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SPEAKERS

Rob Mineault, Steve Barclay, Jody Yarborough, Ryan Fleury, Lis Malone

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R **Rob Mineault** 00:09

Hey and welcome to a another episode of AT Banter.

S **Steve Barclay** 00:26

Banter, banter.

R **Rob Mineault** 00:29

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. A My name is Rob Mineault and joining me today ... let me see who's here. Mr. Ryan Fleury.

R **Ryan Fleury** 00:49

You got to start sounding a little bit more excited, you sound so Dopey Dog-ish today.

R **Rob Mineault** 00:54

Yeah, okay, whatever whatever. Projector.

R **Ryan Fleury** 01:02

Hey, look who else it is - Mr. Steve Barclay.

Steve Barclay 01:05

I'm so happy I got to play here today.

Rob Mineault 01:13

Miss Lis Malone.

Lis Malone 01:15

Hey there party people. There you go. Now that's done.

Ryan Fleury 01:26

Exhausting.

Lis Malone 01:29

So much effort. I don't I can't do that for a whole show.

Rob Mineault 01:35

A little birdie told me I think I know why Lis has some pep in her step. It's because of the hockey series. So I hear that your team Lis is is is doing quite well.

Lis Malone 01:52

Two games for the USA, zero for Canada.

Rob Mineault 02:02

I'll give you guys like two minutes to like trash talk each other I guess.

Steve Barclay 02:07

It's really hard for me to trash talk because you know Edmonton took up my Canucks and that was brutal in and of itself. But yeah, now that you know they're they're sitting there playing each other I find myself be grudgingly cheering on the Canadian team and occasionally like, fuck you McDavid?

Rob Mineault 02:30

Rob Mineault 02:30

I don't understand that reference, but it made me laugh.

Lis Malone 02:34

Well yeah, I mean, I guess your FUs to Connor are working because I don't think he's really managed to do anything other than get a bloody face in Game One.

Rob Mineault 02:44

Wow. Really?

Steve Barclay 02:47

He's crazy. You know, the guy can basically skate through everybody. He just can't get it in the net.

Ryan Fleury 02:53

I think Drysidle also been their strongest player. He's been incredible.

Steve Barclay 02:58

I would disagree. I think it is McDavid. Drysidle has been excellent as well. But Florida is so good at blocking shots. They're just not getting stuff through.

Ryan Fleury 03:11

Now, just like the Canucks against Edmonton all the way, the Canucks weren't shooting the puck. Nevermind.

Steve Barclay 03:17

Exactly. There was a slight difference.

Lis Malone 03:24

I'll say though, Rob, last week, your instincts were right when you said who are you going to cheer for. And then you said, ah, you know, I'll go with Lis. I'll root for the Panthers. You know how to go with a winning team.

Rob Mineault 03:38

That's true. I did say that. So yeah, let go. Florida Panthers. Yay.

Steve Barclay 03:44

He knows how to go with the winning team so far. There's four more games left.

Rob Mineault 03:47

Move over so there is room on this bandwagon.

Steve Barclay 03:52

I should say there's two to four games left.

Ryan Fleury 03:58

And then we got the Summer Olympics. So look out world, Canada is coming for you.

Rob Mineault 04:04

Go sports. You guys in your sports. I tell you all right. Enough nonsense and sports. We should get down to the brass tacks of the show. So Hey, Ryan.

Ryan Fleury 04:47

Yeah, Rob?

Rob Mineault 04:49

What the heck are we doing today?

Ryan Fleury 04:50

Today we are speaking with writer, blogger, disability advocate from Love Disabled Life, Jody Yarborough. Jody, welcome to the show.

Jody Yarborough 05:00

Thank you. Thank you for having me.

Ryan Fleury 05:02

Thanks for sticking around.

Rob Mineault 05:07

Are you a hockey fan at all? Or are you like me, and have no idea what they just talked about.

Jody Yarborough 05:12

I'm not really a hockey fan. I don't like to be cold. So I went to a game and I was like, yeah, I don't think so. I am a baseball fan. We both love my San Francisco Giants, even though they're having a rough year.

Rob Mineault 05:32

Everybody's having a rough year, it seems. Well, listen, we want to thank you so much for making some time for us and, coming on the show. I'm very excited to talk about your work, your advocacy work and a lot about the blog, because there's some really amazing articles there. But maybe we can just we can just start with just giving the audience just maybe a little bit of background on yourself.

Jody Yarborough 05:58

Sure. Yeah. So my name is Jody Yarborough, and I am 48 years old. And I was born and raised in Washington State. I was technically born in Colorado, but my Dad was in the military. And we've actually moved around a couple times even before I remember. So like by two years old, we were in Washington, Tacoma area. And so that's really what I consider home. And I am disabled, I was disabled since birth, I was born with a really rare muscular condition called a Congenital Trilaminate Myopathy. And it is kind of in the dystrophy family. But my particular version, or flavor, if you will, is extremely rare. In fact, medical paper was written about me, and doctors took my case around to conferences. And yeah, they didn't really know what to do, you know, with me told my parents what to do. So it was obviously in the late 70s and the medical technologies aren't what they are today. So they basically did their best just to keep me alive. And the interventions they did obviously worked. And I'm still here. But yeah, it was kind of scary time. And I think, you know, my mom told me a story. You know, when I have when I was a baby, and they were like, well, you can either take Jody home, or you can put her in an institution. And this was my mom's second child. So I have an older sister who's four years older than I am, she is not disabled. I'm the only disabled person in my family. And really in my, you know, in my in my second ring of family to like, cousins and whatnot, no one else is disabled. So my parents, thankfully chose to take me home. And you know, obviously, I still have medical interventions, but they for all intensive purposes, raised me in what we would now call a very mainstreamed or integrated environment. So the main result of the Myopathy was I developed a very severe Scoliosis, which I still have to this day, they didn't have the Scoliosis interventions for children that they do now. So they basically just use hardware to keep my spine from collapsing my lungs. And so every summer I would go in for, you know, kind of a tuneup until they finally fused my back at the age of 13.

S **Steve Barclay** 08:32

Wow, that sounds extreme having your vertebrae fused. I know my mom had to doubt on her neck and she's dealt with chronic pain ever since. Is that the case for you too? Are you constantly dealing with pain as a result of that?

J **Jody Yarborough** 08:44

You know, interestingly, Steve, I'm very blessed in that I have never really had back pain. I've known people with Scoliosis, much less severe than I have, like, you probably won't even know they have it, who have much more chronic pain than I do. And so, you know, I try not to read too much into it, but I just think I've been very, very fortunate that I really feel that my back feels much like probably any other person's back feels like I feel things but I don't have to take any you know, drugs or you know, go to chiropractic treatment really even when were you even work on me. So I'm just kind of like, you know, I'm one all fused thing now. And I will hopefully be able to stay this way for many more years.

R **Rob Mineault** 09:37

So it also must have been kind of challenging to when it is such a rare condition and and even like sort of really rare conditions. Quite often they'll have support networks and stuff -- was that something that you found that you sort of missed out on having such a rare condition?

J **Jody Yarborough** 09:53

Absolutely. Yeah, for sure. You know, we I think I went to one MDA Telethon. And it was kind of interesting. I mean, I think I can process and understand this a lot more now as an adult. And unfortunately, my parents aren't with me anymore for me to ask them direct questions, but I think that they, you know, I was a child, so I didn't really know any different, but I think they had issues with what I would call the telethon environment. You know, the Jerry's Kids and Shriners and even though you know, those organizations, organizations do some great work, there's an attitude or can be of dependence and paternalism, which my parents just, I think, philosophically didn't ascribe to you. And so either of their own choice that they didn't feel comfortable with it, or they didn't want me to be around that. So I would say the most important organization we found, and that they accepted was the Children's hospitals. So like, I was very fortunate to have my surgeries at Seattle Children's, which is a very well known renowned, orthopedic, I mean, they do other types of surgeries, but it's a very much supportive pediatric model, you know, medical facility, and I think they really were instrumental in helping my parents be okay. And also helped me be okay.

R **Rob Mineault** 11:23

Well, you know, that brings up a really interesting point, I feel like that something that a lot of organizations and people struggle with in the community is the whole idea of the charity model of disability. You know, on the one hand, you know, we we want to send this message of empowerment and normalizing disability, but at the other hand, a lot of these organizations in order to really effectively raise money, they have to sort of lean the other way, and lean into this idea of the poor disability community, please help, that type of thing, knowing what we know, now, like, sort of how do you navigate that?

J **Jody Yarborough** 12:05

Yeah, I think, well, I'm on the board of Independent Living Center, which is a nonprofit. And so I totally get what you're saying about walking that fine line between going over what I would call overboard, and like, really objectifying a disabled person's life or story, to, you know, make money, but also say, hey, you know, society, unfortunately, is very still ableist. And there aren't the support structures that need to be in place to help disabled people live their most independent lives. So what we try to do at the nonprofit I am on the board for, and what I tried to do, just in my own life, and through Love Disabled Life, is to say, you can have it both ways. You can be empowering, but also ask for support. And I just work to align myself with individuals and organizations that don't objectify the disabled experience. And I have a pretty sharp antenna for when I feel that's happening. And I keep that engagement on a very micro level, whether it's with my care team, my own doctors, whether it's like I said, with other groups or organizations, I checked out your podcast, because I think that that's really important. And it's an important value for myself to to live by.

R **Rob Mineault** 13:26

See, it always sends chills up my spine - you did research on this podcast, and you still came on?

R **Ryan Fleury** 13:34

That just means we passed the bar?

R **Rob Mineault** 13:36

Hey, I guess we are doing somehing right. But it is a very, really fine line, like you said. And I think that it's something that a lot of organizations are really beginning to really grapple with. The really ironic thing about the idea of support or even the idea of universal design, the only reason that there are barriers out there and that the disabled community needs support with is because well the able bodied people have built a society that's inaccessible. If we had built it with universal design your mind from the get go, then we wouldn't have these problems.

J **Jody Yarborough** 14:15

Exactly

Rob Mineault 14:15

I want to I want to talk a little bit about about the blog because you know, going through the blog, I'm just amazed at the at the sheer amount of content there. Can you talk a little bit about the blog and just the sort of the genesis of it and how it started and, and sort of your your sort of mission statement behind it?

Jody Yarborough 14:35

Sure. And thank you for that. I really appreciate it. It really makes you know, makes me feel good to hear your feedback on that because it has been a fairly personal project for many years. So I do have I got my Bachelor's in Journalism with a minor in Creative Writing in college and so I wouldn't call myself the best writer. But you know, I do have an affinity for it. I did work as a journalist for a little while, but I found out that I actually hated reporting. Journalism even, you know, 12/15 years ago when I was doing it, gosh, maybe almost 20 by now. It's a hard gig. And so, you know, I'm like, but how can I keep doing this work in my own life at my own pace. And that's where blogging really exploded, you know, it will fill the gap. And at the time, blogging was exploding, WordPress was getting to be a real big thing. Everybody was starting a blog. So I'm like, you know what, I should start one and I started writing on topics of disability. And my own disability enlightenment journey started when I actually learned about independent living centers. And I got involved with a group called Little People in America. Because like I said, growing up, I didn't have really any disabled role models, I didn't even really know there was a disability community. And in many ways, I think that sheltering helped me. They helped me be very independent minded. But at the same time, I did miss out on quite a bit of that history and education and culture. But I eventually discovered it on my own. And I just started to explore disabled topics that resonated with me, things that I thought this can, you know, my readership at large should know about. But it also has surprised me how many disabled people themselves don't know about our history. And so it evolved from a few blog posts to about nine years ago, into a platform when I was sitting down one day, and I was like, What do I want to call this? Like, what is this going to be? Because at first, I was just blogging under my own name. And I thought, Hmm, well, I love my life. There isn't anything I would change about it. And I am disabled. So, yeah, okay. Love disabled life. And that's really how it came about. And I've just been building on it, you know, since then.

Rob Mineault 17:16

And so yeah, and that's, that's what really popped for me. I really love the name of the blog. And I do think that that is such a, such an important message to get out there. And quite often, you know, we've talked to too many people on the, on the podcast, and quite a few of them have said this, I love my life. There's nothing, I wouldn't change about it. And I feel like in the able bodied community, that's such a foreign concept, you know, again, going back to all these models of disability or disability has generally historically been seen as something that needs to be fixed, if it can be fixed, it should be fixed. And if it can't be fixed, while we need to dump research dollars, into something so that it can be fixed. That's the been the messaging for many, many, many years. So often, we talk with people even who have entered into the disability community at a later life, they've had an accident or something has caused them to go down this different path. And many of them have said things like, you know, I would never trade becoming a member of the disability community for anything, because it put me on a path to where I am now. And I'm really happy now. I never would have been a paralympic athlete, if it had I never ever I'd never become a member of the disability community. So it's quite often we, we hear these stories, and I feel like those are that's a really important message to send to the able bodied community. Disability isn't something that needs to be fixed. It's not a deficit,

J Jody Yarborough 18:46

Right. 100% I completely agree with you. But you know, I also say, I'm always leery The one thing I am conscious of way in talking about, you know, Love Disabled Life as a, as a brand or lifestyle or whatever you want to call it. There are hard days being disabled. And I don't want to negate those hard days either. It is not all sunshine and roses. That my my emphasis for love disabled life is is on a macro level. Because I feel like it's personal for me, but I'm only me right? And I don't feel comfortable telling another disabled person, you have to love everything about being disabled. Because I'm sure there's some things that are really hard. And I want to respect that too. But I feel like if we as a people, as a culture as a community can't truly love and embrace ourselves collectively. How can we ask the world to and so this idea of not only understanding ableism but internalized oppression is really something that hit home for me in the in the process sense of thinking through what I wanted this platform to be. I think a lot of people with disabilities have internalized oppression that they don't even recognize. And I think it seeps out in unconscious ways. I know myself, you know, I'm sure I have some internalized oppression. And it comes out in different ways, I might think about certain aspects of being disabled, or when I see somebody else with a specific type type of disability. And I think it's important to acknowledge that, because until we acknowledge it, call it out, talk about it, process it, it's not gonna go away.

R Rob Mineault 20:37

Yeah. And we've often said on the show, that ableism is a very, it's a very tricky 'ism'. I think it's one of the trickier 'isms', because a lot of people don't even recognize that they're being ableist. You know, even when it does get called out, a lot of people can say things like, well, you know, they weren't being ableist, they were just trying to be helpful, or they were just being nice. Which is in its in and of itself is ableist. Because you're pushing back on somebody's feelings, and people get really upset when you call them out on things like that. And it's, it's like, well, how will how do we combat things like that?

J Jody Yarborough 21:24

I think just through individual luck, I'll give you an example I just experienced very recently, I was in a group facilitated meeting, and we were among the people with various levels of mobility. And the group leader prompted us in a kind of a team activity to do clapping in place. And not all members of the room couldn't could clap. And so one individual, you know, spoke up and said, you know, I find this activity ableist and uncomfortable, because I can't participate. And thankfully, the facilitator, you know, didn't get defensive, or, you know, take offense, they were willing to learn, and listen, and acknowledge what they had done, and that they would work to do better in the future. So that was a really good positive learning moment. But it took the courage of the person who was feeling excluded to speak up, it took the collective room of support, to help the facilitator not feel embarrassed or ashamed. Um, because, you know, the fact of the matter is, even though I'm disabled, so my husband is disabled, also, but he uses a power wheelchair. And so I'm sure I've done things in our time together that could be perceived as ableist, even though, you know, I would never, my intention is never to be that. And it's just because disability is a spectrum. And, you know, too, I think it's about having the right intention. And being open when you, you know, may make a misstep.

R Rob Mineault 22:58

Yeah. And maybe that's part of it, you know, people really tend to panic. The idea of being called out on doing something that's ableist, it has such a terrifyingly negative connotation. But really, if it's painted in the sense that, hey, this is just me sharing my experience with you. This didn't work for me. That's okay as long as you're gonna take this away and learn from it. You're not a terrible person. And maybe that's part of it.

J Jody Yarborough 23:32

Exactly. Yeah, no, totally. I think you're right. It's about not demonizing. And, you know, I appreciate all levels of advocacy in our community. But I personally have never been overly demonstrative in my advocacy. Like, you won't find me chaining myself to doors. And I'm not really comfortable in protests. I'm more of a quiet advocate. And I think that's okay, too. I think that, you know, we need to make space for everyone at whatever level of advocacy that they're comfortable with. So, yeah, and I think part of that work is letting people know who may be saying or doing something that is ableist that, hey, you're not bad. You're a good person. You just, you know, you just are making a little misstep. And let me if you're allowed me to, let me help you understand, from my perspective, why that wasn't helpful.

R Rob Mineault 24:31

Yeah, I think so. I think it's, you know, really, at the end of the day, it just comes down to like, just having conversations and not nobody feeling threatened. But yeah I think that that's the other part of the challenge around the disability community, because it is such a diverse and large population and everybody's needs are going to be different. Even within like a similar community, like say, so for example, say the blindness community, one person's needs is going to be, you know, slightly different than the others, you know, let alone, you know, wildly different communities. How do we sort of approach that?

J Jody Yarborough 25:17

Yeah, that's tricky. I mean, I don't think there's a one size fits all. And I don't think that there's a one solution, I think it just still comes down to not siloing ourselves off. So having integration among the blind community, with the wheelchair community with the, you know, little people community, we have, you know, interestingly, in the little people community, there's still a lot of stigma around using a wheelchair or a scooter. It's like, I don't understand it, but it exists. So I think there just still needs to be integration and inclusion. I think that, you know, there are other there is additional marginalized communities, even within the disability community through either race, gender, or sexual orientation, you know, and to be mindful of, you know, for me, I want to be inclusive of all as possible, and I'm not going to be perfect. I'm doing the best I can. But I will always if I have an opportunity, try to include and encompass as many, you know, to that conversation as possible.

S Steve Barclay 26:21

I'm curious, are there any conferences, specifically for the broader disability community where we bring together people with all kinds of disabilities to discuss an advocate and maybe drag the odd politician in for haranguing?

J Jody Yarborough 26:37

Oh, yeah. So here in the United States, there's a big conference every July in Washington, DC and then there's the National Council on Independent Living. And it brings in advocates from all over the community or all over the country, Mostly through these independent living centers that are all over the country to talk and lobby with politicians on Capitol Hill for issues that affect the disability community. There are dozens if not, you know, a couple 100 a year, regionally or, you know, like the National Spinal Association. I know that's often associated with just wheelchairs, but any spinal cord injury. I know they have a big lobbying week. And the same with like the Muscular Dystrophy Association. You know, I'm sure the blind community has theirs. So I know that still kind of getting a little siloed. But the one off the top of my head when it comes to the most different types of disabilities would be the conference in July.

S Steve Barclay 27:49

Interesting. I've, I've been involved in in the disability community for 33 years but I've never heard of it. But well, mind you, I'm Canadian, too.

J Jody Yarborough 27:58

Well, this reminds me, I'll do a blog post about it. Once I get it posted, because yeah, we always have at least one or two staff members from the Independent Living Center that I volunteer for.

R Rob Mineault 28:20

When it comes to, you know, minorities and equity seeking groups, it just it seems like the disability community is still yet to have their moment. There's been a lot of a lot of communities that that have managed to break through and really gain some traction in terms of social justice and sort of equity and inclusion. The disability community just seems like they just haven't had that moment yet. Why, why do you think that is?

Jody Yarborough 28:48

I think it's multifaceted. And its challenges. I think, number one, the whole idea of ableism that we've already spoken about. But I also think that there is just challenges, very logistical challenges through whether it be transportation, but then, you know, education, economics, I think there's a lot of things that keep the disability community at large less able to coalesce around something that would attract someone the national attention, like the Black Lives Matter movement did or like, the pride movement has. You know, it's just unfortunate. I don't want any, you know, a lot of these social movements in social justice movements get sparked by unfortunately, some type of tragedy, right. So I don't want to say that I want something bad to happen to disability community to spark some kind of national outrage. But, you know, the fact of the matter is that here in the United States, there are still laws like marriage equality laws, and what I mean by that is, if you have a person who is on Um, government subsidy, I shouldn't say that subsidy, I should say government support, mostly related to SSDI. Their resources are monitored. And so it prevents them from getting married. They I have, you know, a friend of mine, right marry who right now who'd love to marry her partner, but can't, because if they get married, they will lose the in home support services, and the Financial Services Support SSDI. And to me, that's just it's a huge inequity. It's a huge problem. But you're not going to see people, you know, rallying in the streets around that issue. Like I wish they would.

Steve Barclay 30:38

And interestingly, that is also true in Canada.

Rob Mineault 30:43

Yeah, it's terrible.

Jody Yarborough 30:45

I mean, you love is love, right. And they should, in my opinion, they should be able to get married, and start a family like anyone else. And it just drives it just, it just is so upsetting. And that's the example I can come up with the top of my head. But there's, there's dozens more and, you know, around your choice to live in a home of your choosing, you know, a lot of it here in the States, even though there's laws on the books, a law is only as good as it's enforced. Yes, enforcement requires legislative action and follow up, but also the resources to provide that reality. We had a woman recently, she hadn't left her home in four years, because she didn't have a ramp data warehouse. And so at our nonprofit, we helped her, you know, get the get the room she needed, so she can leave her house. I mean, really? This is 2024. Yeah, it's stuff like that, that just drives me crazy.

Rob Mineault 31:44

Absolutely. I mean, we had a guest on the podcast not long ago, you told us a story about you know, her and her boyfriend. She was a guide, dog user and was looking for apartments, and they found this great apartment and worked great for them, they loved it, everything was lining up. But at the end of the day, the the owner, just straight up said, yeah, you know, what I'm just not comfortable renting to you, because there's stairs in there, and I'm just afraid that you would fall down the stairs, and, you know, we'd be on the hook for that. So they just refused them just based on that. And even though that's blatantly illegal, it, they still felt comfortable enough and ableist enough to just not really even think that they did anything wrong. So there's so much like latent ableism out there that people just feel like they can get away with. So clearly, you know, these enforcement mechanisms, you know, aren't necessarily doing the doing the job that they need to be doing.

J Jody Yarborough 32:43

Exactly. Yeah. And that's why I mean, you know, people get very hot and upset about what you would call maybe a "drive by lawsuit". I don't know how Canada is, but United States, we are, you know, deemed a very litigious society. And I know that that can be, you know, not always a good thing. But there's a lot of conversation around. Like I said, they're called kind of, or even now click by lawsuits where there are organizations or law firms that seek out businesses that aren't accessible. And the business community because they feel like they're being picked on. But what we say is, if you were following the law in the first place, then you know, we're not asking for any special treatment here. We're just asking for you to follow the law, and provide us equal access and equal treatment. And so if the resource we have is litigation to help make that happen, then that's the recourse that we have. Because if you're left unchecked, no, you're not going to do it. So yeah, I kind of have a very unpopular opinion that, you know, do what the law says, and we'll leave you alone. But if you don't, you might get a letter, you know, saying, You need to come up to compliance.

R Rob Mineault 34:05

I almost think that it should be easier. What people do also don't take into consideration is that it's not easy to sue somebody. You have to be really mad and really sort of set to bring up a lawsuit against a company like it's, it's not like it's this is a no cost thing to you, like, you can just like click and sue, for example. Like the guests that I was referring to, like, they were upset about it, but at the end of the day, they didn't do anything they didn't they, they don't sue, they just went on their way because they they wanted to live their life -- as much as that sucked, you know, there weren't going to invest, you know, hundreds of hours to bring up a lawsuit. Right?

J Jody Yarborough 34:47

And I understand that too. You know, it's funny this story reminds me of an experience I had. So obviously I have my my platform and I've tried To start a YouTube channel, there is one that exists. But I haven't created any new content for a while. I'm a one woman show here. So, you know, I keeps me pretty busy. But I posted a video about how my husband and I, so we like to shop at Whole Foods. We're very, you know, blessed that we can afford to shop there. And, but the parking there was constantly getting filled by the disabled parking was constantly getting filled by illegal parkers. And one day, I just had enough. And there was probably five illegal cars parked. And like I said that day, I just had enough. So I went into the store. And I complained to the service, customer service person. And lo and behold, a police car showed up. And sorry, ticket. Yeah, it started ticketing. And I was able to capture all this on film. And the comments on that video. While they're, you know, well, they're majority positive and supportive. I remember a couple that stuck out, called me like a Karen said I had that I must have no life. Because all I do is go around and, and, you know, knock out people who are illegal parking. And I was just like, wow, I mean, so those attitudes, and you know, opinions really do exist. They don't bother me. Because I know myself and I know my truth. And know, I don't just, you know, for fun, go around for kicks, you know, knocking out illegal parkers. But this is a issue that we face on the daily. Yeah. And that day, I just had enough.

R **Rob Mineault** 36:40

This is what the disability community sort of runs up against. How do you ride that fine line about being too vocal and complaining too much, and then getting this reputation that wow, that's all they do is complain? Or like, you're just angry? Yeah. They're, they're always angry about something. You know, how do you balance that with the fact that, hey, if we don't speak up and say something, then nothing's ever going to change?

J **Jody Yarborough** 37:12

No, I think you just balance it by knowing you're going to win some and you're going to lose some and being strong in your convictions. And just doing the best you can. I mean, I it's kind of part of my personality anyway. I mean, when I say, I don't care what people think about me, obviously, I, you know, I care what my husband thinks, and I care what my friends think. But, but by and large, I'm pretty, a pretty self assured person. And I know that even if I run into things with them, that we can talk it out and work it out. So I think there's just an element of having kind of a thick skin. But you know, yeah, it doesn't mean it's easy.

R **Ryan Fleury** 37:51

I'm back to let's all carry a big stick. Enough carrot, get the stick out.

L **Lis Malone** 37:59

Yeah, finally rubbing off on somebody.

R **Rob Mineault** 38:08

Sort of going back to talking a little bit about social change and, and sort of other equity seeking groups. You know, I can't help but look at at some of the social change that has happened over the, say, the past 10/15 years, that really illustrates that, when there's a will, like, we can make some pretty big social changes in short order. You know, I think back to like, 10 years ago, the idea of a gender free bathroom was for it like you just that that was unheard of. And now very common. You see them all the time, you know, started, say, the trans community, they've made really, really big movements in the past 10 years. Autism - I think that autism has really grown in terms of awareness and the general public understanding a lot more about what it means to be autistic than ever before. So, you know, I think we can see that that change is possible in short order. It's just really, you know, how do we get there? And I tend to think my opinion, my little humble opinion, is I think that mass media has a lot to do with it. I think that that's how you sort of enter into the conversation in the general public is, you know, as cynical and silly as it sounds, it's like, you need a Netflix show. You need something that's going to teach people while they sit and and drink wine and eat popcorn on their couch. That's that's where you enter into the collective thought.

Jody Yarborough 39:51

Yeah, I completely agree with you. I'll just to speak directly to your comment. I'll so I'm here in the States and, you know, I feel like I have to push back a little bit on the the gender neutral bathroom and the Trans progress. I think, depending on what State you live here, you will think it's more aligned with Canada. But there are certainly States here that you will not find a general neutral bathroom and Trans people are being harassed and excluded in horrific ways. For the Autism, I agree with you, for sure. I think that there has been a more awareness and appreciation for what kind of I feel like it's getting labeled here as, quote somebody on the spectrum. I don't know a lot of Autistic people, other than through my connections on social media. But, um, so I hope that they don't find that term offensive. But yeah, I think that even among that community itself, they're feeling I think, from the outside looking in, that there's more opportunity for inclusion for them. And I think that that's long overdue. I did work with an Autistic person years ago, she was very high functioning. And I still saw the struggles that she went through. And I hope that even though we don't have contact anymore, I hope that life is a little bit easier for her now, because there is more of a social and Employment Awareness. Like people who are hiring for jobs, they're more open and inclusive of autistic people.

Rob Mineault 41:40

Yeah, and even, just even just understanding what it is. Even the fact that it is something that that is on a spectrum. We talk to a lot of people in sort of the blindness community, and what's often a frustration is just how much of a, like even getting that through people's heads, that, hey, vision isn't a light switch. It's not about you're not just blind or your sighted, like, there's a spectrum, some people are low vision, they have some workable vision, like even that, like a lot of people don't understand that. So even getting that, you know, into the, into the heads of the general public can be a real challenge. I think that the work that the Autism Awareness organizations have done has just been stellar.

Jody Yarborough 42:30

Yeah, I agree with you. And I would say similarly, you know, in that that dynamic also exists for ambulatory wheelchair users, and ambulatory wheelchair scooter users. So I use a scooter, because I can't walk long distances, but I can still walk. And many friends who use wheelchairs, who use wheelchairs, because their level of you know, function is either less than or greater. But, you know, seven, eight, and then so the thing is, when they're out and about, and they're using their wheelchair, and then they stand up some jerk, you know, will accuse them of faking or not needing it, or whatever it is. It's like, can't you just be nice? You don't know what this person is living, you don't know what they need? Well, it's none of your business, that's kind of what I'm going through in my head.

R Rob Mineault 43:24

It's very prevalent in say, the low vision community where somebody might be, they might need to use a mobility cane based on what time of day it is, like how light is or where they're going, or, you know, there's all kinds of these factors where they may or may not use their mobility cane or even choose to use their mobility cane. You know that's a legitimate choice that that, you know, that they should be able to make without being quote called out by, by people, you know, who just think that oh, well, they're, they're just faking, like, that's, that's, that's such an insulting piece of ableism. That just, it just sticks in my craw every time we talk about it.

J Jody Yarborough 44:07

Agreed.

R Rob Mineault 44:09

One article that I want to zoom in on off the blog is a recent article that I found really interesting, because I've never heard it talked about before. So I kind of wanted to ask you a little bit about it. It's this idea of addressing the environmental impact of of disability. Maybe set it up a little bit and talk a little bit about the article and then I'd be really fascinated to hear how this sort of got written.

J Jody Yarborough 44:38

Sure. Yeah, um, well, don't quiz me on it because I don't remember every word. I remember how the idea came up, and I remember how fun and interesting it was to research for it. And yeah, I think that um, environmentalism and environmental impact of you know, the disability community is something that I think about. There's kind of a two pronged situation going on. So there can be a lot of medical waste that disabled people contribute to. And not because obviously they want to, but because it's a byproduct. You need sterile products, you need safety, you need help, you know, good health practices, and the industries that create these products. I don't think, think with that in mind, I think that so there's a there's a situation going on where the industry is creating these products, have their own incentives and their own ideas for what, you know, environmentally sustainability is or recycling. And so you're limited by that somewhat, then you're just limited by chemistry. Like, many materials be broken down and reused, some can, some can't. But then, you know, as I always do break it down to the micro level, on an individual basis, like I use a power scooter. And I think about the batteries that my scooter uses. And I think about the batteries that my husband's wheelchair uses uses. And I think about you know, where do those go when we're done with them? And so there's impact there, right? But also, how does it when we use our mobility devices? Do we offset a carbon footprint from our car? How is the fact that we will most likely never be able to drive a true hybrid car or electric car? I mean, maybe, but we both drive conversion vans with ramps. And I don't know, if, you know, the makers of those cars are going to be very economically incentivized to start making them electric, maybe, maybe not. And then I think in that piece that included talking about the whole straw controversy, like, there being a lot of backlash for for or shame for disabled people using straws, because they're quote, unquote, you know, bad for the environment. But, you know, for many disabled people, you straw is a is a tool that they need to use to, to consume their, their food or beverage. And I don't feel that we should be shamed for having that need. I think it was just an unfortunate overcorrection and an indication where the disabled population was again, left out of the equation. And so I'm the person who, every time I go to a restaurant, I ask for a straw, even in places where it's not offered, and if they don't have any, I bring my own. So, you know, but then I try to offset that in other ways in my life. So I just think it's something that's not talked about enough. And that was really my main intention for at least putting together a little blog about it. And hopefully starting a conversation or getting people like you to you know, think about it.

R Rob Mineault 48:20

Yeah, no, totally. And, Steve my mind went to like a lot of assistive technology, right? Batteries, and a lot of those devices aren't necessarily made to be reused or or sustained.

S Steve Barclay 48:36

No, that's true. But you know that getting getting back to the straw thing, it really is no pun intended a straw man argument because it you know, of straws make up about 4% of, of trash, plastic trash by piece, but not by weight. Because they waste so little. So out of about 90 million tons of plastic waste that hit hit the waters, about 2000 tons of it are actually straws. And we've been convinced that we all need to give up straws to save the environment. But the largest contributor to that, that waste is fishing nets. And nobody's convincing the fishing industry to go away from fishing nets.

J Jody Yarborough 49:25

Exactly. Or parents from stopping using diapers. It was just an unfair consequence. And again, I think a sign of the overt ableism that exists in the world.

S Steve Barclay 49:39

Yes, indeed.

R Rob Mineault 49:42

Yeah, or Ford F 50s. I'm pretty sure pretty sure have more damaging impact on the planet than a straw.

S **Steve Barclay** 49:52

I'm pretty sure Jodie can drink straws from straws for the rest of her life without impacting anywhere close to a Ford F150.

R **Rob Mineault** 49:59

Exactly.

R **Ryan Fleury** 50:04

I think we need to develop a cartoon or some sort of animation with sticks and carrots and the disability community and the rest of the mainstream population, and just highlight some of the issues that we face, how we can dangle a carrot. And when there's no result, you bring out the stick.

L **Lis Malone** 50:24

We're gonna have a dangling carrot and a carrot stick in our cookbook. It'll be, you know, recipes and advocacy all rolled into one.

J **Jody Yarborough** 50:36

You know, I've been interested, if I might ask your thoughts, because I think Ryan, you're kind of hitting on it with your stick and carrot analogy that, you know, so often I hear people, you know, who become disabled, who weren't previously. And they basically say, in different words, but the same intention. Wow, I had no idea. And, you know, I just because I have such a positive view of disability, and positive view of self love. You know, I struggle with I don't necessarily want somebody to have to become disabled. But I'm also because I don't see anything bad about it. I turn him in, like, well, welcome to the community. Yeah, but yeah, I just so always surprises me so many years later, here I am. And like I said, 40 years old, then people were like, wow, I had no idea. And so like, once they, once they experienced that level of that, you know, whatever that brings to their life, then it's like, oh, okay, I'm just like, what was there no part of you that could have empathize with that prior to, I don't know,

R **Ryan Fleury** 51:55

I don't think they can. And, you know, I lost my sight when I was 23. And so I became a part of the disabled community. My only really exposure to the disability community was back in school, there was a special room for students with special needs, and you rarely saw them, they came in, they went to their room, and, you know, they did whatever they did in that special needs classroom. That was my exposure. And until I became part of the community, and now, you know, being in the assistive technology field for over 20 years during the podcast now for eight years talking to people from all walks of life, all various disabilities. You know, like, like you mentioned, the US is very litigious. And that that works for you guys. Here in

Canada, we have a Human Rights Commission, which is broken. And that's really our only recourse. So as much as we want to educate and advocate, and try to teach people, you know, that's what keeps bringing me back to the stick. We've tried the carrot, we've tried the carrot, we've tried the carrot, we've tried the carrot, I'm sick of the carrot, here's the stick, learn why you just get so frustrated all the time trying to make everything a teachable moment. Yes. It's just yeah, it just annoys me.

R **Rob Mineault** 53:19

Yeah, and it's, it's sort of part of a bigger, a bigger conversation to like, just why disability is such an incredibly uncomfortable topic for people to engage with. And we, you know, we've all sort of been in the assistive technology field for many years. And, you know, we always say, like, people don't even realize what kind of assistive technology is out there until the day they need it. And until then, they don't want to think about it. The disability community is one of the only communities the only minority communities out there that anybody can enter into, at any time in their life. And they probably will, the chances are, at some point, even if it's temporary, but you're gonna get to the point where you're welcome to the club.

L **Lis Malone** 54:09

Everyone starts their life in the disability community, right? And ends in the community and people don't realize, you know, and I was actually, with some friends and we, we got into the topic of we were talking about just dating in general. And one of the topics was if you date somebody who is older than you, then you have to think about, oh, well, that person is someone that I could have to take care of. And they you know, that if we did that period of time when they won't be as active will will be accelerated. And and listen, these are my these are my friends. And I think it's a very normal conversation and I'm not one who wants to take every moment to put advocacy of at the forefront and but then, of course I'm thinking, well, you know what, anytime in that period, you know, something can happen to you. And then yeah, and the roles can be reversed. But it's always the assumption that, okay, I'm gonna have to take care of this person. And I have to think about how horrible it will be. And no one ever thinks about, well, my gosh, well, I mean, yeah, something happens to me. And someone may have to, you know, assist me in a different, you know, whatever my needs might be at a later time. But it's very much a condition of it will happen to them and not to me.

R **Rob Mineault** 55:34

Yeah, for sure.

S **Steve Barclay** 55:35

Just to push it to the absurd. You know, in a lot of societies, we have mandatory military service. And I think what we need is we need some sort of device that we slap on the vertebrae, and just the signals, and everybody has to spend a couple of years is disabled, particularly if they work in city planning.

R

Rob Mineault 55:57

I'm writing this down. Interrupter ... but it's true. Like I'm sure if aliens landed tomorrow, and we talked this through to them, they'd look at us like we're crazy. Like, what do you mean? Okay, wait, so let me get this straight. So you, everybody can enter into this community and probably, well, why didn't you just build a universal designed society right from the get go? Because then nobody would have to worry. Like, it just makes complete sense. But no, we're stupid as a species.

S

Steve Barclay 56:29

It's interesting, too, that a lot of Native societies. I'm not sure if this was mentioned on the show previously, or where I picked this up, but apparently a lot of Native societies had no word for disability. So when they were engaged in conversations with you know, the, the the invaders or whoever happened to show up in their territory. They it was it was an area they didn't understand. They didn't understand the concept because it was just like, oh, no, that's Bill over there. You know. He's just Bill.

R

Rob Mineault 56:58

We need to spin off podcast called the Rantcast, I swear. We get all stirred up and fired up and I love it. It's good.

R

Ryan Fleury 57:06

Yeah, we should make a cartoon on Netflix.

R

Rob Mineault 57:08

Oh, yeah. I'm writing that down, too. That's another good idea. I mean, all the best ideas come at the end of the show. Jody we want to thank you so much for coming on but before we let you go though please tell people where they can find the blog.

J

Jody Yarborough 57:27

Yeah, thank you so much for having me again. This was a lot of fun. You guys are a great group. Really appreciate your work you're doing you can find all things love disabled live at WWW dot love disabled lifestyle calm. Interestingly, footnote, I had no problem securing that domain. And no one seems to be coming after it. So there's that which is the the branding. Yeah, and you there is a YouTube channel. And then I also have an Etsy shop where I sell some merch that helps to spread the word of positive disability identity. So all things can be found there. And I really appreciate your time.

Rob Mineault 58:04

Wonderful. Well, listen, please come back anytime. I feel like more hours more. Hey, thanks.

Jody Yarborough 58:11

Thanks, guys. Take care. So

Lis Malone 58:14

nice to meet you. Nice to meet you too.

Rob Mineault 58:17

Well, there you go. Advocates it gets me all fired up.

Steve Barclay 58:23

Don't get me going about straws.

Ryan Fleury 58:28

Paper straws that design your drink is a

Rob Mineault 58:32

hot topic for see.

Steve Barclay 58:34

Oh, wow. Okay, don't get me started on plastic shopping bags versus the the the papers I know the recyclable ones are worse for the environment than the plastic ones. Oh, actually,

Rob Mineault 58:45

I agree with Steve on this one. I'm actually a big fan. I have a closet full of those stupid things. And like I'm getting to the point where I'm just gonna start using them as plastic garbage bags, like filling them with kitty litter and throwing them out. Like it's it is ridiculous because you always forget them you never you always have to buy another one for like 25 cents and then you just end up throwing it out anyways and it goes right into the environment. It's just it makes no sense.

S Steve Barclay 59:14

They talk about like things like jute bags versus plastic bags and the environmental impact and how many times you actually have to use those jute bags in order to make up for the environmental damage that they cause in manufacturing. Any guesses? Any guesses?

L Lis Malone 59:35

What is it jute?

S Steve Barclay 59:37

It's a it's a it's a plant fiber

R Rob Mineault 59:42

Yeah, so it's yeah, I'm gonna I'm saying I like I knew

R Ryan Fleury 59:51

fiber from a fibers plant. Is the

L Lis Malone 59:56

fibers plant the jute

S Steve Barclay 59:57

plant? Yes, it is. Yes.

L Lis Malone 59:59

I know nothing of this plant.

S Steve Barclay 1:00:02

It's very it's some or horticulturist. It's going to take issue with this but it's sort of like a tall skinny bamboo. It's very, very fibrous. Oh.

Rob Mineault 1:00:16
You have surely you've heard of the country jute Lind

Steve Barclay 1:00:21
I have not heard of

Ryan Fleury 1:00:25
a way maybe that's where this animated cartoon is based. And it's right.

Lis Malone 1:00:30
I've heard Whoville yes just south of Whoville

Rob Mineault 1:00:42
southern neighbor in Whoville it's always Christmas it's always snowing. And they eat

Lis Malone 1:00:47
roast beast

Ryan Fleury 1:00:52
presents on the two tree

Steve Barclay 1:00:57
turning them around it's no 10,000 times it's 400 times with X Mizdow 400 times

Rob Mineault 1:01:05
that's a lot. Yeah. A lot of bags.

Steve Barclay 1:01:10
No sorry. That's That's how many times it can be used to hang on. Oh, hold

R **Rob Mineault** 1:01:13

on. Oh, it was to see Sorry. Shocking. So

S **Steve Barclay** 1:01:17

in order to have a lower carbon footprint than a plastic bag, you need to use a jute bag approximately 30 times I'm wrong I'm so round

R **Ryan Fleury** 1:01:27

30 dry from 10,000

S **Steve Barclay** 1:01:31

correctly corrected before the end of the episode. Unless somebody logged off before now which case are gonna run around my bullshit?

R **Ryan Fleury** 1:01:41

I'm just not a fan of the show.

S **Steve Barclay** 1:01:47

Steve goes full on disk

R **Rob Mineault** 1:01:55

Alright, that's enough of that. Let's get the hell out of here. Okay,

S **Steve Barclay** 1:01:59

sorry, but it is it is cotton bags is cotton bags. You have to use at least 7100 times to make it truly environmentally friendly. Oh, no

R **Rob Mineault** 1:02:06

way. Okay, so cotton.

S **Steve Barclay** 1:02:07

Cotton is worse. Hello? See, we

Rob Mineault 1:02:11
need more of these youths.

Lis Malone 1:02:12
Yeah, no. Jutes sorry.

Rob Mineault 1:02:15
No, well, we need more youths do we?

Lis Malone 1:02:18
Apparently Japan needs more more youths

Rob Mineault 1:02:21
are they? Are they aged out over there? Creating? Yeah,

Steve Barclay 1:02:25
it's the same in Canada. We need about 100,000 people a year to

Ryan Fleury 1:02:30
start having babies just just have you

Lis Malone 1:02:33
seen Canadian men understand slim pickins up here man.

Rob Mineault 1:02:45
Bumble is not an easy platform to deal with.

Lis Malone 1:02:48

Lis Malone 1:02:48

It's a very lonely place on Bumble Canada. Rob's like new buddy swiping on B

Rob Mineault 1:03:00

camera in my place. Exactly. After dinner every night of the week

Ryan Fleury 1:03:09

you're sitting on the couch stuffing your face with Cheetos watching TV

Rob Mineault 1:03:14

when your Cheetos but okay. They do read or equivalent hey, let's change the topic

Ryan Fleury 1:03:35

Hagey jute

Rob Mineault 1:03:38

the national anthem to jubaland

Ryan Fleury 1:03:46

International eye candy is

Lis Malone 1:03:49

no jujubes What did you say? Jujubes doo doo doo

Steve Barclay 1:03:59

tubes. tu tu tu tu

Rob Mineault 1:04:01

tu noobs walk into a bar

Lis Malone 1:04:09

everybody just the entire back end of the show.

Ryan Fleury 1:04:15

Oh my god. I love this show. This is the best comedy ever. We should ever show on am I

Rob Mineault 1:04:24

hard cut to the Canis tech commercial.

Ryan Fleury 1:04:30

You can find us online at@bento.com.

Lis Malone 1:04:33

And you're surprised why AMI is not banging down your door

Rob Mineault 1:04:40

where's our show?

Ryan Fleury 1:04:43

Returning my emails

Rob Mineault 1:04:49

all right on that note Hey, somebody hey, realists.

Lis Malone 1:04:53

Hey funyun where can people find it? Well if you would like to learn all About the jute plants and how unsustainable it is please pay us a visit at a tea banter.com

Rob Mineault 1:05:12

Right or send us some hate I mean email to cowbell he banter.com And if

Steve Barclay 1:05:23

you don't cotton to jute for 7100 times more you can find us on social media.

Rob Mineault 1:05:30

That's right. We're I guess mass on tech or via social media, isn't it? It is yeah, I suppose. Or whatever, whatever. Just go look us up. Just punch in at Badger and we'll find your bonus. Ah, all right. Well, I think we've done enough damage to the world for one week. Big thanks, of course to God for joining us and we will see everybody next week.

Steve Barclay 1:05:57

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