many reasons why I've been really looking forward to our conversation so that we can learn more about Pride@SAP and also the initiatives of the LGBT+ community, importantly including its friends and supporters. So welcome, both of you.

Nina Strassner: Thank you for having us.

Ezequiel Massa: Thank you, Lizzie.

Elisabeth Riemann: So June, as we know, is Pride Month, it's a month of commemoration and celebration. So, Ezequiel, I'd like to ask you, what does Pride Month mean to you personally?

Ezequiel Massa: Thank you for asking. Well, you know, I am gay, so Pride Month has always been very important to me. I live in Buenos Aires now in Argentina, but I grew up in a very small town. I was a straight-A student, but I was not straight myself. You know, that that led to a lot of issues back at school and bullying also with my parents. Things got hard back then. I was in a way, ashamed of who I was or who I thought I was. I was scared to be gay. I didn't want to be gay. And that was a very big challenge for me. Right, learning to love myself and embrace who I was. So that was difficult. And then along the way, as I started to come to terms with who I was, um, I discovered Pride@SAP, and I volunteered and I was the lead for Pride here in Argentina for a few years. And this well led me to be involved in diversity and inclusion and here I am today heading D&I for Latin America. I now have a great relationship with my parents. Things do get better. And Pride Month is a big part of all that because it's helped me to understand how we should all be proud of who we are and accept us for who we are. So that is my message to everyone out there that the things do get better. Um, and yeah, we all have something nice to look up for in the future. In our future.

Elisabeth Riemann: Thank you, Ezequiel, for sharing that with us that was so open and honest and I think it's just so, so special to share that with our listeners as well. And I think it's important that no one feels alone. I think being a teenager, growing up, being anybody in anyone's skin is difficult. And we're all working through who we are, our own identity. And I guess then it's really important that we all feel part of a community. Right. And I guess that's what you're saying as well, is something that the Pride Month also represents there to you.

Ezequiel Massa: Definitely.

Elisabeth Riemann: And Nina, how will you be celebrating Pride Month this year at SAP?

Nina Strassner: Yes, I would really like to. So, I mean, I speak for the German employees mainly, and we are in close connections with our pride community, it's maybe one of the most agile and really strong communicators amongst them. And I'm always amazed on how much effort and also how much fun and what a humorous touch sometimes is in all the events, but never, you know, never too much. So there's always the right amount of seriousness we need for this topic, because as Ezequiel said it in the beginning just perfectly, there is a story behind it in all of this, like, yeah, bright colors and rainbow and all of this. We sometimes tend to forget that the story behind sometimes it's a story of like a lot of dark moments and that from an employer side we are celebrating on one side. But on the other hand, we're really making sure that we have a close look on what's going on, talking to each other and get everyone into a dialogue. What we think from an employer's perspective is really what is key to. Yeah, what we just heard from Ezequiel in the beginning, just listening and being touched and being like, wow, I just didn't think that things are sometimes really things for people. Well, we tend to say, like, you have what? It's 2021, come on people. It's not still a thing. And then you really start listening like, wow, OK, there are a lot of issues we still have to tackle, even though they're not a secret, maybe as they were 5 or 10 years ago. We're not denying that there's really I think we're going upwards here. But still, it's nothing we should specifically celebrate that there's even the opportunity right now in the workplace to do something like that that was unthinkable a couple of years ago. And that's what I really like about it, that it's like you go out there and and share your stories

and you bring bring everything you are. I think that's one of the nicest sayings we have at SAP, bring everything you are. And this is in its deepest sense, from my personal view on that.

Elisabeth Riemann: The LGBT+ community and its supporters is really at the heart of our conversation and this episode today. So before we start talking in nonstop acronyms, as we tend to do, so for D&I, LGBT+, I'd like to ask, can you please tell us what does the. We do, don't we. I mean, it's just so many acronyms all the time. We throw them around and it's not just a letter there are real individuals and groups with important issues here at stake. And so I wanted to ask, what does the LGBT+ community stand for so literally in terms of the groups and the individuals that it represents and also explain its important mission to us all just so that we all have a common understanding right at the beginning.

Ezequiel Massa: Yeah, that is very important and it's very important to mention all of these letters and to understand what what they stand for, right. Because these are all people that are included in these letters and all different identities and different ways that people see themselves. So L stands for lesbian, G for gay, B for bisexuality, T for trans. You know, there are longer versions of the acronym right, there's Q for queer. There's A for asexual um. And P for pansexual, I mean, there are so many identities as there are people, and that's important to understand, right? I mean, we are all different. We're all diverse not just because of our sexual orientation or gender identity, but because of how we speak, how we communicate, the way that we relate to each other, that we think that all makes us diverse. So when we think of diversity, we shouldn't just think of that person who is different from me, because in any case, I'm also different from them. So we should have that in mind that diversity involves each and every one of us and inclusion, that's what we need to do, right, to ensure that those people who may not be similar to who I am or perhaps are part of an underrepresented group as the LGBTQ+ community that they feel included. Why? Because they have been neglected and misrepresented and denied a lot of opportunities just for who they are, right, and no one chooses their sexual orientation or gender identity. Right. It just it's something that happens. People who.

Elisabeth Riemann: It just is.

Ezequiel Massa: Yeah, exactly. People who are straight that they didn't decide, oh, well, I'm going to be straight no. It just happened. They they came to the realization that they they were attracted to the opposite sex. And that was it. Same happens for the LGBTQ plus community. Right. I mean, we don't choose to be gay or lesbian. We a trans person doesn't choose to be trans. It's just who they are. And when it comes to Pride@SAP, what's also very vital to mention is that it's not just a group for the LGBTQ plus community, and I'm glad you said also allies and supporters because that that. But they are a key part of the group, right? And this goes for all of our employee network groups at SAP. They are open to everyone, not just for the those who are underrepresented. So no matter your sexual orientation or gender identity, you are welcome to join Pride@SAP and be part of the community. And as long as you believe that no matter who you are or how you dress or how you communicate or, you know, any other factor, as long as you believe that everyone deserves equal opportunity. And also if we acknowledge that merit does not apply equally to everyone because not everyone has the same chances in life. As long as you acknowledge all that, then you are already an ally to the LGBTQ plus community or to any other other underrepresented group. So if you are an ally, just use your voice to stand up for those people who have been underrepresented for so long and still are because many of them have been silenced for too long, not because they don't have their own voice, but because no one's willing to listen. So you have the power to make that change happen.

Elisabeth Riemann: That's really good, and I like the fact that you say it really is the community itself, it's representing different groups and it's also anyone who has a similar mindset, who has empathy and who is open, who wants to drive positive change. And I think it's something that we can all drive together and I guess there very simple steps that each and every one of us can do to kind of make our lives more enriched and more fair and more equal for everyone as well. And can we maybe look back into history just a little bit and think about how Pride Month came to be? Because initially it was just a day, right? It was one day in June, I believe.

Ezequiel Massa: Yeah, it was it was 1969, June 28, that's when the Stonewall riots took place in New York City, a bar in Manhattan called the Stonewall Inn. It was a bar that was mainly frequented by members of the LGBTQ plus community, and there was lots of police raids back then taking place every single night. And one day, one day, they were just fed up and so they started a riot that lasted for a full week and it was not

the first time that the LGBTQ plus community organized, but it was the first time that, you know, this mass movement all over the world ignited. And that's why it's so important to remember that date. And it was mostly trans women of color, drag queens, some gay men who really stood up that day, lesbian women, all of them. But it's also important to acknowledge that trans women of color were the ones leading the riot. Right. Which sometimes is a bit overlooked. People like Marsha P. Johnson, Sylvia Rivera, they were the ones leading that confrontation and that fight for equal rights. Back then, they started a movement that until today, you know, we celebrate and we remember and we use to celebrate our identities. Right. And that's why. Well, now with a pandemic, of course. But that's why throughout June, all over the world and well, in some countries, the date varies. But in most parts of the world, during June, we have Pride parades where people just go out, have fun and be who they are. And sometimes, you know, for many, that's the one day in the year where they feel that they can be their full selves in public. That's why it's so important.

Elisabeth Riemann: It's just so shocking for me to hear as well that individuals who fear there's only one single day in a whole calendar year where they can really go out and be themselves, that's something that I completely take for granted. So I think that's a really important message to convey. You know, just how some people are suffering, do feel underrepresented. And it's just really great to hear about these courageous figures who are really prepared to stand up for their rights and really fight a way for new generations as well to come. Because I wanted to ask as well as, Ezequiel, how is it changing for younger generations in terms of what's been achieved so far and where we are today?

Ezequiel Massa: These people just almost 60 years ago, they were already starting this fight and these people are still there while we see a lot of younger people joining Pride@SAP, for instance, and younger generations also are the ones who tend to seek for a company that is committed to the community, that is committed to, you know, community outreach activities, committed to equity and inclusion. Older generations are getting more and more involved and from experience right in Latin America that I'm seeing a lot of people getting involved. And it's not just the Millennials and Gen Z years. Right. That's really beautiful to see that we have these older generations who were always thought of, well, they don't care about these topics. They just care about results. And they are getting involved too, um. And that's a positive change that happens as a

result of all the actions that we have been taken. Right. And where they found a gap, uh, that they also wanted to be seen. Right. Because most of these actions that we have been leading or mostly done by younger generations and perhaps we were not representing them correctly. So now they are getting involved and taking active parts in in telling their own stories, which is really nice to see.

Elisabeth Riemann: That's so important that it brings the fullness to the community as well, that it really is cross-generational and I think, you know, we can discriminate on the basis of age as well. And so I think it's really good when people are just kind of coming together with a common goal and just really want to kind of support other people. And I just feel really moved just even hearing about that. So thank you for sharing those insights with us. And Nina, if we look at Pride@SAP, SAP was founded in Walldorf, Germany in 1972 and the company has come a really long way since then. Can you maybe talk us through some of SAP's own corporate diversity and inclusion journey? So how did things start?

Nina Strassner: I mean, regarding the Pride community, I think it's pretty amazing that this goes a long way back. They just had the 20 year anniversary, which we celebrated. When we talk about it, like all this diversity and talking about diversity and things like this, everyone is like, oh, that's New Work and things like that. So why is this diversity topic everywhere? And this is a perfect example that this is not a new thing with all these things started on a grassroots movement started 20 years ago. And I think we have to be really sensitive for that, that this is like nothing that just popped up and now everything is fine because we talked about like five or six years. This is really work and it is really like going through the structures and it needs to grow. And you get like Ezequiel already said, you need the allies a lot and you need the sensitiveness of of colleagues that they want to be engaged because it's absolutely impossible for the underrepresented group in a workplace or in society to do this all by themselves. Of course, rioting. Yeah, this is one thing to get attention, but it's bad enough that you need to riot and then you're like, oh, wow, this is not the way to do it. I mean, behave people. And then, yeah, like thank you. If you wouldn't be so stubborn and if you wouldn't be so like not listening and being like discriminating, there's no reason to riot. And we know this in for all our personal things, when no one is listening, we get angry, and then, you know, we need to make voices for ourselves. And I'm really glad that we're getting more and more sensitive for the topic. And I would dare to say that a lot of the companies get

it now that they at least should start touching the topic so it won't go away. And yeah, also podcasts like this and talking about stories, what we're doing is doing good for all the other dimensions of diversity as well. It is an intersectional thing. So what what the Pride community and the group there is facing, the hurtfulness behind it, but also what worked to make it better. You can use that for other areas as well. You can use it for women, you can use it in matter of age. You can use it in the matter of where someone comes from, because what we don't want is that someone feels not normal. That was what Ezequiel started with, that he felt not normal or like the other one in the room and things like that. And we all in a workplace need to be sensitive that it is a privilege to don't know what someone means by that. That means you are always feeling already included and a place where you belong. And if you search inside yourself, I think each and every one will find situations where he or she felt like the other person or not normal. And this is what we want to eliminate. Not that everyone is like the same, but that everyone has the same sense of belonging in all this. So this is how the journey is progressing.

Elisabeth Riemann: And I think that's brilliant. It's really kind of celebrating our differences we're all fundamentally different and it's good that we're different and I think that's valuable for society and it's valuable for a company like SAP too. We are who we are. Right. We can't change our identity.

Nina Strassner: We shouldn't be forced to. We should really make progress that a lot of things are already good, that should be the case, that you don't have to stick to the hope that it gets better. We need to reach points, step by step, that things are already good, that you don't have to struggle all the time. Explain yourself.

Ezequiel Massa: I echo that sentiment. Why does it need to get better? Why can't it already be good? Why do we have to wait till things get better? And she was just telling Pride@SAP was created 20 years ago that this is its 20th anniversary. And if I go back in time, 20 years ago, I was doing high school and I was going through all that right. Of being bullied, not being not accepting myself. Why does a 13 year old boy have to be thinking all that? Why why does anyone at any age have to think that they they they shouldn't be who they are? Why do we let other people's prejudice and hate affect us so much? And why do people hate in the first place? Right. So I still ask myself these questions a lot.

Elisabeth Riemann: Why do you think there is this hatred there against things that are different?

Ezequiel Massa: I think it's lack of information, it's hate for the sake of hate. Sometimes religion plays a part in telling stories that are not right about the LGBTQ+ community, and so still, I mean, it's not a matter of religion, it's a matter of the people who are telling that story. We are all human beings and human beings make mistakes. I really can't explain that kind of hatred towards the LGBTQ+ community or any other underrepresented group, really racism. I mean, why does all this happen?

Nina Strassner: It's an interesting point, it's just people make mistakes, and I think this is a really important point because we all make mistakes sometimes and we all sometimes say like discriminating or sexist thing or sometimes, you know, hurtful things. And this could happen. But if you do it twice, it's on purpose. So before it's a mistake and the second time you do it, it's on purpose. So we need to develop a culture where someone also gets fair feedback if he or she does something that maybe it was hurtful or was not OK and gets fair treatment into the discussion. But then, um, you need to really roll that in your stomach and in your mind and in your heart and think about how you kind of confront other people with specific topics. And I think this is also something we really want to do in Pride Month together with all the networks that we engage into, for example, really guided discussions like ask me anything and things like that, because what Ezequiel said, sometimes like hate and maybe not even hate, but, you know, the ignorance of the problem comes sometimes from the lack of knowledge. And if something gets complicated, and I have to be honest, if you're not part of a community and the discussion sometimes is like going up and and emotions like get high, it's like, ah, you tend to neglect the problem, to get out of the discussions, like there is no problem or it's not my thing, or you tend to not speak to the people because you are afraid to say something wrong. You don't have bad intentions, but you're like ha, I don't know how to address the topic and I don't want to, you know, jump in in the wrong pool and the fear of making others uncomfortable and makes people stay in their bubbles and not going out talking. As the gay community is getting more visible, I think each and everyone maybe was in touch with someone who is who is gay and can, like, talk to a person. And I would really encourage doing that. Me as being straight, before I form an opinion, please, like educate yourself, inform yourself, and don't do it in the Internet

alone. Don't read comment sections, talk to people about this. And I think the next step there where we where we find a lot of insecurities is, for example, for the topic of transgender. And this is where we need to focus right now also with the groups, because this is what I personally feel really is the subject where we have a lot of insecurity. Is this just like, OK, you have your biological gender. Why do you just you cannot just choose what what is the end of it? If everyone could just choose? Because it's irritating for some people because they're like, I don't know what it is personally, but I think there's not enough visibility for transgender, for example, that employees can ask questions and that they can educate themselves and ask like and find out and walk in someone else's shoes and walk in his or her story. And then you feel the empathy comes itself. And these are things that we really need to focus on, especially on Pride Month. As Ezequiel said, it's cultural background and it's how you were raised and the prejudices you you kind of even don't know that you have them to broaden the horizons of people. And there are some when you talk to people, then some stories. And I promise that there are stories that people can tell you that really change your world because you don't even know that this was such a bad blind spot and it's so easy to change.

Elisabeth Riemann: I think this dialogue, as you said, is so important and that it's a real kind of individual story, the real people behind all these different identities between different groups. So I think it's fantastic, all the different activities that SAP has going on. Maybe, Ezequiel, you would like to tell us what's going on in Latin America, the Caribbean, and then we compare that with activities ongoing in Europe and look at maybe some of the differences and similarities there.

Ezequiel Massa: Pride Month and Pride@SAP's 20th anniversary, so you can expect a lot of things to happen in June. Micky Gamboa, he's the global lead for Pride@SAP. He and his team are doing an amazing job putting all these activities together, getting all the leaders that the regional Pride@SAP leaders involved in consolidating this agenda. They are now creating a collaborative playlist on Spotify, even, uh, where you can add on your favorite LGBTQ+ anthems. So if you are looking to revisit some songs from Madonna or Lady Gaga or Kylie Minogue, that be the best playlist to go to. Yes, people from all over the world are contributing their own anthems in their own languages. So it's invigorating to see that we have all these powerful, visible allies and LGBTQ+ artists who have our backs and who are producing their work, thinking of us, thinking of their

fans who are part of the community. And it's not pinkwashing. They genuinely care. And you can see that through their actions. It's not just the material that they produce, but all the messaging that goes behind that. So it's really nice to see that we have all these artists from all over the world. And it's not just those three that I mentioned. I think that that's signals a lot of hope for us, that we have these these figures, these personalities all over the world who are doing a lot of things and speaking up for us. We have over 30 Pride@SAP chapters around the world, in Latin America particularly. We are doing some activities with our executive sponsors because that will help us amplify the message of the network. And I take this opportunity to send my appreciation to Andres Rodriguez, who is the current regional lead for Pride@SAP in Latin America. He's doing a great job consolidating all the activities and the sessions. We will talk about everything really that some D&I basics about what's the difference between sexual orientation and gender identity, which still some people don't know about. And it's important to tackle. We're going to talk about transgender children and youth. So that's also a very important topic that Nina was just mentioning about what we're doing for the trans community and how to make that part of our regular conversation. Queer identities, which I think is also something that we as a company need to discuss and address more queer identities, gender fluidity. There's a lot of grey areas here that we don't know much about, but there are lots of people who identify that way. We have to talk about this and make sure that they feel welcome. If there's one action that I could highlight in Latin America that I'm very proud of, it has to do with the transgender community and community outreach. So it was a joint thing between Pride@SAP and CSR and HR, so we found a local organization here in Buenos Aires and that's a safe space for trans folks to attend during the day to to get to know, find learning opportunities, to get some medical tests done. It's called Casa Trans, so Trans House. For the last three and a half years we have been. Well, first of all, we made some donations of IT equipment and we have been delivering some English lessons and computing lessons on a weekly basis, so that also says a lot about the commitment of the volunteers. I mean, go in there every day and now doing it virtually to help them with their employability. We are contributing to their future because there's people who go there have been facing a lot of challenges. They are underserved communities and we are now contributing to change through that. So my shout out to the Pride@SAP team in Argentina, who has been doing great with this initiative.

Elisabeth Riemann: That's absolutely amazing. Can we include a link in our show notes to provide some more background information? That would be really good. And Nina, what's going on in Germany and in Europe?

Nina Strassner: Yeah, still on the schedule, I just in parallel checked the fact that we're planning kind of a theater night, they build up a virtual theater and want to invite, its English speaking, and an actor from the gay community who does like a really humorous but also very educating play, a virtual play you can attend with your family. Because coming from HR is that we know that it's really important to discuss a lot of things with your children and your families as well. So that's what Ezequiel said, that things don't always have to get better, that they are children are educated as well. And we get that a lot from employees that when we touch topics like this, also others like racism and sexism and things like that, how to talk about kids about that and so that the next generation is having a head start so that they don't. I think everyone knows the feeling that you're doing like a step forward and three steps back because you really have to do it all over again. So if we kind of dare to include our children into some of the topics. So this is what we really want to put a spotlight on this year to to have it with a focus on family, because it is a society thing. It is nothing that stops like at the office door or stops outside of the office door. And we really need to take that into discussions with our friends, with our families, with our children. So easy to just invest maybe on a special day or in Pride Month to really take 20 minutes of your day. Educate yourself a bit. And if you don't understand, ask, simply reach out to all these active people. If you have ideas what to do with your teams, if you are leader or if you are a team member and you want to get your team attached. So this is the viewpoint of HR when we do things like that, we want to have a service. We are service- orientated when it comes to that and to help find finding information and connections and helping to connect the dots.

Elisabeth Riemann: If we look at D&I and the bigger picture and the role of big corporations, what are they doing in comparison to SAP? What's the bigger network look like when it comes to D&I and equality?

Nina Strassner: From a company's perspective, what I really like about the diversity community is we're sharing a lot, there's a lot of best practice sharing and there are a lot of networks and communities, for example, in Germany, specifically the Charta der

Vielfalt, it's like the Charter of Diversity where a lot of companies join and they financially contribute to provide all companies also with information and materials so that like not every company has to come up with everything themselves because this is really slowing the process down so that we learn from each other. And I'm always really amazed on how open compared to yeah, of course, other business related things, how open companies are sharing there. And they are also sharing what's what worked and most importantly, what did not work with some measurements. So to just avoid that the others are stuck in the trap somewhere because it is a societal thing and we the companies are operating in between society. So if this is changing quickly and we're getting things done, it's getting easier and better for all of us. So that's maybe in a couple of years we don't need diversity managers anymore. And I am unemployed. This is the goal to make myself unemployed here. Yeah, it basically is, so that we don't need things like this anymore and can concentrate on other things. And is it the same with the networks so that the Pride networks has connections with other companies or countries or how is this going?

Ezequiel Massa: Yeah, well, I can speak for Latin America. In different countries, we have different networks that operate in the same way that you were mentioning, Nina. And that's why I'm particularly about the LGBTQ+ community, that's called Pride Connection. Uh, this is a network of companies. It was originally founded in Mexico about five or six years ago. And since then, it has expanded across Latin America. So now there's an active chapter, I believe, in every country or almost every country in the region, which is great because they are driving change. Right. And bringing all this great practices from the different participating companies together and sharing what works and what will help us create more inclusive environments for the LGBTQ+ community. And the funny thing is that in most of these countries, these networks are being run by the companies themselves. So this sense of community, they are so open and embracing other people, no matter what company they represent. I think that's great. And that's the whole point of Pride@SAP and the LGBTQ+ community that we are all equal and that we should all have equal opportunities.

Elisabeth Riemann: Brilliant. And an openSAP Invites Thought Leaders, we really like to focus on learning recommendations on how we can develop practical skills, so here's the call to action, what can we do as listeners now to support equality, D&I and the

LGBT+ community? How can we become supporters and allies and really join up with these communities to help?

Ezequiel Massa: First and foremost, empathy. I mean, we should start with that, a lot of jokes being made at the expense of the LGBTQ+ community. Um, sometimes the person was saying that is unaware that the person next to them is part of the community and they crack a joke, and that really takes a toll on that person's life. It could. So just stop, think. Would you like to be made fun of just for who you are? I mean, we talked about this earlier. You are born that way, quoting Lady Gaga. So how would you feel if you had to hide part of who you are just to fit in and to pray that people won't make fun of you? Why would anyone have to do that? Next time you are thinking about making a joke, stop and think, would you like to be on the other end of that joke? Probably not. Then. To our straight cisgender allies out there. Use your voice to stand up for the community, for the LGBTQ+ colleagues and friends. And if you're not the one making the joke, but you hear someone else saying it, then raise your hand and stop that. Do not be complicit. Because then the other part of the problem. And amplify the message of the LGBTQ+ community and Pride@SAP, learn about the community, ask questions, connect, share. Ask people for their pronouns. That's a very important thing. Nina mentioned, include your own pronouns in your email signature and social media bios. Wear a rainbow lanyard, when we go back to the office, put a sticker on your computer. Those are very small actions that really take no effort. But they go a long way, right, and they could mean the world to the queer person passing by and talk about it with your family and with your friends outside of SAP, too, because you never know who is listening and how impactful a word of support can be to them.

Elisabeth Riemann: And Nina?

Nina Strassner: Maybe adding on what Ezequiel said. So humor is never on the expense of others, I think. So don't hide discrimination behind humor. My wish for the future would be that it is good and that it is getting better, especially in regards to the struggle with diversity. What I would like everyone to do is to have a cheerful and positive approach towards these topics because we would never get allies and get the things done and just eliminate discrimination. If we tend to, you know, talk about diversity, as I think, again, it's now a trend or we have to do it, or these are measurements that are modern right now, or maybe they are in right now or things like

that. We will not making progress with this, it's just taking longer. So get your good mood, get all your your drive that you have, because it is a great topic. It's a human topic and it makes life better for all of us and each and every one. I mean, empathy is not so hard sometimes for some people in specific topics, it's really hard, but not on all topics.

Elisabeth Riemann: Ezequiel, one thing you mentioned right at the beginning that I would like to revisit is you said how difficult it was growing up, kind of struggling with your own identity. And I think that's something that many people experience and might be going through right now. So for anyone who's listening to this episode right now, who's feeling very isolated, very anxious, very misunderstood, lacking a sense of belonging, confusion, whatever, what would you say to anyone feeling like that now?

Ezequiel Massa: Well, I would say that they should be proud of who they are, no matter what, no matter what people are saying, no matter what they think of themselves, we should all be proud to be who we are. And that it will get better, they will start to embrace who they are, and also my suggestion would be not to be alone in the process, find someone who they can share with, find someone that they can trust. Uh, to talk about it and not stand alone in the dark.

Elisabeth Riemann: Thank you, both of you, for this really wonderful conversation, I thoroughly enjoyed it. I think it's a very important dialog and

Nina Strassner: Me too.

Elisabeth Riemann: You've made me laugh. You've made me feel emotional as well. One thing we could really ask our listeners to do now, after they've listened to the episode, go to the playlist, get some feel good music going on, and celebrate what we've achieved so far and really think about what we can achieve together moving forward.

Nina Strassner: Couldn't have said it better. Thank you, Lizzie.

Ezequiel Massa: Now, I would like that. Thank you, Lizzie.

Nina Strassner: Bye bye. Bye, everyone.

Elisabeth Riemann: Thanks for listening to openSAP Invites Thought Leaders with Nina Strassner and Ezequiel Massa. Thanks also to our sound engineer, Miguel Caroli. If you've enjoyed this episode, please share, rate, and leave a review. And be sure to check out openSAP's free learning portfolio of Massive Open Online Courses, Microlearnings, and Podcasts on opensap.com. And don't miss your next invite, subscribe now.