

File Name: 0227171945_TAS-023-Initiating_The_Uninitiated.mp3

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[START OF TRANSCRIPT]

Kyle: Give me a P.

Emily: P.

Kyle: Give me an A.

Emily: A.

Kyle: Give me a T.

Emily: T.

Kyle: Give me a R.

Emily: R.

Kyle: Give me an E.

Emily: E.

Kyle: Give me an O.

Emily: O.

Kyle: Give me a N.

Emily: N.

Kyle: What does that spell?

Emily: PATREON.

Kyle: Oh my God Patreon is where you can go to give a monthly donation to the accessible stall that will pay for all kinds of cool shit we need for this podcast. Okay, find us at the Accessible Stall at patreon.com/theaccessiblestall. Cool, love you, bye. Here's the episode.

Emily: How terrible.

Kyle: Let's use it.

Emily: Hey I'm Emily Ladau.

Kyle: And I'm Kyle Khachadurian.

Emily: And you are 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 the uninitiated.

Kyle: What's that Emily?

Emily: It's a new movie, you should have heard of it a long time ago, getting an Oscar.

Kyle: Is it? In what? Best podcast episode?

Emily: That's what they said. No, it's not a movie. That just came to me on the spot, how clever? Haha. We are going to address what it is like to communicate with people who are not generally aware of how to talk about disability.

Kyle: So like everybody?

Emily: Yeah, basically. If you are a person we are talking to you. I guess the reason that I wanted to talk about this is because I constantly find myself questioning how other people discuss disability and I get a little frustrated when people who...

Kyle: I know

Emily: What? Go ahead.

Kyle: They don't.

Emily: I mean it's a fair point but sometimes people like to stick their noses in and be like, "Oh, yeah I totally get it, and let me demonstrate to you how I get it by talking about it like I get it."

Kyle: **[0:01:59 crosstalk]** to my cousin's uncle third ex-wife's dog with four faces and three legs.

Emily: That's a disability all right. That's one level, but the reality is that disability is a sticky situation for anyone and this would not be a podcast episode if I didn't bring up my dating life but this just occurred to me, so I want to tell you.

Kyle: Is this really why you wanted to do this today?

Emily: What?

Kyle: Is this really why you wanted to do this today?

Emily: Not at all. This just came to me. I try to make things less awkward by being like, "I'm super open and you could ask me anything you want about my disability." I said that to some guy the other night, and then I realized when he didn't respond immediately, he had no idea what to say. Where do you even...?

Kyle: What to say or if to say or even if to say anything?

Emily: Yeah, I feel like it's really a double edged sword, you can either say something and risk offending the person or say something and risk seeming ignorant.

Kyle: I feel like if you are literally inviting questions and there is very little that this... the other person could say to really offend you unless it was completely egregious because you are asking for it knowing that they probably don't know anything. You are more tolerant than somebody who 'should know better.'

Emily: But I do not apply that tolerance to everyone, and I'm going to be the first person to admit it.

Kyle: Of course you don't. Right, you are the worst at it but we all are; I mean that's humans. My point was though when you are specifically looking for questions, I feel like you are more open to weird and strange ways that very illegitimate questions could be asked because you are actually asking for it.

Emily: Is it also possible that disabled people or minorities in general have alienated the public from wanting to engage and discourse about our situations?

Kyle: Oh yeah, we are the worst. Yes absolutely, we are going to get to that in a minute too.

Emily: I hate to say it --

Kyle: I don't.

Emily: -- but I think we are all guilty of that.

Kyle: Nope, we are, absolutely. If you don't think so you are part of the problem. Yes, you too.

Emily: Yes me too, like me?

Kyle: No. I'm talking about whoever is disagreeing with us in their head right now.

Emily: Oh man, so many people must be talking back by now but the reason that this constantly pops up in my mind is because I'm just realizing that I haven't even fully figured out how to navigate talking about disability in a way that is --

Kyle: Accessible to all?

Emily: -- relatable... Accessible, there's our buzz word. It's true though...So at the same time as I'm still not sure how to navigate my own territory sometimes. I also put way too much of an expectation on other people to know how to navigate that territory, and they should just know not to ask stupid questions but they do, but then I get mad.

Kyle: Well, it's funny because what's a stupid question? You know what your stupid questions are and you have an expectation as to what you think people should know what a stupid question is. But when you are asking somebody or when you are expecting answers from somebody either direction, who doesn't know about the thing you are talking about, then they don't know if what they are asking is stupid even if to you it is. Like, "Can you have sex?" It's a really stupid question, it's a stupid question.

Emily: Can I be real?

Kyle: But it's a question, it is a question, it's a legitimate question, it's probably the crassest way to ask that question, but it is a question.

Emily: I really don't get that question. I feel like that is everybody's go-to.

Kyle: I don't even, but really...It is everyone's go-to...

Emily: No, but it's everybody's go-to for rude questions and yet I feel almost weird because I really don't get that.

Kyle: Don't get that...You don't get --

Emily: Not the...

Kyle: -- why it's weird or?

Emily: No, no, no, I don't get that question. It's not something that's asked upon me or asked about me.

Kyle: Oh you really don't...You don't get that question?

Emily: Oh yeah, not like I don't understand it, like it is literally not asked of me.

Kyle: Oh, well you are missing out Emily. I feel like I should just ask you right now.

Emily: The answer is yes. Thank you everybody, goodnight.

Kyle: No, but that's like a disability rite of passage my friend.

Emily: Yeah, but...I'm not saying I've never gotten it, I've certainly gotten personal questions of that nature, but for some reason that seems to be the thing that everybody points to as the most commonly asked ignorant question. I've literally never had a random stranger come up to me and ask me if I can have sex. They are more concerned about healing me...

Kyle: I wish I could think you are missing out Emily, but really you are not. It's a stupid question. Is it stupid? Is it? It's personal, but is it stupid?

Emily: It just indicates that you are not using common sense because you wouldn't ask that to somebody else, would you? Unless you would, I don't know.

Kyle: I agree with you but I have to imagine that the reason that they ask that of us is because we are doing something or we look a certain way that suggests that maybe we might have trouble with it. You know what? We do. I don't really know. I'm serious so even though it's a perfect example of a completely ignorant question, make no mistake, it obviously is very ignorant and you shouldn't ask that question of anyone if you don't ask it of everyone, which you also shouldn't do in my opinion. The fact remains, it's a question.

Emily: I've just never had anybody ask me out of context that I can remember. It's usually in the context of a relevant conversation in which it would be necessary to continue the conversation for me to indicate whether or not I can be sexually active.

Kyle: You are really missing out. You are not a real disabled person until...

Emily: Has this happened to you?

Kyle: Yeah.

Emily: Really?

Kyle: Uh-huh. Every able bodied friend I make asks that question to me at some point and I always answer it. I always answer it because it's...I don't care. That question is ignorant but if it's ignorant from a place of, I don't know and I want to know then I don't mind answering it

Emily: That is so interesting.

Kyle: It's none of their business but I suppose why not? I'm going to probably ask them an ignorant question without realizing at some point

Emily: I also don't know if I just bring it up in other random girl talk conversations to the point where people don't need to ask me that question. I just don't know what it is but all of my...

Kyle: When a man and a woman love each other very much, or a man and a man or a woman and a woman and everything in between because obviously that's somebody's like I can hear the angry tweets on their keyboards already.

Emily: We are not gendering anyone. We are not paring genders.

Kyle: We are not gender intenders, "Don't gender my gender."

Emily: What? Anyway, okay this is off the rails. Okay so...

Kyle: My God, you give one example of one ignorant question and it goes off on a nine minute tirade on the Accessible Stall.

Emily: This has been an interesting episode of nine minutes and 35 seconds. No, I have more things I want to say about the subject. I always have myself getting worked up about ignorant comments but I also wonder if they come from some kind of place of being genuine and actually caring about the other person and like having an interaction with the other person, forging a human connection.

Kyle: Yes. I wonder that too but then there's also the other side of it of whether or not your interpretation of a question as to whether or not its ignorance is stemming from a place of ignorance on hearing it on your part, because what's ignorant to you might not be ignorant to them and so on and so forth.

Emily: Yeah. It's not even questions, it's just comments. It's people trying to make conversation with me in public, and I often find myself getting very worked up about that, but I'm not sure if my getting worked up about it is just because I

hear it every day and I'm frustrated or because it's genuinely an annoying thing to say to someone.

Kyle: It could be both just because, it could be genuine and annoying, right? They are not very mutually exclusive. I think the bigger issue comes in when you are trying to discuss these things with people who shouldn't know better. If they should know better then they are probably disabled themselves or know somebody who is or has a family member who is and that's all well and good. But for the truly uninitiated, for the people who for all sense and purposes don't know we exist, how do you get to them? I think that's a real crux of everything that we do and everything any disabled person does.

Emily: Yeah, it took us 11 minutes and 43 seconds to get here, but that is a critical question because...Do you ever feel like we are just sort of talking to our own bubble?

Kyle: I'm almost certain that we are.

Emily: I mean us, in our podcasts, not in the rest of our lives?

Kyle: No, I know. I'm almost certain that we are. That's okay and that's fine and we love you, but we are not educating anyone if they already know what we are saying, if they already agree with what we are saying. We are not achieving anything other than being entertaining, which is in and of itself a separate thing and that's great, but when it comes time to teach people about anything that we've talked about on the show, you have to wonder whether or not we are talking into an echo chamber or if somebody ever actually listened to one of these or read an article that Emily wrote or anyone else wrote or even did a Google search on a certain disability and walked away from that learning something. I don't know, I don't think there is any way to know, but I think that reaching people who don't know much about disability are more important to reach in terms of getting things done and the over-arching goal of acceptance than reaching somebody who is already disabled and gets it in some way or another.

Emily: Then how do we make the 'uninitiated' the initiated without somehow alienating them in the process because...I know I used that word earlier but it keeps coming back to me because sometimes I recognize that my advocacy can come on very strong, and I recognize that I have very strong reactions to certain questions or comments or things that people did or said, and my goal in talking about those is to try to get people to recognize where I'm coming from, but I also recognize that that may not be the way to do the 'initiation'.

Kyle: I'm always a fan of the saying that you catch more flies with honey than you do with vinegar. Not to say vinegar isn't sometimes very needed, but I don't know how we come across we as a people. I think that I have an idea of how we come across and I'm not very shy to say that, I have said it a bunch of times in the show that I think that how we come across is...to uninitiated person that we come across as a bunch of infighting people that can't agree on anything. Obviously, that's a bit hyperbolic but if you come across two disabled people they are going to give you two different answers to the same question even if they are almost identical in terms of their physical ability. Why is that? Is it because there are no right answers or is it because that there are so many right answers that finding one true answer is almost impossible? Then when that happens, which one do you go with, how do you know what's right? Obviously, the way to do that is to converse with as many people in the disability community as possible. It's the same for any minority I suppose, but I think that we tend to expect that people get things right in sort of an unfair amount of time or with an unfair amount of exposure. Seeing a disabled person for example isn't the same as seeing a black person or any other minority. We are harder to spot. I mean we are very common, one in five. It's my favorite thing to say, but there is no marker of, "Oh you are disabled." You know what I mean? Disability is...

Emily: Well...

Kyle: No.

Emily: There's like...

Kyle: [0:15:24 inaudible].

Emily: Yeah, there is like visible symbols.

Kyle: Okay, but then there is me. You know what I mean? You can look at a guy who is black and be like, "Yeah you are black" it's not the same thing. It's just not, and we are not the only minority that has that. LGBT, you can't look at somebody and go, "Oh, he is gay" I mean I guess you can in some cases but for the most part you can't. But even so that kind of thing is so individualistic. I think two, is that unlike sexuality and race partly, disability has many, many external factors that affect you as the person in the disabled person's life as much as internal factors that affect only them whereas sexuality is very personal and race can or can't be depending on the issue. Disability is extremely heavy on the exterior factors as much as the interior ones. I really do believe...Don't you? I mean accessibility, if you can't get somewhere that's someone else's problem as much as it is your problem.

Emily: You know what I'm still harping on that you said?

Kyle: What's that?

Emily: How is there no right answer or are there so many right answers...?

Kyle: I will, if...

Emily: Honestly, I feel like that's...

Kyle: I don't think there's a difference at that point. If there are so many right answers that no one right answer is the right answer then it's the same thing as saying there is no right answer.

Emily: Or rather there is no answer, not even a right answer, there is no answer. I think that applies to basically everything you were saying.

Kyle: Yeah.

Emily: That's what is so difficult about podcasting is, here we are trying to --

Kyle: We are only two people.

Emily: -- give our opinions, great, but we are genuinely trying to educate the uninitiated and yet they are just listening to us, so do we really count in the grand scheme of things?

Kyle: Yes. Step one, realize that this is all subjective. Step two, ask a lot of questions and don't worry about how you are coming across until you are done asking them. Step three, listen to the feedback you get about how you asked your questions. Step four, listen for the answers. Start there and you'll end up okay.

Emily: I know what we are putting in our show notes.

Kyle: This...The what?

Emily: These steps of how to reflect on disability in that we are constantly trying to get across a particular message that we want people to recognize and we want people to perceive us in a certain way, but the reality is that disability is subjective for us in how we interpret it and experience it and it's also subjective for other people in how they interpret it and experience our presence.

Kyle: I have an example for this actually, and it's a phrase that we love to use all the time and it's a good phrase. I'm not making fun of ourselves here, but it's like,

“Oh, treat me like everyone else.” Okay, that's fine except inevitably there will be a certain situation where we can't. We can't be treated like everyone else. We're going to have a need or something and it's like, “Okay, well if I'm uninitiated, I'm going to treat you exactly as I treat everyone else and then when I hit that inevitable roadblock then what?” Of course the answer is learn and figure it out, but you have to understand that that thing, that message of treat me as you would anyone else, it might...I don't know because I am disabled...but it might come across as, “How do I do that? How can I actually do that?”

Emily: I think conversely there are some...or not even conversely but just something else to consider when it comes to treat me as you would everyone else. Think about the fact that some people may just treat everyone a certain way and you may not like how that is so you may interpret it...

Kyle: When they treat you like everyone else, you're not going to like it in any way and meanwhile they are doing exactly what you asked them. Yes.

Emily: Yeah. A perfect example, I had an interaction recently on a train with a woman. You knew I was going to bring it up eventually.

Kyle: I have no idea what you are talking about but I know that it's going to be good when you call it an interaction.

Emily: I was minding my own business. I was on the train. I was riding home. It was late.

Kyle: You're saying this and I know immediately that there's something that's entirely your fault that you did.

Emily: It wasn't my fault. How do you know?

Kyle: Because any story that starts with I was just sitting there minding my own business when all of a sudden...

Emily: Nah. It was all this woman on the train. I was sitting there, minding my own business and the conductor comes over to me and says something about how he'll be back to bring the bridge plate over.

Kyle: Mm-hmm.

Emily: I was like, “Oh, hey, thank you.” I told him and this is true, that a conductor forgot me on the train recently and so I said that just to emphasize, “Please come back for me.” Then a woman overheard it and so we started chatting about needing the ramp and all was well. I smiled, I went back to my phone and she said, “I hope you can walk one day by fate.” I was like, “Not going to happen

but I'm pretty okay with my life. I'm pretty happy with it, thanks." She goes, "Oh that's so sad. My uncle has multiple sclerosis and he's in one of those things and he thinks he's going to get up and walk one day." I just...

Kyle: That's a good example.

Emily: Argh.

Kyle: No, but that's actually a really good example because on the one hand that's totally ignorant, but on the other, she's just saying that to you based on the fact that her uncle really believes that.

Emily: She's also trying to extend an olive branch to me, this random stranger on the train, but I'm just so sick of hearing comments like that that I immediately got annoyed, but I don't have it in me to ring people out like other people do.

Kyle: Then you look like the bad guy even though you were all just trying to do the right thing, and I normally wouldn't say that about this woman, but since you specifically brought up that she really thinks her uncle believe that that's probably where she gets that weird belief from. Not that its right, I'm just saying it's all very cyclical. It all feeds into itself.

Emily: Well, it goes back to disability being subjective because if you're contemplating disability in one way and someone else perceives it in another way, and you think what you say is actually a kind wish to someone. She could have legitimately thought that telling me to walk was actually a nice thing to do.

Kyle: In her mind it probably was, like really. It's also very disability dependent because you'll never walk but somebody with MS might.

Emily: You know what really sucked was, just when I said that I'm happy with my life. It's almost like she didn't hear my response because then she went on to say, "Oh that's so sad." It's like she got hung up on the part where I'm not going to walk.

Kyle: Yeah. I doubt that somebody would say that they're sad for you when you say that you're happy with yourself. That's a little weird. I think you're right, but even so there's a certain amount of can't help you kind of thing. I think that's where she passed it. But I think that's a great example of how all of this can feed into itself and how everyone thinks in that exact situation, both parties, you thought you were doing the right thing and she thought she was doing the right thing and no one got anywhere because of pre-held beliefs that you both didn't know you both had until you interacted with each other.

Emily: Well, to be fair, I'm very aware of my particular feelings on interactions like these.

Kyle: Of course you are, but so is she. That's what I'm saying.

Emily: Or is she though? Is that a common occurrence for her like it is for me? Does she run into someone in a wheelchair every day and tell them she hopes they can walk?

Kyle: Maybe she [0:23:24 crosstalk]. Maybe they see each other every day and maybe she felt that...

Emily: I feel like I get that every time I go somewhere particularly.

Kyle: Yeah of course. I mean that's a dumb thing to say. That's a dumb thing to say, but I'm just saying, and I don't mean to sound like I'm giving her the benefit of the doubt because it sounds like she's just plain old ignorant. But the reason I did that before is because you laid out a scenario that she told you that really, really could cement her belief in saying that it was actually the right thing, regardless of whether or not it is.

Emily: I don't mind necessarily giving the benefit of the doubt, not because I believe that she had a right to impose her beliefs on me in that way, but because I'm trying to be more aware of what it is that prompts people to say things. There is no avoiding people coming up to me and imposing their weird beliefs on me.

Kyle: That's everybody. I'm sure it's...Obviously I think we get it more because we look helpless, right?

Emily: I've been prayed over. I've been told to go to a healing service at a church, have I let Jesus...

Kyle: Have you tried yoga?

Emily: Yeah. Have I let Jesus into my heart? Did I try to heal myself with this supplement that's good for my body? I get all the other question, I just don't get the sex one, but I would not mind having a substantive conversation with these 'uninitiated' people and being like, "Hey listen to me I'm going to tell you why what you said is kind of ignorant but I'm not going to attack you for it."

Kyle: That comes off as standoffish though but even without that though, let's say it didn't. They're not coming up to you because they want to learn. They're trying to make you feel better and that's part of what pisses you off and I understand that. You're totally in the right for feeling that way but...

Emily: Do you think...I don't know if it's making me feel better or making themselves feel better.

Kyle: It doesn't matter because the situation is the same regardless. It doesn't matter who's the object of the feeling betterness of what they're saying because A) it's not happening and B) even if it does happen to one or both of you or neither, no one's going to walk away learning something. It's totally...If you take an event like that and remove it from your life the rest of your life would have been exactly the same. That event in question has no impact on your life whatsoever except that it waste your time.

Emily: Unless you count that I posted it on Facebook and I had a conversation about it.

Kyle: I understand, but in that case...

Emily: I know what you mean.

Kyle: No, but in that case it did you some good, so really we wouldn't be doing this podcast if you didn't have that interaction on the train. You could do that any way you want about anything.

Emily: Well, sure. I look at things at this point as fodder for podcast or writing or whatever.

Kyle: Yeah, but my only point is you...I don't know. I think that there is value in educating people that are ignorant but not willfully ignorant.

Emily: How can you even tell the difference?

Kyle: You can't.

Emily: That's exactly the sticking point.

Kyle: Well, actually I don't know if you can't. I think the difference...Well, assuming that both parties are willing to talk beyond the "I feel sorry for you - No you don't" stage. When you tell somebody something, assuming it's true, and they choose not to believe you then there are willfully ignorant. If you say, "Oh actually, you know I'm in this wheelchair because I have a syndrome called Larson's syndrome and its XYZ and thank you for asking." Then they say, "Well, don't worry. That will go away soon." That right there is when you lose them. That's like you can't help that. But if they say, "Oh, well I don't know that." If all they do is that, then you've helped a little bit, whether they're not...they go home and Google it and learn more about it or whatever, it doesn't matter because you actually educated one person. That's better than them saying they feel sorry for you, right? But I think getting to that point is hard enough by itself.

Emily: Well yeah, because then you automatically get the response. "Oh I was...I was just trying to help her. I was just trying to be nice to her. Why aren't you

accepting my kind words because I'm a good person and I just want you to know that I'm here to say nice things and...?"

Kyle: It's like telling a really angry person to calm down and they are like, "I'm calm."

Emily: I know. It's like that is the worst thing you can say to an angry person. It's the same thing to me. It's like "I was just trying to be nice." "Okay."

Kyle: That's the thing. I think that that is an entire mess, like a concoction of stuff by itself, that a whole set of interactions of both parties are interacting with each other defensively in order to not offend the other one such that even good things like a gesture, unwanted or not, can come across as offensive. Obviously, if you don't want it and they insist that is offensive. I'm not talking about situations where it's explicit. I'm talking about situations where it's very ambiguous, which tend to be most of them. When you have two parties that are both; "I don't want to, I know I should do this, I know this is a good thing to do but I don't want to do the wrong thing or say the wrong thing or feel the wrong way", when you're both doing that you're going to get anywhere and then you're both going to walk away thinking you're the bad guy or you're going to both walk away thinking the other person is the bad guy, which is even worse.

Emily: There are the situations where people are genuinely obnoxious like the what's wrong with you kind of questions. Then I always think about this because you know, whenever I have random encounters like this I post it on my Facebook. It always gets a conversation going and everybody always says, "Oh why didn't you come back with some snappy or retort?" like what's wrong with me Nothing. What's wrong with you?

Kyle: Did you...

Emily: I don't have that capacity in the moment most of the time, and you would think I would be used to it considering that this is my daily life, but I still get so...choked up is the wrong way...but like a silence befalls me when I get comments and I just...Every retort that I had or every common thing that I could say that should just roll off my tongue, suddenly it's like we're failing you right now.

Kyle: I don't think that's a bad thing though. I get the anxiety that comes of you is bad but I don't think that something preventing you from being a complete jerk to somebody who is just plain old might not have known better because you know better. You know better, they don't. You know that this happens to you every time. They have no idea.

Emily: How come people don't know no better though? I really want to know that. I know it sounds like such a childish question.

Kyle: You don't know better either though. The only reason know better about this is because it happens to you every day but they don't know that. It's like how if you have something in the grocery store that has no price tag on it, and how you might go up to the cashier and say, "Oh does that mean it's free?" And they heard that same joke four hundred times today and they're bothered by it, but they don't show that to you because they don't know that...

Emily: Or maybe they do because they're disgruntled teenagers working the check out.

Kyle: No, but you know what I'm saying.

Emily: I know what you are saying.

Kyle: Why don't people know better? I don't know man. Why don't people know better about everything? They just don't.

Emily: Actually you make a good point because I get super irritated every time some random person thinks they're being the most clever person in the universe by being...

Kyle: "Do you have a license to drive that thing?"

Emily: Or like "You're going to get a ticket. Stop speeding. Haha." It takes every ounce of my strength to remember that they think they're being funny.

Kyle: Doesn't mean it is funny.

Emily: Other question, do you think they're performing some kind of acceptance there? Do you think that it's almost a way to be like, "Hey I'm one of the good ones. I accept you, so I'm going to make a funny comment about it. See, look at me accepting you."

Kyle: You know what? Honestly, I've never thought of it that way but actually I would say yes. I think that humor, bad humor aside because that's a terrible joke, even if you've never heard it before, but I think that humor is a brilliant way to build bridges. I think that in the face of something that society sees as taboo such as disability or anything else, humor is a great way to navigate it without the fear of offending someone because obviously jokes can be offensive but you grant them this poetic license that it has to be very explicit or very, very overt for it to matter in the same way that a comment would. I think that that's an attempt at extending an olive branch. Is it a good one? That's subjective, but I think...because that wouldn't happen if you weren't disabled. If you pass somebody and you're not disabled the most that they do is look at you and make eye contact and maybe say, "How are you doing?" They might nod up at you and that's it. That's the end of your acknowledgement. But because you're

disabled and you don't see something every day, it's something you don't see every day.

Emily: Because I'm disabled, people might just say hi.

Kyle: I don't know what you're talking about but really they might be like, "Oh my God, that's somebody that clearly..." They might have the worst reaction. They might look at you and go, I'm going to talk to that person because they must not get out much. That's ridiculous or they could have the reaction of, I'm going to talk to that person because they're interesting looking. I don't see that every day. One's worse than the other but I think in both cases that it's something and is something better than **[0:33:25 crosstalk]**.

Emily: It's also all in what you say.

Kyle: Yeah but it's also **[0:33:30 crosstalk]**.

Emily: I really believe that.

Kyle: No I agree.

Emily: Okay. Like if you want to strike up a conversation with me, I get that your bad joke is an easy go-to but I would just rather you say, "Beautiful weather we're having today" or...

Kyle: It's like a pick up line man. You've got to do it. "How much does a polar bear weigh?" It's enough to break the ice, right? I don't know, but it's the same thing except instead of dating, it's disability. It's just as corny.

Emily: **[0:34:00 crosstalk]** both.

Kyle: Well, no but it's just as corny here as it is and...Well, that's what it is. You do that in dating to diffuse an awkward situation, and yes the situation almost always is made more awkward by saying the thing than just behaving like a normal human. But just like dating, people don't realize that until it's too late. I'm probably giving them more slack than they deserve. We've all been the wrong person. We've all been at the wrong end of that stick, disabled or not. How do you get people to do better? You just treat them like you want to be treated, not how you treat everyone else, how you want to be treated.

Emily: That's where I think the signals are missing because treat people how you want to be treated is great until you forget that and then get mad because the way you treated somebody is fine to you, but not fine to them and then you just end up getting your wires crossed again.

Kyle: It's not hard to be a good person. It's not. It's very easy. It becomes a problem...I'm not saying that like I'm some sort of moral high horse. I'm just saying it's really easy to not be a...

Emily: It's also though isn't a matter of being a good and bad person because I think you can be a good person and just say something that's a little like "Uhhh..."

Kyle: Yes certainly. You can be a bad person and get some [0:35:34 inaudible] once in a while, of course you can.

Emily: I wouldn't call you a good or bad person. I would...That's why I was going with initiated versus uninitiated but I guess that's not totally accurate either, because you could be a complete jerk and still be 'initiated'.

Kyle: There's also like...Have you ever seen that meme on the Internet called like...

Emily: What's the Internet?

Kyle: I don't know.

Emily: What's a meme?

Kyle: It's that...Have you ever seen almost politically correct redneck where like...

Emily: Yes.

Kyle: The meme is that...It's a terrible stereotype, but it's a guy who is a stereotypical 'redneck' and he's saying something that is completely true, but for all the wrong reasons or he's saying something that is true in the wrong way which I think is something you can apply to disability. I can't give you an example because somebody will think I'm serious and take offense to it. I'll just link some in the show notes.

Emily: I can give an example.

Kyle: Go ahead.

Emily: I was talking with my grandmother recently.

Kyle: That's not an example of a meme but sure go ahead.

Emily: Can't it be a real life example?

Kyle: Yeah of course. I was just making a joke.

Emily: Okay. I was talking to my grandmother recently and she was addressing all the ways in which I am a minority and this was very relevant to the conversation. It

wasn't like she just brought it up but she said, "Em, you're white so that makes you a minority" and I was like, "Umm." And she was like, "Yeah you know like how there are so many people who are different skin colors who are moving to America and so America is getting darker and so we're all racially diverse now." There was nothing racist about what she said but it was just like slightly off kilter. I got what she meant.

Kyle: Yeah but America still like 40% of white but no...Yeah, I mean...

Emily: She was trying to indicate the whole we're moving towards becoming continually more of a melting pot and I get that it was like...

Kyle: It was the completely wrong way to say the right thing.

Emily: Yeah.

Kyle: Right. And I think that that's very common to disability. I think it's more common than we ever give it credit for and probably did give credit for in this episode. I think that maybe I'm naive but I really do believe most people are good and the ones that aren't are trying, and that there are bad people, but I think that's a much smaller minority than anyone really thinks. I think that there's some credit you have to give when somebody is trying to be good and isn't. It's okay to fail if you're trying your best I guess. It's what you say in school. Try your best so your best is all you can give. That's true for life. Yes, also they say that sometimes your best isn't good enough. That's also true but if you say...If your intentions are good and your words are a little off or vice versa, it's way better than just being all wrong or even in some cases all right because if you're all right you come across as being like you're being too careful and you're...

Emily: Can you ever win with that though?

Kyle: Yes.

Emily: If you're all right, I really think there's a way to go about doing that without it looking like you're trying too hard.

Kyle: No, because if you're all right that means you are trying. There's no way to do it without being disingenuous because in doing it you're being disingenuous. Nobody says the right thing all the time unless you're making a conscious effort to do it. There's no such thing as genuine with that unless you like Mr. Rogers. I'm serious, I am not even being facetious...and there's nothing wrong by the way with making a conscious effort to say the most correct things, the most frequently...Like obviously it becomes more natural the more you do it, but to err is human. If you say a 100% of the things the right way the right time then

you're not going to come across as genuine. Look at this podcast, how often do we say the wrong thing and I don't mean like...

Emily: Probably all the time.

Kyle: No, I don't mean that we speak wrong although we do that too. I just mean is that the correct way to say that? Is that the right term? Is this right? Is that right? Somebody correct us. We do that all the time, but because we're asking and because we're going to use that information to improve ourselves we don't get...for it because clearly we were trying to know better and I think that that matters. I think the same can be said for pretty much anybody. But I think that the hardest gap to bridge is the initial step where somebody is trying to say something to ease their way out of what they're going to perceive is going to be an awkward situation but instead in so doing makes it an awkward situation. Like in your, "Hey you need a license to drive the thing or you're going to get a ticket." That's the exact situation and unfortunately those are the people that need to hear it the most. I don't know if there's an answer to that. I really don't because the answer to that would just be to say hello or to like you said strike up a conversation about the weather or anything else or not say anything.

Emily: I just want to know what makes it somebody's first reaction to make a comment about disability when if it was someone who was a different skin color you wouldn't say, "So you're looking mighty black today." What?

Kyle: I don't know about that. I don't know about that and I'll tell you why; because I'm pretty sure people do that but also...

Emily: Really?

Kyle: Yeah. I mean not us because we're better but I wouldn't put that past somebody. We are not better because we're funny, but I remember this one time my parents were at this event and at this event there was a Native American and he was dressed in traditional garb like with just...He looked like a walking stereotype and he was real but he looked like exactly like what you're picturing in your head, I guarantee you that's what he looked like.

Emily: What is that saying that you are calling it a walking stereotype and not just a person who was Native American?

Kyle: In the same way that when you see a Chinese kid in the corner of your Chinese restaurant doing homework, you are like, "Oh yeah that happens in every Chinese restaurant" because it does. It does. Watch you are going to go to a chinese place next week and you are going to see an Asian kid in the corner doing homework, you'll be like, "Oh my God." But anyway he was dressed in traditional dress and my mom didn't know what to say because that's obviously something you don't see every day. She looked at him and she was like,

“Looking good chief” and my dad and sister...I wasn't there because if I was, I would have had that on video. My dad and sister looked at each other and they were like mortified and they started like laughing at my mom because it was...

Emily: I would be too.

Kyle: It was like the dumbest thing in the world to say. The only reason she said it was because her mind totally didn't know...Her brain short circuited and I think that that's what happens with disability too. I really do. I think they like, “Wheelchair oh...License tickets yeah that makes sense.” You know like they don't know what'...I'm serious. That doesn't make it right.

Emily: No, I hear you but I want to get to the point where that is not a reaction that people need to have, where it's not even like a weird thing to see someone with a disability out and about in public because that's the other thing it's like, “Good to see you today” like what?

Kyle: I mean we do that too.

Emily: Good to see you?

Kyle: No, we do that too, we do it too, whenever we are somewhere and we see a person with disability we go, “Oh my God do we know them?” We do that all the time and we are no...

Emily: Except for chances are I actually do know them.

Kyle: It doesn't matter, it doesn't make you any better than them, you are doing the exact same thing even...whether or not...You don't know that you know them until you know that you know them.

Emily: I am better because I'm in a wheelchair and that qualifies me to do that.

Kyle: No it doesn't.

Emily: I'm obviously kidding.

Kyle: I know, but I'm just saying that not for you, it's because somebody is going to believe you.

Emily: Don't believe me. I'm not better than anyone.

Kyle: We are just as guilty of doing it of each other as everyone else does. I agree with you, I want to live in a world where that's not a thing that happens. I hope it happens in my life time but the fact of the matter is right now this is the world we live in and instead of dreaming, hopefully this is like starting to build bridges and take really small baby steps in making...

Emily: Build bridges not walls blocking out people from Mexico, Donald.

Kyle: I don't know what you are referring to Emily, if it's a Southern border wall construct...thinking about being constructed by the 45th president --

Emily: That's just a silly idea.

Kyle: -- of the United States. What we should do is make it all solar panels because then no one will know what to do because on the one hand it's a wall, but on the other hand it's protecting the environment and using clean energy so like will their heads explode? I don't know, let's find out. Final takeaways I guess...Final takeaways is if you see a person with a disability somewhere and you're thinking about making a dumb joke about wheel chairs, don't. You did it, you are better than that.

Emily: Final takeaway for me, I'm trying to be more eloquent than this kid over here.

Kyle: All right, while you think about it I'll give a real one. I think that it's very important to build bridges. I think that it's very hard to do. I think that everyone involved us and them have a long way to go, and I think that having conversations without the fear of being afraid of saying the wrong thing is a perfect way to start, and I think that both sides us and them need to start doing that.

Emily: I have the incredible urge to start singing Kumbaya, which happens at least once every four episodes.

Kyle: And just like every other time, I'm just going to suggest very violently that you don't.

Emily: Violently? He is violent.

Kyle: No. I'm not.

Emily: My final take away is...

Kyle: I want to violently suggest something by the way.

Emily: I don't know, why did you even say that?

Kyle: "You are not going to sing Kumbaya!" I have no idea.

Emily: Aggressive maybe not violent.

Kyle: Yeah, that's the word.

Emily: Violence is like the antithesis of Kumbaya anyway.

Kyle: Yeah, oh well [0:46:06 inaudible] get that it'll make me into a monster but...

Emily: My final take away is, please be conscious of your language if you are per chance someone not in the disability world all the time who is listening to this. But also don't be afraid to have a conversation. Don't be afraid to be open and friendly, but just do so in a way that maybe indicates that you put a little thought into what you are saying before you said it.

Kyle: Do you know what I wish? I wish that somebody not everybody listens to this episode right and gets to the part where you say that you are sick of hearing the joke about needing a license or getting a ticket and then has a light bulb moment where they realize Holy...they were being a massive...

Emily: This whole time they were the ones saying that obnoxious thing.

Kyle: I don't mean that like that's a bad thing. I think that that's a really good thing like, oh my God, like this just smacked you in the face like that would be a stupid thing because it...Sometimes...And this is true for a lot of things in life, you don't realize that what you are doing or saying is dumb until someone points it out to you.

Emily: That's true.

Kyle: I don't mean that in a negative way either.

Emily: No. I think people need to be called out. I think it's reasonable. It's not fun, but it's reasonable.

Kyle: Yeah, and not explicitly either. I mean it's not calling out if somebody hears us and goes, "Oh my God that's totally me" but to your point calling out works too.

Emily: Well, I've also being just sort of listening to someone talk or read something and I even come to the realization that I did or said something that I really shouldn't have.

Kyle: Yeah, because you are human we all do that. This is the thing, everyone is so afraid of saying the wrong thing that we end up not saying anything. It's like well, that's sad to me in a way, in like a cosmic way. Anyway, I think the best thing to do when you are uninitiated is first to...Well, actually we had a checklist that I'm going to listen to and type out in the show notes

Emily: Because he can't remember a damn thing he said.

Kyle: Not a clue. Anyway, goodnight everybody. This is the --

Emily: Thanks for listening.

Kyle: -- Accessible Stall, I am Kyle, she's Emily and we will see you next time.

Emily: I am Emily. I want to say my own name.

Kyle: Go ahead.

Emily: I am Emily.

Kyle: Goodnight everybody.

Emily: Bye.

[END OF TRANSCRIPT]