

Tarika Barrett

CEO, Girls Who Code

You Cannot Be What You Cannot See. Dr. Tarika Barrett, CEO of Girls Who Code, is on a mission to close the gender gap in tech and change the perception of what a computer programmer looks like. Her first step on this ambitious mission is to empower young women — especially those from underrepresented backgrounds — to feel like they belong. In this talk, Dr. Barrett shines the light on the transformative power of learning spaces where women can collaborate to problem-solve, innovate, and envision themselves as leaders and, more importantly, equals in their fields. Speaking with a palpable passion, she inspires individuals to dream big and let go of their fears while emphasizing the importance of mentorship and outlining ways that organizations can advance their cultures to be more supportive of women, amplify their voices, and tear down systemic roadblocks that women so often encounter in the workplace.

Leading Through Challenging Times. As a woman of color, Dr. Tarika Barrett possesses unique understanding and insight of the disproportionate impact evolving socioeconomic factors have had on women in tech and across all industries in recent years. With that in mind, she knew that taking the reins as CEO of Girls Who Code offered the perfect opportunity to continue carrying out the mission of building up women and underrepresented groups that are often left behind or systemically locked out from access to opportunities. In this eye-opening talk, she shares real-life examples of how leaders can unite and engage their teams during challenging periods and best practices for pivoting your business when faced with disruption.

Cracking the Code to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Dr. Tarika Barrett's primary key to advancing organizations to be more equitable and inclusive is to first acknowledge where we are with women and underrepresented groups in the workplace and where we need to be. Dr. Barrett discusses the cultural issues and systemic barriers in place that inhibit achievement for women and underrepresented groups, while providing a framework for organizations — in tech, as well as across industries and society — to create more diverse, equitable, and inclusive environments that spark real change and real results. The insights she shares offer a solid foundation from which organizations can begin to rethink their approaches to compensation, promotions, work from home policies, family leave policies, and flexibility for employees with equity and inclusion in mind.

Reprogramming Education. According to Dr. Tarika Barrett, there are points in the educational pipeline that need to be reprogrammed. This is supported by the fact that women make up only 25 percent of the tech workforce, a statistic that decreases to 18% for women of color. And for women in tech, 50 percent leave the industry by the age of 35 due to the lack of systems in place to support them and ensure their inclusion. In this talk, Dr. Barrett points to the work Girls Who Code is doing to shape and adapt its programming around the ever-evolving tech industry so that students have equal

opportunities to have hands-on experience with cybersecurity, AI, and other emerging areas in the tech space. As part of the discussion, she shares how inequity and lack of representation for women and underrepresented groups begins early in their education — long before they ever make it to the workplace. She'll discuss the current pipeline problem and provide her insights and best practices for reprogramming education to elevate women and underrepresented groups in every field, and champion the viewpoints and contributions they bring to organizations.