

AT Banter Podcast Episode 291 - Sammy SweetSpirit

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SPEAKERS

Rob Mineault, Steve Barclay, Lis Malone, Ryan Fleury, Sammy SweetSpirit

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

S Steve Barclay 02:44
Banter, banter.

R Rob Mineault 02:45
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. I almost screwed that intro up. And joining me today, Mr. Ryan Fleury.

R Ryan Fleury 03:07
I don't know how you can screw it up when you've got it written on a piece of paper right in front of you.

R Rob Mineault 03:10
You can screw it up by not having a piece of paper in front of you for the record. And hey, it's Mr. Steve Barclay.

S Steve Barclay 03:24

I am actually here in person and everything.

R

Rob Mineault 03:28

And Lis Malone.

L

Lis Malone 03:35

Wow, that was a very dramatic pause.

R

Rob Mineault 03:38

I know I thought I would give you something a little bit special today

S

Steve Barclay 03:41

Gonna put a drumroll in.

L

Lis Malone 03:43

it was like yeah, no great idea. Was that a "who the hell am I supposed to have mentionnow" kind of pause?

R

Rob Mineault 04:00

No, I was just giving you like a big dramatic pause. But maybe you know, maybe I will put in the sound of like seven beers opening.

L

Lis Malone 04:09

Yeah. Seven beers like clanking.

R

Rob Mineault 04:15

And and how how's everybody?

R

Ryan Fleury 04:20

Good.

S Steve Barclay 04:21
Fantastic.

R Rob Mineault 04:23
So now Lis, you in one of those heat domes down there?

L Lis Malone 04:29
Yes, yes. Yes. Yes. Still. We're still we're right now in the valley. And we're going to be heading back up to the peak.

R Rob Mineault 04:39
Yikes. That's nasty. Yeah, we are probably heading into one I think. I think they're saying by the weekend. We might be getting some some pretty hot weather. So looking forward to that. So the listeners have some cranky AT Banterites to look forward to next week probably.

L Lis Malone 05:01
Yeah. So sales spike for full powered full strength deodorant. None of this aluminum free nonsense deodorant is going to be flying off the shelves.

R Rob Mineault 05:19
Yeah, I mean, they should just have make big sticks for your whole body. Like forget just under your arms, just, you know, just cover yourself in this white, white aluminum zinc powder. I mean, that's not a bad idea. Actually. Here's a life tip for anybody out there who's listening. Baby powder works great.

L Lis Malone 05:39
It gets doesn't get a little messy. No, clumpy?

R Rob Mineault 05:45
No, totally not. Not if you put it on, right. Just powder powder it on. And it helps I mean, doesn't help all day. I mean, it's only going to last for a while. But no, it totally works.

L Lis Malone 05:55

L Lis Malone 05:55

Wasn't there a class action lawsuit against that Shower to Shower product? Because there was something that they used in their powder product that was cancer causing?

R Rob Mineault 06:06

Yeah, I don't know. I don't know. But then I then I guess I should put a caveat on that recommendation to everybody that I am also not a medical professional or responsible for any long term injuries that are suffered by covering yourself and baby powder.

L Lis Malone 06:22

Steve, you're you're the fastest Googler in this group. I could have sworn that there was one of the the powder makers.

S Steve Barclay 06:30

Yeah, it was Johnson's baby powder was contaminated with selenium.

L Lis Malone 06:40

Yeah, there were some. So um, so I guess I apologize to the makers of Shower to Shower if it wasn't them. But I just I just had that on the brain. That was one of the products that was like, yeah, "just a sprinkle a day".

R Ryan Fleury 06:53

Another sponsor lost?

L Lis Malone 06:55

Probably yeah, like they were gonna sponsor us anyway.

R Rob Mineault 07:01

Johnson and Johnson out. Yeah, there goes my sponsorship deal with them. Thanks a lot. Just about had the baby powder in her back pocket. All right. All right. Enough silliness. Hey, Ryan.

R Ryan Fleury 07:17

Yes, Rob?

R

Rob Mineault 07:19

What the heck are we doing today? And who are we talking to?

R

Ryan Fleury 07:23

Well, today we are doing another podcast episode. And our guest is author, advocate, singer, songwriter, Sammy Sweetspirit. Welcome, Sammy, thanks for joining us.

R

Rob Mineault 07:37

Well, where to start? Because you have done so much. Why don't we start by just maybe telling us a little bit about yourself and your vision, and we'll go from there.

S

Sammy SweetSpirit 07:50

Hi, I'm Sammy. I'm a singer, songwriter, and author. And I could just say advocate, because I definitely consider myself that. Um, as far as my vision, I'm totally blind. And I've been blind since birth. I was a preemie. Like my mom was 23 and a half weeks pregnant when I was born. So I was born like four months early. And I weighed one pound and six ounces and wasn't expected to live. But I beat the odds and I'm here and now all you guys are stuck with me and my vision. So I wrote a book called "Look at it This Way: The Blind Leading the Sighted". And it's very special to my heart, very important to me. It's basically educating sighted people about blindness and blind people and, you know, some of what we experienced as blind people. And then the bigger picture, you know, providing a way for us all to connect as human beings. And to you know, you know, we are all one. That's, that's one of the biggest messages in the book. And so that's, that's my vision. I'm working on other projects, you know, speaking engagements and as well as, you know, consulting to try and, you know, bring this message to life so, I really appreciate you guys having me.

R

Rob Mineault 09:45

Yeah, well, you know, we and we've said all the time on the podcast, but you know, really education is so important, because there is so many misconceptions about blindness and vision loss and disability in general, you know, floating around. And a lot of times, you know, people just don't understand. Like that, for example, vision is a gradient, you know, you it's everything from totally blind to low vision and everything in between and not everybody is the same. So what, what made you write the book? Was there a particular event that that you just thought, you know what, you know, someone needs to write all this stuff down and put it out there in the world? Or was it something that is sort of been germinating for quite a while?

S

Sammy SweetSpirit 10:35

So I love that you said what you said, because that's, that's the reason why I wrote it. Like,

there's so many misconceptions out there about blindness. And, you know, why does that mean, that's why right there, I started to write the book, it took me two years to write from start to finish and getting it out there. And I originally was going to start with like a YouTube channel. And because there was just things I wanted to get out to people, such as, you know, job searching. And that was something I covered in the book, as well as one of my biggest messages from the book is that we're either as viewed by society as we have superpowers, like Daredevil, or were mentally challenged and can't, we don't know anything about the world. So I wanted to talk about that at first the those core things and then I just said, I just I didn't, I didn't, I didn't want to worry about videos in the background and how everything would look. And you know, obviously, because I don't think about those things. It was more about the content. So I said, Okay, I'm gonna write a book. And I just literally woke up one day, it was Presidents Day, 2020, I woke up and just started writing. And, you know, I went through a lot, I had a lot of help. Editing and, you know, getting things right, but I think it turned out really, really good. And I think it's really needed for a world right now.

R

Rob Mineault 12:27

And so how was this kind of received within your sort of your your friend group and your family? Like, when you said, you know, I'm going to write a book, like, what was what was the reaction that you kind of got?

S

Sammy SweetSpirit 12:38

It was funny, because I had people tell me years ago, I think you're gonna write a book one day, and I'm like, Oh, whatever. Like, I'm not a writer. I mean, I've written music for, you know, almost 15 years now. But I was just a book. I don't know about that. And then, like, nobody was really surprised. Like, when I was I'm going to write a book. Yeah, we told you, like, we kind of knew that you would you have one things to say. So that, you know, my friends and family, they're proud of me. I've had people telling me that they read the book and cried, and I've had people tell me that it got them to look at themselves and want to do better for you know, their life, their world. And so that, that, if that's the case, then I've done my job. You know, that's why I did it.

R

Rob Mineault 13:30

And so and what was the what was that process? Did you come up against any sort of a writer's block? Or did you get sort of halfway and think this just isn't feeling it?

S

Sammy SweetSpirit 13:40

So I had moments where things just flowed. And then I had moments where I'm like, what am I doing? Like, this is not coming out, right. I mean, I had all those moments and I had I had moments where I would have writer's block and you know, question and what am I need saying, and my biggest problem or hurdle I guess, was I had a really hard time knowing when to stop changing things and editing and fixing words and adding one word in a sentence and removing one word. I have a mentor, who helped me his name was Neale Donald Walsch, he

wrote the foreword for the book. And that's a really cool story, because, you know, I, I was just a fan of his. He wrote the Conversations with God series. And I love those books. And I've like devoured all of his material. So I was just a fan of his quoting him throughout the book. And then one of my editors as well as a friend of mine, who knew Neale said, why don't you like reach out to him and see if he would be willing to give you some pointers? And so I did. And he called me the next day after I emailed him. And you know, I told him, I said, well, in the email, I said, I used what I learned from you to create a new context to, you know, educate sighted people, about blind people. And he loved it and called me the next day. And I had totally forgotten that I put my number on the top of the manuscript. So when he called me I was like, like, he told me, he said, Hey, is it Sammy? I said, yeah, who's this? He said, This is Neale. And I'm like, how did you get my number? Oh, yeah, it's on the manuscript. Like, I'm, like, totally starstruck. And then we got to be good friends throughout this. And he, you know, he was helping me along the way. He became, you know, almost like a second editor helping me edit things. And so I would tell him, like, how am I going to know when to stop? And he, you know, he would always just give me words of wisdom. And, you know, he would talk about the creative process, and how, you know, how creative people are, and that, you know, it's basically just telling me, you'll, you'll know, you'll know, and he was right. And I said in the book, you know, it's always said never to meet your heroes, but I love the fact that I get to, like, have one of my heroes as one of my really good friends. I feel like that that mentorship probably really influenced a lot in the book. Definitely, he taught me to really be careful, not too much careful, but to choose my words, and choose them intentionally. And that was a really big lesson for me. And I know how, how powerful words can be, but just to have him kind of saying, you have to be intentional with what you're saying. And get them to fall in love with you get them to where they can't put the book down. Sp how are you going to do that? You know, and it was it was really powerful stuff.

R

Rob Mineault 17:23

So when you when you sat down to write it, did you always kind of have a plan for the sort of the underlying message of the book? Like, was it always sort of intending to be sort of something that was for sighted people to inform them about what that lived experience is like? Or did you try to maybe be more biographical? Like, how did it sort of evolve?

S

Sammy SweetSpirit 17:52

Its original intention was to inform sighted people about, like I said, the main, the main point, I'm, you know, living in the blind experience. I saw us being viewed as Daredevil or mentally challenged, and there was nothing in between. It fascinated me. And, you know, I wanted to really look at the human condition. And how did this how, you know, I'm questioning as I'm going through this process, how did that happen? And how can we change the thought, because obviously, we are not all the same. But we are all one, we're all connected, we are all a part of each other. And so it kind of, you know, turned into that, which, you know, that's, that's my ultimate view of, of life and reality, and everything is that we are all connected. So, you know, it was just a way to demonstrate that.

R

Rob Mineault 19:01

And so, did you do a lot of research during that, that writing time, or did you just sort of draw

upon a lot of your own experiences to sort of develop?

S

Sammy SweetSpirit 19:13

Both. I drew a lot on my own experience. I kind of told people, the book is, you know, education and awareness about blind people. Part, memoir, part a call to action. You know, it's kind of it's a bunch of things in one. I spoke a lot with friends, family, people around me, other blind people in the community, to ask them what their, you know, what was the thing that they wanted people to know about blindness and blind people. And so, a lot of those questions in the Q and A's chapter is directly from from them. And in my own experience as well. So it's kind of a definitely a collaborative effort.

L

Lis Malone 20:16

Yeah, there was definitely a very, I guess, intentional flow to your book that I at least that I picked up as a reader that the first part was very informative. I would say like the first I'm gonna say about the first seven chapters, I think you offered a lot of different perspectives about the blind experience to the sighted world. And I'm legally blind. So obviously, I could relate to just pretty much everything you wrote on some level. So yeah, so I think that the first part really offers readers, you know, perspective, and understanding some of the things that they probably have never thought about, because especially if they've never had close contact with anybody, from the blind community. And then your book definitely said, segwayed into an auto autobiographical section. And it was very interesting, because that's what I was like, wow, we're now we're getting to know Sammy, and your personal experiences and sort of like how this was all sort of culminating to like you said, you said it was call to action. So I mean, my perspective from it was it was just really getting your, your global point of view of what are these lessons learned and what how you've taken your your spiritual philosophies, your life experiences, the things that you're through your journey in it in with your family and your friends and the things that you talked about. So it really is a very interesting flow of storytelling, because it is a little it is unexpected. Because you're reading this, it's very informative, and you're not expecting it to now take this like very personal turn.

S

Sammy SweetSpirit 22:09

That was very intentional. So when I first started this, I actually had it flipped around. I started talking about myself first. And then Neale was kind of guiding me he's like, no, we, I think we need to flip this around, we need to talk about the stuff that people are going to be interested in. Not that they're not interested in you. But we have to get them to a point where they they, you know, are they know you and they fall in love with you. So let's talk about the things that is going to pique their interest, and then give them more. So yeah, that was very intentional. And it it turned out great. Like I wasn't sure at first, but okay, then I did it. And I'm like, Okay, this works. So yeah, that was very intentional. The flow was very intentional.

L

Lis Malone 23:00

And I think that my very amateur writing perspective of it, is that I think that Neale had a very interesting point to that. Because people, let's just be honest, people is personal, are selfish

interesting point to that. Because people, let's just be honest, people in general, are selfish beings. And when you're reading something you're most interested in things of how does this relate to you, and what are you getting from this.

S

Sammy SweetSpirit 23:23

Yeah, that's exactly what he told me.

L

Lis Malone 23:25

And then once you've you're kind of absorbing and getting, it's like, you got to feed yourself before you can start feeding others.

S

Sammy SweetSpirit 23:34

He was really blunt with me about it. What he said was, he's like, can I speak to you Big Brother to Little Sister? And I said, Yeah, of course. And he said, okay, don't start with you. Because people aren't gonna care about you. We have to get them to the point where, you know, they care about you, but they don't care about you right off the bat. They want to know, how does this benefit me, you know, as a reader? And so yeah, that was really powerful for me to learn, because I'm also an amateur writer. I also, I mean, I've written a book now, but I really had to, to really listen to that and understand that because, you know, my thought was, well, they don't know me. So let's start off with me if then get to know me. But no, he was absolutely right. So I'm glad glad we did that. And it worked out good.

L

Lis Malone 24:29

Yeah. Well, if when you listen to this, you could tell him Lis got it. I got it.

R

Rob Mineault 24:33

And so how has your life changed since the book and what kind of reception did it get? Are you a local celebrity? What's going on now?

S

Sammy SweetSpirit 24:48

Not yet. But it's slowly getting exposure. I'm still working on that. I've hired a marketing person to kind of help with that. But it's gotten really good feedback. So far people have have called me and said, I read your book. And like I said it, they've said, it got me to look at myself to want to change in my life and do better in my own life and be a better person just hearing your experience and your stories. And you know, it, I was very thankful for that. And so, yeah, I'm just trying to get it out there as best I can. I've written a lot of news organizations and stuff to

try and get this out there. But it's slow going right now. But you know, everything has its time. And, and so I'm being patient, and, but I do think it's very important. And, and so I'm willing to do what I have to do to, to get it out there.

R

Rob Mineault 26:01

Well, you know, what, it is such an important project too, because, you know, you know, again, I have to go back to you know, we're always talking about how education is important, because people have to understand what the what these lived experiences are like so that we can start to change society in a way that is making it more, you know, more accessible, for example, or just under understanding what it's like. And, you know, back to your point about people, you know, work in these huge extremes, where it's just like, yeah, it's like Daredevil or they're completely helpless. And there's none of this in between. We need to push through that for real change to sort of happen. So I think the more that more stories and the more books like yours, that's not only just being strictly educational, but it's taking taking the reader into the lived experience, the day to day lived experience it's so important.

S

Sammy SweetSpirit 27:11

One of the one of my editors told me that same thing, she's like, you know, what I appreciate about your book is that we, we read all these books from other blind people about, you know, them doing amazing things like climbing Mount Everest, and you know, things like that. And she's like, not that, you know, not, of course, you've done some amazing things, but you're talking about, you know, the everyday blind person and what they experience daily, and you know, how to make things better for everyone, really. So it was, it was really good to hear that too. And, yeah, I, that's, that's why I did it. So glad that comes across.

R

Rob Mineault 27:57

We're kind of like that as a society, right? Like, these days, everything has to be sensational, or it really doesn't tend to get a lot of attention. And so people put a lot of a lot of emphasis on things like, oh, this person you'd, like you said, is climbing Mount Everest, or Mount Kilimanjaro, and they're, they're blind. And I just feel like we need to sort of shift - and not that that's not amazing. I mean, I think that, you know, cases like that, yeah, that's, that's great. And we should celebrate that. But we should also celebrate somebody who is just dealing with the every day struggles.

S

Sammy SweetSpirit 28:40

Trying to find a job, trying to find a date, trying to you know, you know, the the things that that we all want, as human beings, you know, that blind people want to show that they are just as capable. And yeah, that's, it's so important. I mean, I did a bold thing. I went to South Africa, I talked about that in the book. And, you know, I was hit with, you know, you can't do that you're, you think you're invincible, you're blind, like you can't. it's just really funny the way that people think. And, you know, I went and I had a great time, and I showed something to myself. If I want to do something, I'm going to do it. And, and I've always been that way, but, but that was just a

clear demonstration of that. And I agree with you, even if it's, you know, taking the bus for the first time or cooking a meal for the first time or you know, you can really show yourself, what you can do and you you know, you can show yourself that we aren't limited beings, we're limitless. And so, yeah, I agree with you.

 Lis Malone 29:56

I am very curious about the editing process that you must have grappled with when it came to your section on the with the q&a. And so, in that section, I think there were some very graphic questions, but they had to be put out there. Especially when it came to things about sex, and misconceptions about personal hygiene, and things like that. So I'm just kind of wondering, like, what, what, what was that editing process like about? Like, how far did you want to take that? And how I mean, were there talks of like, cutting some stuff? Or? I mean, was it was it kind of like a push pull in that process?

 30:46

So, yeah, I hope that I handled that gracefully. But yeah, you're right. i There were things that that needed to be talked about. Because, you know, I had, I had put a Facebook post out. And that was some of the questions that, that I got back. And, you know, one of my friends said, people are genuinely asking these questions. Another friend of mine responded, like, oh, that's we don't want, that's TMI. And my friend wrote back and said, but people are asking this, they think that we can't have sex, or that women don't know how to take care of their menstrual cycles and or get dressed or take your medicine or, you know, they they think that we can't do these things. And so if people are asking, you know, it's important for us to explain so people can have a better understanding. And I've said often, understanding replaces judgment. Because it's when we judge something, it's because we don't understand it. It's easy to judge, like, oh, that's stupid, or oh, that's silly, or, I don't like that, or, you know, whatever. Because we don't get it, we don't quite understand it. But once we kind of get over that barrier, and we start to ask questions and understand things, it makes more sense. And it's like, no, okay, I can kind of identify with that a little more, or see, see what they're saying. And so it kind of eliminates that judgment. So I didn't have a whole lot of graphic questions. So I didn't really have to edit too much. But it was funny, because I actually got the question was related to the sex question. No, people, people don't ask that. Are you? Sure? Are you sure you want to include this? Yes, I want to include this because that has been asked in my life and some of my friends. And so people are almost like kind of baffled, like that, that really gets asked.

 Lis Malone 33:08

Yeah, we really does. We've had Amy Amantea on this show. And she's talked about that same thing that she's been asked in public places by strangers about how she has sex. So yeah, it's it's unfortunately, a real thing.

 Sammy SweetSpirit 33:26

Yeah, it is in my responses. Well, I hope you're touching more than looking.

R Ryan Fleury 33:39
How did we become top of the food chain? Such a dumb question. It really is.

L Lis Malone 33:49
But it but it's it is one that really is out there,.

R Ryan Fleury 33:52
For sure. Lack of understanding. Yeah,

L Lis Malone 33:54
Yeah. Well, is that like, that's like saying like, Well, how do people have sex with the lights off? Right, seriously?

R Ryan Fleury 34:07
I heard it's better that way.

L Lis Malone 34:15
I think most people would prefer it with the lights off. Well, I think that it was a I think it was very, very interesting just to read that chapter just because we do you know, I we've we've had some authors on here and everyone and that's what's great is that everyone brings a different perspective to how they they document their journey and tell their story and share information. But I I did appreciate that you went there to that place where you you kind of had to just think okay, this is so stupid that we have to write this, but for all you people, all you ignoramuses out there, we're going to tell you yes, we know how to wipe our asses. Shocking, I know.

S Sammy SweetSpirit 35:04
Yeah. I mean, I It's funny because some of the questions I could see myself asking a sighted person well, how do you do you know, like, let's flip it around like, well, let's -

L Lis Malone 35:17
Listen, having had a grown up with a father and a brother and they had no sight issues whatsoever. I can assure you that skid marks are very prevalent in the sighted community, and I don't know what their excuses. So you notice the guys just got silent? Like I don't know.

R

Ryan Fleury 35:41

It's gonna be chapter five in her book. Skidmarks. How to deal with them, where they come from.

R

Rob Mineault 35:51

Now I'm totally rethinking the title of Liz's upcoming autobiography. Okay, well, yeah, listen, bringing the conversation back around. I do think that that is such a great medium to address a lot of those questions. Because if, you know, because if those are indeed what are on people's minds, I think I think you're absolutely right, I think it is important to, to discuss that with them. And in something like a book, it's a safe space where people can ask the stupid questions and get it addressed. I mean, they would never ever probably ask that in person. Unless, of course, you're on the 99 B-line in Vancouver. Maybe people, someone on the bus would ask that. But, but no, you know, it's so I think that it's good. You've got to approach things like there is no such thing as stupid questions, just bring them on, so that we can answer them.

S

Sammy SweetSpirit 36:54

Yeah, let's deal with let's deal with it. Let's deal with that first, and then we can, you know, get to the real, you know, the real important issues. I've kind of a funny story, though. So, my so for the audio version of the book. So my partner, he did the voiceover work for the intro and outro like the credits, you know, like introducing the book and, and saying, you know, read by the author and all this stuff. And he sent me an outtake him saying, "Look at it this way: The blind leading the stupid". It was so funny. He's like, maybe it should be your your title. I don't think you'll sell very many but just made me laugh.

R

Ryan Fleury 37:53

Think about it. You know, Windows for dummies? billions of copies sold, right? All these books for dummies. So...

R

Rob Mineault 38:01

That's true. Actually. That's another great idea, Ryan. Blindness for Dummies. The amount of million dollar ideas that comes out of this podcast.

S

Sammy SweetSpirit 38:14

See what a conversation can do? This is this is why I do what I do. Because conversations can really spark great ideas.

L Lis Malone 38:23
Oh, we talk about gravy and beer and other intelligent topics.

R Ryan Fleury 38:29
Intelligent topics.

L Lis Malone 38:34
Hockey scores. Go sports go.

R Rob Mineault 38:43
Well, okay, why don't we switch gears and talk a little bit about your music because as we mentioned earlier, you are not just an author, but you are also a singer, songwriter. So talk to us a little bit about that. Were you always musical growing up? Or was this something you acquired later on?

S Sammy SweetSpirit 39:04
Um, so according to my parents, I was singing before I could talk. And I had, you know, perfect pitch and all that stuff.

R Rob Mineault 39:19
Wait, you have perfect pitch really?

S Sammy SweetSpirit 39:21
I do. I do. So it's kind of I kind of in the book. I kind of joke around like, you know, back when you had to dial your voicemail password, yeah, don't do that around me, because I'll tell you what it is. So yeah, the smartphone did good for that because we don't do that. So yeah, so you know, I did a lot of school talent shows and choirs and performed weddings and festivals and funerals and all kinds of things. And then I met one of my best friends. When I met him he's like, have you ever thought about writing your own music? Because he, that's what he did. And I was like, I was just saying covers, you know. He said, well, let's, let's write some stuff for you, that's yours, you know, and that you can put out there. And so we did. And I have an album out now, and it's on all the, the musical services, the music platforms. And it's called Something for Everyone. And it's, it was it took, took about a year to make it. And I got a bunch of, you know, my friends, you know, together blind musicians and, you know, mixers and consultants and stuff. And we, we worked on it. And it's, you know, people from all over the world, really. And it was kind of a world collaboration on the internet. And it was, it was really fun. And so, you know, before that, I always just put stuff on SoundCloud, and YouTube and I had a website for a

while, and, you know, but it was a totally different avenue to make an album. And so there's more, everybody's asking me about more music, yeah, it's coming. There's, there'll be some more music. I'm just kind of focusing on the book right now and trying to get that going. But music is my first love, and it will it will never, never die in my heart. So yeah, when I started, you know, when I was it was really fun to, to write my own songs. And, you know, let my voice come out that way. Talk to me a little bit about that particular writing experience. How did you sort of wrap your lived experience, and what kind of message were you sort of trying to convey through the music, The same message really, that, you know, the music, music helps us connect. And so, you know, let's, let's connect let's, you know, create a world that we want to live in. I mean, there's lots of different, lots of different avenues to do that, you know, I mean, nothing, nothing feels better than when you know, you're listening to a song, you get the chills. Just an amazing feeling like you feel really connected to yourself to, you know, if you believe in something higher than you know, the source. And it helps you think it lets you know, if you're going through something, it helps you. At least for me, it helps me get my thoughts out my thoughts and feelings kind of working together. And so I wanted to create a space for people to be able to do that. And it's really interesting to hear people's perspectives on a song that I wrote. It's so different, like, if you talk to five people, you'll get five different answers to what they think the song is about. And, you know, sometimes that's more fascinating than what, what the song was about for me when I wrote it. So you know, one of the songs on my album is called, Please Remind Me. And that's probably my favorite song. And I love all of them. But that's probably my favorite because it was such a production. And it, it was very, it's very cinematic, and very deep. And, you know, but asks questions that we all ask at one point in our lives. And people have told me that they listen to that song every day to get them through the day. It just, it just warms my heart.

R

Ryan Fleury 43:43

I know that I've listened to your album a couple times now. And what I have found is that whether you're listening to one of the upbeat songs, I think Purple Love or the Brian Wilson song, all of your songs make you kind of stop and listen to the lyrics. Listen to not just the music, but listen to what it is you're saying. And I found that really interesting that you know, there was- I don't want to say there's a theme to the album because I have a feeling there is and I'm still trying to figure out what that is - but it's it's truly you know, it's joyful. It's calming, it's it's peaceful. But your music definitely made me stop and listen to the lyrics and so I wanted to ask you you know where did the ideas of you know I think purple love and the Brian Wilson song come from?

S

Sammy SweetSpirit 44:41

Well Purple Love I'm obviously both Prince and Brian Wilson. I'm huge fans of there's also an homage to Alliyah as well. I'm a huge fan of hers as well. And so Purple Love is very, very near and dear to my heart. My best friend and I wrote the song together. He's also a huge Prince fan. And we, you know, I had seen Prince perform about a month before he died. And it was just, I mean, Prince is always magical on stage. And on, you know, I kind of, I kind of joke around with people, like, he just grabbed you and takes you and you, you, you first you don't know what to say. And then you're like, Whoa, this is, you know, I didn't expect this. Prince helped me embrace myself. And so to Brian Wilson, just with his music, and helped me to to find freedom in me, and so I wanted to, to, you know, thank them for that. And Brian Wilson song, it's called,

Like Brian and it was just another thing, I woke up and I'm like, I have an idea. I wanted write this song. And I came up with the melody and the, you know, the instrumentation me and my friend did together. And so and actually today's Brian Wilson's birthday, so happy birthday, Brian.

R

Rob Mineault 46:26

That's right. Yeah, I saw that.

S

Sammy SweetSpirit 46:29

And so, but, but what I love about him too, is that I don't know. So there's a documentary out, it's called Long Promised Road. And he's so genuine and so honest with himself, that it's like, oh, my gosh, like, I hope that I could be half as good as that, because, you know, he'll he'll tell the person doing the documentary. You know, I don't want to I don't want to go into my my childhood home right now. I'm just going to stay out here in the car and, and listen to music, I just, I am going to do that. And he just he's so like, and I know, it took a lot obviously because, you know, we know his story from you know, mental illness and, and drugs and all that stuff. But he's very, he knows himself. And he knows what he can handle. What he can't he'll tell you. And it's so it's just I'm very inspired by by these people and look up to them greatly.

R

Rob Mineault 47:40

Yeah, you know, speaking of that, actually, I did I watched a really good Beach Boys documentary. And I can't recall what it was called, and I'm sure there's there's a bunch of them, but it's really interesting to go back and and hear just how important of an influence those guys were and just how musically talented they were. I think that a lot of people just take take that sound and what they were doing for granted because you know, we've just we've been around it for so long. But it's really amazing. I definitely I need to go check out that Brian Wilson documentary because he was also like he's he was the center of all that. Genius.

S

Sammy SweetSpirit 48:25

I mean, he really is. That harmony like that's that's what made me fall in love with the Beach Boys. For those of you who listen to my album, I've got harmony everywhere. Because I love love harmony. And it's one of the greatest things about music to me.

R

Rob Mineault 48:44

Yeah.

R

Ryan Fleury 48:44

Yeah, I need to talk to your people to work on my harmonies,

- R** Rob Mineault 48:52
I think maybe collaboration is an order and you can call the album 50 Shades of Gravy
- L** Lis Malone 49:06
Sex with the lights on.
- R** Rob Mineault 49:10
Right, featuring the hit song The Same Way You Do, Dummy.
- R** Ryan Fleury 49:21
Her gears are grinding, she's thinking.
- R** Rob Mineault 49:27
Stick around here. We'll come up with all kinds of ideas that we come up with that we never do anything with. It's kind of our thing.
- S** Sammy SweetSpirit 49:34
I'll take them and then use them for myself. I'm just kidding.
- L** Lis Malone 49:39
I'm still waiting for our Weedies.
- R** Rob Mineault 49:40
I forgot about that. Can't even keep track, we'd be we would all be millionaires by now if only we had follow through.
- S** Sammy SweetSpirit 49:55
Well, you can change the world. It starts with you.

L Lis Malone 50:02

It starts with a beer sponsor.

R Rob Mineault 50:07

Right? Well, Sammy, I got a really thank you for for coming on and joining us, this has been really fun. But before we let you go, where can people find your music? Where can they find the book? Where can they reach out to you if they're interested?

S Sammy SweetSpirit 50:29

So the book is on Amazon. It's Look At It This Way: the Blind Leading The Sighted , it's also available as the Kindle paperback and audible. I'm actually getting a website together currently, so it's, it's under construction right now. But it will be sammysweetspirit.com. So it's, there's a little bit of a slow process, but it's moving. My music is on Spotify, Apple Music, YouTube, Google, Deezer. Pretty much anywhere you can think of where you get your music. Amazon, of course. And I'm on social media but not as much as I used to be. But I'm going to be ramping that up here. I'm on Facebook and Twitter. My Facebook is SammySweetSpirit. And my Twitter is _sweetsprit_. So yeah, I'd love to connect with you guys. And my email address is sammysweetspirit@gmail.com, if you want to send me an email. Thank you very much for having me, guys. I really enjoyed talking with you all. And thank you so much for all your great questions. They were fun.

R Rob Mineault 51:53

Well, listen, thank you. And we'll be in touch about this this whole collaboration album, soon.

S Sammy SweetSpirit 52:01

Exciting. We'll all be millionaires.

R Rob Mineault 52:05

All right. Listen, well listen. Best of luck with the new album. Best of luck with the book and we're happy to have you on anytime.

S Steve Barclay 52:17

Take care Sammy.

R Ryan Fleury 52:19

Bye bye.

R Rob Mineault 52:20
Oh, what a lovely young lady.

L Lis Malone 52:23
She's a beauty, eh?

R Rob Mineault 52:27
Hey, you use it properly in a sentence.

L Lis Malone 52:29
That's right.

R Rob Mineault 52:30
Contextually correctly. Did Steve get all those research materials over to you?

L Lis Malone 52:37
Don't you know by now Steve and I kind of share our brain. We share a hemisphere or something

S Steve Barclay 52:44
I just I just wish you'd stop hogging it.

R Rob Mineault 52:51
No, I mean, that was great. That warms my heart. I didn't get a chance to listen to her album yet.

R Ryan Fleury 53:04
It's very well done.

R Rob Mineault 53:07
Awesome. Awesome.

S Steve Barclay 53:10
So I was I was up in Kelowna last week and we had our children's low vision clinic up there. And I got invited over to Dave Grimes house. You know Dr. Dave Grimes who was was on the show about his missionary work. So he, he went and he made up some some some weiners for us. Which of course, for all of us who are there immediately started the weiner jokes. It's like, oh, look, you know, Dave's Dave's weiner, et cetera, et cetera. So I just I just found and bought him a t shirt. It's on its way to him today. That says, it's not a party until my weiner comes out.

R Rob Mineault 55:35
Amazing. So much for a classy outro everybody.

L Lis Malone 55:44
We need to get Rob to start drinking a beer during our show, too.

R Rob Mineault 55:49
Well, listen, they don't do you know what what kind of like depravity the show would devolve into if I did.

S Steve Barclay 55:59
No, Rob, but no, we don't know. But we're excited to find out. Next week.

R Ryan Fleury 56:08
No, we can't do it next week. It's the World Blind Union show.

R Rob Mineault 56:13
Yeah, we got to be good for that. Yeah.

L Lis Malone 56:15
Oh, no beer, no beer.

R Ryan Fleury 56:17
Beer.

R Rob Mineault 56:17
I can drink beer.

L Lis Malone 56:21
I'll drink beer. But I won't announce that I am. But you'll know.

R Rob Mineault 56:46
That's great. It's always I don't know, I really do feel like a lot of those books like hers, I think really need to get out there, the more the better. Because I think that, you know, it's a really, it's a great way to connect with, you know, the sighted community and inform them rather than us screaming at them. Because obviously, that doesn't work.

R Ryan Fleury 57:05
Well, I think like I've said before, and I said it, even Amy on the show, and yeah, maybe you know, sitting on a bus talking to a stranger about your sex life isn't the optimal situation to be educating people on. But these conversations need to be have and nobody's having them. So if we're going to say no, we're not going to talk to you, how can we expect people to change their attitudes, their behavior? So you know, well done, Sammy, for bringing up the question that we know people are thinking, yeah, they're just not asking.

L Lis Malone 57:37
And you know, we do talk so much about the different perspectives. This is how you learn. Yeah, you buy me a beer. You could ask me anything.

R Ryan Fleury 57:47
But what kind of beer?

L Lis Malone 57:50
The one I don't the one I can't mention yet because they have to sponsor. They have to pay me.

....

- R** Ryan Fleury 57:59
Yeah, we all have our opinions and perspectives. And at least some of us are willing to talk about it and share. So with us, all we can do is what we can do. Now change in the world, one person conversation at a time.
- L** Lis Malone 58:16
That's right. Cheers.
- R** Rob Mineault 58:18
Yeah. See? Thanks. So one, one podcast episode at a time.
- L** Lis Malone 58:24
So sympatico tonight, look at that.
- R** Ryan Fleury 58:27
Eric Clapton wrote a song called Change the World didn't he?
- R** Rob Mineault 58:35
Ever since he came out is one of those COVID nuts I can't I just have a respect for him like I did. It bummed me out. Yeah, he's one of those anti Vax weirdos.
- R** Ryan Fleury 58:50
What's that got to do with his musical genius?
- R** Rob Mineault 58:52
Well, nothing. But yeah, it was good song. Anyways. All right. Hey, Lis.
- L** Lis Malone 1:02:28
Yeah, what's up, Rob?

- R** Rob Mineault 1:02:29
See, do like that dramatic pause again. Its symmetry, man. It was a call back.
- R** Ryan Fleury 1:02:45
Well how techincal.
- R** Rob Mineault 1:02:48
Whatever. Hey, Lis.
- L** Lis Malone 1:02:49
Yeah, what's up?
- R** Rob Mineault 1:02:52
Where can people find this?
- L** Lis Malone 1:02:54
People can find us on the web at www.atbanter.com
- R** Rob Mineault 1:02:58
Hey, they can also email us if they so desire at cowbell@atbanter.ca If that extra letter is a problem for you.
- R** Ryan Fleury 1:03:15
You can also take out the www if you'd like to.
- R** Rob Mineault 1:03:18
Oh, shoot. That's like four letters. Our web traffic's gonna go through the roof. Where else can they find a Steve?
- S** Steve Barclay 1:03:29

Well, if they go looking they could find us on Twitter or they could find us on Facebook or they could find a very very non active account on Instagram

R

Rob Mineault 1:03:40

For now. Yeah, just wait. So we start pulling the trigger on some of these ideas. It's going to explode.

L

Lis Malone 1:03:49

It's gonna be littered with my with my beer bottles.

R

Ryan Fleury 1:03:58

Lis passed out on the floor with bottles.

L

Lis Malone 1:04:02

It's gonna be amazing. And glitter and glitter.

R

Rob Mineault 1:04:10

So many angles. Oh, that's

R

Ryan Fleury 1:04:12

right glitter in spam because I gotta get working on that song.

R

Rob Mineault 1:04:16

Yeah, I mean, you have a couple of song ideas. Now after today's episode too.

R

Ryan Fleury 1:04:20

Yeah, we're gonna work on 50 Shades of gravy, glitter and spangles. Oh my goodness,

R

Rob Mineault 1:04:48

All right. Well, I think we've done enough damage for one day. Thanks, everybody for listening in. Big thanks to Sammy for joining us and we will see everybody next week.

