

AT Banter Podcast Episode 328 - Anne-Marie Pham & CCDI

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SPEAKERS

Rob Mineault, Lis Malone, Anne-Marie Pham, Ryan Fleury

- R** Ryan Fleury 00:54
Hey, and welcome to another episode of AT Banter. 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. Oh, and joining me today Mr. Ryan Fleury. Oh he's going to keep her on Mic 3. Look at that. Hello everyone.
- R** Rob Mineault 01:27
And listen - Mic 3, it's Lis. Malone.
- L** Lis Malone 01:37
Oh Mic 3, I love it it's gonna be my new handle.
- R** Rob Mineault 01:48
If I had hosting permission, I would rename you. I believe Brian May from Queen was was infamously Mic 3 for all the Queen records, so you're in good company.
- R** Ryan Fleury 02:06
Keep digging Rob. Keep taking.
- R** Rob Mineault 02:10

No, listen, hey, we do need to talk to Miss Lis Malone for a minute because it's her first time back in I don't even know how many weeks so welcome back to the circus.

L

Lis Malone 02:23

Thank you. I'm healthy as a horse. If a horse was really sick.

R

Rob Mineault 02:31

I don't understand why people say that. I

L

Lis Malone 02:36

I know. Yeah, is that an insult to me or insult to the horse?

R

Rob Mineault 02:41

Yeah, what happened this time?

L

Lis Malone 02:44

Oh, I had I came down with some bronchitis pneumonia as a post COVID giveaway parting gift. Wow.

R

Rob Mineault 02:58

Wow. So bronchitis, so that's a lot of coughing.

L

Lis Malone 03:02

Oh, let's just say there was all kinds of good stuff coming and going. So yeah.

R


Rob Mineault 03:09


Yeah, did it knock you down for like a couple of weeks or what?


L


Lis Malone 03:12


It was like two weeks for sure. And then a nice healthy course of wonderful American antibiotics.


 Rob Mineault 03:23
Can't go wrong.


 Lis Malone 03:24
No, I'm a fan. I am definitely a fan.


 Ryan Fleury 03:27
You could have done the show then, is that what you're saying?


 Rob Mineault 03:35
I would hate to work for Ryan.

 Ryan Fleury 03:45
I'm sorry.

 Lis Malone 03:48
Isn't he the worst sometimes?

 Ryan Fleury 03:52
What a guy, right?

 Rob Mineault 04:01
Listen before we do get into the body of the show, though, too. I do want to mention that it's good that you are back because we have a little bit of a surprise for you after the end of the show.

 Lis Malone 04:12
Yay. Do I get a hint now?



R Ryan Fleury 04:17
Nope. Stay tuned. You gotta stay to the end.

R Rob Mineault 04:22
Yeah, that's right. No, no bailing, going and watching hockey halfway.

L Lis Malone 04:26
Oh tonight, my Devils are playing so Yeah ..

R Rob Mineault 04:34
So we had to we had to bribe you with something to keep you focused for the rest of the show.

L Lis Malone 04:39
All right. So alright, so I'll stay. I'll stay.

R Rob Mineault 04:45
hat's good because we do have a great show. And without further ado, I'm gonna ask Ryan.
Hey, Ryan?

R Ryan Fleury 04:51
Yeah, Rob.

R Rob Mineault 04:52
What the heck are we doing today?

R Ryan Fleury 04:54
Today we are speaking with the CEO from the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion
Anne-Marie Pham.

A Anne-Marie Pham 05:02
Thanks, Ryan. And thanks, everyone for inviting me.

R Ryan Fleury 05:05
Thanks for putting up with our silliness.

L Lis Malone 05:10
Hey, Anne-Marie gets to be Mic three.

A Anne-Marie Pham 05:13
So Cool. I'm not the last mic.

L Lis Malone 05:18
I'm always in the cellar. So you're good.

A Anne-Marie Pham 05:22
Well, I'm pleased and honored to be Mic three today.

R Rob Mineault 05:25
Listen, we were happy to have you. Maybe you can give us a little bit of background of yourself and a little bit of background about the organization.

A Anne-Marie Pham 05:35
Yeah, you bet. I will be happy to do that. So I am Anne-Marie Pham. I was actually born in Vietnam. And then when I was three years old, our family moved to France, where my dad had a job there with the Vietnamese Embassy in Paris. And it was supposed to be for five years. So the whole family went over. But then the fall of Saigon took place on April 30 1975. Our family ended up in France. And we stayed there because obviously, we're not with the previous governments. So we stayed in France for 12 years, like many immigrants, my parents had a restaurant and we ran the restaurant for about 10 years. Then when I was 15 years old, we moved to Canada. So Canada is really my third country, on my third continent, and English is my third language. And so that's me, I'm very passionate about ensuring that people of all backgrounds, different lived experiences, different identities, feel like they belong in Canada. And that has been my journey here, you know, trying to fit in trying to have that sense of belonging from the age of 15. And I've seen it in my community. I've seen it in my family, I've seen it amongst friends. I've seen it amongst colleagues and amongst members of the community. And that's where my passion comes from. So today, I am the CEO of CCDI, which stands for the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion. And we are a national charity that

was established actually 10 years ago. So 2023 is attempt year anniversary with basically the vision of building a more inclusive Canada for everyone. And we do this by offering learning, research, knowledge solutions, and just some good advice, hopefully to many workplaces, schools and communities that we work with.

R

Rob Mineault 07:50

We've been doing the podcast for about what is it ran seven years, or eighth year. So you know, we've sort of had sort of a ringside seat at the conversation around diversity and inclusion for a while now. And it's really something that, at least from our vantage point, that's that's really grown and really gained some traction mainly in probably in the past five years. Being a 10 year old organization, how have you seen it? Have you really seen things pick up in the last few years? What's sort of the climate of around diversity and inclusion?

A

Anne-Marie Pham 08:31

Yeah, it's a good observation, Rob, because actually, you know, we've been around for 10 years. And I would agree with you that, you know, the first six years or so we've seen the growth of the of the organization based on demand, and the growth was pretty steady. You know, it was pretty organic, and more and more organizations were trying to really learn about diversity and inclusion. They were starting by maybe training their leaders or doing a learning session or building, you know, diversity and inclusion plans for the organization. But it was really a relatively slow and organic growth, I would say. And then comes the murder of George Floyd, which happened a couple of months after the COVID 19 lockdown after the pandemic started. And those two things coming together really created the kind of environment where people were starting to really reflect and think about, you know, what, life is precious. Health is not to be taken for granted with this COVID pandemic. And many people were unemployed or you know, changed, working or family situations because of the lockdown. And a lot of people started to reflect and think about, you know, what can the life do I want to have, what are my values? What's important to me? Assuming that we don't always have a secure and safe and healthy life for the rest of what we were expecting life to be. So come May 2020, and George Floyd gets murdered. I'm sure you've all seen, you know, the huge impact it had on the media, everybody was talking about it. Not only were we seeing marches down the streets of America, but it happened in Canada, it happens in many countries in Europe and other parts of the world. It was sort of this international social awakening, you know, where people were saying, enough is enough. How long do we need to wait and be patient for the system to be fixed? So racism, especially towards black people, really came to the forefront. It was a huge thing. And then shortly after, you know, you saw the rise of anti Asian sentiment, and a huge exponential increase of hate across the world, including in Canada. Because, of course, some people wrongfully thought, you know, that the virus was, you know, the China virus, and people from China and Chinese people, you know, are to blame for this. It reminds me of like, what happened in the Second World War when, you know, Japanese Canadians were incarcerated, right? In Canada, so those were some of the issues that are happening. And then shortly after that, you see the confirmation of Indigenous graves in Canada. So there are several big, big events that took place. And it's sort of like, compounded into, okay, what's going on now? And what do we need to do to make this country this work better? And so because of this series of events, CCDI saw a huge demand, like an increase in demand, from workplaces who have been starting to call us more, and saying, you know, what, how can I address this, I feel that my

clients that my employees that, you know, my leaders are really being affected by all of these things. And I think as an organization, we need to do better when it comes to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.

R

Rob Mineault 12:58

Yeah, it's, it's very interesting, because, and I hadn't really thought of it like that, because I haven't really put all those three events together like that. But you're absolutely right there, it was, like these, these moments, that that happened, sort of one after the other, that really, I think, opened up a lot more conversation around this, just in general, both in the media, and I think, certainly on an organization and a business level as well. You know, we're sort of coming at this through a slightly different lens, you know, we, we are big, you know, big advocates for accessibility and the disability community in all of this. And it really is tied together, because diversity and inclusion are very much words that we use all the time too, in order to talk about the disability community. And in ways the disability community is sort of lagging behind, you know, we've been talking about how that that community really needs its moment to really serve to really drive home some of the conversation around a lot of the barriers that are still in place around accessibility and around the disability community. But it is I feel like all of this is really tied together through these ideas of diversity and inclusion. So maybe I would, I'd be really interested to sort of hear your take on those specific words, and how you guys sort of define them when you're presenting them to different organizations. Because I do feel like those can be confusing to some people, as well, especially that, you know, people in the mainstream who haven't really spent a lot of time there. They're not advocates. How do you guys sort of frame the idea of diversity to somebody that that sort of isn't familiar with it?

A

Anne-Marie Pham 15:01

Well, you know what, you're right, that there's some confusion out there. But the terms and what they really mean, and you know, you talk to different people, and they may have different definitions. So for us, I'll tell you what it means. For CCDI, when we talk about diversity, it's all the ways in which we differ, right? So it's your diversity of life experiences, is to diversity of perspectives, is visible diversity dimensions, it could be your, you know, race, ethnicity, how tall you are, how old or young you look, whether you have a physical disability or not, you know, any symbols of faith that you might be worrying about you. So diversity is a fact, right, and you're going to have diversity, as soon as you've got two people in the room, because many dimensions of diversity are invisible. Many are also visible, even twins to people who are born with the same genetic markers, they will be different from one another, because they may have different life experiences. And they may have different perspectives. So diversity is a fact. But inclusion is a choice. And inclusion is that mindful, conscious, intentional effort that we want to put into an organization or at a team meeting, or an event, or in the review of our policies and practices. So that we ensure that everyone is included. So that we make the mix work. And the mix is the diversity price in the mix of people, the mix of experiences, the mix of educational background, the mix of great ideas. By creating an inclusive environment, what essentially you're doing is you're creating an ecosystem, where people are free to be who they are, they can bring their whole self to work, you know, they can bring the humor, like the humor that I'm seeing in this podcast, they can bring different ideas that can be innovative. But they also feel like the place is safe enough for them to have the courage to say, hey, this workplace is okay. But it needs some work, you know, maybe it's not accessible for them.

Maybe it hasn't accommodated some of their needs, maybe they have, you know, different thinking style, or the way that they're communicating maybe different maybe they're more indirect in the communication styles versus direct. Maybe they're more introverted versus extroverted. And we know that workplaces really encourage and sort of gives more credit, typically to people who are extroverted. So an inclusive work environment is one in which we really try hard, we're intentional and conscious about checking in with all of our colleagues and all of our clients and making sure that we understand what they need in order to succeed in order to be happy and productive in the workplace. So that's a difference. Diversity is a fact. Inclusion is a choice.

R

Rob Mineault 18:38

You know, it's, it's interesting, I'm sort of tying this together in my head, it's an it's a little bit of a weird example. But a few weeks ago, we had a fella on that was part of a dance group that it was called All Bodies dance. And the idea behind it was it was a dance troupe that was that they termed 'mixed abilities'. And what that meant, basically was that it you know, they welcomed anybody into the program, regardless of whether they had a disability or they didn't have a disability, or if they were, you know, 15 or they were 80, it really didn't matter. And what they did is, is they really sort of leaned into the differences between everybody's movement and they made something sort of a bit of a, like a dance tapestry out of everybody's uniqueness. And tying that together in terms of the conversation, its that's that's sort of true inclusion, that's including everybody and celebrating the differences rather than bringing people on and just being like, okay, well, you know, these people need the need this type of accessibility, or this this type of adaptation, in order to bring them to every to everybody else's level. It's more about just including everybody and celebrating those differences, if I'm understanding this correctly.

A

Anne-Marie Pham 20:06

Yeah, absolutely. And that's a great example that you shared just now. I love it. In fact, we even see diversity as an asset, as something beautiful to be celebrated, and not as a risk or a liability. If people really knew how to leverage all the ways in which we differ, and see our various abilities, people will see that we can all bring something to an organization or to a team, right, and that can be beautiful. So I remember I worked for a previous organization, and one of our colleagues was blind. And she was the only blind person on that particular team. And, you know, I was, you know, managing diversity at the time. So of course, I touch base with her, and I'm, like, how you doing and things working out for you? And she, she'd started before I started, so she was more, you know, into the system than I was. And I was really pleasantly surprised to hear from her and said, you know, what, I've had a really good experience. When I started, my manager asked me, what is it that, you know, I needed to do in order to make sure that your work experience would be great, because obviously, she was very qualified, right. But like many people, you know, with disabilities, she wasn't always employed in in the jobs that she deserved. So they set it up in such a way that, you know, she, she got the right assistive technology, they put some things in place, so that when there's a team meeting, you know, she's got a buddy to support her to access, you know, the files that she needed. You know, if people wanted to go into her office, there was a way in which they can knock on the door, introduce themselves, so that, you know, she wouldn't be surprised, you know, caught off guard with this person was coming in. So there's things that you can do. And certainly, if you

know, for those people who don't have that experience, it may feel unusual, and for others, honestly, uncomfortable as well. But we need to push the needle, right, we need to help people to learn to be a little bit uncomfortable with things that they're not used to. And then get past that, right, like adapt, we're adapting all the time, we adapt our language when we talk to little children versus when you talk to a professional colleague. So we can adapt, but do we want to adapt or not. And the adaptation has to be for everyone. And once we, when we have that mindset, we see people as being a value, you know, a great benefit to the organization, adaptability is going to come more naturally. And once we're able to adapt them, we will truly, you know, leverage, you know, the, all the skill sets and the diverse ideas and talents and, and the damn thing like in your example of the people that we have in the room. So the challenge in our workplaces, of course, is that it doesn't happen automatically. And humans by nature, sadly, like the status quo, they like things that don't change, they like to feel safe and secure. That's a little bit of a reptilian brain coming to the forefront. But as society evolves, you know, as a needs evolve, as a language evolves, have values evolve, too. And workplaces are going to fall behind if they are not adapting with times if they are not more diverse and inclusive and accessible for all the kinds of people who are looking for meaningful and productive work experiences.

L

Lis Malone 24:09

But Anne-Marie you mentioned how you engaged with the particular team member who was blind and engaged with them and really wanted to become invested with what their experience was. I think you've I think you said it was a she and how she was managing and getting all the right tools and support to be really successful and to prove that with all the right access that persons with disabilities can be very successful, even exceptional in many work roles. So in in engaging with an organization and you are dealing with those who maybe are not the ones who aren't necessarily needing the adaptations, but are sort of the ones that have to conform? What are the sort of the strategies that you've had to apply to kind of help crack through that hard veneer to make people more more accepting of, you know, of that change that people are so uncomfortable with?

A

Anne-Marie Pham 25:21

Yeah, so to move from the uncomfortable to the comfortable, honestly requires some courageous conversations. So we've got to be courageous and start the conversations ourselves, if we really want to be, you know, those active allies, right, those co conspirators in the workplace that are trying to create the change that we wish to see in the world. So we've got to start somewhere. Sometimes it's, if we can change a policy just yet, maybe we change it within our own sphere of influence within a small team and whatnot. So usually, that's what I do, I try to, like get a sense of a pulse of the organization, what's working, what's not working? What are people's, you know, mental blocks that get in the way, and then hit at it, right, like, address it right there. So there's no one single answer to your question, Lis. But I will say that, you know, the vision that you want, you want a place that is fully accessible, you want a place that is fully inclusive, where everyone can be the authentic self, and not, you know, there's no microaggressions, people are not making wrong assumptions about your abilities and your qualities just because of an aspect of your dimension of diversity. All of those for sure, is the vision. A lot of people don't know the vision. So the first thing we want to do is make sure that as leader of a workplace or as a colleague, that we're clear, I can articulate the vision. And we

can give some really good example of why it's so important for all of us to create an environment, and there's so much research out there. I mean, you can Google the benefits of diversity and inclusion in the workplace. And you'll come up with like dozens of benefits. And that have been research, economic drivers, social imperatives, people, inclusion, higher retention, promotion, greater sustainability of the workplace, because you're going to be adapting and evolving your products and service offerings all the time, if you listen to your diverse workforce, and the great ideas that come from them. So you got to you got to articulate the vision, you got to understand that it's not just the right thing to do, but it's the right thing to do for your business, and use the right words that your business people understand. The second thing that has worked really well is you provide examples and analogies and things that are really simple and that people can relate to. So one of the examples I'll share with you is one of my 'aha' moments years ago, when they started getting into the field of diversity and inclusion is truly understanding accommodation. This term accommodation sometimes is not such a positive term, right? People may think of it as oh, I'm just accommodating them, right, quote, unquote, which means I got to change the way that I do things just for them, I have to do this. And while it is a legal responsibility to accommodate people based on their disabilities, somebody taught me a long time ago that we have to flip that narrative. And think about the fact that workplaces have been accommodating us forever. Those who are physically, you know, abled, for example, right? You think about it, a desk would design in the right height for us, so that we can sit and the laptop and a screen are perfect eye level for us. The lights above our head was designed with the right light density so that we can read a books and use our screens. The audio sound is set up for us so that we can hear properly. We've been accommodated forever. So why can't we do that for everyone else? Okay, so it's about flipping the narrative in such a way that they will understand, you know, all of the privileges and all the benefits that able bodied people have had since time immemorial in the workplace. So hopefully that helps, that those are really you know, concrete ideas and examples that you can use in the workplace to really I meet people where they're at so that they can really understand what it means to be inclusive in a place.

R

Ryan Fleury 30:10

It's funny when you when you put it that way and Marie, because, you know, I grew up sighted, Rob has sight, and I'm totally blind. Lis is blind. And you know, you take a lot of those, you take everything for granted, you don't even think about the desk height, the color of the light, you know, the audio frequency coming from whatever your speakers, your laptop, you don't think about any of those things, and they are accommodations.

A

Anne-Marie Pham 30:36

They truly are. And the workplace has been how much you know, how many 10s of 1000s of dollars to accommodate 90% of the workforce, right? Assuming let's say 90% are able bodied. So if you're asking for, let's say, you know, 10% of the budget, to actually rightfully accommodate folks in the workplace. Nobody should be pushing back on that if you understand the bigger narrative.

R

Ryan Fleury 31:07

Yeah, they're replacing light bulbs every six months, why can't they buy a screen reader for

somebody who's blind?

A

Anne-Marie Pham 31:14

You got it. Yeah. And once we proceed that way, they're like, okay, that kind of makes sense. Yeah, of course, it makes sense. And, you know, I, you know, like, I work with this one guy, he's, like a VP of human resources for this huge company. And, and he had twin daughters, they were born and had twin daughters. And then he saw them grow up. And he saw how his wife was treated differently from him, you know, like she, she took maternity leave. And suddenly, she stopped having opportunities for advancement in the workplace, because now her managers assume that, you know, she won't be as committed to her job, because she's a new mom. But the flip side of it is he got a promotion, because now he's the provider. And he's a responsible father of twins, right? So he realized as he saw his own experience relative to his wife, and that is how his daughters grow up. That, oh, my goodness, you know, I gotta make this world and my workplace better for women, because I can see how difficult it would be for them, how they were seen, as you know, potential leaders in an organization, if one day they want to become mother. And that's just one example of probably 1000s of examples out there. Folks just need to really understand and connect with people. So let's say if you don't know anybody who's blind, right? Maybe you should get to know somebody who's blind, and try to understand their life and the realities, and then see how, you know, what if it was your, your own child, right, do we have to get to that point, but what can you do to make life better, which make the workplace more equitable for everyone? So anyway, so that was the wake up call for him. And it was built over the years to the point where now he's truly, you know, one of those, he calls himself, you know, a straight white, able bodied, male, you know, but he's an ally. Right? He's an ally, even though he's received all of the privileges. In, you know, in his circumstance in his life circumstance,

R

Rob Mineault 33:43

You know, it's so interesting to because I really feel like the workplace is so key with a lot of this and will have like, huge impact downstream. Because if you think about it, you know, people spend a lot of their time every week at the workplace. And so, you know, having having a working at a organization that engages in diversity and inclusion, and you are, all of a sudden you're interacting with people of, you know, with people with disabilities, or people of other races, that is going to spill over into your day to day life. And now, you're not freaked out, when you see somebody on the street who is blind -- you understand what that lived experiences is like, at least, you know, certainly more so than you did before. And so, that's really a way to really slowly start to trickle these ideas into people's everyday thinking.

A

Anne-Marie Pham 34:53

Absolutely. And, you know, I think that the more I've been doing this work, the more I reflect on, what does it take for us to break down the barriers, right to break down these stereotypes, which are just myths. And, you know, if they're not 100%, true 100% of the time, they're not fact. The myths, their stereotypes, what will it take for us to get to the point where we're no longer assigning a particular attribute to someone just because of one aspect of their diversity of who they are? It takes exposure. That is my, that is one of the key solutions to this. And so

you're right, we need to do a much better job of exposing our children are youth, people in the workplace, to people who are different than themselves, so that they're less uncomfortable. They, you know, we can ask questions of each other, we can see each other as humans as individuals without those labels and the stereotypes, and we can see each other for humanity are the things that we share in common and our differences. And the more we do this, the more we're going to break down the barriers. And that's why when you think about it, there's not that many stereotypes about white men, for example, right? Because you see them all around you, you, you know, the the all kinds of characters are played in movies, by white men, you can have the smart person, lawyer, you know, the educator, the dancer, this thing, or the, you know, the administrative charge, right? The murderer, the drug addict, the cartel leader. So you're a huge variety of folks. And because of that, it's really hard for us to automatically, you know, when we think about when we see a white man to automatically jump into 'white men are XY and Z'. It's very hard for us to do that if we were raised in Canada.

L Lis Malone 37:26

Well, if you watch the show Criminal Minds, you would learn that white men are more likely to be serial killers than anybody. Yes. Yeah, I just want to, I just want to put that out there folks.

A Anne-Marie Pham 37:39

So true and proper of other TV series. And it's not just criminal minds. And I'll tell you this, I love Criminal Minds. I think I've watched the show. But there are some shows in the past now 10/20 years past where most of the criminals were black men. Right?

L Lis Malone 37:59

Not serial killers, though.

A Anne-Marie Pham 38:03

Just killers, killers, and criminals and criminals. So the thing is, the more we get to know, folks, from a derived variety of backgrounds, the less our brain is going to automatically default to this wiring that we've been socialized that's been building up and been reinforced over years and years and years. That x person is like this, white person is like that. We need to stop doing that. Like I'm from the Asian community. And there are a lot of stereotypes about Asian women. Right? Sometimes when I make a comment at a meeting, you know, somebody will come back to me later and say, wow, you know, you were pretty, like verbal and vocal. Wow. And they're like, surprised, and they're like, Wow, you had some really good ideas. And I'm kind of thinking, Okay, I hope that that income because dot, dot, dot, you are Asian, and you're not supposed to speak as much. I hope that didn't come from there. But certainly, there are some stereotypes about you know, Asian people, generally speaking, they're hard worker, they don't complain, the good in math, the bad drivers, right. And they don't have leadership potential, because a lot of Asian people don't speak up. So that's the stereotypes that I have to deal with.

And then for yourselves, you know, your aspects of diversity, I'm sure has brought up some judgments from other people about you. So how can we find a way for people to see us to believe in us to trust us to peer relationship with us as we are and that jumped to conclusions?

L

Lis Malone 39:58

Well, the tricky thing is, and I say this as, as an Asian woman, also is a person with a disability is that the exposure is obviously very, very important. But what happens during that exposure can also be very meaningful. Because, you know, even if you say, okay, if you don't understand what it's like to be blind, maybe spend some time with somebody who is blind, but I will tell you that that experience is still very different from blind person blind person and how we cope with that disability, and how it impacts our, our way of life and even our attitude. So the I always, always want to caution people that there's no monolithic anything in race, gender, sexual orientation, ability, religion, dada, and, and, you know. It's with any with any group, just because we may know one, or we've spent time with one that, you know, that is not necessarily representative of everybody that there is still a wide spectrum, within each of each, each diverse segment of the population.

A

Anne-Marie Pham 41:21

So true, so true. And I actually did a session last week, on, you know, showing up the way that you know, the way we are in all the ways in which we differ. And we talked about the intersectionality of dimensions of diversity. So, like, you know, for example, you, Lis, you know, you're a woman with a disability who happens to be Asian, so your experience is going to be very different from my experience does have to have those three dimensions, for example. But even your experience on those three dimensions could still be different from somebody else who has those three dimensions, but maybe, you know, let's say, comes from a different social economic status, right? And so these are the compounding effects of intersectionality. And so oftentimes, people will say, Well, you know, if people are so different from one another, well, how are we going to create an inclusive workplace, it becomes so complex and so complicated? Well, we have this very simple recommendation. It's a little bit simplistic, but I think it's actually very good. And it's very applicable. Many of us were raised with the golden rule, right? And the golden rule, you can see this in every major religion of the world. And even if you're not religious, you were taught this probably by your parent, or grandparents or elder in the community. And the golden rule is treat others the way that you want to be treated. And fundamentally, it's a really great rule to have in your life, right? You want to treat other people with respect, right? You want to treat others, with kindness, with thoughtfulness? Absolutely. The golden rule works really well, if you and that other person comes from either the same community, or you will raise the same values. Or, you know, you usually have shared backgrounds from a pretty homogeneous community. But the reality, of course, is that many workplaces, many communities are not, like you said, a monolith. They're not. They're not homogeneous. They're very different. And our society is more and more complex every day. So we invite people to upgrade from the golden rule to the platinum rule. And the platinum rule says, treat others the way that they want to be treated. Don't assume that other people want to be treated the same way that you want to be treated. Right? Because if you assume, then we'll never learn from the other side, and we'll never be able to adapt. So upgrade from the golden rule. Treat others the way you want to be treated to the platinum rule, treat others the way they want to be treated. And how do we do that? Very simple. Ask. And like you said, Lis,

don't assume. Don't assume that just because you've had that one experience with this one blind person, that and this is how it worked for them that is going to work the same for the next person that you're going to meet, because most likely that may not work. So don't assume just add the right environment to be able to ask. That's an environment that is safe. But that is productive, that allows you to ask good questions, and doesn't put the onus, you know, on always, you know, the the marginalized person, the minority of the group to educate the whole organization, I think the organization has to take responsibility for building learning and conversations to make it happen as well.

R

Rob Mineault 45:31

Yeah, I love that, actually. And we, you know, I think we've had sort of similar conversations. I mean, we, you know, we've talked a lot on the podcast about the importance of education and educating and educating. But, Ryan does get get frustrated when we talk, because he's like, you know what, we are tired of trying to educate.

R

Ryan Fleury 45:48

People just need a bigger stick. I Keep saying, oh, bigger stick.

R

Rob Mineault 45:58

But I think that I really love this idea of putting the onus on, you know, the mainstream on the organization's on the people out there. It's time to ask questions, it's time to take responsibility for your own lack of knowledge and get out there and and do some learning

R

Ryan Fleury 46:19

Well they have to, because we, the disability community, are tired. We're tired of pushing and pushing and pushing and trying to try to make change.

R

Rob Mineault 46:30

Yeah, yeah. Especially because a lot of this change is, I think, has the potential to be very organic. I think that if we can really push this idea of diversity, inclusion and inclusion, and get organizations embracing it, and starting to, to celebrate difference, rather than making it something that they feel intimidated by, or feeling like they're mandated to work towards - I think that that's you, we're going to see a lot of a lot of progress.

R

Ryan Fleury 47:03

And I think we need more. And I think, your approach, Anne-Marie, is probably way more successful than my big stick.

L

Lis Malone 47:13

She's the carrot to your stick.

R

Ryan Fleury 47:17

Yeah, that's right. She's, the "I'll bring the cupcakes" and I'm the big bat.

A

Anne-Marie Pham 47:22

So you got to come to the Government of Canada. And I'll tell you, we, you know, did some work on education, the workplace and employment equity. And of course, if you know, the employment equity legislation in Canada, there's four designated groups that have historically been under-employed in the workplace. And they are people with disabilities, indigenous people, women, and visible minorities, ie racialized minorities. So it was really an interesting experience, going into different workplaces, I worked with hundreds of them, and really trying to understand where they were at. I mean, these public, government departments and agencies had to comply to employment equity. So Ryan, that was the stick. So many years, many, many years, this organization since the late 1980s, is when the legislation was in place. You know, they're like, oh, my God, I have to report on my representation of these four designated groups every year, and have to write a narrative report to the Government of Canada to tell them what is the progress when it comes to representation numbers. And, of course, they had to have enough representations at all levels of their organization in a variety of roles and positions to make sure that the representation number reflected the market availability. So that's fair, I think that's very, very fair. What the Government of Canada realized is that, if you just give them the stick, and the report on it every year, a lot of them will be in that compliance / public relations mode. Right. And if you look at the spectrum of inclusion, that's pretty low on the totem pole. So one, the lowest is denial, denial that there are any problems at all in the workplace. But the next level is that level of compliance. I'm doing it because I'm being told and have to. Well, I would admit that for some organizations that worked for me use that and they leverage that to really build great programs and to increase the representation and to work on the culture. But the vast majority of them did not see it that way. They saw something that they had to do. So when our program came into place, it was to go into the workplace and educate and support and give advice to people on why they needed to do this work. And in fact, the first training workshop topic that we design and put together worth building the business case for diversity and inclusion, because a lot of people did not even understand why they had to do this, they were just doing it because they were told to. But, of course, now we want every organization's to go beyond the building the business case, they just need to do it, because it's the right thing to do. And the organizations will really, really benefit from it. And the people will be happier and all kinds of great benefits for it. But, you know, Lis, your point is important, we need to stick and we need the carrot, we need the combination of both two to systematically move organization to the next level of inclusion. Ideally, we'd like them to be, let's say, level five, but realistically, if you are at a two, we want you to go to the three, if you had a three, we want you to move to four. And it takes a lot of conversation, oftentimes starting with senior leadership, and helping them to understand why does this matter, for your organization, for your team, for your shareholders, for your clients, for corporate sustainability, for the environment, right for so many aspects, and really help

them to look at the big picture, and then say, Okay, now that you understand why this matter for your organization, how we're going to get there. And then really build a diversity and inclusion strategy for your organization. Typically, there are three to five years, leaders have to assign resources to it a budget, and people, not just one token person, but a group of people who are dedicated to the work, build neural networks of employees with, you know, employee resource groups, different dimensions of diversity, who can come together support each other in the workplace, but also a huge part of their their group existence is leveraged their expertise and their experience, so that they can provide recommendation to the organization on the policy changes the practices changes, the cultural changes, the training that's required, and the kind of reporting and accountability that is required for the organization to actually do better and be better. And once you've got leadership resources, and employees on the ground all working together, a lot of organizations I see have movement, they're making progress. And if you want the progress not to die off and disappear, once your inclusive leaders and staff disappear, because of course, there's always turnover in organizations. Before you go, you got to make sure that you embed those changes into your policies and your practices, so that it becomes a part of the DNA of the organization, the operating system of the organization. And the next person who will join the organization will read the policy and say, aha, they do have, you know, a budget for accommodation, they do have training on, you know, accessibility and inclusion and equity in the workplace. And I'm valued, and I'm supported, right? So there is a there is, you know, a system that are things that organizations can do. But it is not a simple solution. Simple solutions tend to fail, because they're not sustainable. And they don't have enough of the critical mass of the people in the organizations to keep it going. So that's what we do at CCDI. We often work with organizations to look at the big picture, and provide all kinds of training materials, resources and advice to hopefully, you know, hopefully be that trusted advisor on their journey to become to becoming more inclusive and more accessible and equitable for.

R

Rob Mineault 54:33

I love it. So speaking of that, if people are interested in learning more about what the organization can offer and look into getting some of these resources, where can they find you online?

A

Anne-Marie Pham 54:48

Yeah, thanks for asking. They can go to our website, which is www.ccdi.ca. And it's a bilingual website. People can check about our various resources. We have two to four webinars available every month on the variety of topics. We have resource kits, guides, we have community of practice events, a mix of virtual events, and in person events where people can come together and talk about specific topics. And we have an annual conference, which is a virtual conference. We just had ours actually earlier this month to talk about our 10 year anniversary, where we've been and the vision for inclusive workplaces in the next 10 years. So check out our website and try to find out more about it and how we might be able to support.

R

Rob Mineault 55:44

Well, I for one, I really want to thank you for not only coming on the show and chatting with us, but also just for all the amazing work that the organization does, do. You know it the fact that

you guys are, you know, 10 years old and have made this much progress, and that we're seeing the progress that we are, I think, are directly correlated to the hard work that organizations like yours do. So thank you very much.

A Anne-Marie Pham 56:11

Thank you very much, Rob. I really appreciate it. And thank you so much to all of you for your time. With me today and for sharing in this very interesting and important conversation that we have had.

R Ryan Fleury 56:25

Stay tuned because I'm working on another employee from CCDI to come and join us. So Anne-Marie, thank Alexander again for helping coordinate this. It's been a pleasure.

A Anne-Marie Pham 56:36

My pleasure. Thank you so much to all of you. And I wish you a really great rest of the evening.

R Rob Mineault 56:42

Absolutely. And don't forget you've you've managed to get an invitation to the anniversary show.

R Ryan Fleury 56:51

Be warned.

L Lis Malone 56:52

Join at your own risk.

A Anne-Marie Pham 56:58

Yeah, if you want to send that over, I'll be happy to see if we can make it.

R Rob Mineault 57:04

Okay, awesome. Anne-Marie, have a great rest your night.

A Anne-Marie Pham 57:07
Thank you. You too.

R Ryan Fleury 57:08
Take care. Thanks. Bye. Bye.

L Lis Malone 57:12
Oh, now we all have to be on our best behavior at the anniversary show.

R Rob Mineault 57:15
No, no, that's impossible. There's drinking involved.

L Lis Malone 57:22
Oh, Anne-Marie, you're gonna be scolding some language. Hey, shush you serial killer.

R Rob Mineault 57:36
No, what a great organization. I was talking to Ryan about this, you know, it's weird, we've been doing this for so long and yet there's all these organizations that we still don't know about that we're still learning about that have been around for years.

R Ryan Fleury 57:48
So well, I guess I think it kind of brings to light like she said, the events that were taking place there. George Floyd, the graves being found, you know, go on and on and on. COVID exposing all the gaps in the systems. You know, all these things have kind of made people start having this conversation. Which is great. Unfortunately, you know, it's taking those events, but we're here, so ..

R Rob Mineault 58:15
Exactly. So anybody who's interested, go check them out. www.ccdi.ca, the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion. Good stuff. Anything else to say about any of that?

R Ryan Fleury 58:32
Nope.

R Rob Mineault 58:33
You sure?

R Ryan Fleury 58:34
Yep. That was good. Great show. Very informativel was impressed.

R Rob Mineault 58:40
Yeah, I loveed hearing the definitions of diversity and inclusion. Because sometimes, you know, you throw those words around without really knowing what they actually what we're actually talking about when we use them. We've said the same thing about accessibility, right? Like we throw around accessibility, but really, really, what does it mean? What's the actual definition? So I was really pleased to hear that she could break it down for us like that, because I thought that was really helpful. Even just for me. So Ryan? Yeah, Rob? Should we let Lis in on her surprise?

R Ryan Fleury 59:14
Probably should soon. She's gonna turn the hockey game on.

R Rob Mineault 59:17
Yeah, that's true.

L Lis Malone 59:19
You don't think have a mute button on my remote?

R Ryan Fleury 59:25
Okay, it's already on it's been.

R Rob Mineault 59:29
Well, okay, I'm gonna let you spring it one her and actually on the audience as well.

L Lis Malone 59:37

It better not be Oreo cookies.

R

Rob Mineault 59:39

Nope, not Oreo cookie related. Okay, Ryan, go ahead.

R

Ryan Fleury 59:43

How am I gonna do this?

R

Rob Mineault 59:46

What has Ryan been working on for a while now, Lis?

R

Ryan Fleury 59:52

Like, well, maybe six months, seven months,

R

Rob Mineault 59:57

And it's not his girlish figure.

L

Lis Malone 59:58

The options are endless. His sense of humor? His charm?

R

Ryan Fleury 1:00:08

What were your first thoughts when I emailed you asking what color your hair was and how tall you were?

L

Lis Malone 1:00:14

That you're getting creepy and stalkerish.

R

Ryan Fleury 1:00:24

Yes, I've never emailed the woman asking her what color her hair is.

L Lis Malone 1:00:36
I thought um this is creepy but okay, I'll play along.

R Ryan Fleury 1:00:50
Well, I have completed your song. 'Glitter and Spangles' is done.

L Lis Malone 1:01:00
Oh my God. Are you messing with me?

R Ryan Fleury 1:01:02
No, it is done. I told told you guys it takes time and I need to get inspired in order to write songs. That's why I don't write one every month because it just has to come to me it has to flow and one day it just finally came and it is now complete.

L Lis Malone 1:01:17
Oh God.

R Ryan Fleury 1:01:18
So should I tell everybody where it is? Rob?

R Rob Mineault 1:01:21
Yeah, let's do it.

R Ryan Fleury 1:01:22
All right. If they want to go on here, glitter and spangles it is at www.whitecanerecords.com.

R Rob Mineault 1:01:30
Okay, so I let you I let you plug White Cane Records. Everybody should go check out www.whitecanerecords.com because you have some very cool music up there.

R Ryan Fleury 1:01:39

Well Rob is up there too. We've had interviews.

R Rob Mineault 1:01:42

Yeah, that's true. But even more so I'm going to do everybody a solid and we're gonna we're gonna play it right here on the podcast, world premiere, Glitter and Spangles.

L Lis Malone 1:01:58

Oh, go ahead!

R Rob Mineault 1:02:02

Yeah, I don't even know I don't even know how to introduce this song. But Ryan, it's took a year to write but anything any other additional information before we we go ahead and play this thing?

R Ryan Fleury 1:02:12

So a friend of the show longtime client of ours Kelly from Saskatchewan did the music bed for it. So thank you to Kelly for that at KJS Productions.

L Lis Malone 1:02:28

Oh my god, you went all out.

R Ryan Fleury 1:02:32

I did. I hired a guy and paid a guy to play music.

R Rob Mineault 1:02:36

Yeah, so that's probably worth 80 bucks of shipping.

L Lis Malone 1:02:42

Wow, this is my Oreos. This is they actually made an impression on you.

R Ryan Fleury 1:02:48

That's right. They did. I just finished them all yesterday.

That's right. They did. I just missed them all yesterday.

R Rob Mineault 1:02:54

Oh, I'm still working on that a lot. I've done nothing for the song so I'm just reaping the benefits of Ryan's hard work and his song and took half the Oreos. Alright, anyways, but before we do that, let's get out of here first. So let's do the outro. Hey, Ryan?

R Ryan Fleury 1:03:20

Yeah, Rob?

R Rob Mineault 1:03:21

Where can people find us?

R Ryan Fleury 1:03:23

They can find me in the guitar dungeon or www.atbanter.com

R Rob Mineault 1:03:28

Hey, they can also drop us a line if they so desire at cowbell@atbanter.com. Lis is just giddy.

L Lis Malone 1:03:38

I'm very giddy for the song. You're making me wait.

R Rob Mineault 1:03:42

Okay, sorry. Well, okay, well then we're -- wait, who's going next?

R Ryan Fleury 1:03:47

Well, the Third Mic is gone. So it's got to be Fourth Mic.

R Rob Mineault 1:03:51

Where else can people find us?



Lis Malone 1:03:54

Well, and to quote the great Steve Barclay. You can find us on those huge social media outlets. I think we're on Twitter and maybe that Facebook and maybe Instagram nonsense and you know banter banter.



Ryan Fleury 1:04:14

Awesome that's a keeper for every outro going forward



Rob Mineault 1:04:18

Yeah, I thought he had stepped into the room.



Lis Malone 1:04:24

Love you Steve!



Rob Mineault 1:04:29

And with that that to it for us this week. Big thanks of course to Anne-Marie for joining us. Oh, all right. Well, without any further ado, let's get to it.