



Living Icon Dolores Huerta Is Still Fighting the Good Fight

The founding mother of the farmers rights movement, Dolores Huerta is still traversing the country protesting, marching, and sometimes getting arrested. And she loves every minute of it. In this live episode, she recounts funny and alarming stories from her decades of fighting for the rights of workers, from the farm to the ballot box.

Dolores Huerta:

¡Si se puede!

Crowd:

¡Si se puede!

¡Si se puede!

¡Si se puede!

Si se puede!

Si se puede!

Si se puede!

Si se puede!

Si se puede!

Si se puede!

Si se puede!

Huerta:

Thank you! Thank you very much and muchas gracias. Thank you.

Alicia Menendez:

That's 89-year-old civil rights activist Dolores Huerta, leading a crowd in a cheer of "Si se puede." Together with Cesar Chavez, Dolores co-founded the organization that would go on to become United Farm Workers. In 1965, she helped organize the successful Delano grape strike, and she was the lead negotiator in the workers' contract. We recorded this conversation with Dolores in front of a live audience at Seton Hall University, and talked about everything from workers' rights and racism, to the importance of taking credit, and what it means to dedicate your life to a cause aimed beyond yourself.

Dolores, what an honor. Thank you so much. I want to go way back. Start at the beginning. You've said that your mother was the most dominant person in your life. What is your most vivid memory of your mother?

Huerta:

Oh my God. Well, my mother was... She was not flamboyant. Had a very gentle demeanor. Spoke in a very soft voice. But very, very powerful and very strong. Always working. I think when we were kids, she divorced my father, because he was abusive. She worked two jobs, as a waitress during the daytime and in the cannery at night. But then on Saturdays and Sundays, she would be at home, and I remember while she was ironing clothes, she would be reading us Bible stories. Made sure that we went to Mass on Sundays, and then she finally got enough money to start her own business, and then she made sure that we had violin lessons, and piano lessons, bought us tickets to the symphony, even though she

couldn't go herself. So, I guess when I talk about remembering my mother, I remember all the things that she did for us.

I think in terms of her own persona, like I said, she was just a doer. She was a doer.

Menendez: She's also, though, the one who instilled in you the sense that social justice was-

Huerta: Oh, right, because she always... She was very charitable, because she was a very great admirer of Saint Francis of Xavier. Saint Francis of Xavier of course copied Saint Francis of Assisi, and the whole thing about always helping people. You had to help people even if they didn't ask you to help them. If you saw that somebody had a need, it was your responsibility to help that individual. And never expected gratitude from them, because she would say, "If you want to be rewarded for something that you do, you take away the grace of God for the act that you did."

So, our obligation as human beings is just to be of service to others. In her business, she finally had a hotel, a 70-room hotel, and we always had people that lived there that were people in need. I remember a young man coming to our hotel. We were in California. He was from Kansas. I happened to be there when he got there, and he said to my mother, "You know, I'm new here. I don't know anybody. I don't have a job and I don't have a place to stay." And my mother said, "Don't worry. You can stay with us until you find a job."

In fact, when my mother passed away, we found out that we had so many people in my mother's hotel that have lived there for years without paying any rent. But that's who she was, you know? She just... Whatever she could do in the community, she did.

Menendez: I was struck by something that someone said in the documentary, Dolores. They said you were living this comfortable, middle-class life, and you left it to advocate on behalf of those who have so much less, and that isn't an easy choice to make. Take us back to the moment where you said, "What I'm seeing is not right, and I'm going to dedicate myself to fixing it."

Huerta: Well, again, when you see injustices, you want to feel, "What can I do?" And growing up, again, as a person of color, get all of these discriminations throughout your life, and school, and wherever you are, at work, et cetera. At that point in time, you felt you couldn't do anything about it, but when I learned how to organize people, how to bring people together, and how to direct nonviolent action to change things, that's what changed my life, because then when I saw the injustice of the farm workers, the fact that they weren't getting paid, that they were so poor, that the children were so poverty-stricken, and I just said, "This is wrong."

Menendez: Take me back to the early days of UFW. What did you get right and what did you get wrong?

Huerta: That's not an easy question to answer, because when you're doing that work, organizing people, getting them to have faith in themselves, and knowing how desperate the situation is, I think it's a miracle in itself that we were able to do what we did. And when you think that when we started the United Farmer Workers, it was just Cesar Chavez, his wife, Helen, and myself, three of us, organizing people through house meetings, et cetera. We were able to get over a thousand farm workers organized initially.

And it's kind of interesting, because we made all of these plans of how we were going to organize the whole Central Valley of California, which is eight different counties. It's bigger than most states. And yet we weren't able to do that, because the Filipino workers went

out on strike and we had to support them, so it changed our whole plan. So, I think I learned that... not to be disappointed when things don't go the way that you want, and because often when things don't go the way that you want, and you have all these plans, is because you're supposed to do something different. You're supposed to go in a different direction.

Menendez: But what a huge sense of responsibility to be on that journey and know how many people are relying on you to deliver for them. Right? The stakes are incredibly high when you do the work that you do. There was a line in your official bio, it's from your foundation page, that I loved. It said, "As much as she was Cesar's right hand, she could also be the greatest thorn in his side. The two were infamous for their blowout arguments, an element that was a natural part of their working relationship." Tell us about one of those fights.

Huerta: Well, I kind of say that it's the way that women think and the way that men think. When we started the great boycott, I was in New York City, and Cesar said we should boycott potatoes. And I said, "No, Cesar. People don't think of California when they think of potatoes. They think of Idaho." So, we had this big argument on the telephone, and so I finally said to Cesar, "Well, I think I should fly back to California so that we can have this argument in person, and I think we should boycott grapes, because California produces 90% of the grapes of the United States of America."

And the employer that we were battling at that time grew, he had both grapes and potatoes, okay? And so, Cesar didn't want to pay my plane fare, so he gave up. And that's how we ended up boycotting grapes instead of potatoes, okay? And the other thing on the boycott is I was in charge of the boycott on the East Coast, so what I did is I went after the small, independent stores, to take off the grapes. You know, we would picket the stores, and they would eventually take off the grapes, and so we got the independent stores, and then we went after the small chains, and then we got them to take off the grapes, and then went after the larger chains, and then finally the biggest chains.

So, in California, Cesar was doing in the West Coast, starting from Chicago west, they were doing the boycott, but Cesar took on the biggest stores, kind of like the macho trip. You know, I'm gonna take on the biggest chains. So, while we were able to get all of the East Coast clean, from Chicago to New York and down to Florida, we had all the grapes out of all the stores, and guess what? In California, they were still boycotting. So, then I flew to California, and I did the same strategy that I did here, and we got all the grapes out of the stores over there. So again, it's kind of the feminist logic, right? You take on the small ones first and get them clean, so then you have clean stores to send people to. We would always say, "Go to that store, because they don't have any grapes." Right? Instead of just battling the biggest chain.

And I guess one thing Cesar told me... You know, he did these fasts that he did. He did two fasts for 25 days. Water-only fasts. And his last fast was for 36 days, and he wanted to bring to the attention of the public about the pesticides, economic poisons on our food, and that's why he did that last fast. But after one of his fasts, I think it was the first one, and I said, I apologized. I said, "You know, Cesar, I'm really sorry that I argue with you so much." And he said, "Don't ever stop." He said, "Because you keep me honest." He thanked me, you know?

A lot of the people, they kind of worshipped Cesar, and they looked up to him, and I guess I didn't see him in that way, you know? I just saw him as a coworker and somebody that I could disagree with.

Menendez: What a thing to be able to say. Me Too and the subsequent Time's Up initiative, from the outside, it seems, has been really mindful about being clear that sexual abuses are rampant across industry. It affects women who are working in the fields. It affects women who are working in corporate boardrooms. When did you first become aware of sexual abuses that were happening to farm workers?

Huerta: Well, I have to say that my own mother, I would go work in the packing sheds and she wouldn't let me work in the fields, and I didn't know why. But then when we started the union, well, I did go out into the fields, and right away you saw as a young woman, you feel like the hawks were circling around you, you know? Looking at you while you're working, all of the foremen would come around you. I was never sexually abused in the field, but when I was negotiating contracts for the workers, the stories were horrible. In one of the last negotiations that I was doing... This is hard to believe. Not only were women sexually abused in the fields, but there were some women that would have children from the contractors, because that was their job security.

There were other women that to make sure that they could get their job, they would have to meet the foreman or the contractor, maybe at a motel, before the job started. And I think it still goes on today, but the biggest thing about the fear that the women had to report it, because women, they were afraid because they were afraid that their husbands, or their boyfriends, or their brothers, or fathers, that they would blame them if some kind of sexual harassment was going on. It was very hard for women, for them to lose that fear. In California, luckily though, we have really, really great laws in terms of protecting women when they are harassed, so the whole thing can be kept private, so that they don't have to fear that their family is going to be exposed.

The other thing, it's an economic fear also, because if women are harassed and sometimes families work together, they would fire the whole family if the woman complained.

Menendez: This is hard work. It's emotionally taxing work. Has there ever been a moment when you wanted to throw up your hands and just walk away?

Huerta: Oh, never. And the reason I say this is because I think the more people that we can reach out to, the more people that we can empower, and this is what we need to do. I think it's like having a magic wand that you go into a community, and you say to poor people, "You know what? You have power." And they kind of don't believe it, but then you give them examples, as Mr. Ross did to us, Mr. Fred Ross, showing us pictures of people in East Los Angeles, how they had brought in street lights, and sidewalks, and clinics into the community. How they put policemen in prison for beating up Mexican American youth, and I thought, "Man, if they can do, I want to do that, too." You know? "I want to put a cop in prison for beating people up." You know?

And to see that people had that power to make those changes, I thought that's, to me, is like magic.

Menendez: I don't know that I have ever interviewed someone who does this type of work and asked them if they have had a moment where they thought of walking away and had them say no, they haven't, so I am impressed by your tenacity, and it leads me to this question, which is do you consider yourself a person of faith?

Huerta: Oh, you have to. If you don't have faith, it's almost impossible to do this work. It's almost impossible. You've gotta have faith in people, number one. Trying to empower them, that

they can actually change sometimes, and you gotta have faith in God that what you're doing is really going to have fruition. And I have to say this like... because when I was a school teacher, so I quit teaching school to come and be an organizer, and when we started the union, of course there was no money, and many members of my family thought I was crazy.

Menendez: I'm sure.

Huerta: I got a lot of criticisms. It was like I had run away to join the circus or something, you know? And taking all my children with me, not knowing where our next meal is going to come from, but also having to live like the farm workers. Having to get my food from the food bank, surplus commodities, and eating what they were eating, which was the beans, and the rice, and the cornmeal, the flour, you know, the stuff that you get from the food bank. Being treated like a farm worker.

And it's really different when you're a school teacher, and you come in, and you're dressed up like a middle-class person, and then you're the same person, but you're dressed like a farm worker and you get totally different treatment. You dress like an immigrant and you get a different treatment. And then, of course, my family, once we got popular and we were in the news and everything, they all changed their attitudes. But for a long time, it was really hard, and it was kind of lonely, too. Coming from a city where I grew up and I knew everybody, and then going to Delano, California, where I didn't know anyone. And even having to change some of my own behavior, so to speak, you know?

Menendez: Like what?

Huerta: You know, when we're trying to do this healing work that I'm talking about, it's easy to get angry, and to get mad at people because they don't agree with you, but I have this story I tell about a woman, because when we started the union, farm workers paid dues. They paid like \$3.50 a month, and back in 1962 when we started, that would be like \$40 a month. People were making like 50 to 70 cents an hour. That was their wage, and yet they had to pay the equivalent of \$40 a month to join the union.

And it was very difficult, and what Cesar would say, and I had to really learn that, is that if they don't pay the dues now, so that we can organize, they will never be able to change their condition. And I really had to believe that, and I remember going to this one house, it was the 16th of September. Mexican Independence Day. And if I would have been in my hometown, I would have been getting dressed up to go to the dance, you know? To go to all the celebrations.

So, I go to this house, and this young woman opens the door. She's all dressed up, and I thought, I'm thinking here I am in Delano, California, don't know anyone, and I'm thinking, "Oh, she's probably going to the dance, and she'll probably invite me to go to the dance with her." And then when she opened the door and I said hello, and I said, "I came to collect your monthly dues for the union." And she kind of gave me a dirty look, and then she said to her father, "Papá, vienen por tu dinero." Dad, they came for your money. In a very sarcastic way, okay?

And so I thought, "Well, she's not gonna invite me to the dance. That's for sure." So, I went and I got her father's dues, and then maybe about a month later, she comes to the office with a whole stack of income taxes, and she says, "Here, I want you to fill these income taxes for our family." With that tone of voice. And so, I took a deep breath, went to the back of the office, I counted to 10, and then I came back out smiling, and took the income

taxes, okay? And later on, when we started the strike, that same woman came into the office, young woman, came into the office and said, “I just want to let you know that I just took out my whole crew on strike. They’re all on strike.”

And I thought, “I’m so happy that I didn’t get mad at her.” And now she’s my comadre, okay? She ended up baptizing one of my children. Yeah. But, I mean that’s just... You never know about people, so you don’t want to get mad at them when they treat you wrongly or they don’t agree with you.

Menendez: There are many who argue that the labor movement in the U.S. is on the decline today. Do you agree with that assessment?

Huerta: Oh, absolutely, but it’s not because of the lack of organizing, but so many laws have been passed to make labor unions, make it difficult. I’ll give you an example. The labor unions have been trying to pass a law that if you sign a card to say that you want the union to represent you, that that would be enough evidence so that workers can get union representation, and they have been passing laws to prevent that from happening. Well, just think about it. If your signature is good enough for you to buy a house, buy a car, get married, get a divorce, you know? Your signature should be good enough for you to choose a union to represent you. And instead, unions have to go out there and try to organize. The employers put a lot of pressure on the workers, and they fire workers, or threaten workers not to join the unions.

Recently, I was arrested with home care workers in Fresno, California, where they’re trying to get a union contract and getting a wage increase. You know what the offer was from the board of supervisors? These are public workers, you might say. They’re home health care workers. You know, they have to be with them 24 hours a day. They have to bathe them, they have to feed them, they have to take care of the... They offered them 10 cents an hour wage increase. And the supervisors that they’re negotiating with, they make \$100,000 a year. So, this is the imbalance that we have right now in our society, and it is very dangerous, because labor unions are the ones that create the middle class.

And as I said before, if we don’t have a middle class, we don’t have a democracy, so the demise of labor unions is affecting our whole society, and everybody knows that the wages have not been able to keep up with the costs of living, and that’s why you have so many homeless people, you have so many poor people in the richest country of the world.

Menendez: 1988, I believe you were 58 years old. You were protesting against the policies of then presidential candidate, George H.W. Bush, in San Francisco. A police officer broke four of your ribs, shattered your spleen. Incredibly long recovery. What went through your head in that moment?

Huerta: Well, at that moment I was just hurting. It was a very violent attack on people that were protesting the policies of George W. Bush at that time. The one good thing that came out of that, because there’s a saying in Spanish that says, “No hay nada mal que algo bien no sale.” There’s nothing so bad that something good doesn’t come out of it. Well, the good thing that came out of that beating is that I sued the city of San Francisco, and I get \$2,000 a month till I die, okay?

So, because of that beating, I’m able to continue to work. With my foundation, the Dolores Huerta Foundation, I do not take any money from my foundation, because I’m very political, and we’re a nonprofit organization. But with the \$2,000 a month that I get from my beating, plus \$600 a month from my Social Security, I’m able to continue to work for a

long time. But the other thing that is important, too, a lot of people say, “Well, once you got that beating, and you seen people that were killed, people that were beaten, with the work that we were doing, does that change your mind about nonviolence?” And I say no.

You know, before we started the union, Cesar and I, and I didn’t know that Cesar had studied Gandhi, as I had when I was going to college, but when I met Cesar it made me feel good to know that he had also believed in Gandhi’s philosophy and principles of nonviolence. And so, before we even started the union, we talked about that, that we would incorporate into the farm workers union the philosophies of nonviolence. And of course, and we did follow that, as Cesar did with his fasts, with the marches, you know?

And even when people in the union were killed, what we would do when someone was killed, we fasted for three days. Everybody in the organization fasted for three days, just to calm down the violence, you know?

Menendez: When you see the violence that’s been perpetrated across communities, most recently the attack against Latinos happened in Texas, how do you square the Gandhian notion of a beloved community with the violence that we see reaped upon our society?

Huerta: Well, what I would hope is that that type of violence really inspires all of us that we have to get involved and we have to end the hatred, and I would hope that every single institution in our country, our educational institutions, our public institutions, our private organizations, that everybody starts making a commitment to end the racism in our society, because I think that’s where the violence stems from. And racism, but also I think gender violence, also. We know that many women are killed every single day in our country by someone that does not respect that woman, that sees her as a sex object, or as a servant, and do not really respect that woman.

I like to say to people and remind people everything on this Earth came out of the body of a woman. We don’t think about that often, you know?

Menendez: You even got snaps for that one. I think I speak for most of the people in this room when I say we look at you and think, “Wow, this woman is fearless.” So, tell me about the last time you were afraid.

Huerta: I think right now. I am afraid for our world. I mean, when we think of global warming, and what’s happening to our country and to our world, when again, putting the profits above humanity, you might say. When people think of drilling in the Arctic, because there’s oil under the ice, and when they do that, it’s going to create more global warming. It’s going to create more methane. And the planet’s gonna get hotter.

It comes back to the electoral process about electing people that are going to make sure that we can change, and I don’t really know a lot about the Green New Deal. I know we’ve heard it mentioned, but I think part of the Green New Deal is putting some dates out there. When can we get away from using fossil fuel for energy? We’ve already got the technology, so again, it’s a matter of will, it’s a matter of not just thinking about profits, but what can we do to save our planet? And that’s why when you asked me why don’t I retire, I can’t, because we’ve gotta get the word out there to people that they’ve got to get involved.

Menendez: When you talk about the electoral process, it brings to mind Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who is certainly one of the most prominent Latinas, if not the most prominent Latina in

politics today. Do you see a connection between the work she is doing and the enthusiasm she inspires, and the work that you have dedicated your life to?

Huerta: Oh, absolutely, because I think that she got elected by doing a grassroots campaign, and not going to wealthy donors, and that's what we have to do. We have to go back to grassroots. I may not agree with her candidate-

Menendez: Meaning that she's a Sanders supporter.

Huerta: Yeah, I'm actually supporting Kamala Harris, okay? Because I think it's time for a woman! Okay? A woman to take power.

Menendez: Women are often taught not to take credit. I think Latinas are taught that especially. Has there been a time in this work that you have not been given the credit that you deserved?

Huerta: Oh, let me count the times. No, I can name so many, many times that this happened, and actually, I think a lot of us women, we kind of feel that we try to take credit for our work, that we're being conceited. I think the one word that is important for women to really use is the word courage. Courage to stand up for ourselves, and it is so hard for us to do. And you know, I did the grape boycott, I directed the grape boycott on the East Coast, on the West Coast, to make sure that we got the growers to the bargaining table.

I negotiated the contract, but the day that they took the picture, signing the contracts, which I had just negotiated, and I had just done the boycott to get the growers to the table, I wasn't in the picture.

Menendez: Okay. Why?

Huerta: Because I wasn't even in that frame of mind, you know? And I was sitting next to Cesar. We were gonna sign the contracts, and our vice president, Larry Itliong, said, "Oh, do you mind if I sit there?" And I got up and gave him my chair. Really? Yes, I did that. And so, when you see those very historic picture of the contracts being signed, I'm not in that picture.

Menendez: Would you say that was a mistake?

Huerta: That was a very bad mistake. And I know sometimes, and I have to say this to myself often, that when we find it hard to take credit for our work, that we have to do it on behalf of women everywhere, and it's not just about us being conceited, but we have to do it for other women. And I have to keep saying that to myself, because we are so conditioned, and so socialized not to take credit, or not to put ourselves out there in front, you know? And I love that saying, "A woman's place is where she wants to be, a woman's place is where she needs to be." And I like to say when you see these big pictures of all of these men having meetings, whether it's a G7 or whoever they are, and there are no feminists at that table, you can be sure they're gonna make the wrong decision, okay?

They're gonna make the wrong decision, because they do not have our intuition. They do not have our voices at the table.

Menendez: When we talk about why women don't take credit, part of it is that there is a penalty that women face when they do take credit, which is that we become less likeable. I mean, that probably would have been manifested if you would have said, "No, I'm sitting in this seat and you can't have it. Sorry." Do you care whether or not other people like you? Can you do the work you do and care about what other people are thinking of you?

Huerta: Well, I think it depends who your enemies are, and I like... I think there's something in the Bible that says something like that. When you're doing God's work, when you're doing justice work, and people curse you or criticize you, we have to consider it a blessing, you know? Because you know you're doing the right thing. So, yeah, people do say mean things and terrible things, but that's okay. As long as you have, again, faith, and what you're doing is the right thing, and you're trying to help others, then you have to just ignore what people say about you. You know? And just keep doing the work.

Menendez: Easier said than done. You have 11 children. I have two. I can barely keep track of them, so that's my first question, is just how do you keep track of 11 children? And how, because I find this so hard as a mother, perhaps the single greatest challenge of being a mother, which is how I instill in them these values and these principles with which I have lived my life?

Huerta: Well, I think to all mothers, just bring your children along with you in whatever you do. My kids kind of grew up in the movement, and so it's part of their DNA, basically. They were on marches, and my son, Rick, my youngest son, he has a really good way of saying this. For those of you that see the documentary, Dolores, my son Rick says, "Yeah, my mother abandoned us in the parking lot of a store with a bunch of leaflets that we had to pass out, and when people would come up to us and say, "You little commies, go back to Mexico,"" he says, "We can't. We don't have a ride, okay?"

So, my kids all grew up in the movement, and you know, even though my kids grew up really poor, I just have to say they're very resourceful. My oldest son is a doctor. My daughter Angela is an oncology nurse. My daughter Juanita became a teacher. My son Emilio is an attorney, and he's running for office this year. He's gonna run for supervisor. My daughter Alicia, who's with my right here, she's actually traveling with me right now, and she's working for our foundation. So, I mean, and my kids, my son Vincent's a chef, you know? And now he's into real estate, unfortunately, but anyway, so I wanted them all to be organizers, but of course they all took their own paths, what they have to do.

But the thing is that bringing children with you, and the biggest thing that you can teach them is a legacy of justice, you know? Because when they're active, and they grow up, and they go to marches, and they feel that energy and that power of people working together for a cause, I think that stays with them through life.

Menendez: What price have you paid for dedicating your life to this work?

Huerta: Well, I don't think I paid the price. I think my children probably paid the price more, because they didn't... weren't able to get... I mentioned to my what my mother did for us growing up, you know? Having all of these wonderful events, and I remember being in Washington, D.C. once, and we were going to a ballet, and then my daughter Juanita said to me, "Mother, I've never been to a ballet before." I thought, "Oh my gosh." You know, when I grew up, we had the symphony tickets, and we were able to see all these wonderful performances, and my kids didn't have that. I had the piano lessons, the dancing lessons, the violin lessons, my children didn't have any of that.

And I think those are the sacrifices, not that I made, but that my kids made.

Menendez: And so for you, nothing? You really feel like you've not paid a price for this work?

Huerta: I've had a very blessed life. I think I've been very, very fortunate, and thinking of how many people I've been able to organize and empower, I mean that, to me, it's such an incredible gift, you know, to be able to do that. And I would hope that all of us can do the same thing

out there, okay? Go out there and organize as many people as you can, get them involved, and take away that apathy.

Menendez: Here's my last question, which is, as you said, this is a moment in which even you, the fearless, are afraid, and I think it can feel these are very dark times. What do you say to yourself in those moments, when you have to organize and mobilize yourself?

Huerta: Well, I just... Saying to myself, "We gotta get out there and do more work." You know, I like to quote the Chilean poet, Pablo Neruda, and he said, "They can cut all the flowers, but they can't hold back the spring." And so, I like to say that we are the gardeners, that we have sown the seeds of justice, you know? And those seeds of justice that we are sowing out there, they will flower. They will come back, but we're the ones that have to do it.

Menendez: Let's all give a big round of applause. Dolores Huerta.

Huerta: Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Menendez: Thank you so much.

Thanks for joining us for this special episode. *Latina to Latina* is executive produced and owned by Juleyka Lantigua-Williams and me. Maria Murriel is our producer. Carolina Rodriguez is our sound engineer. Emma Forbes is our assistant producer. This episode was recorded live at Seton Hall University. Ang Santos was our field producer. We love hearing from you. Email us at hola@latinatolatina.com, and remember to subscribe or follow us on RadioPublic, Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Spotify, Pandora. We're everywhere, and wherever you're listening. And please leave a review. It's one of the quickest ways to help us grow as a community.

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