



@mothersinvent  

Maeve: Thimali! What are you watching there?

Thimali: Heya Maeve. Nice to see you interrupting my - my downtime here.

[Laughs].

[Music Transition]

Thimali: I'm just watching a conversation actually between Jamie Margolin who of course, is the incredible youth activist, founder of Zero Hour. And she's in conversation with the former republican governor of Ohio, John Kasich, do you remember him? He was a presidential candidate?

Maeve: Yeah, I've seen that conversation. I've seen that - he completely hijacks the whole thing doesn't he?

Thimali: Yeah, pretty much. But since the rise in climate activism that Jamie and all of her youth activist pals all over the world have basically made happen, he himself has become an advocate for climate. And in fact, he is publicly saying he's going to be voting for the Democratic ticket this year, which does have a fairly decent climate plan. So despite all this sort of quite awful social skills, their conversation really got me thinking.

Maeve: What were you thinking about?

[Theme Music]

Thimali: So they're there to talk about the Green New Deal, right? And how we mobilise people to sort of get up off their butts and actually go and do something. But it does become pretty clear quite quickly that the conversation is really about who carries the burden of the climate crisis?

Maeve: Well, I'm going to guess that it is not the people who benefit politically, benefit financially from the climate crisis. I'm going

to guess it's the young people, people under 30. They're the ones who are desperately trying to get these older generations to care.

Thimali: Oh, Maeve, you are painfully spot on.

Maeve: I know it's not fair. It's just very tempting when you see young people to be like, you're going to save us, right?

[Music Transition]

Thimali: This is the existential crisis upon Planet Earth, you would really hope that the older generations you felt invested.

Maeve: I sort of have this mental image that houses all over the country are kind of engaged in battles kind of like the Hunger Games. Except I guess people are not as good looking as movie stars.

(Laughs).

Thimali: Yeah, I mean, do you - do you remember, Anna Jane Joyner from episode 2 we had her in last season.

Maeve: Yeah!

Thimali: And like she became really, really well known for trying and kind of failing to convince her televangelist - .

Maeve: Yeah.

Thimali: - Dad to recognise the climate crisis. Like there was a whole documentary about it and everything, because that's been her mission.

Maeve: Yeah, it was great to talk to Anna Jane and hear all of the techniques that she tried. I mean, my family, you know, they're not deniers at all, but it's still hard to talk to them about climate change because those conversations are not really fun, you know.

Thimali: It can be really hard and it can sometimes feel like you're fighting a losing battle, but there really is hope. So, a survey from the Yale programme on climate change communication from earlier this year, showed a huge change in Public opinion on climate change 69% of Americans now accept that climate change is actually taking place.

Maeve: Yeah, that's fantastic.

Thimali: And better still, about half of Americans, more than half actually 53% support climate activists who urge elected officials to take action to reduce global warming.

Maeve: Well, that support is incredible. Yeah, that's great news.

Thimali: Yeah, making huge progress. That's the first thing, right. But then I also found this study by Dr. Daniel Lawson, at North Carolina State University, which showed that teaching middle school children about climate change could positively influence their parents views on the subject and get this - weirdly older conservative fathers were especially receptive.

Maeve: That is fascinating.

[Music Transition]

Maeve: I mean, I think the key is challenging your family by - even starting that conversation. I still don't have any idea how I'd approach it, especially if my parents were climate resistant, say like Anna Jane.

Thimali: Totally Maeve, exactly - me too. So in this minisode, I actually wanted to find a way for us to unpack this a little bit more because there are people working extremely hard on the ground to make these changes possible. And lucky for us, the very kind people at the Cleo Institute in Miami, which is this strategic peer to peer organisation dedicated to educating people about climate change, have offered to help us out.

Thimali: Gabi Rodriguez has been with Cleo for a while and she's working on outreach programmes across the city. And Gabi's offered to share her tried and tested advice on how to inspire our older family members to engage the climate conversation. But then 18 year old Nicole Gazo, who's part of Cleo's Youth Empowerment programme, Gen Cleo, which actually works to raise up new climate leaders, well she's been trying to have some of these challenging conversations with her conservative parents for quite some time. And so I'm actually super excited about this minisode because Nicole has offered to try again with us and put Gabi's findings to the test.

Maeve: Oh, I can't wait to listen in on those conversations.

Thimali: Exactly.

[Music Transition]

Thimali: Give a very warm Mothers of Invention. Welcome, please to Gabi Rodriguez and Nicole Gazo.

Maeve: Hey! Halloo!

Nicole, Gabi: Thank you. Thank you.

Maeve: So firstly, thank you so much for joining us. We really appreciate you coming to help us out with this. So Gabi, you're like our climate justice guide?

Gabi: Ah, I'm excited.

Thimali: And then Nicole, you've been looking to get your parents to prioritise your future in the voting booth this November and thankfully you can vote this year, too. What has that experience been like for both of you guys?

Nicole: It is one of the most important elections that we have and I feel honestly super lucky to be able to vote. But my focus right now is just subtly having conversations with people whenever I get the chance. We need to normalise climate conversations. Like we're not talking about it at home. If we did during dinner, if we did while we were watching the news, if we were able to connect it, then I feel like a lot more people would be off the fence and activated because it would be something that we're constantly trying to fight and not something that my generation has to fight.

Thimali: Yeah, right on Nicole. And what about you, Gabi?

Gabi: Yeah, I agree. Umm, and right now, I would say that the majority of the people who live here are on the fence where they understand it, they believe it, but they don't feel it as an immediate threat to - to work on, right? The issue that we have is that so little people are actually talking about it at home.

Thimali: Right, right. But we are actually seeing some very dramatic shifts in the way that the US is now thinking about climate right? And a lot of that is in fact, due to youth actions.

Gabi: Yeah, I agree. And I think a lot of that has to do with, like you said youth actions. I think parents actually value what their children are out there striking for every day. And I think the older generations are starting to think, 'Wow, okay. They care about this. I should probably consider this in my, my political actions as well'.

Maeve: So Nicole, this thought you tested it on your Mom, will you tell us a bit about what it was like to kind of start that conversation?

Nicole: It was certainly nerve wracking.

Maeve: Really?

Nicole: I don't know why coz she's my Mom. Exactly - I can talk to her about anything. But I think knowing that I was gonna have a conversation about something that we don't always see eye to eye on.

Maeve: Mmm.

Nicole: My mom and I every time I try to bring it up, she's like, Oh, my God again. Again, Nicole, I'm tired like (groans)... But persistence was key. And so it just feels good being able to talk to my Mom and know that maybe I am activating her through these small conversations.

Thimali: So actually, we have a clip of the conversation that you kindly shared with us. Let's have a listen.

[Music Transition]

[Nicole's conversation]

Nicole: So honestly - woman to woman, you still don't feel the urge to have to go and get those solar panels?

Nicole's mum: Am I at a point where I'll invest in solar panels perhaps I'm not there yet, because I'm still

Nicole: Come on, like what is it?

Nicole's mum: What is what what it is I think it's more of the of the of the look, the aesthetics of my house, right,

Nicole: Are you serious, so that's literally because it would look kind of - you're not used to it.

Nicole's mum:

Well, I'm not used to it. I mean, the way that it would look...

Thimali:

Oh, man.

Maeve:

I wasn't expecting that. I understand that though. So it didn't really go to plan Exactly. But Gabi with your CLEO hat on, can you tell us what you thought of that clip? How did Nicole do?

Gabi:

(Laughs). Um, so the first thing that comes to mind is definitely like I think it's in the first five seconds of that clip, Nicole interrupts her mom, she, she doesn't let her mom finish her thoughts, even though her thoughts sound very, you know, they don't align with our beliefs and our values, right?

Maeve:

I felt really judgmental listening to that little clip. But that's really easy to do to judge people to shame people. But what do you do? Like if you're dealing with people who think they're living on a different planet, that everything is fine?

Gabi:

When you're having conversations with people you love about climate, you don't want to be like, oh, that's such a stupid thought like, because this and this and that. Because at that point, you're just interrogating them and drilling them and it's not a fun conversation and it's not going to be something they're going to want to have. So I think it's a practice of kind of holding back on - on those feelings. No matter how frustrating it might be. You have to let people talk about themselves and their viewpoint. So that you can find some piece of common ground with them, right and move forward. Because who knows what your Mom was gonna say next. We have to be able to have these conversations really openly, you know, not blaming each other not not feeling like the other person's thoughts are stupid.

Thimali:

Yeah. And I'm, I know, with my family who are very smart individuals, I mean, I try all different kinds of things, but actually I realised that a lot of the time they just don't have the information available to them. So you're sort of trying to shout at somebody who doesn't really have all the facts in front of them to be able to counter really.

Maeve: Or maybe they're benefiting from, you know, climate change in some way. Like I think that the information is widely available, but they don't want to listen and Nicole, some of your parents have some friends who you know, you certainly do not agree with. Let's listen to a clip there.

[Music Transition]

[Nicole's conversation]

Nicole: *The only thing that worries me is your friends. And it's scary because they're like conservative pro-Trump, like the complete anti-me. Because their President, the person that they support makes it seem like a joke. Like it's something that you can reject.*

Nicole's mum: *Well, that's out of my control. You know, I don't want it to be that every time they come here, they know that oh - Nicole is going to touch the subject because then nobody's going to want to come to my house.*

Nicole: *You should help me more.*

[Music Transition]

Thimali: Wow. Nicole you sound deflated in that one.

Nicole: I remember one of the last time I had or I saw one of my Dad's friends. They literally said, 'Hey, you want to argue?'. It makes you feel discredited on all the hard work. All the stress that it's also put on you like, do you think we want to have these conversations? No, but your vote is threatening to me. So I have to.

Maeve: But from what I understand, we don't have enough time right? To change the minds of people who don't agree. How do we protect ourselves from being totally drained?

Gabi: I'll say this to start. When the women's suffrage movement in the United States happened. The women who led that movement, they did not focus on angry white men who were totally against them. They focused on people who are again on the fence and we're passive. And we're open to being activated. Prioritising your health and your joy is, is

resistance in, in my opinion, too, so definitely picking your battles with climate conversations is important. Focus on people who, who are open to listening to you and you think you could actually get action out of them.

Thimali: That's awesome. Gabi what great advice. My goodness.

[Theme Music Transition]

Maeve: Okay, Nicole, we heard how your first chat went, and it was pretty good. We learned some lessons. You know, all of us did. So now armed with Gabi's pearls of wisdom, how did it go?

Nicole: It was a lot better. It was crazy to see the actual difference. And the number one tip that I used and took to heart and I think made the best difference was just like I remember Gabi brought up drilling because she said that I drilled people like a little teacher I would go and like when you're wrong, like, but then the second time it was just crazy though it was not a discussion. It was not an argument. It was a brainstorming conversation.

Gabi: I love that!

Thimali: Brainstorming instead of arguing is such a great way of framing it like if our Thanksgiving dinners were like giant brainstorming sessions before the turkey trip-to-fan hits in and you, you know, and then you settle into the football and you're like 'wow actually solved some problems. You know, over the dinner table'.

Gabi: That would be so cool.

Thimali: It'd be great!

Gabi: It would be like a little UN session every Thanksgiving but for your family!

Thimali: Oh yeah, I'm excited. Let's hear your clip then Nicole.

[Music Transition]

Nicole: I think what a lot of people also don't pay attention to is like the economic impact that climate change will bring. Food is going to get more expensive because it's too hot, plants are dying. Look at the spinach or the celery that we put out for a couple hours.

Nicole's Mum: *It was dying, it was wilting.*

Nicole: *It was thin!*

Nicole's mum: *Let's help those people that want to put solar panels but that can't because of the cost. Let's help them fund it right. You know, just like they have grants in colleges, there should be assistance, financial assistance for solar panels.*

Nicole: *I agree.*

Nicole's mum: *There are millions and millions of dollars that are spent every single day on every single commercial right, infomercials on it, advertisements, right. I mean, just like they do it for new brand products, just like they do it for new medicines that are coming out, you know, the same way that they do it for all of that. I think that it would be a good way to also educate folks about that.*

Nicole: *Yeah, that is really true.*

Nicole's Mom: *Great progress here.*

Nicole: *Thank you.*

[Nicole hugs and kisses her mum].

Nicole's Mum: *Oh, I love you.*

[Music Transition]

Maeve: Oh, Yes,

Maeve: My heart!

Thimali: Nice work Nicole!

Maeve: There was something in my eye.

Thimali: Yeah - are you OK?

Maeve: I hope you don't think I was being dramatic. I was like,

Gabi: We went from solar panels to salads, that should be like the name of the podcast.

Thimali: We're very diverse in the climate movement. Yeah.

[Theme Music]

Thimali: So Gabi, that is really what it's all about, like other than mother daughter goals, that kind of positivity and connection is an opportunity to make a tangible change.

Gabi: Yeah, I - and like part of me is like tearing up just because, this is such a horrible problem, existential scary, terrifying problem. And the thing that's also kind of beautiful about it is that it presents us the opportunity for a new world. To change everything we don't like about the world. And I think that when we can connect that part of climate change to other people that we're having conversations with, then it doesn't feel like an argument like it feels like a collaboration, a brainstorm session, a constructive conversation, just the idea of two people on this planet talking about how things could be so much better is what we need a lot more of. Erm, and that's exactly what you see - like what I heard in that clip.

Nicole: Exactly, my mom said, 'what if it was like commercials? And that was a really neat solution that I thought about because it wasn't an idea that I had, but an idea that my Mom had. And if my mom thought that way, maybe it could be relatable to people her age and the people she's friends with.

Thimali: Yay Nicole!

[Theme Music]

Thimali: Okay, so we've heard, like all these amazing tips from you Gabi, but then what are one of the next steps that Nicole should be looking at?

Gabi: I think that, you know, if you decide to bring up statistics or impacts of climate change in your conversations to bring some urgency out of whoever you're speaking to. I think it's so, so important, especially as young people if we're going to do that, we have to be able to back up everything we're saying. And if somebody was able to say to you 'That's not true', then that's it. You lost your conversation because you've completely like lost credibility. So if you're going to bring up science and facts, you better be ready to like back it up.

Maeve: That's great advice. I wonder, Nicole, what are you personally hoping to improve upon? And you know, how's it going with your Mom? Do you have new goals for both of you? Maybe some solar panels? *(Laughs)*.

Nicole: Yeah, I remember we were driving to the keys in this house had an aluminium roof. And my dad was like, Wow, that's so nice. And I was like, Pappi that literally looks like solar panels, and he was like - You're right.

Maeve: *(Laughs)*.

Nicole: He just stayed quiet in like contemplation.

Maeve: Bit by bit.

Nicole: So I think that little by little. It just, it really takes time. The more I have conversations with her the way that we did the second time, the more willing she'll be to finally make the investment and say goodbye to fossil fuels!

[Laughter]

Gabi: Yes! Say goodbye to fossil fuels!

Thimali: Hear hear sister!

Maeve: Well, we're gonna check in with you in a year or so to see how it's going and thank you, Nicole. Thank you, Gabi, it was so wonderful to chat with you today.

Thimali: Yeah.

Maeve: And if you want to find out more about Gabi and Nicole's work at the Cleo Institute, go to [CleoInstitute.org](https://cleoinstitute.org). Gabi also hosts their wonderful youth led podcast, which is called, appropriately house on fire.

Nicole, Gabi: Thank you both, so much. Thank you. Thank you.

[Music Transition]

Thimali: I really love this idea of brainstorming instead of arguing it's just such a sane way -

Maeve: I know.

Thimali: -To get through these conversations.

Maeve: I know. I know. It's like a lot better.

Thimali: It's like, oh right - my mental health.

Maeve: Totally. Yeah.

Thimali: And also you gave birth to me So yeah, I should probably try and figure this out *(laughs)*.

Maeve: Keep this like a nice relationship. Yeah.

[Music Transition]

Thimali: But we want to hear you guys listening to what has worked in your conversations with your family members? What hasn't?

Maeve: Yeah, pass on the tricks that you've learned?

Thimali: Yeah, get some of that brainstorming done. So head over to [@MothersInvent](#) on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter as always.

Maeve: Now I'm going to go and call low solar panel people on behalf of her Mom.

Thimali: As long as they look good, Maeve.

Maeve: *[Laughs]*.

End.