

*diffusetap*  
Virtual Event Series

# How to Build a High Value Community

*Guest Speaker:*



**Maggie Love**  
Founder  
SheFi

*Hosts:*



**Kenny Estes**  
CEO & Founder  
Diffuse



**Ayla Kremb**  
COO & Co-Founder  
Diffuse



## DiffuseTap: How to Build a High Value Community

Last time on DiffuseTap, Maggie Love, Founder of SheFi, talked to us about the pillars of a high value community, the importance of putting your values forward when building a community, and why the world of blockchain and DeFi needs to become more inclusive.

Want to make friends from the Diffuse Fund Ecosystem? Email [contact@diffusefunds.com](mailto:contact@diffusefunds.com).

### DiffuseTap

This networking session is part of our weekly virtual events series. Networking (you'll bump into at least a dozen high caliber fund managers) meets purposeful (you'll tap into brand-new sources of ideas)... straight from your armchair like a boss.

### Meet the Speaker



MAGGIE LOVE is a blockchain industry leader who is focused on building new business and societal models with blockchain for inclusiveness, interconnectedness, and resilience. She is the Founder of [SheFi](#), a crypto and web3 educational platform and community that empowers female entrepreneurs and executives to succeed in frontier industries.

LinkedIn: [@maggielove07](#)

### About Diffuse®

We are an alternative fund platform offering differentiated investment products. From digital assets to VC funds and beyond, we identify green field investment opportunities we feel will have market beating returns and turn them into professionally managed funds. For more information, visit [www.diffusefunds.com](http://www.diffusefunds.com).



**KENNY ESTES:** Let's hear from Miss Maggie Love. Maggie, do you want to tell the good folks a little bit about your background and what you're up to over at SheFi?

**MAGGIE LOVE:** Yes. To get started, I started my career at IBM in 2016. I was working on IBM Watson Financial Services. We were working on how to fix back end banking processes with AI. It was very exciting. At that time, I was in a corporate strategy meeting and I heard about all the solutions we need to look at in financial services, and some guy on the phone was like "blockchain, blockchain, blockchain", and everyone in the room was like, "can you mute that guy? He's really annoying."

And I said, "Wait. someone's excited about something at IBM. I want to learn about what that thing is." So, I went to Barnes and Noble at Union Square in New York City. I picked up "The Blockchain Revolution", which I wouldn't necessarily recommend today, but I was 26. I didn't know what I was reading. But honestly, it was an amazing intro. It talked all about use cases, cross border remittances, logistics, circular economies, and new ways of creating value.

I was very inspired by that. And even though I didn't know there was a token involved in all this stuff, I wanted to work in this space. So, I spent all my free time figuring out how to work in blockchain, even working on an IBM strategy for financial markets use cases. But I really wanted to leave the red tape. So, I found Consensys, which was an Ethereum blockchain company in 2017. A very crazy place back then, but a lot of fun.

I had co-founded an Ethereum mining company with Advanced Micro Devices, which also did some work in the Filecoin ecosystem and Z-K hardware acceleration, which shut down this August, but that's okay. I also co-founded a science fiction storytelling universe on the blockchain called Cellarious. I was working with Iain Mccaig, who created Darth Maul for science fiction movies to put on the blockchain, but that died in 2018. I've had nine lives in this space, and I've worked on a variety of projects.

Something I find really important is storytelling, and including more people into this space in the quiet of 2019. That was post my first bear market in 2018. All these new use cases started popping up called decentralized finance. People were building lending exchanges and stablecoins, which are assets that were pegged one-to-one to the US dollar in a totally permissionless way.

They were talking about building more inclusive finance, more accessible finance. All the people on stage were men who had already benefited from traditional finance. And I had just noticed that everyone that was put on the DeFi teams in Consensys and elsewhere happened to be men, even in roles you could say that were more traditional, like marketing. Women were not being included. I saw this happening and started wondering how I could get women excited about participating in decentralized finance and taking some of those risks, like putting in your money into a lending protocol that might get hacked.

I know that sounds crazy, but it's this idea of getting us more comfortable taking risks with money. We all know that in crypto, you don't need to take that risk with \$100. You can take it with \$5. So, in the fall of 2019, I was meditating on this idea while on a run and thought of the name SheFi, which was a play on the word DeFi. I was like, "that's pretty good", and it hadn't been trademarked. So, I figured I was divinely inspired to run with this.



In April 2020, I launched SheFi from my friend's apartment during lockdown in New York City. And while I knew it wasn't a great time for many people to be talking about money, I also felt that, seeing how our financial systems and government systems would respond, if you had money to explore alternative investments and alternative opportunities, SheFi would be the place for you.

My first cohort was about 20 people. My current cohort is 570, and the SheFi community today is 2,200 women and non-binary folks from 50 plus countries. What the program looks like today is 13 weeks of programming, where each week is a use case like blockchains, wallet scaling, a bunch of DeFi courses, NFTs, governance, artificial intelligence, staking, etc.

With each week, there's a quest, such as download your wallet, bridge tokens to a layer two network, swap on [Uniswap](#), mint an NFT, etc. And the purpose of that is to really help build women's competence on-chain and give them a peek under the hood so that they know how all these technologies work, they know what an [automated market maker](#) is, they know what a market maker is in traditional finance, and how we're using smart contracts to turn that into blockchain code.

My main goal is to help women become active contributors and leaders in the web3 and crypto space and to do that from an educational lens. We do lots of other things, too. We just started a new series called [SheFi Summits](#), which includes female speakers but is open to everyone to come attend. We had a 300 person summit in Paris, and we had a 200 person summit about a week ago in Istanbul.

There is definitely a lot of excitement and engagement for the type of event we're putting on, which is focused on having a lot of on-chain experiences and getting people really excited about why the technology matters, and less so about how data availability works on [Celestia](#) versus [Eigenlayer](#). That's what I'm passionate about.

It's a lot of fun. I love learning. I love getting creative about how to communicate that learning in a very understandable way to people without watering it down and making it dumb. I don't dumb it down. I make all these concepts, infrastructure, and mathematical implementations of things relatable. That's a bit about me and what I do.

**KENNY:** I love it. That's great. I love the super practical approach of “we're not going to teach you a bunch of theory.” It's more like, “here's something that you should just go do.” The reality is that with all things, but particularly in crypto, just doing it is the best way to learn. You make mistakes along the way, so you try not to make those mistakes again, and you get a lot more comfortable with it. That's super cool.

In virtual events, your audience is about 2,200 people. And then, you also have these in-person events. You started during COVID, during remote work time. Do you want to talk to us a little bit about the evolution of that? You started all-virtual on Zoom, and now you're going in-person.

What are the pros and cons of that?



**MAGGIE:** Yes. Something interesting is that when I started creating this course, I don't think I understood the impact that it would have to build this large community. And not just the audience. I mean, at our events, everyone stays all day and fully engages. And there are a lot of comments saying, "wow, this is a super active and engaged community." And I was like, "Oh, I'm just going to create five DeFi courses." There was Uniswap, Aave, MakerDAO, and an insurance protocol back in the day. They'll take my course, and then what happens happens.

I started virtually. And then in 2021, we could have our first meeting and meet up in New York City. Before I was ready to give it to another women's organization, I didn't know if I was cut out to run a community. But we met in person, and a woman told me that she took my course during lockdown. She came from a very non-technical industry. I'm not advocating for this, but she was able to divorce her husband and pay for her daughter's autism care because she got a job in web3 from my course. And I was like, "damn, I am doing something here that is impactful." The community piece is just as important as the course piece.

So yes, we launched during lockdown. And for the first couple of years, I really focused on virtual engagement. Being on Discord, on Telegram, emails, Zoom calls. All the courses are live, by the way. You can also watch them recorded. But for 13 weeks, a lot of women meet with me twice a week live. So, we built a bit of a relationship. I thought that was great, and we started doing happy hours at events and these casual gatherings.

But through those, people then started saying the program is great, the course is great. Discord is not great, but we're happy we have a space to gather virtually. But we want to continue our learning. How do we do that? What are the reasons to come back to the SheFi program other than just networking and having fun lunches and dinners? Which is great, but it's not necessarily continuing this mission we have around education.

So, in the fall of 2022 about two years after, I felt there was something missing from crypto conferences, and that is female speakers in general. It's also the space for women to come together and learn from one another, and see themselves up there on stage, and also have a place to build more authentic relationships than you can by responding to people virtually.

So, this year we started testing out the SheFi summits. We did a very small one in Denver. We expected about 115 people to come, but the waitlist had 200 people on it, so that was my bad. But it was just a half-day event that was very positive. As I mentioned, we did one in Paris with 300 people. Some of you are familiar with people in this space. We had Meltem Demirors come to speak. We have Victoria from Castle Island Ventures. We also had people working on privacy, and people working on multi-chain solutions. It was just a really high impact day of the top females in the space.

We also had one in Istanbul recently with 200 people. And the reason we did it there is we actually have a community of 60 women in Turkey. I think it's really important to go to the places where our community is physically, and to not only bring them together, but to bring members from all over the world such as Istanbul too.

Obviously, I enjoy the freedom of working from home and doing things virtually. But while I'm working from home, I think that virtual spaces aren't actually that good at manufacturing deep and authentic



connections without a lot of intention. The physical aspect really allows us to take those initial sparks we have with people virtually, and really firm up those relationships and provide that bonding that a community needs to really stick together.

Being able to more deeply connect people through our physical events is actually going to be way more impactful for growing the community and keeping it together, and keeping it motivated around this mission that everyone has identified with, more so than just the virtual spaces can be.

I think people belong to a lot of virtual communities, and they spend a lot of time on Twitter or wherever online, and you're just kind of fried. You don't even want to pick up the phone and call people after a long day of sitting in front of a computer. So, I think that physical presence and connection is really important. The last thing I'll say is that this year, we started also experimenting with local chapter leads.

That includes getting people in London, in Lagos, in San Francisco, in New York, etc. New York is spoiled because I'm here, so that's not really fair. We do lots of things. Now, we have one in Canada and in Seoul, South Korea, to take up the SheFi banner and plan events. Three of those being casual, one of them being a panel with other crypto companies and being more education-focused.

My hope is that these physical and local groups get very, very strong. And that also helps propagate the SheFi community in a way that we can't necessarily do by hosting four in-person events a year. I'm really curious about decentralizing the community aspects of SheFi and building strong local groups. That's how strength will bubble up into the overall community.

**KENNY:** I love it. Very thorough, and that makes a lot of sense. There are definitely pros and cons to both. I think that in particular, young people coming out of college are getting really hosed in the current environment with not as much physical interactions, or not as many physical interactions.

So, you've talked a couple times, and I will give you the benefit of the doubt that you've built and are continuing to build a high value community. You kind of alluded to some of it already, but what are the most important pillars? What are the most important things to keep in mind when you want to build that type of community?

**MAGGIE:** Yes. I get asked this all the time from people that are looking to start communities and asking "how did you do it?". I can't say I necessarily had a roadmap and knew the perfect way to build a super strong community. I felt like what I did building this community was what resonates most with me about how I want to learn, the type of people I want to be around, and maybe what am I not receiving from the workplace that I could change, because I'm able to start my own community really easily through the blockchain space.

And so, I put my values on my very first website, which are kindness, interdependence, curiosity, learning, and I made it clear that this was a mutually supportive environment. If you joined this, you would have



the whole community to support you and your goals. It's not about just learning for the sake of getting ahead for oneself. It's about learning and supporting the community. And as a community, we wouldn't have to lean in at the table because we could all sit at the table.

I was very clear about what my values were as an individual and what I thought other people might be attracted to. And in doing that, I knew that not everybody was going to be attracted to it. I actually had plenty of people comment that this sounds too nice and that it's like a brunch club, or whatever people were saying on Twitter during lockdown.

And I said, "That's okay. I actually don't expect my community to be for every female and non-binary person who might want something super-competitive, or just want to get ahead." There are lots of places for people. I knew that if I was very clear in my values, I would grow a community in those values. I think the values piece is very important for community building, and people being like "Yes, I'm curious. I'm fine. I'm supportive. I'm interested in learning."

I think another thing that structurally created a very high value community was that once again, I reflected on my own learning patterns. In the blockchain space, if you guys are in it, there are 100 applications coming out a day and you have 1,000 tabs open. And you're going to read about Bayes, and you're going to read about Optimism and Friend Tech, and this new layer two, and real estate on the blockchain, and you have 70 tabs open. And then, it's Friday, and you're like, "Well, better luck next week. Maybe I'll learn about that new layer two in a month."

For me, I find it helpful to learn about things when I come together with a person and we sit on a Zoom call, and we're like, "Okay, how does this work? Open your wallet, bridge your tokens, do this thing." I learned best in a community, and when there is a dedicated space for learning. That's how I architected the program. Every week, we would meet twice a week.

If you spend that time, you will learn something. You don't have to open 50 tabs. You don't have to do it on your own. I promise you, you will learn about it if you come to class. I was architecting the program around that way of learning, which is based in community. You get on Zoom and SheFi, and there is, at least on the live classes, 50 other people that are doing this with you, and you have space to ask questions.

You have that dedicated time to learn where you don't have to worry about anything else you have to do. You just have to learn. And I think through that entry into SheFi, which is that 13 weeks of classes and seeing other people there on the Zoom with you, you really sense that you're with a community, and that you're doing this together. You're not just in your home alone watching a pre-recorded thing and wondering who else is in this class.

I think having values and having structure around how we learn, and having the onboarding experience to the community that we have is really what helps it stay high impact. And then, another one is that we have a strong focus on helping people get placed in jobs. That's not just from me, but I'll offer my social capital to anyone.

They send me their resume and a blurb. I know the people at Optimism, so I'll send it to Optimism, or Chain Link, or you name it, wherever it is. Many other women now, since we've been around for a while,



have jobs at the [Ethereum Foundation](#), at Maker DAO, or at Uniswap. You see a lot of the community coming in to support one another, and more women are getting jobs in the space.

It's just really this nice flywheel. SheFi people are not just people who come and take a course. There are people who are active contributors in the ecosystem, and the best example of that was in Istanbul. Yes, it was amazing to have 200 people come to my event, but it was more impactful to see our members working at Optimism, organizing the entire Ethereum [Devconnect](#) Week, working at different layer twos, and organizing their own side events with base.

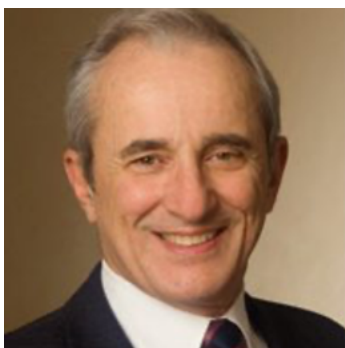
It felt like a bit of a SheFi takeover, where our community was actually the people there contributing to building things in the space. I saw that throughout the week, and it was not just me experiencing it, but also male allies and the women in chief have also seen that. That is what continues to create this stickiness around our community. I think those are some of the ways that we built a really high value community.





Thank you for downloading this DiffuseTap event transcript.

[Sign up for upcoming sessions](#) and check out [past features and event transcripts](#).



**Dennis Chookaszian**  
Corporate Director, CME Group

DiffuseTap: Institutional Grade  
Governance

Sharing his decades-long expertise on corporate governance, Dennis talked about how to avoid a co-partnership going sour, the problem with overly idealistic CEOs, and the importance of keeping your board in check. [Read on](#)



**Susan Brazer**  
CEO & Founder, LionShare Media

DiffuseTap: Media Metaverse  
2022

Susan described the 2020 digital media landscape; the evolution of media distribution; how converging, emerging technology points to the metaverse; and the prospect of having an open, decentralized, and free Web 3.0 marketplace. [Read on](#)



**Raj Mukherjee J.D.**  
VP/Global Head of Tax, Binance.US

DiffuseTap: Crypto Taxes  
Decoded with Binance.US

Raj explained the complexities of the US crypto tax landscape, how he built a dynamic tax information system for [Coinbase](#) and [Binance](#) from scratch, and how investors can profit from crypto without getting caught in a taxation mess. [Read on](#)

**JOIN US**