

Agency for Change Podcast: Sarita Reddy, Executive Director, Adeo

- Connect with Sarita on LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/sarita-reddy-528a7923/>
- Learn more about Adeo: <https://www.adeoco.org/>

Sarita Reddy:

Remember who you are here to serve and keep going.

Announcer:

Welcome to Agency for Change, a podcast from KidGlov that brings you the stories of changemakers who are actively working to improve our communities. In every episode, we'll meet with people who are making a lasting impact in the places we call home.

Lyn Wineman:

Here is a sobering statistic—traumatic brain injury, or TBI, is a major cause of death and disability in the United States. In 2020, 276 Americans died from a TBI related injury every single day. That's nearly enough people to fill Empower Field at Mile High where the Denver Broncos play. So, hey, everyone. This is Lyn Wineman. I am the president and chief strategist at KidGlov. Welcome to another episode of the Agency for Change podcast. Today, I'm going to be talking with Sarita Reddy, executive director at Adeo, a Colorado based nonprofit serving individuals with brain injuries. And for full disclosure, I am on the board of this amazing organization and KidGlov has worked with them on a significant rebrand that occurred in 2020. Sarita, welcome to the podcast.

Sarita Reddy:

Thank you, Lyn. I'm so excited to be talking with you again.

Lyn Wineman:

I always like talking with you. And you were one of the brave souls. You recorded one of our first three podcasts, Sarita, and now we're 160 episodes in. Can you believe it?

Sarita Reddy:

Congratulations. It was so much fun. It was so much fun.

Lyn Wineman:

Thank you. Thank you. What's amazing to me, too, is I'll look into the data, Sarita, and just the other day somebody downloaded that podcast from two years ago, so I'm excited to update the story for people who haven't listened to that original episode. Would you take a minute to tell us more about Adeo and the work that you do?

Sarita Reddy:

Sure. So, Adeo has been around since 1978. And it started, like many nonprofits do, as somebody saw an issue that needed to be solved, and here it was, people with disabilities, particularly those with spinal

cord injuries and brain injuries being shut away in nursing homes because there was nothing else for them in the community. There was no way to provide the services that they needed. There was no housing available for them and so on and so forth. And so, our founder, Hope Cassidy, basically said, let's do something about this, gathered up a bunch of people she knew and they started off all volunteer. And today, all these years later, we are nonprofit organization that has been functioning for many decades. 10 years ago, I mean, the focus has always been people with disabilities. I came to this organization 10 years ago. And when I came, it had a number of different things under its umbrella.

We had a day program, we had four people with disabilities, all focused on people with disabilities. We had a home health, we were a licensed home health agency. We had affordable housing, so on and so forth. Over the last 10 years, what we have been doing, there's a couple of things that have happened. We were called Greeley Center for Independence. There was general agreement among the board and everybody, all of our stakeholders. What does that mean? What does Greeley Center for Independence mean? And so, we went through a rebrand because we were really more northern Colorado than Greeley. And we're not a center where people come and get services, we really are a bridging organization that allows people with disabilities to come and get the support they need to take their place as full citizens of the community. And so, we bridged to other resources.

Independence seemed like a heavy lift for anyone, because not one of us in this world is completely independent. And so, for those reasons, we decided we needed our name to be a little bit different. We needed our brand to be a little bit different. And so, again, with your help, we did this. And we are now Adeo and I love the name, and we are continuing to serve people with disabilities. But two years ago, in 2021, the board made a decision that we really needed to focus on figuring out where our best and deepest impact on the community was going to be. And the short story for that is that brain injuries are where it's at. So, we are going to be moving forward into the next decade and hopefully many decades to come, expanding our services to adult survivors of brain injury.

Lyn Wineman:

I love that, Sarita. Thank you for that explanation. Also, thank you for the shout-out about the rebrand. I do want to talk to you about that a little bit later because it's one of my favorites. But doing the work that I do with nonprofit marketing, I've seen so many nonprofits get stretched very thin. And when you get stretched so thin, you don't have enough resources or focus to really be great at what you do. Adeo has really taken that step to say, 'we are great at helping people with brain injuries.' And one thing I found interesting about working with you, I understand that Colorado actually has a very high incidence of brain injury. Can you tell us more about that?

Sarita Reddy:

It does because there's no surprise there. What is Colorado all about? It's about our mountains, and snow sports and motorcycles. Riding motorcycles, we don't have a helmet law.

Lyn Wineman:

That outdoor lifestyle, yes, yes.

Sarita Reddy:

Yes. It's the West, and people take risks and people enjoy the rush from doing things that are kind of risky. They don't sit on their couches, other than me. And so, there is a high incidence of brain injury. We are ninth in the nation for deaths as a result of brain injury and 13th in the nation for hospitalizations. And the thing about brain injuries that people really must recognize is that you could be hospitalized for

a brain injury and you have a 45% chance of having a disability a whole year after you've been discharged.

Lyn Wineman:

That's astounding. And you know what? If you break your arm or your leg or your foot or whatever, we can see the cast or the brace or even the scar. You hurt your brain, you don't even know what's going on. Sometimes it's obvious and sometimes it's less obvious. So, you mentioned in an earlier answer that in the absence of specialty care for brain injury, people might go to nursing homes or to a place that really isn't set up to care for brain injury. I'm curious, if someone has brain injury, what do they do and what does the recovery process look like?

Sarita Reddy:

Okay. That's a little bit more of a complicated answer than one might imagine, because there is a wide spectrum of brain injury. You might experience a concussion because you fell down the stairs at your home, and you go to the doctor and you're told to rest and report any further symptoms. That's a brain injury. That's a brain injury. Now, the other spectrum of it is that you end up being hospitalized with a myriad issues depending on the severity of the injury. So, recovery looks different for different people. One thing I do want to say is every single one of us is at risk for brain injury, because almost half of TBIs, traumatic brain injuries happen because of falls. So, any one of us could fall at any time. And then auto accidents, assault, sports injuries are also ways that you end up with a brain injury.

And so, recovery looks different, but a significant number of people do end up experiencing long-term or even lifelong disabilities. Some people have physical disabilities that they end up with physical disabilities. As you can imagine, if you fall down a mountain or something, you might end up in a wheelchair or using another kind of adaptive device like a walker or something. Most people with severe brain injuries also have cognitive issues. Issues with memory, short-term memory are always something we expect. We expect difficulty managing stress, because the people we serve are not the people with mild brain injuries.

We serve people with moderate to severe brain injuries, people who are experiencing this level of challenge years into the future after the injury. And then the other thing is explosive anger. Something happens with impulse control, and so we see a lot of explosive anger. And then the thing that just breaks my heart is the depression. Because for most people with brain injuries, it's not that they don't remember what life was like before. It's not like their memory gets wiped. It's life before and life after. And so, we've had, for instance, someone who came who just thought, yeah, I'm here, I'm going to recover and I'm going to go back to running my company and playing in my band and doing all of this stuff. And when he realized that what he was going to have to deal with was a lifetime of needing support, that depression was heartbreaking.

Lyn Wineman:

Oh, yeah. I can only imagine. So, you are treating a myriad of things from the physical to the emotional, to the psychological?

Sarita Reddy:

Correct.

Lyn Wineman:

Wow, wow. So, Sarita, is there a high demand for these services?

Sarita Reddy:

Oh, my God. Short answer, yes.

Lyn Wineman:

I was kind of setting you up there. I figured that was in fact the answer. But I mean, give us a feel for it. Are you getting calls every month, every week? Do you have a waiting list? What does that look like?

Sarita Reddy:

Yeah. Sometimes it feels like we're getting calls weekly, but we definitely get at least a couple of calls a month. Our waiting list currently has more than 60 people on it. The other thing that really indicates the need for these long-term services is that the people who choose our program typically don't leave unless it becomes impossible for us to serve them. They need to go into hospice, or they pass away. We've had that too. We've had to grieve a member of our community who passed away with us, which is what we want. As much as we grieved, I am so grateful we were able to serve him until the end of his life.

Lyn Wineman:

His whole life.

Sarita Reddy:

But that's another indication that you really need this kind of long-term support for people with brain injuries. And we're the only agency north of Denver in Colorado. So, we've got several agencies in the Denver area. There's one in Grand Junction, and they're all great. But north of Denver, it's us.

Lyn Wineman:

You're it. And I imagine it's probably good for people to be close to their families as this treatment occurs too. So, locality also makes a difference.

Sarita Reddy:

It matters. I mean, I'm so glad that you said that, because honestly, the success rate is so high when you have a safety net around a person who needs services, that includes us for sure. I'm not trivializing what we do as staff, but friends, family, that kind of thing, when they can stay connected and when they have something that describes their life, that has nothing to do with us.

Lyn Wineman:

I can imagine.

Sarita Reddy:

It's wonderful.

Lyn Wineman:

Yeah, I can imagine. So, Sarita, you have 60 people on a waiting list for spots that very rarely come open. I feel the magnitude of that. So, I'm just really curious, again, to bring this back to the specialized nature

of the care. Can you give us some examples of how treatment for brain injury just differs from other types of rehab and recovery or injuries?

Sarita Reddy:

Let me just say, I'm not an expert on treatment for brain injury or any other kind of injury. What we do is not treatment. What we do is support people to live good lives post-injury. And after their doctors and specialists have told them they no longer need a hospital or just got medical treatment, intensive medical treatment. So, we see these folks after all of that stuff has happened, the treatment phases are done. Now, that doesn't mean that they don't have to visit specialists and so on. They're always under the care of a primary care doctor and that kind of thing, and several of them have many specialists. There might be a neurologist involved for the long term. There might be an orthopedist involved for the long term, so there could be others, all of that. But that's not our part.

What we do, the way we approach supporting survivors of brain injury over the long haul is to see them as human first. And then let the people who know them best, again, going back to families, friends, and all of that, teach us about what's important to them, how they define a good life. So, then over time, our staff become some of the people who know our residents best because they spend so much time with them and they pay attention to their individual needs. They get to know their quirks and all of that stuff.

But again, like I said, the people we serve have moderate to severe disabilities, and so we end up with people who have such complex needs. We work really closely with multiple physical and behavioral health providers, their dental providers, to ensure that every person gets the care they need. We're their care coordinators, we're their case managers. We know what family would have to do if we weren't there, but that's the bare minimum. And then we take the approaches that we really need to figure out what makes a good life for this person, what's important to them, but what's also important for them.

Lyn Wineman:

I love the fact that they get to decide. You are not telling them what a good life is.

Sarita Reddy:

Never.

Lyn Wineman:

It's not a cookie cutter approach. It's very, very individualized for the person. That's amazing. So, Sarita, Adeo has recently made an announcement about expanding to meet this great need. Can you tell us more about what's on the horizon?

Sarita Reddy:

Yes. So, the announcement specifically that we made was that Hope Apartments, which is 31-unit apartment complex that we own and operate, is going to be renovated in order to provide services to more adult survivors of brain injury. Now, this is an apartment complex where we used to provide home health services to tenants with disabilities. And that was very much in alignment with our Housing Plus mission, because we don't just provide housing. We've always said, yes, housing is a need, but what we really do well is provide those supportive services. But during the pandemic, we had to shut down home health, because if you will remember, there was a huge nursing shortage during the pandemic.

Lyn Wineman:

Huge nursing shortage, absolutely, yes.

Sarita Reddy:

And we had seven nurses on our staff because we needed them to provide these round-the-clock skilled services to people who lived at Hope Apartments. Well, they all lived because they were getting \$10,000 signing bonuses to go elsewhere. And so, we had no choice. We could no longer safely support these folks. And so, we transitioned them to other home health providers, which was amazingly wonderful to be able to know that we were not the only game in town, and there were other people who could pick up the slacks, so they did. And at that point, the board decided, well, there are plenty of home health providers. We do not need to try to bring home health services back.

And so, then Hope Apartments just became a place where we offered housing. So, we were a landlord and nothing more for those people. And again, not in alignment with our mission. And so, the board decided, okay, we should look at this. And the building is 30 years old. It needs a number of upgrades to make it a safe and decent place for people to live. So, considering all of these issues and the fact that we're the only providers that serve survivors of brain injury, the board decided let's renovate the building and utilize it to serve more people in this group. So, that was the announcement that we made.

Lyn Wineman:

Sarita, it really is leaning into your mission. There are other home health providers, there are other affordable housing providers, but you've got 60 people on a waiting list for brain injury support and something very specialized that only you can do. I think it seems like a really exciting project that can help a lot of families. So, what is the timeline for the project? These things obviously take time.

Sarita Reddy:

Yes, they do take time and we're not going to rush it. We would like to be able to start this fall. But really what we're focused on right now is assisting current tenants of Hope Apartments to find alternate housing that works for them. They're all people who need affordable housing and there is a dearth of affordable housing nationwide. And Greeley is not exempt from that problem. And so, even though we're firmly committed to the new project, we're also very aware of how disruptive it is and how anxiety provoking it is for these tenants to have to move. So, that's what we're focusing on. We have a staff member who dedicates almost all of her time to assisting tenants in a variety of ways. And we're working with community partners to make sure that these folks have the resources they need, not only to find a place, but also to move there and get set up there in a way that works for them.

Lyn Wineman:

So, as eager as you are to move forward with the new project, the first priority is making sure you take care of the folks that are there right now.

Sarita Reddy:

Absolutely. We will not cause harm in this process. It is not our intention to cause any harm. In fact, it is our intention to mitigate harm in this process.

Lyn Wineman:

I appreciate that. Sarita, I want to switch gears here literally, because I want to talk about an annual event that you have coming up in the fall. I know it's an event that you've done for a number of years

now, that's very inclusive, but can you tell me a bit more about the event and how people can get involved?

Sarita Reddy:

Yes, it's very exciting. Walk, Run or Roll, it is the 10th anniversary of this event, so it's kind of a big deal to our organization, but it's kind of a big deal to me too, because the first event was held during my first year here.

Lyn Wineman:

Oh, Sarita, that's great.

Sarita Reddy:

The event and I have grown with this organization together.

Lyn Wineman:

So, that means the event is in its 10th anniversary. I love that.

Sarita Reddy:

Correct. So, we are very excited. We're planning a nice celebration, because it's also the first one. It's a 2K, 5K race for people of all abilities. When we first conceived of this event, we wanted to make sure it was inclusive, because that's what we do. We make sure that people with disabilities can participate. So, we were not going to exclude people with disabilities. So, you can walk, you can run, you can roll in your wheelchair. That's why it's called Walk, Run or Roll. And then during the pandemic, since we couldn't have any in-person events, we went virtual for three years. And strangely, the support kept growing.

Lyn Wineman:

That's great.

Sarita Reddy:

People from all over the country signed up, and even a couple of folks from other countries signed up. I'm from India, and so there's support from India, but then there was a woman from France, there was another person who started her race here and ended it in Hong Kong.

Lyn Wineman:

There's an idea. That's amazing.

Sarita Reddy:

So, the support kept growing, but our residents really participate and they love the in-person component. Because again, knowing what you know now about brain injuries, think about whether you can really count onto the fact that there's a two-week virtual event and you can do a few miles here and a few miles there to get your mileage in. It doesn't compute for them. They love community interaction. They love being out and about, all of that stuff. So, to celebrate our 10th year and the official end of the public health emergency, which is May 11th, we're going to keep the virtual part and finish up with an in-person event. And we may even have a party afterwards.

Lyn Wineman:

Yay. Party, sounds good. Well, last year I did most of my walk, run, roll miles on my Peloton. So, we'll see.

Sarita Reddy:

And you can still do that. You can still do that. Everyone who does virtual can still do that. And our in-person doesn't have to be this big... We're not trying to compete with BOLDERBoulder. But that's not the thing. We're not trying to do that. What we're trying to do is make it something fun for people to do in person. It's also a great way for people in the community to come and meet the people we serve, see what it is that we do, because that race does actually exemplify how we support people to participate.

Lyn Wineman:

I love it.

Sarita Reddy:

We do. It's just wonderful. It's just wonderful. So, anyone who wants to support this, please go to adeoco.org, A-D-E-O-C-O.org, watch for updates on the event, and instructions on how to sponsor, how to donate, how to register. Any and all of those things are very, very welcome.

Lyn Wineman:

Fantastic. Sarita, we'll make sure to have the link to that website in the show notes on the KidGlov website as well.

Sarita Reddy:

Wonderful. Thank you.

Lyn Wineman:

So, we mentioned early on in our conversation that you and I got to collaborate in 2020 as part of the rebrand from Greeley Center for Independence to Adeo. Do you have any reflection on that process that you'd like to share?

Sarita Reddy:

I have to say it was an amazing experience. I remember we were in the thick of the pandemic because it was May 2020 and the pandemic started in February of 2020. So, you and I had already talked about what would need to happen and what the process was going to be for the rebrand and for how we were going to roll it out and all of this stuff. And everything went out the window.

Lyn Wineman:

Everything.

Sarita Reddy:

Everything went out the window. I don't know, maybe you weren't surprised, but some people were surprised that we would continue with that project and not wait. Because again, I'm sitting in the healthcare space, I can honestly say I worked seven days a week. Long, long, long days because things

were changing every day. The rules were changing. We didn't know what we were dealing with. We had no idea how long-

Lyn Wineman:

You were protecting your population, both your employees and your residents.

Sarita Reddy:

Yes. So, having to quickly pivot to who can go remote and work that way. But then the vast majority of our staff did not have that luxury. We're essential workers. We're on the front lines. And so, how do we still keep it... And I want to say, I just want to say, shout out to everybody on my team. There was no COVID in our organization-

Lyn Wineman:

That's amazing.

Sarita Reddy:

... until just a little while ago when all of the protections and stuff. We were really quite draconian in the measures we implemented to keep our people safe. And I think it paid off for us. But I just felt like we couldn't allow this to derail something really positive like I knew the rebrand was going to be. And it was such a great time working with your team. I have to give you so much credit.

Lyn Wineman:

Thank you.

Sarita Reddy:

For one thing, I loved working with you in particular. You were just so good at listening to what we wanted and how we see ourselves and all of that, and then bringing all of that to the forefront. The website design is beautiful. The colors are gorgeous. The logo's wonderful. I mean, we're so happy. And when we did roll it out, we had to roll it out with not as much fanfare. We didn't have the big in-person event that we had planned and things like that, but we did what we needed to do. And I think over time, and I have to say my staff, they loved it. And that was huge for me. I mean, I know a brand is supposed to speak to the community, but it also speaks to your internal community. And we feel like we are one now under this Adeo umbrella. And we feel like we're just flying and soaring just like our logo does. So, it is lovely. We thoroughly enjoyed the time with your team and are still continuing to just enjoy our brand.

Lyn Wineman:

Thank you for saying that, Sarita. It's one of my personal favorites as well. I have such a memory of the day when the work shutdowns were happening, and we met in the morning and said, we just need to call everyone we're working with and make sure they're okay and see what they want to do. And that day, we had so many projects canceled, so many. And we understood, we understood. And I got to my call with you, and I said, 'Sarita, how are you doing? What are you thinking?' And you said, 'well, of course, we'll continue with the brand. Of course, we will, Lyn. We need something positive. And when the pandemic's over, we're going to need the rebrand anyway. We might as well do it.' So, you got lots of special attention for your bravery during that time.

Sarita Reddy:

Look, I mean, I think we did. And I didn't realize how many projects you had canceled, but we benefited from continuing to move forward with you guys because you were available in a way that you might not have been if you had 50 other clients that you had to shepherd through a pandemic. And so, it's wonderful. And you know what I do want to say for those people who might want this information, Adeo feels like who we are. It feels modern, it feels innovative, and courageous and aspirational, because we aspire to do better all the time. And so, the brand reflects us. And that is not a simple thing for a marketing agency to pull off.

Lyn Wineman:

Thank you for that. Yes. And I think it's because we did involve your team from the very beginning. They provided input, they were part of the launch, and I think that was very important. So, Sarita, would you remind me of one more thing? We spoke about this on the past podcast, but I love sharing people's stories. How did you personally get involved with this line of work?

Sarita Reddy:

Oh, my God. It was fascinating to me that my life allowed me to get into this. I've always had disability as part of my life. My grandmother was deaf and I did not know she was deaf. I spoke to her in a different way. Because as a kid, I mean everybody's communicating with her in a certain way. We didn't do American sign, but there was a different... Because I grew up in India. But we spoke, she was an excellent lipreader and all of this stuff. And it didn't even occur to me that she had a disability. But then my youngest sister, I have two sisters, I'm the oldest, and my youngest sister was born with an intellectual disability. And so, we grew up with her. And as she was included by default is what I call it, because in India there were no services really that were worth a damn.

I mean, you could lock people up in some kind of horrible institutional hole, and my mother was not going to do that. And so, even though she got lots of advice saying that's what she should do. And so, I grew up with my sister who is so loved by all of us, and she just had a wonderful life with us. But there weren't any special services or anything. And so, life got difficult at times, particularly for my mom. And then I came out here as a young woman to study, and then ended up staying and getting married and raising my family here. And our first child was born with a disability. My son, Samir, has cerebral palsy. That was when everything kind of crystallized and it almost feels like everything in my life led me here.

If Samir hadn't been born, I think I would have, with cerebral palsy, I think I would've probably gone on. I was getting adopted in organizational psychology and management, probably would've gone on to work in the corporate sector and do something very, very different with my life. But when he was born, and I was so frustrated with the lack of information. It wasn't services we needed so much, lack of information. Because my husband and I, immigrants who spoke English very, very well, both graduate students who did not have any problem researching things, and yet the information for how to support our son simply wasn't really readily available. So, I got mad. I got so mad, and I started crashing these meetings that I would hear about these la-di-da providers were doing around disability services. And as a result, I started a little group initially for parents of kids with cerebral palsy, and then people said, well, why just CP? So, we expanded it to parents of kids with disabilities.

And then people said, well, adults with disabilities need a place to go to, which said, fine. What do we call it? Northeast Georgia Coalition of Disability Advocates. I was in Georgia at the time, a student at the University of Georgia. So, it became this wonderful organization, advocacy organization. And we started doing some work on policy type stuff and began to realize that, hey, there's not enough services and the legislative process doesn't work well for us, for our community. And so, we got involved in that. And that

led to my becoming the coordinator of a statewide campaign along with my friend Grace Fricks, called the Unlock the Waiting List Campaign in Georgia.

Lyn Wineman:

Oh, wow, I like it.

Sarita Reddy:

Yes, because people with disabilities were on waiting lists. They would call the state and say they had need for services and they would say, okay, we'll put you on a waiting list. That was basically the thing. And that was happening across the country. And so, we started the Unlock the Waiting List Campaign, and I crisscrossed the state, talking to providers, talking to people with disabilities, families, media, civic organizations, helping people go to their legislators and explain what the issues were and all of that. And it has moved the needle in Georgia. Georgia moved from a bias towards institutional services, towards funding community services. And so, it's something that that's how I got involved.

And I was working at the Institute on Human Development and Disability at the University of Georgia, and so it was doing a lot of advocacy in different realms. And then when I left the university, I left for a personal reason, my mom was not well and things like that. And then when I went back to, I started volunteering for a provider organization, Georgia Options in Athens, Georgia, and loved it. And then ended up joining the staff. I was on their board and my fellow board member said, we think we should kick you off the board and let you go, actually work there for pay and get paid for what you do. So, I did. I worked there for four years, I think it was before we came to Colorado and loved it, loved it.

And then when I came here, I thought, well, maybe I'll do something different. Go work in a different field because nobody in Colorado knows me. They don't know my connection to disability. But it didn't happen for me. I got drawn back to disability and ended up with a provider organization again. And I have to say, I think it's been great, because one of the blessings of my life experiences is that I know what it feels like to be a family member of someone with a disability, so I have great empathy for people who have to deal with this, with their family member. I know what it feels like. My mom is now gone, my dad is now gone, so my sister in Australia and I are the ones who take care of my other sister who has a disability and lives in India. And I know what it feels like.

And I think that bringing that to the table is really valuable for the work that we do. I'm also able to coach our staff who may not have that same experience on how it feels. So, please, be sympathetic and empathetic to our family members. But the other piece of it is, because I know how hard it is to be a provider in this field, I can advocate for our staff and I can say to families, and they will take it from me and say, you do not get to treat us the help. Recognize that we are skilled professionals. We are not here just to do what you tell us to do. We have expertise in this area, so treat us like full partners. And so, I'm able to say that to families. So, I can walk that line really well because of my experiences. And I'm very, very, very grateful for that.

Lyn Wineman:

I'm always struck by how pieces of someone's journey just seemed to come together perfectly to get them where they are. I'm also struck by the fact that you are once again unlocking the waiting list by expanding services, unlocking the waiting list by expanding services for people with brain injuries. So, I love how that comes full circle.

Sarita Reddy:

It's the reason you are so good at what you do, Lyn. You can go to the heart of the matter. I talked about all of this using thousands of words, you went straight to the heart of the matter.

Lyn Wineman:

It's just how my crazy brain works. So, just how my brain works. So, Sarita, you are one of the few people that I've asked this next question twice. I'm going to put you on the hot seat for a minute and ask you my favorite question because I am inspired by motivational quotes. And I'm hoping you can give us a few of your own words of wisdom to inspire our listeners.

Sarita Reddy:

Yes. And I actually remember what I said to you the last time. I said, it is uncomfortable to do good work a lot of times, and so just lean into the discomfort and get moving, words to that effect. I don't remember exactly. But that's what I said. And it's really interesting. I am sitting in a place right now where there has been a lot of flak for the decisions that our organization has been making, even though we feel we have made them with integrity and we are doing the right thing and we are not going to be sweet from our purpose and that kind of thing. I will tell you that the mantra that I've been repeating to myself recently is remember who you are here to serve-

Lyn Wineman:

That is so good.

Sarita Reddy:

... and keep going, because people will have opinions about what you do. Everybody's got an opinion. Some of them will be informed opinions and a lot of them will be uninformed opinions. That's not what matters. Why are you here and who are you here to serve, that should be your North Star.

Lyn Wineman:

That's beautiful. That's beautiful. It reminds me a lot of marketing, actually, Sarita too, like focusing in on what is the task at hand and who is involved. So, remember who you are here to serve, I love that so much. So, you mentioned this earlier, and we're going to put it in the show notes, but for listeners who would like to learn more about your work, how can they find out more about Adeo?

Sarita Reddy:

Our website has a wealth of information. And as we evolve, we change up the information on our website. And so, please check back often. And it is at adeoco.org. So, our official name is Adeo Colorado, and so it's A-D-E-O-C-O.org.

Lyn Wineman:

Fantastic. We'll have that in the show notes. So, as we wrap up this great conversation today, Sarita, what is the most important thing you would like our listeners to remember about the work that you're doing?

Sarita Reddy:

Everything we do is to support survivors of brain injury, to take their place as full citizens of the world. Unfortunately, the world we live in makes it really hard for them to do this. There are so many barriers to

poor participation. Our job at its core is to break down those barriers wherever they are. That is the most important thing that listeners should remember about the work we do. And that involves lots of different details, but the core of it is breaking down barriers.

Lyn Wineman:

Yeah, very good. Very good, Sarita. I always love talking to you, and this conversation has not been an exception to that. So, Sarita, I just want to say I fully believe the world needs more people like you, more organizations like Adeo. Thank you for taking time to share with us today.

Sarita Reddy:

Thank you, Lyn. You're a huge champion of our work, and I could not be more grateful.

Announcer:

We hope you enjoyed today's Agency for Change podcast. To hear all our interviews with those who are making a positive change in our communities, or to nominate a changemaker you'd love to hear from, visit KidGlov.com at K-I-D-G-L-O-V.com to get in touch. As always, if you like what you've heard today, be sure to rate, review, subscribe, and share. Thanks for listening, and we'll see you next time.