

DOPE LABS

Transcript of Lab 028: There's Something in the Water

Zakiya: If there's one thing that's happening is Corona is keeping us outside. That's where I feel safest.

Titi: Yeah. Definitely taking more walks.

Zakiya: Mm hmm.

Titi: You been bike riding?

Zakiya: Oh, man. I've been biking like my life Depends on it. Tour de France, Tour de 495. I'm riding underneath it.

Zakiya: Do you remember when people were talking about how the air quality was improving because everyone was staying home?

Titi: Oh, my gosh. There were so many things that were coming out at the right at the beginning of quarantine that was like the air quality in L.A. is the best it's ever been or something like that. And I was like, oh, my gosh, it's because no one is driving around. Everybody was at home. So the air quality was better.

Zakiya: And I was like, yo, this is a wakeup call. We're really out here just polluting all over the planet,.

Titi: Honestly,.

Zakiya: And we don't That was our day to day. We didn't even think about.

Titi: We didn't. And what it also showed us is that we can be doing better. When you know better, you do better. So now that we know what it takes...

Zakiya: What you gonna do?

Titi: How you gonna act?

Titi: I'm Titi

Zakiya: And I'm Zakiya.

Titi: And from Spotify, this is Dope Labs.

Titi: You know what, I've been noticing.

Zakiya: What.

Titi: Every time we go on a walk. So me and Jimmy, we have like this this game that we play and we try and spot the rubber gloves or spot the mask on the ground.

Zakiya: What?.

Titi: It's not on people, because now that everybody is wearing gloves and masks, now we're seeing a lot of gloves and masks just on the ground, in the street, in the grass, like I saw a bird pecking at a mask the other day.

Zakiya: No, no.

Titi: I was just like, what is going on?

Zakiya: That's crazy.

Titi: We got coronavirus, but then we're also continuing to kill the planet.

Zakiya: And you know where those mass are going to end up. We know exactly where they're going. Right into the ocean.

Titi: Exactly. And that's today's topic. We're talking about the ocean and specifically how the ocean is connected to the health and vitality of our planet. Because as we all know, we could be doing better. Like when you talk about like there were so many things that came out about how many micro plastics that we're starting to find in the ocean and in the fish that we eat.

Zakiya: That are in the ocean yeah,.

Titi: That are in the ocean and finding all these micro plastics because we're not disposing of our plastic and our waste properly, like we know these things already in yellow, thrown your gloves and mass on the ground.

Zakiya: There's so much to consider when talking about climate change. So why are we only focusing on the ocean?

Titi: I feel like people when we talk about climate change, like people think about, you know, emissions from our cars. Yeah, we want electric cars and things like that. And we think about recycling, reduce, reuse, recycle. But we don't talk about the ocean, like, really at all.

Zakiya: Yeah.

Titi: You know, sometimes it comes up in people like, yeah, the ocean is important. Like, let's not forget. But then we forget about the ocean.

Zakiya: Yeah. It's like out of sight. Out of mind.

Titi: Exactly. Because most of us don't live on the ocean. And so it's not something that we interact with every day. But we do interact with, you know, trees and we interact with our cars and things like that. So what we're doing with this lab today is bringing the ocean to you.

Zakiya: Let's get into the recitation.

Titi: So what do we know?

Zakiya: I know the plant is 71 percent water, but I feel like I learned a lot of stuff as a kid about the ocean and I haven't really brought that stuff back to the forefront of my mind. Like, I know the ocean is all connected and it moves water, but I don't really know the significance of that. Why I should care about it. I mean, I know I should care, but. I don't really know the details.

Titi: We know that the ocean affects all things, right?

Zakiya: Yeah,.

Titi: But in what way? You know? I mean, we can't use the we can't cop out to say, oh, that's not our area of research because it's just like.

Zakiya: You live here.

Titi: Exactly. It's like, oh, this is my house. But I don't know nothing about the roof. What?

Zakiya: Yeah. When it rain in the bedroom, you're going to find out.

Zakiya: I think we should just start with that baseline assumption. Knowing that the Earth is over 70 percent. What is enough for me to know that the ocean is important and actually get down to some nitty gritty. It sounds like we're gonna focus a lot on what we want to know?

Titi: Yes, because we don't know enough. And so one of the things that I want to know is how is the ocean affected by climate change? We know it is OK. I'm not saying that I don't know that it is. I'm saying, like, in what ways that, you know, we might be missing is it affected?

Zakiya: Help us see our blind spot , basically.

Titi: yes. I want these blinders off. I want to see the whole thing.

Zakiya: And if, you know, people always saying "save the ocean" and "if you save the ocean, you can save the earth". I need you to draw a line between those dots. What exactly about saving the ocean helps me save the rest of the planet.

Titi: Right.

Zakiya: I want to know that.

Titi: And I want to know what are some of the misconceptions about the ocean, how it affects the world, the things that we can do. And I know that there are certain people that are disproportionately affected by climate change. And I would like to know how, why and who those people are specifically.

Zakiya: That's a lot to think about. I think we're ready to jump into the discussion.

Titi: Our guest for today's lab is Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson.

Dr. Johnson: My name is Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson. I am a marine biologist and a climate policy nerd from Brooklyn, New York.

Titi: She is the goat and she's trying to be modest.

Zakiya: She's founder and CEO of Ocean Collective.

Titi: Ocean Collective is a consulting firm for conservation solutions that are grounded in social justice.

Zakiya: You can find out at Johnson at the nexus of all things science, policy and communication. She's always advocating for coastal communities and basically figuring out how to solve our climate crisis.

Titi: And we're going to talk about those solutions in a bit. But first, let's talk about the ocean. How does the ocean work with the rest of the planet?

Zakiya: Let's hit some some key points. Right. I think you have to know these things to understand the gravity of why the ocean is so important. The scope of the ocean is huge. You know, we tend to think about what's happening right at the shore and we think, oh, look, there's a huge wave. No sea waves in the ocean can move at hundreds of miles per hour.

Titi: And the ocean, because it's so vast, hasn't been explored as some other parts of our universe, like there are more extensive maps of Mars than our own ocean. So how does the ocean move?

Zakiya: I think it's really useful to imagine the ocean as this huge pump, like this big physical pump, this just churning water all around the planet.

Titi: So in the ocean, the ocean that's all over the planet. There are these things called gyres. And a gyre is any large system of circulating ocean currents. And the way that they're formed is by the Earth's wind patterns and by the forces that make the earth rotate. So on our planet Earth, there are five major ocean gyres the North Atlantic, South Atlantic, Indian, North Pacific and South Pacific. And together, these gyres circulate the ocean water all around the planet. And the ocean doesn't exist in a vacuum. The ocean and the climate are very intertwined.

Dr. Johnson: And we think about our climate system. It's the ocean actually plays a big role. It's not just the atmosphere. It's the interactions between the two.

Zakiya: You know, one of the things that's easy to forget is that we don't have some unlimited source of water. The water on this planet is all we have. And it's just constantly being recycled. So the water that rains down on us has been in the ocean many times before. It's evaporated into our atmosphere then is precipitated and it becomes snow or rain and is distributed over bodies of water or land. And when it's in land, it just, you know, drains right back down our waterways and basins, back into the ocean to complete that cycle all over again. The water molecules that make up the ocean are constantly interchanging with the water molecules that make up our atmosphere.

Dr. Johnson: So the temperature of the water means a lot for the temperature of the air and the weather where you are.

Zakiya: The ocean has this amazing heat capacity so it can absorb solar energy and then it can release it as heat, but it does that very slowly. So the way I think about that is considering, you know, it's a hot, sunny, hot day. But when you get an ocean, the water is still cold because the ocean has the ability to absorb way more heat than the atmosphere around it right. And because it has that heat capacity, it doesn't rapidly heat up and rapidly drop in heat in temperature.

Titi: Imagine of the heat, the ocean to heat up as fast as the atmosphere like the air around us. we would be boiling.

Zakiya: you want to get in that boiling pot of water? I don't want to get in!

Titi: I don't want I don't want to be boiled like that. You gonna sous vide yourself.

Titi: So then my next question is, how are the oceans affected by climate change?

Dr. Johnson: I'm so glad you asked because most people don't think of the ocean as part of climate change, as part of a climate system.

Zakiya: So Titi has just explained about these gyres. We now understand how the temperature of the ocean is superimportant. And this is all such a delicate balance for how our planet keeps us alive. Any interruption or imbalance or skew in one direction of this balance is a problem. And today, we're just going to touch on a couple of those examples.

Titi: There are a few ways the ocean is affected, but it's all related to the increase of the ocean's temperature. And it's like a domino effect or a chain reaction that causes a lot of different issues.

Dr. Johnson: The heat of the water actually drives a lot of different things. So you've this cold, dense, salty water that then sinks and it drives this sort of conveyor belt in the North Atlantic. But if the water doesn't get cold enough in northern Europe, then it doesn't sink as fast. And sort of the current this conveyor belt is slowing down.

Titi: When the ocean water gets warmer, it can cause a lot of problems.

Dr. Johnson: If the water's really warm. My favorite climate scientist, Dr Kate Marvel at NASA. She describes a warm ocean as hurricane food.

Zakiya: The atmosphere is always holding water vapor, and that's just water in a gaseous state. But the atmosphere's ability to hold that vapor is related to temperature. Warm air can hold more water vapor than cold air.

Titi: If you think about the summertime and how we only talk about humidity in the summer, that's because warm air has the ability to trap those water molecules. And that's what humidity is. That's water in the air. But in the wintertime, we don't talk about that because cold air does not do that.

Zakiya: And when you think about it that way, like you said, the warm air, when the ocean water is evaporating, it increases the temperature and humidity of the air around it. And that's how when whenever they talk about hurricanes, they're always show there. You never seen a hurricane generate over land. It comes from the ocean over where we live. Right.

Dr. Johnson: this heat and more evaporation and stronger and wetter storms become even more dangerous. And that is also due to climate change.

Zakiya: The next thing to understand about climate change affecting the ocean is how it changes the ocean's chemistry. We've all heard that the warming temperature of the planet is caused by greenhouse gases, but those gases are also being absorbed by the ocean.

Dr. Johnson: And so we've actually changed the chemistry of seawater by burning all these fossil fuels. And that is bananas. The ocean is enormous and we've changed the chemistry of the entire ocean.

Zakiya: The ocean is a carbon sink. That means a place where the carbon can just go to basically just go away. Right. If you think about it, the carbon we generate from activities like driving and flying and even exhaling, all that carbon has to go somewhere. So the ocean just takes all that excess carbon. And through a variety of processes, it basically traps it in its depths.

Titi: But of course, we've taken it too far. The Ocean Foundation says that we're exceeding the ocean's carbon sink capacity. So that's like if I let my friend borrow my car and I'm like, yeah,

that's fine. You can go get groceries. And then I find out a week later, they actually took a road trip across the country. And now my car's broken down in California. That's too much.

Zakiya: I'm not that friend, by the way. Right?

Titi: Yes.

Zakiya: Are you trying to tell me something?

Titi: Well, we'll see.

Zakiya: And the thing is, all this excess carbon that we're generating. That's not the only thing. The oceans absorbing is also absorbing heat.

Dr. Johnson: And the ocean is also absorbed 90 percent of the heat that we've trapped. So the ocean is getting warmer. The seawater is, you know, a degree Celsius or more warmer than it used to be in modern history. Warmer water holds less oxygen and warmer water also stresses fish out. So they're like super stressed out and they can't get enough oxygen. And it's just a recipe for disaster.

Titi: You know, when you get in the shower and you turn around and that hot water touches your back. That's what we are doing to the fish.

Zakiya: They are upset,.

Titi: Just as upset as you be.

Zakiya: When you take that into account with, like the heat capacity, how the ocean warms slowly, even if we stop what we're doing right now. The ocean is going to continue to warm because of past things that we've done and because it has that he capacity is just slow. So don't be like, oh, it doesn't feel warm to me.

Titi: Exactly, because people will think a degree is is not that big of a deal.

Zakiya: They must not live with anyone else. If you havent fought over seventy four versus seventy five degrees in the house.

Titi: Daily.

Zakiya: I don't wanna talk to you about the ocean.

Titi: Exactly. Living in the middle. D.C.. It is a swamp here. That air needs to be cutting on.

Zakiya: So these are all the ways that climate change is affecting the ocean.

Titi: So if we go back to the to the metaphore, like, oh, you let your friend borrow your car. But I'm a good friend. So if I'm the ocean, I'm a good friend and I'm like, hey, I understand. Like, you have places you felt like you had to go. I'll let you borrow my car again. That's the way the ocean is treating us. They are such a good friend that even after misusing them and mistreating them, they still going to try and help us out.

Dr. Johnson: There's all these ways, the oceans like out there trying to help us and we just constantly ignore it.

Zakiya: And it's not just the ocean. You know, when we think about all the places we want to go and all the greenhouse gases we continue to generate, the ocean is doing its job. So our rivers and streams and salt marshes and mangroves, all those things absorb way more carbon than like, no shade to the trees, but than the trees do OK. So all those areas, those water rich areas, they absorb more carbon.

Titi: And another thing that I think that no one really knows or thinks about that we talked about with Dr. Johnson, one of these things that is in the ocean that helps with purifying the water and keeping a record of history me and Zakiya's favorite late night treat, oysters.

Zakiya: If you've been out with me and there were bivalves on the menu, you already have heard this spiel. You know, I like a little ecological history along with my horseradish and oysters. Yes. And like you said, they're great storytellers. Like if there's anything that's gonna get you motivated. The thing that you're eating. Do you love that? Well, what if it was no more?

Dr. Johnson: And there's finally some oysters are getting more respect as far as their role in filtering water. They are. They're really good at first filtering excess nutrients and pollution out of water. And I'm actually on the board of the Billion Oyster Project in New York City. They're trying to replant a billion oysters in New York Harbor by 2035 and involve a million school students in the process. But, you know, they can't swim away and they're really easy to catch and catch them all. So we basically ate them all.

Zakiya: What people don't realize is that we're at an all time low for our oyster populations compared to the estimated levels in the early 1600s square at about 1% of the oyster population we used to have.

Titi: So it was like we don't have any oysters. That's what it feels like you're saying.

Zakiya: That's what I'm saying to you, friend.

Titi: Oh no, I didn't know it was so dire.

Zakiya: And all this tells me is that you haven't been listening to me because I tell you this every time. You tune me out.

Titi: OK. Well, I just be trying to eat and enjoy my cocktail and my oysters.

Dr. Johnson: Oyster reefs can be an incredibly effective buffer from storms and waves because they just like they they buffer that energy. They kind of like disperse all of that by creating all this friction that, you know, breaks the power of the waves coming ashore. And so restoring oysters is actually a really important part of building resilience to climate change. So shout out to oysters for being delicious and historical and saving us.

Titi: Oysters are physicists they are providing a great barrier between the ocean and our coastline. It's like put it like a permeable brick wall where some water will get through, but it slows it down because they're taking the brunt of the force.

Zakiya: Yes.

Titi: So they're standing there like no limit soldiers and getting whipped up by this ocean. And they're like, that's fine. Thank you, sir. May I have another

Zakiya: I'm the Silkk The Shocker oyster. Which one to you?

Titi: Definitely Master P. Make 'em say unnhhhhh na na na na

Zakiya: maybe I'll be Snoop Dogg while he was on no limit. If anybody mess with Snoop Doggy Dogg, are yall gonna save that oysters or what.

Titi: We don't deserve them. We don't deserve these oysters. They deserve better.

Zakiya: How we gonna fix this?

Dr. Johnson: That's where my head is at. Like, how can we just make sure the ocean is a part of these solutions? And right now, I'm really focused on how that would manifest in terms of policy change.

Titi: And we're gonna talk more about those policy changes coming right after the break.

Zakiya: Now it's time to put on our myth busting heads and talk about some common misconceptions when it comes to the ocean and climate change.

Titi: The first misconception is about who is the most concerned about our changing planet.

Dr. Johnson: We are taught this myth that white people care more about nature, care more about climate. It's like the rugged, outdoorsy wilderness, Patagonia clad Prius driving dudes who are like they're going to save the planet. And and it's actually more likely that a Latina grandma in a in Arizona cares about the climate than a college student in Massachusetts. Like, that's how the polling plays out.

Zakiya: And I've wondered, I'm like, is it the outdoorsy influencers that are making us think this? Is it the YouTube videos about camping that make you think like this is the profile of a person who cares?

Titi: Probably. I think that's I think it's all the marketing of all of these outdoors companies as well, where I mean, everybody in all of their ads are white and they don't show that black and brown people are also doing things within their community. They might not necessarily be hiking because, you know, they might not have the privilege of having that kind of time to just say, I'm going to spend time walking through the woods and things like that. But they're doing things within their community to impact climate change.

Zakiya: If you would have asked me a long time ago as a kid, was I an outdoors person, I would say absolutely. I used to catch lightning bugs. We used to go exploring in the woods and stuff. My grandma would say, "hey, back in the yard", you know, go push it. Yeah. Me and all of my cousins. And I think as I got around high school, I was like, oh, I remember there was one episode of The Simpsons. I know this sounds so crazy. Do you remember this episode of The Simpsons where Lisa is like meeting up with this activist environmental group, this environmental activist group? And they're like. In the tree, like there in this tree, so it doesn't get cut down. And I was like, no, this is an outdoors person. This is a person who cares about the planet. They wear sandals and socks and they have T-shirts with the with a tree on it or the globe. That's right.

Titi: They brush their teeth with bark.

Zakiya: Yeah. Right. And you begin to think this is what an outdoors person is. This is what a person looks like when that cares about the planet. And that's not necessarily the case. There's a thousand ways to care about the planet and to make change.

Titi: I actually have a friend that started a group called the Black Outdoors. It just highlights so many people of color that are getting out hiking, traveling and doing all of these really amazing things to help impact climate change and also show that people of color are also a part of that community.

Zakiya: I just went to the Web site. I'm I'm all into it.

Titi: It's a shame that we aren't included in these conversations, because I know Zakiya and I, we really enjoy being outside and in hiking and biking and doing all these things like that. Me my husband did a 110 mile hike for our honeymoon. Honeymoon.

Zakiya: That dont sound like honey to me.

Titi: Parts of it was not. But yeah, these are things that we like to do. But, you know, we are constantly excluded from the conversation.

Zakiya: Yeah.

Titi: But we know to be fact is. That it's not the stereotypical person that you think wants to save the Earth. That is actually saving the Earth.

Zakiya: Dr. Johnson told us about a recent study from Yale and George Mason universities that highlights exactly that.

Dr. Johnson: It's 49 percent of white people are concerned about climate change. Fifty seven percent of black people and 69 percent of LatinX people. This is a survey from Yale and George Mason universities. They've been tracking this stuff for over a decade.

Titi: Not only are people of color more concerned about the planet, but Dr. Johnson said that they're also more likely to get involved.

Dr. Johnson: And there's also sort of double the likelihood of wanting to get involved in campaigns to solve these problems. And there's and and people of color are half as likely to be climate deniers.

Zakiya: And the next myth is about who is most affected by climate change. Too many people are thinking of this as a faraway problem in these other countries, but is really affecting us all.

Dr. Johnson: In the U.S. in particular, we've had many people have enough resources and protection that they're buffered from the worst of the impacts and journalism had for a long time been telling this story about climate change as something that is going to affect like poor brown people in other countries. Whereas like we know it's hitting here. It's the floods in the Mid West, the record floods, it's the record fires in California. It's the record storms in the southeast. It's the droughts. It's all of that is hitting us right now. And I think we're at the, we've finally reached the tipping point where the majority of Americans are like, oh, shit. Like this is real it's coming for all of us, like it's coming for poor people and people of color first, but it's coming for all of us.

Zakiya: And I think we've seen that as part of the behavior in the U.S.. Like, if something isn't affecting us right where you can see it in front of your face, you feel like it is not important. We saw this with coronavirus when it was happening in China. We say it's not affecting us.

Titi: And even current, even when it's happening here in the United States,.

Zakiya: When It happened in New York and D.C. and in California, people in other states say, oh, that's a problem there not here, we're not worried. And now we see those other states having these numbers surge. Right. If you're going to wait until the fire or in this case, the shoreline is at your back door,.

Titi: It's gonna be too late. And for some people, this is not something that is in their distant future. This is something that is happening right now.

Dr. Johnson: Vulnerability to the climate crisis is just another manifestation of white supremacy. And a lot of ways like where people live is a function of history. What resources they have as a function of history, whether the government jumps in to support you after a disaster is a function of a racist past and present. So in this moment of reckoning, and it's been really good to see people try to muddle through that and figure out how to be on the right side of history and connect the dots, because, like, we just can't solve the climate crisis without people

of color, but we can honestly probably solve it without racists. So choose choose your side. Right.

Titi: The third myth is that climate change is a coastal issue, but it's just as important for people in the landlocked areas.

Dr. Johnson: So, yeah, there's all these connections and the way that we do agriculture is actually super bad for the ocean. All of this like growing animals in high density. And then you have these like ponds of pig manure that are like leaching out to sea and all the fertilizers and all the lawn's fertilizers and all the big industrial farms and and all of that goes downstream through rivers to the sea and causes these dead zones and anoxic zones and and really pollutes the oceans. So when people, you know, in the Midwest or in the middle of the country or like the oceans, not my issue. I'm like, well, what what we do in the middle affects the coasts and vice versa. So it's so important that people that people connect those dots.

Titi: So if you're listening to this episode and you're in the Midwest and you feel like, hey, I mean, there are no oceans near me, this has nothing to do with me. This does not affect me. I do not affect it. That's not true. The ocean affects all of us, as we talked about earlier on in the episode. And it definitely affects the Midwest and Midwest agriculture.

Dr. Johnson: There's a whole sort of anthropology and historical ecology around sort of how much things have shifted. And this idea of shifted baselines means that every generation has just lowered expectations for nature and that that is actually really damaging because when we try to do conservation or restoration, we're actually it's just not ambitious enough. We just don't even understand how, like diverse and resplendent and abundant nature should be.

Titi: And that goes back to pretty much everything that we've been talking about, the oysters.

Zakiya: Our expectations are so low because at each generation, which is tearing stuff up. You never knew how clean the room could get. We never knew it. We'd never seen it.

Titi: We really have to start being better and doing better and expecting more for our environment.

Zakiya: So now you should be fired up just like us.

Titi: Yes.

Zakiya: And if you have all this information now, you know about climate change, you know its effects on the ocean. You know who is affected. You know that who cares about climate change and that it could be you. The question is now, what will you do?

Titi: Right. This is an all hands on deck situation. Everyone has to play a part.

Dr. Johnson: One of the things I really care about is making everyone feel welcome in the climate movement, in environmental work. There are so many solutions. There are so many

different ways to participate. So I just really want to encourage people to think about how they can be a part of the solutions that we need.

Titi: We can't just say we're gonna focus on this one thing and do this one thing. And if that doesn't work, then we'll move on to the next thing. We need to be doing all of these things all at the same time. It sounds like a lot but for real, When you think about it. It's not. And part of this includes our government. Policy is so important and Dr. Johnson says the good news is that when it comes to climate change, there are some things that Congress can agree on.

Dr. Johnson: That topic, like should we or should we not have heaps of plastic in the ocean? Is one of the few environmental issues that hasn't been politicized. Like Republicans, Democrats, like no one wants trash on the beach. No one wants all this stuff in the ocean. No one wants plastic in their seafood, so there's actually real opportunity for bipartisanship on this issue of plastic pollution. And we should absolutely lean into that and and take advantage of it.

Zakiya: And one of those ways to take advantage of this is to educate ourselves about the different policies and plans to tackle climate change. One of them is the Green New Deal. You may have heard of it.

Dr. Johnson: First, I would like to encourage all of your wonderful listeners to read the Green New Deal do either of you know how long the green New Deal is?

Titi: No,.

Zakiya: We didn't. Do yall know?

Titi: Pause it right now andThink about it. OK. You're back. You don't know.

Dr. Johnson: It is 14 pages, double spaced, massive font. We'll take you, like, five minutes to read it. This is the big secret. Everyone thinks it's like hundreds and hundreds of pages. I could never read it. I could never understand it. Like everyone go read it. We can then have an informed discussion about what this should look like. So the Green New Deal is it's a it's a it's a congressional resolution. It's not a policy. Its not an act. It is a vision statement. And it was introduced in the House by Representative Ocasio Cortez and in the Senate by Ed Markey, who's been a champion of climate issues for decades. So they introduced it in both chambers of Congress together. And it's this short vision statement for how we as a nation at a federal level should address the climate crisis. But this I read word for word several times. And the first time I read it. I got to page 10 and I saw the first mention of the ocean in a list of like things we should protect, include blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, ocean. And I was like, that's all we get, you guys. We're going to lose if we don't include the ocean as a core part of our climate solutions that we're just not going to get there.

Titi: And that wasn't good enough for Dr. Johnson. So she got together with some other climate experts that specialize in the ocean. And they decided to draft up their vision for climate change that includes the ocean.

Dr. Johnson: The three of us got together and wrote an op ed called The Big Blue Gap in the Green New Deal. I mean, just like y'all, you're missing it. Here's what we think needs to be included. And so that's what sort of started these discussions about a blue new deal and what that would look like. And the idea is that this is a supplement to the Green New Deal. Like we just want to make sure the ocean is included. This is not a competing proposal. This is an, you know, an addition.

Zakiya: I'm so grateful for the people like Dr. Johnson doing this type of work. Right. Informing folks. You know, I think she makes some really good points just to help us get through some misconceptions, just for us to see how connected all of these systems are.

Titi: And it's just like with other things. Once we get past the first initial barriers that are very kind of basic in our understanding of why the ocean is so important, then we can really get to work.

Zakiya: You know what Titi? Even after that thing came out for L.A., I thought I considered myself. I said, hey, I'm a scientist. There are certain facts I know, you know, but I drive to work and is too far to bike, is too far to walk. But since I've been biking, girl, no, it's not too far. And when I realize in July that I hadn't gotten any gas since March and I was like, I don't need to be so dependent on fossil fuels. There were just so many little small things that I could see. I'll give you another example since I've been home. I'm not eating out. Right. I haven't been kind of ordering things in. But what I've been noticing is the amount of waste that I generate. I'm taking the trash out and I'm looking like, did I make these three bags of trash that are going to go there?

Titi: in a week? That was something that I noticed about myself, too. Like, I use a lot of paper towels. Oh, I use a lot of paper towels and napkins. Like, it was something that I knew about myself. When I would go out to restaurants, I blog. Yet I'm always asking for more napkins and things like that. But then being at home and realizing how many paper towels I used for like for everything, even if it's just like, oh I need to oh I splashed some water on the on the counter. I'll get a paper towel to wipe it up. Like why when I could use like a dish towel. Yes. And so I was creating a lot of waste. So now I'm a lot more conscious of it and trying not to do that anymore.

Zakiya: And with anything where you see a little room for improvement, you know, it just makes you think, what else? Who's next? You know, what else can I do? And so I can't wait to talk about some more solutions now that I've seen how easy it is to be an advocate of earth in general.

Titi: Yeah. Little steps, little things done by a lot of people can make huge impact.

Zakiya: Yes. What are the little steps for you? They might not be the same as for me, but there are so many steps. There are so many we could take.

Titi: That's it for Lab 028. But we have so much more for you to dig into on our Web site. So head over to Dopelabspodcast.com.

Zakiya: On our Web site You can find a cheat sheet for today's laugh, along with a ton of other links and resources in the show notes.

Titi: And if you want to stay in the know with dope labs, don't forget to sign up for our newsletter on our site, too.

Zakiya: Special thanks to our guest expert Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson. She's co hosting a brand new podcast called How to Save a Planet. And that comes out on August 20th. So be sure to listen. Also, we love hearing from you. What did you think about today's lab? Do you have ideas for Future Labs? Call us at 202-567-7028 and let us know!

Titi: you can find us on Twitter and Instagram at Dope Labs podcast.

Zakiya: Titi is on Twitter @Dr_Tsho..

Titi: And you can find Zakiya @zsaidso.

Zakiya: Follow us on Spotify or wherever else you listen to podcasts.

Titi: Dope Labs is produced by Jenny Radelet Mast of Wave Runner Studios.

Zakiya: Mixing a Sound Design by Hannis Brown.

Titi: Our theme music is by Taka Yasuzawa and Alex Sugiura with additional music by Elijah 'LX' Harvey. Dope Labs is a production of Spotify and MegaOhm Media Group.

Zakiya: And it's executive produced by US.

Titi: Titi Shodiya.

Zakiya: And Zakiya Whatley.

Zakiya: But it seems like there's something about returning to the water like the ocean that just feels like, oh,.

Titi: Like Moana said.

Zakiya: Who said?

Moana.

Moana, yes. I was like who??