

[START OF TRANSCRIPT]

Emily: Hi, I'm Emily Ladau.

Kyle: I'm Kyle Khachadurian.

E: You're listening to another episode of The Accessible Stall.

K: Emily, what are we going to talk about today, Emily?

E: We're going to talk about groupthink.

K: What is groupthink, Emily?

E: So, it's basically when a whole bunch of people have the exact same thought or opinion on something and then there are a few dissenters and everyone goes all wild over the dissenters.

K: Well, that sounds awful.

E: Yeah and it creates a big old division.

K: Really?

E: Among communities.

K: Why would you say that that's important?

E: Because as we have talked about numerous times before we finally gained enough courage or by 'we' I mean me...

K: Who are we Apple?

E: What?

K: That's what they said when they were removing the headphone jack, they did it for courage and not for more money.

E: What in the... okay.

K: Seriously.

E: That's a load of hooey but whatever. So, it took at least me a while to warm up to wanting to talk about this topic even though it's something that Kyle and I think about a lot privately, but groupthink is rampant in the disability community. For the most part, that's what a community is, right? You think in similar ways, you share similar views, and I would say

that on a whole there are things that the disability community largely agrees on.

K: So do I [0:01:26 crosstalk].

E: Better access, economic equality, more jobs, etcetera. Better housing options, better transportation option. Sure there are a lot of common goals that we all have, but I've noticed that we also disagree on some things and it's harmful, but I don't think that it should be harmful that we disagree. I think it's harmful that it's become an issue that people disagree within the disability community.

K: I think we should explain why it's harmful. I don't think that a disagreement is harmful. I don't think you do either. I think that the harm comes when your opinion, whatever it may be, doesn't go with the group, that instead of considering why you might have that opinion as a member of that group, instead, the group tends to push you out or attack you or do anything but ask you why you think that pretty much.

E: Yeah, so you are made to be an outcast, not entirely always, but at least when it comes to certain conversation in regard to a topic that you may have a different opinion on. I'm just going to be honest right now. I have very strong opinions about a lot of things. But despite the fact that I'm out there all the time talking about them and sharing my views and my experiences, I don't always feel safe 100% expressing my thoughts on something to the larger disability community.

K: Right, and it's not because, or maybe it is, I don't want to speak for you, but I believe that you're not saying them because you haven't thought them through or that you can't articulate your thought well enough or whatever. That might be true in some cases, but I think what you're saying is that you choose not to say them based on the fear of the repercussions of the fact that you said them.

E: Yes, absolutely.

K: Now, I happen to think that that is a very bad thing. Not that you don't say them. I mean I think that's bad, too, but you certainly have a reason for doing that. You're a public figure in this world and you have to choose your words carefully and I get that, but the fact that you can't say certain things that you believe says to me that... when a community can't have a conversation that needs to happen, or even a conversation that somebody wants to happen, when you throw all discourse out the

window and you stop considering why someone might feel or think that way, then you're less of a community and more of a like a cult.

E: Okay, but...

K: I don't want to say the disability community is a cult because it's not.

E: No, not at all. I get what you're saying, and I also figure I should clarify that there's a huge difference between really genuinely harmful or racist or vilest or sexist or homophobic thoughts, that was just a small example. But there is a big difference between harboring legitimately awful thoughts and not feeling safe to express them because somewhere in you, you know that they're awful and you don't want to say it and just having a dissenting opinion. There is a difference between thinking horrible things and thinking different things, and I want to put that out there right now.

K: I agree, but I also would say that you should be allowed to say those horrible things and then the community should be like, "No, those are horrible, harmful things, and we don't want you here anymore." But I think that we as a community should be able to separate those horrible things from the things that are just simply, as you said, different opinions. I think the fact that we can't do that yet, in my personal experience, is the sign that we might have growing up to do as a people a little bit.

E: Yeah, let me put it this way...

K: Okay.

E: If someone puts something out there and it's legitimately awful and harmful, they absolutely deserve the recourse and repercussions and the backlash that they receive.

K: Yes.

E: Then, at least in my case, I become afraid that if I express a certain differing viewpoint... and this has even happened to me before, perfect example being language. So, a person first language versus identity first language.

K: That's a pretty benign example too.

E: Yeah, of course I'm trying to...

K: No, no, that's good.

- E:** ... keep benign so that... and you know why it's not that I'm not ever going to talk about these dissenting opinion. It's just that right now, I think expressing them is going to take away from the conversation at hand because then we'll start talking about that thing.
- K:** Absolutely, yeah that's why I said it was a good thing.
- E:** Right. So I'm keeping it benign. So, there have been many cases where I have come out in favor of identity first language. I'm no longer shy about that at all. In fact, someone actually told me that if you google person first language, my article on why I'm against it is actually like the fifth result in Google.
- K:** That's pretty cool.
- E:** So, that was not a humble brag, but that was to say, there's no escaping my viewpoint.
- K:** That is totally a humble brag, but one worth humble bragging about that's really...
- E:** Okay, fine that was totally a humble brag, whatever. Hashtag humble brag. So, whoa that rhymed. Anyway, so point being that it's not hard to find out how I feel about language. Right? A lot of people that I know feel the same way, hence the groupthink, but then there's also another section of groupthink within the disability community that thinks that person first language is the way to go. So, it's almost like you have these opposing hive minds kind of pushing against each other, and as much as I identify with identity first language, so saying disabled person instead of person with a disability, I have also learned that thrusting that viewpoint on people without also explaining that I understand the reasoning for person first language is super ineffective, so I'm just alienating people and pushing people away from me and then in turn, turning them off from my viewpoint. I wish that there was a way that... and I know this is the most idealistic like Pollyanna thinking ever.
- K:** Go for it.
- E:** That we can just exist in a community where disagreement doesn't set us back from our common goals but instead we can actually politely agree to disagree and that's okay.
- K:** I feel like that's the case in a lot of circles. I feel like we as disabled people are odd people out. I almost said odd man out. You mentioned the hate I get for that. Are odd people out that that don't do that, which

is weird because we talk about a lot of things and it's not like we're a disrespectful people as a whole. I wouldn't say that at all, but we tend to feel so strongly about what we believe that opposition doesn't cause us to think about why we believe them before it causes us to think that the other person expressing a different view is just completely wrong and doesn't know what they're talking about, which I think is a bad thing.

E: Yeah, and I think there are certain cases where you're just completely wrong. I think it happens.

K: Yeah, of course.

E: I do, but I also think that more often than not, there's more than one side to an issue and I would love to see people discuss that respectfully.

K: Right, because, well, sorry, go on. I cut you off.

E: Yeah, all I know is that when people express disagreement with me, and I've had some very harsh dissenters, if you will, and I don't think I'm the gospel on anything, but I'm proud of my views. I've thought them through carefully, but most of the time when people disagree with me, it gets me to at least see the other side of the issue or another side of the issue and I make it a point to be like, "Oh, I hear you," because I do, I hear what they're saying. I'm trying to understand what you're saying even if I still don't agree with you.

K: Right. That's what this...

E: I'm not perfect but...

K: No, no, but that... you're describing discourse. Having strong opinions about something isn't the bad thing. Everyone, when they have a strong opinion about something, wants other people to believe what they believe. That is just a natural thing, but when your response to an opposing view or a different view that looks on the same issue, when the response to that is, I don't want to hear it, and you stick your fingers in your ears and yes, sing loud circus music instead of, "Oh, that's interesting. I've never thought of it that way. Let's agree to disagree." Or even, "Hey, I never thought about it that way. I agree with you." You create just this notion of, if you're not with us, you're against us even if you are us, and I can't stand that.

- E: Yeah, and I've been noticing that that's happening a lot and I'm going to do it. I'm just going to say we are largely apolitical on this podcast and we're going to continue...
- K: We can say names.
- E: Sure. Right. I think part of the beauty of what we've been doing so far is that we talk about issues in the world and don't try to politicize or bring them over to one particular side.
- K: Well, no, but this has context, right? So it's, right.
- E: Of course, so...
- K: But yes, The Accessible Stall will remain apolitical as soon as we're done saying this thing.
- E: Yeah, which I hope you'll all bear with us but I think this...
- K: Needs to be said. Yeah.
- E: So, I am a Hillary Clinton supporter. I may get some people who are mad at me for that.
- K: No one should be mad at you for that. That's exactly what we're talking about.
- E: Right, but okay, you know what? So, case in point, I'm a Clinton supporter and I think that she's doing some pretty cool things when it comes to actually bringing disability into the conversation. So, I'm pretty glad to see that disability is getting some actual attention and that we're being treated like the disability community is a legitimate voting bloc. However, I recently did an interview with NPR and after I watched the speech that Hillary Clinton gave on the economy and on people with disabilities and things like that, I felt that it was kind of heavy on the feel good stories and did not focus enough on substantial issues including intersection of various identities, including diving a little bit deeper into the how, not the what are the issues but the how are we going to solve these issues. I get that you know, political rhetoric is a thing whatever, but I expressed my views on NPR. I'm not going to launch into a whole tirade now. Long story short, some people don't agree with me on the views that I expressed, and most people were able to come to me and tell me that calmly and say, "I disagree with you, but I still appreciate that you're speaking out." Other people were like, "Wow, you're like causing all the progress we've made to go backwards."

- K:** Yeah, that's the problem, right? Because I read Emily's NPR article and in fact, I think we should put it in the thing, we should put it in the little box.
- E:** Maybe for a frame of reference.
- K:** Yeah, because what you'll see when you read it, if you read it, is that it really isn't that bad. Emily was speaking as a Clinton supporter saying, "Hey, look, I like what you're saying, but this is how you can make it better and this is why I didn't think you completely nailed it even though you were very close." It was hardly something that I would personally call criticism at all, and the fact that she got any backlash for it whatsoever to me is like almost astonishing, and there's no hyperbole there because... and I'm like fangirling over you a little bit but I just... It really was a decent critique. It wasn't like, "Oh, you're wrong," or, "Oh my God, you're perfect." It was like, "Hey, look, this was good but..." There's nothing wrong with that at all especially when you're running for the President of the United States. Like that's... you need to be open to public backlash for things that you say so...
- E:** Right. I'm realizing that this probably is going to come across a little bit as like Emily is trying to defend herself. Oh my goodness, listen to her trying to talk her way out of whatever backlash she's getting.
- K:** You are.
- E:** Here's the thing-- no, but here's the thing. I do not reject backlash. What I reject is disrespectful backlash in which you're not even so much as willing to have an open conversation about it. You **[0:14:52 crosstalk]**.
- K:** That's an important distinction to make. I'm glad you said that.
- E:** No, because I don't think that it would be even remotely reasonable for me to say, "I don't like that you're giving me backlash," because there's plenty of times when I give people backlash for things that I don't agree with, but I always try to do it in a respectful way. So, even though, yes, I brought up the whole Clinton thing, and yes, this is I suppose my way of expressing how I feel about the responses that I've gotten, the truth is, this has been a reality in the disability community long before NPR was like, "Hey, we care what you say."
- K:** Yeah, this was just... I won't even say the final straw. We've been thinking about this for a very long time. It was just the catalyst that

made us say, "Okay, now is the time to do this because this is getting ridiculous."

E: Yeah, the election has really brought this out in people and this has nothing to do with what I said anymore. This is just in general. People disagree with each other left and right but it's almost... it's catty at this point. It feels like I'm in high school again, and that... we're going to get backlash for saying this.

K: You already got... I can hear the backlash already for saying that you support Clinton, which to me is ridiculous and that's...

E: I think we're going to get backlash for this whole episode and maybe we might sound slightly harsh or bitter.

K: No.

E: We're trying to keep it real here.

K: If you are hate tweeting us right now, just... the idea we're proposing isn't that opposing views are good or bad, it's just that it's important for us as a community if we're going to grow and thrive and succeed that we need to have them. Emily made a point earlier about horrible things shouldn't be said, but I think that a community is a self-correcting system where, if you say horrible things, that you will be called out and put out, but I don't think a differing opinion about anything unless it's pure hate speech, which is pretty black and white for the most part.

E: There is the distinction, that's what I was looking for.

K: No, but even if it is, that's okay. That's when I'll say like, "All right, I don't care that you're calling this person an idiot," or whatever, because they're being hateful. There's a very big difference between hate speech and a differing opinion. I think that if you say hate speech, then as we said earlier, that you deserve to be... it's your right to say it and it's our right to tell you that you're wrong, but that's a very different thing to a differing opinion. I think that in our world where most of the issues that affect us, affect us on a very personal level, we tend to think with our hearts first and our brains second, which when it comes to a lot of the bigger issues or a lot of the nuance issues too, a lot of issues don't affect me in the same way they affect Emily. A lot of... disability is different for everybody so everyone feel strongly about it, and when it gets down to the nitty gritty of little tiny nuance issues, we tend to have very strong feelings about them because it's our life. In my experience, I've never... I

wish that somebody would say to me, like, "Oh, I think you're wrong," but it doesn't come across that way. It's always like, "Well, why do you think that?" Well, like, "What's wrong with you? I don't understand." Like, "Why is this what you think?" It's like, well, I'll tell you...

E: Actually, I love to tell you that you're wrong.

K: The difference between... no, but you do, you do. This is the whole podcast that you are telling me I was wrong.

E: Right, I was just about to say that. The whole point of this podcast is so that Kyle and I can either agree or hash it out.

K: When Emily tells me I'm wrong, I'm like, okay, I accept that I might have been wrong. Why is she saying that? Then she says it and then I say, well was I... do I think I'm wrong? Yeah, maybe and I change my view a little bit. But the reason that we do this podcast is because we can't handle it with anyone else and we... I don't want to speak for Emily here, but at least I want to see this community thrive and grow and become this thing, and for people to take disability seriously, we have to take each other seriously all the time.

E: Right, and there seems to be this notion that taking disability seriously or for the disability community to be taken seriously that we all need to think the same thoughts about everything.

K: Which is completely untrue, I think.

E: Can we just call it bullsh*t? Can we just call it what it is?

K: Yeah, it's bullsh*t.

E: It's so... that's not even how the world works. That's how nothing works in life.

K: Yeah, there are very few things, and I think we listed them at the beginning, that I would say that everyone in the disability community universally agrees on, and I would say that that's more true for us than almost anyone else because disability is so individualistic and personal that it's very difficult, quite frankly, to come up with things that affect everyone and everyone can agree on.

E: Yeah, and that's okay.

K: Yeah, that is okay.

- E: On the one hand, we're sitting here being like, "Diversity, whoo!" and on the other hand we're like, "You have a diverse opinion, uh-uh."
- K: No, but yeah, exactly. I think that's funny because I am all for diversity in every shape and form including opinion. In fact, I welcome diversity in opinion because that's what makes communities grow and become real and isn't just an echo chamber.
- E: Sure, and I... as you always say, you don't want to speak for me, I don't want to speak for you, although just...
- K: You can speak for me.
- E: Okay. I speak for Kyle, everyone, did you hear that?
- K: Yes, she does. She's...
- E: But there are plenty of times that Kyle and I have just been like, no this person's flat out wrong. This person's terrible. We hate this person. This person just needs to go away. Kyle and I are not perfect human.
- K: Oh God no.
- E: We have done what we're sitting here criticizing right now, and I think it's really important to call ourselves out on that.
- K: Oh, yeah. We're... if any of you thought we were perfect, oh we're so sorry because...
- E: Which I don't think that they think that at all.
- K: Yeah, no.
- E: Just to clarify, we would be so remiss if we did not call ourselves out on doing this because we're guilty of it.
- K: Right, and in fact I think that's one of the reasons why we're doing this in the first place is to check ourselves, but it's just a shame when there's... particularly with things like cures. That's the thing that is polar opposites usually. There's very little middle ground in the world of that, in our world, for cures.
- E: Like finding a cure for disability?
- K: Yeah.
- E: Yeah.

K: My opinion is irrelevant and I'm not going to say it in this episode, but it always boils down to like nothing. It always turns into this argument about nothing. It starts off with person A says their opinion and person B says there's and if they disagree, then they argue until it goes down to like name calling. I think that that's stupid. I think that you should just be able to say, "I think this." "No, I think this." "Why do you think this?" "Oh, because XYZ." "Oh, that's interesting." I don't understand why we can't do that.

E: Right. If we're talking about cure, again, not to muddy the waters of topics, but just to sort of exemplify what we're getting at. So, I am pretty adamantly against the idea of the cure, but a long time ago...

K: For your disability or for disability?

E: What?

K: For your disability or for all of them?

E: Well, so that's where I'm going with this. So, I've come to realize that I'm against the cure for myself, but what I'm against more than that is the rhetoric that comes with curing disability.

K: Oh, yeah, completely.

E: I found that-- and this took a lot of self-exploration to figure this out, but the rhetoric for curing a disability is often directly opposed to the rhetoric that comes with disability access and equality and justice. So, I'm looking for a world where the desire for curing a disability can coexist with respecting that a disabled person is fully human and that even if you don't "fix them" they're still worthy of being a person. So, I'm looking for a world where those two views are no longer at odds. I don't want the desire for a cure to trump the need for equality, the immediate need for equality.

K: I'm glad you said trump, that way we can be totally fair. I know you're using it as a verb, but that's good, because now we said both their names so now no one...

E: We did? Oh my God, so we are so fair and balanced on this podcast.

K: We're not talking about Donald. I was making a joke just for anyone who doesn't, but... but you see the thing I would say to what you just said that I don't know why we currently don't live in that world. I don't think that the want for a cure is necessarily at odds with the needs of

access and acceptance and all that stuff. I know that it is, I don't know why it is.

E: It is I think because of the way that curing disability is presented. It comes with the tragedy narrative, it comes with the pity narrative, it comes with the "Your life is over" narrative, and you know what? The other thing I had to realize is I was born my disability. I have no freaking idea what it feels like to become disabled.

K: Oh forget it like.... but here's the thing and you're absolutely right, and that is as far as I will concede unless presented with more opinions and evidence because that's what the rational person does. That's as far as I go.

E: I see what you did there.

K: See? To me the idea of a cure no matter what your personal view on it is such an individualistic choice that it's hard, if not impossible, to push what you believe on to someone else. I don't think that you should do that anyway especially when it comes to something so personal as a cure. Because, yes, you might be against it, but you don't know if someone else is. I don't understand what gives you the right to tell someone what they can and can't do if an imaginary cure for whatever they have exists.

E: Yeah, here's the thing. When you're talking about a cure in a way that you just want to like eradicate disability, then I'm offended and that's terrible. Then you stop that, but you know what? That's because I'm a person who is disabled and I feel like you're trying to get rid of my humanity. So, I'm looking at it through my own lens here.

K: Yes, but you're smart enough to realize that. You're willing to accept that. You say, "Okay..."

E: Yes, but it's still... it's painful when you see the tragedy narrative over and over again and the problem is that it's used as a very generalized narrative. So, it's not like one disability [0:26:17 crosstalk].

K: Yes and that's... actually, you know what? I think that that's dumb too. I don't think it's...

E: Kind of like groupthink in the other direction.

K: No, it is. I think that that's just as dumb. I don't think it's possible to paint all disabilities with the same brush. I'm not saying that any one is

worse than the other objectively. I think that that's entirely subjective and I don't even want to get into that conversation because I don't really think there's any right answer to that, but if you as a disabled person with disability A feel that way, then I don't think that you should be attacked for wanting to cure it if you want.

E: But at the same time, don't go around either saying that everyone's life who's disabled is tragic.

K: No, no, that's just as wrong to me. That's absolutely the same. It's the same kind of wrong from the other side.

E: Again, it's the happy medium that I'm looking for though it can't seem to find, and I know how idealistic seeing the world through rose colored glasses that is. I get that, but I also feel we have to be capable of it as human beings and somehow it just continually gets worse. Somehow we just continually become more divided and divisive rather than trying to work together and figure things out and it's like...

K: Oh go on, sorry...

E: It's okay. Like...

K: I was going to say and I'm going to make one more political joke that your view - and it sounds like mine too. I think we actually agree, oddly enough. I didn't know that - of cure is very libertarian. I mean that literally and figuratively because we make politics jokes, but it is. It's very individual, it's very like per person type of thing. Cure was just an example, and as you can see by the mini debate that Emily and I just had, that it's a very personal, but it's not... we pick that because that's the easy one there's many of them in there are some that shouldn't be that way. Like whether or not you think your preferred presidential candidate did the optimal thing for your people. I don't think that that's a horrible thing to say or do.

E: Right. Essentially, I got accused of like... so the fact that I had an opinion that maybe wasn't like everything is sunshine and roses and unicorns. The fact that I didn't have that cheerful opinion, I think somehow sent this red flag up that I'm detracting from the major progress that's being made by the fact that a political candidate made a historical speech that reference disability. My argument is, hi and that's how politics has always worked. Sometimes you like some things about a candidate and you don't like other things, but you can still support that candidate. And

guess what? I still support that candidate. Can you tell that this ruffled my feathers a little bit?

K: Well, but I think that more than it ruffling feathers, your feathers ruffled that it even ruffled them in the first place. You're more ruffled that they're ruffled than the fact that... because any opinion about any politician is going to piss somebody off. That is a given, no matter who you are, no matter what you believe, everywhere someone's not going to like it. No, I don't think you can argue that with me. If you can go, for it, but that is... nobody thinks the same. When you criticize the person that you like for them to be better, like that is the least backlasy thing I've ever heard. That is so...

E: Let's actually take that out of the political sphere.

K: No, sure, go ahead.

E: If I'm talking to Kyle, if you're talking to your friend. Kyle and I push each other to be better like nobody's business. Let's just get really real here for a second.

K: Let's do it.

E: Before we even did this podcast, like this one in particular, this episode, Kyle was poring over a message that I sent to somebody on OK Cupid. Okay?

K: Okay.

E: No, we're just going to get really real right now.

K: That happens.

E: Because I trust Kyle with everything in my life and etc. etc. Anyway he was reading a message that I sent to someone on OK Cupid and critiquing the hell out of it because that's what he does.

K: But that's what she asked for it before anyone tells me that I was doing something wrong.

E: No, no, no ,but I wasn't even going to go that far because I think that it's okay to hold each other accountable to be better. That's the point I was getting at. Maybe politics and OK Cupid aren't exactly on the same wavelength, although kind of they are.

K: I mean, I would say so.

E: But the point being that Kyle and I push each other to be better, and the best friendships that I have and the best relationships that I've had are ones where you push each other to be better. Criticism is annoying. I get super annoyed, like if my mom criticizes me about something. I'm like, are you kidding me? Can you just stop? But then I think about it, and most of the time, she wants me to be better. She doesn't mean like, be better, like, you're a failure and everything is terrible. She just cares about how I'm out there in the world.

K: I think that when it comes to disability in general, it is so... and I said this, but it bears repeating. It's so individualistic, it's so personal that it's hard to separate you, Emily, from the issue that you're discussing, but I think that you need to when you're discussing an issue because how an issue affects you is almost never going to be the same thing as how it affects somebody else, especially in regard to disability where even if you're arguing with somebody with the same disability as you, they might be affected differently. I just think that like, it's sort of... while we're still in the political thing, it's sort of why defining people with disabilities is hard to do if you're trying to draw voting bloc lines. It's because we all think differently, and that's part of the reason why when groupthink even happens, it's like, oh, how did that happen? I don't think it's... I'm sorry you keep trying to say something I'm just going to get **[0:32:40 inaudible]**.

E: Oh no, I'm just nodding in agreement.

K: I don't think it's a bad thing to have a different opinion. I just don't ever no matter what it is because even if it's terrible, you're going to get yelled at. I will never say that you can't say something. I'll say maybe you shouldn't, but can't. If you're a social outcast because of what you believe, to me that's absurd. I just don't subscribe to that in any form much less than in the form of my people. It just doesn't work that way for me.

E: I'm really interested in a point you made at the beginning of what you were saying.

K: What did I say?

E: About how it's hard to separate yourself from your thought, and you would think of course while they're your opinions, with you, it's your thoughts, but at the same time when you're living in a body that is so deeply connected to those particular opinion. So, it's one thing that my

opinion is, I don't really like vanilla ice cream. I don't really think it's that great. I prefer eating chocolate ice cream. So...

K: Is that true?

E: That's true.

K: You're the worst.

E: Right. Whatever... fine. Vanilla so boring. I'm not emotionally connected to that opinion.

K: I am.

E: Okay. Well, clearly we have different opinions. For that matter, ice cream would not be my first go to anyway.

K: Okay, now you're just picking a fight with me, but go on.

E: Also I don't really like donuts. Okay, so now that we've just gotten my dessert **[0:34:25 crosstalk]**.

K: She is just ending this friendship the more she talks.

E: Clearly, I see it disintegrating. I'm not emotionally attached to my dessert choice opinions, but I'm super emotionally attached to my opinions about disability because that's an integral part of who I am, of how I experience the world, of how the world perceives me. So yes, it's really hard to separate emotions from certain viewpoints or preferences or perspectives or opinions.

K: Did I say that or did I say from the issue themselves? I don't remember, but I think that they're both kind of important.

E: Yes, I guess... you just sort of said it's hard to separate you, Emily, from I guess the issues for...

K: But from the opinion or the issue, I don't... but I think...

E: I think I meant the issues.

K: But I think that that's important too. I'm not saying that somebody should separate themselves from their opinion because then you would just have like words. That's a weird thing. It's important, I think, to take the way that you feel about an issue away from the way that you objectively think about the issue and not how the issue affects you. You can obviously be very personal about how an issue affects you. That's

what an opinion is, but when you're trying to make sort of an... if you're trying to be as objective as possible about an issue, you can say, "Oh, this bothers me, but I get it," whatever it is. You got to take yourself out of it as much as you can. I think that that's hard to do. Like Emily said, that's not easy when you live and breathe this.

E: Yeah. You know what? I think that's what I was getting at, but I kind of completely misstated it.

K: No, I think you said the right thing, but I think they're different.

E: It's hard to take your personal views and opinions out of the issue. Being objective is hard.

K: It's hard to do in disability when almost nothing is. I think that it's more important to do it in situations where it's harder to be objective, because then you sort of... you're trying to eliminate your personal bias as much as possible. Like I'm not... no one's perfect, we're not perfect. We do it all the time, like you said earlier, but like...

E: Yeah, and there's unconscious biases.

K: Of course, yeah. I'm not a statistician so I'm full of sh*t. I think our audience is smart and knows what I'm saying or trying to say anyway.

E: Yeah, and I mean even this podcast is not objective. Clearly, I came in here...

K: Oh, God no.

E: I came in here to this particular episode color by my recent experiences with politics and the media, right? I was already raring to go on this topic, but it's also... it's a relief to talk about this, and the reality is that we're not going to change the disability hive mind. We're not, and we...

K: I don't want to. I just wanted to be better.

E: Exactly. That's the other thing. I don't want some of this groupthink to go away. I want us to be united...

K: ...as much as possible.

E: ...with common goals. Yeah, I don't want us to be divided. We're not strong that way. We have a long way to go to stop being so divided, but we're only furthering our divisions by not respecting diverse viewpoints.

K: Especially when there are people who are afraid to express certain viewpoints for fear of what the groupthink might think.

E: Yeah, for fear of repercussions, which I fully admit to being one of those people.

K: Oh, me too. Maybe we'll talk about some of them someday.

E: Yeah, we're working up to in here. People.

K: You should see our list. It's nasty.

E: Nasty, not in a bad way, but nasty in like we have a lot to weed through and deal with.

K: In a "How many fans do we think we want?" kind of way. I kid.

E: In all seriousness, we don't.... we take this podcast lightly, but we also don't. Does that make sense?

K: Well, we present that we take it lightly, but I think we take it seriously, enough.

E: I think we take everything a little bit with a grain of salt, but we're also very serious about getting into the issue in a way that I honestly don't hear happening a lot. I don't think that we're that special.

K: That's why we're doing this.

E: People are afraid of talking about things like this.

K: Not me. Not afraid to talk about anything.

E: I mean you should hear what we say when we're not recording.

K: Oh my god.

E: For real. It's nice to talk about stuff like this because my hope or at least what I'm sort of envisioning is that whoever is listening to this podcast, somewhere in here, you're nodding your head or you thought to yourself, "Yeah."

K: Totally.

E: I hope that, and on the whole, if you don't agree with what we said, then hey, our case in point would be that's okay, too. **[0:39:35 crosstalk]**. But let's do it respectfully.

- K:** Yes, let's do something.
- E:** Please let us know.
- K:** That sounded like a final takeaway-ish type thing. If we're doing those... just when it comes to disability, it's important for us to grow because we came a long way since the ADA, but our favorite thing to talk about the ADA this past year was, "This is great, but..." I think that the same thing can be said for the entire community. Yes, everything we've done so far is great, but there's still a long way to go and that includes internal dialogue about important issues and how we express them.
- E:** Yeah. Well, I mean not to get off on another tangent when we're trying to wrap up. Super quickly, the Americans with Disabilities Act was actually another great example that we could have talked about in more depth.
- K:** Yeah, I don't know why we didn't for the past 40 minutes. That would have been really good.
- E:** Long story short is that a lot of people who are in the younger or post ADA passage generation...
- K:** Which is us.
- E:** Yeah we are very firmly in that. We were born like just a year after its passage. A lot of us are like, the ADA is great, but we can do better, we can do more. I remember when I said that, when I came out and said that, I got like ripped a new one by a couple of people who were like, "You take the ADA for granted. What are you talking about?" Older people who were around for the passage of the ADA and who helped. Of course yes, I'm saying that something that they directly contributed on needs to be better, but at the same time, how do we gain civil rights? By constantly striving to be better. How do we gain justice and equality? By constantly striving to be better. I guarantee you that the people who came before us had the same thoughts.
- K:** Right. Also it's important to recognize that we do in fact...there's no way to even say that we don't because we do. I don't think that taking something for granted automatically makes it infallible. I don't think that about anything.
- E:** In the same way that being a supporter of something or someone doesn't make that person or thing infallible.

- K:** Yeah, exactly the same way. So, while I think that those people have a point, and they do, it's important for us to recognize that we do take this for granted. I don't think that you should have gotten backlash there either. The reason you're saying you want to be better is because you recognize how good you have it now and how much worse it could have been.
- E:** Well, also, just because I care about the disability community.
- K:** Absolutely. Yeah.
- E:** Nothing that I ever say comes from a place of not giving a crap.
- K:** No, in fact, everything you say, comes from a place of giving too much crap, I would say. Seriously.
- E:** I'm thinking. I know we said we were going to do our final takeaways with this show **[0:42:31 inaudible]** head. Think about it, if you are a surgeon and... like I had a surgeon who did a spinal fusion for me. He fused the part of my spine and my neck, my cervical spine, and he's amazing, he's fantastic. I would recommend him to anyone, anywhere, anytime, but I always think about, like what if I recommended him to somebody and then he screwed up their surgery?
- K:** Yeah, or had a...
- E:** Of course, your opinion is shaped by your experiences and someone else's opinion of the exact same thing could be completely different. On top of that, you can also use the surgeon analogy to talk about how if a surgeon does mess something up, you're going to want them to get better. That surgeon should want to get better. That surgeon should want to improve. In so many cases, we should constantly be striving forward and that comes with messing up or being called out or taking a good hard look at yourselves and then saying, "Okay, I will do better. I will be better. I will push forward." I don't know if that comparison was totally off the rails, but it just popped into my head.
- K:** No, I think groupthink is good when it has a common message. When your common message comes from...
- E:** Well, groupthink always had a common message.
- K:** Yeah that's why I'm kind of clarifying because I was stupid to say that. It was really dumb. Groupthink is good when it has a message that that signifies something that is universally agreed on pretty objectively. Like

universal access or more wheelchair ramps or general accessibility thing. When your groupthink becomes largely what stem from a completely personal opinion that you feel and not something that's based in any kind of reality except your own, then it's not so good because there are people in the world who feel differently than you about things. That's just fact. So, to what Emily said before, I think that the best way to get better is to have discourse, and the more we have it, the better it will be. So there you go, have more discourse. That's my... those are my words.

E: Okay. I feel like I kind of ended up giving my takeaway and my little surgeon analogy there, but my takeaway would be to...

K: Be better.

E: Yeah, well, sure, be better, but like that goes for me too. So, who do I know I'm over here? I think my actual takeaway would be...

K: You're a self-aware person. Give yourself some credit.

E: Be more communicative.

K: Yes, don't yell too much.

E: But communicative in an open way. I mean, look, I love to yell at Kyle. It's my hobby. It's my [0:45:53 inaudible].

K: Emily is like my seventh favorite thing to do in the world.

E: Only seventh? Kind of disappointed.

K: Maybe second.

E: Look...

K: You want me to make it first? I'll make it first.

E: Make it first.

K: Listen, why don't you just chill out?

E: Take a long roll off a short cliff.

K: I don't roll.

E: I'm just putting words in your mouth. Anyway, we love each other so much, but look, it's okay to disagree. Even if you're going to say that you're going to agree to disagree, I mean, really mean that mean that.

Don't just say that because you just don't feel like having discourse. Really try to understand each other, work with each other, be more accepting of each other's differing opinions, and that will actually bring us together and make us stronger as a community. So, on that beautiful note, I don't know if we should sing "Kumbaya" right now or whatever.

K: I really don't want to.

E: Kumbaya my Lord. I'm not a part of this. Okay, so no one wanted to sing along with me. Kyle ruined everything.

K: That's the name of it. That's the tail end of the show really.

E: Kyle ruins everything, always.

K: Yep.

E: Including my heartfelt sing along.

K: I wish I could say that I was sorry

E: Well, I hope someone at home was singing along with me. Okay.

K: Yep.

E: Go hug something.

K: Good night.

E: Good night. Bye. Thanks for listening.

[END OF TRANSCRIPT]