Allies Creating Equity (A.C.E.)
presents:

Ten Ways to Strengthen Your Diversity & Inclusion Efforts

❶ Diversity should be an early priority. Get the leadership team right from the start.

Early stage startups are the best opportunity to get your culture started on the right track. Like a child, your startup is more receptive to change, ensuring a tremendous and noticeable impact. "Startup founder's main objective is to do what it takes to make their company successful. With the growing evidence illustrating that diverse leadership yields better business performance, it's time for founders and venture capitalists to treat culture conformity as a serious risk and prioritize diversity from the beginning."

 - Nancy Wang in:

Diversity is the Key to Startup Success - What Can Early-Stage Founders Do about It?

❷ Create safe spaces for dialogue to unify your team.

Consider launching an internal campaign to unite all of your employees and proactively carve out space for conversations about race and inclusion. Twitter's internal rallying cry to bring everyone together is #UntilWeAllBelong to frame their company's diversity work, a reminder for everyone that they are one team and the company is a place where everybody truly belongs. "Get everybody working together... get really focused on ridding any inequities that exist...[get] really committed to advancing inclusion and diversity, broadly."

- Dalana Brand, Vice President of People Experience and Head of Diversity and Inclusion at Twitter, from:

SF Citi's "Prioritizing Racial Equity in Tech at Scaling Social Impact" Panel
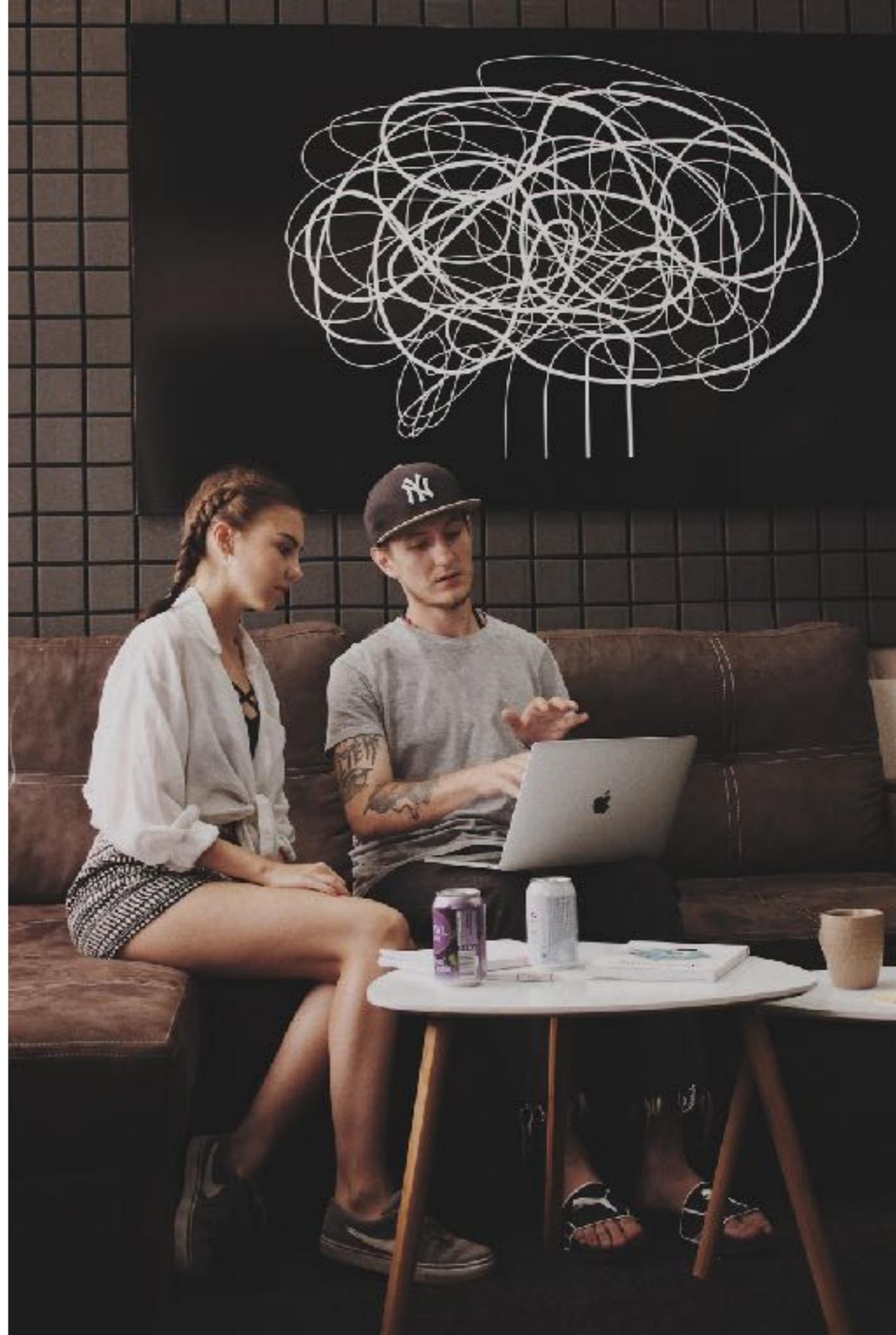
❸ Be courageous and write a new diversity statement.

"Rip up your diversity statements and write a new statement committed to anti-racism. And in that statement, clearly define what a racist idea is, what an anti-racist idea is, what a racist policy is and what an anti-racist policy is, and state as a workplace that you're committed to having a culture of anti-racist ideas and an institution made up of anti-racist policies. Then everyone can measure everyone's ideas and the policies of that workplace, based on that document."

- Ibram X Kendi, in:

[The Difference Between Being "Not Racist" and Antiracist](#)

❹ Ask questions and learn from those who are doing it well.

There isn't an expectation that you'll get it right the first time. But the first step is asking yourself "What can I do to improve diversity in tech?" and learning from those who have done it before you. Check out some top tips from other startup founders and experts who've had success in fostering inclusivity within their startups.

- Check out Emily Smith in:

How to Build an Inclusive Startup: 9 Experts Share Their Diversity Tips.

❺ Dedicate time and resources to your staffs' individual education on racial biases and micro-aggressions both in and beyond the workplace.

"Putting these skills into action at work requires deep understanding and harnessing power. Each of us is learning to ask:

What informal and formal power do I hold to shift culture?

How should I wield it to change damaging norms and power dynamics within our institution?"

- Ben Hecht in:

Moving Beyond Diversity toward Racial Equity

❻ Don't procrastinate.

"The most common mistake startups make is to leave diversity and inclusion for the later stages. Of course, there's a temptation to first and foremost focus on product, market, and fundraising while leaving all else for later. But the benefits that a diverse team brings to creativity, decision-making, innovation, and revenue are sorely needed early on, particularly considering that as many as 75% of venture-backed startups fail."

- Nicole Shephard in:

How to Improve Diversity in the Startup Sector
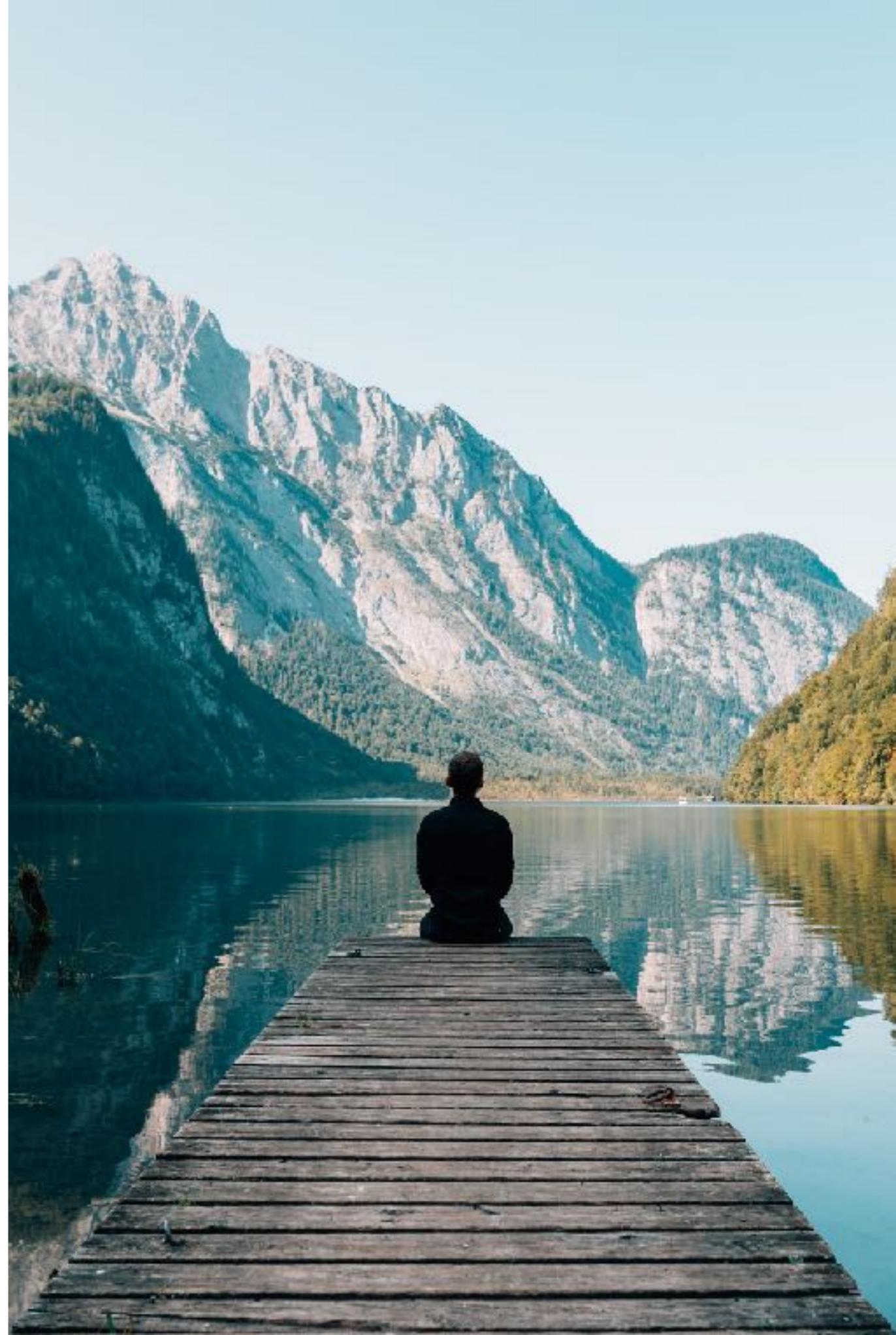
❼ Apply your resources and knowledge to create an inclusive community of mentors for aspiring entrepreneurs.

"Mentors provide entrepreneurs with role models and resources for addressing their most critical strategic and operational challenges. Mentors also provide valuable advice to founders on how to articulate the value of their ideas for the VC audience and how to raise money effectively. However today, nearly 50% of female founders cite a lack of available mentors or advisors as holding them back."

- Deepak Krishnamurthy in:

Here's How to Improve Diversity in Startups

❽ Make inclusivity intentional in your hiring process.

In order to truly advocate for diversity and inclusion, you must make it a priority in your hiring process and workspace culture. Such an environment must be intentionally cultivated from all levels of the startup. The earlier you build a diverse team, the easier it is the shape your culture appropriately.

"In a Techstars Diversity and Inclusion Report that surveyed 680 startups, only 12 percent employed five or more tech workers belonging to underrepresented minority groups. Yet 72 percent said diversity was important to them."

- Brian Nordli in:

How to Make Diversity a Hiring Priority at the Startup Stage

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❾ Ask yourself if your application screening process is driving away great applicants.

Job applicants are more likely to be interested in your company if they see your commitment to creating and maintaining an inclusive environment from recruitment to employment.

"Not only will diversity of gender, ethnicity and viewpoint serve to check unconscious bias on the part of interviewers, but it will also help the candidate imagine him- or herself at your company."

- Serenity Gibbons in:

How to Make Your Startup Team More Diverse

10. Never be afraid to shake things up.

Disrupting the status quo in tech is important, not only because of the value of equity but also because of the widespread impact that tech has on multiple sectors. Often, people generalize gender status quo with racial status quo; however, racial discrepancies are among the most substantial in tech.

"Facebook says 23 per cent of its tech employees globally are female, up from 15 per cent," yet when it comes to ethnic diversity, at Google and Microsoft, the proportion "has risen by about one percentage point since 2014."

- Madhumita Murgia in:

How to Increase Diversity in the Tech Sector