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SPEAKERS

Ryan Fleury, Albert Ruel, Speaker 1, Steve Barclay, Clement Chou, Russell Leung, Betty Nobel, Rob Mineault



Rob Mineault 00:17

Hey and welcome to a another episode of AT Banter.



Albert Ruel 00:23

Banter Banter



Rob Mineault 00:24

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, it's Mr. Fabulous himself, the golden cowbell player, Mr. Ryan Fleury.



Ryan Fleury 00:45

Hi

R Rob Mineault 00:47
That was a dramatic pause. You had to decide whether you're gonna grace us with your presence?

R Ryan Fleury 00:55
You stunned me with golden cowbell player.

R Rob Mineault 00:58
So I'm assuming that it's gold. I assume that your house is looks like a Trump Hotel, and it's everything's gold, including the cowbell, everything. How you doing?

R Ryan Fleury 01:12
I'm great. Thanks.

R Rob Mineault 01:14
How are you on this craptastic April day?

R Ryan Fleury 01:17
Well, you know, it's not summer yet, so we're bound to get rain,

R Rob Mineault 01:22
Yeah, but we got cold and rain.

R Ryan Fleury 01:26
Last week they were talking about having snow this week.

R

Rob Mineault 01:29

Yeah? Well, that was just silly. If we got snow, I would have been out of rage quit, as the kids say.

B

Betty Nobel 01:37

Be glad you don't live in Alberta.

R

Rob Mineault 01:41

Yeah, that's right. Well, the thing with Alberta, you know, they'll deal snow one day, and then it'll be plus 18 the next, they have those weird Chinooks. Well, yeah, what's, what's new and exciting Mr. Ryan?

R

Ryan Fleury 01:57

New and exciting? Yeah, there's not a whole lot new and exciting. Can Ass Tech is getting a new Notetaker coming in probably next week. So that's kind of exciting.

R

Rob Mineault 02:07

Which one? Tell me about it.

R

Ryan Fleury 02:09

Brailnote evolve from Humanware.

B

Betty Nobel 02:11

Oh, I want to see it.

R

Ryan Fleury 02:12

Yeah, we should have it in about a week. I think Steve had mentioned it's enroute.

R Rob Mineault 02:17
Yeah, that is exciting.

B Betty Nobel 02:19
Hey, I got some exciting news. Can I share some exciting news?

R Rob Mineault 02:22
Yeah, please do.

B Betty Nobel 02:24
It's Betty and I'm going to be a great grandmother in September.

A Albert Ruel 02:28
You're already pretty great.

C Clement Chou 02:36
Even great, even greater than she already is.

A Albert Ruel 02:39
Congratulations.

B Betty Nobel 02:41
Thank you.

R Rob Mineault 02:43
See, Ryan, this is what happens when we have the when we have this gang here, they just all the, all the normal rules of the podcast just get thrown out.

C Clement Chou 02:53
The last time I heard this was an AT Banter podcast,

R Rob Mineault 03:00
and?

C Clement Chou 03:00
I'm pretty sure what we're doing is bantering. So I think, I think we're well within the rules.

R Rob Mineault 03:04
We're not complaining. I'm sure the audience is just like, Oh, my God, thank God. They're they're breaking the format that they've been same thing for 10 years.

R Ryan Fleury 03:11
Can you believe it's 10 years next month?

B Betty Nobel 03:14
No, I can't.

R Ryan Fleury 03:17
May 2016 is when we started this show.

R Rob Mineault 03:19
Yeah, that's right. Yeah, we should. We gotta, we gotta talk.

B Betty Nobel 03:22
You're gonna have to do something to celebrate that.

R Rob Mineault 03:28
Well, we'll talk off mic but anyways, okay, well, since everybody's broken in, anyways, we better get to introduce everybody, just so the audience isn't completely confused. So Ryan, would you do the honors, please?

R Ryan Fleury 03:40
Sure. So joining us again for this generations Part Two episode, as I'm calling it, we have Mr. Clement Chou, welcome Clement.

C Clement Chou 03:49
Hey.

R Ryan Fleury 03:50
We have Mr. Albert Ruel. Welcome Albert.

A Albert Ruel 03:53
Bonjour.

R Ryan Fleury 03:55
And in the upper decks, we have Miss Betty. Noble. Welcome Betty.

B Betty Nobel 03:59
Hello there.

R Ryan Fleury 04:00
And coming in on left wing, we have Russell Leung. Welcome Russell.

R Russell Leung 04:05
Hi, I'm back.

R Rob Mineault 04:07
yeah, it's good to have you all. And thank you, right? That was, those are some real mixed metaphors I was trying to keep track of. I was one was baseball, I think.

C Clement Chou 04:21
There was a hockey

R Rob Mineault 04:24
I like it. I liked it.

R Ryan Fleury 04:25
Mixing it up a little.

R Rob Mineault 04:27
A smattering of stuff. Yeah. Well, listen so Ryan's kind of already talked a little bit about what we're doing, just as of course, the generations Part Two - part one, which may people may not be familiar with, and if you're not, I'd highly recommend, actually, to go back and listen to it. It's and I don't recall what episode it was, hold on. I better look that up.

R

Ryan Fleury 04:54

They can go to www.atbanter.com.

R

Rob Mineault 04:55

You can go to atbanter.com and look it up. It was a few months back. We, we actually brought this gang together. We've got a couple of younger folks and a couple of older folks, and we just wanted to explore a little bit about the the generation gap in the blindness community, and talk a little bit about that. And you know that last, that last episode we we mainly talked about, we just explored the gap and what the what the gap was, where the gap was. Today, we wanted to do something a little different, and we wanted to dig a little bit deeper into that conversation. So what we did is we asked each of them to come up with some questions for the other generation, and we're just going to sort of let that open up a discussion and see if we can just kind of explore and dig a little bit deeper. So this is really sort of a companion piece to that part, that first part, before we before we get started, let's just re familiarize the audience with each of you. So maybe, if we can, just, if you could, each of you, could just introduce yourself, maybe a brief little bit about your vision and whether or not you're the older or the younger generation. I'm not gonna make anybody say their age. So actually, Clement, you were last in let's put you first up, first up to bat, as Ryan would say, why don't you go first?

C

Clement Chou 06:32

Okay, so I'm Clement. I'm from Vancouver, and I am a millennial who has Nori's disease and is totally blind.

A

Albert Ruel 06:40

I am from an island in the Pacific, otherwise known as Vancouver Island. I'm totally blind, and I've just turned 70, so I have no idea what generation I'm in. It just just slightly younger than dirt, I guess is what it is. And and I'm totally blind, but I'm one of those guys who grew up sighted and then lost my sight slowly through my 20s and into my early 30s. So, you know, all of these things make a heck of a difference in how we sort of make our way through life.

B

Betty Nobel 07:09

Well, I don't know if Albert is older than dirt. I'm not quite sure what that makes me. I am, somewhat older than Albert. He's much younger than I am. Anyway, I am a retired teacher of the visually impaired. I'm totally blind. I love technology, and I think having these discussions is really interesting and a lot of fun. So I'm so glad that I got invited to be here.

R

Rob Mineault 07:46

Excellent. And our pitch hitter, Russell.

S

Speaker 1 07:54

Hi, I'm Russell. I am what you call the youngest Gen Z, actually, technically, Gen Alpha is the youngest Gen now. So I guess I'm technically the second youngest generation. So Gen Z, I guess.

R

Rob Mineault 08:08

Okay, so to get started, and I thought one of Russell's questions, I thought, would we would be perfect to sort of lead the discussion on. So, Russ, can we just get you to ask one of your questions?

R

Russell Leung 08:26

Let's see, what would you say is your generation's greatest strength? And why do you think this is so?

B

Betty Nobel 08:32

Okay? Well, I was thinking about this, and it's really interesting. And I think our greatest strength is that we've been through so much change, and we've had to figure out how to keep up with it all, you know, like maybe some of you younger people don't even remember or know about having, you know, phones with dials on them, or battery powered radios. And, you know, things have just changed so incredibly much over the time that I've been on earth. You know, when I was little in Vancouver, we used to have street cars, and then we had trolley busses. But when you put them, people put the money in the trolley busses, they made all sorts of different noises depending on what coin it was. And you know, now you use a Compass Card. So I think how we've had to deal with change and respond to change, I think, is and keep up with it. It's really hard to keep up with it, and so I, I think that's one of our biggest strengths.

A

Albert Ruel 09:35

For me, what I look back on in the experiences I've had, it's, I think it's resilience and the determination to make the solution happen like I was raised by parents who got married in the Dirty 30s. So they got married during the Depression. They homesteaded, they grew their own food and. And so they raised us to, well, if you want it, just go out the shed and build it. So if we wanted a toy, we it'd be a piece of two by four and a sardine can nailed on the back and a block of wood up front to make it look like a cab. And you go play in the sandbox or in the sand pile. There was no box. You know, we grew our own food. It was, there was a sense of, don't give up. There's a way to do it. We were a large family, so there was always a way to go and find the support. So I think it's that whole sort of resilience, don't give up, don't wait for somebody to come rescue. You get her done and get it figured out. Maybe that's one of our strengths. I think,

C

Clement Chou 10:49

I think as a millennial, we have just, objectively speaking, I think we're a good middle of the road generation, especially for younger millennials like myself, I think we have kind of a balance of practicality that maybe we got from our parents or, you know, growing up, just just enough to remember some of the more solution oriented kind of things that we had to do. But then we also transitioned from there right into the internet and tech and smartphones. So I think, and I think we have, I think a lot of us grew up as kind of in time with close enough to Gen Z, that we could see some of the changes happening, experience some of the changes ourselves, and really kind of be able to relate. And so I think we can speak to both a little bit more, perhaps than than other generations can.

B

Betty Nobel 11:58

The other thing I thought about was about safety and how that has changed over the years. Because I can remember when we were growing up, we would go off to the park and, you know, we'd maybe leave the house that in the summer, especially when it was, you know, great weather and stuff, and they had a wading pool and whatnot, we would leave the house around, I don't know, nine in the morning, and we wouldn't come home until, you know, dinner time, or if we, you know, got super hungry, we'd come home at lunch. And so that feeling of safety that I don't think people have now, and I wonder if that influences why people, maybe don't, you know, get out and about, because the world seems to have changed so much.

R

Russell Leung 12:46

I mean, people have become more cynical over the years too, especially since the advent of internet. You can see all these videos and all these articles talking about, oh, this thing happened to this person. So it is contributed to this sort of feeling of things not being very safe anymore. In a way, it's kind of true, but at the same time, it definitely makes it so that people are reluctant to stay out for longer periods or wait, are afraid of going out for a long time. So definitely, it's become a factor, I would say, I guess, in terms of, in terms of Gen Z, we are, I guess, I guess we're at the quote, unquote, forefront of technology, right? We are the generation that grew up with the Internet. We all know all the we, all we, all need. We, we essentially, I think, I think from early childhood, we were exposed to internet, and we also are kind of in that, that that that era of change. So we're right in it with the change. So we don't have to adapt, essentially because, it's because, you know, as soon as you, as soon as you not, essentially not like maybe some younger Gen Z people who basically grew up like as soon as they can use the internet, as soon as they can walk, basically, but you learn how to use the internet for a very young age. You learn how to use technology for a very young age. So just as a consequence of that, you're a lot more exposed to it and you you're kind of more you can you can learn how to use it very quickly. And you tend to learn to pick up technology very quickly.

A

Albert Ruel 14:51

And I think too some of the programming around, I think, Russell, you were saying about, you know, the news feeds, and it's all this stuff, and it's all this great. Come out. It's all this fear mongering going on. And when you think about, you know, the programming of today, where everything is in 30 sound bites, and it's a quick little reel on Facebook, and it's Instagram, even the names are starting to show that we don't have much of an attention span anymore. But that programming started with us with the advent of talking your vinyl records and music, and then all of a sudden, the songs can't be any longer than three minutes, or you won't be able to sell it. You have to get, you know, X number of songs on an album. Do you know the music used to be big, long Sonatas and long stories. You know, back in the oral traditions of ancient time and stuff. And so, you know the programming to shorten it and shorten it and shorten it and make it faster and quicker and more of it started with us, with the, you know, the LPs and the 40 fives of the 30s and 40s and into the 50s. All that programming to shorten everything up so that we're getting it all in quick bites started in our generation. And you guys are limited in spades, aren't you?

R

Russell Leung 16:07

No, unfortunately. Unfortunately. We've basically went, Hey, you want you know you you can't pay that for 30 seconds. Well, here's a 10 second clip. Here you go. Have fun like it's not good. It's not good. Definitely not good.

A

Albert Ruel 16:21

No, my granddaughter, who's 11, doesn't have the patience to sit down have a conversation, because everything comes to her in 10 or 30 seconds.

B

Betty Nobel 16:31

There's also information too. Like, you know, when I was growing up, you know, yeah, we had the news and, you know, we heard about, you know, Vietnam and all the demonstrations in the US and stuff like that. But it wasn't instantaneous like it is now. Now you're just totally bombarded by information constantly, and it's hard to know what's real and what isn't, and when to turn off, when to just say, I don't care. Like, I don't know if I want to do this anymore. I don't want to watch the news. I don't want to see what Trump's next thing is. It's just like, I don't know.

A

Albert Ruel 17:16

There's a desensitization. I think that's occurring today.

B

Betty Nobel 17:20

Yes, yes, I would agree with that.

R

Russell Leung 17:23

Well, like, news, right? Like something happens, and we may, within, like, five minutes, you're getting updates of what's happened, what just happened across the world, right? That's, that's, but you don't know how real it is. You don't know if people can, people just say anything. And you'd be like, here, you know, something just happened, just now, something just happened. And then you, you know, you send it across, you send it and, boom, it's out there. And someone all the way from across, across the world can go see it and go, oh, that's, you know, that's true, even though it might not be true. But you could just, people would just say stuff, right?

C

Clement Chou 17:54

But the opposite is also true, right? So now anybody can take videos of stuff that does happen. There was a time when, if you if someone had a car accident, or if there was a pile up, you couldn't, you wouldn't hear about it until two or three days later, when everything was already taken care of it.

B Betty Nobel 18:12
It was just newspaper news. Yeah.

C Clement Chou 18:14
Now, now you can take a video of the crash while it's happening.

R Russell Leung 18:22
Yep.

C Clement Chou 18:22
Which which is 10 times scarier and 10 times more depressing than hearing it after the fact. Same if someone gets shot. Now you can now there's videos of you know the incident as it happens, because someone just happened to have a phone on and then they captured, you know, the worst moment that could the timing was terrible.

A Albert Ruel 18:50
Clement. I can tell in some of our conversations, like this morning at the center, we had a men's conversation group, and I can tell who listens to mainstream media and who goes off into independent media to find information because and the topic, because I love the stuff that we can get now, where it's quick, there's a camera. It's showing you, it's not telling you what happened, it's showing you what is happening. So some of this technology, some of the stuff that I love, because, like just the truckers convoy in Canada. There's two different worlds around that whole thing. There's those of us who watched hundreds of hours of people just walking up and down the street with a camera on, talking to people and engaging and then there's those who watch the mainstream media absolutely a 180 degree totally different stories from, you know, a news event that was really important in Canada. And I that's what I love about the technology of today. And what I embrace is I can go get what I want when I want it, and it's gonna, it's gonna be immediate. You got this stuff. You were born with this stuff.

C Clement Chou 20:02
Sure, but I would, I would argue that the challenge of that is we because we have it, because it's all most of us know. We don't know how to disengage from one or the other, and all we get is overload from both sides, and nobody knows what to believe anymore.

R

Russell Leung 20:19

Well, it also this tends to happen too, especially in if you, if you you're a you're bombarded in your own echo chamber. You have an echo chamber, and you just keep getting information from that same source over and over and over and over and over again. And you don't know how to, like, separate and be like, Okay, how real is this thing? How can I make sure? How can I verify that it's what it's saying is true, what is not true? There's a lot of information to sort through that's that's another issue too.

C

Clement Chou 20:45

And it's and it's one thing, if you can, if you have all the available information, and you know how to sift through it, and that is something I think we've lost, not just, not just generationally, but as a culture, because I know even older people don't sift through information anymore, so we're all susceptible to the algorithms.

A

Albert Ruel 21:06

And like Russell said to the echo chambers. And I mean, I recently had a conversation with a younger person, I think he's in his late 20s, but you know, I was saying now, well, don't you think that these algorithms that feed you are dangerous? No, no. He says, Keep showing me the stuff I want. I don't need all that other stuff, I said, but aren't you losing balance if you're only ever seeing that which you want to see, you're not seeing the other side of the coin, so your coin is one sided.

C

Clement Chou 21:35

But that's not a general, generational thing.

A

Albert Ruel 21:39

I think, like Russell said, we're all susceptible to the algorithms of today, and it's not generational, for sure, but it's a danger.

C

Clement Chou 21:49

So now that we've talked about that, I am I think I feel like this is a good lead up into Russell's second question.

R

Russell Leung 21:55

My second question is, how could you use your strengths to help and foster cooperation between the generations?

B

Betty Nobel 22:06

Albert, you must have some ideas on this one. I couldn't come up with an answer, except that, I guess, I guess I would say, try to encourage more personal interaction, as opposed to virtual interaction, because I think it's one thing that we're losing, and I wish we had more of it, and I think we have to encourage more person to person interaction so that we don't lose it. Like all the virtual stuff is cool, and it sort of happened in a big way during Covid. But I think we've really lost something by not actually coming together and doing things together in a group that's not virtual, a group that you know can hear each other and talk to each other and you know, knows where each other's sitting in a room. I don't know. Maybe, maybe some people, maybe you don't agree with me, maybe people think that, you know, virtual is just fine, but I really feel that if people get together in person, there's a different dynamic.

A

Albert Ruel 23:15

The Human Condition does require community. It's how this animal has evolved. And I think you're absolutely right. It's always been my coaching, that there's nothing more important than peer mentoring than being in the room with people. And I suggest that constantly to newly blinded folks or folks who are experiencing vision loss that you've got to go to the room where other other people with vision loss are living because sitting in isolation, reading about it, watching videos on YouTube, ain't going to get you the feeling of it, the immersion of it, the sensation of being in the room. So to me, that's that's crucial.

R

Russell Leung 24:05

As somebody who completed half of their university agree online, yes, you you need personal interaction. You really need personal interaction. I can tell you that you it's there is a a sense of isolation because, yeah, because yeah, because it's like, oh, yeah, you know why we need to go online. When I need to go in person, I can connect online and talk online. It's not the same because, you know, you can because, like, because it's almost like a buffer between you and the other people, and it contributes to a lot of feeling of loneliness, isolation that is resolved when you have when you're actually physically in the room with other people. So important.

R

Ryan Fleury 24:48

So I'd like to ask a question related to this, Clement and Russell didn't reach out to Albert and Betty. Betty and Albert didn't reach out to Clement and Russell. We brought the groups together. So how can we reach out and be willing to talk to each other when it doesn't seem to be naturally happening?

A

Albert Ruel 25:12

That's an interesting, hmm, interesting, interesting question, you know, and it's certainly because I coordinate a CCB monthly group here. There ain't nobody with dark hair in the room. I don't know how many young blind folks there are in the Parksville, the Oceanside area in district 69 so and again. You know, today we've got all this privacy stuff, and I haven't tried to reach out to the school district, and we meet during the day when they're still in school. So sure a let's change our timeframe, maybe to be more open. So interesting question, because now I'm going to have to think about that.

C

Clement Chou 25:59

I think it has to start with facilitation. So Ryan, you'd, I think you described it really well when you said, Yeah, we didn't reach out to one another, which, which is sad, because, you know, I've known both Betty and Albert for a long time, and this is a conversation that, you know, could have been started by any of us. But I think because, and I think I think both, I think all, I think both generations are at fault here. I think we were so used to the generation gap that we don't really think about it.

B

Betty Nobel 26:28

It's true.

R

Russell Leung 26:30

I think so.

C

Clement Chou 26:33

We kind of assume that, you know, we have a few things in common, and, you know, we see each other once or twice a year, and that's it. And I think this, this facilitation is kind of what needs to happen, is someone has to say, hey, everyone sit down and let's have a round table and let's have a talk.

C

Clement Chou 27:24

I think that's where maybe we need, that's where the disconnect is. I think we need to say, Hey, I just want to check in. How are you doing? What's the job market like for people like you right now? Or, you know, what's retirement life like for you right now? What you know, what things are going on. I think those kind of smaller conversations lead to deeper ones. And maybe, you know, we haven't quite modeled that as well as we probably should have.

B

Betty Nobel 27:51

Oh, sorry, Russell, you want to go ahead first. Sorry,

R

Russell Leung 27:55

I was going to suggest, I was going to suggest something. But, yeah, I think Clement's idea is kind of has merit where you have, like, a mixed generations room, or a once a month gathering, or something, something, because you normally it's like, you know me and my Gen Z friends go and gather in this one place at once a month. Or you know me and my other these, me and my you know other generation like generation, like other friends want to gather in this place once a month. It's never, you know, like younger generations and older generations at the same time. It's always like one or two generations, like, it's, it's a mixed group. Would be, I think, very enlightening for a number of reasons. So good idea.

B

Betty Nobel 28:44

So what I was going to talk about was, you know, one of the things that some of us do, just to help, to try to facilitate that, although we haven't focused on it, is having a group of people who have, you know, so are like minded who have similar issues, etc, but we've organized it around advocacy and consumer groups. And so my question was, for Russell and Clement, would you consider joining a consumer group made up of people who are primarily people who are blind and low vision, or would you not? And if you would, what would the goal be? What would you you know? What would you like to accomplish? And if you wouldn't, why wouldn't you?

C

Clement Chou 29:35

Could you define consumer group?

R

Russell Leung 29:38

Yeah, what is a consumer group? Same question.

B

Betty Nobel 29:40

Well, I'm thinking about groups like AEBC, you know, they have like, they have a technology training, they have a newsletter full of stuff that informs people about all different kinds of advocacy issues and different like, government programs that are happening. That sort of thing, and also advocating for different things, like commenting on federal government standards or when issues come up, you know if someone's denied entry or access, or something like that, to to work on those kind of systemic barriers that happen. And so if, if you know, would you consider participating in a group like that? Or, if not, why not? Or if so, in you know, maybe you don't want to get together with a group of people that does a lot of advocacy, maybe you want to do something different, like maybe a different topic that would be a more interest. And an example of that that I was thinking about anyway was employment. It's the biggest hurdle for everybody, I think, in the in the blind and low vision community. And some people are very fortunate in getting employment, and some are not. But it's not just getting there, it's staying there. And the strategies that you use around staying there or whatever, or advancing or whatever it is that you want to do in terms of, like, you know, career mentoring and stuff like that. So it could be anything, I just wanted to throw it out there.

R

Russell Leung 31:27

Um, yeah, this consumer group, I think I would. I probably would, would join something like this. It sounds, it sounds like something that is important to help foster, I guess cooperation between generations and sort of this, this, what's in the gap, so to speak, right? I think that, I mean, definitely, I think technology, like a technology, technology group, would be very, very useful. I think because, you know, there's technologies, it's here, and it's here to stay. So you have to, you know, someone showing you the ropes, someone to, you know, show how to use it would be very helpful. And I think another one is, another important aspect is, I think if we have, like, an advocacy group too, so like, maybe because, you know, people, self advocacy is such, so important for, you know, blind and low vision people that you need to know how to do it and when to do it and what matter. How will you go about it and that kind of stuff. And different people have had different methods, right? So perhaps, maybe someone from an older generation might have a method that works better than someone from a younger generation and vice versa. So it would be very useful for you know, useful to for people to know what methods people use and how to use them, and how and how best to like to to incorporate them into your into your method, into your advocacy styles. So that's what I have to say about that.

C**Clement Chou 33:10**

I think I would, depending on what the focus was, and depending on where or whether we could meet in terms of shared perspective, or really exchange perspective, because I think the issue with so from, from where I'm sitting right now, I think that I would be less inclined to join a consumer group that was really government and advocacy focused just because of the way that I've lived my life and the things that I've seen and the interactions I've had, I think I would be more likely to join a consumer group that focused on spreading awareness and fostering connections in community. So I'm a food guy. I love food, and I would love, I would totally be part of a consumer group of a mixed generation of blind and visually impaired people. Let's say if we talked about, hey, what's a good restaurant you've been to lately? How were they in terms of service? What can we do to change that? Because to me, I'm at the point in my life where I feel community outreach does more at this point in time than trying to scream into the political void. Not. I'm not. I'm not saying that advocacy on that level is bad or wrong. I'm just saying that that's not where my strengths are, and that's not where I that's not what drives me, whereas community outreach and spreading awareness and community drives me a lot more. So I think if you know there was a consumer group that focused on you. Making work in the more local, grassroots kind of community way, I think I would be inclined to join a group like that.

A**Albert Ruel 36:09**

It's been an interesting conversation, because I sit back here and think, whoa, you know what? I'm not engaged in advocacy, and the way it feels in my body is been there, done that. It's somebody else's turn. And so I look for as a as a senior citizen, are the sort of social and recreation, kinds of groups and endeavors and and, you know, the reason that my body feels like this is because of my sort of, my upbringing, my family, you know, this large French Catholic community. You know, when we first started our first century reunions, way back in 1982 it was my aunts and uncles organizing it, pulling it all together. And all of us came along. We all enjoyed ourselves and engaged. And then a couple of them did a couple of them, because we do these every five years. And then all of a sudden it was my generation, and we planned a bunch of them. And then the aunts and uncles came along, and then the younger ones came. And now I just noticed that we're planning the next reunion for next year. And guess what? It's my kids and that generation who are doing all the planning. And I, I looked around, I thought, Hmm, I guess they don't need us anymore. We'll just go and have fun. So it's that, you know, let the ones who have the energy and the passion and the need, let them organize for themselves. We'll just come along and play. And when it was important for us, we did it then too.

C

Clement Chou 38:06

And this, this is interesting. You brought that up because I think, I think you spoke something, you said something that I think I really resonated with. And this, I think a lot of the blindness organizations and the consumer groups that we were part of, like ABC and a lot of other places. CCB, probably, I think we try and do too much of everything, and we try and encourage everyone to do everything. So like, if you are, you know, as if you're not someone who is into government and politics and advocacy on that level of scale, whatever generation you are, and if everyone else keeps talking about government change and advocacy and policy changes, you're kind of like, I don't know if I want to really be a part of that. Like, I just want to talk to people about going to new places and talking to my community center rep about, you know, starting up a hiking club or something, you know.

A

Albert Ruel 39:05

And I'm one of those Clement I applaud the heck out of the CFB and the AEBC, the folks who are out there pounding the pavement and trying to make life better for us. Appreciate the heck out of them. I've just done that, and I'm, yeah, I'm not looking for more of it, so yeah, and I think that's, that's where the challenge is.

C

Clement Chou 39:25

I think we try and put too many interests into the same box, and we try and encourage people to be involved in everything, including the things that they might not personally have the drive and passion to care, you know, like I know people of of my generation as well, and Gen Zers, who are really passionate about government and advocacy. And they, they, they drink the stuff, like, I drink water, you know. And so this is, this is good, but I know there are also people who are like, you know, I have enough trouble just keeping my own head afloat. I can't worry about i. The government and trying to change, like, you know, it's like telling a cane user that they should participate in rallies to support people who get denied because of their service dogs in Ubers.

B

Betty Nobel 40:15

Yeah, no, I totally get it, and that's me, you know, that's why I ask the question, and it's really interesting, because, everybody has different interests, but I like your focus on community. To me, that's really important. So even if we could have, like, you know, once a month, a gathering, and I don't care if it's virtual or in person, I mean, it's probably makes more sense to have it virtual. But regardless, I think it's important to come together and just start some conversations.

A

Albert Ruel 40:47

Yeah, your food thing, too. When I the time I lived in Victoria, I was there for 10 years, and we had a group of blind and vision impaired folks who met once a month for dinner at a different person's place. And the rules around it were, if you were the host, you were responsible for providing the entree for the meal, but you weren't allowed to go out and buy it. You couldn't go buy an already cooked chicken from Costco. You had to get a raw chicken from the grocery store, and you had to prepare it and serve it, and then the other people brought either appetizers or desserts, and we did this once a month at a different person's home, and we were always encouraging each other to try something new, try a recipe we've never tried, and it was a ton of fun. And we learned so much from each other and got so much support from each other, you know. So those kinds of things are equally as important to do as is advocacy and the rest and so, gender, generationally.

C

Clement Chou 41:47

Now the way, way I would say, like, I guess model this, if you had a mixed generation of older and younger blind people, the rule might have to change, because most, most young blind people haven't had eaten, not me. I shouldn't say most, many young blind people don't feel comfortable in the kitchen. And so if the rule is everybody has to bring their own stuff. Uh, no, I'm not going to that. But if you say you can get it delivered, then Heck, yeah, I will. I will happily go to that and I will order something new. You know that I haven't tried before because, general, because most of mine and Russell's generation spends time on UBEREats.

C

Clement Chou 42:31

Yes, I was going to say, I'm not too comfortable in the kitchen

R

Ryan Fleury 42:33

So how do you do that when you're not employed?

C Clement Chou 42:37

Sure, and that's that's a fair question. But for most of us in our in our let's, let's talk about older people in our generations, for for the moment, without talking about teens and youth, most of us are either on PWD or we have some kind of part time employment, or ideally both, so enough to scrape together, you know, like I've done this before. When I go to when I go to parties, I don't have enough to I don't have the time or the confidence to necessarily make a thing from scratch, but I will order something off Uber Eats to get to the place at the same time I get there, you know. So there are things that you know, kind of maybe not stipulations, but things that I would say might look a little different, because -

R Ryan Fleury 43:23

You think that puts people off that can't do that, they can't order from Skip and bring something themselves, because they don't have the financial means to do so sure.

C Clement Chou 43:32

That's right. And I think that's where you could say you could do either,

R Russell Leung 43:37

Yeah, I was gonna suggest both, yeah.

C Clement Chou 43:39

And if you can't come anyway.

A Albert Ruel 43:43

See, like my head is exploding the whole, the whole thing we were doing at the time that we were doing, and I gotta tell you, it was all us in this, in my generation, right, there was, we were all pretty close in age who were doing this. And I'm thinking, you know, the whole thing was an encouragement and challenge and step outside your comfort zone. And I'm thinking, if you lose that, you lose the whole power of the exercise.

C Clement Chou 44:15

And I agree, I agree. But what I would what I would say to that is, if you open up the options and say, hey, look, you can either order, you can make something, or if you really can't do either, come anyway, because we want you there. And then when people are there, what happens is you ask people, Hey, how did you make that? And that's where the conversation, that's where it starts.

R Russell Leung 44:45

Also small steps first, right? So let's say you don't know how to make, you know, a roast chicken or something, and you're, you know, I was talking about trying new things, you can be like, Okay, I don't know how to, I don't know how. To make it let me like, I can maybe I can, like, come over here and I like, maybe, maybe, you know, you can try someone's thinking, Oh, how'd you make this? Well, you can start by, you can start by by, like, making something very simple, and, you know, go from there. That's like, small steps. If you want to try something new. That's just how it goes.

A Albert Ruel 45:22

And I'm all about this whole intergenerational thing on a on a project like that. That's interesting. Yeah, how coaching has is changing technology is changing that whole thing.

C Clement Chou 45:39

Technology changes it, but also attitudes about stepping outside your comfort zone. So I'm a little bit closer to Betty and Albert generation. Now, the way I like to push myself to do stuff. I like to try things, if I get it wrong, if I burn it, whatever I can, you know, do it again, or I can just tell people I'm burning it. I don't I'm not really embarrassed about it. But generationally speaking and culturally speaking, people are a lot more careful, and nobody wants to embarrass themselves anymore. And I think so. Am I Albert, so am I? But I think that's where, that's why you know people. It's like Russell said, we have to start small and say, look, it's okay to step outside of your comfort zone, because if I ask Betty, hey, Betty, how did you make that rum cake? She'll go, Well, I had to try five times and I got it right.

B Betty Nobel 46:33

Yes.

C Clement Chou 46:34

And I think that that's when a lot of people will look at you and go, Oh, you can get it wrong too. It's not just me.

A Albert Ruel 46:41

I'll tell you how Betty made the rum cake. It's one for the cake and one for Betty.

C Clement Chou 46:48

But that's, that's, that's what a lot of younger people need now, I feel is someone to show them that, hey, mistakes are fine.

R Ryan Fleury 46:59

So we come, we come full circle to my question is, Clement, you say you're willing to join a group that does stuff like that, forms community, strengthens community. But who's going to initiate that? Are you willing to start a group like that? Do we start a group like that? Again, we're back to who starts what?

C Clement Chou 47:22

So yeah, and I think that that's, that's a great question. And I think, sorry, Albert, you're on the island, but for the rest of us in the Lower Mainland, I think we could start something like that.

A Albert Ruel 47:38

And I think there's some huge opportunities here for collaboration like, you know, get Shawn Marsolais and Anne McNabb in the room and say, Okay, how can we collaborate and bring, bring groups together? Because there are organizations out there who are sort of putting themselves out as supporters and service providers for the two generations. It could be done at the organizational level.

C Clement Chou 48:13

Because I'll be frank, I would, I would be happy to initiate this. My only issue is space. I live at home with my family, so I don't have free reign to a place that I can just kind of host anytime I like. But if I did, I would be very happy to bring people together and to organize it and to plan it, because I think this is something that we're missing like Betty said, we're missing in person connection, and we're missing a safe space for people to experiment with new things, to talk about things, you know.

R Ryan Fleury 48:48

I was just gonna say a social connections once a month.

C Clement Chou 48:54

Rob, and I have talked about that, and, you know, I think that's that's outside of the scope of this podcast. But yes, I think that's something that we should explore.

B Betty Nobel 49:03

Well, let's, let's think about that.

C Clement Chou 49:05

Yeah,

R Rob Mineault 49:05

Yeah.

C Clement Chou 49:06

Because if we have the space, I will spearhead this, and I will plan it, and I'm saying this on record.

A

Albert Ruel 49:15

Think about your public libraries. They often have meeting space that's available free of charge too, right?

B

Betty Nobel 49:22

Yeah.

R

Rob Mineault 49:24

Yeah, and maybe the thing to think about is that, you know, maybe it doesn't have to be what it needs to be right out of the gate, you know, for example. Like, really, the goal here maybe is to just start with and we can go back to baby steps, just, just getting people in the same room together.

R

Ryan Fleury 49:41

Yep,

B

Betty Nobel 49:41

Yeah

R

Rob Mineault 49:42

For whatever to sing, to sing Christmas carols or to have a potluck or whatever, and then, you know, things like advocacy groups spin out of that and just grow and breathe.

C

Clement Chou 49:53

Exactly, yeah, I think Rob's totally right. It doesn't have to be this grand project.

R

Russell Leung 49:59

Right.

C

Clement Chou 49:59

It doesn't have to be right like that. From the get go, it could be just the five of us going out for a glass of wine or, you know, whatever, right?

A

Albert Ruel 50:10

Yeah, one of the other things too, that our generation, those who have been in the game a long time, have to consider, and it's something I I bumped my head on from time to time, even just amongst, you know, the older group that I do sort of hang out with is that, you know, I get talking about things that are difficult to do, like, you know, running a radio arm saw, or running a piece of board through a table saw, and building stuff with wood. It just totally freaks out the newbies or the people who aren't interested or who have hung back because of fear of the machinery, and it's so important to not make it Oh, Wow, geez. What the hell's the matter with you? I can do this. Why can't you being really careful to couch the story so as not to get up on that high horse, but to stay on the ground with it. So we always have to be really careful about staying off that high horse that's for sure.

B

Betty Nobel 51:21

Oh yeah, everybody's different. And, you know, everybody has a different comfort level with things to do. And of course, yeah, you know, we're not going to criticize somebody and say, well, what's what's wrong with you? How come you're not doing it?

A

Albert Ruel 51:37

My challenge is, sometimes I didn't think I criticized, but in the in the way of telling the story, it may have it, sometimes it may be heard. Boy, that's a hard part of human communication.

B

Betty Nobel 51:54

Well, let's think about this. Let's think about what we could organize. I'm I would really like to connect with more younger people, like, people like, you know, I'm thinking of Jillian Sloan and others. And maybe a potluck would be a fun way to try that, you know, maybe her, and maybe Nika, and maybe, I don't know who else, whoever else is around, and just get together at the Blind Beginnings office for maybe a potluck lunch where everybody brings something, and I don't care if people order it or whatever, however, whatever they want to do, or make it or whatever. And we can plan a gathering and just sort of see where it goes.

B

Betty Nobel 52:39

And I don't think we want to organize it so much that it's like super organized. I think we want to make it flexible.

A

Albert Ruel 52:46

And that kind of speaks to the the questions that I had posed is, what is it that our generation can teach you guys? What is it that that you might want to learn from this generation?

C

Clement Chou 52:59

I think one thing I've learned from my older generation friends, and what I can continue to learn, is how to disengage from being buried in my feelings and be resilient and take risks. I think that's something that Albert and Betty mentioned at the top of the episode, and I think that's something that my generation and Gen Z and Gen Alpha needs a little bit more is to just say, look, change is fine. It's going to happen, and you can't change the fact that change is going to happen. You just have to learn how to roll with it. And I think that takes a certain, certain amount of years of living in the world and seeing certain things. And I don't think our generations have lived long enough to really understand that. And so when we have older people who are willing to enforce that in our lives, but also guide us through how to navigate those changes, I think that is something that's very, very invaluable, at least for myself.

R

Russell Leung 54:01

I was going to say pretty much the same thing, actually, pretty, pretty similar, pretty similar, actually. But I think another thing I was gonna say, though, is I think all like younger generations aren't, obviously what I've seen don't tend to be as good at dealing with like things, and they try and being like, okay, let's just, let's just think about this in a way that makes sense. And I can do it, I can work through problems like, we're not really good at dealing with problems. We tend to just, we can just freak out and panic and just be like, Okay, well, I'm guilty of this too, actually. So like, you know, almost a problem that I see a problem. Oh, all right, time to time to freak out. Time to time I do X, time I do Y. Like, you know, you there's this sort of, this, you kind of have to kind of have this, this, this knee jerk reaction where you just freeze up, or you just do something that maybe. Might not be the best idea at the time. And I think, you know, learning how to be okay, you know what? Just relax, just, you know, sort all possible scenarios you could do, or alternate solutions. Because I find, I find that we only know or know one or two solutions and those things don't work then, well, that's it too bad you're done goodbye. But you know, other generations are better at, really good at because, because they because you guys lived at a time when these solutions didn't exist and, you know, or didn't exist, or you just didn't do the solutions we're thinking of. So it's really good at different ways of thinking, that other that we tend to overlook or just plain forget about. So that's something I want to learn.

A

Albert Ruel 55:48

Different ways of thinking. Chinese proverb that I heard once, it said, if 20 years ago was the perfect time to plant a tree, the second best time is right now.

C

Clement Chou 56:00

I'll tell you something, though, Chinese people are Chinese people are the worst at following your own advice. We give very sage telling advice. But let me tell you, as some and Russell can say this too, as we were raised by Chinese parents, that does not always ... We talk about patience in our Proverbs a lot.

C

Clement Chou 56:24

So actually, I'm curious. Well, we didn't hear from Albert and Betty about what, do you guys think we you can learn from people who are younger? I'm just curious to know your thoughts.

R

Russell Leung 56:47

Yeah, me too. I'm kind of curious.

A

Albert Ruel 56:49

For me, it's around the the technology piece I you know, like my iPhone when I first got it, if we didn't have screens on the windows, that thing would have been gone, but it kept bouncing back.

B

Betty Nobel 56:59

Yeah, mine too, for sure, would have been out the window.

A

Albert Ruel 57:04

Yeah, fighting through some of that stuff. Oh, the hell with it. I'll go back to the way I've always done it. So although I embrace technology a lot in my group, I see that in you know, many of them who, you know, basically are checking out of checking out of the information superhighway, because they're bound, set and determined that the hell I'm going to live without all that technology. I didn't need it before, and I don't need it now. So I think we can. We can sit back and relax, take a deep breath and just learn from young folks just how powerful it can be.

B

Betty Nobel 57:44

I think also that we can probably learn something from the mindset of the younger generation. The positive part of you know, putting yourself first sometimes is something that the I think the older generation doesn't do well, and I think we could probably learn a bit from that to help our balance. You know, we're so much about doing something for the other person that we often don't think about our own needs, and maybe it's time that we did something like that as well.

R

Ryan Fleury 58:26

And I think stay tuned for generations part three, because there's a whole conversation. We could go down on that topic right there.

C

Clement Chou 58:34

How long of a series you want to make? Because I we could go on about this.

R Rob Mineault 58:37
We could, hey, you listen, we're not we're not constrained. Where, where we can we can do whatever the heck we want.

A Albert Ruel 58:43
Docu series, are always 10 episodes long, right?

R Rob Mineault 58:55
Yeah, exactly, exactly do it. We can do it.

R Russell Leung 59:01
Why not?

R Ryan Fleury 59:01
interesting discussion. You know, putting our needs before others, and, you know, wanting to serve others before ourselves, I think is a very important topic to touch on at some point.

C Clement Chou 59:14
And that's, and that's the balance part for younger generations too. I think we need to learn to get out of our own heads and get out of our own needs. And actually look at other people as well.

R Russell Leung 59:22
I agree. I agree that is, sadly, don't do.

R

Rob Mineault 59:25

Excellent. Well, listen and the audience. You know, they were, they had a view of of something perhaps coming together. Who knows, in six months, maybe we will have a regular thing running here at the Blind Beginnings office. You never know. So they they were witness to it right here on AT Banter. We really want, do want to thank you guys for coming back and again. It was, it was a fascinating discussion. And I think we really did break some ground here. And, you know, I certainly made some some notes of stuff, that I think, that you know, we could certainly explore later on. So thanks for that, guys, thanks. Thanks for coming back and and who knows, maybe we'll have you back for a part three. I'll talk it over with Mr. Fleury tomorrow.

C

Clement Chou 1:00:11

Thanks.

B

Betty Nobel 1:00:12

Thank you.

R

Russell Leung 1:00:15

Thank you.

A

Albert Ruel 1:00:16

Thanks

R

Rob Mineault 1:00:18

All right

R

Russell Leung 1:00:20

Bye. Thanks guys,

C Clement Chou 1:00:21
Thanks.

R Rob Mineault 1:00:22
Oh, good stuff. That was another great show.

R Ryan Fleury 1:00:26
It was a very good show.

R Rob Mineault 1:00:28
They did not disappoint. Once again, I'm telling you,

R Ryan Fleury 1:00:32
And I think especially coming out of this show that the dialog has been opened, the conversation has been started, and there's an openness to want to get together, to form community, and to listen, to learn from each other, and just converse with each other.

R Rob Mineault 1:00:51
Yeah.

R Ryan Fleury 1:00:52
Like we talked about that didn't really seem to be happening, because, again, nobody really thought about, well, how do we initiate this? Who initiates this? If I wait for somebody else to do it, it'll probably never happen. So, yeah, it'll be interesting to see where we go from here.

R

Rob Mineault 1:01:11

Yeah, for sure. And I think that there's also a little bit of, you know, trying to run before you walk, you know, trying to form some sort of a group that brings these, these two demographics, together in an advocacy space. You know, it's a big ask. So, you know, maybe, maybe the beginnings of that is just getting them in the same room together, and getting them in the same room together regularly, and seeing what is born out of that. Because I think that a natural side effect of doing that is going to be conversations like today's happening just naturally and organically, and the younger generation realizing that, wow, you know, the older generation has all these really interesting perspectives, and the older generation can look back, look at the younger generation be like, wow, you know, never thought of it that way.

R

Ryan Fleury 1:01:57

Yeah.

R

Rob Mineault 1:01:58

Tech just comes so naturally to them, or they, you know, they, they have all these different perspectives that that even we as the older generation have to learn. So, yeah, there's, there's just so much potential there from just getting these folks in the same room together. There is, I really hope that's, and it sounds like there's, there's a real hunger for it.

R

Ryan Fleury 1:02:18

Sounds like it.

R

Rob Mineault 1:02:21

You know, I think that we go way past just, you know, Clement and Russell. I think that there's a lot, a lot of folks in there, in their age range, that would really enjoy, you know, doing something in a group.

R

Ryan Fleury 1:02:34

We hear all the time in the organization I belong to that people want the physical connections they want to get back together in a room with their peers and converse, right, have a meal. So we need that we're social creatures.

R

Rob Mineault 1:02:50

Yeah, for sure. And I think that, you know, you just said, The tricky part about right now is that I just think we need, we need the right entry point. We need something that's going to be that's going to appeal to both generations, and it can, because it can be hard to engage people these days, as much as the I keep hearing, yeah, people want to get together, people want to get together. But then I hear a lot of events that just kind of flop, because people are just like, I'd rather not leave the house. Oh, it's a hybrid event. I'll just connect via Zoom or whatever. You know, a lot of a lot of times people don't necessarily go out and I don't know, you know, I think that the, it's part of, part of the Covid effect, you know, being locked up for two years, people rebuilt their lives. And so it takes some time to get people out of that habit. But, you know, we'll see everything's got a Rome wasn't built in one day, and we'll see what happens. But yeah, I thought that was a fascinating discussion. And yeah, it's a big thanks to, to Albert, Betty Russell and Clement for for making it happen. And I'm, I'm hoping that there's some similar conversations, maybe with a different group, or, who knows, maybe we will do part three. So stay tuned, folks.

R

Ryan Fleury 1:04:09

Sounds like a plan.

R

Rob Mineault 1:04:10

Yep, but first we got to plan what the hell we're doing for our 10th Anniversary. So we're gonna have that discussion.

R

Ryan Fleury 1:04:14

Yeah, we'll probably figure that out the week before.

R

Rob Mineault 1:04:17

That's kind of our usual thing. That's the AT Banter way. Right, well, anything else to say about that? Let's get on here, because that ran really long.

R

Ryan Fleury 1:04:33

Yeah, let's get out of here. It's my dinner time.

R

Rob Mineault 1:04:36

Okay. Well, where the hell can people find us?

R

Ryan Fleury 1:04:39

They can find us www.atbanter.com

R

Rob Mineault 1:04:43

They can drop us an email if they would like at cowbell@atbanter.com. Man, my brain is fried. Its' the end of the day, clearly.

R

Rob Mineault 1:04:55

They can also, you know, they can also find us on Facebook, and that's about it. All right, well, that is going to go do it for us this week. Big thanks, of course, to Betty, Albert, Clement, and Russell for joining us, and we will see everybody next time.

R

Ryan Fleury 1:05:16

Bye,

S

Steve Barclay 1:05:19

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