

# AT Banter Podcast Episode 299 - International Disability All...

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

disabilities, persons, people, organizations, convention, countries, advocacy, happening, world, lis, dairy, eating, governments, work, include, talk, ryan, advocating, educate, accessible

## SPEAKERS

Rob Mineault, Lis Malone, Elham Youssefian, Ryan Fleury

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 Rob Mineault 00:00

Hey, and welcome to a another episode of AT Banter

 Ryan Fleury 01:35

Banter, banter.

 Rob Mineault 01:38

Hey, this is of course the podcast where we talk with advocates and members of the disability community to educate and inspire better conversation about disability. Hey, my name is Robin. Oh, joining me today. Mr. Ryan Fleury.

 Ryan Fleury 01:54

Hello again.

 Rob Mineault 01:56

And once again joining us Miss Lis Malone, LLC.

 Lis Malone 02:07

Also known as Ms. Part time.

R

Rob Mineault 02:13

No, you know what, I did ask you this was before the show, but does it a lot of paperwork to become an LLC? What's the deal with an LLC? What's How does that work?

L

Lis Malone 02:21

I think it's much better to pay somebody else to do the paperwork for you.

R

Rob Mineault 02:27

Oh, fancy.

L

Lis Malone 02:28

Yeah. I you know, I look at it as I'm just stimulating the economy and keeping somebody else you know, occupied with with work.

R

Rob Mineault 02:40

That's true. You're contributing member of society. Yeah. How are you people today?

L

Lis Malone 02:51

Good. Ish.

R

Ryan Fleury 02:53

Fabulous. Ya know, how are you?

R

Rob Mineault 02:57

I'm good. We're boring. We do this every week. I don't know. You just got to start making up something to start making your rants or something.

L

Lis Malone 03:07

I always have a rant.

R

Rob Mineault 03:10

I quite enjoyed the week when Ryan had a dead rat in his basement wall and can talk about that. But we haven't really had a crisis since then. So we might have to work on that.

L

Lis Malone 03:22

I have a mini crisis, I could share real quick.

R

Rob Mineault 03:24

Okay, do it.

L

Lis Malone 03:24

Yeah. So I recently learned that I have a dairy allergy.

R

Rob Mineault 03:30

Oh, no, really?

L

Lis Malone 03:31

Yeah. Not just like lactose intolerant where I mean, I could pop a lactate and everything's good in the world. I'm talking allergy, no dairy product or byproducts. And apparently, everything has whey. That's a bad one. So yeah, so I kind of had like a giveaway of a lot of stuff in my cupboard.

R

Rob Mineault 03:54

Oh, no. Did it just recently develop, or did you think you already you always had it?

L

Lis Malone 04:00

I think I had it, it's just kind of gotten worse. And it's it sort of reached critical mass where I you know, I went to the doctor and I thought it was celiac. I thought it was gluten. And they're like, no, but it's still like, oh, we can understand why you thought it was gluten because there are so many gluten products that have whey.

R

Rob Mineault 04:22

Man, well, I would have opened with that. That sucks.

L

Lis Malone 04:26

That's why I'm good ish. You know, trying to be positive.

R

Ryan Fleury 04:30

Isn't there alternatives?

R

Rob Mineault 04:33

Yeah, well, that's true. That mean, they make almond milk and I don't know there's all kinds of other types of milk. Squirrel milk.

L

Lis Malone 04:41

I don't know. But but let's just let's just be really honest. I have yet to have a vegan baked good that's actually good. Like I've had vegan doughnuts are awful. I've had vegan cookies. I want to just throw them across the room. Brownies. I've tried vegan banana cake. I just yeah, I mean I just wanted to just hurl. So, maybe I mean, maybe I'm gonna be really skinny after this.

R

Rob Mineault 05:11

Yeah, I don't know it was so bad. I mean, the real kicker is, that's cheese is involved. Like you're gonna lose cheese, which I love. Who doesn't love cheese?

L

Lis Malone 05:20

No Pizza Hut for me, Ryan it's all yours now.

R

Ryan Fleury 05:24

Imagine pizza with no cheese. That's just not pizza.

R

Rob Mineault 05:29

Yikes. Oh my gosh, well, okay, well, let's discuss this more later. We will do some research because that's that's a that's actually some big news. We might have to have an entire episode.

L

Lis Malone 05:40

We could have to have somebody on the show that can talk about food allergies and stuff.

R

Rob Mineault 05:44

Yeah. And we can just we can list all the food that you're gonna not be able to have anymore. So I think that would be a fun show.

L

Lis Malone 05:50

Thank God, I can still have booze though.

R

Ryan Fleury 05:53

Alrighty.

R

Rob Mineault 05:55

All right, enough of that. Ryan, we should get to business. So could you tell everybody, just what the heck we're doing today.

R

Ryan Fleury 06:06

I will do my best. So today, our guest is Elham Youssefian, who is from the International Disability Alliance organization, here to tell us everything about who they are and what they do. So Elham, welcome.

E

Elham Youssefian 06:26

It was hard for me to remain silent because I had tons of comments about when you guys were saying about cheese, and I'm gonna talk about my organization.

R

Ryan Fleury 06:43

We'll bring you back to talk about cheese and dairy.

R

Rob Mineault 06:47

And we're happy to circle back to it because yeah, this like I said, this is big news. We're all we're all pretty shook over this.



Lis Malone 06:54

But I really feel for you is because my fiance is also he is lactose intolerant. And one of the main elements that I needed to consider before deciding to say yes, was that there will be some limitations in eating pizza. He was a very good man.



Ryan Fleury 07:24

So you chose him over cheese.



Lis Malone 07:28

Oh, that's That's true love.



Rob Mineault 07:33

It's actually true. I'd have to really think about that.



Ryan Fleury 07:36

Should we have him on the show?



Rob Mineault 07:42

You know, you did beat out Provolone. Oh, dear. Okay, well, all right. Well, let's circle back to that. But for now, why don't we start out with maybe just telling us a little bit about the IDA, which is the International Disability Alliance, what you guys do there and what your position is there.



Elham Youssefian 08:11

So maybe I should start by telling this story of grassroots organizations of persons with disabilities. I'm sure you have had many people coming from those kind of organizations in your show or you will have more of them coming. So persons with disabilities of course come together and establish organizations of persons with disabilities. As you know, people make an acronym for it OPD Organization of Persons with Disabilities. Those who are in the UK and prefer to talk about disabled people they say BPOS but anyway, these openings and BPOS who work for example, at local levels, have come together and share and formed national organizations of persons with disabilities or national umbrella organizations like national unions or national associations or whatever all over the world. And then those national organizations and have just shaped the regional organizations and then those regional or global organizations. For example, Federation for the Deaf or European Deaf Union, African Union, Asia and if union have come together and shape war Federation for the Deaf or World Blind

Union. And then we also have regional organizations, all of these big organizations, network organizations of persons with disabilities, decided that they can do better if they work as an alliance, and then they formed the International Disability Alliance. That's where I work. So basically, our organization has a 14 main board members, eight global, and six regional organizations of persons with disabilities. And, you know, we calculated we have over 1100 organizations overseas with disabilities shaping up and we are representing them. So we are representation network of organizations of persons with disabilities.

R

Rob Mineault 10:26

Yeah, it's, you know, it's really interesting, because we often have organizations of varying different sizes and who work on various different levels. And there are there just there are so many spread out. So was that sort of the the mandate when when the organization was created? Sort of being able to bring all of those organizations in under one umbrella to make it more efficient in order to advocate?

L

Lis Malone 11:03

Well, of course, we can bring everybody under one umbrella. But the time that my organization was shaped, was the time that there are negotiations going on, for the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. So this conversation started late last century, early 2000s. And that's why they, these organizations of like regional and global organizations decided to form the Alliance, so that they can be like to join the advocacy. So the, my organization the International Disability Alliance was basically first established as a union, that's so organizations of persons with disabilities can get together and unify their opinion and do joint stronger advocacy towards the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which was adopted in 2006, and came into force in 2008. So, um, that's where we are, of course, after that, my organization continued its mandate by like monitoring and advocating for the implementation of the Convention. Right now, we are doing advocacy, we're doing capacity building unit, we're supporting participation of persons with disabilities in different international platforms, regional platforms, and many other things.

R

Rob Mineault 12:38

So is the work that the organization does, is it is it fairly high level? I mean, do work with the UN in sort of the creation of really high level advocacy that is going to apply to countries all around the world? Or do you do you focus in or do you ever focus in though on specific countries and specific issues?

L

Lis Malone 13:07

Well, we do international advocacy, but sometimes doing international advocacy requires working on specific countries. So we do have our main office in Geneva. Also, we have an office in New York, and as we do Geneva, New York advocacy, for example, we've worked with UN Security Council, we've worked with the General Assembly, UN General Assembly, we work with the Geneva based organization organizations, for example, World Health Organization. One

example is that, when, when pandemic and COVID-19 pandemic hit, we started working with the World Health Organization to make sure that what they are issuing as briefings or guidance is inclusive of persons with disabilities includes our requirements and our rights. But sometimes this international global level advocacy, of course, requires attention or advocacy for national situations. So one example, for example, is the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. So I talked about the UN Convention earlier, and that convention has a monitoring body, which goes through the reports that those governments who have ratified the UN Convention submit and say, okay, yeah, we have implemented the convention. But the committee looks at the reports and also asks the civil society, the organizations of persons with disabilities in that country and also others who are like doing advocacy to submit the information they have. And that's how, for example, my organization supports or organizations of persons with disabilities from that specific country to come to Geneva, to prepare their submissions for that committee to make sure that final conclusion about how the convention has been implemented by that particular government is close to reality and includes views of people with disabilities will live on that particular country.

R

Ryan Fleury 15:23

What I was wondering is, can you kind of generally speak to what the convention is or contains?

L

Lis Malone 15:32

Yeah, the convention basically talks about the human rights of persons with disabilities. They say that the Convention does not create new rights and just recognize and elaborates rights of persons with disabilities as human beings. So it does include main principles. For example, one pillar of the convention is accessibility that most people with disabilities most of your audience may be aware of. So for example, we talk about how public goods and services, and any goods and facilities that are meant for public use must be accessible for persons with disabilities. That's one of the main articles of the UN Convention. And then the Convention talks about how different human rights for example, right to life, right to health, right to be free from torture, right to access to education. And, for example, access to employment and different human rights are inclusive of persons with disabilities, what governments must do, to make sure that, for example, persons with disabilities are autonomous decision makers, people can decide for their lives. For example, one particular important article is right to independent living and living in the community, which is about how persons with disabilities should not live in institutions. And how, by providing community based services and making sure that they have access to the services they require in the society and families situations or semi family situations. They can live in the society, they don't they should not be institutionalized. That, for example, and other elements of the convention. It's a long story. I cannot summarize it. Yeah.

R

Rob Mineault 17:38

So I guess I guess my question is, is more about sort of enforcement, because it's in there must there's so many levels, that that something like the Convention has to sort of trickle down through in order to make those changes on the ground. So last week, for example, we talked to an O&M instructor in Charlotte. And he was describing this neighborhood that has horrible horrible sidewalks just and there, there are storefronts and stuff that are essentially

inaccessible. And that's just because the way that the city has structured the building of sidewalks, they've left it to the shop owners to be responsible for their section of sidewalk, which is, you know, resulted in this horrible patchwork, accessibility nightmare for somebody that wants to try to walk through this neighborhood. So I guess my question is, how do we get from, you know, having these very high level, you know, human rights, how do we get the changes made on the ground in any given city in any given country?

L Lis Malone 18:55

Well, it's a long way full of different steps. Of course, first of all, we need strong laws. So, countries need to adopt the convention into their national mandatory legal system, that is supported by a strong independent judiciary system. So for example, like, there should be a law that is enforceable in a country that includes all these rights like with all the details. So for example, or I was just talking about this. Any facility that is meant for public use must be accessible for persons with disabilities that includes this and this and this and that, and if any private business does not do that, then they would be forced to fix it and they would be forced to pay the remedy. So we have the American with Disabilities Act. In this case, of course, the United States has not ratified the Convention. I don't want to go through the story because I don't have very detailed, very detailed story of why the United States have not adopted the Convention. Basically, US is quite, quite conservative when it comes to adopting international convention. The Americans with Disabilities Act is quite strong, and does include obligations on making the public sphere accessible. So that's one part the law and then the judiciary system, the possibility of bringing cases and suing those who are violating this law. But most importantly, we need strong civil society, we need to support the organizations of persons with disabilities. So they need to have the funding the information, the human resources, the possibility, the knowledge how to sue and where to do that, to force those who are violating these, these laws to, to implement them. And of course, there is another layer, the public awareness, many people don't still understand the basics about persons with disabilities. Like, I can't tell you how many times - I live in New York, and this sounds to be like a lot of diversity. So people are exposed to many different things like it's a very big community, right? But still, I can't tell you how many times I've stepped to a business or faced a public servant or any anything like that, and tried to interact with people and ended up like that people don't talk to me and talk to the person accompany me because they feel that because I'm a blind person, by the way, and they feel that a blind person cannot hear or cannot communicate there. They don't know how to communicate with that person. So they talk to anybody who is accompany me. And I have to say, please talk to me, why don't you just address me? So what I'm trying to say is that we need the public awareness raising, we need to educate the public. So when they are putting their motorbikes in the street, in a sidewalk, they should think, oh, maybe a person with disability with a wheelchair wants to pass here, or maybe a blind person wants to pass on, they will bump into it, and they hurt themselves. But for that, for that we do need media, social media to work and educate the public, we need the schools to educate children about diversity. And I think inclusive education where children with different abilities can be educated together sit next to each other is plays an important role. Because if you have had a classmate with who uses a wheelchair, I don't say you didn't have it, I just say, a particular person. And that person becomes a decision maker business manager, they will consider how a person with disabilities will be able to benefit from that particular business. So many layers.

R Ryan Fleury 23:24

Is there a list of countries that have adopted the Convention on your website? Because it almost sounds like it may be the developing countries that are adopting it, whereas, you know, if US hasn't, I'm assuming Canada probably hasn't either.

L

Lis Malone 23:39

I don't have the exact number, but all European countries have. Canada has. Yeah. And then European Union as a organization also has adopted the Convention. There are some reasons beyond not to ratify the convention in the US that goes back to the legal system. Like it's a constitutional law conversation that they had, there has been there has been effort, there has been effort, I would suggest you talk to some people that may be able to give you the story of what happened, why they didn't ratified a convention. I'm an immigrant, I entered this country like six, seven years ago. I'm not the right person to tell you the story. But I can tell you that almost. I think maybe like 10 to 15 countries in the world have not yet ratified the Convention.

R

Ryan Fleury 24:51

Well, and the reason I asked the question is because it's only in recent years that here in Canada, our provinces some of them have started talking about provincial accessible acts for persons with disabilities. And, you know, if they've adopted the Convention, then this should have probably been happening years ago, not in the last five years.

L

Lis Malone 25:16

Right. Yeah, that's an interesting point you're making about because I think it's the federal government's, the federal government goes to the monitoring bodies and says, well, I don't have that much power over different states, and they're doing things on their own pace. That's what I'm doing at federal level. But I can't be responsible for acts of the states.

R

Rob Mineault 25:43

And I feel like that's sort of the frustrating thing about all of this is that, you know, everything has to move through so many layers of bureaucracy, that things can get tripped up. And it's, it's kind of no wonder to that the general public doesn't really understand or even know what's going on. So I think that your, you know, your point is spot on, I think that education is really key. And probably the other is enforcement, you know, unfortunately, you know, we need a big stick in order to make some of these changes happen, because it's just, it's just a fact of life that everybody doesn't necessarily do everything for the right reasons.

L

Lis Malone 26:32

I couldn't agree more.

R

Ryan Fleury 26:34



ryan reilly 20:54

Keep telling you, we need a disability uprising. We're the largest minority group in the world. And yet, we're all sitting on our asses doing squat. Well, not all of us. There's definitely some proactive people out there. But yeah, you know, we need a movement.



Lis Malone 26:47

I want to just jump in for a quick second. I just want to get an idea of how does your organization prioritize some of your efforts when you have so many, so many countries that you're, you're you're working with, and so many different levels of progress in terms of accessibility and disability rights and everything underneath that umbrella. So how are you able how, as an organization, are you able to sort of figure out where your resources are best spent? We are mostly working at global level. So for example, on the example that I provided on doing support for organizations of persons with disabilities, to communicate with the community about what was happening at the national level. There, that committee has a schedule, so each year, there are like a few countries that are present before the committee. So they do have like some limitations about that. And then, of course, we do have a board that approves our strategy. We have like a strategy that is being approved by our members at what they want us to focus on which topics you're focusing on. And of course, another important element to determine which would be the priority. So when the donors come to us and say, I want to support access to education for children with disabilities in in this particular region, we need to focus on our work on that part. So that's another element. And of course, we do have regular communications consultations with persons with disabilities all over the world to hear from them. So for example, one interesting event that we had was the Global Disability Summit. The Global Disability summit happened for the first time in 2018, hosted by the governments of UK and the United Kingdom, and Kenya, and then they and then again this year 2022, the second Global Disability summit was hosted by Canada and and Norway, and of course, both Global Disability summit were co hosted by my organization and international allies. So we bring together all the stakeholders like governments, UN agencies, and ask them to provide commitments on what they are planning to do to advance disability rights, their share commit movements, and then there would be platforms for them to hear from persons with disabilities directly. But what they are asking what they feel the gaps are and how they want to proceed.



R Rob Mineault 30:01

So I want to talk a little bit about something that I really feel is really important work that the organization does. And that's in the realm of crisis management. Because, you know, when when we have global crises, like we just did with with COVID, I really do feel like the disability community generally falls by the wayside, just just, you know, by the nature of people scramble and come up with solutions. And generally, the disability community is is sort of left behind, they sort of are an afterthought, almost sometimes. So I want to, I want to talk a little about a bit about the work that you guys do in in that space, and maybe maybe just set up like, what what kind of things do you do? And what did COVID kind of teach us?



Lis Malone 30:59

Well, you're right. When crisis hits, everybody's running, and when everybody running, they leave persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups behind. So this is pretty new area

for us. We are still advocating but with human rights or humanitarian organizations with emergency response. Leaders at global level that what they should do for, for example, when COVID hit like, we had persons with disabilities contacting us telling us about triage protocols, which meant that basically, when there were scarce resources, the some of the medical teams decided, in some cases based on protocols that was communicated with them, in some cases, just based on their own discretion, that, Oh, we're gonna dedicate this limited ventilator system to a, this man without disability, because this man with disability or this woman with disability suffers anyway. This is a very extreme example, but which unfortunately, has happened quite a bit. But we do have other examples. Like, for example, we had a list of essential services that could operate in the core full time, right. And when you look at this list of essential services, we will see that many times, they were not including services required by persons with disabilities, for example, interpretation. And they didn't think about, okay, how a deaf person can access health care if there is no interpretation, sign language interpretation available for them. Or how they would be able to, it's like there was no fixing this or somebody was contacting me, and telling me, well, they didn't include wheelchair fixing services in the list of essential services, now my wheelchair is broken, I cannot fix it. So I cannot go anywhere. That's because of lack of consultation. Because when they set up a table of the Emergency Response Team, or headquarters or whatever, and then national or global, local or regional level, they do not invite persons with disabilities to have a seat. Because if they had and they, for example, invited me to the table and say, okay, this is the list or is your opinions that person with disability will be raising their opinion and say, oh, you're you're leaving services required by persons with disabilities out. So what we did was to of course, first of all, document is stories. So we we have a page that we have stories or voices of persons with disabilities. During COVID-19, where they say they tell their stories from all over the world. We share document through surveys, what happened to persons with disabilities, and then we published a report summarizing the service findings, share them with the decision makers with governments and World Health Organization and other important stakeholders to inform them about what happens to persons with disabilities. When the global COVID 19 pandemic was announced, they managed to publish a first set of recommendations on how to improve persons with disabilities in COVID-19 response, like a few days after the announcement, we did as much as we could. But of course, there is much to be done. And then if you if I want to summarize the lessons learned, the first one was, of course, give persons with disabilities seats around the crisis management tables, decision making authorities and hear from them before making any plans or policies. When you are monitoring the implementation include disability inclusion indicators, employ persons with disabilities that are at those levels and those bodies. Document what's happening to persons with disabilities. And again, I want to conclude by education, you need to educate the medical team. Like I don't know how many of them, the medical team to help hair care professionals, decision makers, the budget holders, like how much they have learned about disability inclusion when they went to college, when they went to university, and their annual training plans. That's the key.

R

Ryan Fleury 35:59

And I'll just jump right in and say, you know, they're probably getting very little of that training. And a lot of this probably stems back to man's drive to survive and become top of the food chain and the week are expendable, right. So, you know, it's only been, you know, the disability movements been going for for decades. But to me, it seems like we're making progress. And we're seeing more rapid progress as each year passes. But it's still frustrating as hell to be doing these shows, you know, seven years later, and telling people we need to educate, we need to make people aware, we still need to educate. It is what it is, but at least there is some

light, we are seeing change. So, you know, thanks to you and other organizations that are doing the advocacy work, because without that, we'd be back in caveman times, banging people with clubs.

 Rob Mineault 36:58

It's interesting, because if you think about it, you know, in certainly in our lifetime, COVID was sort of the first global sort of major crisis that happened on a rapid scale. And I always think back to that, that great Mike Tyson, quote, who says "everybody always has a plan until you get punched in the face". And it that's kind of how I think of COVID is that, you know, we, we thought we kind of had a plan and had it all together. But when we got hit with with a global pandemic, everybody did sort of have knee jerk reactions and just reacted. And, you know, we hopefully learned a lot from this process, so that the next time we face some of this stuff, maybe we will actually think of people with disabilities first, before we run out and implement policy.

 Lis Malone 37:59

I am positive, but I hope we don't we don't get the chance to test that.

 Ryan Fleury 38:04

But I was just gonna say to Rob to, you know, we can use that quote to, you know, the mainstream public that, you know, wander around with their sight, and they're working limbs and able bodies, and, you know, they have a plan, their plan is drive to survive and make the best life they can until they're punched in the face and acquire a disability, invisible or otherwise. So that quote applies to that, too.

 Rob Mineault 38:27

Yeah, that's true.

 Ryan Fleury 38:29

It's true. Plans change.

 Lis Malone 38:34

Yes, plans change. There's a very interesting new trend, which is stability and climate change. So right now everybody's talking about climate change. And we are also working to document the impact of climate change on persons with disabilities. Because that would be the next crisis that's already the next crisis for humanity. Like look at this heat wave. Yeah, last year, and in Canada, for example, in British Columbia, there was a heatwave and my colleagues in Human Rights Watch did a very interesting report on how persons with disabilities and older persons

were mostly impacted by those heat waves and the measures taken by the government of British Columbia was not sufficient was not accessible for them. They couldn't go to cooling centers, they didn't have AC in their apartments and they couldn't access the help they want it. So right now we are more and more focusing on climate change and how it impacts persons with disabilities. How persons with disabilities must be included in climate change and Climate Action decisions because some of the policies that are being placed about climate change are not considered or not are not taking persons with disabilities into consideration. Let me just give you one example. So, we all know that that we need to decarbonize and one way of the decarbonizing is to encourage people to use more and more public transportation systems and avoid using private transportation. But what when public transportation is not accessible? So, we enhance the prices of also, like fuel forces, for example, gas, we enhance the gas prices to encourage people not to use their private vehicles. But what if the public transportation system is not accessible, that means that the person with disability need to pay higher prices, still, because they cannot access the public transportation. So, they need to consider these limitations they need to consider building the public transportation accessible before using enhanced gas prices as a decarbonizing policy, or they should consider remedies for persons with disabilities. That's just one example.

R

Rob Mineault 41:32

Yeah, that's really interesting. And I hadn't really thought about climate change and the impact, and this is coming from. You know, Ryan and I are we were in Vancouver. So we, we lived through that the heat dome, the heat dome last year, and it was not pleasant, let me tell you. But you're absolutely right. You know, different cities here, set up cooling centers, but there was no, I don't even know, where or if they had a complete list of where they were online, how accessible that was. And you're absolutely right, there could have been many people that couldn't actually get to them. And you know, in these in more and more cities that aren't set up for heat like that, and don't have air conditioning, or, you know, centralized air in buildings, it's going to be a real problem. And we're seeing it this year, certainly in the UK, even more so because the UK not being used to heat like that. Of course, all of their buildings are built to trap heat in because of the climate. And so when you have a heatwave in in, in countries like that, yeah, people have to either have some sort of air conditioning, or be able to get themselves to cooling centers.

L

Lis Malone 43:02

And just another layer upon what you're saying, Rob, is that the the, the excessive heat, heat waves that we've all been experiencing is only one factor of climate change. When we look at some of these, these natural occurrences like, like the flooding in Kentucky and, you know, flooding in other regions from, you know, snow melting off of mountain tops to prematurely than in previous times. So it's really just that whole, reactionary system of how do we protect the public in all of these different scenarios. Because it is true that they're not there, they're reacting in a way that on these short term events, that if these become more regular occurrences, then I mean, we've had all these little instances where these lessons haven't really been learned yet, or if they have they, there hasn't been significant change.

R

Ryan Fleury 44:05

Well, I think that's where governments have to just step up and say, it is gonna cost us a trillion dollars, we need to spend the trillion dollars. We can't just be putting band aids on all these things that are happening as they occur. You know, like you say, Lis, we need to plan for these things, the best we can be prepared, but it's going to cost.

L

Lis Malone 44:26

Yeah, I mean, you look at the wildfires that then move into the you know, to these National Parks and then coming into residential areas. And it's just seems like every force of nature, whether it be heat, fire, water, rain, wind. I hate to say it, I hope that this isn't really the new normal, but it just might be if this is because I'm not a scientist and I don't even try to pretend like I know anything about what the progression could be. But you still hear about, there's no real plan on the table. Very limited resources are allocated to disaster preparedness most, the very, very huge chunk is being dedicated to response. And then you don't need the very hard work to find out that how much of that is actually dedicated to preparing persons with disabilities for disasters. So we have the warning, early warning systems, some countries like for example, and then you know, they send text messages. And they don't think that maybe a person cannot read the text message, or they make a lot of speaker announcements, not considering that the deaf person cannot hear that they need to write using alternative formats of communicating. And then they want to evacuate. We have stories of that equation. For example, they come to evacuate a person and they say, oh, your wheelchair is big and heavy. We're gonna take you without your wheelchair. It's like, somebody comes to rescue you and tell you oh, we're not gonna take your your legs because your legs are heavy. That's as funny and as heartbreaking as it is.

R

Ryan Fleury 46:34

Yeah, so we're doomed is what you're saying. As a human race, we're stupid. We're doomed.

R

Rob Mineault 46:41

I don't think that's what she said.

L

Lis Malone 46:44

It's what Ryan Fleury says.

R

Ryan Fleury 46:47

It's just not going to happen in our lifetime. So good luck next generation.

L

Lis Malone 46:58

Oh, terrible.

R

Ryan Fleury 47:02

Alright, so how can we end on a high note?

R

Rob Mineault 47:04

Yeah, that's right.

R

Ryan Fleury 47:10

Let's talk about magic and unicorns.. Are you seeing more countries or more organizations becoming part of the disability Alliance? Are you hearing the conversation shift?

L

Lis Malone 47:26

Unfortunately, I think the world is not moving towards a positive direction, in general. That being said, I really believe in the power of social media. And I think if there is a game changer in this world, there would be social media. So for example, we launched the WeThe15 campaign, which means we are the 15%. Because World Health Organization estimates that 15% of world population have some disability, and it's on disability. So these kinds of campaigns, these activities, may change the game and may conveyed a message to the public. So and including governments at the same time, I really believe that the only ultimate sustainable solution needs democracy, the more democracy and human rights in general, or minority rights, including disability rights going to be observed strongly and more sustainably. So yeah, I don't know I can I am positive and a little bit unhappy, both of them. There are tears in my eyes and smile on my lips. Yeah, but it's an unhappiness and anger and frustration that is the catalyst for change. If we were all happy, you know, we would just all be, you know, floating around bumping into each other not giving a crap, but that's what we need. You need a little fire in the belly. Yeah. When when I see like young generations of disability advocates, like working on climate change, going and speaking with others, that I see how we are changing minds, our members all over the world are doing the advocacy. And it's, you know, it's heartwarming, but at the same time, the problem is growing very fast, you know, the climate change this COVID The war that we have the refugee crisis, like you know, how many refugees with disabilities we have? And all the other things that are happening. So we are working hard, but the crisis is also growing fast. So Oh, let's see.

R

Rob Mineault 50:04

That's right. And don't forget that Lis can't have dairy.

L

Lis Malone 50:07

That's our own AT Banter crisis.

R

Rob Mineault 50:13

Speaking of fire in the belly. Well, listen, we want to thank you so much for taking some time out of your evening to talk to us. And thank you for all the work that you're doing. You guys are literally out there fighting the good fight and helping change the world. So thank you in both cases.

E

Elham Youssefian 50:41

We try and I hope that all the people who listen to me today are taking one more step ahead to advance disability. Yes, I'm sure there's one thing that at least every single human being in this world can do. So that's right. And by the way, not eating dairy is quite climate friendly. It's your body the body's contribution in fighting climate change.

L

Lis Malone 51:17

I had no idea how progressive my gut is.

R

Ryan Fleury 51:20

So does that become like carbon neutral if you're still eating beef, but not drinking milk?

L

Lis Malone 51:34

I have to say I love me some beef. I do. I had some ribeye last night. Your body has taken one step. I'm a work in progress. So yeah, thank you. Thank you for the lovely conversation.

R

Rob Mineault 52:02

Listen, come back. Anytime.

L

Lis Malone 52:04

Thank you. Thank you have a great rest of your evening.

R

Rob Mineault 52:11

I don't know if I could not eat cheese.

 R Ryan Fleury 52:13

Yeah, no. Not gonna happen.

 R Rob Mineault 52:17

Cheese is too good, everything else I could I guess. I think I could. It's just losing cheese man. But like it's brutal.

 R Ryan Fleury 52:26

But even milk. Like I don't drink a lot of milk. I mean, occasionally, it's that nice cold milkshake that you're just like, Ah, it's so good.

 R Rob Mineault 52:36

You know what even that's not too bad because you can make a milkshake and not have milk in it. Right? Because like, stuff doesn't make Well, McDonald's milkshakes, for example. I don't think I think you can. People who are lactose intolerant can drink those because there's no actual milk in it I think.

 L Lis Malone 52:51

No, I'm sure there is a dairy product of some sort of some sort. I don't think so. Well, let's just say listen, they're not advertising it as vegan. Let's just say that.

 R Ryan Fleury 53:02

Well, you probably can't use the term milk. Do they even use the term milkshake or they just call it shakes?

 L Lis Malone 53:09

I don't know. I'll tell you though, in the short time that I've been delivered this bad news now that I'm reading labels you would be shocked at how much stuff has some sort of dairy product in it completely now off my radar and I'm, I'm yeah, I'm I mean, mourning.

 R Ryan Fleury 53:31

Well, even you think of like sugars, right? You know, people think of sugar. But if you're looking at your labels, not everybody thinks sucrose, glucose, verbatose, dextrose those are all types of sugar. Right? So that's our food is full of crap.

L

Lis Malone 53:49

It's but yeah, so with my dairy allergy now it's basically I can't eat any processed foods. Because almost everything has has a dairy byproduct in it. Yeah, I even I bought a I had to give away these. These cashew nuts from that I bought at Whole Foods, which are there Thai curry flavored, and they are so good. Um, like I said, I mean, I'm like, oh, no, this should be good. I just looked at the label. And I said, Oh, crap, there is whey powders. There is dairy in this flavoring. And so yeah, it's every it's everywhere, even in the things that you would think that there shouldn't be any kind of dairy and now I'm reading labels, at this stage I'm reading labels on salsa.

R

Ryan Fleury 54:36

Well, you know you have what you eat, no matter what it is, you know, our subway restaurants here. Maybe it's in the US as well. There's a lawsuit going on right now because their tuna scientists have tested contain no tuna. Oh, that's disgusting. So if they've been advertising tuna subs, and they say it's tuna is the eat tuna. So what are we eating?

L

Lis Malone 55:03

I had heard that Subway was in some trouble because they put so much sugar in their bread that some I don't know where or some countries were saying that they would have to classify it as cake.

R

Ryan Fleury 55:17

I think I heard that once yeah.

R

Rob Mineault 55:25

I can't beleive we just immediately like went out we went straight to like Lis's allergy immediately.

L

Lis Malone 55:38

Fascinating. I think because you guys are you're just so shocked.

R

Ryan Fleury 55:41

It's gonna be everything in moderation, right? Like you're not gonna trigger your allergy or they -

L

Lis Malone 55:46

I'm not having anything with dairy. I was told that I need to have take take it out completely. Because it's an because then you're you keep having the allergic reaction because you're not removing it from your body.

R

Ryan Fleury 55:57

Well, good luck. It's been nice knowing you. Let us know if you find like fake bacon the taste like bacon. No, I can have bacon. You'll read it read the ingredients. There's no milk and flavoring in some of the bacon you might want to check.

L

Lis Malone 56:14

If it's like if it's I can have you know, the only thing I can't have sausage? Because there's a lot of soy, but I can I could have kosher hotdogs because there can't be any dairy in there.

R

Rob Mineault 56:31

Wow. That's crazy, isn't it? Yeah. But honestly, it's gonna be an adjustment. But for sure, it's probably for the best in the long run, because you're gonna cut out a bunch of crap that's not good for you anyways, you'll probably feel 10 times better.

R

Ryan Fleury 56:45

No more chocolate bars.

L

Lis Malone 56:46

I know that I like I said, I'm

R

Rob Mineault 56:54

I mean, I'm sure she can have like trace elements of it without having like a huge adverse reaction.

L

Lis Malone 57:01

I'm told I have to remove it all all of it.

R

Ryan Fleury 57:03

Okay, well, yeah. But that's what I eat nowadays. It's been nice knowing you should be fine. Just

Okay, well, yeah, like, that's why I say goodbye. It's been nice knowing you should be fine. Just eat lettuce.

 Rob Mineault 57:13

Lots of lettuce and bacon.

 Lis Malone 57:15

And that's, and then the crappy thing is like if I'm having salads I have to. There's only certain salad dressings. Now anything creamy and delicious. Like those are gone. Those are gone. It's all frickin raspberry vinaigrette.

 Ryan Fleury 57:29

It's so sad.

 Rob Mineault 57:30

Yeah. Well, yeah. Wow. Our hearts go out to you.

 Lis Malone 57:38

Thank you. Don't send me chocolate turtles at the holidays because

 Ryan Fleury 57:42

We were gonna send you some BC cheddar Armstrong cheddar gifts.

 Lis Malone 57:46

No, no, you can send me some steaks.

 Ryan Fleury 57:49

Alberta beef.

 Rob Mineault 57:52

Okay, anyways. Okay, back to the show about again. Yeah, well, I don't know how you guys feeling after the conversation you feeling optimistic or pessimistic? Or I don't know. What do

you guys think?

R

Ryan Fleury 58:13

I think it's such a high level organization. I personally still don't have a full grasp on the work that they're doing. You know, I think we hear rumblings and see things on our local levels. But even nationally, there's stuff happening that we aren't necessarily privy to. And then you take it globally. It's just, we just don't know, right? We don't know what they're doing, what, who they're talking to? What changes are being made. It's just such a different scope of advocacy that I would say a lot of us aren't familiar with.

R

Rob Mineault 58:50

Yeah, I mean, that's it's a really good point. I mean, you know, we're, you, when you're on the ground level advocating, it can be hard to really wrap your mind around what's going on at the higher levels. But that higher level work is incredibly important, especially when you consider the number of organizations that are that are members of of the Alliance, and you know, just the sheer number of people who are working towards a singular goal. You know, you got it, you got to have the that, as well as everybody that's putting in the time here on the ground, that's advocating at their local levels. It's all gotta sort of work together. And I think that that can be some of the challenge behind it is you've got so many moving parts to an organization that's trying to do so much for so many people. I'm sure that that can be challenging, but, you know, it certainly needs to happen. And I'm heartened to hear that. They've, you know, they're making progress and that so many different countries around the world have, have ratified the Convention. With the exception of Lis and her country, so that's weird.

R

Ryan Fleury 1:00:06

Like Elham said, that's due down to Constitutional Law and the Constitution itself. And I'll reach out to people as well. But you know, the Americans and their "it's my right to do ABC" ... So ...

R

Rob Mineault 1:00:23

Why do you hate people with disabilities, Lis?

L

Lis Malone 1:00:29

I love to hate myself.

R

Rob Mineault 1:00:30

You can be self loathing.

R

Ryan Fleury 1:00:32

That's true.

L

Lis Malone 1:00:35

Well, I think my takeaway from this conversation is that it really takes so many organizations from top to bottom, to make to make change. And I'm not saying we're anywhere near where we need to be. But I think that it is somewhat comforting to know that there are organizations that are talking to the people that we are not even thinking of, that we could never even dream of accessing, but that it's happening on all on all levels. But ya know, so I mean, I'm grateful for organizations like that. But, you know, I mean, and I, I'd love that at the end, I hum. Say that, no, I'm not happy with where we are, I don't think that there's enough change, and you need those people to kind of to be not happy with where we are, as opposed to just like, well, you know, at the end of the day, we're just, you know, we're going through the motions, we're talking to the people to you, and we're doing what we're supposed to do, but you know, that, that there is dissatisfaction at that level, too. And that, so that, you know, like I said, I think fires your pistons more.

R

Ryan Fleury 1:01:46

Well, I think, too. You know, one of the things I took away also is that, you know, we know, a lot of our organizations don't always agree on everything. And I'm sure a lot of these countries don't necessarily agree on everything, but the thing they do agree on, is the importance of the person's of disabilities and their rights to equal access and inclusion in society. So see, I'm positive.

L

Lis Malone 1:02:13

Yeah. Look at you. You know what, you are the glitter and spangles this week.

R

Ryan Fleury 1:02:20

Well, thanks.

L

Lis Malone 1:02:22

Where's, where's my damn song?

R

Ryan Fleury 1:02:28

Songwriting is hard.

L

Lis Malone 1:02:30

You know, he gives me crap about when's, when's your next Breaking Dishes coming out?

R

Ryan Fleury 1:02:41

All right. There's gonna be some sort of song next week.

L

Lis Malone 1:02:44

Maybe I'll work on a Breaking.

R

Rob Mineault 1:02:49

Make sure you work in mozzarella cheese and explosive diarrhea.

L

Lis Malone 1:02:58

That's just mean, Rob. See Rob always takes it too far.

R

Rob Mineault 1:03:03

It's kind of my thing. That's my role in the podcast. Just take things a step too far, and then have to step it back. Guess that's it? Hey, Lis.

L

Lis Malone 1:03:18

Yeah, Rob?

R

Rob Mineault 1:03:20

Where can people find us?

L

Lis Malone 1:03:23

We are always found at atbanter.com

R

Rob Mineault 1:03:29

And they can also drop us an email if they so desire at cowbell@atbanter.com, especially if there's any of our listeners out there are lactose intolerant and have gone through -

there's only 10 of our listeners out there are lactose intolerant and have gone through

L

Lis Malone 1:03:45

dairy change or have a dairy allergy

R

Rob Mineault 1:03:49

I'm sorry, I guess it's not the same thing right now the same thing I don't even know. See, I'm sorry. I need to be educated in different spheres as well.

R

Ryan Fleury 1:03:57

Send all your recipes and food suggestions to [cobell@atbanter.com](mailto:cobell@atbanter.com) and we'll pass them along to Lis.

L

Lis Malone 1:04:03

I need gift cards to Whole Foods because it's very expensive. Not eating processed food. Eating healthy really is a nightmare with that. So yeah, for taking, you know, pantry contributions for sure.

R

Ryan Fleury 1:04:18

All right. Well, they can also find us on Facebook and Twitter. And wherever you listen to your podcast.

R

Rob Mineault 1:04:26

That's right. You know what scared me a comment in there was the fact that Elhan was was heartened by social media. I feel like that is actually the downfall of civilization, not our savior. So I don't know about that. The Metaverse, I don't think the metaverse is going to save us.

L

Lis Malone 1:04:50

But two sides of the same coin.

R

Ryan Fleury 1:04:55

Maybe

R Rob Mineault 1:04:56

Also who knew that that Mike Tyson quote got so much more mileage. I feel like we can really apply that quote to many things in life. Who knew that Mike Tyson was like the Socrates of our generation.

R Ryan Fleury 1:05:10

Well we will have him on this show it asked him about it.

R Rob Mineault 1:05:15

Ryan, everybody has a plan until you get punched in the face.

L Lis Malone 1:05:22

It sounds like the kid.

R Rob Mineault 1:05:25

I only have one voice.

L Lis Malone 1:05:31

We should we should we should have you read cards like, okay, was that Mike Tyson or the kid at Comic Con?

R Rob Mineault 1:05:38

Right. There you go. It's a great idea to do that for the next anniversary show. Set up a game. Hey, are we done?

R Ryan Fleury 1:05:52

All right. Well, yes.

R Rob Mineault 1:05:54

In fact, that is going to about do it for us this week. Big thanks for everybody for listening in, and we will see everybody next week.

