

[music]

Emily: Hi. I'm Emily Ladau.

Kyle: And I'm Kyle Khachadurian.

Emily: And you're listening to another episode of *The Accessible Stall*.

Kyle: What are we going to talk about today, Emily?

Emily: We are going to talk about tokenizing disabled people.

Kyle: What is that, Emily?

Emily: So it's when there's like one disabled person in a room-

Kyle: Yeah.

Emily: -full of non-disabled people-

Kyle: Uh-huh.

Emily: -and you're like-

Kyle: Uh-huh.

Emily: -"Hey, disabled-

Kyle: Hey.

Emily: "-person."

Kyle: I get--yeah.

Emily: "We're gonna ask you a bunch of questions about your experiences-"

Kyle: Uh-huh. Mm-hmm.

Emily: "-to make you feel uncomfortable."

Kyle: Great.

Emily: I don't know. You can explain it.

Kyle: No, that was the best example ever. I can't even explain it. The best way I can explain it is to ask nobody that I'm actually talking to if they've ever seen *South Park* because the character token on that show is black. He plays the token black character. It's basically when you include a certain minority for the sake of doing so.

Usually, when it comes to disability [sic], it comes in the form of people knowing one of us. Therefore, because they know us, they can speak on behalf of the community or speak on behalf of us or claim to know how things are. Stuff like that. Whether that's true or not, usually depends on how well they know the person they know more than anything else, but this episode is going to primarily focus on the situations when that sort of thing goes way over the top.

Emily: There are lots of different instances. I mean, we were definitely talking about two different immersions of tokenization just now. I was talking about when you're the token disabled person in that you're expected to represent the entire spectrum of the disability community, which is literally impossible.

One person can't represent more than one person. Then, there's the flipside of that, which is that you're tokenizing someone just to say that you included them. I don't know if 'flipside' is the right word but-

Kyle: No-no, just the different-

Emily: -it's a different kind. There's more than one way to tokenize someone. If I may, I went to a conference today where I very much felt that disability [sic] was [sic] tokenized, if acknowledged at all. It was a conference on inclusion and diversity in the tech world. I just felt like, "Oh, a couple of token disabled people slapped in here for good measure."

Disability was [sic] an afterthought and I feel like that goes for so many minorities, if it's safe for me to say that. Tokenization is a real problem.

Kyle: I have a question. This is more food for thought than anything else. I'm not trying to get you to actually answer, but when does it stop being tokenization and when does it become inclusion? Obviously, if you can argue that it becomes inclusion when the focus changes to disability, but you're talking about your conference that you were at today. It was a conference about inclusion in general.

In that case, what could've been done for those handful [sic] of disabled people in the room for you not to think, "Oh, we're just the token disabled guys."

Emily: I think it's very situation and context dependent because at something that's focused on diversity and inclusion, I would expect to feel more like one of the group and less like, "Representing my minority over here." Do you know what I mean?

Kyle: Yes, but how can you--it's sort of a double-edged sword, isn't it?

Emily: What do you mean?

Kyle: In a weird, roundabout way? Let's say--I don't know how you were selected. You paid to go, right? You weren't invited or were you?

Emily: I was invited to go, but I wasn't speaking or anything. I was just there.

Kyle: It doesn't matter. Let's say that you went and let's say that you were the only person there with a disability. Wouldn't it be on [sic] your best interest, and on [sic] the best interest of the community to be the best-disabled person you can be? Yes, that's still tokenization. Of course it is. I'm not saying that it's not. What I am saying is it becomes sort of this pressure to be the best because you know that's what the people around you expect you to be.

Emily: Sure, but it's not even so much because of expectations. For me, it's just because I don't want to leave a bad taste in anyone's mouth. I worry about that with almost every interaction. As much as no one person can represent an entire minority group, if I have a negative interaction with one particular person who doesn't really know very much about me, and it's just a random encounter, they're going to take that with them.

Sort of associate that negativity with anyone who has a visible disability. I know that's a leap, but do you know what I mean?

Kyle: No, I don't think it is at all. I think that's actually a very healthy attitude to have as an activist. I know that's going to get a lot of people angry. I really do mean that because like it or not, even if you don't represent the entire community, and nobody does. Everyone only represents themselves. There are some people that like to believe they represent their group, but they don't. That doesn't mean that that's not how other people will perceive them.

It's really not that much of a stretch, I think, to feel the pressure to perform the best or indeed interact the best with people knowing that that's a possibility. I don't think you necessarily should have to. I do think that it's good too. I think that that's quite the healthy attitude, whether or not it's because of pressure or because of genuine interest to do so. I think as long as you're doing it.

The same thing could be said for positive impacts, right? If you have a positive impact on somebody, you're doing that on purpose, pressure notwithstanding so that they don't have a negative view of disabled people. I think that's very good.

Emily: This is also a personal thing, too. Whether or not I am concerned about representing the disability community as a whole, which I do not delude myself into thinking that's ever the case. What I do think about on a more personal note, and I guess this is varying away from tokenization a little bit, but we can bring it all back.

So whenever I go somewhere, I'm always very focused on putting my best foot forward, or best wheel forward? [laughs]

Kyle: You can't.

Emily: [laughs]

Kyle: Your wheels stay in one place. Don't worry. We follow. I follow.

Emily: Okay, best something forward. That comes in the form of always trying to dress presentably and always trying to be on my A-game in terms of being very social and outgoing and friendly. I'd never want anyone to think that somehow my disability just makes me this miserable human being. I go out of my way sometimes to make sure I always have a good face on in public.

Kyle: I always--I really do believe that the best way to counter stereotypes is to be the best version of yourself that you can be. Let people meeting you realize that their stereotypes of your group, whatever it is, was wrong. If that means that you always have to go out with the most best version of yourself out there, in a way, so what? Of course, you shouldn't have to. That shouldn't be expected of you. It's horrible that you have put that on yourself because of what you believe to be societal constraints. I get that, and I don't disagree. What I do think is that's still a good thing. While I'm not saying that tokenization and having to put your best foot forward is good in a sense that it's forced upon you, I think that either way that it gets about being done, it still ends up doing a good thing. It's really roundabout. I'm sorry if I'm not making sense.

Emily: No, you are and I think the other thing is in the sense that we're talking about it right now, I'm not really sure if it's a good or bad thing. It's just sort of how I've become. I also don't know

if it has anything to do with tokenization of disability as a whole or if it has something to do with how people perceive me. In an effort to try to stop people from pushing their negative assumptions about disability on me, I put my best foot--wheel forward.

Kyle: I still think that that's a good thing.

Emily: No, it is, but interesting to think about. Sometimes it's exhausting always feeling like I want to be on my A-game-

Kyle: Absolutely.

Emily: -just because I don't want people to underestimate me because they see that I'm happening to be using a wheelchair.

Kyle: I completely understand that. Not the using a wheelchair part. The pressure of needing to be your best self when you're out and about in public is one that I'm sure transcends the disability borders. Tokenization as a concept is fairly interesting for us. You've been somebody's first disabled friend before, haven't you?

Emily: Sure. Absolutely.

Kyle: I don't know about you. For me, it's those first moments when they will learn that you're different. It's a little different for me because I can pretend to hide it for five minutes.

Emily: You look at me and you know.

Kyle: Still, that first glance, that first "O-OK" is my favorite thing.

Emily: What's that like?

Kyle: It's like guilty pleasure.

Emily: I don't get that.

Kyle: It's the best. I sincerely mean that. It's happened so many different ways. My favorite way was I had a drama class in college and some guy named Robert. After class, he looked me right in the eye. This was after weeks and we'd become the kind of classmates that you're friends with because you talk to them because you're forced to sit next to them. Not real friends-

Emily: Right.

Kyle: -but sort of classmate friends and he was just like, "So what's wrong with your legs?". I was just like, "Huh, ok."

[laughing]

[crosstalk]

Emily: [unintelligible 0:10:36]

Kyle: I couldn't even call him rude. It wasn't rude. He asked a question. He asked it in the most blunt way possible. I said--we used to hang out with me and this other--us, me, him, and one other guy. I said, "Look. If you really want to know I'll tell you." He did. He really wanted to know. I used that time to tell him about CP at the end of the day. He was like, "Oh. That's really interesting." That was that. It was great.

Emily: Were you friends with him afterwards?

Kyle: Absolutely.

Emily: See, that's as blunt as he was, but sort of puts a positive spin on things.

Kyle: Yeah. My second favorite time was with a friend of mine, where I outed myself. We were going to lunch and we were climbing a staircase. He looked at me and he said, "Oh if I'm walking too fast, you can let me know." I thought that was his way of telling me that, "Hey. I noticed you walk differently, and I'm gonna try to tell you I know without being too obvious about it." I was like, "No worries, man. I'll tell you." I'm thinking, "Oh. It's because he noticed I am CP." I explained it. I was like, "Oh, I have CP. I walk slow, so you're not actually walking fast." He said, "No. People tell me I walk fast all the time and I say that to everybody." I was like, "Oh." It was the first time where I let the disability card out first. It was like this weird--I pulled the blanket off of myself. It was just this very strange moment.

Emily: The only time I ever have experiences like that are if I somehow connect with someone online. At this point, my entire online presence is centered on disabilities, so there ain't no hiding it.

Kyle: Yeah, you can't hide it even then. Even he--everyone when they meet the disabled person has--they love to play 20 questions. Depending on the mood that people like us are in, we're more than happy to play 20 answers. He was very, very straightforward. Very, very blunt. That's all the stereotypical questions that everyone always asks us.

Emily: Okay. I don't always want to play 20 answers.

Kyle: No. Of course you don't. What I'm saying is whether or not I do doesn't--I feel for most people with disabilities. It tends to stem from how well you know the person vs. how the question was asked. I'm not like that. For me, I don't care about either of those things. As long as it feels genuine and if it does I'm more than happy to answer your 20 questions. I did and we

were friends ever since then. The way I think if it is if I'm going to be someone's first disabled friend, I'm going to make them think about disability differently. I don't wanna say better or worse like I'm the sole arbiter on what's best and worst for disability. Certainly differently.

Emily: While I don't have the whole letting the disability cat out of the bag thing, I definitely have been being someone's disabled friend and that being an 'interesting experience' kind of thing.

Kyle: I'd like to hear yours because that's a thing that you just don't know how to deal with.

Emily: Basically something that always stands out in my mind is when I was little, I would say third grade-ish. Maybe. Could it have been? I was all excited waiting to go trick or treating with some of my friends. Waiting, and waiting, and waiting. The phone never rang. I asked them about it at school the next day and somehow unearthed it in elementary school fashion that my friends had gone trick or treating without me. It's hazy. Generally, the situation was that they were a little bit embarrassed to go trick or treating with me. I used a wheelchair. I can't climb all the steps to get the candy from the houses. Blah, blah, blah. We were young. I was really hurt. I was really upset. I think about that from where I am in life now. One of the people who had excluded me from that particular trick or treating situation years later wrote about me for a school assignment. She's still one of my very, very close friends to this day. We read a book about someone who was nondisabled being friends with someone who is disabled. It's called *A Prayer for Owen Meany* by John Irving, in case anyone's read that very obscure book.

The character Owen has a disability, and one of our assignments for English class was to write about an experience that you can relate to. The relationship between Owen with the disability

and his friend. Long story short, because this is getting long winded was that my friend all those years later reflected on leaving me out and how she shouldn't have done that. How much she's benefited from having me as a friend and how I've opened her eyes to think. On the one hand, I was like the token disabled friend. On the other hand, I feel like I kind of contributed to making her a better person.

Kyle: Right. That's what I'm saying. Tokenization is bad, but there are ways in which in which it can be good. If you want to think of it that way. Not that tokenization itself can be good. I'm pretty sure I could generally say that's always bad. If you're doing something just because and not for any real want or need, then it's probably not good. If you're going to do it there are ways to make the best out of a situation like that I think that that is a prime example of exactly how to do that. I think the fact that you both remembered it enough to even share that story is a testament to how much that moment meant in both of your lives.

Emily: I had absolutely no idea she was even writing this thing until she showed me her notebook one day. She was like, "Yeah. Look what I wrote about." I was like, "Oh. The time that you completely ignored me and broke my heart on Halloween." It stung at the time. Somehow, I think we grew from it. Both of us.

Kyle: Right. I think that I don't fancy myself an activist. I really don't. We did a whole thing on that. I think the best way you can be one is educating people. If you can educate people simply by being yourself, and just being without actually stepping onto a soapbox and pedestal or rolling onto one, if you will, that's the best way to do it. All you're doing is you're saying, "Hello. I'm here this is how I do life." If somebody benefits from it, then good.

Emily: I think we talked about this. I have a recollection of us talking about this at some point about being a teachable moment or being somebody else's teachable moment.

Kyle: That was both in our help episode and in one of our graveyard episodes. We talked about this exact thing and we talked about how exhausting it was or can be, but how in general if you know you're willing to do it, it's probably okay. I think that one of biggest pressures of a disabled person is the feeling that you have to be that. I don't feel like I have to be that. You might. You don't get to hide it. However on the flip side, unlike most people with disabilities or disabled people, if you prefer, I love to be that whereas most disabled people with parking spots and disabilities don't.

Emily: You are such an enigma, because you-

Kyle: I know. Isn't it funny?

Emily: -you completely don't wanna be labeled as an activist, yet you have the exact 'educate everyone-

[crosstalk]

Kyle: [unintelligible 0:18:07]

Emily: -behavior'.

Kyle: No, but see on the flip side everyone who labels and sells--most people who label themselves as an activist say that it's not my job to educate you. I'm saying, "No. It absolutely is. Just not all the time." It absolutely is. I think that no raindrop feels responsible for the flood, but I think we should all be raindrops every once in a while-

[crosstalk]

Emily: Oh. That's [unintelligible 0:18:26] raindrops.

[crosstalk]

Emily: That's beautiful.

Kyle: -instead of expecting the flood to just peer out of the ether. I'm serious.

Emily: Now what actually--are you making a metaphor [pause 0:18:35] for right now?

[crosstalk]

Kyle: I'm saying that the difference between "It's not my job to educate you and "Sure, I'll tell you what's up." is--the argument is, "Look. This world isn't built for me and it wasn't my fault I was born this way, and therefore, it shouldn't be my responsibility to help you change it." Sure. That's valid, but at the same time, I know this world isn't built for me. If my little tiny way of changing it is letting you know that I exist and helping you see that not everyone does everything exactly the same--and by the way, this is coming from somebody who does 99% of things exactly the same. To me, that's my own little raindrop in my flood metaphor. I think instead of everyone building a dam, we should all be little raindrops. Maybe someday we'll get a bunch of change done. Perhaps in my lifetime hopefully.

Emily: Now that I just took the metaphorical shower-[laughs]

Kyle: How deep does this go? We got 18 minutes left, guys.

Emily: [laughs]

Kyle: Let's see how long we can stretch this one.

Emily: I'll let you keep running with your water metaphor. I'm going to talk about another thing related to the conference that I was at today. Someone raised their hand and said something about how they aren't really sure how to communicate with someone who is a veteran or someone who has a disability. I think they were a--

Kyle: Wait a second, wait a second. Those things are different.

Emily: No, but listen. My urge was--first I was like, "What the heck. How are you even a recruitment person?". Then, I thought about it some more. My urge was to go find the person and be like, "Hi, I wanna help you."

Kyle: This is how you do it. I really do understand the hesitation. If their preconceived notion of a person with a disability is being immediately met with, "Oh my God. How do you not know how to talk to us, you terrible human being? You should just know." The fact is they don't. I feel like often as a community--and this doesn't happen often. I said often. It really doesn't happen all the time. The fact that it happens at all is what I'm talking about. I don't think it's fair for anybody to expect anybody else to know how to do things right immediately.

I think that it's a total farce and lie and untruth to say that the way to communicate with somebody with a disability is exactly the same way as everyone else. I'll tell you why. Barring any disability specific needs like an interpreter or a speech device or something like that, the second any form of accessibility comes up the tone of the conversation changes. You're still communicating in the same way that you're communicating with anyone else. That's a given.

You as the person who doesn't know the world isn't gonna know the first thing about it, except for something that ought to be common sense like, "Oh elevators should exist."

Emily: Right. The conversations can be strange and maybe even uncomfortable territory, especially because there are laws surrounding certain communication especially between employers and people they're interviewing. I understand some hesitation and things like that. For that matter, people who haven't had a lot of interaction with disability [sic]--I can understand some of their hesitations as well. In a perfect world, I wish that we can all just go up to each other and talk to each other and it would be fine. We wouldn't have all these thoughts about how a person's appearance should make you hesitate about how you communicate with them.

Kyle: Of course. Of course. We don't live in that world.

Emily: Exactly. Then my goal--I think my underlying goal was always trying to be on top of my game when I'm out in public is so that I don't cause any of those uncomfortable situations. I want people to consider that I'm approachable. It's almost my way of quietly posting a solution for an issue and trying to make things a little easier

Kyle: I know--I think that there's some merit in doing things quietly. Loudness has its point. It's like a company you don't like. What's the better way to fight a company you don't like? Sure. You can make a dozen posts on Facebook and Twitter and your Instagram or whatever. You could just not buy anything from them. It's the same thing with disability [sic]. I'm not saying one works better than the other. I'm saying you could yell at somebody all you want. It's better to stop feeding into that whatever nonsense it is. You'll get a--I really do believe that if enough people did something like that, you'd get a result faster. I think that this quieter silent activism--it is oftentimes not better. No. You know what? Better.

I'm gonna say better than the other approach which could be anything from being loud and obnoxious and boisterous to something also loud and impactful like a lecture on how to do something like this for example.

Emily: I can definitely be the 'loud, boisterous, make-a-fuss, make-a-scene, display my feelings everywhere' activist. At the same time, and I hope that you know that I mean this in a humble way--I think the best activism I do is being myself.

Kyle. No-no. That's my entire point. I think that's the best way to do it. I don't think that that's not humble at all. That's what I'm saying. In my opinion, if you have to take a position to have an opinion--if you have to go somewhere to feel a certain way in your mind then you're not doing it right in my opinion. Just be-

[crosstalk]

Emily: You mean you have to act a certain way to get a message across?

Kyle: Yes. Yes. I understand that extremism--there are certain situations where you have to. For example-

Emily: Extremism is not a fair word because what if you really need to make a scene in order to be heard.

Kyle: Right. No-no. I'm saying there's obvious exceptions. I remember the time--we talked about it on the show where you, me, and Meg were in a diner. It was technically accessible. It was accessible by building code laws. Practically, and it was technically practically accessible too. The thing is that your wheelchair blocked the path for the waitstaff to serve food.

Emily: Not my fault.

Kyle: And--no, it's not your fault. That's my point. You caused a scene without doing it loudly. You caused a scene by being there. That's the same thing. It's not the same thing as throwing a book on the floor and screaming.

Emily: Okay. Then this actually goes back to the silent activism thing. At the end of that terrible experience, wherein the waitress was extremely condescending, due-

Kyle: That was a separate issue.

Emily: -due to my wanting to be a patron of her lovely dining establishment, our form of activism was to leave a note reminding her that it's not okay to be condescending to visible disabilities. We stiffed around the tip. I guarantee you that's going to make some people angry. I felt in that situation it was the right thing to do.

Kyle: It was totally the right thing to do. Leave your angry comments below. It was totally the right thing to do. I say that as somebody who generally tips well. I think you do as well.

Emily: I do. Absolutely.

Kyle: That's the point. Sometimes there are situations where making a scene is the only way to get a message across. For those scenes and for those people who love to do it, God bless you, man. That's not what I'm saying. What I'm saying is that the best way to be an activist in my opinion generally is to just to be your best self. Let the problems come to you and dissuade them. Don't go looking for trouble.

Emily: Speaking of looking for trouble, this is something that I feel sad to say. Sometimes, I'm a little scared to make too much of a scene. I know we really went from tokenization to just how we present ourselves in the world. But I think-

Kyle: I think they're related. I think they're absolutely related.

Emily: But sometimes I get a little a little afraid of talking back--a previous example I was rolling down the street today with another friend of mine who is also a chair user--a power chair user or scooter actually. A man had a whistle around his neck for some reason, walked right at us, and blew the whistle at us. We were apparently some traffic obstacle to him. I just got really pissed because that's really immature. Why did you need to do that? I turned around and yelled-

Kyle: It's New York City, man.

Emily: I know it is. I shouldn't expect any less in New York City. I turned around and I was like, "Was that necessary?" Everybody stopped and looked at me. I was like, "Ah, I should've just kept going. Nobody do anything to me. Please don't hurt me."

Kyle: It's like you get that little burst of courage and it's like, "Oh. Now what? What do I do now-now that I have everyone's attention? Hello. My name is Emily. "

Emily: [laughs]

Kyle: I do things sometimes.

Emily: My favorite color's turquoise and-

Kyle: I like tea--I think?

Emily: [laughs]

Kyle: But that's a good point. I wouldn't call that--would you call that afraid? I don't know if I'd call that afraid.

Emily: No.

Kyle: More like-

Emily: I mean afraid in two different senses. I mean afraid in like I'm calling attention to myself and afraid as in actually afraid that I am going to talk back to the wrong person and they're going-

Kyle: [crosstalk]

Emily: -to physically retaliate.

Kyle: Some people need a punch in the mouth spontaneously. Occasionally. I don't think I could think of a situation where I would think bad of you. I say that as one of your dearest friends. The person delivering it might disagree with me on that. I sincerely mean that. I wouldn't say that's not a worry in a place as crazy as New York. I certainly understand the hesitation to not want to spontaneously climb on a soapbox to prove a point.

Emily: It's the same thing if somebody offers me help. My goodness. How many times can we talk about offers of help?

Kyle: When it stops happening, we can stop talking about it.

Emily: Exactly. When someone offers me help, part of me wants to--and I'm talking either 'A: A condescending offer' or 'B: insistent'. I was trying to get on the train. This literally all happened in the span of 24 hours. These various examples that I'm using in this podcast. I was trying to get

on a train and I was deciding what car I wanted to sit in. Someone looks at me and goes, "Oh. You're going to want to go that way to get on the train." and said it to me and no one else. It was just a very condescending tone. I muttered under my breath. I was like, "Yeah. Thanks, lady. Like I'm just trying to find a conductor. I know what I'm doing. I got it under control. Leave me alone." Instead, I just smiled. I was like, "Thanks." It was seven 'o' clock in the morning-

Kyle: It wasn't worth--you picked your battles. Right? This all comes full circle.

[crosstalk]

Emily: Full circle.

Kyle: You see how that worked guys?

Emily: For real though. I really did.

Kyle: That's how--this all relates to everything. Everything we say on this show relates to everything else in some way or another and this was a great example of that.

Emily: Because I don't want to leave a bad taste in someone's mouth. Not the alternative. I guess the alternative to that is that people end leaving bad tastes in my mouth all the time. What am I supposed to do? Just deal with that? Basically--yes. That is the answer. [laughs] Whether I like it or not, that is the answer, but-

Kyle: But just like you don't want to leave a bad taste in someone's mouth about you, you don't want to deal with having a bad taste left in yours about them. If to avoid that entire situation all it takes is a smile and nod, smile and nod. Swallow your pride. You do. That's the entire point.

Emily: But I don't want to.

Kyle: No, but sometimes you have to.

Emily: And also, it really depends on the time of day. Ain't no way I'm dealing with anything at seven o'clock in the morning.

Kyle: At seven in the morning, you're just on autopilot. You're not-

[crosstalk]

Emily: Trying to get on Long Island railroad.

Kyle: You're not even awake at that hour really. You're just--you got your reptile brain going and it's just-

Emily: Just barely functioning. I'm not a morning person. That probably had something to do with it. It's just these little assumptions that I can't figure out what I need for myself. I think that all goes back to tokenization. I guarantee you that someone heard a story on the news about some piteous disabled person. I don't mean that disabled people are pitiful. I mean that the news spun the story to make the disabled person sound pitiful.

Kyle: We're pretty pitiful. I don't mean disabled people. I mean you and I right now. We are pretty freaking [in unison] pitiful.

Emily: [unison] pitiful.

Kyle: Ten out of ten.

Emily: Pitiful.

Kyle: But go on.

Emily: Anyway, someone saw something in the media where a disabled person was portrayed as an object of pity and guaranteed that's what they're basing that interaction on. When someone treats you like you are a lost helpless soul.

Kyle: Where do you think they get that information from?

Emily: It's got to be from the media.

Kyle: It's cyclical. It's all very cyclical.

Emily: Or they have other disabled people in their life who I feel very bad for. They're also treating them like that.

Kyle: Either way it's not good.

Emily: I just don't understand why it's so hard to presume competence when you see someone. I don't know if we talked about that concept on this podcast or not.

Kyle: We touched on it in the first episode once. Basically, I agree. You shouldn't have to presume comp--you should just--you should always presume competence until you have a really good reason not to. Those reasons could be anything. It doesn't necessarily have to be disability related. You could just be face to face with a class-A idiot who doesn't know what they're doing in regards to, I don't know, getting an accessible seat at a restaurant. Really. Until you're faced with such a problem, I don't know why anyone would not assume competence. I don't think that that's an unfair thing to assume about anyone. I think that if you're a human being, that you should--everyone should--

Emily: It really--I wanna assume the best in everyone. I really do. I am not Ms. Mary Sunshine all the time. If anyone's--

[crosstalk]

Kyle: Never. Never.

Emily: -gonna attest to that it's you.

[crosstalk]

Kyle: Oh my god.

Emily: Except if you put a puppy in my lap, then I'm great. I'm great. I always assume the best of puppies. If for people, I want to assume everyone is a good person until proven otherwise.

Kyle: Yeah. Disabled or not.

Emily: Exactly. This doesn't even have to be a disability thing. This is just about-

Kyle: Most of the things we talk about while they're centered on disability could really be applied to pretty much anything. Really. If we weren't disabled, this podcast would just be '*How to Be a Better Person*'.

Emily: *The Stall*. Just *The Stall*.

Kyle: Generally. Just *The Stall*. *The Regular Stall*. *The Very Cramped Regular Stall*.

Emily: Can you imagine if we were actually recording this podcast in a bathroom stall?

Kyle: We have to do that once. Maybe for the 100th episode anniversary.

Emily: Okay. That's our new challenge. First, we have to make it to the 100th episode. Keep causing problems so we can keep talking about them. People--no, I'm totally kidding. Stop it.

Kyle: No, I'm not. We need this.

Emily: [laughs]

Kyle: This gives our lives meaning.

Emily: No. But the thing that really gets me is that on any given attempt at recording a podcast episode, I can go over a catalog of events that happened in the span of a day.

Kyle: And I can't which is why we need each other.

Emily: It's really--I think there's a very interesting dynamic in that we both have disabilities but they manifest very differently.

Kyle: And I think invisible disabilities is [sic] an honor. Giant list that we ignore everytime we record of things to record about.

Emily: You know why though? Because-

Kyle: You don't have one?

Emily: That's debatable. I think the real thing is that I don't want to speak to something that I know absolutely nothing about. I think that's-

Kyle: I know. I know. Anyway, what are your final takeaways? Because that's a thing we do. That's a thing we also say that we do. Saying that we do it isn't as much of a thing as doing it.

Emily: [laughs] Wow. Okay. Final takeaway. Oh. This is hard. This is always hard for me.

Kyle: You want me to go first?

Emily: Yeah. Do you notice a pattern wherein you ask me my final takeaways and I tell you that I don't have any?

Kyle: Yes.

Emily: And then you say something.

Kyle: We're very formulaic people, which is ironic because we don't script this at all.

Emily: It's not intentional. It's just how our brains work.

Kyle: Yeah. No. Here's the thing. Tokenization is in general bad. If you're faced with it, it's not that hard to make it into a situation that benefits everybody. That's my final takeaway. Sorry I put the pressure on you so quickly. I know you didn't really expect me to answer that fast.

Emily: Would you speak slower? No. I think that my final takeaway is to treat everyone with respect as cheesy as that is. Also to include people and treat people in a way so that they don't feel like they're tokens. Treat people like people. Not like you're checking off your diversity and inclusion checklist. Treat people like you would want to be treated. I know I'm sitting here spouting off the golden rule-

[crosstalk]

Kyle: That--it's a good rule. That's why it's called that I think. Anyway, this has been another episode--by the way, I didn't say this at the beginning-

Emily: Oh my god! How did we go the whole episode without saying this?

Kyle: Did you notice the sweet ass music?

Emily: Can we just give a shoutout super quick? A lovely, lovely person that I know--his name is Brad Toller and he's the brother of one of my best friends in the whole world, is very talented, and he created our opening theme music so now we are a bonafide, real, legitimate podcast.

Kyle: Because as we all know the first rule of the podcast handbook is if you don't have intro music, you're worthless.

Emily: Exactly. And on that note-

Kyle: Goodbye, everybody.

Emily: We'll be here-

[crosstalk]

Kyle: Some other time.

Emily: -Eventually. Thanks for listening.

Both: Bye!