

AT Banter Podcast Episode 266 - Anthony Ferraro

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SPEAKERS

Rob Mineault, Steve Barclay, Lis Malone, Anthony Ferraro, Ryan Fleury

R Rob Mineault 00:39
Hey and welcome to another episode of AT Banter!

S Steve Barclay 00:45
Banter, banter.

R Rob Mineault 00:48
Hey, this is of course the podcast where we talk with advocates and members of the disability community to educate and inspire better conversation about disability. Hey, my name is Rob Mineault, joining me today, Mr. Ryan Fleury.

R Ryan Fleury 01:06
Hello, everybody.

R Rob Mineault 01:08
And we've also got here Mr. Steve Barclay.

S Steve Barclay 01:13
That would be me.

R Rob Mineault 01:14
And hey, guess what? Once again, we have Lis Malone.

S Steve Barclay 01:20
Oh, right.

L Lis Malone 01:22
Hidey- ho party people!

S Steve Barclay 01:23
We're so much better with her.

L Lis Malone 01:27
That's so sweet.

S Steve Barclay 01:28
You improve our average.

L Lis Malone 01:30
Your cheque is in the mail.

R Ryan Fleury 01:34
He's getting paid?

L Lis Malone 01:35
He gets paid for compliments. Yes. I'm sorry. We didn't work out that same side deal.

R Ryan Fleury 01:39
it's true. Inside deal.

L Lis Malone 01:42
Steve's an entrepreneur -- he was working it. Yes.

R Ryan Fleury 01:47
That's true about the marketing

R Rob Mineault 01:51
What's shakin, anything? Anything going on over there and anywhere?

R Ryan Fleury 01:56
No, no, not much. It's been you know, we had a little snow but it wasn't as exciting as four months worth of rain in two weeks.

R Rob Mineault 02:06
Yeah, well, hey, listen. Wait It's kind of boring around here when we don't have some sort of a weather emergency or anything.

R Ryan Fleury 02:12
Yeah, we should really have another one obviously sort of Snowmageddon or something.

R Rob Mineault 02:16
I like it. Yeah,

R Ryan Fleury 02:17
We need we need new winter term we learned you know, we learned bomb cyclone in the spring we had dome heat dome in the summer and then we had atmospheric river in the fall so we need to we need a good Snowmageddon.

R Rob Mineault 02:32
Yeah, we do. The snow. Yeah, I don't know. I don't know.

- R** Ryan Fleury 02:38
Give us a call toll free with your name and suggestions for the new winter catastrophe.
- R** Rob Mineault 02:42
What's that number? What's that number Ryan?
- R** Ryan Fleury 02:44
1-844-996-4282 All right, or you can email us at cowbell@atbanter.com.
- L** Lis Malone 03:00
Not to be confused with jingle bell cowbell.
- R** Rob Mineault 03:05
Wow. Okay. Where were we? We were talking about okay, well, what about? Let's check in with Lis. How are you Lis?
- L** Lis Malone 03:18
So I am probably going to have the worst rip roaring cold in a future episode if you guys are so inclined to ever have me back. But this weather is from like, mid 70s to 30s. And it's everything in between. So I know ... I know poor Lis, living in 70 degree weather.
- R** Ryan Fleury 03:40
Gosh, that sounds awful.
- L** Lis Malone 03:44
No, but we don't know how to dress, you know, you don't know. It's like, you know, then you're sweating. And then the next thing you know, you're freezing. So it's like the perfect storm for breeding germs and getting sick and spreading viruses and everything.
- R** Rob Mineault 04:01
You know, I'm wondering, I wonder if there's a podcast out there where they just - it's just like three guys and they just talk about the weather for like 20 minutes. I feel like the podcast

three guys and they just talk about the weather for like, 20 minutes. I feel like the podcast space is getting pretty crowded. There's a lot - everybody has a podcast these days. Like pretty much every every celebrity now has a podcast. You got podcasts about like shows that are like 10 years old, like The Office - like all the office cast like they have a podcast where they just talk about it ..

R Ryan Fleury 04:27

There's podcasts about podcasts.

R Rob Mineault 04:29

Yeah, like it's crazy. Everybody has a podcast. We were doing it when it was cool. Right, we were hip. Yeah, we were. I mean, we were doing it so long ago that we were we first had it we had a Google Plus page for our podcast. Remember that guys? Remember that?

S Steve Barclay 04:52

It goes back. Yeah, we did.

R Rob Mineault 04:54

We talked for like couple years before we phased it out and then eventually died, but it's probably still there. Yeah, probably probably got as many hits as our Instagram. Hey, Steve...

S Steve Barclay 05:09

Yeah,

R Rob Mineault 05:10

hey, I'm gonna I'm gonna I'm gonna ask you a question because Ryan sick of answering my questions, but can you perhaps tell me what we're doing today?

R Ryan Fleury 05:19

Well, we've got this dude named Anthony Ferraro coming on the show. And Anthony as best I can tell does everything. It's a paralympic athlete in- training musician. What else does he do? Blind skateboarder,

S Steve Barclay 05:34

... ..

Wrestler, judo...

R Ryan Fleury 05:37
Content creator, motivational speaker.

R Rob Mineault 05:41
Traveler. He really does do it all. Really amazing. I watched some of his stuff earlier and I'm stoked to talk to him.

R Ryan Fleury 05:52
Haven't heard that term since the 90s...

R Rob Mineault 06:00
I knew you're gonna call me out on that. Listen. It's it's a skateboarding term.

R Ryan Fleury 06:05
Maybe?

R Rob Mineault 06:11
We're gonna do grinding half pipes and doing turny thingies and the flippy flippy thing.

L Lis Malone 06:21
Oh my god, Rob. That's so rad. Yeah, it is rad. Right?

R Rob Mineault 06:24
It's gonna be totally, totally tubular.

L Lis Malone 06:27
Totally bodacious.



R

Rob Mineault 06:32

I don't know. I'll have to watch Bill and Ted again.

L

Lis Malone 06:35

Very, very, very dated.

R

Rob Mineault 06:38

Okay, fine. Now, okay, now. Okay, so I'm not stoked, okay. He's really cool, dude.

R

Ryan Fleury 06:46

Okay, grandpa. He's a hoopy frood who knows where his towel is.

R

Rob Mineault 06:49

Exactly my thought thinking to. Okay, well, I guess we're just gonna have to accept that we're getting old. We don't know how to introduce a 20 something year old skateboarder.

L

Lis Malone 07:01

Whippersnapper.

R

Rob Mineault 07:03

He's not a whippersnapper. Well, I'm looking forward to talking to him. I checked out his a lot of his channels in the last couple of days, and it's gonna be a great interview. So can I can I tell you guys one thing before we get into that, though .. so I had a really terrible thing happened to me the other day. So I'm at McDonald's. And I go, I'm in line and go and I'm just gonna get a double double. And I go up and I say, hey, this medium, medium, double double, and she's like, okay, great. And she brings it in. It's like \$1.50. And I don't think anything of it at first. I'm just like, man, coffees gone down in price. And then I look down at the cash register. And it says 'seniors coffee'. And so then in my head, I'm going okay, well, I want to call her on this and say, you mischarged me, young lady. I am definitely not senior. But then I'm like, but it's like 60 cents off. And so I'm like 60 cents is 60 cents.

L

Lis Malone 08:17

Spoken like a true senior.

—

R

Rob Mineault 08:19

Yeah, well, I guess I guess so. But as so I just I just sucked it up and and went with it. But yeah, that was that was that's alarming. It's alarming. So that was my week so far.

R

Ryan Fleury 08:33

Well, you should have taken a picture of her I could go there for coffee.

L

Lis Malone 08:38

Everyone wants to know where that McDonald's is located. .

R

Rob Mineault 08:41

Like obviously they are giving out seniors coffee to people who look maximum .. 35.. m aybe north of 38. Count the rings around my forehead. All right. Well, I'm glad that nobody else has had that problem. But I'm the only one no. Yeah. Okay. Well. Great. Anyways. Hey, let's bring on Anthony!

R

Ryan Fleury 09:26

Joining us now is Anthony Ferraro. Anthony, I want to thank you so much for taking some time out of your evening to join us. I am Ryan and joining me in the room today are Steve Barclay.

S

Steve Barclay 09:37

Hello there.

R

Ryan Fleury 09:39

And Rob Mineault.

R

Rob Mineault 09:40

Hey

R

Ryan Fleury 09:42

And the good looking one, Lis Malone.

L

Lis Malone 09:45

Yes, it's just me little Lis. Sitting here in the corner.

R

Rob Mineault 09:50

And I used to be the good looking one. So, I have to say, Anthony, you are a fascinating guy. I'm excited about having this conversation. I've been looking at all your social media feeds. Very cool stuff. So why don't we however, just start out by just giving us a little bit of a background on on who you are and a little bit about maybe about your condition.

A

Anthony Ferraro 10:16

Yeah, absolutely. Thanks for having me. Um, my name is Anthony Ferraro, I'm 26 years old, I was born blind with Leber's congenital amaurosis. It's a degenerative eye condition, with the retina, yada, yada, basically, all it means to me is that I'm blind. But when I was younger, like I was able to see a little bit where, you know, able to see people and things like, you know, not very detailed, but blurry and things like that, and, you know, more shapes than anything. And then, as I grew older, my vision got worse, degenerative over time. And I was left with little to no vision. I'm basically right now I have like light perception and like shadows in the perfect day light. And yeah, I grew up in the youngest of five, I grew up in a small beach town in Spring Lake, New Jersey, and my mom's a second oldest of 13. So I grew up in a big family, really big family of like, 60 cousins, that all grew up around the area that I did, and we didn't know I was never treated any differently. So I grew up like surfing, skateboarding, you know, riding bikes until I started hitting park cars, like different things like that. And, you know, just always trying to keep up with everyone and having fun with it. And, you know, the so now I'm currently training for the Paralympics in Judo, and for 2024, in Paris, and also motivational speaker, musician, and a content creator as well.

R

Rob Mineault 11:49

Yeah, you are incredibly talented, I have to tell you, I was even just watching some of your busking videos. And you're a really incredible musician as well.

A

Anthony Ferraro 11:59

Thank you so much, I really appreciate that. I, when I first started and like my senior year of high school, or, like, and on my serious like, 7 years ago, I was terrible. Like, my, my dad played trumpet. He's called me stone hands because I had no rhythm. And like, I used to just bang on the guitar, like, my family wouldn't even let me practice and in the same room as them, and, you know, like, it was bad. And I just, I fell in love with it. I just started playing every day, it was like, kinda like with wrestling, like, when I first started wrestling, I was awful. And then, you know, I had no, like, no wrestling ability, like I, you know, I was out of shape, I didn't know how to, like, do anything, oh, in that field, and it just, it wasn't natural to me. And then I just, you know, like anything in life, you just have to, like countless hours and to get good at anything, you know?

R

Rob Mineault 12:53

Well, you know, and that's what I find really interesting about you too, is because you, you seem to be one of those people that will just see something and be like, hey, I want to try that. And then you go and you try that you become really involved in it and get really good at it. And then you kind of move to something else. And like you seem to be all like just multi multifaceted, in terms of, of what your interests are.

A

Anthony Ferraro 13:16

I always like to get out of my comfort zone, I always like to, you know, you're if you're not learning, you're not growing. So to continue to learn from other people from different fields, what they do, you know, in life and try and experience those things. It's, it's, you know, it's the best way to grow in life and just learn and keep going forward.

R

Rob Mineault 13:35

So I want to talk to you a little bit about sort of growing up, because, you know, we've talked to a lot of people on here and the common thread with with a lot of people who seem to be able to be into a lot of different things, they really develop that at an early age, where their parents are just sort of encouraged them to just, like, whatever they're interested in, go ahead, go try it out, fall down a lot. Like just, you know get out there ... is that kind of what your experience was like?

A

Anthony Ferraro 14:05

1,000%. My parents, the best thing they were ever told, I'm the youngest of five, and I'm the only one of my family with an eye condition. And the eye doctors told them, you know, first thing was, you know, treat him like any other kid. Like, treat him like you would any other of your kids and just make sure you get him a good education where he learns Braille and stuff and you know, treating me like any other kid was the best advice ever. Like I'm so grateful for that because my parents allowed me to, you know, go out, you know, fall down, like you said, get back up and learn like what it's all about, about, you know, you fall nine times get back up 10. And you keep you keep going and you know, that allowed me like, I grew up like I said, surfing skateboarding, doing all these things with everyone around me because my parents weren't overbearing, you know, there's some parents that won't even let her kids leave the house without, you know, them having a close eye on them because like, you're blind, you know, you're this kid, and just not being treated differently, it was a huge, a huge advantage in my life.

R

Rob Mineault 15:12

Yeah, because for a lot of parents, I mean, that's, that's sort of in the natural sort of reaction is to want to shelter or to want to, you know, protect. So that can be sort of a natural reaction. So I find that it's really powerful when parents sort of, you know, get are able to get that advice.

A

Anthony Ferraro 15:30

Yeah, I totally agree. And like, that's, that's what I tried to be a light, you know, shed some light on that, like, look, it's all possible, and I'm out here, you know, proving it to you. And don't coddle your children, like, let them, let them go out and try these things. And, you know, I'm not encouraging people to go, like, jump in on a halfpipe, and like, fall, fall might get hurt, or anything like that, I just want people to, you know, not be afraid of going out and trying something new or, you know, something they want to do, but they're told all that's too hard for you or something like that. Because, you know, your words have effect a big effect on the people you talk to it, no matter who you are, you know, you could be, you could meet someone, for the first time, have no credibility with that person, but, you know, tell them, they can't do something or can't do this. And for some people that could literally predict their future, you know, that can affect what they do. And it could make someone quit.

L

Lis Malone 16:28

You know, Anthony, I'm so I'm so glad you actually said that. Because it's not just for parents who have a child growing up with a disability. I mean, I think that in general, so many parents coddle their children, and maybe limit their children without even realizing it. So I think like what you just said, can really, you know, cross over to parents of children of all abilities to kind of really give kids their opportunity to find themselves and try new things and, and explore and you know, it's okay to fail.

A

Anthony Ferraro 16:57

I mean, my dad always had this saying to, like, when I started wrestling, I was losing all the time, like, I wasn't even scoring a point. And I would go to these tournaments every weekend trying to, you know, just get better. And every weekend as having the same results, were like, Oh, I'm gonna go win, you know, I'm gonna win a match this time. And each time, excuse me, each time, I was not scoring a single point. And then I switched my goals to i Let me score a point. And, you know, instead of winning a match, and then it started, little by little, these little goals started, you know, achieving these to get to this bigger goal. And my dad always told me, because, you know, you lose so many times, but Anthony, you win. And then you learn. So it's like, you're winning, or you're learning. So it's, you know, every time you lose, if you take something from it, it's it's a win in a way because that, that experience, it's priceless. You can't pay for that.

R

Rob Mineault 17:50

Now, speaking of the wrestling, though, now, there was actually a documentary released a few years ago, based on your wrestling. Can you tell us a little bit about how that came about?

A

Anthony Ferraro 18:01

Yeah, absolutely. So my older brother Oliver... I'm the youngest of five, two older brothers, two

mean, absolutely. So my older brother Oliver .. I'm the youngest of five, two older brothers, two older sisters. And my one older brother, Oliver is really into film. He was in college at the time. And then he, he, he was in college, and he studied a lot of film. And you know, he's a film major, all this stuff. And then once he graduated, he did a lot of like, independent filming all this stuff, and he beat took a sizzle reel. You know, he always was so inspired by me, he was my inspiration too, because he wrestled he was fifth in the state of New Jersey, all this stuff, like such a great athlete, great at skateboarding, and surfing and all this stuff. And he, he really looked up to me and what I was doing and just like dealing with adversity, and you know, like people giving me crap about being blind and all this stuff, and just living my day to day life and not giving up. And he took a chair, a little sizzle reel, like two minutes of me talking. He filmed me and showed some clips throughout it of me talking about what it's like growing up being blind dealing with these things. And, you know, just being a teenager and living life. And he posted that once I won a district championship, my junior year of high school and said, This is my little brother, you know, I want to make a film about him. I don't have the resources, blah, blah, blah, this is in 2011 or 2012. And then someone reached out my wrestling coach, his teammate from college, he was now doing independent filming and all this stuff and met with my brother and they decided to make a full feature length documentary, my senior year of high school, trying to become the first state blind state champion of New Jersey and just, you know, living dealing with life and just being a kid and all this stuff and, you know, kind of telling my story, and that's exactly what they did. My senior year. They followed me around like everywhere, they you know, got 1000s have hours of footage. And after my senior year kind of got put on the shelf for two years. And then in 2015, the producer Chris, and this was all funded, like out of pocket self funded and everything independent. And Chris guy was working with my brother took it off the shelf and put together the first 15 minutes of the film. And he loved what he had there. He's like, this is amazing story, like, I need to finish this. I can't, you know, can't wait and all this stuff. And then he had a meeting with my brother to show him the first 15 minutes of the film and everything. Because my, my brother was doing a lot of the producing and everything. And when they were scheduled to meet the day before, my brother at the age of 27, ended up passing away, and he never got to see any of his film. And it was this whole, you know, shocked to my family to everyone in the area. Like his, his funeral was so big that, like the viewing and everything that they had to, there was a line wrapped around the funeral home. And it went all the way through the highway, they had to shut down the highway, because there's so many people there from everywhere. And it just like goes show what kind of person my brother was. And, and at his funeral, Chris vowed to me and my family that he would finish this film. And like, that's exactly what he did in the next year and a half and then put it on Kickstarter, and to raise the money for post production. And we ended up raising \$87,000 in a month. And our goal was 36. And it was just this amazing support from everyone the trailer received like millions of views all this stuff and it's just a beautiful love story, you know, told basically for my brother to me and and with the Chris's amazing help, like he did, Chris produced the did the whole film once my brother died. And what he did is incredible, like, it's it's a full movie, it's an hour and a half long, and it just, it all plays so you know, fluid, and it's incredible what he did. And you know, there's it's just amazing every time I get to, like, hear my brother's voice and different things like that. It's just, it's an amazing gift to me. And and it's just, you know, it's an incredible love story in my eyes.

R

Rob Mineault 22:21

What was the reaction in the community of around the film?

A

Anthony Ferraro 22:24

People you know, overflowing, like just support and love for it. People you know, the this, it's played in schools, for teams for different things all over like the do a bunch of viewings, different places, and it's just, it's had a lot of impact on people. And, you know, it's a real story. So it's just, it's real life, and it's raw, and it's, you know, it, it's, um, it's just, it's the cancer anymore, that it's just real. So people, you know, fell in love with it. And, you know, one of the people that ended up seeing it was someone from the United States Olympic Committee, and they reached out to me one day saying, I get a phone call, and they're like, what this is so and so from the United States Olympic Committee, would we've seen your documentary? If you have any like, of that talent left .. would you consider training judo for the Paralympics? Like trying to, you know, compete, learning your new sport, going around the world and doing this, you know, trying to make it to the Olympics. And I was just like, you know, it's kind of a no brainer, like, I get to go from trying to be the best in the state to being trying to be the best in the world. And like, this is unbelievable opportunity. And when you get these types of opportunities in life, like, they don't often come twice, so you have to take them when they come. And that's something I've learned. And it's just, you know, right, I jumped on it right away. And that's what I've basically been involved in for the last like five years now.

R

Rob Mineault 23:58

Wow. Wow. And so what was that like? Are there similarities between wrestling and judo? Were you able to sort of transfer some of the skills from wrestling into it? Or is it just completely different?

A

Anthony Ferraro 24:12

No, there's a lot of similarities, which is great. It's, I basically say it's like wrestling with a jacket on. Like, you wear this like uniform, you know, like a Karate outfit. It's called a Gi. And then you have your belt. And it's just the new things I had to learn where like chokes and arm bars and things like that, and like, basically the way the rules work, but other than that, you know, it's pretty similar, and I really enjoy it. It's good. And I also do jujitsu for fun. And it's, it's a good discipline. I enjoy it.

R

Rob Mineault 24:46

And so you so you're going to be training for which Olympics?

A

Anthony Ferraro 24:49

The 2024 Paris Olympics. I'm training to compete in and also trying to help move skateboarding to get into the 2028 Paralympics in LA. So my dream is to double sport in 2020 in judo and skateboarding.

R

Rob Mineault 25:07

Wow. Wow. And let's talk about your skateboarding too, because that's really interesting. I was watching some of it on YouTube. And it's, I mean, some of it's terrifying. I mean, I can't even imagine and it's sort of to paint this picture for people like you actually are able to use your cane sort of extended out out in front of you. And you're able to navigate that way, but you do things like so what's it cuz I'm not a big skateboard guy. But like, what's it called when you jump up onto the under the rails that grinding? Yeah, like, so? Yeah. So you use your cane to find the bar. And then you jump up and grind on it. Like, to me that's amazing. Is that just something you just kind of as a kid, you're just like, I gotta figure out how to make this work. And you just figured that out yourself?

A

Anthony Ferraro 25:58

I grew up like on a skateboard, basically, where in the sense of my brothers were always skateboarding. So just to want to be around them. Naturally, I jumped on a skateboard and like, would just roll around and stuff and just try things, but never be good at it. And then, you know, finally, like, a couple years ago, I started getting into skateboarding a little more. And then I never had the luxury of being able to see other people's skateboard. So seeing how they do it. So a lot of it was kind of figuring it out on my own, especially in the beginning. And then I was lucky enough, you know, about like, eight months ago, I went to Michigan, and met up with a bunch of blind skateboarders. Like really good, blind skateboarders, and they end up showing me some different techniques and stuff. And you know, I never was able to grind like Eurail until that weekend. And it was like really incredible feeling to be able to do that. And you know, see that there's these other blind people doing it and and you know, doing doing it well, like this guy, Dan Mansina. He's actually, like, started a podcast and like whole project with him. He's really credible buying skateboarder you read for like a company called Real and Adidas shoes. And he he showed me like, you know, some of this cane techniques to be able to grind these ledges and stuff. And it opened up a whole new world for me. So you know, in this guy, Nick Mullen showing me different stuff on the halfpipe, and Justin Bishop, and it's just incredible, you know, seeing these guys do this. And, you know, even this past weekend, I went to Tampa, Florida, and I went to my first ever skate contest where they did that I've never done a skate contest before. And they also had an adaptive division. So you know, people that deafblind wheelchairs, like, could be missing an arm, anything like that. And I ended up getting like second place in the advanced bowl division, and then first place in the beginner street division, and it was just like, it was such a fun time. And like, you know, it's another thing where I was terrible in the beginning, and then just putting in all these hours, like, even now I'm seeing, you know, things pay off, and it's really cool.

L

Lis Malone 28:21

Anthony, do you think that your blindness actually serves as maybe a bit of an advantage for you personally at times? Because sometimes, like, if you're not able to see what's ahead, the fear the same fear doesn't exist, as it might with someone who's fully sighted.

A

Anthony Ferraro 28:40

No, I think it's intensified when skateboarding I'm terrified, like, literally, you just have to swallow that fear. And it's about like I said, I love like being out of my comfort zone. And I've constantly out of my comfort zone on a skateboard. And it's really exciting every time

constantly out of my comfort zone on a skateboard. And it's really exciting every time something happens the right way. And I think that fear kind of serves it's like adrenaline as well. But also being able to like control that fear really helps, especially in different situations in life.

R

Rob Mineault 29:17

Why and this might be a stupid question, but have you ever had like a fairly bad wipeout and really kind of injured yourself?

A

Anthony Ferraro 29:27

Knock on wood I've never broken anything like but I broke in like a toe because I was going in like skating barefoot to the beach and like caught my pinky toe on like on something and it like it's never been the same way ever since when I was like a little kid. I think it did that to both my toes and that's like ... you know I've I've taken part falls like definitely hard falls very hard falls from like, off like six foot ramps from like the top to the bottom and it's it's not fun but now I'm, I'm smarter now. And like, you know, as I get older, where I used to now that I look back, like I was a kid, like, there are times it wouldn't be wearing a helmet and like, just stupid, like, it's stupidity. And, you know, now 100% All the time wearing a helmet anytime I get on skateboard. And then, you know, knee pads, I've learned are amazing. And just, you know, having the right tools really helps. But there's definitely risk involved, and there's no reward in life, you know, unless there's some risk involved.

R

Rob Mineault 30:35

So I want to talk to you a little bit about about the social media channels. Because I see they're mean, there's, there's so much, there's so much there. And I feel like it's such important content, because it really gives people who see it, sort of a sense of not only of what the abilities of blind people can be, but just I think that it sort of also shows just sort of the more quiet just lived experience of, of what it's like to be blind or partially sighted. That's, I think, for the mainstream, it can be really important to sort of educate. And I feel like that those channels sort of must have kind of naturally spun off your experience in being filmed for the documentary. Is that kind of the sense? Or were you always into social media? Like was it it was sort of a planned move to have all your social media channels?

A

Anthony Ferraro 31:33

It was basically a planned move is in the sense of, you know, when I had the film made about me, I had no channel for people to ask all the time, like, Where can I find you? Where can I support, and all I had was like, a personal Facebook page, and I wasn't in the social media wasn't any of it. I met my, my wife, who was my, you know, girlfriend at the time. And she, she helped me I was basically like, I need help, you know, like, I need a place where people can find me and a way where I can tell my story. And this was, you know, a couple, couple years ago, probably 2019 and or the end of 2018. And she made me like a website, like landing page, you know, and we made me an Instagram and a couple other things. And just started, you know, started there and started telling my story, and slowly growing over time, like, you know, a

couple 100 followers for like, the longest time, and I still get excited, anytime anyone hits the Follow button, then, you know, it's to have that support, and people like interested in, you know, what you have to say, and the things you're doing. And I try not to be I try not to speak for all blind people, personally, because everyone in life is different. And I try and say, you know, I'm blind, this is how I do this. And, you know, other people may have a different way, but this is how I navigate this in life. And, you know, take what you want from it, learn what you want from it, and I just try and make people you know, smile, learn something, and just feel good. And just, and hopefully, they spread that to other people. And it's just like a chain reaction. And, you know, didn't really get into this video creation until about like, a year and a half ago, or a year ago now, or where we, it all started on our first tour. So my, my wife works in tech, and she can work from wherever she works remote and stuff. And when the pandemic hit, you know, nothing. We were living in New York at the time, and we moved back, we moved to down to Spring Lake where I grew up, we got an apartment and stuff. And we decided, you know, there's so much negativity going on at the time. And we decided, you know, I was making a lot of people smile on the internet, like just live streaming on Facebook. By playing guitar and singing and stuff, and just trying to get people out of the funk. And we were like, we're addicted to traveling, and we couldn't really fly anywhere. So we decided to go on a cross country road trip where we live stream me in all these beautiful remote locations and played music to the world and just tried to like inspire people and make people feel good and, and all this stuff. And, you know, we started we did that we went 10,000 miles in seven weeks, she drove the entire way. And it was just like this incredible trip from New Jersey to California back and met so many people, you know, went to all these amazing places. And it was the first time we really did like video, you know, and we're doing that was doing that a lot. And it was it was hard. It was really hard at first like getting into a groove. And then finally we just started clicking and like everything, slowly but surely started making sense and We started finding a way of like storytelling and doing it fun. And we just became this incredible team. You know, my wife and I do everything together. And she's the producer filmer the, you know, she does so much and we just, you can't do anything in life without like a team. You know, it's like you guys have three of I'm sorry, I can't remember how many three or four on right now. But it's like, like that. It's like, you know, you can't get anywhere in life alone. And if you do try and do life alone, what are you going to share? How Who are you going to share anything with? So like having that team and that partner, you know, to share these successes with and, you know, and the chat, like the tragedies, the failures with and just keep pushing? It's like, that's the beautiful thing of life and just keep pushing, you know?

R

Rob Mineault 35:55

How are you finding that social media community-- because social media can be hard, it can be hard to navigate, and they can have some sort of darker, toxic parts of it. Do you have any experience in that? Or is your community pretty much just all cool, and everything's good?



36:12

No, there's people every day that send hate comments and say you're faking blindness, or just want to, you know, there's, there's hurt people out there that just want to hurt people. And all you can do is try and respond with positivity or not respond at all, but I always try and give a little love and, and, you know, maybe one person out of 100 will be like, Wow, he responded with kindness, and maybe I should stop being so mean to people.

R

Rob Mineault 36:41

So let me get this straight. Are you self taught on the guitar?

A

Anthony Ferraro 36:47

No I take lessons. And I, you know, I like to learn from anyone I can in any way of life. And, you know, I learned everything by the ear, like, it's all by ear, but I'm definitely have people that show me things along the way. And, you know, a lot of it was I had lessons in the beginning and then stopped. And there's so much of my time that was self taught, but just learning from others along the way. And now, you know, I'm diving back into like, voice lessons and guitar, and it's a whole new world. So I'm just trying to get out of my comfort zone there. Because, you know, I've been, there's, you know, people love my singing, and there's nothing wrong with it on the outside, like from the outside, but like, there's so much more I want to be able to do and, and have fun with that I need to practice and learn more. And, you know, humble myself in that sense. So definitely always learning and taking lessons and growing in every way in life.

R

Rob Mineault 37:47

Well, and that is, so that that leads right into my next question is when the hell do you find the time to do all of this? Like, you must be incredibly busy.

A

Anthony Ferraro 37:57

Yeah, my schedule gets busier and busier every day, I think feels like there's not enough. There's not enough time in the day. And I don't know. It's getting crazy. But I'm just, you know, always, always stay true to myself and the things I commit to doing. I really try and stay true to that. And I always try and follow through.

R

Rob Mineault 38:22

I'm sure training, like training for Judo, it probably takes takes precedent at the moment, right?

A

Anthony Ferraro 38:28

Yeah, definitely does. But in the set in that sense. You can't do it every day, or your body will just give out and your peak too early. So you have to be smart. It's another thing I've learned in my, in my years, I guess. It's just those training smart. There is a such thing as overtraining, and there's a way to train smart. So there's a balance in life. You know, Judo is not my, it's not my entire life, because I've learned a couple years ago, I was off, you know, to go fight in this tournament in the Pan Pan American championships in Canada. Eight hours before I'd go to the airport, I ended up getting an really, really bad concussion where these cellar doors like metal doors fell on my head. Oh, it was really bad. And I had a concussion really bad concussion and I couldn't do anything for like, you know, a couple months basically. And that showed me right

then. And at that point, my whole life was judo. It was just set on judo. It's all I did. And it's all I knew at that point, you know, I blocked everything out kind of in my life. And that was like a wake up call of saying like, Anthony, like Judo could be gone tomorrow, like you could break a limb and this could be done. So what else do you have to fall back on? And what else are you doing in your life that you're focusing on? So it really made me slow down and focus on other parts of my life. You kind of build in those areas and then you know, realize this is this isn't like nothing is a sure thing. So you can't put all your eggs in that one basket.

R

Rob Mineault 40:11

So I'm just curious then. So before they they reached out to you for Judo, Paralympic Judo, had you had you considered the Paralympics in any capacity at all?

A

Anthony Ferraro 40:27

Never. I never really know what the Paralympics were. But I didn't even I was never really, I never paid attention to the Olympics. I didn't pay attention. Like, I never. I never read, like the news or like paid attention to the internet, anything when it because it was all like getting popular when I was growing up, kinda. And I didn't like it. You know, it was like, I hated these touchscreen phones. I hated all of it. And I'm like, I missed my buttons. I miss like, I know, this is all like, too much. And I kind of rebelled against it for a while and just, you know, wrestled, basically put all my all my time into wrestling. That's all I did. And you have to tackle those, those fears and those anxieties, because it's just the fear of like the unknown. And once you start learning, it's like, just like anything else in life?

L

Lis Malone 41:21

Well, I think you sort of touched on this answer a little earlier. But so on your website, you have the quote, 'the only disability is a bad attitude'. So I wanted to give you a chance to sort of explain how you adopted that mantra.

A

Anthony Ferraro 41:37

I know people, you know, I was fortunate enough to get accepted to this - Erik Weihenmayer, the first blind person ever to climb Mount Everest. Yeah, Mount Everest, and like the every highest summit in each continent. And he's this incredible human being. He reached out to me after my senior year of high school, when I was in this ESPN article, and he said, you know, your story's incredible, would you consider coming to hike in Peru, and go like you hike 16,000 feet in Peru, it takes four days, you're basically in the middle of nowhere, you have no technology, anything, and you're sleeping in the tent, everything and, and then you do community service in the city and stuff. And then also there's stuff for like, you know, the time after that, and I got accepted. And it was just this, like, amazing experience. And through that organization, I met all these people have like, No, I met people in wheelchairs that were rock climbing, I met people, you know, with no arms, no legs that were crawling up mountains, like I just met in Denver in like Colorado, doing all these things and like, things you wouldn't think are possible, and like, just completely pushing the limits of life and like pushing through these barriers and

all this stuff. And it made me realize, like, there's people at home, that are sitting at home with nothing physically wrong with them. And they are literally crippled in the sense of, oh, I need to get a job. But I can't like, like making all these excuses. They're like, you know, I want to do this, blah, blah, blah. And they just don't, and they sit there and just complain. And then all these, like, it just said, All these people going on doing these things. And it's like, the end of the day, who has the disability, it's like, the the disability is like a mindset, you know, it's like, some days I'm way more disabled than others. Because some days I can't get out of bed and let my grief and, you know, depression or whatever, it just consumed me. But like, that's people say, like, how are you so positive all the time. And I'm not like there's days that are really hard, but you have to, you know, push through those dark times. And you have to remember those good times. Because when you're in those dark times, just remember, like, there are good times to calm and when you're in those good times, remember your dark times to make sure you stay present in those good times and really enjoy it. And it's like it's just the ebbs and flows of life. And, you know, it really comes down to in life, the only disability is going to be your bad attitude.

R

Rob Mineault 44:14

And I love that. I do and I feel like that's, that's really the importance of social media channels, is, you know, to show people that yeah, you know, what, every day isn't a good day, some days, there are bad days, and those are just as important as the good days because those are the days where you grow as a person, you you have to push through them and that's where you gain strength and you that's where you learn your the lessons that you need to go forward.

A

Anthony Ferraro 44:42

Yeah, and you know, my social media, it's like, I look at it more as like, you know, when people say I'm such a big fan, it's like I tell them I don't have fans. I only have friends like I look at everyone is like it's a family basically, I you know, my community and I want to help others. I want people My community to help other people in my community and I want to be able to help my community as much as possible and just to grow and and create that positive, safe space for everyone and just continue that and to like, basically make it contagious because negativity is contagious, but so is positivity. But, you know, it's really, it's hard to keep the positivity going. But that's, that's what it's about, like paying it forward and just, you know, creating this, this like boom of, you know, positivity that just goes around and people picking each other up instead of putting people down. And, you know, just realizing your words have such such an effect on everyone.

R

Ryan Fleury 45:40

I want some of your positivity, some of your energy, your ambition, I need it, like twice your age, almost. I still want some of that.

L

Lis Malone 45:49

I think. I think, Ryan be honest. You also want his friends. Right?

 Ryan Fleury 45:53
Well, friends would be great too

 Lis Malone 45:54
Yes because we don't have fans either. We have well, almost have friends, right?

 Ryan Fleury 46:00
I think we have listeners...

 Rob Mineault 46:07
Well, hey, listen, we've got I don't know, we got 260 .. so many episodes, I have lost count. We're nothing if not consistent.

 Anthony Ferraro 46:20
Content is way better than any viral moment. Because once you have a viral moment, you have a library of content for people to go through.

 Rob Mineault 46:28
True. True. Yeah, that's exactly. Well, listen, before we let you go, because clearly, you have a lot of stuff that you have to do still today, I'm sure. Where, where can people find you? Your channels? Your website? Plug away my friend.

 46:50
Yeah, absolutely. Everything's on www.asfvision.com across the board. That's all my handles is asfvision. And you can find every single thing on my website. So asfvision.com. And the film is 'A Shot in the Dark'. It's on Amazon Prime, Apple TV, Google Play and Vimeo. So I really appreciate anyone that supports in that way. Thank you so much for having me and I really appreciate it.

 Rob Mineault 47:17
Alright, Anthony. Thanks so much again. And listen, we will have you on closer to the Paralympics. We'd love to hear an update.

L Lis Malone 47:26
Yeah, go team USA.

A Anthony Ferraro 47:27
Yeah, guys, thank you.

R Rob Mineault 47:31
Alright, Anthony. Take care.

R Ryan Fleury 47:32
Have a great evening. Thanks so much. Take care.

S Steve Barclay 47:34
Bye.

R Rob Mineault 47:36
Well, I'm telling you, I told you guys I feel like a terrible human being now.

S Steve Barclay 47:43
Well, you're not wrong.

R Rob Mineault 47:44
Hey!

R Ryan Fleury 47:48
Terrible, no. Maybe lazy, lethargic?

R Rob Mineault 47:51
I don't know about lazy.

R Ryan Fleury 47:54
Oh, sorry. I looked in the mirror for a second. Sorry, boys.

R Rob Mineault 47:57
It's just doing stuff ... it's a lot of work. And a lot of energy. No, I'm like, I'm sure Steve, you do get a chance to watch any of his skateboarding stuff, Steve. No, no, I didn't. Man, you got to check it out. Because it's crazy. Like it's it's so cool. To just watch him just use the use of the cane in ways that you never would have thought you would see a mobility cane being used. It's really super cool.

R Ryan Fleury 48:23
Awesome. Yeah, check it out.

R Rob Mineault 48:25
But and we even talk about like he also serves. You even get a chance to talk about that. Yeah. Where do you find the time to do it?

R Ryan Fleury 48:35
Where's your sense of balance?

L Lis Malone 48:37
I'm loving these guests that just accentuate my lack of athleticism. Yeah, thanks for that, guys really appreciate it.

R Ryan Fleury 48:45
Well, let's let's just look at it this way, though. We're not 26 anymore.

L Lis Malone 48:50
Some of us are further from 26 than others, right? Yes. We won't be we're not going to take a poll or anything.

R Rob Mineault 48:58

Yeah, but no, but like, even when I was 26 I wasn't even a nearly dialed in to that.

R Ryan Fleury 49:06

Yeah, I was still bitter and angry for the most part three years into my blindness. And then Steve hired me.

L Lis Malone 49:18

And now you're more bitter?

R Ryan Fleury 49:19

Yes.

R Rob Mineault 49:24

No, but I mean, it's just so cool. I just love having conversations like that. And it just it really does just make you show the power of those formative years. You know, and just being able to be like you're not being treated differently than any of the other kids. You're being encouraged to go try stuff fall down. You just this is what happens when you when you do that you just you build somebody with such a strong sense of, I guess confidence in themselves. That really makes all the difference in that's these people. that are able to break through some of the barriers that society puts in front of people with disabilities. Oh wow I stunned you guys into silence.

L Lis Malone 50:11

That was so profound

R Rob Mineault 50:17

Put that on a t shirt. It wouldn't fit. That was a good find Ryan, I don't know where you found Anthony but good work.

R Ryan Fleury 50:26

I think it was someone on Twitter or he had posted or a saw mentioned or a retweet or something. But yeah, I'm gonna have to reach out I want to reach out to that skateboarding association that does these adaptive contests and stuff like that, because I can't imagine like, even when I had sight, trying to judge the height of a rail, trying to your skateboard up in the

air onto that rail. You got no sight. Somebody can tell you it's three feet high. But what's three feet high? Yeah. Like you've got your cane. You find this rail? You got to get your skateboard up on their slide the length of this rail Yeah, like That's amazing.

L Lis Malone 51:04
There's a dirty joke in there somewhere

R Rob Mineault 51:14
But you're absolutely right. Like that is such that is definitely a sport where I have to say like, even us who are fairly dialed into like things like the Paralympics and adapted sports and all that things. I mean, even we go look at that and go wow, I can't believe that can be adapted. And it just goes to show you that that where there's a will there's a way to adapt something.

R Ryan Fleury 51:38
Man, another profound thought.

R Rob Mineault 51:42
Wow, I'm just from full of it today.

R Ryan Fleury 51:44
We have the front end the back of the tshirt.

R Rob Mineault 51:45
Oh, yeah. Woot! My third profound thought of the day

R Ryan Fleury 51:56
That can go on the left sleeve.

R Rob Mineault 51:59
Oh, God. All right. Hey. Man, all right. Anything else? Before Ryan loses it and gets the giggles.

R Ryan Fleury 52:13

It's all good.

R

Rob Mineault 52:14

Okay. All right. Anything else? Anything else to add about Anthony? Yeah, I'd highly recommend everyone check out his channels. And definitely like, I didn't get a chance to watch the documentary before we recorded this. But it's definitely I'm definitely going to grab it on Google Play and, and watch it because it sounds really cool.

R

Ryan Fleury 52:35

If everybody listening, it is not available on Amazon Prime Video in Canada. So you will have to get it from possibly Vimeo. But Google Play for sure.

R

Rob Mineault 52:44

Yeah, give me your Google Play has it? I think I don't know, maybe Apple? Or what is it? I might have? What is it? So iTunes, I don't even know everybody's rebranded so many times that there's stupid services that I can't keep track anymore. Is iTunes still iTunes? Or is it called Apple?

R

Ryan Fleury 53:02

It's just called Apple TV?

R

Rob Mineault 53:05

Whatever. Go find it. He shot in the dark. The name of the documentary go Google it. You'll find it. Hey, Ryan. Yes, Rob. Hey, I heard that we people can call us if they want to talk to us.

R

Ryan Fleury 53:22

They can, they can give us a call toll free at 1844996428. To leave us your name, your message, comment or suggestion. And if you give us your permission, we may play it on an upcoming episode.

R

Rob Mineault 53:40

And more importantly, I would just like to put it out to the audience that that's not even the reason to call. The reason to call is to save our phone line. Because if nobody calls it, Ryan's gonna cancel it. So this think of it. It's not even leaving this message. You're just saving, saving the line. So I'm going to put it out there and everybody forget it. We don't have Patreon. We

don't do a lot of things where we asked the audience to do stuff. But Me Myself personally rob me. No, I'm asking our audience, please, please call that number. And just whatever. Just say, Ryan, don't cancel this phone line. Say Ryan, your dick, whatever you want to wear, do whatever you want to talk to Ryan about. Just do it. And so that we can extend our phone line into 2022. Because we don't want to, we don't want to live our lives in 2022 without a phone line.

R

Ryan Fleury 54:33

Or at least call us leave us a message and tell us how badly you want us to do a live show.

R

Rob Mineault 54:41

Or that too. Yeah, it will take anything at this point. So you can say yeah, you can you can make comments about any of us. And we may play them on an upcoming episode. Just call the damn number. That's it. That's the end of my plea. Okay, back to regular scheduled programming. Hey, Ryan. I know I just asked you something. But where would you like so where else can people find us?

R

Ryan Fleury 55:14

They can find us online www.atbanter.com And there's also the social medias. There's the Facebook, the Twitter and the Instagram. For a limited time only. No Instagrams gone.

R

Rob Mineault 55:28

You want me to delete it? Do you want to delete it off the face of the planet? I mean, it still exists.

R

Ryan Fleury 55:38

So they're still Instagram.

R

Rob Mineault 55:39

I mean, it's there. There's just nothing happening on it. So I don't feel like we need to delete it. It's not like we have to go back and delete it. Just don't nobody go there. Nobody was going there before. They're not ringing the phone. So they're certainly not going to Instagram.

R

Ryan Fleury 55:54

So just call us toll free and tell us you'd like us to save Instagram?

R Rob Mineault 55:58
No.

R Ryan Fleury 56:01
We're just not that interesting.

R Rob Mineault 56:03
No, I think we are I think that people would be fascinated by our Instagram feed that we invested some time and energy into but it's just,

R Ryan Fleury 56:13
I don't know. That'll come next year.

R Rob Mineault 56:15
I can .. listen ... I'll take a picture of my dinner tonight. And see what happens. Okay, that's there you go.

L Lis Malone 56:24
You know, just everybody just call the toll free number and tell us what you want to see on Instagram.

R Rob Mineault 56:30
Once again, Lis proving her worth right there. That's a brilliant idea. Yes. Call us on the line. And tell us what you want to post a picture of and we will post it whatever what , whatever doesn't break the Instagram Terms of Service obviously. So no body parts.

R Ryan Fleury 56:52
We're not Madonna.

R Rob Mineault 56:53
Where were we? I haven't even done the email yet. So first of all, Steve jumped the queue. So this is going really well. Okay, so people can also drop us an email if they so desire at

this is going really well. Okay, so people can also drop us an email if they so desire at cowbell@atbanter.com Okay, great. Now the cowbell is not working.

R Ryan Fleury 57:14

Do it again. I did that on purpose.

R Rob Mineault 57:23

Man, we are punchy tonight. Okay. And that's it. Steve already did the socials. We gotta give Okay, we're gonna nevermind, forget it. Okay.

R Ryan Fleury 57:33

Why don't we let Lis plug where people can find her stuff?

R Rob Mineault 57:36

Dude, that's a great idea. Okay, let's do that.

L Lis Malone 57:39

Don't worry. You can find me on Facebook and Twitter. You can find me at Lis Malone. And you can visit my website www.breakingdishes.org. Short and sweet.

R Rob Mineault 57:53

Did you have trouble getting that domain? Incidentally.

L Lis Malone 57:56

Um, I've been having a domain issue with one of the other extensions, which is kind of a it's probably a funny story for a future podcast episode, but yeah. It's kind of funny.

R Rob Mineault 58:09

Okay, cool. Cool. Cuz I guess.com I wonder what's over at breaking dishes.com I wonder what it is just some video of some guy just breaking dishes.

L Lis Malone 58:21

.....

Well, that's where the store the funny story is. I don't want to send people to that domain.



Rob Mineault 58:23

Okay, well. If you're tempted to go to www.breakingdishes.com, instead, just phone the phone line. And tell us what you'd like to see on Instagram. Okay, we're running late. We're being silly. Let's get out of here. Thanks, everybody for listening in. Big thanks, of course to Anthony for joining us, and we will see everybody next week.