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SPEAKERS

Garrett Brown, Rob Mineault, Ryan Fleury, Steve Barclay, Rick Sherak, Lis Malone



Rob Mineault 00:12

Hey and welcome to another episode of AT Banter.



Ryan Fleury 00:17

Banter, banter.



Rob Mineault 00:20

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 Rob Mineault and joining me today the Ryan-est of Fleuries, Mr. Ryan Fleury



Ryan Fleury 00:41

Yo dog.




Rob Mineault 00:44


Hey, look who else it is. It's Miss Lis Malone.





Lis Malone 00:49


Yeah, I didn't have to wash my hair tonight, so I showed up.

 Ryan Fleury 00:54
That's good. Kind of you.


 Lis Malone 00:56
You're welcome.


 Rob Mineault 00:56
Yeah, it is kind of you. How, how are you doing?


 Lis Malone 01:00
I've been fine.

 Rob Mineault 01:03
Listen, don't start with that, because you're just, you're you're here to sabotage the snow, I swear.

 Ryan Fleury 01:09
Are you having pasta for dinner tonight Lis?

 Lis Malone 01:11
Yeah, some pasta, pasta and beans

 Rob Mineault 01:17
As you climb up on your roof. You've been doing the podcast for for how many years now? You should be used to our Canadian-isms.

 Lis Malone 01:32
I know surprise you, but it's still a little, you know, nails down a chalkboard ish kind of thing. Listen, I call it like it is.



R Rob Mineault 01:57
So well, listen, you should be happy then that this whole 51st state thing has fallen through, because then we'd be we'd be just up in your face and annoying the hell out of you every day.

L Lis Malone 02:09
You'd be eating pasta instead of pasta.

R Ryan Fleury 02:11
We will getting you learned on the English vocabulary.

R Rob Mineault 02:18
Anyways, enough of this, let's get started with the show, because I am very excited about today's show. So Hey, Ryan,

R Ryan Fleury 02:27
Hey Rob?

R Rob Mineault 02:29
Just what the heck are we doing today?

R Ryan Fleury 02:32
Today we are speaking with Hall of Fame inventor Garrett Brown and Rick Sherak, CEO of Exokinetics, about a product called Zeen, which sounds pretty spectacular. So gentlemen, thank you for being here today.

R Rick Sherak 02:48
Thank you Ryan, Lis, and Rob. And Lis, I just wanted to let you know I didn't have to wash my hair either. Right there with you. Don't let the glare affect you too much.

R Rob Mineault 03:05
Well, maybe we will get started by just, maybe just giving us a little bit of background on about yourselves before we start to dive in and talk about the Zeen in particular.

R

Rick Sherak 03:19

Okay, my background is much shorter than Garrett's background.

G

Garrett Brown 03:24

I'm older. Background takes time.

R

Rick Sherak 03:30

Well, you're exactly right, but back in the day, I started off as an Air Force officer, not a college and served my my country and got out as a Captain, and you know what a great master class and leadership and teamwork and mission that experience was. But you know, I decided to go into the medical diagnostic industry, so 25 short years later, I had the pleasure of watching the whole field of medical diagnostics, especially for cancer diagnostics, grow from a very, you know, small technological application to genomic profiling in that period of time. And it was great ride. But toward the end, I really started steering my Outlook more toward medical devices, and that's how I ended up at Exokinetics. I combined my medical domain experience with my engineering experience and commercialization of device experience so I could come on board this company and and promote the Zeen, and we'll talk about the Zeen, and I'm sure later, but I tell you, it's it's been a wonderful opportunity for these last 15 months that I've been here at the company to work with such wonderful people and have a mission of truly addressing mobility challenges that people have and giving. Them confidence and freedom and independence, again, with the mobility that they have left.

G

Garrett Brown 05:05

Well said, well said. Philly has been good to me. I moved here, as they say, in third grade, and was a normal kid, except that I was sick in bed for six months and read the World Book Encyclopedia, and became a wild reader at a young age. And that actually has he takes a sip of water, folks, that's what that was about. Certified water. He's holding it up to the camera. Yeah, it actually served me well, because I've invented a few things, and they all they can't be found in the World Book, but the technology, Newtonian physics, school boy physics, has served me very well. You know, I invented something called the SteadiCam, which is all over the world, that lets people run and walk and climb stairs with cameras, and it's smooth. That was because I had a little film company in Philly and had a huge dolly, and I was so motivated to ditch the dolly and disconnect the camera from the person. I'm going into detail here, because there are aspects of this that showed up in the Zeen much later, among other things, the SteadiCam lifts cameras up to 70 pounds, kind of hanging on an arm and a vest that you wear so that it's a fingertip operation to move them around in space. It does all the lifting. And if you can picture it, you have a stabilized camera anywhere you can reach and anywhere you can go with your legs, the mobility of a camera was key to that, and it got me an Oscar, and it got me in the inventing Hall of Fame and a slew of other golden objects. And it gave me a taste for the idea of inventing, which is at its simplest, identifying something that's missing, and going after it, you know. And that's something we all need to do, and we need to teach kids to do and think about, you know, because humanity at this stage needs to invent its way out of some pretty dire possibilities in the future, you know. But all those inventions, the camera ones, including

SteadyCam, are, I admitted, fluffy little objects that you know, don't change lives. They just are amusing and interesting and make movies more interesting. But a challenge came up in 2013 when I was watching my dad with his cohort of people on walkers and wheelchairs. And it occurred to me, walkers and wheelchairs hadn't changed for, you know, half a millennium, and they were not that impressive. People fall I watched guys falling off of walkers. They're demeaning. They're in the way. They hurt your shoulder muscles and so on. And wheelchairs are, in effect, a one way ticket to not walking. So here we are. I'm sitting watching my dad's pals and going, gosh, there has to be something better than this, something that helps with fall prevention, something that isn't in the way, something that does the lifting, like I did with cameras. But now for 250 pounds of humanity, you know, because these old fellows happen to be all old guys that I was watching, you know, they couldn't get out of a chair without heaving and hauling and doing the old one, forward two, forward three, and lurch to their feet in a painful looking thing. And I thought you could list the stuff that's missing. Could it all be one gadget? You know, one device. And that started what amounted to a 10 year project, we got it invented. It actually did all those things spectacularly, but yours truly was running the company as a kind of fake CEO, because I'm not a CEO, and we needed a real CEO. We needed an enlightened investor to carry us forward to profitability. And both of those commodities showed up about a year and a half ago, that famous 15 months that Rick just mentioned, and when they strolled into my life, then it became spectacular, because I could semi retire. Rick's a marvelous CEO and our patron, Steve Kelly, who's a very philanthropic and very wealthy gentleman, which is those two don't go together entire often, you know, often enough, you just don't hear the expression philanthropic and billionaire in the same sentence too often. They're a couple, and now there's another one, Steve Kelly, you know, so he saw what we were doing, and we have been changing lives with this thing. People that were at fall risk can tool around their environment very happily at speeds that exceed walking speed, coasting on the zine. They can stroll and walk and go up and down safely. They can duck down to tie their shoes or get some something in a low shelf. They can pop up high to reach a high shelf, and as Rick, very eloquently, tells us they are at a sociable altitude when they're up high on the zine, which has a saddle that sort of allows you to perch on it as you need, and a seat belt so you can't fall off when you're elevated to your standing height, you're at the height of humanity. You know, where we socialize, where we talk with our peers, and that is one of the things that people cherish beyond anything. So yours, yours truly, the fluffy inventor of Steadicam, is pretty happy with this one, I must say.

R

Rob Mineault 05:06

Can you kind of give the audience, sort of a bit of a snapshot and a brief overview of just how it works and what it can actually do above and beyond a regular wheelchair?

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Garrett Brown 08:04

Unlike traditional wheelchairs and walkers, the Zeen has a motor free technology that Garrett developed that lifts up to 75% of a person's body weight from a seated position to a standing position, and that is very novel and extremely unique, right for mobility devices in today's world, the neat thing is that you're fully supported through your hips and your buttocks, right? Because, like Garrett said, you're supported by this large bicycle type seat, and that enables you to safely walk upright, spine straight, with the option of not even holding on to anything. And that, again, is something completely foreign to other mobility devices available to the

market today. And the neat thing is, you know, when you're walking, you're you can use your hands, but when you need to rest, all you have to do is simply bend your knees and rest your weight on that large seat, right? And that's a big deal for people with mobility loss, because they're constantly you know, if they're on a walker, they're they're always looking for a park bench or somewhere to sit here with the Zeen. Your seat is with you at all times. And the neat thing, like, like Garrett alluded to, is that you can sit on a Zeen at standing height. And we call this the bar stool mode, right? You can sit at a high enough height where now your eyes are level with a person that's just about six foot tall, and that does so much for our customers, for their psychology, for their you know, for their their pride, their self worth. It brings them into the conversation. And what we what we say is that it enables them to interact with family and friends at eye level. So, you know, the Zeen really is focused on enhancing quality of life, but also giving people with mobility, loss, that dignity that they so deserve.

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Garrett Brown 09:12

There are a number of benefits to being upright as compared to being seated in a wheelchair, and they involve cardiac benefits, bone density, digestive health, a host of physiological benefits where stuff just works better if you're upright, and upright is upright. If you're upright on a zine, you get those benefits.

R

Rick Sherak 11:00

Absolutely.

R

Rob Mineault 11:00

So. Garrett, what was kind of the the light bulb moment, then for you,? What kind of technology Did you latch on to and what was kind of the light bulb moment to really, you know, push, push you forward?

G

Garrett Brown 11:00

Well, unfortunately for me, I've never been one of those, you know, eureka leap up out of the bath with the full idea in my head. I I'm good at detecting things that are missing, but it's, you know, it's a slug fest getting to getting it. Whatever it is to work, you have to just do the hard work of imagining every aspect of it. What's it feel like? You know? That was a years long process. In fact, we first made a unit that was heavy and large and did not fold, thinking that it might be an institutional object, that you would be in a rehab hospital and that you'd use it while you were there, or, if you were lucky, in a home, they might assign one to you, and you would have one in your space. And then it became clear to us that people wanted to take this thing, fold it and throw it in their trunk and go places. And that caused us to shut the whole process down, financially a disaster, because we had one that worked, but we were so convinced that the folding, lightweight version was the future that we shut it down, re engineered it for a year and a half, and then reintroduced it, and boy, was that the right choice, because people love to grab it. We have a gizmo that helps you get it in your trunk, a very simple lifting frame, a lifting kind of cloth thing, actually with straps that allows anybody to lift

it in a trunk with half the normal effort. And they want to, they want to go, they want to go to the Mall, they want to go to industrial shows or large department stores or or, you know, supermarkets. And the ability to be not just horizontally mobile, but vertically mobile is hugely important. We just picture yourself in a supermarket, tooling along, pushing your cart because there's nothing in front of you, and now you want something on the bottom shelf. Grab a lever. Drop down, grab it, pop back up. And I can't emphasize too much, guys that and and list that this kind of lifting is not like we've seen with lifting chairs for old people, which are motorized, and they go kind of with incredible slowness, getting you to your feet, and, In fact, turning into a ski slow. This lifts you like you were 30 years younger. This just, you know, you almost can't tell it's doing it. It's just your muscles are suddenly sufficient to get you to your feet at any speed you want. And that's a very humanist kind of lifting. And people love it.

R

Rick Sherak 17:22

They do. And, you know, that's, that's a very good point, Garrett, the lifting from seated to standing, you know, is just revolutionary and life giving, right? But the other thing, the key thing that I think the Zeen truly brings is, and you said it earlier, Garrett, is that it removes this horrible fear of falling that people with mobility law suffer from every day. You know, falling for anyone is, you know, extremely dangerous and could be catastrophic. But when you're compromised and and you fall and don't have the, you know, ability to to mitigate that fall, and you know, it could be just horrible. So, you know, the fear of falling is one of our key features that we're able to eliminate with the Zeen. And in fact, when we demonstrate the Zeen to people, I have this fantastic staff that does demonstrations every day. We have webinars daily and training sessions. They will simulate a fall with their hands above, you know, in the air, their feet off the ground, like somebody's ready to do a face plant, and the zine will hold you suspended in that position to enable you to regain your balance and regain your composure and prevent falling.

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Garrett Brown 18:56

They call it the young people call it the Superman position, which it makes me laugh.

R

Rick Sherak 19:00

Yeah, and it's not the most comfortable thing to do, but I tell you, it's a lot better than falling. So you know, we service so many different kind of wonderful, courageous people with the Zeen. You know people that are suffering from chronic illness. You know, people and chronic illness could be anything from MS to Parkinson's to Ataxia to Cerebral Palsy, or, you know, people that are recovering from injury, and many people recovering from strokes, are ideal candidates for the Zeen. And finally, just elderly people, like what inspired Garrett at the very beginning. You know, when your knees hurt and your hips hurt and your endurance goes down and you can't breathe that well because you get so tired, the Zeen is ideal for those people to, you know, regain their their freedom. And their ability to be independent and active, have that active lifestyle again.

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Garrett Brown 20:05

And you should, you should see somebody young or old faced with a long corridor to get from their room to the dining place, which you know, care homes seem to, mysteriously always do. They seem to delight in putting a half mile corridor between where you live and where you eat. And you watch the cohort going down that corridor on walkers, and you watch a Zeen owner going by at, you know, seven or eight miles an hour posting and the pure hatred of the people on walkers for the Zeen? No, no, I'm kidding. Pure admiration. I'm sure, I'm sure.

R

Ryan Fleury 20:45

I'm totally blind, and many of our audience are blind, partially sighted, not all, but, but many. So can you describe in in some more detail what the Zeen actually looks like? Is it because I'm I'm picturing a bike seat with a seat belt, but you're saying it goes up and down and it balances you.

G

Garrett Brown 21:05

Let me do that for you. Let's, let's build this out from a comfy seat that has a saddle component on front. Okay? And your mind, add a backrest that moves with that seat so you can always lean back from that backrest, add a pair of really clever, patented seat belts that extend enough to get you to the front of it, and then, if you're sitting on it, they retract, so the seat belt isn't clanging around, you know, the upper thighs, all right. So now that you have that in your mind, but that's floating in space a backrest and a saddle. It is actually elevated by a pair of arms on either side. Kind of subtle. We call them lifting arms, and each pair of them on left and right are driven by a small gas spring, the size, I would say of a pencil case, if that you know. Well, I and those arms are attached now to a frame, and the frame has a very elegant, almost Victorian shape to it, a kind of smooth curve from the front casters down a little bit past the rear casters, and then up and curving forward to turn into an armrest when you're seated. So when these arms are at their lowest position, these armrests are right there for your arms. At the front of the armrests, rising up and down with the seat, are a pair of handlebars that fold out. So when you're up high and rolling and strolling, you've got these four foldable handlebars out that have brakes in front of you. So the stuff that moves up and down is the saddle seat, the backrest and the handlebars. What stays put is the frame with the forecasters, which is the mount for the lifting arms. They are, if you're interested, a pair of parallelograms, one on each side, so that when they lift, what they lift stays upright. And it could not be simpler. You've got brakes that operate the rear brakes. There are casters. Are forecasters. And if you recall contemplating caster type devices, they're very hard to steer, because forecasters just go anywhere. And a crucial invention for the Zeen, invented by an early partner of ours, is a dual state caster, so that when you go forward, they track like a dream. But the minute you start to go backwards, the minute that the caster is halfway, you know, halfway around from front to rear, it changes its state. The axle change takes a different angle, and now it will very happily back up or go sideways and so on. And that is a subtle thing. That means that when you coast, you coast with wonderful straight backing, and when you back up or go sideways, you can go anywhere. It was important to us that you can maneuver in your kitchen with nothing in front of you still perfectly safe and cook. You can clean if you're in somebody forces you to with a vacuum cleaner or even a broom, right? You know you can. You can go down and load a dishwasher and all the humble things that we love to do in our in our dwellings. And you can go into an elevator and spin in your own position without moving. This thing does 360s in place because of the four casters. So there's, if you picture something with front casters, which most

walkers have, and wheelchairs and rear fixed wheels for you to turn. You have to. To either spin on those rear wheels in a wheelchair or in a walker, you have to back and fill and go forward and backward in order to make a turn, you know.

R

Rick Sherak 25:13

So one final thing that will paint the, you know, the final strokes of the picture is that the Zeen is fully adjustable. We can through some some adjustable blocks, we call them, that go up and down. The frame that Garrett had described have positions from one to 13 and a position one. We've had six year old children use the Zeen at position one and that that keeps the seat down, and it only allows it to rise just a tad, right, so that it's down low enough for a child. And then, as you increase the the positions up the frame, you're able to accommodate a person up to six foot, three inches tall. And those pistons that Garrett was mentioning that give you that ability to go vertically, mobile from seating to standing. We have three sets of those are lightweight users, down to 50 pounds standard user, and then all the way, just recently, and we'll be, you know, introducing this here, probably in the next 60 days, we'll be able to accommodate users up to 325 pounds with what we call heavy springs. And you know that adjustability of height and weight makes the Zeen so customizable to each and every user, and for children, they can literally grow with the device, which is one of the reasons the pediatric settings is so popular for our Zeen device.

G

Garrett Brown 27:03

And one more thing for your mental picture, each and each. The front of each armrest, there's a lever underneath the armrest that you can grab with your fingers while your hands are on the armrest, and that lever releases the pins that allow it to go up and down. So if you want to raise with the Zeen, you pull that lever and bounce a little bit because it won't let you go up if there's load on the pins that hold it in place. But if you, you know, get the unload those pins by either going down or up as required. Slightly the pin retracts, and you can go up as high as you want, any any place on the way up to your full height, and release that lever, and boom, it locks you in any height you want. So very often you would be happy at a half height doing some task, or, you know, working at a desk or or even coasting is fun slightly lower than your max height. So the zine only has two basic controls. One is brakes, and one is the seat height position. The adjustment that, that Rick was referring to is kind of a one time adjustment where you remove the stop momentarily and rise as high as you want, and then reset the max height. So that means you can go right up to it, you know, and go up and collide with it if you want. And that's your max height. Release the lever, and you're there. It's extremely intuitive and easy.

R

Ryan Fleury 28:42

And yet it takes a beautiful mind to come up with a creation like that.

G

Garrett Brown 28:47

You know, you're too You're too kind. It took a lot of minds, and more time than you would care to, uh, imagine when you start a project. They're never they're never easy. You know, they're always harder. I started at age 71 I'm 83 and the Zeen is coming into its own, you know. Too

always harder. I started at age 71 in 03 and the Zeen is coming into its own, you know. Too late for my satisfaction, but, well, it sounds incredible time long about age 81 two that I thought, Oh, my God, what have we started?

R

Rob Mineault 29:19

Well, you know, and it's funny, you know, we we've all been in the assistive technology field for for quite a while, and innovation can be very slow in this field for for multiple reasons, I won't bore the audience with but this is, you know, the amazing thing about this is that, you know, nobody, no person's mobility challenges are the same, like everybody had different range of mobility or different that's why we hear stories all the time about, you know, people confronting people that are, that are, you know, standing, loading their wheelchair into their car, you know, accusing them of faking it where it's we and not understanding that. well, maybe they don't need the chair 24/7, they have some mobility. You know, It's a gradient. You know, we keep saying that on the podcast all the time, disability is a gradient. And nobody's nobody's challenges are the same. And so the great thing about this device is that it's really going to be a good fit for anybody, no matter what their what their particular challenges are.

G

Garrett Brown 30:23

And I say also that anti sociability and stupidity are also a gradient. Very stupid and very anti social people to remarkably kind and wonderful people. So, you know, you can't guarantee not being called out by a moron. You know, no matter what you do.

R

Rick Sherak 30:41

To your point, Rob, you know, the way that my team, and I'm so proud of my team, I couldn't be. They are truly the best team I've worked with in my long career. They are the most compassionate, kind, patient people you'll ever meet. And I have people on my team that are 24 years old, up to 60 plus, right? And every interaction we have with a new person, just like you said, we have to meet them where they are. They have to understand what they can do, what they can't do. We have to understand their goals. You know, what do they want to do? What are they afraid to do? And you know, each and every opportunity to interface with these, and I always say courageous, because they are some of the most courageous people I've ever met that are facing these mobility challenges with with courage and bravery, right? But I tell you, the number one quality of a person that will make a zine successful is determination. It's not a silver bullet, right? You can't just hop on a Zeen all of a sudden, everything is just perfect. But I'll tell you a quick story, and it's just amazing. Young lady. Her name was Kim, and she came in she has a debilitating chronic illness called Ataxia, where the body thinks that the cerebellum is a foreign object and it attacks it. And your cerebellum is, is what makes everything coordinated and balance and strength, etc. And she got in the zine, and we got her in, and we said, okay, Kim, walk right. She went from seating to standing with the levers, and she just stood there. She looked at her legs, and she said, move. And her legs barely moved. I mean, just barely. And she she couldn't even get a full foot forward. And she was so frustrated. And we said, wow, you know, I'm sorry this isn't working out for you. And she looked at me, or not me, she looked at one of my colleagues and said, This is exactly what I need. She goes, I'm going to practice and I'm going to walk again. And son of a gun, she bought the Zeen, she took it home, and every day she got in that Zeen and just stared at those legs and just said, walk.

And, long story short, six months later, we get videos of her on trips with her husband, walking in her Zeen, right? Her husband sends us a video saying, Hey, I just dropped Kim off at the high school track, and she's doing her laps. I'm going to go over here and check, you know, walk around the park a little bit. I don't have to worry about her. She's exercising, and she doesn't she can't fall, so I don't have to worry about her falling. But that transformation of someone that could barely motivate her body now with the Zeen and her determination and just just fight attitude, completely changed her life around.

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Garrett Brown 34:14

If you if you want to see everything, including some amazing videos and some what we call eye level chats with users don't miss going to GoZeen.com. There's some great stuff on it, including a video of the history of how it came about, which has some comical elements and is actually some inspiring stories there, and also any details, in case you're more interested.

R

Rick Sherak 34:46

Yeah it's an interesting business, you know, trying to help people with with mobility challenges. And the in the story of the Zeen is wonderful. The the company is designed to help people see if the Zeen is a good fit for them, and to work with them and to be with them and and and coach them with this technology. But you know, beyond that, this is, you know, truly, it's a calling for a lot of us, right? We're trying to see if we can make a difference and help people get back to an active lifestyle that, in many cases think that they'll never have an active lifestyle again. Yeah. So, yeah, yeah. Please check out the website. As I mentioned earlier, we have daily webinars where you just dial in and you can watch one of my team demoing, showing you the Zeen, showing you the functionality, taking questions. And if you have any questions or whatever, just please call us. I have the greatest staff, as I mentioned, and they're just fun people to talk to, and they're there for you.

R

Rob Mineault 36:00

So are you guys sort of collaborating with with different like, say, healthcare providers or rehabilitation centers, or try to sort of get the Zeen in front of people? Because I would think that that that, you know, marketing wise, and, you know, with the medical model of disability, what it is, you know, a lot of doctors will just be like, yeah, you're, you're, you're, you're in a chair, and that's it.

R

Rick Sherak 36:25

So, so our market segments are interesting. The biggest market segment is 70% of our business, and that's people calling in, right? That see the Zeen on social media or hear about it and saying, hey, I want this for me, right? That's our direct to consumer segment. But to your point, we just started, and it was only in September of last year I put together a a embryonic Field Sales Team, right? And we are going out there. We're calling on rehab hospitals, large medical institutions, right that? And again, we're not we're not cold calling any of these people. These institutions are seeing the zine and they're calling us, going, you've got to come out and

talk to our staff, mostly physical therapists or occupational therapists. We're at a neurology convention in Atlanta this week because, you know, the Emory neurologists are just so amazed with with the Zeen and what it can do for reestablishing the neural pathways from brain to legs. We visit almost on a weekly basis. The the sales team goes into VA hospitals throughout the country, primarily some of these poly trauma centers in the VA network that really focus on people with with mobility, disabilities and and like I mentioned earlier, we're often invited into children's hospitals because the Zeen is such a novel way for children to weight bear on their legs, safely, not fall and actually grow with this device and not have to buy a new device every six months or so. So it's kind of fun, you know, we have all these segments, and I haven't even talked about our, you know, elderly segment, where we also go to many of these senior communities and try to, you know, show people the Zeens and, you know, a lot of the the seniors out there are looking for something that they they can exercise with. You know, they may not have complete mobility loss, but they they have endurance issues, right? So one device really fits a lot of different opportunitites.

L

Lis Malone 38:55

I'm just curious, what kind of response have you been getting from the insurance carriers, because there, obviously, there are so many benefits to this. It completely blows the wheelchair away on so many levels. And then I could definitely see this being something that, when you demo it to those who could really benefit from from this type of new adaptive equipment just being completely blown away. And then, you know, you always are faced with the age old question, will insurance help me pay for this? No. And then, of course, you know, insurance carriers are looking at the price of a wheelchair versus the price of, you know, this technology, which, of course, it's you, I mean, I mean, it's, it's shit. I'll just say it's really shitty that we have to put such a price on quality of life. But it is sort of like a reality in the United States. So I'm just kind of curious what sort of feedback you've been getting in terms of acceptance? Is, is it gradually coming? Is it kind of a case by case? People are having to fight these battles?

R

Rick Sherak 39:04

Yeah, well, everything you said is true, actually. Lis, you know, we're, we're preparing to approach CMS, which manages Medicare and Medicaid, right? We've, we've hired several consultant firms that are advising us. And bottom line, we got to prove the Zeens benefit in clinical studies. So we have clinical data to go to the government with to say, hey, you know, this is clinical supportive data, that the Zeen is good for you, you know, good for your weight bearing, good for your mobility, good for your quality of life, good for your digestive system, cardiovascular whatever you know, whatever the study end points are. But those studies take so much time. Luckily, we have some partners out there that are in the early stages of getting the studies off the ground, which is wonderful, but in the meantime, it's like what you said. It's, you know, people saying, hey, I need this. I'm going to buy it, and then I'm going to go after my insurance company to see if they'll reimburse me. We have some of our clients that that just, you know, hammer their insurance companies until, you know, they get authorization or get partial payment for the Zeen. But the Zeen is, is a premium price device. And you know, wheelchairs range from \$620 to \$25,000 the Zeen is right around the \$5,000 mark. So it's not the most expensive by far mobility device out there, but it is so multi functional that for \$5,000

your value is immense. You know, getting the world's best transport chair. You know, a sit to stander, a stander, a walker, fall prevention device, all in one really adds to that value of that \$5,000.

R

Rob Mineault 42:11

Well, and especially when the device can grow with you, right? So for, for a kid, it's a no brainer.

R

Rick Sherak 42:18

Yeah. So for, you know, because we realize that our potential customer base out there, a lot of them, you know, are on disability subsidies, our Medicaid, you know, recipients and and, you know, a \$5,000 devices is a lot of money and a challenge for them financially. So mid last year, right after I joined, we created a Foundation, and it's called Project Elevate Mobility. And the Foundation is designed to not just, you know, raise money and give Zeens to people. It's actually designed to meet people halfway. So it's \$1 match program. So for every dollar they put into their Zeen, the foundation, you know, matches that dollar. So what it does is it gives them an opportunity to, you know, take ownership of the of their purchase of the Zeen, and, you know, with dignity, you know, earn or save or crowd fund. You know, they're half the cost, and then the foundation, through donated funds, will cover the other half. And it's been amazingly successful. We have a waiting list now. We need more donors. We need more generous people and corporations out there to help us. But I tell you, it's, it's just phenomenal when people have skin in the game to get a revolutionary mobility device for their life enhancement, they're so proud of themselves and and as I said, that dignity component is is just wonderful. And, yeah, so we would love to to have some more generous donations, you know, to to help, you know, with these grants, it's just such an important project.

R

Rick Sherak 42:21

Yeah, and that funding, and those grants, they are really life changing for people. And I mean, this device, you know, is, you know, I'd be marketing speak throws around the term revolutionary a lot, but any I would challenge anybody in the audience to just to go check out the website. Go watch the videos, and it will blow your mind. This is really an amazing device, and you're really pushing the or whatever, driving the football forward in terms of some real innovation in that, in that mobility space. So you. Thank you guys for all of the work that you guys are doing, and for really, you know, getting this device out there into the world.

R

Rick Sherak 45:09

You're welcome. Thank you guys and listen. Hats off to you, all three of you. This is a wonderful outlet, you know. Congratulations on on having this type of podcast. I think it's very important you're you're doing good work, you're making humankind better by what you do. And this gives us an opportunity to hopefully reach out and find people that might be interested in in our zine device. So thank you very, very, very much for inviting us and for hosting us tonight.

R

Rob Mineault 45:42

Absolutely and before we let you go, please plug the the for the Foundation and the website again for people, just so they can go check it out.

R

Rick Sherak 45:53

So the website is gozeen.com and our foundation is project elevate mobility.

R

Rob Mineault 46:05

Oh, wait, one more question before I let you go. I can't I forgot about this. Can you explain the origin of the name for us real quick?

G

Garrett Brown 46:21

Yes, happily, Barrett. The idea of being on a saddle and being able to coast with your feet on the ground was actually pioneered by Baron von Dries in 1816, he invented the the Drazine was what he called it, self referentialing. It was called The, what did the Brits call it, the hobby horse? But the young bucks loved this thing because they could run and coast over the countryside. We had steering, and it had a saddle, and they had races with, we suspect, old beat up horses that the Drazine folks won. But in homage to Baron von Dries, the Zine part ended up as the Zeen. And you know, that's, that's where it began from, based on the Drazine, where the zine, where the coasting, emulating getting around part. It's a pretty thin connection, I admit, but it's all we got. Love it. We wanted a word that didn't mean anything else in any other language, yeah, because my ancestors and my dad and my uncles got in trouble, you know, with various names that suddenly meant something else.

R

Rick Sherak 47:35

So as far as the colors, Ryan, we're happy to say the Zeen comes in three colors, black, black and black.

R

Ryan Fleury 48:26

What about cup holders? Can I get cup holders?

R


Rick Sherak 48:29


We do we have, we have a whole series accessories.


R


Rvan Fleury 48:33


 Ryan Fleury 48:33
nice.


 Lis Malone 48:34
I want a little, like, a little horn.


 Rick Sherak 48:41
You know what? Lis, if you want a horn, we'll make one for you.


 Lis Malone 48:46
I need a horn in headlights because, I'm a very dangerous driver.

 Garrett Brown 48:54
Well, you know, we've actually observed people that in the euphoria of the Zeen are taking off, and they feel like objects in a pinball machine for a while, and they don't care you're pretty much invulnerable in the compression stuff.


 Rick Sherak 49:07
And we are seriously thinking about having a, you know, a signature color every year, like a limited number, I don't know how many, but just, just something, you know, like 2025 could be the the orange zine year, or something along those lines. So, always, always willing to take, uh, advice from from you guys, if you have some.


 Ryan Fleury 49:36
We're just a bunch of blind people.


 Garrett Brown 49:38
We got some great color advice from you guys.


 Lis Malone 49:45
They obviously have not listened to our show because we are like the Idea Factory.


 Ryan Fleury 49:51

 Ryan Fleury 49:51
That's true, especially when it comes to food, especially food.

 Garrett Brown 49:58
You said the key word. I'm going to it now.


 Rick Sherak 50:04
That's awesome. Well, again, real pleasure. You guys do great work and again. Thank you very much.


 Rob Mineault 50:10
Thank you, and please feel free to come on again anytime. If you know anything we can help with, we're happy to have you.

 Rick Sherak 50:18
Okay, wonderful. Maybe when we have an update or a new color or something like that.

 Lis Malone 50:22
Absolutely, I think one of us needs to buy a Zeen so we can, like, you know, get some cool video.

 Ryan Fleury 50:30
And I think we all need to buy one so we can have races.

 Lis Malone 50:33
I know!

 Rick Sherak 50:34
Let me tell you again, just as just probably uh TMI, but every one of the people in the company has a Zeen, has their own Zeen, and we use them as office chairs. They are the world's best office chairs because you can sit high. You have those desks that raise and all of us are sitting just, you know, about six and a half feet tall, working at our desks. Really fun. And then we have spontaneous races.

G Garrett Brown 51:05
Thank you guys.

R Rob Mineault 51:06
Thank you so much. Have a great evening, and we'll talk again. So cool. I'd love to see one of these things. It sounds pretty incredible. It's, and you they did a great job in in describing it much better than, than I certainly could.

L Lis Malone 51:29
Very futuristic.

R Rob Mineault 51:30
You know, honestly, in a perfect world, we would just be like, oh, oh, this replaces a wheelchair. Why have wheelchairs like this is just better in every single sense. Just stop making wheelchairs, like, because this works for anybody. I mean, pretty much it's just going to be better all around.

R Ryan Fleury 51:52
And \$5000 so that's really not bad. Like, if you look at blindness products, we have \$8,000 note takers. It's really, at the end of the day, a drop in the bucket when it comes to something that gives you the independence. It sounds like this thing will do on the scale of adaptive.

R Rob Mineault 52:09
Yeah. I mean, I don't know what, what a power wheelchair goes for, but ..

R Ryan Fleury 52:17
For the power wheelchair, you get batteries you got to charge, or, you know, there's a whole other, whole bunch of other issues that come with that, right? Sure, this has no motorized parts,

R Rob Mineault 52:31
And, I mean, you know, power wheelchairs. I mean, for some people, there probably are, like, that's, that's a needed technology. They need the power wheelchair part of it.

- R** Ryan Fleury 52:44
This isn't an end all be all. It's not like they said. It's not a silver bullet for everybody, right? All the chairs are necessary.
- R** Rob Mineault 52:56
Well. Lis, you better get your color request in.
- L** Lis Malone 53:00
I know. I'm I'm going to need, of course, you know me. I'm high maintenance. I need mine retrofitted.
- R** Ryan Fleury 53:07
You're gonna get yours the same color as the New Jersey Devils.
- R** Rob Mineault 53:11
I know, maybe get their logo on it. You can be making a branded New Jersey Devil Zeen.
- L** Lis Malone 53:21
And I'm good with just putting my own decals on it.
- R** Ryan Fleury 53:25
All these sports arenas, they should all have one or two of these so that people can borrow them.
- L** Lis Malone 53:30
Yeah, oh, they need to have them in every supermarket. Scary things that that, you know, these, these, these folks drive around in and it's just feels very dangerous.
- R** Rob Mineault 53:45
It's an incredible device, you know. Again, I would really recommend anybody, everybody, go check it out. Check out the the website, of course, which will be in the show notes, and, yeah,

go check out these videos. Because it's, it's, it's pretty remarkable.



Ryan Fleury 54:00

All right, so let's wrap up with our hockey update, and then I'm going for dinner. Okay, sounds good?



Lis Malone 54:08

Rob, yes, you have officially won.



Rob Mineault 54:11

What?



Lis Malone 54:12

Yes, no, yeah, really. So what happened?



Lis Malone 54:16

Okay, because Edmonton made it into the finals. That pretty much just pushed you over the top.



Ryan Fleury 54:25

You basically knocked Steve out.



Lis Malone 54:27

So yeah, you you ended up with with nine points. Now you could end up with another eight points. If the Oilers win, okay, so the only one you have not officially beaten is Artie. Artie, Artie, our artificial intelligence. Artie is at 16 points, but he already completely fell apart in the end. But it was amazing how Artie got all the other picks right. Now, if the Oilers win, you will have beaten Artie by one point.



Ryan Fleury 55:36

So have the final started now?





Lis Malone 55:39

Today, this Thursday, today, the day we're recording game one, right now.



Rob Mineault 55:46

Yeah, yeah. Hey, there you go. Like I said, all thanks to a thrift store sweater. Yeah, there you go. So it's Edmonton, and the Panthers are in the finals.



Lis Malone 55:57

Yeah, correct.



Rob Mineault 55:58

Okay. Well, there you go. Well go Edmonton! Go sports!



Rob Mineault 56:02

Who are you hoping for this series the Panthers?



Ryan Fleury 56:05

Well, yeah, it's her second favorite team.



Rob Mineault 56:08

Yeah. Okay, okay. Well, there you go.



Lis Malone 56:10

Don't you listen to AT Banter Rob??




Rob Mineault 56:19


Lord, okay. Let's get out of here. Let's go.





Lis Malone 56:22


I hear your darn stomachs.


 **Ryan Fleury** 56:24
it's been in there for last half an hour.

 **Lis Malone** 56:26
You need some pasta, pasta, right?


 **Ryan Fleury** 56:29
Some pasta with some tomatoes. Tomatoes, potatoes, potatoes.


 **Rob Mineault** 56:34
Hey, hey, Lis?


 **Lis Malone** 56:37
Hey, Rob?

 **Rob Mineault** 56:38
Where can people find us?


 **Rob Mineault** 56:51
Website, right. www.atbanter.com


 **Rob Mineault** 57:47
Hey, they can also drop us an email if they so desire at cowbell@atbanter.com I don't know if I like this new style that you have now with the cowbell. It sounds like a dinner bell.


 **Ryan Fleury** 58:04
I'm in control of the cowbell, sir.


 **Rob Mineault** 58:08
I know. Listen, you're, you're the musician, you're the you're you're the you're the conductor

when it comes to the cowbell.


 **Ryan Fleury 58:14**
So I'll change it up for you next week.

 **Rob Mineault 58:16**
Okay, where else can they find us? Somebody?

 **Ryan Fleury 58:20**
Facebook, Instagram, Mastodon,

 **Rob Mineault 58:25**
Great, excellent.

 **Rob Mineault 58:26**
Well, I think that's gonna do it for us this week. Big Thanks, of course, to Garrett and Rick for joining us, and we will see everybody next week.

 **Steve Barclay 58:41**
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