

The Accessible Stall Podcast

Episode 38: The Soft Bigotry of Low Expectations

Emily: Hi, I'm Emily Ladau

Kyle: And I'm Kyle Khachadurian

Emily: And you're listening to another episode of *The Accessible Stall*. What are we gonna talk about today, Kyle?

Kyle: This isn't how it usually goes

Emily: Well, we're switching it up because this one was your idea, so uh, credit where credit is due

Kyle: So today we're talking about the soft bigotry of low expectations

Emily: The what?

Kyle: Didn't you hear me? I said, the soft bigotry of low expectations! That doesn't sound complicated at all, does it?

Emily: Oh, no! Not like we're gonna dissect from every angle for the next forty-five minutes!

Kyle: Surely that would be absurd

(Emily laughs)

Emily: So, what is that? What does it mean?

Kyle: So, in a nutshell it means not expecting a type of disadvantaged people to meet the same standards of behavior, or achievement or whatever you want to call it, that most people are held to by society. And the reason it's called "soft bigotry" is because it's very subtle. And you might think of it as normal even, in some kinds of people. It was coined by a man called Michael Gerson, who is an op-ed columnist for *The Washington Post*. And I totally didn't just look that up, even though I did.

Emily: Thanks Michael Gerson for giving us a podcast topic! Although, I feel like that's a topic that's been talked about with various types of jargon throughout the years, but I like his particular phrasing.

Kyle: Yeah, me too. It was very succinct was to put a name to a concept that I think every disabled person has felt at one point or another.

Emily: I am thinking of maybe a way to try and contextualize it or exemplify it and the thing that keeps coming to mind for me is something we already did a podcast on, but um...sheltered workshops.

Kyle: Right!

Emily: So I think that a lot of what I've been seeing right now being released in the world of journalism is the arguments both for and against sheltered workshops. And a lot of these articles make a point to mention the fact that, you know, somebody's parent will say, "Well at least my child has some form of employment." Or a politician will say, "Well, at least they're able to take on this job opportunity and feel like they're being productive."

Kyle: Yup

Emily: And so, it's just this assumption that we need to keep the man down and we can't let the man reach their full potential because we just assume that it's not possible.

Kyle: Right, which is why it becomes sort of.. normal to do so. Which feeds into the cycle of when people like us speak up about it and say, "Hey! Sheltered workshops are terrible and you should stop that." You do hear those arguments of, "Well hey, at least it's something." But like, even months later after that, that's still not a valid defense. And I think that this exact thing is why.

Emily: It's never going to be a valid defense. I get frustrated. I mean, if you want to talk about the soft bigotry of low expectations from a more colloquial standpoint it's pretty much just uh, you don't believe in a person. You don't believe that someone is capable in achieving some kind of prescribed norm. I mean, basically it's like if you were dating, and you have to settle. That's kind of what you're being told. Low expectations is settling

Kyle: I was thinking more of it like, you don't see this person as a person, you see him or her as less than a person. So you hold them to a totally different, like, "Well oh, they can't do this so it doesn't matter...just let them go." Like how if a disabled person commits a crime they are likely to get off with a lighter sentence because the people feel bad for them. I don't know if that's actually true, but that stereotype. No, wait that is true! Because Oscar Pistorius can shoot his girlfriend four times in the face and you know, walk away.

Emily: I'm not sure that's a great example because there's a huge population of disabled people in prisons, so clearly the whole, "Pipeline to Prison" is a pretty big issue for disabled people. But I think it's true in certain cases that you can use your disability to get off.

Kyle: Okay. Alright...

Emily: But then are we playing into it?

Kyle: Maybe unknowingly. Perhaps prison was a bad example. But anytime someone does something for you because they feel bad, that's exactly what their doing.

Emily: So I guess what I was thinking, in terms of like, "settling." It's not that I think that someone doesn't see me as.. No, let me correct this. Okay. It does mean that someone see me as less than a person, but it also means that they have this particular vision in their head of what they think is "enough" for me. So, example of being that there is always this assumption that I am dating somebody with a disability. And what would this show be without me bringing up my dating life in every episode, so here we go! Um...

Kyle: Drumroll please!

Emily: I, for a very long time wanted nothing to do with dating a wheelchair user, I'm sure this cannot be the first time I've said this in the year plus that we've been doing this podcast

Kyle: No, definitely not

Emily: But then I did end up dating a wheelchair user, and I always had this nagging feeling in the back of my head that I was doing what people expected of me like, "You're never gonna get anyone whose non-disabled so you should just settle for one of your own kind." Um, and I guess sometimes I still feel that way working in the disability field. A little bit like, "Well, you're disabled soa you're just doing what you should be doing, there's really no room for you somewhere else." I don't know. This is silly because I also realize "low expectations" means different things when it comes to different people and different disabilities but (*unintelligible*)

Kyle: Well, but the concept doesn't though. I mean, yes what you're expectations might be according to someone might be more or less than what their expectations of me might be. But the fact that their lower at all is what we're talking about, right? So I mean, you're right I'm not taking that away from you but it's just the concept of having a different standard based on not disability itself, but the thought of what it might be.

Emily: There's just all these assumptions involved

Kyle: Okay so, say that we protest something...

Emily: Right..

Kyle: There's going to be a certain percentage of the population who doesn't even take the protest seriously because we're disabled. And not in the same way that you see a group of people that you disagree with protesting and you might go and say, "Oh, look at them they're acting like babies." That's one thing because at least you're acknowledging what they're doing.

But when a bunch of us get together and protest something, we don't even get that. Except by people who believe in what we're protesting obviously, cause..

Emily: So are you saying it's like the, "Oh how cute! They're doing something!"

Kyle: Yes. Yes, but it's not even... They don't even acknowledge that we're doing anything so much as they acknowledge that we're all out in a pack.

Emily: So then, the soft bigotry of not being taken seriously?

Kyle: Low expectations! Or no expectations in that case. I mean really, like how low can we go, other than nothing?

Emily: Yeah, that's a good point

Kyle: It happens all the time. This is like what a lot of disability activism is rooted in. This concept. A lot of it portrays itself as "Ableism" but I think the reason, or a least a reason that a lot of people don't see, forgive me, are blind to some forms of ableism is because to them it's just

Emily: You can say, "don't recognize."

Kyle: "Don't see," "Don't recognize," "Are blind to," Euphemisms.

Emily: Instead of "Are blind to" "Are blind to" is not a euphemism.

Kyle: You're right, it's a colloquialism

Emily: Anyway

Kyle: But I'm saying, the reason ableism might not be seen by somebody isn't because they're hateful, so much as they might unknowingly have a lower expectation for people with disabilities. So you brought up dating before. On our third episode ever when we talked about sex and disability and dating? We did a whole bit on how we're seen as asexual. Why? Because they don't expect us to be sexual. And we did a whole bit arguing against sheltered workshops. Why are sheltered workshops even a thing? It's because they don't expect us to have jobs.

Emily: There is not a flipside to this but just something I'm thinking about. I think a big issue is you know, functioning labels like when you say someone is "high- functioning" versus "low-functioning" and I hate that. Um, I also think it's worth that acknowledging sometimes we...How do I explain this? Okay. So I'm a very able disabled person in a lot of ways.

Kyle: Ah, there you go! Aw, this is getting weird

Emily: And so, every time I advocate I find it paradoxical that I'm sitting here saying things about how I don't want you to treat someone as less fortunate than you, or as less of a person than you but do I somehow have that same complex? When it comes to someone who is maybe

physically cognitively able to do less than I am. So how do we talk about this problem of “the soft bigotry of low expectations” without also being ableist ourselves and putting down people who truly might not be able to do something like hold down a full time job

Kyle: I think exceptions would have to be made. I mean, you could make the same argument that you can't talk about something like privilege without undermining those women without it at the same time. That's not true. And I think the same can be said with ableism. I think there's a difference between having a discussion which may inadvertently perpetuate the thing that you're talking about by virtue of talking about it. It's still worth talking about if your end goal is to make it go away or least recognize how you yourself do it. But you're absolutely right in that it's a very, very interesting problem when you you know, *could* be advocating for against something that *could* in some form for some disabled person less able than you, might benefit from. But, as someone who's also pretty “Abley Disabled” I don't know. I don't know. I mean, that would suggest that we were incorrect in what we said about sheltered workshops a little bit. And I don't think we are at all.

Emily: What do you mean?

Kyle: Well I mean to say, so say we are completely ignorant of some form of ableism that we don't know that we even do because we are, like you said, more, “Abley Disabled.” So what if for somebody who isn't in sheltered workshops. In some capacity.... I'm making this up...do pose a benefit? And we're over here on a much higher plane of privilege, and reach by the way, because we have people who listen to us, saying that the thing that they like in this situation, is the worst thing ever. Are we doing something wrong? I would say no.

Emily: No because, I think my argument about what sheltered workshops comes down to is that you know, I'm not looking for disabled people to be out of a job or be taken away from something that they feel that they're good at. So if, working in a factory type setting for example is something that matches your skill set, I don't want to take that away from you but I don't want to make sure that you're being given an opportunity to make sure that that is your, A, fullest potential, and B, you're being paid a fair wage for it, and C, that you're not isolated while doing it. So you know, sheltered workshops are often peacework, that's what they are. And plenty of other factories are peacework and those people don't have disabilities and get paid minimum wage so...

Kyle: No, I agree with you. I'm like completely with you. What I'm saying, that was just an easy example but I guess you can't really prevent yourself from that. Because no matter how aware you are of your position in a social hierarchy, you're going to exist there, no matter how aware of it you are. That's where you're gonna be. Like, you can't do anything to really make it a lot higher or lower than what it is except you know, going bankrupt or winning the lottery or something like that. So I don't think it's like a reach to say that you might be perpetuating ableism because your less..or you might be more “Abley Disabled.” I don't... I would never say that to you. I wouldn't say, “Oh Emily, you know this activism you do is so great but have you

considered what you do might be harmful to someone with a different set of disabilities?" Like that to me is absurd, I would never, ever say that.

Emily: See, but I have considered that because I only know my own experience so you know...

Kyle: Well who's other experience can you know though? That's what I mean like, you can't know someone else's experience no matter how hard you try.

Emily: Well, here's a perfect example, so I always think about the discussions around employment where it's like, "Disabled people can work and we want to work!" I wrote this as a line in a project that I was working on recently and I struggled with it for awhile because there are many disabled people people who truly are unable to work. And I don't think that that makes them a less valuable human being. So it's kind of like how do I avoid generalizing and fight against low expectations, but also recognize that everyone varying abilities I guess.

Kyle: Because you're not tackling those people in the article that you were writing. You were talking about the vast majority of people with disabilities who can and do want to work but aren't because of things like ableism in the hiring process or lack of transportation to and from a job or stuff like that. That's an entirely differently sub-issue of the employment issue. I mean, I hear you, it's a very good point. What I think is.. I guess it comes to a point where if you try to consider every sort of angle to every sort of problem that you ever sort of wanted to solve, you're not gonna solve anything.

Emily: Oh sure, you're gonna spin yourself outta control.

Kyle: Yeah cause I mean you could go even further. You could be like, "Well this is being published on the internet and you know there are a lot of people who are blind and have low vision who can't afford a screen reader and Hey, there might be people in the United States without access to the internet and they can't read my article and become empowered" I mean, you could go down that rabbit hole forever, and it's all true, but I don't think that lessens the point that you're trying to make in this particular instance. But, it's always good to be cognizant of it of course"

Emily: It's a rabbit hole for sure. And I'm always trying to be conscious of how I talk about anything where a broad generalization is easy to do. Which I guess is most of disability activism because "disability" is like the world's broadest term.

Kyle: Yeah, that's true. I mean, still though you see this sort of...The soft bigotry comes in the form of good intentions too, you know? It's the thing we always come back to more than your dating life. "Can I help you with that?"

(Emily chuckles)

Emily: I am actually surprised that it's taken me this long to bring up the major thing that people should do to avoid low expectations. And that is to "presume competence." That's a big phrase thrown around in the disability community but it essentially just means that you should look at

every individual as having endless and infinite capabilities and then it's up to that individual to show you what they can and cannot do. I guess would be the way to say it. Because I was originally gonna be like, "Oh everyone is capable of doing certain normal things!" but like that's a whole Pandora's Box.

Kyle: Well it's also not true, that's the entire point

Emily: Yeah

Kyle: Well I mean, you could simplify that though, you could just say, "Treat every disabled person you meet like any other person you meet, until they give you a reason to treat them differently." The same with any other person! Disability is irrelevant Treat everyone the same, period, until something happens that suggests to you that you can't.

Emily: "Presume Competence" is like the disability community's version of "The Golden Rule" basically.

Kyle: Yeah, no that's...we should actually say that when we write up the summary for this because it's true! It's so funny because...It's not funny, "Haha funny" but it's...so many people don't do it, and yet for me, and this is coming from a place of being disabled so I understand like, this isn't "normal." But for me it's a lot harder to assume incompetence. You know what I mean? Like I have to like, make an effort to assume somebody is like, "less than." I don't know why. And yet, if you're able-bodied it seems to be the exact opposite when you meet a disabled person. Cause when I meet a disabled person I don't care. I talk to them like anybody!

Emily: I guess I'm so quick to be like, "Oh everyone can do whatever, and I'm not here to assume people's incompetencies!" But sometimes I actually find myself like not jumping to offer help or not actually providing help when it's asked of me, and I'm like, "Are you sure you can't do it?"

Kyle: And yet, is that inadvertently doing the thing that you specifically tried to avoid, by not doing it? So you're assuming too much if they need help. Where if an able-bodied person dropped something within your reach you may just pick it up without thinking about it. But if you saw a disabled person do that, and you don't want them to think that you're helping them specifically cause they're disabled, but because they dropped something, you might not immediately pick it up. Nah, I'm just messing with you. But that type of thought, I'm pretty sure has gone through your head, Because it goes through mine all the time. (*chuckles*) It does!

Emily: 100%. Although to be fair, if we're talking about your specific example, I can't pick things up. (*laughs*)

Kyle: Yeah, I don't know why I said that. I do that.

Emily: Like, it depends on how low to the ground I am (*chuckles*)

Kyle: I actually, the way that I was envisioning that as I said it was like you like catching something out of thin air. Which is actually a bigger joke than you reaching to the ground and getting something.

Emily: It's to the point where..this is an aside... I take a kitchen tong, like salad tongs with me when I travel, like in my suitcase because I can't reach anything! I've also in very desperate moments like called up for help from like the front desk. And if it's not urgent I'll just wait and have the cleaning service pick it up for me *(laughs)*

Kyle: Got it. That is like, that's amazing. In talking about this we should probably do an episode on weird sh*t that disabled people do to remain as independent as possible.

Emily: I was also thinking, weird things we do when we travel

Kyle: Oh yeah, totally.

Emily: Have we talked about this before? Because..

Kyle: No. But traveling, interestingly enough, is an example where low expectations shines through like nothing else!

Emily: Oh my God, you're so right

Kyle: So, for the next twenty-five minutes, let's talk about what it's like to be disabled while traveling!

Emily: *Especially* when you're visibly disabled. Holy. Moly. The amount of offers I get to like, assist me with my suitcase or whatever. And part of me just tries to tell myself like, people think that they are being nice or whatever but um it's just like how do you think I got here with my suitcase? And then they're like, "How are you gonna roll that next to you?" Watch me!

(Kyle laughs)

Emily: Are you kidding? I'm clearly doing it! I'm here! I'm at the train station, I'm at the airport, I'm already en route.

Kyle: Low expectations

Emily: I will never forget, there is a CEO of a certain "disability organization" who I do not like at all, and she'll probably find a way to sue me if I mention her name so I'm not going to.

Kyle: I'll bleep it out even if you did. Don't worry, go ahead don't shy away!

Emily: Well, I'm not going to so I'll let people come to their own conclusions. So this delightful human being said when I posted a Facebook status about people's endless insistence about trying to help me with my luggage when I am just trying to go about my merry way, she said, "Oh it could just be because you're a woman. And men like to help pretty women"

Kyle: Oh my God!

Emily: And I was like, "I'm like doubly offended. You just offended me because I'm a woman *and* you discounted my experiences as a disabled person?"

(Kyle laughs)

Kyle: Dude, I can't. I can't even. I'm not the type to get offended at stuff like that. You know that. You know that more than anyone else that's hearing this right now. But my God, that's bad!
(laughs) That's really bad!

Emily: Yeah I was like, "So you just justified ableism with sexism" I was like, "No!"

Kyle: Cool! *(laughs)* No but before we go into how awful that was, I just wanted to point out like I don't think those people are being...Okay some of them are. Some of them are. In fact, I'll even say most of them are. But the fact of the matter is, if those people help you in the exact same situation that they wouldn't help someone else? They're not being nice, they're assuming you can't do something, they have low expectations of you, they're presuming incompetence. No having said that, if, and there's no way you could know this, right? But if this person was the kind of person to offer help to anyone that they ever saw drop something, then okay. Then that's not who I'm talking to.

Emily: But there's a really good barometer for this which is, there's a relatively good chance that I'm not going to be the only woman around but I am gonna be the only disabled person around.

Kyle: Yeah word! Seriously, you're totally right.

Emily: So it's pretty easy for me to determine if someone offers me help and I say no, are they gonna go right to the next person behind me and offer help. If they do, which has literally never happened in my life, than they are just a very helpful person and I'm good with that!

Kyle: Well, I'm assuming that they look like they needed help though. And that's the other thing. But that is sort of a different thing, right? Cause like, I don't think you look like you need help cause I know you

Emily: But sometimes I kinda do look like I need help. But those are never the times when I'm offered help! My goodness, how many times can we talk about help on this podcast? *(laughs)*

Kyle: Well, it's just...I think this concept, this is gonna take like more than one episode to like really get to, and we should probably do a part two of this at some point, but I think a lot of what we do in dare I say, every episode that we've ever done, stems from this concept. Where a lot of your "everyday ableism" stems from the fact that people don't expect fu*k*ng anything from us. To the point where they're amazed that we do things like shop.

Emily: That's very frustrating to me. And I actually edited a pretty interesting blog post for my position as Editor-in-Chief of *The Rooted in Rights Blog*, *(all italicized??)* and I swear this is

not an intentional plug, it just happens to be relevant. It was recently “The Americans With Disabilities Act,” Anniversary (*italics or quotes here??*) and a contributor named Heather Watkins wrote a post, and she made the argument that there’s this cyclical issue that disabled people have because when places are inaccessible, we can’t get there. And so we’re often forced to be hidden from the public view because of inaccessibility. So then when places are accessible and we are seen out, it somehow contributes to this shocking nature of us just being out and about living our lives. Because it’s like, “You can do that?”

Kyle: And it’s never, to your point, It’s never, “ Oh my God, look they did it because there’s a giant staircase and the place is upstairs” It’s always, “Look at them, they’re all together, and they’re here, what a good time they must be having!” You know what I mean? It would be one thing if they were suprised if you were out like there’s some literal obstacle that you all overcame. Like, “Wow, how do you do that, look at them!” But it never is. Because that’s ridiculous. It’s just always, “Oh look there’s two of them.”

Emily: The comments definitely tend to be different when I’m alone versus when I’m with another disabled person. But either way, I get so frustrated by again, soft bigotry of low expectations. I hate just saying the whole thing missions of times but it’s so accurate! Perfect example, I will be in v the middle of the parking lot getting in or out of my car and somebody will come over and say, “Do you need help?” and I always just say no thank you. But what I really want to say is, “Do you think that somebody would have given a driver’s license and let me buy a car if I couldn’t get from from Point A to Point B by myself, and get in and out of the car by myself? Like, I’m literally doing the same thing that everybody else does when they drive their cars which is, leave wherever they are, get in their car, and drive to someplace else and yet, that very simple thought process does not got through people’s heads. It’s like, they still have low expectations, even though that I do the exact same thing that they do.

Kyle: That’s how low they are. Just because you look a little differently doing it. It be one thing if you had like, three very heavy grocery bags on your lap while doing it, ok yeah then maybe

Emily: Oh my gosh, then please offer help!

Kyle: But it never is

Emily: No

Kyle: It’s just literally you getting into and out of your car like anyone else. And that’s a great example Emily. That’s a wonderful example because that’s just...all of it.

Emily: And do you know how often this has happens to me? Like this is not the first time I’ve complained to you about this.

Kyle: Tell me! Well it is on the show so now other people can hear.

Emily: Yeah. It had to be, I would say...so I don't drive too frequently just because I don't really work outside my house, so I just kind of run errands and things like that so I would say an average of once every five car trips. The last time it happened to me was like two weeks ago.

Kyle: That's 20%

Emily: Yeah, if we were being statistical here, yeah. So, I was at Starbucks and I had just gotten myself a drink. Now mind you, I don't mind if someone's like gonna open the door for me at Starbucks? That's fine, whatever. You wanna get up and hold the door for me? Fine. But then you know, I was going to my car and this woman was like right behind me and she saw me like, roll up my ramp. And she was like, "Do you need help?" and of course I said no thank you. But, there wa nothing about what I was doing that indicated that I needed help. And holy moly, I already got out of my car and had Starbucks. So, I clearly got out because I had a full beverage cup in my hand. Not even in my hand, it was in my cup holder. I have a little cup holder on my wheelchair. Very convenient! I think every human being should come with a cup holder.

Kyle: I agree. You know this happens when I'm with my friend, Roy. Who I know you know so I don't know why I said that to you.

Emily: Well the rest of our listeners don't know

Kyle: Well yeah, the rest of the listeners don't know

Emily: Well, except for his girlfriend.

Kyle: Yeah, who listens. Hi Amanda!

(Emily chuckles)

Kyle: No, so..when I'm out with him, he has no arms, and he smokes, right? And he can do it. He can take the match out of the matchbook and light it, all with his feet. And yes, yes it is a circus. It's cool to me to see. But it's *amazing* for everyone else to see. But sometimes when we're out, I do it because it's just easier for me to do it for him. And I don't mind cause he's my best friend, whatever. But the looks that people give me, when they see me "feed" him a cigarette, give him one and light it, the looks that they give me, as if this poor human being can't possibly smoke, I'm a monster...I'm doing this to him. He doesn't want to smoke, I'm the one making him moke. That's the look. That's the low expectation.

Emily: Or...because his disability is visible, is it possible that people are thinking, "Oh my god there's already so much wrong why is he smoking?"

Kyle: Perhaps. But that's not much better.

Emily: Like, "How could somebody so fragile be smoking?" Oh no I'm not saying it's better. It's kind of like um, if I have a drink. Which I really don't drink. But...

Kyle: Oh yeah, no that's the other thing! That's a good example. Has that happened to you?

Emily: Not really, but I really just think that's because of the way that I communicate. I'm like super assertive so I don't leave time for you to question me. And me having a drink requires some form of communication, whereas me getting in my car is just a person watching me. So...but I've definitely had some interesting looks when it's a girl in a wheelchair at the bar.

Kyle: Yeah but, okay so that's an interesting situation, right? And so is the car one now that I'm thinking about it although that is also the perfect example. There's a difference between staring and actively asserting that you wanna help. Cause like, the stare could easily just be, "Oh there's something you don't see everyday." And okay that's rude, right? But I wouldn't call that ableist, really. Like everyone stares at things they don't see everyday. And to them it might be a disabled person. And okay yeah, that's a little screwed up, sure. But we've all been somebody's thing to stare at for the day.

Emily: But that goes back to the blog post that I was talking about. It's like we are still so shocking to people. The visual of a disabled person out in public is still so shocking because of all the barriers put in our way to get there.

Kyle: No you're right, you're right. You're absolutely right.

Emily: I mean, something as simple as..I have a wheelchair that you know raises up and down, like it has a seat elevator. My power wheelchair, it's an absolute Godsend. It's my favorite piece of technology. And To be quite honest with you, I really don't care when people comment on that in particular because it's not everyday that you see someone in a wheelchair that's a foot higher than it usually is, grabbing something off the top shelf in a grocery store. So if you want to comment on that like, that's fine. Um, I'd rather you didn't but whatever, I'll pick my battles. But the point is, if I raise it and then roll up to a high-top table or a high bar or something like that, it's suddenly this very weird feeling that I get like I'm somewhere that I'm not really supposed to be. Like I'm cheating the system. Like, I have low expectations for myself.

Kyle: Yeah but the reason you have them though...that..I don't usually blame society for things, in fact, it's like the thing I try to do the least because I think that in many cases it's quite frankly, a cop out. But I really do think that this type of ableism in this form, feeds into itself in that exact way. That's precisely how it does that. And we're coming up on "Final Takeaways" time and somehow I don't have any way at all to wrap this up. I don't know where you even *begin* to throw the wrench in that, That is a cycle that like, I'm not gonna say has to repeat cause it doesn't, there's no reason this even has to be a thing. But you know it's a tough, "Well how do we get society to recognize an entire group of people as more than nothing." (*chuckles*) It's like, "Well. First..."

Emily: It's gotta be a one person at a time thing because I'm not sure how else to tackle it. But the other thing is, it's so different when we're sitting here recording the podcast versus how I react to things. So, when the offers of help come in I don't say, "Ugh, screw you, like how the

hell do you think I got here?" I'm just like, "No thank you, have a good day!" And uh, did I educate that person? No.

Kyle: Yeah but as much as I love it to be a teachable moment man, I get it, sometimes you just want to go home. So I mean like, what can you do? That's a weird give and take, that's certainly a balancing act. You know, if I can't say "blind to ableism" I really shouldn't also say, "balancing act" because that one's me. I can't do any balancing acts!

Emily: He really can't balance. He really cannot.

Kyle: Yeah, the fact that I can walk at all. I'm not really one for miracles, but if there is one, that's it.

Emily: Yeah

Kyle: Oh, man.

Emily: Miracles. That's a...that's a beautiful thing. I don't think we're ever gonna come up with an answer for this situation because it requires more than a law, it requires more than a couple people changing their attitudes, it's like a massive paradigm shift that we've just not achieved yet.

Kyle: Yeah, I agree. It's just gonna take one of those...you're gonna need like a cultural fault line to break, you know?

Emily: Seriously. You know those signs in an office where it's like, "Days Without Injury?" I seriously want a sign that says, "Days Without Being Offered Assistance I Didn't Need!"

Kyle: Aw man, we should do that on our social media

Emily: Cause I don't think I would get much further than a week quite honestly.

Kyle: I was gonna say that! I was gonna say that exact thing. I was gonna say that I think the highest you'll ever get is a week.

Emily: I mean, and it would probably be different if I left my house every single day but there are days where I don't leave my house because I work from home. You know, so there are days when I don't have to interact with too many people.

Kyle: #HumbleBrag

(Emily laughs)

Kyle: No, I'm just messing with you

Emily: Jealous?

Kyle: Yes

Emily: You work from home sometimes too, don't even!

Kyle: I work from home forty percent of the time. No.. Wait, I can't percent. Yes! Forty percent of the time!

(Both laugh)

Emily: I would probably say it's like seventy-five, eighty for me. Because you know, and I travel. Like, when I'm gone I'm really gone, like I'm not just gone for the day. Um...but again, that's a thing I can do whenever so...

Kyle: #Privilege

Emily: Do we have final takeaways?

Kyle: Um, I think that your, "It won't just take a village" is a good one. I really do. That would be sort of what I was saying too like, this is a huge problem that quite frankly, doesn't only apply to disability. Like, this applies to many, many groups of marginalized people. So if you can figure out how to solve it, consider yourself the receiver of like, the chairperson of every Sociology department of every university in the country and perhaps maybe the world.

Emily: And like, The Nobel Peace Prize *(laughs)*

Kyle: For real, it's up there man.

Emily: I guess my final takeaway is that this is going to keep being a problem, and I'm tired of just letting it roll off my shoulders, so I consciously try to take action when I can. But I also think it's important to know that just because people have low expectations of you does not mean that you always have to feel pressured to combat those expectations.

Kyle: Nor does it mean that you should feel pressure to succumb to them, either. You know, it works both ways. Just because someone tells you you can't do anything doesn't mean you have to like, make it so

Emily: Yeah. You are not ever obligated to prove yourself and you should definitely not ever feel like you have to sink under the weight of someone's low expectations.

Kyle: #Wholesome. And on that note, that's been another episode of *The Accessible Stall*. I'm Kyle..

Emily: Thanks for listening! Oh, wait, I didn't say who I was. Who am I?

Kyle: You're Emily I think.

Emily: I am Emily. Can confirm

Kyle: I'm Kyle, allegedly.

Emily: He is, I'm looking right at him.

Kyle: Goodnight everybody

Emily: Thanks for listening!

Kyle: Bye-bye!

Emily: Bye!