Unknown Speaker 0:02

Hi, cousin.

Unknown Speaker 0:03

Hi.

Unknown Speaker 0:05

Oh, are you? Are you I am excited to be talking with you. Finally, we obviously as I said cousin related, and have been following each other on social media. And then I started thinking about different topics. And I know, this topic of disability on so many levels is something that is, in your world, part of your life, every single day, so we have a couple of things to dive into. So let's, let's roll into it.

Unknown Speaker 0:37

Awesome.

Unknown Speaker 0:38

So, what Okay, we have a laundry list first,

Unknown Speaker 0:44

a little bit about me, I think that's important. Yes, I am legally blind. I have a genetic eye disorder called retinitis pigmentosa, which is basically just a pigmentation of the retina and the retina itself. And what it does is it basically reduces my peripheral vision. Most people have 180 degrees of peripheral vision. So if you were to stick your arms out to your sides, and then move them in, you'd stop when you can know when you can actually see your hands. Right. Um, mine are about right in front of me, basically. So I have like two degrees of peripheral vision. It also affects your night vision. So I've had no night vision since I was a kid. I mean, I remember, I just always remember not being able to see very well at night. Sure. And it can result in being totally blind. Right now, my central vision, so I can read a computer screen. I can read a book, although that wears my eyes out quite rapidly. Sure. Um, but I you see 2020 straight ahead. So that's no problem. I don't drive anymore. I used to drive. And I actually probably should have never driven but I did drive

Unknown Speaker 2:15

as Illinois back in the day, right. Right. Right.

Unknown Speaker 2:18

And so so if the genetic part of it is it runs in families. So I have two siblings with the disease and a cousin with the disease. Okay. And we have an idea. You know, for a long time, my mom didn't know where it came from on her side of the family. We had no clue on my dad's side. But the way it works is both of them had to have the gene in order for us to have the disease because it's an excessive trait. And their chances of having kids with the disease, or one in four, and they ended up with three out of 11. So

Unknown Speaker 2:58

in but how long for your Yeah, yes. And so you so you, obviously as we said, You have experience in this too, because your vision has been impaired. So you've seen what the changes have been like? I mean, we were going to talk about the ADA, the Americans with Disabilities Act, which is I believe in what 30 been around for about 30 years.

Unknown Speaker 3:20

celebrated its 30th anniversary last year. Yes.

Unknown Speaker 3:23

So you know, if

Unknown Speaker 3:24

I'm into law by George HW Bush, okay. Yeah. In 1990. So yeah,

Unknown Speaker 3:31

yeah. So, so that means you spent a good part of your life prior to there being guidelines for design and so forth. So yeah, that's, that's led to some of the career choices that you've made, right?

Unknown Speaker 3:44

It really has I mean, I, I lived in Chicago for a number of years and worked as a secretary up there. And when I got tired of it, and my parents, my parents were older, and my dad got sick, I thought, you know what, this is a great opportunity for me to move back to champagne, and go to school. And my field is art. I mean, I've loved art since I was a kid. I've been able to draw on all sorts of do all sorts of stuff like that very creative. And so I started out at Parkland junior college. And people were looking at me like I was absolutely nuts because I wanted to go major in art and they were like, Okay, how anyone told you, right? How are we gonna do this when I explained to them what was going on, you know, that I could see straight ahead. I just see differently than every anyone else. So um, I ended up with a 3.95 grade point average when I graduated from Parkland night, they they all all my instructors at Parkland told me I needed to transfer to a four year college, that I should not stop there. So I transferred to the IB, I got into the sculpture and painting program at the AFI, and graduated with honors from VMI. And then went on to get my master's degree in Industrial Design. And I am the first person in the world to have a degree in Industrial Design while I was visually impaired,

Unknown Speaker 5:32

so I love that that's your first legally blind person to earn an industrial design MFA, which is amazing. That is, yeah, what a great thing to have on the resume. But then for people to also understand because I think it's super limited, how people no pun intended, see what disability is about, right. And my specialty and industrial design, which basically is

Unknown Speaker 5:59

your our interaction with everything we see or use during the day. So televisions, coffee, pots, tables, chairs, I mean, they have to furnish designers, store designers. You know, television designers, computer designers, I mean, there is so many things that are designed. And that's what industrial design is. And so I chose to lean more toward design for disability. And in that vein, empathic design, so empathy, to create designs for people with disabilities. So basically, it's putting yourself in their shoes, right? Um, for just a minute amount of time, your neck, no one is ever going to know what it's like to have a specific disability unless they eventually get that disability, right. To be honest.

Unknown Speaker 7:09

Yeah. So

Unknown Speaker 7:09

when you're looking at empathy in the design world, you're looking at, understanding where that person comes from. And taking all of their feelings at the time into account when you're designing for you know, sorry, is it it's my thesis was basically based, based on all of that I on that idea. Show empathic design is basically where I'm, what I'm good at,

Unknown Speaker 7:45

Oh, my gosh, and what a need for it, as some of you know, and as you know, cousin, I have been in the design and construction world from the inspection side for 20 years. So I've seen some, some pretty interesting things. And when when you start to understand how ad works, how the guidelines work, you really can't unknow that. So even going into units and let me tell you a quick thing. I'm still waiting to hear back from that designer on and I went to a building in downtown Denver last week. And it was kind of a reverse of what you're, you're talking about because I couldn't tell like the tub was really high but it had the the handheld shower. So it's but it's the only bathroom where the handheld shower was super, super low. So if anybody was ever there that was taller, that bathroom and there's only one bathroom and I was like, okay, so you need to pick a lane on which this is going to be and then on the flip side as well. You even think about radius for wheelchairs. You think about corners, you think about the how the width of how far the toilet needs to be from the wall, the grab wires and things like that. And if you don't have

Unknown Speaker 8:56

the toilet paper roll and things stop.

Unknown Speaker 9:00

The placement of paper roll is got to be the worst gaff that happens. Oh, yeah. And then thinking about this more. The other thing with this particular apartment is it was looked to be designed specifically Ada but it had a stackable washer and dryer. So how's that going to work folks?

Unknown Speaker 9:19

in a wheelchair,

Unknown Speaker 9:20

do you tell me exactly so so these are things that people don't think about? And certainly I would think from from a public just out in the public idea of curbs, streets, lights, things like that.

Unknown Speaker 9:34

And and actually the University of Illinois, which is where I went to school is the front runner for design for disability. Amazed the gentleman who started wheelchair basketball and wheelchair track. His name was Timothy Nugent. And he did this right after world war two and they had a lot of soldiers coming back wanting to use the GI Bill, but because they were injured, they couldn't. So he devised a plan.

Unknown Speaker 10:07

Wow, I did not know that

Unknown Speaker 10:09

at the U VI. And they had a dormitory setup. They used an old house where on campus where they had are all set up for with a wheelchair ramp and the whole nine yards. And he's the one who devised the curb cuts. So you know how the curb goes down? Yeah, yeah. And he was I remember him telling me that the the facilities and services over at the Ovi, who does all the lawn mowing and the building maintenance and that sort of stuff in the snow shoveling, they were really ticked off, that he wanted to put these curb cuts so that wheelchairs could get through. And after they put them all in, they were like, Whoa, this is kind of cool, because we can take our plows and just go right into this. And we can go from one side of the street to the other without having to tear down off the curbs. And, you know, they were like, Oh, this is pretty cool.

Unknown Speaker 11:15

That's what came into my head when

Unknown Speaker 11:16

he said that that now why would that be a problem? But I think that's one inability to see through through the empathy of what other people are thinking. Right. When you wrote that paper then has that been? Is that something that you think people are doing more of now? Do you think that's been incorporated? I

Unknown Speaker 11:34

know that there's a duo incorporated at the U vi in their teaching methods, because my advisor teaches a class called disability and relevant design. Wow, which I was her ta for, I think, three, four semesters. The key here is we inform the students that they're there. Even if they simulate disability, they're not going to get a complete and full understanding of what it's like to be disabled, they will get one, you know, incontestable amount, but what it's there to do is it's to show them how they need to empathize with people just in general, right. I remember we had one student who said he wanted to use a wheelchair. So I, we said, Fine, you use a wheelchair for 24 hours. The minute you get in that wheelchair, you have to do everything, like a person who would use a wheelchair on a daily basis. Right. And so the next afternoon he was he did it the day before he was supposed to come to class. So he was supposed to be in class with the tail end of his 24 hours. And it just so happened that that day, the elevator in our building broke, and we were up on the third floor. Wow. No, he had to figure out a way to get upstairs to the third floor without using his legs. And to bring that wheelchair with him. How do you do? He? Well, he finally talked to guy and to help any him up the stairs. And he didn't tell the person what he was doing or anything like that. And when he came into class, he's, he's like, I'm so sad. He was like an hour late for fers.

Unknown Speaker 13:27

And that's proof positive of the situation we're talking about right? Now it works. Yes.

Unknown Speaker 13:33

He comes into class. And he's like, Oh, thank goodness, can I get out of this chair now? And I said, Well, when did you get into the chair? And he said, 10 o'clock last night. I said, Now you have to wear us it until 10 o'clock tonight? He goes, but my butt hurts. I said, Yes. Exactly. I mean, you know, so so a lot of times, you know, it's, it's really beneficial. There are a lot of people with disabilities who don't like that kind of situation that product designers use. And the reason they don't like it is because there's not someone with a disability explaining to them along the way, how this needs to be done, what needs to be done, things you need to look at, they just automatically assume that they're doing it correctly. Right. Right. When you have someone with a disability who is familiar with a lot of different disabilities, which I am. You know, you have someone talking about the various things that could go wrong during someone's daily lived experience. Right, right, whatever you could run into To everything from soup to nuts, what they could run into that sort of thing. And I think it's really important to understand that the kind of empathic design I do is very different because I am disabled. Right? And it makes a big difference to have someone with a disability kind of leading the way

Unknown Speaker 15:27

that and that goes to so many topics that I talk about on this podcast to have representation. Yes, one of the worst things that happens to people is they're not only asked about it, but they're also asked to use something that they weren't asked about that doesn't work for them. But they'll say what we did this for you

Unknown Speaker 15:47

quite well. And one of the things we found is that we always work with students with disabilities. You vi has the largest population of students with disabilities on campus. There's, I think there's over 1400 students now with disabilities on campus. And that can range from ADHD to someone who is completely immobile has to have a tracheostomy, and a motorized wheelchair etc. The Avaya is also the first place first university to have a dormitory specifically designed around people with disabilities. And it was named after Timothy Nugent, it's called major tall,

Unknown Speaker 16:37

okay,

Unknown Speaker 16:37

right. And they have personal care assistance, the students that are live in Nugent Hall on the third, second, third and fourth floors, I believe, are get a stipend for working as personal care assistants to the students on the first floor, who have major disabilities, right. So I mean, it works on so many different levels. It's ridiculous,

Unknown Speaker 17:06

Oh, I love these systems that they have. And we're going to put some links into that to yell. That's my hometown, by the way, hometown pride with the University of Illinois. They've been they've just done so many cool things back. Back in the day, when I lived in Illinois, I worked for the insurance company that did a lot of the insurance for the use of AI and the Cray supercomputer was at the U of AI. This is back in the 80s as big as the room is the room that we're both in right now. But interesting to see how what, especially with the universities, what they can do to make progress on it. Talk to me real quick, hasn't about we mentioned briefly before we jumped on here about ableism. And then also the terminology. Now I know that there are different terminology that people prefer. But But ableism is a problem. And I and I do believe that obviously COVID has exacerbated the gap

Unknown Speaker 17:58

with folks. I think it has Yeah, first of all, the terminology we use. A lot of disabled people call themselves disabled. I mean, the words previous to this, you know, when I was a kid was handicap crippled. Right now, those are no longer used at all. The other one, the big R word. We don't use that. retarded. These are all no nose major. No nose. Yeah. And so um, you know, it's neurodivergent I mean a lot of people with with autism or, you know, other brain injury, or anything like that they are, they are they think of themselves as neuro divergent. Someone who has ADHD might be thought of as neurodivergent Okay, because a lot of the issues with ADHD, OCD, add any of those type of disorders are related to the brain. And the function of the brain, as is autism. And Autism is a huge spectrum of disorders. It's not just autism. You know, you have Asperger syndrome, you have various others that fill in, in that, in that that cover the autism spectrum. So you you are and I don't even know I mean, I'm late. I've seen things on Twitter that have talked about being on the autism spectrum is even being something that that people who have autism are not thrilled with.

Unknown Speaker 19:48

Sure, when everything comes down to labeling anyway, even though the phrases that you use that we that were common when we were kids and wrote and then also used as well. Are you and then they fill in that that word they were used as as, as put downs and so forth. And then to also go into get this label as and thing. And it's interesting because Temple Grandin is here in Colorado, she actually got her PhD here at the event at the VI. That's right. That's right. I've actually I've had an opportunity to interview her a couple times. And she

Unknown Speaker 20:23

just feels amazing, isn't she she's amazingly enough. The former president of the Ovi, Bobby stir. I met on several occasions, just because we presented him with a book that our course did on our design work, and we created a book from the students, final projects. And they all had an opportunity to write their own project write about their own project, what they learned that sort of thing. And we turned it into a book. And we want to make sure he had a book. And he said, The Temple Grandin was his worst failure because he should have he had his I think he had a PhD in either agriculture or animal science. And he was his he came from a place down in Texas and his family had a pig farm. So he knew all about pigs before he even got here. And he just wanted to go on and study about pigs and things like that. Right. So then when he was running that part of this college, he said he had an opportunity to keep her here and he didn't do it. may have been kicking himself. I had been kicking himself ever after that.

Unknown Speaker 21:44

And we were so well known for that obviously with the agricultural school, and now she's out here at Colorado State. And, and definitely doing great things in y'all if you don't know who she is, where have you been, but it's Temple Grandin, gra and di m,

Unknown Speaker 22:01

there is a movie about her as well,

Unknown Speaker 22:03

they're HB. And that's really well, but it is well done. They did a really interesting job. And they didn't they didn't cartoon, her. The first time I had heard for was the book by Oliver Sacks talking about different neuro conditions. And so this is probably 20 years ago and I was just so fascinated that she created her own little squeezy machine right for hugging and then she's very, y'all please go look up her TED Talk called The world needs all kinds of minds. And then she wrote a book recently. That's about about how kids are sort of being given a disservice because they're not learning trades. When they're not, they're not learning things that are more Yeah, more than the kind of the old school way of learning. So anyway, we, we had to divert for a second because she's just she's, she's someone who has put in a normalization to that. But I can see that with autism as well, that there are these different labels. There's, there's a couple folks and I know you're on Twitter quite a bit to that. I'm finding Twitter has been a great way to to find out about new people that are doing really interesting, amazing work in in that world too. But talk to me about ableism real quick, which I know we could do a whole show on this. But I also don't think that able bodied people, which I think is also Yeah, that's relative. That's what's really normal. That term I

Unknown Speaker 23:28

don't like either. Oh, now with people with disabilities tend to use the phrase abled abl, E, D, for a b l. e. d s, for able bodied people. And a bed sometimes they don't say it in a nice way. No, they don't. But, um, to finish up the bit about language, I mean, there are essentially two ways to think of this. It's people first language, or disabled peoples. Basically, people first language is people with disabilities, so they put the person before the disability. However disabled people feel. So for me, it'd be people with visual impairment. But visual impairment covers a broad spectrum of things. So somebody like yourself, who needs to wear just glasses to someone who's totally blind, right? So you have varying degrees of visual impairment, you have varying degrees of hearing impairment, you have varying degrees of mobility impairment. And so people with whatever disease they have, is also a way people talk about it. And that's mostly done in academic academia because they don't really want to offend anyone. So they classify people with disabilities or people with spina bifida or people, you know, that kind of sure show it classifies the individual first and then the disability interest but disabled people prefer to use the term disabled. Okay. And that leads into what we were talking about ableism Yeah, basically ableism is a way for people with out disabilities to condescend. Or I wouldn't even say treat people with disabilities. badly. It's done without them thinking about it.

Unknown Speaker 25:52

Right? It's it's very normalized.

Unknown Speaker 25:58

It's very normalized. And it's I'm trying to think of a good example. Oh, this was one blind spot. Now, we all know what a blind spot is. The blind spot in the car. It refers to a blind spot, right? So somebody asked me, How would you feel if somebody said, You're in my blind spot? I'd say, Okay, I'll move. You know, what most people don't understand is that is an actual thing. So when I was driving, I had a very big blind,

Unknown Speaker 26:37

this entire thing.

Unknown Speaker 26:39

Right, right. So that is an actual thing. When you're using the term, I see someone who's visually impaired or even totally blind. You know, we don't mind that. I don't mind. You know, there are certain phrases and things that people still continue to use, that we wish they wouldn't things like, moron. You know it? Yeah. Oh, yeah. cific words that they use in their everyday language that they don't even think of as being an herbalist phrase.

Unknown Speaker 27:18

And then again, it's that normalizing piece of it. And, you know, just just like in any of the activism work that you do, breathe things up to people can be super uncomfortable, especially if to them, it is what they always say, no one's ever said anything. No one seems to have a problem. You know, it's living in a world where you can if it's brought up to you to say, Hey, you know, that's that's not a

Unknown Speaker 27:46

nice thing to say. All right, is a different word.

Unknown Speaker 27:49

Did you use a different word? I love that. And here's and here's why. Here's why. There's a Gallagher

Unknown Speaker 27:54

there were other things that are a computer considered aimless, like. I have had friends who have gone out to dinner with me, in wheelchairs, and there's no entrance to the restaurant that they can get into. They have in the front, the only restaurant is in the back. Where the joy is always kept right, right now. And people think nothing of saying, oh, there's an entrance in the back. Let me let me help you or I can carry you in. No, you can't. Yeah, the thing that the thing that a lot of people don't understand is that people who use wheelchairs I mean, for the most part wheelchairs have allowed. people with mobility issues independence, they are not wheelchair bound. Hmm. They are not confined to a wheelchair. See, those are other ablest comments. Wow, you're so yeah, yeah,

Unknown Speaker 29:04

it's words words matter.

Unknown Speaker 29:07

And if they are wheelchair users, hmm, you know, yes. So and and the other thing is, not everyone who uses a wheelchair has to use it all the time. You know, right. excellent example is someone with a disease called Ehlers danlos Syndrome, which actually is a disease that affects the joints of the body. And someone with Ehlers danlos can can hyper extend their joints, so it becomes very painful. So walking can be very painful. So sometimes they use a wheelchair on their good days. They can use a wheelchair on their bad days. You know, they're in the wheelchair all the time. On their good days, they can use a wheelchair, they can use a cane, they can use a walker, it's very similar to someone who has MS.

Unknown Speaker 30:07

Right? Or RA, like different things. So and I think that's that's a thing that abled do also is categorize. So they get to this thing like it, but categorize it from their own ability. Right. So,

Unknown Speaker 30:22

yeah, so they don't think of the other person. That's where empathy comes in. Exactly like a lot of people have no clue that people with disabilities tend to have some pretty sucky days. Sure, you know, and as an example, this is this is a really good one. I was actually teaching at the Ovi. I was filling in for someone who was having visa issues, they asked me to come and teach because I was familiar with courses over there. And so I did this for about eight weeks. At the same time, I was teaching at Parkland College. So it was kind of a mismatch mismatch mismatch and stuff. But I used to have to be over at class at 9am. So I get on a bus, take the bus over to campus, and here in town, I had to go one direction to go and then go the other direction, because of where the buses switch off. And so at one point, my bus driver stopped picked up this woman who asked, could we get to the switch off place? And did we he think that we would make this particular bus and he said, I don't know, they, they're supposed to leave a minute before we get there. But if we see them, maybe we can stop them. So it just happened that she hopped off the bus because she saw the bus put her bus pulling out, she ran after it. And this most driver I've known for, like 10 years, used to ride his buses out to Parkland over the campus all the time. And I just kind of quietly turned to him and said, she's not gonna make it. As from where I was sitting, I could see her out the window, right? And I knew I was gonna make it. And this woman across the aisle from me, says, What's wrong with your eyes? Oh, boy. See, you know, let's just let her know right now. Very happy. A bed. And I actually said something that I don't normally say. But it just hit me at the Normally I'm very accommodating. When they ask questions about my guide dog, they ask questions about what's wrong with me, you know, and it's honestly, extremely personal. And I don't tell a lot of people unless I know them intimately. And so having Perfect Strangers come up to you and ask you what's wrong with your eyes? It's really

Unknown Speaker 33:09

bad. That's very invasive.

Unknown Speaker 33:11

Yes, very invasive. And so when this woman said, What's wrong with your eyes? I turned to her and said, none your app and business. That's how we're related. And then of course, she says, Well, you don't have to be rude. And I thought, really? Well,

Unknown Speaker 33:31

you started it don't start. None won't be.

Unknown Speaker 33:34

Yeah. And so Wow, she got off the bus at the next stop. And the bus driver says to me, I can't believe you actually said that. I was gonna say

Unknown Speaker 33:49

if you didn't get it, I was going to. Yeah,

Unknown Speaker 33:53

well, anyway, I mean, yeah. Another good example of things not to do when you're speaking with someone with a disability.

Unknown Speaker 34:01

Sure, sure. I just assume ask them what's wrong with them?

Unknown Speaker 34:05

Wow.

Unknown Speaker 34:06

I think

Unknown Speaker 34:08

it can be the most traumatizing event of their life. I'm sure someone could have been in a car accident and broken their back.

Unknown Speaker 34:16

or been in an accident where their family was, was also killed or something. Yeah, there's

Unknown Speaker 34:21

like that. I mean,

Unknown Speaker 34:22

there's so many variables.

Unknown Speaker 34:24

You don't blatantly just arbitrarily go out and say What's wrong with you? You just go

Unknown Speaker 34:31

which I think is a version there's a gal that I follow, and I bet you you might too, Melissa Blake on Twitter.

Unknown Speaker 34:38

I he's from Illinois as well. Is she she's? Yeah,

Unknown Speaker 34:43

she is so y'all go follow her. She's literally at Melissa Blake. She's a writer, blogger. She is disability activist, op ed Queen viral Tweeter, so she's somebody that that really got came to light because she started talking about the angle Increase in hate mail and actions toward her specifically starting and really elevating with the last administration yeah no tough correlation there folks. I love what she's so she does this selfie the seller of the day which really was based on and on somebody just making these horrific comments so she's very she a she parlays them and I think gives a lot of people some some good hope because trolls are awful terrible awful at at everyone but

Unknown Speaker 35:31

yeah,

Unknown Speaker 35:32

but they are but what I love one of the things that she talks about as well as how people infantilize folks with disability as well kind of make them like that. pat them on the top of the head, right? You're so brave, or you're so this and that. And so it takes that person

Unknown Speaker 35:48

to ration for everyone else. Good. Yeah.

Unknown Speaker 35:52

Oh, yes.

Unknown Speaker 35:55

Like, what am I supposed to do sit here and do nothing. Right. And then

Unknown Speaker 36:00

also that also pigeonholes you in some ways into that you've got to be that you can't have a shitty day, right

Unknown Speaker 36:07

like that, like, in front of the infantilizing means you're not worth more than a tiny child with no opinions with no opinions, no, no ideas, no creativity. No, you know,

Unknown Speaker 36:23

he sexualizing too, by the way.

Unknown Speaker 36:25

Very,

Unknown Speaker 36:26

it she she talks about that, too, and I really appreciate it because I think it gets to people, you know, having uncomfortable thoughts, you know, they have to turn the thought process on themselves. Like, where are you at? So I really appreciate her for that too. And again, I

Unknown Speaker 36:42

think a couple other people on Twitter that you should follow one is Alice wall. Okay. Don't think I'm falling. She started something called the diff. diff Visibility Project. Hmm. And it's all about visibility of people with disabilities. Another individual is Judy human. He UMANN. She is one of the people who

Unknown Speaker 37:18

literally crawled the steps of the Capitol. For the 1993 get the ADA passed? Sure. Sure. And I think she was also involved in adapt, which in Denver, lay down in front of buses. people in wheelchairs lay down in front of buses, buses, good. Not, because they had no buses that would

Unknown Speaker 37:47

take that would take that. Yeah, yeah.

Unknown Speaker 37:51

Yeah. So should. And then another person is Imani barbarin. She's awesome. There are a few others. Once you get hooked up with them on Twitter, you will see the flood.

Unknown Speaker 38:09

Sure.

Unknown Speaker 38:11

suggesting it and then they share it. And I actually am following Alice, which is, which is awesome, too. And I think this is what I like as well that people have a voice now on social media. Because before this, you were sort of at the mercy of if the news wanted to do a story on you, right, or something like that. Let me wrap it up with something that I think is really important for people to know, because we want to give them actual action steps as well. You're talking about? I don't know if it's a house bill, but talk real quick about this disabil or this pay bear disparity.

Unknown Speaker 38:42

So back in 1938, there was a federal law enacted, called the Fair Labor, Fair Labor Standards Act, and authorize the payment of sub minimum wages to workers with disabilities. And basically what that means is that people with disabilities if they go into a sheltered workshop area, or so, someplace like goodwill, this is an excellent example because goodwill has been called out on this. They hire people with disabilities to sort in hang up clothes that have come in as donations to do things like that. And a lot of places pay them sub minimum wage. So right now the minimum wage is 725 an hour. They have documented. I think it was NBC that did a documentary on this a few years ago. But they documented that goodwill was paying their disabled employees 22 cents an hour. Wow. To do this now. When you consider 725 is not even a decent. Yeah, wage, the fact that they were making 22 cents an hour, which is $7.30 less than the actual minimum wage, it's quite atrocious. And so for that reason alone, I will not donate anything to Goodwill, because all goodwill does is turn around and sell it and make a profit. That's right. And they're supposed to be nonprofit, but they make money on it. And the the cases at Goodwill are very important because their CEOs and CFOs have been making four and $500,000 a year. Yeah, when their disabled workers are making 22 cents an hour

Unknown Speaker 40:50

below poverty level, and they're already at this disadvantage, because the system is is gamed against it

Unknown Speaker 40:57

right? as well. A lot of these people with disabilities are living in housing, like HUD housing, or group housing, right, because they can't afford to live independently. And we have their their on Social Security course. Which means, you know, they could make as little as $500 a month on Social Security. Yeah. And with social security disability income rules, you can only go out and work and make a certain amount over and above what you get from Social Security. So they're still poverty level.

Unknown Speaker 41:45

Right, that system is is also set up against that. And that's such a good reminder. Right?

Unknown Speaker 41:51

There is a current, there is a bill that the National Federation of the Blind has been working to get passed in Congress. I'm not sure what the bill number is. But it's to repeal this sub minimum wage act. It's a you know, from 1938. I mean, let's get rid of it. You know, so, you know, if you if if you're interested in helping people with disabilities, this is a good way to do it. Call your congressman. Let them know. You want this you would like them to to vote to repeal this this ridiculous law?

Unknown Speaker 42:30

Yes. And I will put that link in our in our blog as well. I know that there's there's some dialogue about that. Yeah. Natalie first and sub minimum wages. So thank you for that I always like to give people because a lot of times, we can all get into this, you know, outrage handwringing syndrome, that is a lot of talk, but not a lot of action so well.

Unknown Speaker 42:55

Through I mean, you know, look for a couple other places, you know, because I'm someone who cannot drive anymore. Yes, we have instant instacart and, you know, shipped and all of those things for groceries. But maybe if you know of a neighbor who has a disability, maybe you can offer to go to the grocery store for them or take them to the grocery store. Or maybe even if you're out and about at Walgreens, maybe if they might need something so check in with them, make sure they're doing okay. Especially in you know, one of the things that that has been a problem in the past with, you know, the weather we've been having, especially the hurricanes, the you know, the stuff going on in Texas right now with the no water and things like that, right? disabled people are often forgotten.

Unknown Speaker 43:52

Oh, completely. Yeah. So left behind

Unknown Speaker 43:55

getting in, if you know of someone who is disabled, if you have any contact with them at all, you know, make it a point to tell, you know, to go out and tell them, you know, if you need anything, here's my number. Let me know, I'll be happy to go pick it up.

Unknown Speaker 44:13

And here's another thing to several times to though, because you can say that and somebody thinks you that's just saying that but but calling and saying hey, I just wanted to let you know, I'm going here and then setting up that is for them to be able to ask for help. Because asking for help.

Unknown Speaker 44:29

is sometimes very difficult.

Unknown Speaker 44:31

It is so if you make it

Unknown Speaker 44:32

easier than remaining independent.

Unknown Speaker 44:36

Yes. Yes. Because what a great reminder and so you know, going back to that before we wrap up that final idea of empathy that's empathy that's thinking outside of yourself and and I mean, that's grassroots but when and even for folks that you know complain about government being involved in things then you know what be grassroots be you're allowed me to be that the own community advocate and I also want to give people Add a call to action of if you are doing Google reviews and things like that. Make sure to note when you see good things about because Google Maps does ask you, is there accessibility parking? Is there different things. So start keeping your eyes open for that to kind of calling the stores on it. If you see a restaurant, which who's seen a restaurant lately, not this girl. But when we do restaurants, you know, keep that eye open, and be that out. Outside set of eyes, because there's this, we're all in the same. We're all in the same situation.

Unknown Speaker 45:34

Right? Another point to if you are on social media, please remember to describe your photos.

Unknown Speaker 45:45

I was gonna ask you about that. Thank you for that. Yeah, really? Yeah.

Unknown Speaker 45:48

Yes, the a lot of the technology that totally blind people, some legally blind people use these days, Zoom Zoom Text, there are a lot of different computer programs that they can use to read the text to them. So if you're posting a photograph, on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, wherever, make sure you describe it, because if you can describe it, what will then happen is the ZoomText will be able to read the description to the person. So they know what's in the photograph.

Unknown Speaker 46:29

That's really cool. That's,

Unknown Speaker 46:31

that's such a great reminder. And it's so simple. But that also, if that's not your world, and you're not thinking about it, but then you really can't unthink it once you start thinking, what can I do to help other people feel good? other point, you've captions on YouTube videos? Yes, yes, absolutely. I because I actually sometimes watch things like Viber if I wake up in the middle of the night, but I don't want and I can't find my headphones, but I just want to want to watch it. That's, you know, that's just my own personal use of it. But oh, really great, cause

Unknown Speaker 47:03

I'm very familiar. We have to have all of the videos, I post on my class has to have captions.

Unknown Speaker 47:10

Sure. These are easy to do, folks are happy to do things

Unknown Speaker 47:13

if you can do just to help someone. And it doesn't have to be to help someone, you know, with a disability, as you said, you know, you can't find your headphones. You know, there are people who have text disabilities like dyslexia, where audio descriptions come in really handy. Oh, nice, you know. So if you happen to be that I mean, audio descriptions are the bomb. Be honest with you, because I can't go to a movie theater anymore without having issues? Because I can't see the whole screen,

Unknown Speaker 48:01

huh?

Unknown Speaker 48:02

So if I'm watching a movie, I have to look on one side of the screen or the other look in the middle and Miss both ends. Right? Right. And they now have movie theaters again. When are we going to get back to a movie theater? movie theaters that provide you with an audio description device. If you're at home, and you happen to want to know what an audio description sounds like, turn them on. Right? Disney plus has a two year Max has. Comcast has them when they have, you know, shows and movies that actually have them embedded in the movie. But those are really good pointers. Because what's interesting is once you've heard the audio descriptions, it's real easy to see how if you happen to be walking around the house, cleaning up or whatever, you can turn on the audio descriptions and have the movie playing in the background and you still know what's going on. Right?

Unknown Speaker 49:12

Yeah, that screen and that is me. Definitely. That's That's why I love YouTube on that. Thank you so much for those good pointers. We're going to wrap this up at one question for you. And then we're going to get out of here. Do you have a favorite swear word or swear phrase?

Unknown Speaker 49:29

Um, my sister would say it's Oh shit.

Unknown Speaker 49:33

Oh my

Unknown Speaker 49:34

gosh, but um, no, I think POC is my favorite.

Unknown Speaker 49:41

Like, like what you said that woman

Unknown Speaker 49:46

I don't use it in public mirror. Yeah. I mean, you know after after I walk into a door You know, I know I said it after I broke my eye.

Unknown Speaker 50:01

I've been several times. Right?

Unknown Speaker 50:05

So I've been times, that's probably my favorite.

Unknown Speaker 50:10

And it's my favorite question to ask at the end of the So, where, where's the best place for us to find you to reach out to you?

Unknown Speaker 50:17

Well, my email address is F. Evan, Sam, and as in Mary Schneider as ch any ID er 750 eight@comcast.net or@gmail.com, either one. And then I do have a website. I'm currently working on the website. It's Yeah, it's FM Snyder. 758 at I think it's

Unknown Speaker 50:45

Wix site.com.

Unknown Speaker 50:46

Fight calm. Yeah. Well, now you're gonna get a lot of my design work on it. See

Unknown Speaker 50:53

that?

Unknown Speaker 50:54

Yeah, this is work was bait. My before we go, my thesis work was it you know, I worked to devise a method by which blind people could actually move through an airport bathroom. Without having issues a lot of airport bathrooms don't have adequate lighting. And although they have several disabled stalls, they are not. They're not as apparent as to where they are. Right. And when you're in an airport bathroom, there's lot usually lots of people in and out and zipping in and out. And, surprisingly enough, people who aren't disabled use disabled stalls. Oh, like,

Unknown Speaker 51:42

we've seen it.

Unknown Speaker 51:44

Yeah, yeah. And so I tend to use a disabled at all simply because I use if I travel somewhere, I usually travel with my guide dog,

Unknown Speaker 51:53

right gives you room

Unknown Speaker 51:54

and my guide dog will then come into the stall with me. So Nobody messes with my guide dog while I'm not looking right, so to speak. And so my method after all of my research and trying to figure out various things, I found a lot of things wrong with bathrooms, like putting a hand sanitizer right next to the paper towel dispenser. And automatic hand sanitizer. So when you walk by the paper towel dispensers, the hand sanitizer, yeah, fences. Oh, yeah. tied onto the floor with slipping hazard. I make ridiculous sampling, right. So the other thing is being blind, you don't want to be touching everything in a bathroom. Right?

Unknown Speaker 52:41

Right.

Unknown Speaker 52:42

So my solution was to use the truncated domes that you see in the curb cuts. So you know, those little sticky up orange things that are in the curb cuts. I reduced the size of those and put them on floor tile. And I created a series of four tiles that you can put together in several different ways. Wow, to create pathways through a bathroom.

Unknown Speaker 53:11

Oh, that's amazing. That's a man that was part of your design. I love that. And they can we can is that on your website as well. Yeah. I love that. And I'm looking at this now on my website as well. Yes. And I see your sculptures to cousin Thank you so much. That was so much information ton of shit we don't talk about when it comes to disability and and and empathy and design. Yeah. Which I absolutely love. I want people to start thinking about that more so right folks, go check out Sheila's website, you'll see one.

Unknown Speaker 53:44

Okay, right. But one thing I do want to say before I leave, is remember, don't stare because no matter how much a person is disabled, they do not like to be stared out. They like to be treated as a normal human being.

Unknown Speaker 54:02

Thank you for that. Thank you for that reminder, folks. That and people need to be reminded of it. She's saying it because people need

Unknown Speaker 54:09

to be reminded that it's a thing and stop it. Yes. All right. Yeah. Good thing. Yeah. Yeah. And stop doing that. All right.

Unknown Speaker 54:20

Thank you. You're welcome. Have a great day. You too.

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