

# AT Banter Podcast Episode 265 - Ableism Part 1

📅 Mon, 12/6 6:07PM ⌚ 1:19:13

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, disability, ableism, language, microaggressions, sighted, folks, community, learning, blind, ryan, impaired, term, talk, hear, space, person, identify, find, amy

## SPEAKERS

Steve Barclay, Rob Mineault, Lis Malone, Ryan Fleury, Amy Amantea

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**R** Ryan Fleury 00:54  
Hey, and welcome to another episode of AT Banter.

**S** Steve Barclay 01:00  
Banter, banter.

**R** Rob Mineault 01:03  
This is a podcast where we talk with advocates and members of the disability community to educate and inspire better conversation about disability. Hey, my name is Rob Mineault. Joining me today, Mr. Ryan Fleury.

**R** Ryan Fleury 01:19  
Oh, thanks so much for remembering me.

**R** Rob Mineault 01:22  
Yeah, see, well, you know what, and I gave you that dramatic pause, because I wanted to make you sweat. First, because I know I got crap for it last week when I went to Steve first.

**R** Ryan Fleury 01:34  
I was still gonna give you a crap because it should have been ladies first.

**R** Rob Mineault 01:43  
Thanks a lot. Hey, speaking of spoilers, now forget it. Steve Barclay is here.

**S** Steve Barclay 01:56  
Hey, I'm gonna say hey, because Rob says, hey,

**R** Rob Mineault 01:58  
Hey, yeah, that's my thing. Hey, who else is here? Hey, we also have Lis Malone here.

**L** Lis Malone 02:10  
Always happy and shocked at the same time to be invited back.

**R** Rob Mineault 02:14  
Yeah, listen, we're shocked that you keep coming back. It's a mutual shock. Yeah, yeah, exactly. We just we sat and stared at each other for a good five minutes. We're both in shock. And okay, but that is not all. We do also have a very special guest. For today's episode. Ryan, I'm gonna let you do the honors because this is kind of your thing. I say, hey, and you introduce our guests. So Ryan, who else do we have here?

**R** Ryan Fleury 02:45  
Joining us this week is Amy Amantea, who is an artist accessibility consultant and advocate in the disability community. Welcome, Amy.

**A** Amy Amantea 02:54  
Happy to be here. Yay.

**R** Rob Mineault 02:58  
Happy to have you!

**R** Ryan Fleury 03:02  
On a rainy day in Vancouver.

S Steve Barclay 03:04  
Yeah, well, that's true. anybody else's backyard flooding? Mine is

R Ryan Fleury 03:09  
Nope.

S Steve Barclay 03:09  
Well, my basement is.

R Rob Mineault 03:15  
Alright, well, listen, let's, let's get right to business because I think I feel like we have a big show today. I'm excited. Ryan, why don't you tell the fine folks what we're doing today?

R Ryan Fleury 03:27  
We're talking about a topic I know absolutely nothing about. But today's topic is all about ableism.

A Amy Amantea 03:33  
Well, I can tell you, Ryan, I know a lot about this topic. So you're in good hands.

R Ryan Fleury 03:39  
I can just sit back and let you ramble.

L Lis Malone 03:41  
And once again, a lady saves the day.

R Ryan Fleury 03:47  
I knew bringing you on was the right choice.

R Rob Mineault 03:51

Say the three guys will just go get a coffee, go grab a beer.

L

Lis Malone 03:59

We got this. Don't worry.

R

Rob Mineault 04:00

No. Okay. All joking aside, though, this is a very important topic to us. I've wanted to do a show about this for a while. But we just we weren't really sure how to approach it. Who to have on the opportunity presented itself. Amy offered to come on and help us talk about this. And we took her up on that. And here we are. And here I am. So you know what, let's maybe to start out. Why don't we just for people in the audience who may maybe aren't familiar with the idea of ableism who wants to take a stab at giving us like a little bit of a loose definition of what we mean when we talk about ableism

A

Amy Amantea 04:42

Oh, I'd love to hear what you all think about it before we get into the nuts and bolts. Anybody? Any volunteers?

L

Lis Malone 04:48

I'm happy to throw one out. Yeah. So I think this is it's probably close to what the textbook definition but in a nutshell. It's the discrimination On the basis of either physical, mental or intellectual ability, I also, I also think of it as the Forgotten 'ism', if you will, yes,

A

Amy Amantea 05:11

I know exactly what you mean by that. That's like a write up of the Webster's Dictionary. Perfect.

R

Rob Mineault 05:15

I was talking to somebody about this the other night. And that's kind of how I framed it to it, it really is an ism that's unique from all the other 'ism's that are that are bad in. Because I really do think that it is forgotten and not a lot of people really know about it, or even think about it all that much. And it's it's a little bit more insidious than a lot of the other isms, because it doesn't, a lot of times, it doesn't necessarily have any malice behind it. But it's still, like really prevalent in people's attitudes.

A

Amy Amantea 05:52

Yeah, this is this is what we call a microaggression. And I guess, you know, all equity seeking folks, I use that as opposed to marginalized people. I think, you know, like, when we talk about ageism, it's pretty clear what that is. We talk about racism, I think many people sort of have this understanding of racism. There's all sorts of isms. But ableism is sometimes the way I look at it as the second cousin twice removed, right? Or it's we're always like the last person to be invited to the party to have these discussions. But when we're talking about microaggressions, so ableism looks like a whole bunch of different things, which I think is one of the reasons why it's hard to sort of figure out what is ableist. And what isn't, right, and what is systemic ableism. You know, if we go back far enough, we can look at the relationship between systemic ableism and microaggressions. So microaggressions are things that come out of our mouths, that we don't intend to be harmful. It could be language, it could be a joke, it could be a phrase, here's an example. 'Your concerns are falling on deaf ears. Oh, I'm so blind, I didn't see you there.' Those are actually considered microaggressions. Because the, the correlation is, is that deaf is bad, because I didn't hear the concern. And blind is bad, because I bumped into somebody I didn't you know, a blind spot means you missed something of the obvious. So those are considered microaggressions. And then it goes, it goes deeper. So microaggressions around language like, idiot, stupid, dumb, insane, crazy. Those are all things that were traditionally speaking, if we go back, not even maybe that long ago, 40/50 years ago, those were diagnoses. So you are diagnosed maybe with Down syndrome, or with a learning disability or ADHD, or dyslexia, you're just dumb, stupid moron, idiot. And they were actually medical diagnoses. So we find that there are a lot of people what happens with microaggressions is a lot of people disabilities hear these all day long, whether it's in a joke form, or whether it's the random person saying, 'oh, man, this is driving me insane'. And imagine if you are somebody who identifies in that way, and are impacted by language and hear this language all day, every day, and the type of mental toll that takes on you the way it breaks down your own spirit as a human being. I mean, I don't know a lot of folks that live with mental illness that are truly, truly impacted by folks using terms like crazy and insane and nuts, and all those things. So like, it's been a real learning curve for me, too. When I teach about microaggressions, around disability, how do I edit my own language? Because every once in a while, I want to say, this drives me insane. And then I say, No, it drives me bonkers. It drives me batty. It drives me bananas, right? Like trying to find these other words that are maybe more inclusive of all people around us. And that's the same. I think, for me, it's the same when we talk about gender identity and gender expression, like I no longer say, Hey, you guys, because there are some people who don't identify with that term. And that's really, really devastating in an impactful way, on their, their sense of self. So I say, Hey, friends, Hey, folks, I use non gender language. And I think that's how we can be inclusive of people whose we just don't know who's in our space. Right? And I don't want to hurt anybody or offend anybody if it's not necessary, and it's no big challenge for me to change my language. That's just microaggressions friends in a compact little box,

R

**Rob Mineault 09:28**

Well, and I feel like you know, those may be termed micro aggressions, but actually, I think that out of all the different ableist issues, those are actually the hardest ones to break because yeah, you know, in general, people people have been using these idioms and these phrases for years and years and years and those things are really hard habits to break. And you know, even you you know, you mentioned that you go out of your way to to make those changes yet even you slip. So, you know, for somebody who like the average person out there, these would be really, really hard habits to break. And especially when I feel like there's a, there's a segment of, you know, the general public that would push back against that a little bit and be

like, 'Oh, well, that's harmless or That's just a saying' or that's not exactly, that's not what I mean. But they don't really understand necessarily the impact that that can have on somebody who that is relevant to you.

A

Amy Amantea 10:28

Right, right, and how it changes the course of what they do in their lives, it can also change how they access employment, how they access education, how they access the medical system, because a lot of these terms, two are still very much tied to the medical model of disability, there's a whole other thing that we could have a whole nother podcast about. But essentially, that's the idea that folks with disabilities are broken and need to be fixed, as opposed to the social model, which is, again, in an in a small little compact box, is the idea that it's the environment, that is the barrier, not the person doesn't have the barrier, it's the environment, right. So the person doesn't need to be fixed, we just need to remove stairs, you know, as a as an oversimplification of, of the difference of the medical model and the social model. But, you know, I have, and it didn't occur to me either for years, and then I had become involved in spaces with people who were talking about these from a very deep rooted place, and a place where, you know, they had become isolated in their homes, because they were afraid of the world because the world looked at them in this way. And they experienced this kind of language all the time, whether it was from educators, or medical professionals, or family members, and it just took such a toll on their mental health, their sense of self, their sense of, like empowerment and independence, and just like, like, set them back as human beings. And I don't want to do that to anybody truly. Whether I'm impacted by the language or not, is another story, but because there are folks out there that art seems kind of unfair. This is like a toy, this is another example of a microaggression for other equity seeking groups. But you know, when we when we hear things like ball and chain when we're talking about a woman, the old ball and chain, that's a microaggression. So like for women, identifying women out there, what is it like when you hear your partner say that to you all the time, it starts to take a toll, sometimes people of color, notably black people, when we use the term nitty gritty, I encourage you to Google that it's so very racist, you'll never use it again. But people don't know this, right? And so sometimes with the microaggression, you don't know what you don't know. And so that the intent is not to harm. But we have to do a little bit of research into changing our vernacular, maybe possibly, dot dot dot. Yeah, look at look it up, you'll see some, some real interesting facts about where that term came from. And I was in the space with with somebody who identified as black and somebody used that term. And I was shocked when they explained I like, you know, it's like, how many other terms Am I using that have these deep rooted systemic, either racism, or oppression or ableism to them, and we have no idea where that come from.

L

Lis Malone 13:12

I do want to bring up a point then. And I think that the, the discussion about the micro aggression is extremely valid. But when we're in a society where we have so much trouble getting rid of even the aggressive language, or not even putting that language on the same playing field, then how do we move forward, when when we're still allowing so many of these other hurtful terminology, whether it be on any of the isms, yeah, and then taking it down a level to the micro. So I feel like there's a little bit of a imbalance in society. When we become hypersensitive in a good way. There's some of the sensitivities that do exist in terms of

language, but we're still sort of turning away. And here we go, turning a blind eye, a common one to some of the other language that is used. And I'm going to just give you an example, when you hear some very hateful language about, let's say, certain ethnic groups, namely the N word, which is why I'm only saying the N word, because it's a horrible word. And it's a very hurtful word. But when an athlete can then make a comment where they refer to Asian people as making you know, chinky eyes. And that work gets, you know, gets a news report, but then there's no repercussions. So when you have certain things that aren't even on the same playing fields, then how do we how do we pick and choose?

A

**Amy Amantea 14:44**

This is I mean, you know, if we, if we, you're absolutely correct by that, and I think there are some things that are more obvious and some things that are less obvious. And so microaggressions are really very non obvious to folks. And then you go kind of go up into tier two a little more obvious, which is like, we don't refer to people as wheelchair bound, or bed bound, or home bound, right? It's like, the wheelchair is the device that allows me access to the world, right? I'm not tied or bound to a wheelchair. So that's also considered ableism. And you know, what that list is you talk about these identifying features that we use for racial and ethnic groups. I just, I just did a panel discussion earlier in the week on how we, in audio description, identify characters of different backgrounds, because some of the folks were saying we had users who were of different backgrounds, and there was a woman who identified as South Asian and she said, I really hate it when people say that a South Asian character or an Asian character has almond eyes because it continues this stereotype. It really stigmatizes a community, it's the same person. Same thing as saying, to some extent, like this is a Jewish character, and they have a large nose, you know, like we're taking the stereotypes from history and adding them into our audio description. And then what does that do to the listener, we think we tend to think in media that media is God. And if we hear it on TV, we can, we can emulate that. And that's where we get our cues from. So there's a real danger in using language that's not representative of the community, right, and has no input from the community. And I think the same is very true for ableism. Because it looks like all sorts of soul freakin sorts of things.

R

**Rob Mineault 16:30**

Yeah, and you know, it's funny -- language is such a funny thing. But it's really hard to change. And I feel like part of the key to this is, you know, and it's interesting that we're talking about language first, because I feel like in order to get to the place where we need people to start altering the way that they talk about disability, and to change some of this language and to be aware of what they're saying, I feel like we have to, we have to make them understand what ableism is, and, and why it's important. First, in order for them to really clue in and be like, okay, you know, I do need to watch what I say,

S

**Steve Barclay 17:11**

One that I struggle with on a regular basis is the term able bodied.



A

Amy Amantea 17:17

Well, that's interesting. Because you are able bodied,

S

Steve Barclay 17:21

As somebody who I guess self identifies as being able bodied. I wonder if that is something that people find discomfoting,

A

Amy Amantea 17:31

Have you heard the term TAB?

S

Steve Barclay 17:34

No, I haven't.

A

Amy Amantea 17:34

So many of us in the disability community, refer to people who are able bodied as as Tabs, 'Temporarily able bodied'. Right, like you're not guaranteed to be have a body free of injury or illness for your entire life. You could join the club tomorrow, right? Like, knock on wood. I don't want you to I have a lot of times, yeah, that is a reality. You know, here's, here's some from all of the research that and I have done lots of research and had lots of roundtable discussions on panel discussions, a lot of anecdotal anecdotal stuff, and a lot of actual, like, research based surveys out in the world around language around ableism. Around how people and you know, the truth is, is that language is different for everybody. But there are some real common things like, you know, person first language is much more popular than identity, first language. But it also depends on who it's coming from. So person with a disability, like coming up on December 3 is International Day of Persons with Disabilities, not disabled persons. And so if you're able bodied, like I encourage folks when we talk about language, that you don't get to use the term disabled, because that's a reclaiming word. Right? So when I say I'm disabled, it's about the environment being disabling. When an able bodied person say it's disabled, it's about me being broken. Like, right, this is there's a power dynamic there, which can be a part of an ableist society, which is how folks that don't have disabilities. Look at folks that do so like like, here's the one of the most obvious ones, you go in for a job interview, and you're blind, or your wheelchair user, and the person behind the desk wonders to themselves. Hmm, I wonder how that person uses a computer. I wonder how they'll get to work? Will they be late because they're sick? Well, that you know, all of these things, these are ablest assumptions that folks make because you don't have the information. Whereas statistically, people with disabilities who get employed, take less sick days, they stick around in careers longer than people that don't identify with disability, and it doesn't cost so much. Because another part of ableism is, well, I can't hire this person, because it's going to cost me a lot of money to like, you know, adapt my building for them. So those are all also part of, of ableism that we have to end it's systemic. It's deep rooted into our thinking. And so we have to encourage folks to think different Frequently, and that's where the rub is, is because not everybody buys into this idea, but it makes a difference from my end, when I go into, you know, when I was trying to go to

college and I won't name, which one it was, and the pushback I got about how I was going to be able to participate in some of the programs. And I thought, well, give me a try, I have the right to the same teaching as any other person does. That's, you know, up to me to figure out how I'm going to, you know, write my assignment, that's not up to you to decide that. So like, ableism looks like a whole heck of a lot of things. Ableism also looks like if you're curious, when I'm sitting on the bus, and somebody says to me, so how did you go blind? Well, it's none of your darn business, how I went blind. And I always tell folks that for me, because I'm an educator in the space, I'll share with them my story, and then I'll tell them something about a friend of mine who had a very tragic, and they may be listening to this podcast, I'm trying to be careful, but had a very, they were tragically attacked and abused by a parent, and lost both their eyes and that attack as a small child. Now imagine you are on the bus, and you get asked that several times a day, and how triggering that is for you. So you know, it's a reminder to folks as much as they want to make a connection. As much as they want to understand what my lived experience is one, it's none of your business and to not everybody is like, oh, yeah, I was born blind. This is my whole life.

R

Ryan Fleury 21:32

Right? Where I'd rather not have somebody asked you, I don't know, make an assumption. Because it to me, that's almost no different than you standing at a street corner and somebody hauling you across the street. Instead of asking you "Do you need assistance?"

A

Amy Amantea 21:44

Oh, for me, Ryan. That's very different. Because the idea of assistance it absolutely you ask you don't touch a wheelchair, you don't pull a cane, you don't pull a person. I think when you ask, as long as you respect what the answer is, that's that's the right behavior instead of the pulling the grabbing the assuming and doing the act. So we in the disability community call this act, listen, act. Ask, listen, act. So you ask you listen, and you act upon what that person says. So there's a whole convention around that. But the idea of, of asking me how I went blind, or how you, you became a wheelchair user, those things can be very triggering and traumatic.

R

Ryan Fleury 22:26

And I can understand that at what point do you stop interacting with the public? I love it. When little kids come up to me and ask me how I lost my sight. It's an education moment.

A

Amy Amantea 22:35

Well, kids may be different. When kids ask that question, it comes from a different place. Right? When adults ask that question, they should likely know better. And I too, would not ask a quadriplegic, how they became a quadriplegic. If they volunteer that information, and we have a discussion, that's a different thing.

R

Ryan Fleury 22:52

Ryan Fleury 23:08

Would you have 10 years ago, before you learned about ableism? See, that's what I'm getting at is. I know, DEC all about ableism? Yeah, where do you learn about ableism? What is ableistic attitudes? Because I don't know. And I'm sure there's many others that don't.

A

Amy Amantea 23:08

Yeah, I you know, it's I think that's a good point. Ryan, I mean, I think it's if you extrapolate that to indigenous experiences decolonization if you extrapolate that to racism? You know, there are things that we may know more about racism than we do about ableism, because it's been more prominently discussed. And the disability community doesn't rally the same way as other equity seeking groups do right.

R

Ryan Fleury 23:31

Well, the other side of the coin is that disability community can't agree on anything.

A

Amy Amantea 23:35

That is, well, they can agree on some things. But there is there is a challenge with that as well, you are absolutely right. But I would think that equity seeking folks in other communities to have the same challenges like I know, folks in the deaf community have some of the same challenges. It's folks in the LGBTQ2+ community have some very similar challenges in terms of language and how folks identify and what's you know, proper to say, and what's not, and who gets used what to do, and all that kind of stuff. So, you know, we will pointed out that language is changing and evolving. And it's very regional, like the language we use here is gonna be different than the language they use in Toronto might be different, the language they use in New York, and you know, but there are a handful of things that we can like, generally, like we all agree that we don't use the word handicapped. You know, and if somebody says to me something again, I listened to intention. So if somebody says to me, Oh, are you looking for the handicapped bathroom? I, you know, I know that they're not meeting harm. What I might reply with is, oh, yes, if you can show me where the accessible bathroom is, I'd be very helpful.

R

Ryan Fleury 24:34

Yes. And maybe I'm just an ignorant 50 year old, whatever you want to call me. But to me, that's just being oversensitive. Like, you're like you're right. Intent is everything. Yeah. And you can get an idea of the person's voice, their characteristics, their manners, when they're asking you that question.

L

Lis Malone 24:53

And let me let me just jump in there. Ryan, just to piggyback what you're saying. When parking spaces still say handicap. So how do we take things out of the lexicon? When then you're everywhere there it's it's, it's, it's it's printed on, on government, buildings and signs and things

of that nature. So how do we, how do we change that? And without, you know, when I understand exactly the point you're making when you say I'm looking for the accessible restroom, but at the same time, you don't want someone to say, Oh, God, no stupid, angry, angry, blind person that's gone by, because then you also leave that impression of,

A Amy Amantea 25:33

I never do it in an angry way.

L Lis Malone 25:36

Well, you I mean, you're a lovely person.

A Amy Amantea 25:38

Let's just be honest, that I'm an educator, I'm an educator by topic, right? There's a difference. There's a difference, right?

L Lis Malone 25:43

Ryan and I are not as lovely we fully admit.

R Ryan Fleury 25:47

Absolutely.

S Steve Barclay 25:48

You'll notice that I'm being particularly quiet during this episode. And part of that is I am also a 50s guy who who is, you know, I was raised in a very racist household. So I know that a lot of the language that springs to my mind is totally inappropriate. I've learned that over the years. I, I have not until recently really dealt with this idea of ableism language. And that is going to be more difficult, I think, for me to wrap my head around into stop doing, because I have some nasty habits that have been developed over many years. But I also, you know, I look at some of these things as being irrelevancies that take away from the key situation which is trying to achieve equality. And I wonder how much you disengage other people by focusing on really well, minutiae things that, you know, don't necessarily bring about a good result. And one of those things, I think, is criticizing language, whether it you know, I like what you said, Amy about, about you, you, you view it with intention, not everybody does, though some people are more reactive, and might jump on somebody for using an inappropriate phrase, rather than, you know, engage. Right? Yeah, what the intention is, and that stuff turns off people and creates resistance to to the idea. You know, you gave the example of of nitty gritty and you said, Google it, and I'll never use it again, I see nothing that the Google has given me here. I'll

send you the link. Well, I found a link that says it's it's connected to the slave trade, but there's actually no evidence to that. It was the first reference that anybody can find it being connected to the slave trade was in 2005 at a workshop around language.

A

Amy Amantea 27:54

Right. But if one person from the black community says to you personally, please don't use that it's highly offensive. Do you take that and say, well, that's your opinion? Or do you say, You know what, it's not a big deal for me to remove that from my language? I would, that's what I heard in a space. Yeah, with an advocate around Black Lives Matter. And I thought, You know what, that is not difficult for me to remove from my language.

S

Steve Barclay 28:18

It isn't. But should we be removing necessarily things from our language that people just have misconceptions about?

A

Amy Amantea 28:26

I think we have improved whether there's, I mean, you can you can say the same thing about the word handicapped and where it came from, because there's a lot of different documentation about where that word comes from. Most people in the disability community believe that it came after World War One, when veterans were begging on the streets with their hand and cap, or their cap in hand, rather, because they couldn't find work. They were disabled veterans. But if you do enough research, you can find that this goes all the way back to like, I don't know, the 1500s. And one of them one of the French have gotten a lot of the ones I want to say it's King Louie, but I'm sure it's not but one of the one of the kings who in the same way, actually, to some extent, made it legal for their, for their warriors, who were injured to beg for money for money. Yep. Because they thought it wasn't fair, they weren't gonna be able to get a job. And you look at that, and you go, well, that's actually kind of equitable, right? For the 1500s. So yes, language changes language involves but it's the intent around the language. So it doesn't matter where it came from, necessarily. There's an intent around it. So I you know, what I do in this space and believe you, me, I have made a significant amount of money seriously around this space. In teaching this stuff. I offer the information you get to choose what you do with it. I'm not asking you to change. I'm telling you, what comes from community members that comes from and if you look look like I'm deep enough into some of the big disability organizations and the language that they use, you know, autism BC, for example, There are community that uses identity first language as opposed to person first language. So as an organization, they will say, you know, autistic people. And then under that banner, there are all sorts of people that will identify differently, right, but that's the highest bar of language. So you take your cue from that. So if you're writing on your website, that we are accessible for autistic people, you use the language that that they model, right, even though that you know that your friend may identify as a person with autism, right? So there's communication in the blind community, or highest bar of language is blind and partially sighted, then there's all sorts of ways that people talk about their sight loss underneath that banner, right. And we aren't going to get that right all the time. But I continue to think that if we use the highest bar of language, we offend the least number of people. And the idea of this extreme is absolutely

valid I to think, okay, there's an extreme here, when's the pendulum gonna come back in the other direction. That's why the conversation around language is an offer. That's all it is, is an offer. It's not a you must it's not a mathematical formula that x plus y equals Z. It's an offer. And what I find is that folks in the arts community are taking this up big time, hugely, all sorts, all sorts of oppression under any banner of oppression, because they come innately from a band of misfits, and I use that in a loving way. But arts people we're all people like Glenn started in high school that were like, didn't fit in anywhere else. So you have this collection of folks from all these different backgrounds, and they want to make everybody feel as comfortable and as safe as possible. So the minute you find yourself in one of those spaces, we are having deep conversations around pronouns about safe spaces about how we disengage, and engage with content and with each other. And, you know, a whole bunch of like, community charters and safety things that are put in place to make sure that any type of oppression doesn't creep into the space. It's really quite fascinating when you get really deep into some of these conversations. And as as extreme as you think I am in sharing the information. I'm somewhere right in the middle.

**S** Steve Barclay 32:05

No, I don't think you're extreme at all. I you know, I find this conversation really fascinating. And I, I know that, you know, I can I can pull out probably dozens of words that that I have have used in the past. And and am trying really hard not to. But every now and then one of them pops out. It's like oh, I should have said that.

**A** Amy Amantea 32:30

Just use the curse word, Steve. Because like, almost none of those are microaggressions or ableist. To pop out on any of those.

**R** Rob Mineault 32:39

Yeah, right. Just use cock trumpet.

**A** Amy Amantea 32:43

Can I swear in this space? You just drop an F bomb now and again instead of anything else.

**S** Steve Barclay 32:52

There's a writer that I absolutely love by the name of Christopher Moore, who in his writings has some of the most fun expletives that that you'll ever find. And hilarious. Yeah, my favorite expletive of his fuck stockings. Oh, I love it. I love it a lot.

**A** Amy Amantea 33:12

I love it. I mean, just I was just thinking about this. And like, there's all these sort of little experiences that that kind of solidify things. So I'm in a stage production right now. Called Amelia, we've had 16 shows. And when I was casting in the role, we were all sent a copy of the script. And the director said, I want you to read the script before you accept the role. Because there's content in here that people might be uncomfortable with, because we're using slurred language around race, we're using a lot of insane, crazy microaggressions. And they wanted to make sure that people felt comfortable with the script, knowing that we can't really change it because it's somebody else's writing, before we agreed to perform and say these words out of our mouths, right, like so this is the kind of community contract that's being created, that we're going to, we're going to create a safe space for each other. And what's in the script is in the script, but you know, we're creating an environment where we can support each other through that language, because there were some people in the cast who were profoundly impacted by some of this language. So like, there you go, right. It's like it exists everywhere. And it's just, if it's on your radar, you notice it. If it's not on your radar, you don't. And there are a ton of things that aren't on my radar. Surely, when we get deep into talking about decolonization, I think to myself, I don't even know where to start. Right? Like I just sort of, since the pandemic started, have learned how to do a proper land acknowledgement and the meaning around that, and how I become an ally to that community. And my invite for folks is become an ally to the disability community. How do you do that? Well, you consider some of these things and make some changes where you can make changes.

R

**Rob Mineault 34:50**

Yeah, I have a couple thoughts. I mean, I think that for a lot of people, you know, we'll be honest - change is hard. And for a lot of people, things are changing really fast. And I feel like that's why a lot of these issues are getting pushback from people. Because it's a lot of change. And it's a lot of change fast. And I think that it's all positive change. But to step it back a little bit and talk about the disability community and like not being able to agree on, you know, the type the language, the specific language to use. I mean, I get it, you know, and I feel like a lot of the place where people have been landing is that it's an individual choice. At the end of the day, people have the right to choose how they have what what language they are particularly comfortable with. Absolutely. And I think that that's really the important part of this. It's about ownership, it's about the disability community, having the rights to say, you know, what, we want to have the choice about how we are spoken about, and I feel like and whatever that those the particulars of that are, that's not the important part, the important part is that we give the community that power. And I feel like that's what's going on, you know, in all the other, you know, minority advocacy spaces as well. It's just giving the power to people to be able to choose how they want to be spoken about.

A

**Amy Amantea 36:23**

So here's my pushback on that. My only pushback, because I agree with you, I, in all my documentation, my teaching is about the individual choosing the language, if somebody says I'm handicapped, I'm not going to, I'm not going to correct their language, that's how they identify. But how does that help you in marketing? How does that help you if you are putting on your website that you want to be inclusive to a specific group, that you are inviting people into your space, from a, you know, from the blind community or the deaf community? You have to use the highest bar of language in those in those moments. And then you have to learn about people as an individual. Right? Right. So when we have a group of blind folks come to the

theater, you know, what we say to our volunteers, and our staff is us blind and partially sighted. And then if somebody says, No, I choose low vision. And they tell you that specifically, then you can, you can emulate that. But until you know how they identify, and most people won't, because if you use the highest bar, they're not going to say, oh, no, no, no, that's, that's poor language. But if you do the opposite, you tend to offend folks. And like, you know, this is a controversial thing. But the whole idea around the term visually impaired is changing big time, because impaired is the blind community is the last community of people with disabilities to let go of the term impaired. So in terms of community language, highest bar, you're not cognitively impaired, you're not mobility impaired, you're not hearing impaired. In fact, if you use that in the deaf community, that's a huge insult. But we're still we're still visually impaired, we still use that. And that's because it's tied to the medical model. It's a diagnosis, the term that your ophthalmologist uses, there's many different degrees of visual impairment. But for some people, they say, Well, wait a second, that sends up since said, the power dynamic, that sighted people are not broken. And I am, right, like there's, there's all of these nuances to language, and we can go to any extreme. So I now don't use that term, because I know a handful of people who really are opposed to it, I got a lot of other things to choose, like, there's a ton of other things to choose from. So this is the idea of the highest bar. So if if you come out and say, Hey, visually impaired people are welcome to the theater, or welcome in my restaurant, or welcome, wherever, and you've got people who are offended, they won't patronize you, they won't spend your money in your, in your establishment, they won't purchase from you. Because there are people in the disability community who are that empowered around language. So from a marketing perspective, from a perspective of speaking about groups of people, as opposed to an individual, I think we have to look at what the highest bar is. And then we speak to the individual if there's if we have relationships with these people, right? Because if you don't have a relationship with somebody, and you just see them in passing, then you know, you're not going to get into that level of no nuance either.

S

Steve Barclay 39:09

You have to me, you're giving me work. I just searched on my website, and I've got 75 products use the term 'impaired' in some way on them. Now I gotta go and now I gotta edit. Damn it.

A

Amy Amantea 39:23

I mean, that's, that's listen, I, you know, again, it's very regional, and some people won't be bothered, but I know, I know, a huge number of people that are on this upswing have let's get rid of impaired. I'm not drunk, I'm not broken.

R

Ryan Fleury 39:38

And again, that's, that's great that the disability community who we're talking to has come to that consensus, but the mainstream has no idea what you're talking about. So, you know, here we are. Everybody needs education, but nobody's been educated.

A

Amy Amantea 39:55

This is this is why I said ableism and the disability experience is a second cousin twice

This is why I said ableism and the disability experience is a second cousin twice removed. Because there are lots of spaces where you can like find webinars and teachings around decolonization, around Black Lives Matter, other equity seeking groups, but not so much around disability. And so it makes it a lot, a lot, a lot harder. And this is why people come knocking on my door because they hear from another organization that I've shared some information and another organization, I've shared some information. And so it started to chain, you know, to, to snowball, I guess, is the term because nobody else was offering this information in this space. And it's just that I had been so interested in language from the moment, I acquired my disability from the moment because I was a sighted, able bodied person until I wasn't. And then all of a sudden, people were calling me things. And I was like, No, I don't identify that way. And I started to research why I felt the way I felt around language, because people were looking at me as if Oh, I was I was not broken. And now I am. And it's like, well, wait a second. There are lots of things that I can do. Don't assume that I'm broken, that I can't do anything. And that impacted me so much in the world that for 12 years, I couldn't get employment as a blind person. 12 years. And so then I started doing some real research into language into other people with disabilities and what they felt about language. And yes, you're right, there's nuances. People liked it, but there is some consensus around language. And then there were some people were like, Yeah, you know, what, I don't care, whatever, call me whatever, no big deal. And those folks, we don't have to worry about in the same way, as we have to worry about folks that really are impacted by language. I would say, I'm somewhere in the middle, to be honest with you, because there are some terms, I think, yes. What's the big deal about that? But because I know that it might impact somebody else, I choose not to use it. That's how I that's how I become an ally to my own community. That's that's me identifying that way, right? So I'm not I'm not forcing anybody else to be an ally, or teaching anybody else to be an ally, but offering information because it's just not I mean, you can Google all of this stuff, too. And you'll find it. But nobody sits down. And does that to an extent me You can Google microaggressions, and you'll find a whole bunch of different stuff in there. You know, or AI, you'd have to be more specific, you have to google ableist microaggressions. So none of this stuff is like hidden.

R

Ryan Fleury 42:20

Well, this is why we wanted to talk about it, because it's, it's slowly coming to the forefront. You know, we're hearing a lot about inclusivity, diversity, accessibility, person, first language, you know, all of this in the last couple years has really come to the forefront. And so stuff like ableism. Like I was saying to Rob, actually, earlier today, I don't know anything about it. And so a conversation like this needs to happen more often. And I'm so glad we're having this conversation, because, you know, I'm exhausted already. I know, I know, probably in an hour, I'm gonna say something ableist. And tomorrow, I'll be in another one and another one and another one, and I won't even think twice about it.

R

Rob Mineault 43:06

Maybe you will?

L

Lis Malone 43:07

Well, well, yeah. Hopefully.

A

Amy Amantea 43:12

We did the same thing with racism, too, right? Like, there are so many racist terms out there. And sometimes you under them, you go, Oh, no, no, no, no, that wasn't right. Check that. Right. And then, you know, if you happen to be in a space where you offend somebody, you're like, I'm really sorry. I'm working on my language. Right. Like, you know, I think that's also I think that's also important is that when we make a mistake, if there's somebody there that is offended, that we just own up to that, right, like, we don't play the ignorant card, we just say, You know what, you're right. You're absolutely right. I'm working on I'm learning. You know, I'm learning and there are lots of, you know, things that I've edited from my language. And I mean, like, if you want to, you want to talk about minutiae, like I used to love to say the word like, Hey, friends, let's just get together and have a powwow. Okay? No, no, that is that is discriminatory against indigenous folks. I need to remove that from my language. Right. And so, again, minutia, nuance, however you want to put it extremes, but the truth is, is that chinwag or having a gab is just interesting to say, right, it's just that it's we you're right, we get into this like, default habit, right.

R

Ryan Fleury 44:24

Well, we learned from the environments we're raised in and brought up in right and media.

S

Steve Barclay 44:29

Yeah

L

Lis Malone 44:31

Well, so you need somebody in your party to actually express offense to it, right? Because if you're never if you're never Yeah, if it's never corrected, wherever pointed out, then I mean, why would you ever remove the behavior?

A

Amy Amantea 44:45

So this is a really good point list that you bring up. And I'll only just say that as as folks that want to be allies, and what we're asked from every from every equity seeking group. So if I'm in a space and my friend is being misgendered It's up to me to stand up not in a performative way. But to be their ally. Right? And so they may misgender, my friend, and I may use the language to gender them properly. So if you're hearing somebody tell a joke about disability, that's really not great. Then you say to your friend, hey, you know, that's just not That's not cool. Right? I wanted to say that's not kosher. I don't use that word anymore, either. Because it's not my word to use. And I don't know that the Jewish community cares that I use it, but I just choose I'd have to, but there's the example. Right? So it is up to us. You know, it's the same thing if you're in a circle, and a racist comment is being made to someone you know, do you stand by there? And do you say yeah, that was kind of funny, I'll just overlook that? I was,

again, in a space the other day with a group of folks and we were having exactly this conversation. And this woman identified as black. And she said, You know, sometimes I'm so afraid to say something because I don't want to lose my job. Because I don't want to be looked at as a troublemaker, because I don't want to look at as disruptive. And that's part of ableism and the disability experiences that we always have to be nice, we can't have a bad day. We're not nice to people, we're never going to get what we need. But the reality is, is that we're human beings with the human experience, and sometimes we just had enough, right?

R Ryan Fleury 46:22

We need a disability uprising to shake the mainstream up a little bit,

A Amy Amantea 46:26

can we can we store what is that they did in the 504. For Crip Camp, we have just storm our legislature and hang out on the steps and, you know, banded our wheelchairs at the bottom and drag our bodies up to the top?

R Ryan Fleury 46:40

Canadians don't do that

A Amy Amantea 46:43

But, you know, our, you know, Black Lives Matter was a big thing recently. And that community rally to make a statement. And this is why again, you know, ableism, in the disability experience is like the last thing on the list to talk about, because we don't stand up and say, Wait a second, we have an experience too. And because any of you can join the club at any time you able bodied folks out in the world, accessibility and inclusion should be just as important to you sure, as tomorrow, you may not be able to navigate those steps like you can today.

R Rob Mineault 47:13

Well, and that's you know, and that's part of it. What never makes any sense to me. Why the pushback against accessibility and inclusion, when absolutely every single one of us to a person is probably heading towards being a member of that community. So it's really dumb and counterintuitive, to actually have this the last place that we address.

L Lis Malone 47:33

Yeah, well, I did a corporate presentation not long ago, and part of my presentation in talking about being living with a disability is that we all come into this world, disabled. And we assuming we live our natural lives, usually leave the world with a form of disability. So it is a

part of the natural life cycle. But we don't acknowledge it during that time in between. Alright. And just like Rob was saying is that it is the it's the only minority group that people can enter and exit at any point in their lives. Yeah. And I think it's that scares the , can I say -- beejesus?

S

Steve Barclay 48:18

Not around my Mom.

A

Amy Amantea 48:24

Yeah, I you know, it's it's a it's a big conversation. And you sort of just like y'all said, it's exhausting. I mean, think about this, from my perspective, I do this several times a day, like, what I'm doing in all the spaces that I'm in. So I'm having these conversations a lot with folks, and I am constantly learning from, from our communities, and from folks around, and that is also the beauty of the work, is that it, it keeps, it keeps evolving, and it keeps changing. And that's a good thing. I think, you know, it all for all equity seeking people. It's a good thing that we keep having these conversations. Even if they don't resonate, even if they don't absorb in the moment. It's like, the more somebody sort of experiences them the more we recognize them, right? Yeah. That's not the work friends and for all of us who are out who are in equity seeking groups and who want to be allies of others and equity seeking groups. I think that's my, my humble my humble pitch. When I do when I do my opening house speech for the theatre performance, I do a land acknowledgement. And I share with them that I'm a settler, an uninvited guest on these lands. And what I think I've been asked to do is to listen, to acknowledge the truth and to look towards a future with the spirit of reconciliation. Those are things that I have been asked to do by by indigenous folks, is to not ignore what they're saying. Right? And it's like, how do we do that in the disability community?

R

Rob Mineault 49:54

Yeah, yeah.

A

Amy Amantea 49:55

How how do we get people to not go Oh, you're being ridiculous about this. Clark, seriously, you're that impacted by this? Oh my god, right like, how do we? How do we do that? I don't know. That's a ... for me and the work that I continue to do and to can you continue to ask other people in our community how we do that?

R

Rob Mineault 50:17

In terms of that, though, so one thing that I want to sort of extend on what you were just talking about, is that, what what do you and I want to get your impression, Amy, because you're really in this space. But for me, you know, sort of on the outside looking in, I get some time, sometimes intimidated by the real - I don't know what the word to use is - but the sort of the real, 'passionate' advocates that are out there. And I think that part of this is a social media

problem, because I think that in the social media space, there are people out there that are just all about outrage, like that's they they look for things to get outraged about. And they look for people to attack. And this is part of the problem in that space, that that I think that is almost counterproductive, because they go searching out people to jump on and attack, things like language, and they attack them. And all of that really does instead of instead of making it like a learning moment, like we're having here, instead of teaching people what language to use, they attack them. And what that does is that those people then just become afraid to even engage, and they just they just shut down. And they're never talking about disability again, or they're never posting, or they're never, you know, they're just not engaging. And I think that that's really counterproductive. What's your kind of experience in that? And? And how do you see sort of a balance going on?

A

Amy Amantea 51:49

Yeah, so I know, some advocates in the space. And I, you know, I'm not sure I would necessarily call them passionate, because I think I'm passionate. But my approach is logic, reason, understanding education. There are some advocates out there who attack and who threaten. 'This is a human rights violation'. And I find this is this is my experience has been, if you put the way I advocate next to that sort of antagonistic advocacy, I think that makes some folks with disabilities feel really powerful. But what it doesn't do is bring people back to knock on your door when they have follow up questions. Right. So they, as you said, Rob, they kind of go, oh, I don't know if I can approach that person. Because the last time we engaged, they were really angry. And for me, everything I do is an offer. It's an offer, it's like I said, it's not, I'm not trying to change your mind, I'm not trying to, you know, give you rules, or a system that you must follow or you will die, right, like I am offering you, what I know what I've experienced, what I've learned from the community, all the information that's been gathered, so that you can get it in, you know, hopefully, like almost a one stop shop to start the conversation. And to grow from there. Because like we couldn't possibly do everything in an hour in one webinar or whatever. But this idea of having enough information to go, Hmm, I'm interested in going to the next one, ha, I had no idea about some of those things. So I tend to, I tend to find in my own advocacy, and I've been doing it for 15 years, that you're better off to catch flies with honey than you are with vinegar. That old that old analogy. And I learned that a lot through working with architects and municipalities, because these are folks that I don't want to say don't care about accessibility, but accessibility is always balanced against the bottom line the dollar. So you really have to, you really have to encourage people to do it, because it's the right thing to do. And try and leave the money out of it, which is a really hard thing to do. Because again, at the end of the day, it's like, well, that's gonna cost me a lot of money. You know, this is like, this is just, you know, whether this is ableism or not. I said to a developer once he was building a \$4 million, condo, condo building \$4 million condos on the North Shore. And they had two balconies. And we were talking about barrier free balconies so that folks who are wheelchair users can get out onto the balcony because usually they have like a step up or a step down. And that's done, of course, because the envelope can leak. They want to make it as waterproof as possible. But it can be done with a barrier free balcony. It just costs more money. But build that in from the spot from scratch. No big deal. So I sent to this architect because he said to me, Well, what if we make one of the balconies accessible? And I kind of laughed a bit. I said, you know that Porsche that you came in today? What if I make the driver's side door not open but the passenger door open? Like if I'm spending four For a million dollars on a condo, because I live in the British properties in a big house, and I've been there for 60 years, and I'm now a senior who's using a wheelchair or a walker or just has trouble with steps, and I'm going to downsize to a \$4 million condo and I can't access the balcony. Like, what sense does that

make? And so that's like, just another way of how we look at the disability experience from this lens of, well, it just costs too much for these people to have a quality of life. And that, you know, you know, when I approached that I like I could have said to him, Well, you know, it's somebody's human right to have equal access to their home. But I didn't, I used an analogy that made sense to him and his fancy sports car. And he was like, oh, yeah, if I'm going to spend \$100,000 on a car, I want to get in both doors. Uh huh. Yeah, of course you do. Right, like, so I always am finding ways of meeting people at their level, with wherever they are on what I call the accessibility continuum, right? There's, it's a continuum. And we have to recognize where we are, and make a commitment to just move forward. That's it. So you can you can come into the continuum and say, I know absolutely nothing. And every day, I'm going to learn one small thing that I can do to move forward. And this is what I do. And like I work full time for the Arts Club. And every week, I provide them with what I call an accessibility nugget. And it's just like, it's a little tidbit. It's a little sound bite, it's a little thing on language or a little thing on the experience. And they they sort of learn it by osmosis, right? It's like, oh, every week, I'm learning this thing. You know, I just sent them this week a thing on International Day, people with disabilities. That's great. None of them have ever heard of that before. Right? Now they know. So there are all sorts of ways that we can filter the content in like digestible chunks so that it doesn't feel so overwhelming. But then there are some folks that really want to take like a deep dive three hour webinar. I do I do sometimes. Because it just depends on what the individual wants and what they can, what their capacity is to hold it right.

R

Ryan Fleury 56:57

Add me to email list. Once a week is fine, thank you.

R

Rob Mineault 57:05

Well, and it's interesting, too, because, you know, when when we're talking about changing these big societal attitudes, it can become really intimidating, and feel like, you know, man, we're just at the bottom of this huge mountain. But, you know, maybe that's the thing about language and the importance of changing language. Because, like you said, before, it's a small change that people can make, and slowly, but surely, if they can just start to slowly change the way that they that they're their language, slowly, but surely, their attitudes will come along with it. And, you know, in terms of society, you know, one group starts to do it, it just, it spreads. And, you know, that's how we start to really see some change.

A

Amy Amantea 57:53

You know, ableism is a big barrier, certainly to the community. But the attitudinal barrier is like, the two, the two of them are married to each other. Right? So it's, you have to look at the attitudinal barrier and the relationship to ableism. And look at how we start dismantling that system, right, there's a lot of talk these days about systems. And that, and that's part of it, and it takes time, and it will never be perfect, because not everybody either believes wants to buy in wants to have these conversations cares about these conversations. So we do what we can do as human beings, right? Like, I also say that I educate one person at a time, because that's really how it goes, right? Even if I have 50 people on a webinar, it's really still just one person at a time. And then the hope is, is that somebody else is like, hey, you know what, I learned this

thing. I'm going to share this with somebody else. Right? And then it starts to grow that way. And that only only happens when you when you educated with the spirit of it. Again, I open all my webinars with this is a judgment free zone, right? Like this is where you can ask your questions, you don't have to worry about language, we'll talk about it. You know, I'll point you in the direction if you are like, Oh, can I use this? Can I use that, like, use whatever you need to use in this space, because this is where we learn. And I actually don't get offered that often. When I'm on webinars and other equity seeking communities. I don't get the opportunity to ask questions like if I took an LGBTQ2+ webinar recently, and I just had so many questions about about the word queer and how the word queer is changing and means something very different than it did when I was growing up. But I didn't feel safe to ask that question in that environment. Because it's not my lived experience, right? So I really want to, I want to create a space where folks don't feel judged. If they have questions to ask about the disability experience, and that's where we do that. Don't ask me on the bus, asked me in this safe place. Because this is where I can engage with you in a teaching way. better engage with me on a bus, you're with somebody for three minutes. Then they get up and somebody else sits down and I get asked again, then they leave the house again. So I always say to people, I can ask like 12 times a day these like rear random questions about my disability experience, how do I get dressed in the morning? How do I cook my food? How do I end? It's like, just ask me, you know how I'm enjoying the weather? Bad old question. You know, sometimes it's just too much when you're asked constantly.

**L** Lis Malone 1:00:26

So a good pickup line would not be Hey, how do you have sex? Just for anyone out there listening that may want to talk to Amy afterwards, to not ask her about how she has sex, you will end up with a black eye.

**S** Steve Barclay 1:00:52

However, that totally works for me.

**A** Amy Amantea 1:00:56

Totally works for you. Steve, maybe you need to put on your website. Some devices?

**R** Ryan Fleury 1:01:04

No, I'm not doing tech support on assistive devices or sexual aids. No, I quit.

**L** Lis Malone 1:01:11

Oh, we just did a podcast not long ago, Amy, where somebody wrote in their book about a client who built a masturbation machine., Steve is still hard at work in his garage.

A

Amy Amantea 1:01:25

I've had again, this is a conversation that we have a lot in the community with my my friends with disabilities, you know, when you get together with other folks with disabilities, you are shooting the shit like nobody's business. And you get to be raw and transparent and go deep into places that you never thought. And I have been told so many things from my CP friends, my quadriplegic friends my about how that works. My mind gets a little blown. So I don't actually have to ask anybody how they have sex, because I've already been told by all my male friends who identify this way, how they do this, and it's like, okay, alright, thanks for sharing. Next question, like, next topic.

R

Rob Mineault 1:02:04

But you know, that's, like, I really feel like that is such an important way to do this. Is is creating these safe spaces for people that they can just be open. They can they can ask questions. It's it's a judge free zone. I really feel like that's a really, really great way to do it. Yeah. So I mean, obviously, we just we just need to clone you. We need to work on that cloning technology. clone a bunch of you run a bunch of webinars.

A

Amy Amantea 1:02:33

As long as I get a residual from every clone. We're good to go. Yeah.

R

Ryan Fleury 1:02:39

Yeah, no, I think this conversation needs a part two and part three.

R

Rob Mineault 1:02:47

It's a huge topic. And there's so much to it. There's so many moving parts here.

R

Ryan Fleury 1:02:51

And where do you start?

R

Rob Mineault 1:02:58

Yeah. Well, we started with language. today.

S

Steve Barclay 1:03:04

I'm starting by removing visually impaired from 75 products. And I'd also like to point out that all of those descriptions, almost virtually every single one of them have been pulled off of my

suppliers websites. Sure. So it's not just me, it's this industry. It has got a reckoning with vocabulary as well.

R

Ryan Fleury 1:03:28

Like Amy said, it was medically diagnosis. Right, you know, impairment.



1:03:36

I have heard some folks in the community, say things like, I don't have a lack of vision, I have a lack of sight, because they're making this separate distinction between vision, really not something that comes from your eyes, but something that comes from your brain. And sight. And again, like this is getting into the minutiae, and I don't think we're in a place yet where we're like, changing that language in a strong way. But you know, it is interesting to see how some people like 'No, no', and even the Canadian Council of the Blind slogan is 'a lack of sight is not a lack of vision'. So you're starting to see this, this this slow, creeping change in a different sort of more empowerment direction, as opposed to a medical diagnostic direction.

R

Ryan Fleury 1:04:19

Yeah, yeah. And there's organizations that, like, FFB, I'll name them anyway. There are there are people that really hate that Fighting Blindness part, right. Like, what is there to fight? That's right. Are we fighting against blindness?

A

Amy Amantea 1:04:41

Right, absolutely.

R

Rob Mineault 1:04:42

Yeah, we have to I would love to talk about that more on a because I think that's another really great conversation. Because yeah, you do have you do have organizations out there that have very different mandates.

A

Amy Amantea 1:04:57

I think about that in the world of diabetes too. Right. It's like, we want to cure diabetes. And again that but what do I, what are the rest of us do who are living with the complications of diabetes? Yeah, while we're waiting for that cure, right. So, I don't I don't think that it's a problem to have research into doing cures and having preventative research. But I also don't want folks to, I don't want researchers and the, in the mainstream community to forget about those of us who are living today with these experiences, because we need support to and accommodations and Ally ship and adaptation and, you know, understanding and all those

things that go with our lived experience cuz I'm not gonna sit around and be like, Oh, great. Maybe when I'm 90, they'll know how to develop a retina out of DNA. You know, it's not you know, so I have a life to live now. Anyways, friends.

**R** Ryan Fleury 1:05:43  
Alright, you coming back next week?

**A** Amy Amantea 1:05:44  
I'm coming back. Whenever you're brave enough to have me back.

**R** Rob Mineault 1:05:48  
No. Seriously, we would love that.

**R** Ryan Fleury 1:05:51  
Yeah, we needed to do this. Yeah, we need a party.

**A** Amy Amantea 1:05:55  
Sure. Yeah. You set it up. I'll be in the same bat chair at the same bat time.

**R** Rob Mineault 1:06:00  
Okay. It's a deal. Hey, I want to thank you so much for joining us.

**A** Amy Amantea 1:06:06  
You're welcome.

**R** Rob Mineault 1:06:07  
I've learned a lot.

**R** Ryan Fleury 1:06:09  
I hope I haven't offended anyone at all. If I have I apologize. I know nothing.

A

Amy Amantea 1:06:16

But now you know, a little something, Ryan?

R

Ryan Fleury 1:06:19

See if I remember it.

A

Amy Amantea 1:06:22

You'll be surprised. Yeah, we'll be surprised. You'll start to notice and you'll you'll start to hear it on TV. And you'll be like, oh, yeah, yeah, that's really common. That's much more common than I remember. Right. Right. Like, it's, it's everywhere.

R

Rob Mineault 1:06:35

Yeah. And I mean, I mean, I have a personal sort of a personal connection to I mean, I came from the assistive technology industry into a nonprofit. And I had to change the way that because I was the same way. I was, like, visually impaired, like, I didn't think anything of it. That was the language that I cut my teeth on for many, many years in the assistive technology field -- it was just a thing. And so when I moved to this nonprofit, they're like, Well, no, it's you can't use visually impaired, it has to be partially sighted. And I don't know how many times I slipped up in emails and in the marketing copy and stuff. And and it took a while, but now it's just it's, it's common, like, I never use that term at all anymore. It's always partially sighted. And I mean, I think that I've kind of influenced Ryan and Steve as well, because, you know, I'm always saying partially sighted as opposed to visually impaired. So, you know, it takes some time, but but it's totally possible.

S

Steve Barclay 1:07:35

But here's the thing around that term, though, that term came from the community,



1:07:40

No, the terms came from the doctor's first. You leave your doctor's office saying, Well, my diagnosis has visual impairment, just like you leave, say, my diagnosis is stage three, whatever,

S

Steve Barclay 1:07:49

I've had people take me to task for using the term blindness in reference to them, because they're not blind, they are visually impaired. And I've been corrected to use the term visually impaired by people.

A

**Amy Amantea 1:08:03**

The reminder, yeah, and everybody gets to identify individually as they choose. And if you know that, that's great. But you're not going to address the whole community with that. Right? That's, that's the difference. Um, and a lot of people that use visually impaired are now just using low vision. Because again, like partially sighted, you know, for some folks, it doesn't quite resonate with them. And if you're just blind, but for some folks, like I identify as blind all the time, when in reality, I actually do have some partial sight. But I just use blind because it's so much easier, I don't have to explain a lot of stuff to folks, you know,

R

**Ryan Fleury 1:08:40**

What I'm just thinking about, you know, like listening to the Limitless show - little plug there - when people are talking about partially sighted, there is such a spectrum when it comes to vision loss. And so when you say partially sighted, well, just because I might see shades of black and orange, is that sight?

A

**Amy Amantea 1:09:01**

Well, I think, you know, there is a medical, I want to get into that.

R

**Ryan Fleury 1:09:06**

there's a spectrum there. Right?

A

**Amy Amantea 1:09:08**

Yeah, there is a spectrum, the spectrum of visual impairment. So like, I'm reaching for my memory here, that I may not be 100% correct. And I'm voicing this but there's like, profoundly visually impaired and like, right, you know, like there's a different different levels of visual impairment that equate to your 20 over 200 and off acuity. So you so you don't refer to it as legally blind. I use all terms I use blind, partially sighted, partially partially blind, low vision, sight loss, non visual and visual experience, and legally blind. Those are seven terms that I use, I never use visually impaired because of what I've learned from my community. And I actually myself believe that because I don't want to set up a power dynamic. I'm, I'm a human being first. So those are seven and it depends on like, what I'm doing and who I'm communicating with and what almost they need to be able to understand my experience. If I'm looking for ketchup in a grocery store and I can't find it, I might say to somebody, I'm blind, can you help me find the ketchup? Easy peasy, right? Like you say, I'm partially sighted they go, what does that mean? Right? You know? So it just depends on on what it is that I'm doing. If I'm going to go in and try and I don't know, buy a magnifying glass from Steve, I'm going to say I have partial sight because, you know, I find I might need five times I may need eight times I don't know. So it's really it's really just for me, I'm a chameleon that way, it depends.

L

Lis Malone 1:10:35

So I don't want to take the conversation into one direction. Or maybe I'll save this for the next podcast episode. But I am curious. So you, you don't use a cane?

A

Amy Amantea 1:10:48

No, I do. I know my acuity is like close to 20 over 1200. legal blindness starts at 20 over 200 . So I'm way I have about 2% sight way on the far end of close to total blindness.

L

Lis Malone 1:11:04

Okay, now, because usually the, you know, the use of the white cane, not only of course, to keep me from falling down a flight of stairs is also to alert the world around us that, that I'm low vision. Yeah, like, I can't find the damn ketchup.

A

Amy Amantea 1:11:25

But you have to have people that actually know what that cane means. And this is another like, again, a whole other podcast topic. But you know, if we were able to I was in a space once and I said, you know, children are sponges. So can you just imagine a world just imagine a world where you're kindergarteners learning a sign language, oh, and maybe learning some basic Braille alphabet and learning about what a wheelchair is, and why people use them. And what a white cane is how much more evolved as human beings, they would be as adults. And it doesn't take much because the kids are the ones that really, really want to know the information. Right? They absorb it like sponges, and they could probably learn braille in a really short time. But if they ever need it, they've got it. And they understand what that means for somebody who uses it. And of course, the deaf community, culturally, Deaf folks are pushing very hard. And I hope that they get this for ASL to be a registered Canadian language like French and English is. And so you know, all of us as service providers who are working in like government environments would start with government environments, of course, we're going to have to either have ASL interpreters or learn ASL communication. I would have loved to have learned how to do that when I was a kid, even though I wasn't deaf or blind, but it would have helped me today, knowing Braille, because as a 24 year old, when I lost my sight, there was this very complicated for me to try and learn braille. I don't know, I just think, you know, it's there are some things we learn as kids that could be really interesting from a, like a global lived experience understanding of human being perspective. Which is not to say that, you know, there isn't value in the other things that kids learn, but there's real value in this to, you know, anyways, that's just, that's just my random, random tangent thought.

R

Rob Mineault 1:13:17

It's true. It is true. That's, that's, that's where you want to hit - it's the kids.

A

Amy Amantea 1:13:22

A Amy Amantea 1:13:22

Yeah, it makes a big difference. And I, you know, I know, again, I know folks that have grandchildren now. And their grandchildren are coming home to them and saying, We have somebody in my, my class that that was a boy and now is a girl. Right? And so they're learning about pronouns, and they're learning about gender identification, and the, you know, this student's experience of transitioning at such a young age and then they go home and they teach grandma and grandpa who are like likely in their 50s Right. And I'm these people are coming to me and they're telling me about like learning about pronouns and the importance of of this, you know, this stuff was not taught when I was in high school wasn't taught five years ago, it wasn't me exactly Ryan and so but like, how much more inclusive are is that generation going to be have this experience growing up? Right like I'm hoping that that means a great deal of change for us as as human beings as we continue to evolve.

R Ryan Fleury 1:14:20

We're going to have a 12 part AT Banter miniseries.

A Amy Amantea 1:14:24

Are gonna do stop talking to how because the Gemini in me would just go forever.

R Ryan Fleury 1:14:30

Absolutely.

R Rob Mineault 1:14:31

There is no Yeah, absolutely. I agree. And I can't wait. So pretty much there's our January, February and March.

R Ryan Fleury 1:14:41

I'll keep the calendar open.

A Amy Amantea 1:14:44

I'm gonna say book a spot now. Ryan.

R Ryan Fleury 1:14:47

I will send you an email tomorrow. Tomorrow,

S Steve Barclay 1:14:52  
She's already working 150 hours a week.

R Ryan Fleury 1:14:56  
You got it. No, this has been great Amy. I really appreciate it.

A Amy Amantea 1:14:59  
Thanks for sharing space with me, guys.

R Rob Mineault 1:15:02  
Hey, absolutely anytime and let's get out of here. What do you say? Time for dinner?

R Ryan Fleury 1:15:09  
Yeah

R Rob Mineault 1:15:10  
All right guys well oh wait I guess we should we should we do the outro You can see how the sausage is made Amy.

A Amy Amantea 1:15:20  
Fascinating.

R Rob Mineault 1:15:21  
Okay, well listen I want to thank Amy once again and thank you my co hosts my lovely co hosts see this has put me in such a great mood I now I'm just I feel all warm and fuzzy.

S Steve Barclay 1:15:38  
Yeah, and I would I would like to clarify your earlier statement about hitting kids. We have no way advocate hitting kids.

R Rob Mineault 1:15:45

Wait, When I say hitting kids?

S

Steve Barclay 1:15:48

You were talking about education. It's like yeah, the kids so it's the ones you want to hit.

L

Lis Malone 1:15:58

Oh my god, you just brought a tear to my almond eyes.

R

Rob Mineault 1:16:01

Oh. You get to say that. That's hilarious. Oh, man. out of here before we might have to contact our guests from last week, Lainey Feingold the lawyer.

R

Ryan Fleury 1:16:19

That's right.

R

Rob Mineault 1:16:21

All right. Well, listen. Hey, Ryan.

R

Ryan Fleury 1:16:24

Rob.

R

Rob Mineault 1:16:24

Where can people find us?

R

Ryan Fleury 1:16:26

They can find us online at [atbanter.com](http://atbanter.com).

R

Rob Mineault 1:16:29

Hey, they can also drop us an email if they so desire at [cowbell@atbanter.com](mailto:cowbell@atbanter.com).

S Steve Barclay 1:16:38  
That's right. And they can find us on Twitter and Facebook but not Instagram.

R Rob Mineault 1:16:44  
Hey, you know what? Speaking of that, speaking of dropping Instagram, did you guys hear that Lush removed themselves from all social media? Yeah.

S Steve Barclay 1:16:54  
I applaud that move. I think every now remove themselves from social media. I was I was very impressed.

R Rob Mineault 1:17:00  
Exactly. So who knows? Who knows how long it might be before AT Banter follows suit. Good for Lush, even though every time I walk into a Lush store I sneeze. The scents are really overwhelming. There's too many open containers of like those bath bombs and stuff. And just like, I don't even know what I'm smelling. But I just did. Yeah, I just go into a sneezing fit, but good for them for removing themselves on social media. Indeed. Anyways...

S Steve Barclay 1:17:27  
Hey, wait, wait, wasn't there a phone number people can get that too?

R Rob Mineault 1:17:30  
Hey, yeah, let's talk about that. Hey, Ryan. Yeah. Sorry for disturbing you over there.

R Ryan Fleury 1:17:40  
Or did I sound annoyed, I'm sorry. I apologize.

R Rob Mineault 1:17:44  
What? What's, what's that phone number that people can call if they if they want to call us?

R Ryan Fleury 1:17:51  
Well, if they want to call us if they have a comment or topic suggestion for the show, they can call 1844996428 to leave us your name your message. And if you give us your permission, we

may play it on an upcoming episode.

**R** Rob Mineault 1:18:04  
That's right.

**S** Steve Barclay 1:18:06  
And Ryan can also take interact, e-transfers with that number.

**R** Rob Mineault 1:18:15  
All right. Well, listen, I want to once again thank you to Amy, for joining us. Thanks, Lis for helping us out once again.

**L** Lis Malone 1:18:23  
My pleasure.

**R** Rob Mineault 1:18:24  
And we will see everybody next week.

**R** Ryan Fleury 1:18:34  
Bye.