

AT Banter Podcast Episode 248 - Tova Sherman

 Tue, 7/27 1:37PM  1:26:03

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, disability, agency, person, day, business, arts, canada, tova, book, canceled, inclusion, community, create, big, nova scotia, organization, paralympics, employers, win

SPEAKERS

Steve Barclay, Rob Mineault, Tova Sherman, Ryan Fleury

-
-  **Ryan Fleury** 01:02
Hey, and welcome to a another episode of AT Banter
 -  **Steve Barclay** 01:08
Banter, banter.
 -  **Ryan Fleury** 01:11
Did you Did someone hit the cowbell or? Yeah, it's like There we go. Think there it is again. Perfect. Ah, hey, my name is Rob Mineault and joining me today Mr. Ryan Fleury. Hello again.
 -  **Rob Mineault** 01:28
And Mr. Steve Barclay.
 -  **Steve Barclay** 01:30
Hey, Is that me?

R Rob Mineault 01:32
That is totally. Alright. Ah, hey, hey, I have an important question to ask you guys.

R Ryan Fleury 01:41
Oh?

R Rob Mineault 01:43
Do you have Olympic fever?

R Ryan Fleury 01:46
I recorded the opening ceremonies because I want to see how they roll it out with no spectators. Just a bunch of people going around an oval track, I guess.

R Rob Mineault 02:06
You know, so not to go too far down the rabbit hole. And nobody asked, but I'm just gonna tell you what I think anyways, because that's how this podcast works. I don't I don't know how to feel about this. I really do feel like they shouldn't cancel these things. I feel like, like, I love the Olympics. I grew up as a big Olympic nerd. You know, in high school, I used to watch every summer Olympics, I used to like, stay home and just do nothing, but just watch all the Olympic coverage I have. So I mean, I love the Olympics as much as everybody else. But this year, I just feel like it's just a bad idea to go through with them. I just don't think the conditions are right for it.

R Ryan Fleury 02:47
You know what they're gonna do, though, right? The athletes village has already had numbers of people testing positive with COVID. And it didn't cancel the Olympics, the Paralympics start in one month today. Guess what I'm willing to bet is going to be canceled. Oh, wow. There's gonna be a huge outcry again, just like what's happened with that disabled woman who wasn't able to take her mother with her as her assistant, her guide?

S Steve Barclay 03:16
Yeah, that's, that's pretty bad. Yeah, I was going to talk a little bit about that.

R Ryan Fleury 03:20
Getting a lot of flack on Twitter.

R Rob Mineault 03:22
Yeah, so But yeah, I don't know. What's your what I just I'm curious to know what your what how you guys see this.

R Ryan Fleury 03:29
I think they should have canceled it. You know, it was canceled last year. And it was cancelled this year. It should have been canceled this year. They're still not going to get the money from the tourists and spectators who would go and spend gazillions of dollars at an Olympic event. So made no sense to me anyway. Yeah.

R Rob Mineault 03:47
What about you Steve, where do you land on this?

S Steve Barclay 03:52
I don't know. I think there should have been vaccine requirements for the athletes. A lot of the athletes who are over there are unvaccinated. A lot of them, you know, don't don't want to put anything in their body, which I get. But then they, you know, they're going into a village they're going into a confined space or they're competing in group events. You know, the potential for disaster here is enormous. Yeah, it probably should have been canceled, or at very least, they should have had a vaccination requirement.

R Rob Mineault 04:27
Yeah, I would agree. I mean, you're gonna you're also going into a country that their vaccination rate is something like 20% and they're in the middle of a spike. I hear that they're 3000 cases a day. Yeah. So I mean, that's, it seems crazy to me.

R Ryan Fleury 04:41
how many a day?

R Rob Mineault 04:42
I heard 3000

R Ryan Fleury 04:44
That's nothing. That's nothing. Didn't you hear the UK has 50,000 new cases a day? 150
1000 was reported the other day.

S Steve Barclay 04:53
Holy, moly.

R Ryan Fleury 04:55
Yeah.

R Rob Mineault 04:56
How How? What? That's the report, I saw I don't know what well, they had.

S Steve Barclay 05:03
They just had Freedom Day in the UK. That's right. It was it was the day where anybody
could go out and do anything. And people did. That's nuts. Yeah, I think people are getting
putting the cart before the horse here. You know, we're not far enough out of the woods
yet.

R Ryan Fleury 05:22
But I keep saying that people live it up now because we're going to start seeing
restrictions again, come Fall.

R Rob Mineault 05:26
Yeah. Anyways, but Yeah, I know. I was just curious to see it. So I don't know. I have a bad
feeling about the Olympics. I think that's just going to be one disaster after another. And it
already has been like a little bit like that.

- R** Ryan Fleury 05:39
Well think about all the events right? You got swimming pools, you got locker room shower rooms, it's it's gonna be a disaster. You know, you're right.
- S** Steve Barclay 05:46
Yeah, well, and it's something that's spread by breath primarily right and airborne and it's not like athletes breathe heavy....
- R** Rob Mineault 05:59
You know, what's interesting, too, is that I find that there's already been controversy and what's unusual, I think this year is that the Paralympics are getting their share of controversy as well. So maybe this is a little bit of equity here going on because usually it's it's all the all the drama is usually only with on the regular Olympics. So it's, it's, I guess it's kind of nice to see the Paralympics, getting their share. But I'll I wanted to talk a little bit about that. The story that you referenced earlier, Ryan, which was Becca Myers, who was a deaf blind swimmer, I believe.
- S** Steve Barclay 06:37
Yeah, she's being so screwed.
- R** Rob Mineault 06:40
Yeah, so I guess she wanted her mom to serve as her. What do they call them? I guess PCA is which is a personal care assistant personal care aide. Yeah. Which makes complete sense. Like if you're going to travel internationally with a PCA it makes total sense that it would be her mom. But I guess the the Olympic and Paralympic Committee refused it. You refuse to allow her mom to travel with her and
- S** Steve Barclay 07:10
They just viewed it as an extra person. She couldn't bring an extra person.
- R** Rob Mineault 07:13
That seems crazy to me, how many Paralympians must have to bring PCAs like that a lot of a lot of Paralympians, and must have to do that. You would think, yeah, you'd figure

Well, that's nuts. And so she had to withdraw. And and, and, you know, she was, I guess a fairly decorated Paralympian. I mean, she was really in the running for gold for Team USA. So it's, it's kind of a big deal.

R

Ryan Fleury 07:43

It is a big deal. And this is just one story that we're seeing so far. You know, we'll see how the rest of it goes along. Especially once the Paralympic start and people start traveling over there. I think we'll probably see more of this. But the other side of the coin, like you mentioned earlier, about controversy is that what was it the Is it the Norwegian volleyball team? Ladies volleyball team got fined for wearing shorts and not bikinis? Yeah. Like, it's ludicrous in this day and age like, like, God, people.

S

Steve Barclay 08:20

I believe the European handball Federation is the governing body. Yeah, they told the team that it would be fine. 1500 dollars per person, per day. Yeah. They covered more than 10 centimeters of their buttocks.

R

Ryan Fleury 08:34

Isn't that that's that's grounds for a lawsuit against the European body.

R

Rob Mineault 08:41

Like those guys should be sued out of existence. Really? Anybody that would make a statement like that. That's just as it should be gone. just gone.

R

Ryan Fleury 08:53

Yeah. Yeah. I couldn't believe that when I read that.

R

Rob Mineault 08:56

Yeah, that is crazy. That that is nuts. And I'm glad that's getting pushed back to and actually, you know, I read another story on the other side of that, that there was a it's another Paralympian but she's from the UK. She was a track and field athlete. I believe she was a long jumper. And she was told by some sort of an official at like a world meet just recently that her shorts were too short and inappropriate.

R Ryan Fleury 09:27
Jesus.

R Rob Mineault 09:30
And those shorts were basically essentially bikini shorts. Wow. And which, I guess, track and field like, that's their aerodynamic there. Yeah. So yeah, I don't even think it was that officials place to make any kind of comment about it. Yeah, exactly. It wasn't an official thing away or anything. But it is true. This this poor woman off like she was just like, she didn't know what to do. So it's weird. It's just things are all over the place.

R Ryan Fleury 09:56
Yeah, it's it's time people kind of get caught up to her 21st century thoughts and processes now cuz that's an old thinking.

S Steve Barclay 10:05
I think people need to get comfortable with the idea of telling people to go f themselves...

R Rob Mineault 10:14
Going back to Becca Myers, I think one of the things that I'm taking away from this, that I'm, it's kind of the silver lining on this. I feel like I don't know, five years ago, this story might not have yet even hit the mainstream media. I think that it heartens me that this is getting a lot of attention and it's getting a lot of pushback. Yeah. Because it just makes me wonder how many Paralympians in the past got screwed over by by just officials making some sort of a sweeping decision and not being able to compete I'm sure it's happened plenty in the past. So I don't know I just I love it every time I see a headline with para Olympics or para Olympian. I'm glad to see it getting the attention that it deserves. Now, here's a question for you guys. Because I don't know the answer to this. And I don't know if you guys know the answer to this. But what's the coverage of the Paralympics like this year?

R Ryan Fleury 11:13
There was something on Twitter this afternoon. I think NBC is broadcasting all of it with audio description and captioning.

R Rob Mineault 11:24
Oh, well, that's good. We'll look at the AT Banter twitter feed but there was a reference to NBC and the amount of coverage I believe. you can also watch the coverage on the CBC coverage on Prime Video. I love it. Okay. I love it. So yeah, that's great. It's it's actually getting the coverage it finally, finally...

S Steve Barclay 11:46
Sorry, sorry, that's the Olympics. I don't know about the Paralympics. I'm not sure if they've committed to that.

R Rob Mineault 11:52
They better.

R Ryan Fleury 11:53
Yeah.

R Rob Mineault 11:56
Well, they better now because we've announced it, so. We will just speak for CBC. So yeah, well, there you go. Yeah, it should be interesting. I'm curious to see the the opening ceremonies tonight as well. I don't know. I don't know. It's just gonna feel weird with with no crowd just looking out over all those empty seats. It's gonna look like you're watching some sort of a rehearsal.

R Ryan Fleury 12:24
I've always been more of a fan of the Winter Olympics anyway, so I've never gotten to watch much of the summer Summer Games.

R Rob Mineault 12:31
Oh, really?

S Steve Barclay 12:32
We're a country that gets two months of summer at most, you know, and in some cases,

it's a week. So, you know, we're not great at Summer Olympics. Go figure. Anyways, Hey, Ryan.

R Ryan Fleury 12:46
Yes?

R Rob Mineault 12:48
What are we doing today?

R Ryan Fleury 12:50
Today we are talking all about controversies.

R Rob Mineault 12:53
Dun, dun dun, dun

R Ryan Fleury 12:54
No. Today we are talking with CEO of ReachAbility, an organization out of Nova Scotia, Canada. Miss Tova Sherman.

R Rob Mineault 13:07
I'm looking forward to this. This is this is great. This is a you know, this is another one of these organizations. At least this time we have the excuse of it's on the other side of the country. I mean, again, this is this is such a great organization that I regret that we took 248 episodes or whatever to talk about. But these guys are amazing. I did some reading about Tova. I think this is going to be a great, great show. And I know I say that every week, but I mean it this week.

R Ryan Fleury 13:40
Joining us now is Tova Sherman from ReachAbility. Thank you so much for taking some time out of your busy schedule to join us today. I am Ryan Fleury. Joining us in the room are Steve Barclay. Hello. And Rob Mineault.

T Tova Sherman 13:55
Hello.

R Rob Mineault 13:58
It's very nice to see you. We have faces for podcast perfect for podcasting.

R Ryan Fleury 14:04
That's right.

S Steve Barclay 14:06
Also the physiques.

R Rob Mineault 14:09
We won't talk about that though. Yeah, we're we're really, really thrilled to be able to talk to you. I've reading your bio for a week and looking into the organization.

T Tova Sherman 14:20
It's not that long. Rob. it doesn't take a week to read my bio.

R Rob Mineault 14:24
Well, you don't know how fast I read. I'm very distractible.

R Ryan Fleury 14:28
We've got the bio, you've got videos on the About Us page. There's a lot of research that had to be done for this show.

T Tova Sherman 14:34
I'm so sorry to negate all the hard work

R Rob Mineault 14:40

I was joking with Ryan yesterday and just saying that how could probably do several episodes just we could probably just do an episode on the backstory of the organization. And you I'm sure and that would take up an hour. But why don't we just briefly just to catch our listeners up. Give us a little bit of a snapshot of ReachAbility of the organization, what you guys do, and you know, maybe a little bit of of how things started.



Tova Sherman 15:08

Great, I'd be very happy to. So really in the year 2000, I came home to visit my father for a weekend. And I wasn't happy with some of the requirements he had, I come from a family, where really every member of my family lived with a different disability, whether it was Crohn's and Colitis, Cancer, a number of different different issues around arthritis. I live on the ADHD spectrum quite severe, so I also live with anxiety and depression. So we were this family of sort of a ragtag bunch, and I just didn't realize that everyone wasn't like totally cool and in about disability. And so when I didn't like what I saw being the big mouth that I am, I thought I will, you know, I don't just talk the talk. And I began an agency based on the idea of trying to identify what were the biggest inequities around inclusion of persons with disabilities, all types, I like to think I don't have a ribbon, I'm just all anyone who needs some support. I'm all about equalizing the playing field, one ability at a time. So the agency began by first identifying what those issues were finding out very quickly that employment, the ability to be independent, and the unconscious or conscious biases being held by employers was the single biggest barrier to independence. And the second one with self stigma. What I mean by that is when I started working with clients at ReachAbility, who are very, very diverse with diverse issues, and the only commonality was low self esteem, quite frankly. And I was really concerned because I would ask people all the time, "what are you good at?", I didn't expect them to necessarily know but I wanted to know their perception of it. And I would continually get told "nothing". I expected "I don't know". But I have to tell you, "I'm good at nothing" shocked me. So I began by developing a program to prove literally to people, all the skills they have all the ways they can be used transferable skills, and get them the confidence and the firm footing. That tells them of course, you're valuable everybody is everyone has something to contribute. Now let's move forward to employment, education next steps, and try to figure out what that looks like. So the agency was built on this many services to the few model, if we have a model, that's what it is. And today, we have education, employment. We have an arts agency called the bluenose ability Arts Festival. But we're also an agency that does programming. We're really focused on artists with disabilities, monetizing their work online, because that's where it's at, and figuring out what that might look like. So we've got a number of different projects, but the overarching piece is inclusion of all persons with disabilities. And frankly, inclusion of everyone is marginalized. Because once we refuse, remove, excuse me those barriers, it opens for everyone, you know, like universal

design, but I absolutely hate fundraising, no golf tournaments, no dinners, you're not getting invited to anything, because I just couldn't stand the idea of spending time doing that. So instead, I created partners, partners, whether they're in government partners, whether they're grants and foundations, partners, whether just p3 agencies in the community, where we could work with them to fund work that they want done in a way that is really holistic, grassroots, committed, you know, by people with disabilities for people with disabilities. We did some early work around, you know, some of these accessibility groups in Nova Scotia where we have now the Accessibility Directorate, we've been involved in the ACA, really supportive and trying to educate employers. And so what I had to also do was create what we call a social enterprise, which is a business something to make some money. So I became the business initially by going out and public speaking around my message around inclusion. And after 20 years of doing that, we accumulated some of my most popular what we call inclusion isms. I actually used to call them Tova isms, but sounded a little narcissistic. So we changed it to inclusion isms. And that became the book "Win, Win Win: 18 Inclusionisms You Need to Become a Disability Confident Employer". And so we're creating this piece for the social enterprise for traveling. we're educating we're supporting people in becoming compliant around the ACA, and if they're in Manitoba, Ontario and Nova Scotia, also looking at their own regional disability regulations as well and ensuring that we're all understanding the importance of inclusion as a win, win win. And that's where we are.

R

Rob Mineault 19:54

That must have been quite the journey because it seems to me that as you're building the organization, It must have been like a little bit of a, the way that I've described before is like a little bit of a game of whack a mole, because once you think you've got one element of this beat, something else comes up, you know, a good example is, you know, when you go into this, you know, you may think, Oh, you know, all we have to do is change the hearts and minds of, say, employers to make them more open to inclusion, but really, you know, but then there's the, what you talked about the confidence piece of that, right? Where if you have people with disabilities who have grown up in an environment where they feel like they don't have value, or they can't do anything, then they're not really all that employable. And so there's, there's all these, so you kind of have to fight all these different, different fronts in terms of education, because you're really changing the hearts and minds of, of, you know, people with disabilities as well as employers. But then there's all these systemic barriers that are in place that and, and invisible biases and all these things. Does it ever feel like it's overwhelming?

T

Tova Sherman 21:10

Not for me personally, because I really believe that of the I'm of the mindset that I'm never going to solve the problem. But that doesn't stop me from doing what I can, you know, there's this great quote, by a poet from England, Edward Everett Hale. And what he would say is, there are many things I cannot do. But I never let the things that I cannot do get in the way of the things that I can. I have so many limits that it wouldn't have to be a problem period for me to create the problem. But what I know is what I do well, I speak the truth I communicate well, I can engage employers in their language, so that we can engage them to think differently about the fact that they do have bias, whether unconscious or conscious, most likely unconscious, the truth is, guys, everyone wants to kind of do the right thing. And then when it's a three, when meaning we can show them why it's good for them to, it's not really that hard to get people online, the biggest challenge is really and truly, the whole idea that persons with disabilities, like us are often considered to be broken, is what we call the medical paradigm. And we were brought up believing this, not just so this unconscious bias is there, because let's be really honest, where did we learn about disability, it was whispered in the household, or maybe it constantly we laughed about, or perhaps it was the school yard, very cruel place, and so on. So we have to acknowledge going in that people were not given the tools. And I always believe if you don't give them the tools, you can't expect them to build it. So we have to not only give the tools, but we have to show them how to use them. And that does take a little bit more. But ultimately, what I see is a tremendous amount of goodwill. But all the wrong information that came from the so called medical paradigm, which is essentially saying people with disabilities are a medical problem are born broken, and they require fixing. That's how the medical profession looks at us. But the truth be told in the social or the Human Rights paradigm, as I call it, that's where we really are tipping now, which is Wait a minute, people with disabilities have good ideas. I'm a person with disability, wait a minute, everyone I know is going to have had has or will have a disability. So hold on, maybe I do want to do the right thing. But here's the next barrier. I don't know how. And I don't even realize that my concern about hiring a person with disability is so deeply embedded, that I'm not even worrying about whether or not they can do the job, they don't even get that far in my mind. I just want to avoid them. So I don't do anything wrong, because I'm a nice guy, which of course, is the worst thing you can possibly do. Or maybe it's just that it's too much work, which is a real message, because we've made inclusion an add on instead of a core value. So yeah, it can seem like it's frustrating. But the truth is, every inch is an inch forward. And even if I have to take the old, two steps back to get five steps forward, and whatever it works out, I still am a very optimistic person, and I believe in the power of people. So you know, even though I know I'm not going to change the world, that doesn't stop me from trying.

R

Rob Mineault 24:19

But what I really find admirable about the organization is that you guys really are fighting the fight on a multitude of different fronts. Talk to me a little bit about what that's like for the organization. And, and like how big is the team? You know, how do you how do you do that? How do you manage to sort of do so many things at all at the same time?

T

Tova Sherman 24:42

Well, look, I'll be honest with you, when you have a leader with ADHD, you have no choice because I'm an idea person. And I really believe some of these ideas are gold, and it takes a lot for me to drop it. So I'm not sure everyone in my team would lead embrace as many projects that we've taken on or let's say as many fronts, as we've, you know, decided to approach. But we've approached very grassroots level stuff. And we work very grassroots, with our client stop and our programming and our in house and our Nova Scotia work. But beyond that we're expanding international work we're trying to also we're just working right now on the tourism front. Because as a person who travels a great deal and knows so many people living with disability who wants to travel, I think an accessible travel site is very important for Canada, because I think we need to both feature the things we do well, and provide the opportunity for the tourism industry as a whole, to embrace more. And so I call the project the accessible tourist, keep your eyes open, that's the home front. But back to your original point, which is how do you manage all those fronts, I have an incredible team of 15 to 20 people between full and part time, and everybody is so committed, it's not just people who get up punch a clock, we actually don't have a punch clock. So that's good news. I would never be on time. But it you know, we get in, we get the work done. And we do it hot, we work hard we work well. The majority of my team do self identifies living with some form of disability, we're really about not just the professionals, but also the first person voice. And as long as we keep in touch with that first person voice, I always feel like we're on track. And if somebody needs as I said many services to the few, they don't really need few services to the many. And so many agencies are modeled on I do this. Now take this pen, I'm holding a pen, and then go to the next guy to give you the lid. And he gives you the lid, then the next guy gives you the piece of paper, I want to give you the pen, the paper the book, The Linda the the source, the resource, the computer, you name it, either computer long program, I have a food program to make sure that food insecurity is not a problem when you're my client, we have so many pieces running. So you're right. But each piece to me is like a charm bracelet that has a charm that fills it kind of like a pandora or whatever they are they're wearing now. But more importantly, it's really the bracelets still remains very consistent. But those pieces are only building on our capacity to fulfill the belief that many services to the few is the way to go. When you're really going to affect change in your community, whether locally or even nationally.



Steve Barclay 27:24

Yeah, let's take a step back to something you just mentioned. Because one of my one of my questions was I wanted you to talk about the Hello Reach program and how that came about and what it does.



Hello Reach is a direct response, frankly, to COVID. We used to have three lunches a week in the house for our in house clients. We have a number of programs, and they would gather for this wonderful communal lunch that we would provide. As part of what we believe was we noticed immediately, people weren't leaving, they were staying, they weren't leaving and not coming back. They were getting fed, they were more engaged in the afternoon. I mean, it just worked great. Then came COVID. And all of a sudden, not only was everything canceled, but in our case, we actually pivoted within about three weeks. And we were up online doing all of our classes, but on Zoom. So the first thing we had to acknowledge was Well, the first thing we really did after COVID was called 500 past clients and ask them what their biggest issues were. Because we weren't sure what was most important yet, you know, COVID was such new territory for all of us. And the two big issues were one, food security. And two, I still need to go get a job and I still need to keep trying, life has not stopped, it's just become more challenging. With those two, we immediately addressed, what we thought would be a really good response to the food issue was initially to maybe get food cards and mail them. And that was one thing. But a lot of people weren't able to go to the grocery store or leave their homes. So we realized that wasn't helping unless you had somebody kind enough to do that for you. And so what we started to do was admittedly, it's a little bit of a wink and a nod to Hello somebody. But Halo Reach was our idea where we brought together the food with the the support of a nutritionist for three days, put it in one brown bag, delivered it to all the clients that were learning online. And then once that was done, we would also film an online class where someone would cook some of the food for the week. This was not like salami and bread. This was like a Chicken Caesar was, you know, penne, a pasta with shrimp. I mean, we really were able to have budgets and get everybody involved and deliver the food, then show them how to make some of the food. People were losing their minds. They were crying. They were so grateful. We were so happy. And then we started to also notice another thing that was missing was computers, because we're telling people you can learn online and they're going I don't have a computer. So we got a Partnership Grant And we bought 40 Google Chromebooks, and we loan them out now for the duration of the program. And if somebody needs it for something in particular, we can loan it to them, too. So we really responded to COVID. And the food program, although was a lunch in house became this Hello, reach program. And it's really something special. And we're

really excited about it. And although right now, it doesn't necessarily have the most permanent of funding, we really believe that as we start to bring people back, we'll be able to continue it in house with an element about out of house as well, for those that still will choose not to come in. And now that we realize we can do it both ways, we want to be as inclusive as possible. So of course, we'll offer it. So we've got the computer loan program called HTML, we've got the, of course, the Hello Reach program, which is your food. So these were the responses to some of that insecurity around, I still need employment. And what was interesting was during the height of COVID, we were still getting people jobs, because they needed to work. Life did not stop.



Steve Barclay 31:06

Fantastic. It's the first time I've seen food security mentioned by a disability agency. And I think that's fantastic. It's it's very insightful and terrific service.



Tova Sherman 31:22

Well, anytime we can provide people who are not working and not receiving enough money. And of course, I can speak to my community, the rents are out of control. So I'm really worried about people not eating, I'm worried about people choosing to do this or eat. And so anytime we can alleviate that, and I don't mean with like, you know, like, I'm not saying food is food, but I really wanted it to be healthy, nutritious, and nice, really nice. Because I think everyone deserves a nice meal.



Steve Barclay 31:54

Well I've got the picture of of a meal on your website right now. And I have definitely realized that I have not had lunch yet.



Tova Sherman 32:04

Well, you're not alone. So don't show me any pictures. Yeah, it looks pretty good. Yeah, that's pretty decent food. I was gonna do that this week, probably if it's the penne. Anyway, really, what I wanted to say is these little programs are not just like loosey goosey. We might as well try this. It's really a direct response to listening to your community and identifying with their consultation, not telling people what they need, asking people, and then finding creative and innovative partnerships that allow it to happen, whether that's done on the micro level, I need \$10 till Friday, or the macro level, I need \$10,000 for computers.

R

Ryan Fleury 32:44

So Tova, have you thought about running for government? And the reason I asked that is because one of the comments you make is some of the services you guys first initiated, you thought should be being provided by government. And so you started creating partnerships with government? Can you describe how that partnership works?

T

Tova Sherman 33:05

Yes, and then I'll tell you why I can't run for politics. Let's just say there's a lot of closets with a lot of skeletons don't listen, I'm on the ADHD spectrum, which is very likely, in my younger years, I had some impulse control issues. And I'm not sure I have them all under control. And I'm 59. So to be very honest with you, me running for government, I would piss too many people off, you have to be nice to everybody not gonna happen. And more importantly, I don't always have the best control over saying what I'm thinking. So I think I would be a terrible fit. That's assuming you want to win if you just want to make a statement on your girl. But to go back to your other question around how we created those relationships, look, there's a various ways one can fund an agency. Once I determined what was not going to happen, I was not going to spend six months a year on a golf tournament, getting donations to give people who have money, more golf things, I couldn't handle it, I did it a few times. And I said it's not going to happen. It's too much time. And our effort is not going where it needs to. So I must identify partners on the municipal, provincial and federal level to support our activities that make sense to their own mission. So if I read their mission is to, you know, to create an inclusive community or by 2030, which is something Nova Scotia is saying, then I already know that with a little bit of work, I have a good partner here, because I'm going to be able to achieve because I'm small, I'm not government, I can pivot quickly. But one thing that COVID taught me very quickly is big organizations, big structural environments can't pivot very well. And the one thing I learned very quickly was we pivoted on a dime. We literally all went home, took our computers with us I had VPN with up within two weeks, we were meeting We were doing surveys, we were calling people at home and asking what they thought we were then compiling it and starting to develop our material online. Like, you just can't ask large structures to do it, nor should they have to. That's why I want them to fund me. So partnership really developed in and I call it a partnership and not just straight funding, because it's not funding in the sense that Please, sir, may I have some more, it is not charity. What it is, is you need something done, it's on your mandate, we can do it in a way quickly, efficiently. And quite frankly, with as much authenticity as you can find anywhere. And, and we have this great reputation of doing it well. So let us try. And that really was how I started the creation of partnership was not looking at government as a funder, but looking at them literally as a partner. And understanding and identifying what their goals were, and understanding and identifying how they aligned with ours. And that was really

our process. in identifying it's a little bit different. Because for the first number of years where I was biting my nails, not getting donations, I don't think I've given out a charitable receipt in years. Because it's not necessary. We work in partnership, we write grants, if there's a law Foundation was a great example, they were interested in access to legal issues. And we were interested in free legal services for people with disabilities. You know, even on a consultative level, just the ability to know that this person has been vetted by an agency and isn't going to make you feel terrible. So our legal service began really, as a response to the very idea that we didn't know what people needed. And then we ended up with 500 lawyers who are willing to give one on one legal information to people with disabilities. And that's sustained itself. And it's served the need of the law Foundation, and it's served the needs of the community. And we stepped up and filled it. That's what I mean by your partner. Versus you get funded that we think charity has some I love that people give Don't misunderstand. But for me personally, this has been a model that worked and didn't leave us hanging quite to the way that may be waiting for donations, because I'm looking at agencies who really depend and justifiably on donations. It's just a different model that I'm talking to. But they're really struggling now, when they depend on an event that had to be canceled twice.

R Ryan Fleury 37:31
Yeah, for sure.

T Tova Sherman 37:33
And I feel for them, I feel for them. But you know, it's just a choice in the model. But also you have to know that the social enterprise, which is the what we call inclusion in action, all the work that my team does, to develop and support people and agencies and businesses and all the P threes to be compliant around the ACA and their provincial legislation creates revenue as well, I'm, I might go and speak to a certain Corporation, and they want to do a lunch and learn, you know, and I'm out here and I'm there, and they're going to pay for my time. And that payment goes to reach ability and assists us in supporting things like hello reach that didn't have the money it needed at the time I started it.

R Rob Mineault 38:12
And from the sounds of it, that particular model and that mindset, it must lend itself really well when you're when you're talking to businesses. Because when you're when you're trying to set up the business case for inclusion, like you really need to present it to businesses as that as as this isn't, yes, it's the right thing to do. But it also just makes good

business sense. You've got to rob, otherwise, you're not getting in the door. And I think that again, this this sort of goes back to this idea of shifting the mindset. When it comes to the discussion about people with disability, they're not a liability, they are a gift they are you know, you're never gonna find people who are more grateful for for a job or more loyal, and and more talented really. But but that must be tough. It must be really that's the hardest thing to change. I mean, we can legislate things we can we can put in enforcement mechanisms, and granted that you know, I think we would all probably agree that needs to really be better. But, I mean, what we really need to do is just you know, again, it's it's to attack the the hearts and minds of people and really educate on that level. How do we do that?

T

Tova Sherman 39:32

Well, that's why I did the book, to be honest, I needed something that was sustainable, that would begin the messaging and start to you know, get into people's heads. So the book is called "Win, Win Win". And let me tell you the source of that because that's my mantra in dealing with business. Because the idea was Stephen Covey who made kazillion dollars selling like 25 million books in the 80s based on the idea of "Win Win", meaning a used car salesman wants to sell a car. You want to buy one? Why is it that one, the used car salesman had to get one over on? Yeah, in order to win, right? There's always a win/lose mindset in business. Covey really popularized the idea of Win Win, meaning, why not sell the car for touch less, but the guy who bought it feels like you got a decent deal is maybe going to send his friends, and you're going to get more sales from them, versus just one win and one lose. That's the win win concept. And it's really held very well in business, through the 80s, and even into the 2000s. But my argument is, in today's brain economy, we're creating creative, innovative problem solvers are essential to the future of business, as we will know it in the future, like, it's all going to be around brain economy, we really need to understand the importance of and the win from having a third one, which is the inclusion of people as well. So for instance, you hire a person with disability, we're just saying, Rob, so the employer not only has broadened his talent pool, by including the nearly one in four, well, well in three in Nova Scotians who identifies living with disability. So you've just expanded your talent pool employer, also, I often say and one of my sayings in the book is right person, right job. What I mean by that is, I don't want to circle in a square, if you're not expanding your talent pool to include that 30% of people who have lived with disability and want to work, then you're shrinking it to the point where you may have missed the right person, right job, also people already working for you appreciate seeing diverse people in the workplace. In fact, 64% of job seekers in Canada, and this is a pre COVID number, but in 1990, excuse me, 2019, they stated that a diverse workplace mattered to them, they were checking it out. That's a whole new front. So we understand that the win for the employer is very clear. It's no longer they got to lose to be nice, that's

bogus, it's done. It's not even real. And it's proven. Besides the fact there's fewer missed days more grateful. All of the stuff you mentioned, Rob, there's even more. So then we have the person hired, let's be real, that person is grateful, because they have these incredible skills, and no one has been maximizing it. And now this employer comes and says you're the guy to do this for me. So of course, we have a second when we have the employee, but we also have the community seeing itself reflected, we have clients coming in and saying, Wow, they have someone here that lives with that lens with a disability. That's so cool. And people do do that. So or I see myself now and I'm thinking maybe my daughter could work here I my son, what a wonderful place. This is there are so many wins. In the inclusion of persons with disabilities, I had to narrow it to three, but my messaging was Win Win is no longer the ultimate way to run a business. And the McKinsey report talks a lot about diversity in the workplace, and has shown that the top 20% of businesses who are the most inclusive, are returning to their stockholders money stock money, to them a greater return than the least the bottom 20% least diverse. So we know all of this now and even employers know it. But that unconscious bias that around the source of where we learned about disability has to be removed. And the removal of that involves some emotional IQ work, it has to be valued from the top. So we can't just throw it at HR and go now you got to deal with inclusion of people with disabilities to have fun. That's not the message. I say the fish stinks from the head, maybe it's because I'm a merit timer. But the truth is, if the leadership doesn't get it, I can assure you nobody's buying in.

R

Rob Mineault 43:51

You're absolutely right. I mean, when you think about it, too, is that all those people that are also now a co worker, it has a disability, they're all going to be educated to on a daily basis as to the abilities of of somebody with a disability so and they're going to take that with them wherever they go.



So you're right, Rob, and I have to cut you off because it's so important to be my ADHD means I'll lose it if I don't say it. And here's the thing, I always say there's two ways to be the most inclusive of persons with disabilities, education and osmosis. You don't need me to go on and on about education, we could all learn a little bit more and break some of those myths. But osmosis is exactly what you just said, Rob, when I'm educating people, I'm standing in front of a crowd. And I'm talking about something simple like not touching a wheelchair or something like that, because it's an extension of a person's self. And I see a woman in the crowd shaking her head up and down fervently like really nodding. I know that person has worked with someone with a wheelchair and is confident about it. osmosis means I've worked with that person. It was no big deal.



Rob Mineault 44:54

Let's talk a little bit about some of the challenges then like where do you see the real holes in the system that we're really need to be fixed to really start to gain even more traction.



Tova Sherman 45:08

I think the one thing and I don't even know if it's possible, so I'm just gonna say my perfect world is that education is not optional. I'm not suggesting we take freewill away completely. But you know, we're looking at the public's service in Canada really, really pushing and really trying to create this incredible inclusive environment, where everyone is welcome. There's some really wonderful Deputy Minister directives around that, that really push it and and really saying, we need to do this now. My challenges that people don't necessarily get the level of information they require to make those calls and make those decisions well, because often, we don't necessarily legislate the fact that you should know about it. So you don't, and then you don't feel really confident about trying. Listen, I recently talked to a very high up HR person in a public service environment in Canada, who was really genuinely frustrated at trying to be more inclusive of diverse groups, and ultimately couldn't understand why they weren't getting more traction. Now, to be honest with you, they hadn't interviewed very few diverse people, and they had hired none. But they didn't couldn't quite figure out why it is people didn't feel welcome at their workplace, or weren't coming in in droves to say, please hire me. And I said, Listen, if you don't reflect the people you want to see in your workplace, and if you don't show an interest in getting those people, and if you don't train your staff to ensure that their biases are being removed, especially in the interview process. And here's a big one that HR people hate when I say, you got to stop screening out, you got to start screening in, if you want the best person for the job. And HR people are taught consistently, you don't have the time to look at all those resumes, dumped them. And they use software with all kinds of biased words. And they you know, if they have a gap in the resume the route Meanwhile, I took a year off to care for my father when he was very sick. And I honestly believe that employer would appreciate that, that commitment, that loyalty, you know, so what we're doing is we're convincing ourselves out of convenience, that it's easier just to exclude. And that's the shame because there's so many wins to the inclusion argument. And until we get that information to people in a way they get it I always remember people always ask me, Tova, Who should we go after? I'm like, agencies? Who should we talk to? Who should we influence? I said, wrong question, how we need to speak the language of government. When we talk to government, we need to speak the language of Listen, if I'm walking into a bank, I wear a suit, if I'm walking on a construction site, I do not wear a suit, you know,

on a on a level, the idea is you can't say which ones everyone needs to be engaged, but we need to communicate it in a way they hear it. They understand it with proofs with mythbusting with common sense, no pie in the sky, in the perfect world, this elevator would go all the way to the clouds. Well, it doesn't. And it's not going to. But here's what we can do. And that message needs to be out there. And it's getting lost in all of this, you know, rigamarole to get training out or rigamarole to do the right thing when people are getting lost in fear of doing the wrong thing to the point where I believe they're avoiding doing anything. That worries me. Yeah, that's why I want them to have the right information now.

R

Rob Mineault 48:46

Yeah, I think you're you're so right on the nose. I think that there there is sort of a little bit of a downside to things like big public shaming and stuff on on Twitter and Facebook and shutting people down, before we can even have the conversation. And then you just get people that are just afraid to say anything, because they're afraid of saying the wrong thing. And that's counterproductive to all of this to educating because you're not going to learn anything, if you don't have the conversation.

T

Tova Sherman 49:14

Stigma lives in silence. That's where it really grows. It's like a mole. If you want to have stigma really grow, just don't talk about it.

R

Rob Mineault 49:22

So I want to talk a little bit about and get get your, your your thoughts on this, because one of the things in the advocacy space that that we've sort of noticed over the years and talking to a lot of different agencies is part of the challenge, I think, for people with disabilities is that there are so many different advocates and agencies that like you said, all do like one thing or two things and so I can see that it can be a very overwhelming experience to really try to find the right organization for the right need and it also depends on what province you happen to be in or because a lot of you know, agencies are restricted to just working in one province. But how do you find that? And what what do you see as sort of a solution for that?

T

Tova Sherman 50:15

Well, first, I will acknowledge that challenge, I don't have a commercial on TV, and it breaks my heart. Every time someone comes to me and goes, I wish I knew about this five

years ago, I wish I knew about you 10 years ago, I have a model, which is no one goes nowhere. And I mean it. If someone comes to reachability, we can't do that. for them. I actually have a navigator who figures out where they can go to do whatever it is they need to do, whether they want to volunteer with paths, or whether they want to learn something or go back to school, whatever it is, if I'm not doing it, I have a person who then navigates that person to where they need to go. So that to me is essential. And I wish more agencies took the role. If it isn't me, I'm not just going to say I'm sorry, I can't help you. But then direct you to listen, I do believe in five degrees of separation, your five calls from where you want to be. But if we aren't continually believing in the idea that no one goes nowhere, and encouraging that messaging across the board, it wouldn't be a big problem, because you might go to Acme, you know, Acme agency. And I'd really love to work with Pat's. Well, you know, we really don't do that here. The next thing is, but I'll tell you who does? Yeah. So unfortunately, some of the challenges around that lay in the competition between agencies, the feds have a million bucks. They say anybody in Canada who wants this million dollars, give us a good idea on how to, you know, fix scissors. So everybody in the scissor business is not exactly calling each other going, Hey, what are you going to do to fix the scissor, they're all kinda getting into their huddle, coming up with their solution, submitting it, and not talking to anyone else and not wanting to because of the the way it's set up. So the very structure of funding is very competitive. And as a result, I think agencies who might be more aligned with supporting each other and sending each other there aren't doing it in fear of maybe sending that client who, who then would say, Oh, I'd much rather work with scissor Acme than scissor, you know, zig zag, or whatever. So the idea is that in structure, we're being told to kind of compete, but yet in, in day to day operations, we're being told everyone needs to be best friends, and be sure we're sending each other to each other. That doesn't really happen very much. And that's unfortunate. I wish every agency had to have a no one goes nowhere policy, really, because it would help us because there's always someone who can do something, it just may not be where you are. And when I hear how long people waited to find me, it makes me very, very sad, frankly,

R

Rob Mineault 52:53

Did you have you found that that COVID has helped you guys expand your reach by moving a lot of your programming online?

T

Tova Sherman 53:01

Well, the programming being in my case, it being dedicated to that grassroots environment here in Nova Scotia, what we did do is we put our arts festival online, and did that go national, and that was always very regional. So for instance, during National

accessibility week 2020, when everybody was talking about doing a national accessibility week, which by the way, is the last Sunday in May every year. So most if not all, provinces canceled their events except us. And we moved 36 events online, we canceled some doozies fashion shows and things were canceled. But we managed to move 36 events online during National accessibility week. And because we were one of the only provinces doing anything, we got incredible national attention, because we were the only game in town essentially. So in that way, it COVID was very interesting for us because we pivoted quickly and efficiently we were able to get things online that maybe other agencies weren't prepared to or didn't feel fit their festivities or their activities. Whereas we literally put 36 events online during COVID during COVID for national accessibility week. And as a result, people from Ottawa contact me as going hey, we love your stuff, you know, which they I'm sure they wouldn't have looked because they would have seen their own stuff up there and national stuff. So in that way, it was kind of groovy.

R

Rob Mineault 54:24

So and actually, I do want to talk a little bit about the arts and film festival. Because I really, I really loved the idea that the arts is really this space where people with disabilities can really, really shine and and really gain a lot of confidence which again, that feeds into this overarching strategy that we want to do. How did it come about? And was that always sort of a piece of it when you started it up?

T

Tova Sherman 54:54

Well, I have to tell you, the number one disability in the world is cognitive. Okay, and what I started to notice with people with clients like myself living with cognitive disabilities, is we're not always good at the math. And we're not always good at the you know, write this essay. But when it comes to the arts, the playing field is essentially equalized. And there's so many incredible communicators, and through art in the disability community, and they're often forgotten, because people are afraid, maybe I'll offend you, if I don't have it correctly. So I'm not going to invite you a lot of that avoidance stuff. So we really felt that starting with our clients, that the disability arts community needed a place to land to be showcased. And we took an approach that we wanted both professional artists to have a place but also emerging artists, to have a place to become those professionals. We wanted to create this cycle of support. And again, to monetize, because I have no fear of the term monetized disability. Because if it means people are listening in corporations I'm in, we have \$50 billion a year of spending power. And the sooner that the communities across Canada and the businesses learn it, the sooner they want to include us, right. So we just want them to know. And so again, sometimes people are very nervous around the term monetize disability, whereas I think it's fine, as long as we get a voice out of it. So,

you know, we wanted to make sure that the disability arts community was also recognizing, again, going back to that people with disabilities, so on our 15th anniversary, which was 2015, I wanted to do 15 events. And I decided one of them would be some kind of arts Fest, like a three day festival, featuring artists with disabilities and various various forms of art, whether you know, visual art, whether it was spoken word written, you know, there's podcasters, there, there's chefs, there's fashion designers, you name it, it's the arts, and we were able to really do something special with that particular event. So in 2016, when I dropped the other 14 events, we focused on Bluenose Ability Arts and Film Festival or bath, because we really believed that this was a place for people to land and build. And the film festival turned into an art festival, which meant we were engaging more than just the film piece, which is what we did in 2015, to get things rolling. And it's been an exciting journey. It's been a challenging journey, understanding and consulting with the arts community and ensuring they're getting the voice they need. And it's there's work to be done there by us. But we have been really dedicated to the idea, we've just created a fantastic toolkit for artists, it's up on our website, reachability, excuse me, on our bath website, which is www.baaff.ca bath.ca or bath.com I've got both they point to the same place. And on it is a toolkit for artists to learn about writing grants, how to get some money, to learn about some of the different resources in their communities, and also to assist us in building this toolkit into a living document, that people in artists from all kinds of places across Canada across the world can take advantage of this artists toolkit that really promotes the disability arts community and tries to equalize the playing field in how they can engage and get their art out there. And one of the reasons that the book "Win Win Win", just so you know, not only has 18 inclusion isms, but 18 works of art by artists from the disability community, or those that support it. And the art is in there. Now. Why did I put art in a book that was ultimately my opinion for employers and disability competent leadership? Well, because those are the people spending money on putting art in their lobbies. Artists, going to artists, galleries is wonderful, but we're all poor artists, you know what I mean? We want to be rich, but we're not always got the wealth. I wanted to put their art in front of people who make decisions around what art hangs in an office, those lobby pictures, why not one of these artists? Why not make that statement?

R

Rob Mineault 59:15

It's brilliant. So my other thought is talk to me a little bit about how you see the state of accessibility these days. So I'm specifically referring to say something like the Accessible Canada Act. I'm not sure what's going on over there in Nova Scotia. I know here in BC we just have our brand spanking new BC Accessibility Act. How's things over there and how do you see this the state of affairs?



Tova Sherman 59:45

Well, what I will say is I'm impressed with the efforts of the Nova Scotia is making a very big claim. They would like to be accessible, fully accessible by 2030. I'm making a funny face because I'm not sure if That's really feasible. But what I will say is they have done an excellent job and made strides in the architectural environment, making it more welcoming for people with physical challenges. But I still worry that sometimes we forget that it's more than just the architectural, you know, so I'm, I'm one of those skeptics that wants to make sure every type of disabilities considered, and certainly whereas cognitive disability is the single largest, it's important that we remember that even when we remove those Architectural Barriers, and we evolve a sliding doors and the lowered shells and all these things. attitudinal ones will remain and they are the ultimate barrier, dude.



Steve Barclay 1:00:41

Right? I actually wouldn't mind circling back a bit. You talked about the legal referral program, what? What sorts of things? Are people using that for it or what?



Tova Sherman 1:00:53

Okay, so the thing about the law in Canada is we watch too many American shows. And sometimes we think we can sue a lot of people. So one of the things that we need to do with the legal service is let people know what they can and cannot do. Because so many people are looking for recourse whether it's landlord tendency issues, a big one for people with disabilities, whether it's why was I refuse from CPP, whether it's, you know, appeals, it could be something criminal, it could be something domestic, you know, it could be a number of different challenges family law. And what we really discovered was with just some good advice, people were able to kind of determine whether or not this process was feasible for them. So I would say about 50% of our referrals in the first decade anyway, were really around finding out what you could do and whether or not you wanted to choose to do it. Now there is a large chunk of employment law issues as well. They asked me about my disability, what it is how many days I missed them my last job. Now they're not allowed to ask that. But the question becomes, what is your goal is your goal to be right, and to maybe figure out a way to sue them, which you know, we're not a litigious society here. Or is your goal to just get a great job, sometimes going after people is appropriate, and they need to be stopped, because they're breaking the law, sometimes you have to walk away because your needs are not going to be met by that, and your health, and your mental health and wellness is going to be challenged by that decision to go forward and fight something. So it really is an opportunity to reflect with all the right information. And that's the most important thing. But again, subject matter was a lot of employment law, there was a lot of landlord tenancy issues, some family law, which we

always would refer over to legal aid, because they do cover that. And so we don't want to try to, you know, patch up something that could get a better service. In fact, because very recently, we unfortunately lost our funding. For the legal service, we're still running it, but the way we're doing it is trying to refer to other agencies as much as possible and use our service when need be, and contact those lawyers without anyone running the service. Because we lost the funding, it wasn't a question of not doing the job. It was the funder did not have the money in their foundation that they had in previous years. So you know, we work with that, but we don't walk away from something, we just, we may have to roll it back, we may have to be a little more modest. But we always find a way because again, the team that I work with is so committed, and so open to doing whatever it is, I often tell them, they're like waiters in a restaurant with one big table, which is their main program. They got a little a couple of deuces a couple of tables of do to keep an eye on that's nonprofit work. And if you're up for it, it's the most rewarding work certainly I've ever done.

R

Ryan Fleury 1:03:58

I sometimes think, you know, we've been doing the podcast for five years. And here in Canada, we hear a lot of people only recourse is going to the human rights board and filing human rights complaints against employers, buildings, whatever the case might be. Yet in the US, we hear, you know, litigate, litigate, litigate day after day after day. We know that the Accessible Canada Act, the BC Accessible Act, the ODA, they really have no teeth behind them. So do you think we need a better system here in Canada other than human rights?

T

Tova Sherman 1:04:33

Well, I can't speak to BC it's so spankin new I haven't gotten a good look at it. There's no one will say it's okay. But I will say is the ACA is going to have teeth. In fact, they're working right now, both on the federal level and in Nova Scotia with the accessibility Directorate to identify what kind of teeth we can literally put behind it. Because without any teeth, I'm in agreement with you. You know, we have all kinds of regulations as you know, just because you're non compliant doesn't mean it matters. You identified. So the truth be told, I do believe the ACA will have, you know, as it proceeds have some teeth, I think that it must. I think it's essential. I think that human rights complaints are important. I think that avenue remains important. But we need more. And especially in the environment where persons with disabilities are regularly discriminated against. It's just extremely important that we know what we're allowed to do. But that does not mean as you said this whole litigious, listen, I'm gonna be honest with you 35 years, the Americans with Disability Act has been in place we're on like, day two. Now, that said, Now, that said, I'm not sure they're much further along than we are. Okay, so for all the acts, as you said, I

don't see necessarily the level of inclusion, I see lots of physical inclusion, because people have found a comfort level with I get it, I need a ramp, I can see it, it makes sense to me, they can't walk up the thing. So okay, I'll do a sliding door. But when we get beyond the physical and the obvious, that's when people get uncomfortable, and it gets a little murkier for them. So we need the ACA to clarify the rules, and we needed to have teeth, we need all of the avenues available to us. But we also need to understand, it's never going to be as I said, we're not going to get our perfect world. But we'll fight until we get as close to the perfect world as possible. And there's a group I really want you guys to check out and maybe invite onto your podcast, because I'm really impressed with some of the work they're starting to do. And it's called disability without poverty. They have a fantastic website, they're doing some really interesting national advocacy work. And I think that they're going to create a new table for the disability community to sit at. And I think that it's going to be a very interesting next few years for all the provinces with both their provincial legislation, as well as the National. And although they'll never have the teeth, I think, which is the guy should be thrown on his ass, if he's going to be like that. We're not getting that kind of legislation. But we can really bring it to the forefront along with the argument that whatever you think you know about disability is probably based on myth. Let me tell you the facts. When, when, when those are the facts. Now let's talk about how I can help. That's the message and it's just got to keep coming out from every corner of this country. And the fact remains, I do believe I do believe that the ACA will have more teeth than most legislation in support of persons with disabilities has ever had. I'm not sure exactly what it looks like. But I truly believe they're making a genuine effort. And they're starting first with their own house. I appreciate that the federal government is saying, We've got to get our own house in order, and we've got to be compliant, and then move that out. But my concern is that they don't have that win win win mindset in place, which I think is the big, really the big paradigm shift piece that can really bring people on board who have goodwill, but don't have the information.

R

Rob Mineault 1:08:23

You know, I just think we need to step up our cloning technology because we need about 12 of you.

T

Tova Sherman 1:08:33

If I spent more time my next book is going to be called the other side of the coin. I swear to God, because if there's anything that I can tell you with 100 percents, absolute assurance, it is the very things you love about me. My my ability to say it like it is my my determination. My doggedness would be the things you hated most about me, if given time. But I truly believe that because the very things we love about people are the things

that annoys when they're on us. So I'm dogged for sure. And I'm sure my husband would say, God help us all. She gets something. He's afraid to tell me he lost something because I won't stop till I find it. He would I mean, the flip side of the coin, love it. Honestly, guys, if there's anything Let's leave people with this message. Nobody comes with instructions. And people with disabilities are not difficult. We're just different. And if we're open to be having the best team we can possibly have, then we've got to start including the 30% of people in this country who live with disability and bring incredible creativity and doggedness because we face that discrimination and we know how it feels to have to fit when it's not made to fit us. And that's really an important message and everyone should know they deserve a place to there's no one who doesn't have something to offer. No one I'm so, so pleased to be given the gift to be able to do this work and be able to support the community in Canada and to be able to represent when I'm out speaking around North America, this vision of Canada under a new ACA with a really genuine commitment that has some teeth, and allows us to show everybody in this country that living with disability means we're living because it's gonna happen to everybody.

R Rob Mineault 1:10:29
You have to come back and talk to us again one day.

T Tova Sherman 1:10:32
I love talking. This is my favorite.

R Rob Mineault 1:10:36
We would absolutely love to have you back at some point. We want to thank you so much.

T Tova Sherman 1:10:43
Once you guys are rested up and ready, you can call me

R Rob Mineault 1:10:45
Okay, that's perfect. That is perfect. I am going to need a nap this afternoon. Listen, what do you got to plug? Plug whatever you want. Tell us where people tell people where they can find the organization the book, okay?



Tova Sherman 1:11:00

Okay, okay, take a quick plug. www.reachability.org is the agency that houses everything. And if you're interested in "Win, Win, Win The 18 Inclusionisms You Need to Become a Disability Confident Employer or Leader or Human Being", you can get it on Amazon.com or Amazon.ca. My name is Tova Sherman's, you can look it up under me. Or if you want one of the really fancy books, just let us know at Reachability.org, we've had certain ones made where the artwork is just really, really beautiful. Like it really pops. So we have those two, but it's really not a moneymaker. Guys, it's about getting the word out. Right. So if you want to get some books to your listeners, sometime, you let me know. And we'll shoot a few up to you too, because you're certainly doing incredible work just sitting here and making and normalizing the discussion. So I want to thank you for that. Because there aren't that many places for me to go and be I'm welcomed to have this conversation. And I'm grateful. Well, anytime. It's really fun talk to you. I hope you have a great day.



Rob Mineault 1:12:05

You as well. Thanks.



Ryan Fleury 1:12:07

That was awesome.



Rob Mineault 1:12:10

Wow. man I want to duplicate or agency I want I want to open a branch office. I know right? like holy crap. That is that is amazing. Like, just think of every province had one of those.



Steve Barclay 1:12:24

And I love the approach. I just love the approach, you know? Yeah. Yeah, take take it as a holistic approach. You know, if we can help you, we'll find someone who can.



Rob Mineault 1:12:33

Yeah, it's a solid idea.



Ryan Fleury 1:12:34

It is. She's definitely so energetic. And so I think forward thinking, right, you know, if she sees a need, she figures out how she and the organization can possibly meet that need or partner with an agency, organization or person to fulfill that need. And it doesn't really sound like there's any limits to what they're capable of doing.

R

Rob Mineault 1:12:56

I really think that it's a unique approach or approach to sponsorship and donorship. And all that, like, I mean, it's it's a charity, but really, she she treats it like a business. So this idea that she's partnering with the government, as opposed to just getting grants or getting funding from the government. I love that. And I'm sure the government loves that, too. And I think that it is really important for an organization like that to speak, speak in the language of business, especially when they're engaging so much so much with business and business is such an important sort of cog in the wheel.

R

Ryan Fleury 1:13:34

Well, like she said is, you know, when she goes to talk to business people, she wears her business suit, when she goes to a construction site, you're a little bit more casual a little bit, you know, you approach that conversation differently. So, you know, we could all take away from that. So much information just in that little pebbles. You know, everybody has different needs, and need to be addressed individually. Yeah. The problem is nobody government has the guts to stand up and say, No, this is what I really think.

S

Steve Barclay 1:14:12

So maybe they do that in closed doors. It doesn't make it to the public, though. The problem is with politics. Everything at the end of the day boils down to the question of dollars. Yeah, they can't put stuff out there unless they have the money behind it.

R

Ryan Fleury 1:14:29

but doesn't really look at look at how much the federal government is spending, even just in forest fires in BC, we've already blown past our forest firefighting budget for the year. You know, like there's money. It's just the government's not spending it in the right places. Well, you know, where that money comes from, right? Well, after pandemic, our taxes are all going up. Every day everybody except Jeff Bezos, right?

R Rob Mineault 1:14:58
can we please stops going to space.

R Ryan Fleury 1:15:01
You know, I saw an interesting, interesting tweet the other day about that. Somebody tweeted that, you know, Richard Branson went to space. Jeff Bezos went to space. You don't see Dolly Parton with her \$125 million going to space. She's putting out books to people to improve literacy. You know, like, what a what a contradiction, right? There's so much more that could be done with the money that gets spent in this world.

R Rob Mineault 1:15:32
Yep. 100% I agree so hard with that. Just rich assholes, like, good for you. You went to space. I was even angry the day of I remember like turning on the TV. And there was like news reporting on it. They were going live to a press conference. I was like, I was even annoyed with that. I was like, You know what, this should get no coverage. Because really, who cares? I do not care. If Jeff Bezos goes to space. Don't don't care. Like stay up there for all I care.

R Ryan Fleury 1:16:03
No, dammit, I need my Amazon package tomorrow.

R Rob Mineault 1:16:06
You have to keep in mind, Bezos is 57. Musk is 50. These are guys who are around my age. Yep. And we grew up dreaming, dreaming of our moment to get to space. I don't begrudge these guys that at all. I begrudge them the fact that they pay no taxes. But we're damn few given how much they make. But I don't begrudge them going to space One One little bit. You know, they built these companies that they they've created new technologies is they've employed a gazillion people, you know, kudos on them for that. And, hey, if they can celebrate by getting blasted into outer space, man, I, I would do that in a second.

R Ryan Fleury 1:16:54
The downside to that though, is is the controversy that Bezos faced especially for his comments about you know, this all happened because of you know, our clients or Amazon

shoppers and whatever. And he's not wrong. It's not wrong at all. We all sure our dollars put him into space. But because of all the flack he took for that, he felt he he felt obligated I guess that he had to donate? Well, he donated \$200 million to an organization and I don't know what organization, but like, that's wrong in and of itself, too. Because you're right. You know, he had every right to spend his money the way he wants to spend his money. And he's right in saying that. We helped put him there. You didn't say anything wrong, but he felt obligated to have to donate millions of dollars

S

Steve Barclay 1:17:44

His ex wife Mackenzie Scott, though has a major win here. Because not only did she walk away with half his stuff, but he left the planet.

R

Rob Mineault 1:17:54

Actually, that is true Ryan you probably paid for like a like an instrument panel in that rocket. I don't know. I just I mean, it's true. I do get it and yeah, I get but it's like, can you can we solve some problems here on Earth before just going off into space?

R

Ryan Fleury 1:18:28

That's right. Let's solve the monkey the monkey pox issue in the us right now.

R

Rob Mineault 1:18:33

What?

R

Ryan Fleury 1:18:34

100 cases of people with monkey pox in the US

R

Rob Mineault 1:18:37

Is that right? Yeah, man I got I gotta start watching the news. I'm a couple days behind.

R

Ryan Fleury 1:18:43

There's there's bigger fish to fry.

- R** Rob Mineault 1:18:46
Yeah, monkey pox. Now what? I What the hell is monkey pox? know what that is? It comes from monkeys?
- S** Steve Barclay 1:18:55
Yeah
- R** Rob Mineault 1:18:57
is Rick okay?
- S** Steve Barclay 1:18:58
Rick's in the Yukon? I don't know. Rick is probably the safest man on the planet. He ain't going near no monkeys. He probably had it already. He's probably got antibodies. I just Yeah, I don't know. I was never one of these people or where it's like, and times are here. The Apocalypse is approaching. But I don't know, man. Like, I'm starting to starting to get a bad feeling about this. Between the wildfires and the heat waves and monkey pox.
- R** Ryan Fleury 1:19:38
We are doomed. It's just a matter of time.
- S** Steve Barclay 1:19:42
Yeah, generations behind us are screwed.
- R** Rob Mineault 1:19:44
Yeah, that's true. Yep, we're okay.
- R** Ryan Fleury 1:19:49
Yeah, we're okay.
- S** Steve Barclay 1:19:51
We're gonna have some nice warm summers before we go. That's right. It's our kids that

will be living through the ice age.

R Rob Mineault 1:20:01
Well, and they'll probably be it. Yeah, maybe.

R Ryan Fleury 1:20:07
Let's turn off Fox News and move on. Deer. Yeah, so we didn't do another good news show in September.

R Rob Mineault 1:20:20
Actually, you know what? Yeah, that's a good idea. Yeah. Once Steve is back. Yeah. It'll be one of the first shows we do back when you're back, we will do a good new show. We will need it by then. Tokyo may be in flames. We might be in flames. You might not care. You might come back to a smoking ruin, I don't even know there's 300 wildfires burning in the province.

R Ryan Fleury 1:20:43
Yeah, and day what 38 or nine days or something without rain. All right. Well, happy thoughts. Everybody.

R Rob Mineault 1:20:59
Put Tova in charge, I'm telling you that would fix everything. Yeah, I'd see that I'd read. I would read that book. I'm just picturing like Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome. And instead of like Tina Turner, it's it's Tova?

R Ryan Fleury 1:21:14
Well, you'll have to buy her book "Win, Win Win".

R Rob Mineault 1:21:17
I think I will. I think I will. I am very intrigued by it. So I actually went on our website and bought a bunch of their t shirts.

R Ryan Fleury 1:21:25
Oh, you did? I was thinking about buying one or two as well.

S Steve Barclay 1:21:28
Yeah, they got some cool t shirts.

R Rob Mineault 1:21:29
Yeah. Oh, cool. Hey, speaking of T shirts and get this and this is why, again, good. Everything is spying on us. Because you'll never guess what showed up in my Instagram feed the other day. Okay, a T shirt. Which that? No, it's a T shirt company. not unusual, but the T shirt that they pushed me was Dr. Teeth and the Electric Mayhem. No, I kid you not. I kid you not.

R Ryan Fleury 1:22:02
Oh my god. They're bugging your brain. Man. You ever referenced that for months now?

R Rob Mineault 1:22:06
I know. But it showed up and I'm tempted to buy it. it's pretty sweet. So the algorithm got that one right. I'm intrigued. Yeah, I don't know what the algorithm is on Instagram. But one showed up on my on my feed that said, I may have lost my mind, but at least I don't own a pair of crocs. Can you still get crocs?

S Steve Barclay 1:22:36
Oh, yeah, probably.

R Ryan Fleury 1:22:38
Man. Amazon sells everything

R Rob Mineault 1:22:52
Alright, hey, let's get out of here we are digressing all over the place here. Hey, Ryan?

-  Ryan Fleury 1:22:58
Rob.
-  Rob Mineault 1:22:59
Where can people find us?
-  Ryan Fleury 1:23:01
They can find us online. at@banter.com.
-  Rob Mineault 1:23:04
They can also drop us an email if they so desire. And that is at cowbell@atbanter.com. Hey, you know what else? Well, they can get us on social media. I don't know why they don't. But yeah. Yeah, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram. We're there. Why aren't they? What's going on?
-  Ryan Fleury 1:23:35
Well, and we do have to give a shout out to a listener who left us a comment on YouTube. Thank you very much for that comment.
-  Rob Mineault 1:23:44
And I'm thinking ... how are you guys at dancing?
-  Ryan Fleury 1:23:50
Not good.
-  Rob Mineault 1:23:54
We might need a Tik Tok channel. I dance like old people [long censor bleep]
-  Ryan Fleury 1:24:10
Oh my goodness.

R Rob Mineault 1:24:17
Oh, man. That hit me like the vaccine. I'm dizzy.

R Ryan Fleury 1:24:27
That's awesome.

R Rob Mineault 1:24:32
Okay, never can't top that.

R Ryan Fleury 1:24:36
No, no, you can't. And top that.

R Rob Mineault 1:24:38
We just got to sign off. I don't even know how. Okay, anyways, well ...

R Ryan Fleury 1:24:52
I dare you to leave that in this week. Oh, boy,

R Rob Mineault 1:25:08
Okay. That is going to about do it for us this week. A big thanks, of course to Tova Sherman for joining us. Big thanks to you for listening in. And we will see everybody next week.