

## Disability and College

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're gonna talk about college

Kyle: Why? Oh my god. I'm so happy that's over. Why are we talking about it again?

Emily: We're gonna help someone out today.

Kyle: Oh, then by all means.

Emily: We're taking a guest request. Which can I just say, It is so cool that we have people messaging us completely out of the blue and being like, Hey can you talk about a topic? I'd really like to hear you talk about it.

Kyle: Yeah, totally non-solicited. It's pretty dope, actually.

Emily: Because all I keep thinking is wait, like you actually want to hear us talk more? And not put duct tape over our mouths? Like, really?

Kyle: I know, It's an odd thing because I, like, you know, I listen to the podcast when I edit them and I just wanna like punch ourselves. I the face, all the time.

Emily: I don't know, sometimes, I listen to us and I find us endearing, but I can't get through a whole episode.

Kyle: Right. But you guys can, for some reason, and we're grateful for it.

Emily: So grateful. So, anyway our new friend, Nicole- Hi Nicole.

Kyle: Hello.

Emily: Sent us a message, and she let us know that she's starting university in the fall. And so, she is autistic, and she's super excited about it, but she's also anxious and stressed out. So, she wanted to know if we could cover our own experiences with being disabled people who go to college.

Kyle: And we can.

Emily: Because we did!

Kyle: Hurray!

Emily: So, this one's interesting because Kyle and I probably have polar-opposite experiences in terms of logistics. Like I went to a small suburban school and lived on campus, and he went to a city school and he commuted

Kyle: Yep.

Emily: So that, in and of itself, even though it's not all that there is to the college experience, I would say makes our experiences relatively different.

Kyle: A hundred percent

Emily: So, where do we even start?

Kyle: Why don't we talk about our first days. I have a story

Emily: Oh boy, okay.

Kyle: Do you remember yours? Cause I do.

Emily: I sure do.

Kyle: It was August 28, 2009. I remember that cause it was my friend's birthday, and it was raining, and it was humid, and muggy, and gross. And up until that day I've taken the bus, maybe like twice. And now I'm gonna be takin it every day and it was a bus line that I just totally didn't know about. And I didn't even have like a backpack. I didn't have anything. I had a pen and notebook. And um, so I like stood there like a little dumb-a#\$ and I was carrying around this stupid notebook.

Emily: Can we say that on this show?

Kyle: I'm not censoring it.

Emily: I think you should bleep that out.

Kyle: Just walking around with a notebook, and like I was scared and nervous. And I don't know why I was scared, because it was like five miles from my house, But it was like the idea that I was embarking on a new chapter of my life, and the rain just really tied it all together, and probably made the pain in my legs flare up that day, although I can't remember. And I arrived like six hours early, because you know, you could never be too early, for my one class at like noon. So I decide it would be a great idea to get lost on the campus so that I would have to find my way back to where I need to be. It's exactly what I did. And It ended up being great. And then I found myself in the main student union, where by some miracle, I ran into the only guy I knew that graduated with me, that also went to my school. Talk about happenstance. But before he showed up, there was this woman, well, she was a girl. She was a student. Who like clearly saw that I was like just alone in a crowded room. And she was like, would you like to sit? And I was like, Yes I would. Then she like pulled up a chair, and I never saw her again, and I don't know who she is.

Emily: This is not the first time I've heard this story and its still funny

Kyle: Yeah, and then I found my class and then, it was cool. And then the second day I almost got hit by a car cause I was late.

Emily: So, you from six hours early to being late?

Kyle: You know me. Yep, that's exactly what I did. But I was late because it was in a different building, and I thought I was in a building that I actually wasn't in, that started with the same seven letters, and they sounded very similar. So I was like Oh this is this one. And they were like No, this is this one. And I walked into a broom closet, where in the same room number in the correct building, was my classroom.

Emily: Cool

Kyle: So by the time I ran over there I was late.

Emily: I would say in my first day, it was a little less dramatic because since I was living on campus, they have you move in a little bit before the school year actually starts. And I also did an over night orientation in the summer before I started freshman year. So that was my opportunity to make a little group of friends who I barely keep in touch with any of those people, but one of the guys who was in my orientation group turned out to be the guy who gave me my first kiss like at the end of freshman year. So, you know, there is hope for us all. Anyway, but yeah, my first day wasn't particularly traumatic, I think it was just a lot of like Oh there's a whole lot of new people. And I have to figure out how to talk to them, and navigate a college campus, and live with another person in a small room. And I think that my biggest thing wasn't even so much nerves about the classes, it was really nerves about living on campus because I was not the biggest fan of my first year, or I should say first semester roommate. I ended up finding the roommate of my dreams who I lived with for the rest of college, but initially, that was kind of a nightmare.

Kyle: I didn't have any friends until like the second semester of my junior year. None. But I mean, cause it was a perfect combination of me being a little socially awkward turtle and being a commuter.

Emily: Commuting is tough.

Kyle: Although, no, that's a lie, my friend Megan, who I'm actually still friends with. She was in my math class. It was the math class where they put kids who couldn't do math so they put you there to say that you did some math.

Emily: Oh, see, I had the option of not ever having to take a math class, ever.

Kyle: Oh yeah, no, I did the one and I was like Is this it? And they were like If you wanna do some science, you need more. And I was like I do, is this it? And they were like No. And I was like You know what, I don't really wanna do this ever. So, I did something else.

Emily: I took probably the most cop-out possible science classes. I took some very humanist Bio class, which paired novels and stories with the lessons, and I took an Archaeology class. Although, not for nothing, but I wrote a bomb ass paper for that archaeology class.

Kyle: I took like eight of those.

Emily: So yeah, that was all the science I had to do, but that's not the point here. So being a disabled person on a college campus. Yeah, I will admit, it was a little overwhelming to me at

first. I actually had wanted to go much further away from home, and I wanted to go to a bigger school. And then I gradually gave into the idea of not being too far from home, even though I didn't want to live at home. Which let's be honest, I couldn't because on Long island, if I was staying on Long Island, you have no way to commute back and forth unless you drive, which I did not drive at that time. I drive now. But I did try to get a taste of a bigger school, and I checked out Hofstra, which is a huge, huge school on Long Island. And I remember we were about to go on a tour of the campus and they have this big like skywalk that goes over these major streets, and you have to take an elevator or stairs to get up it. And when found out that the elevator required a key, and no one knew where the key was, and instead of finding out for me, my entire tour group just left me behind.

Kyle: That sealed that deal, huh?

Emily: Yeah, so I knew that didn't bode well.

Kyle: Elevators with keys are interesting, right? I kinda like them. A little off-topic. Cause that means that only people who need them get to use them, but, unless you lose the key. But yeah, I mean-

Emily: Yeah, I had to use an elevator key in high school.

Kyle: Being a disabled college student is weird, especially because I never had to utilize my college's apparently very good office of disability services because I always had very understanding professors, and also very easy to accommodate without paper work accommodation needs.

Emily: See, I had to use disability services for structural things a lot of times. So if there was a class that was upstairs, and the elevator was broken, or if my classes were too far apart for me to grab an elevator or race across campus sometime, they did a lot of finagling for rooms for me. They did some door opener button installations for me, and they also helped make some modifications in my dorm room. But in terms of actual academic accommodations, I did not really need those, so I can't speak to those. But I know there were a few professors who needed a little work in that area, but it's really all about communication.

Kyle: Yeah, I mean for me cause my main thing was in a big lecture hall when you had that center column of stairs with absolutely no handrail. Like I can do it but for everyone behind me they're gonna be there for the hour that the class is allotted cause I walk very slowly. And so I was like Listen, you're gonna ask for homework and I'm gonna be sitting in the back because I can't go all the way down in the front, so if you can send somebody to get it or don't care that I'm handing my homework down the aisle to everyone in front of me, then we're fine. And everyone was cool with that.

Emily: They made you get up and walk down?

Kyle: No.

Emily: Or that that was the premise in your class? That was how you handed in homework? That's interesting.

Kyle: No, that was only me. That's my point. Everyone else got up and walked up.

Emily: Okay, So how big were your classes?

Kyle: Most of them were small, so most of them were no problem. But I'm talking about the ones that were in lecture halls. Sometimes I got lucky and the entrance to the lecture halls was in the front row instead of the back. So even though I was practically kissing the teacher, or professor. Cause that's like the very front row is on the floor. It was still really worth it because for homework and attendance and all that, I could just get up and do it myself, instead of relying on someone else to do it.

Emily: I think my biggest class was something like fifty people or so. Really the big thing for me was access in the classroom was usually a night-mare because there were just desks strewn everywhere and they were small rooms, and it was really narrow. I dragged more than one desk with my wheelchair in my day, by accident. Causing a scene in the middle of class, as I'm known to do.

Kyle: I had a professor confuse me with the other guy with CP in one of my classes, and that really offended me.

Emily: Oh yeah, we're all the same.

Kyle: No I mean because we look nothing alike at all. We had completely different names, we didn't talk the same, we didn't walk the same. He had a walker. I had a nothing. And she still did it all the time. It was so bad.

Emily: Yeah, that's just straight up, is that ableism or is that just straight up ignorance? Or are ignorance and ableism the same thing?

Kyle: No, I was gonna call it ignorance but you can call it whatever. I don't even care what you call it, that's like a new thing. I was like, that is some nonsense.

Emily: No, I get confused with other people. Like sometimes when I take the train, a conductor will be like Oh yeah you were here yesterday. No, maybe somebody else in a powerchair was there yesterday. That was not me on account of I was not taking a train yesterday. But you know, so access issues aside, I think college was really where I figured out that I am able to be functionally independent, and that I still require support, if you want to call it that. You know I ended up with a really awesome roommate, and my parents weren't too far from me. So I had some help when I needed it, but it was also one of those things where I learned that I needed to navigate situations on my own. And other people weren't gonna be able to solve issues for me, and that was really huge. Even as someone who grew up with parents who didn't like, molly coddled me to the point of not being able to do anything for myself, I still feel like I really needed to learn that lesson in college.

Kyle: Same. I remember, because I went to special high school, I remember like the huge difference in everything when I got to college, and it was like so overwhelming to the point where I was failing my classes, not because I was dumb or didn't know what I was doing, but only because everything was so much to take in at once, and it was just. Oh man. I actually got

put on academic probation on my first semester, and as soon as I explained the situation to whoever they sent me to, they were like Oh okay, yeah, I can see why. And I was like the fastest person put on and taken off that, in the world.

Emily: That's why I think it must be such a disadvantage to go to a segregated school.

Kyle: You know what, I wouldn't send my kid there.

Emily: I mean, this is not Beat up on your old school day, but.

Kyle: No but they also, to their credit, they told me things that they don't teach you in high school that they should, like how to do a job interview and how to write a resume, and you know things like that.

Emily: Yeah, that's one of those things that I still had no idea what I was doing when I got to college. I remember that I realized that I needed to do some kind of internship in the disability field when I completely switched gears from my plan to be a high school English teacher and wanted to focus on disability advocacy. And so I called my local independent living center and I was like You're gonna give me an internship, and they were like You're gonna send us your resume. And I was like I don't have a resume. What? So yeah, but another thing too is I really relate to the sense of being overwhelmed, but it took some time to catch up to me. I was taking a full schedule of classes, I was working as a writing tutor at my college's writing center, and I just started dating my first serious boyfriend right at the start of junior year. And I had this huge breakdown, and I was like I've been pushing myself way too hard and something's gotta give, and I've gotta let go of something, and focus on actually being productive and not overwhelming myself with things to do. And that was a hard lesson to learn, that you can't force yourself to do everything and that it's okay if you need to take a step back.

Kyle: Absolutely, yeah I remember one semester I took twenty-one credits and everyone was like why'd you do that. I was like I can do it. And then on the first day I was like I can't do it, and I dropped like the least important thing cause it was like just ridiculous. I also remember hiding my disability from my super super progressive neo-liberal professors who just wanted to do right by the poor disabled person. Because you know, I've had situations where I would tell professor about my disability because of something like, some access nonsense that could be only be solved if you just took a second look at me. And so I would always say Hey, excuse me, later in the office hours. But sometimes after that initial, I don't know, declaration, or whatever you wanna call it, they would, whenever a topic of like approaching something through some kind of lens came up, it was very strongly pointed in my direction to do it from my disability lens, which was so annoying. And it wasn't like one professor, this happened all the time, up until I took courses that were directly related to my major.

Emily: See, I hate being pigeon-holed, but I also pigeon-holed myself. Like I found ways to turn things into disability related topics because I guess it interested me. But I also found myself at times, being the token, which was frustrating. And a professor that I really liked, taught a disability and social justice class, as a nod to disability issues. She's not disabled, but then I

ended up being token cripple in that class, and learned real fast that college is great at tokenizing people.

Kyle: Although, I will say I remember that college was where I explained CP to somebody who didn't have anything for the first time ever. And I realized that the big scary able-bodied monster that I was led to believe exists by my group of peers, doesn't actually exist.

Emily: Was that the guy who was literally like What's wrong with your legs.

Kyle: No, No. His name was Robert Lee, and that's his actual name and I don't care that I use it because he's the cool guy and I don't know where he is. He doesn't have facebook, social media, and I'm pretty sure he didn't have phone, so if he's hearing this, it's a miracle. He just, my God, It was an elective, it was German class. And just one day he had had just about enough of I guess staring at me as I exited the building. And he just asked me, and it was so like, Excuse me? But it was so Excuse me, that I couldn't be that upset, I was like, I have never been asked that quite that way before. And he actually like, we talked about it, and he listened. So I couldn't even, I wanted him to be ignorant about it, so I had justification for being mad before, but he was totally fine, and I couldn't. So, And then there was my friend Alex who just asked the questions in a very like bulleted way and then took it all in and googled CP later that day.

Emily: See, I feel like that's kinda the right way to do it.

Kyle: Oh, yeah, cause I remember saying to him I'm like, Look, you're gonna probably google CP later, and you're gonna see things that aren't me, and I want you to know that. And he was like, How did you know I was gonna do that? I was like Well, that's what I would do

Emily: I don't recall, and I'm sure if I sat and thought about it long enough, I would, times when people asked me, you know, certain questions about my disability, but something is nagging at me right now. I can remember where I was and that I got an obnoxious comment about my wheelchair. I can clearly picture where I was on campus, but I can't remember what the comment was, so I don't really know what that says about the whole incident. But the point is that people made obnoxious comments to me about disability. I mean being a college student doesn't make you any more involved or less liable to make obnoxious comments. You know, it's just like a bubble of the real world.

Kyle: You had to need that though, cause I mean if you get that for the first time, outside of a kind of bubble, you're just not prepared for it, I think.

Emily: I mean, I got it in high school too.

Kyle: Oh, I didn't.

Emily: And I've gotten it my whole life, well.

Kyle: My high school was a bubble, yeah. But I remember like my first professor ever, I had to take this English course that they make every incoming student take, period. And it's because where I lived has a very high population of Chinese American immigrants and their children who just don't speak English as their first language, so they make everyone who goes there, take this

course. Native speaker or not. Because what you end up with is like an 80/20 ratio to second language learners to native speakers. And it was English class but it was like, it really was social justice 101. And it was like real social justice, right, not like the Tumblr crap that goes on today. But when my professor, professor Honoria Flores learned that I was disabled, I too was tokenized, and became like Oh you see, here's a minority that is so underrepresented that I forgot to talk about them at all, and that's what that was for the rest of my time with her. And it was okay because she meant well, but it was like my first taste of Alright, like enough.

Emily: I made things about disability whenever I could. And I know that's not everybody's style, but that was my style and it worked for me. I specifically remember having a real problem with the concept of disability awareness and one of the resident assistants in my hall, got it in her head that she could come and ask me to borrow my wheelchair for a simulation event. And I was like Sure, take my durable medical equipment.

Kyle: The one that you're currently sitting in?

Emily: Yeah, please take my durable medical equipment. Go let other people use it for fun in another room, while I sit here, on my bed, cause I can't go anywhere, cause you took my fucking wheelchair, you idiot.

Kyle: What, you mean that you don't have spares that you could just lend out to people?

Emily: No, I actually own a manual chair and a power chair, but that's not the point.

Kyle: Okay, but still.

Emily: You can't have my wheelchair. No. That's what I said about college not making people any more involved humans. But the point being that I had a big issue with disability awareness So I wrote an op-ed for my college's newspaper, talking about why disability awareness is not effective. We need to move beyond that. Simulations are not effective. We need to move beyond, and I do not like the juxtaposition of disability awareness with alcoholism awareness.

Kyle: Why would you even do that?

Emily: So, one week it was disability awareness, followed by alcoholism awareness.

Kyle: Oh, okay, that's not great, but it's less bad.

Emily: But I just kind of felt like it implied, you know, that disability is something that needs to be fixed, in the same way that alcoholism is something that needs to be fixed. So, I was not having it. And the moral of this very long story is that by writing the op-ed in my college newspaper, by being open and willing to take on a little conflict about disability, I think I made some pretty substantial changes on my campus. And I think I got people to recognize that they should look at me as a disabled woman, but not look at me as some kind of monster, you know. College is where I explored my ability to really put myself out there, not that I didn't do that in you know, grade school. But college is where I learned that I actually had some autonomy in how people perceived disability.

Kyle: I remember when I made a friend who didn't bring it up for like too long, and I was just, it made me uncomfortable cause I was so used to there being like a threshold point where everyone I had met at that time, would eventually ask and she didn't. I was the one that brought it up, I was like, Hey you know I'm like fu%&ed up, right? Or something like that, but she was like Yeah, I know. And that was it. But my most memorable experience with disability in college had to be during my senior year. My major had this thing called like a special project, or something, that was like a thesis, but not a thesis, but counted as a thesis, so it was my thesis. And it was like a one-on-one thing with a professor, and I couldn't meet him one day because I was just in so much pain and I told him that, and he looked at me. He went Yeah, you're a little disabled, aren't ya? And I said, That's exactly what I would say, yeah. And that was it.

Emily: Oh my word.

Kyle: And here's another one, I wanted to be mad at him, but the I looked on the wall and saw his full name was Michael Jackson Newman, and I was like, I can't be mad at somebody named Michael Jackson

Emily: You let people off the hook too easily.

Kyle: What was I gonna do? He was in charge in my being able to graduate. It was funny

Emily: Yeah, I definitely had to succumb to beurocracy at a couple points in time. I also had a weird experience because I was the first wheelchair user in the honors program at my college, and I think that confounded the crap out of them.

Kyle: What? Somebody in a wheelchair who's smart?

Emily: Like they were not ready for me, at all. It was kinda funny.

Kyle: I don't even know what that is. That is ridiculous.

Emily: I remember that, you know, the professors would like host events at their house. My college was in like a pretty wealthy area and the professors lived nearby in these like big sprawling houses, and they would like host stuff at their house and I'd be like Hi, you can't do that. So, yeah there were often times where I would feel kind of excluded on the basis of disability, especially when there were like events and things that were kind of out of my reach. And there was like this one inaccessible room in one of the buildings on campus, and they would host events in that room. And I wanted to go to one of the events, and I was like You're gonna stop hosting them in this room. Move it to a different room. There are many rooms on this campus. Stop causing problems that don't need to be problems.

Kyle: What was your most, I don't wanna say clever but like, was there ever a time in your college career that a professor came up with a clever way to accommodate you that wasn't sort of normal? Or that wasn't within the realm of what they normally do?

Emily: Wow, that's a great question.

Kyle: Because I have one. But I'm curious. I wanna know if you have one.

Emily: Oh, my gosh. I don't even know. It's gonna come to me after we record. I mean, I think that professors tried to accommodate me as much as they could. I know that I wanted to do one of my honors college's book clubs one month. And so I asked the dean of the honors program, who would host these dinners at his house for the book club, I was like Can we please host it on campus? And so, he booked a room on campus, but then the problem was that then he couldn't cook for the event, and so I think mostly I just threw a lot of things off kilter, but I don't really care. Ask me if I'm sorry, cause I'm not. But I can't think of a particularly clever accommodation, although I guarantee you it'll come to me if I think about it long enough.

Kyle: I had two. One was way more clever but-

Emily: Do tell.

Kyle: One was like a nonsense music class that I had to take for gen-ed and it was just the way that she did attendance was just not, like I sat in the front, but the way the attendance was done, it was up on a stage that had stairs on it. And I was like I'm not doing that every day. I'm not doing that, ever. So like one day I pulled her aside and I'm like If you see me, can you just mark me down as present? Cause I can't climb those stairs, I mean I can but it would hold up the entire, everyone else. And so every day after that she was like you're here. I see you.

Emily: Is there a point to that?

Kyle: What, attendance?

Emily: No. Needing to walk upstairs just for the sake of attendance.

Kyle: No, it was on a stage. It was in like a music performance room. So like the professor stood on the stage, and I could sit on the front, but she'd put the attendance sheet on the stage, and most people would just walk in, sign the sheet, walk down, and sit

Emily: Oh, Oh, Oh. That is not at all what I thought you meant. I thought you meant that every person got called up to the stage and had to like go up there one by one.

Kyle: Oh, no, that would be ridiculous. That would be, no.

Emily: Okay.

Kyle: Yeah, but ever since that day, she was like You're here, and I was like Yep. And the second one was, I took a human bone course and the room it was in was affectionately named the bone room, because innuendo aside, there was bones in it. And I had a bunch of issues with the way that the professor did the exam because what he would do, is he would lay different bones on different sections of each desk and there were like the big long science class in high school desks. You know, the big black desks

Emily: Yeah, I know exactly what you're talking about.

Kyle: yeah, and there would be different bones on like different parts of each desk. And so what he would do was have the whole class line up outside of the room and then you'd sort of do a konga line throughout the room and out and around, marking your test paper after you have

identified which bone it is. Now, for me, that was horrible unless I was at the very front or very back of the line, and I never was because I was never that early or that late. So, one day I was like Look I'm gonna fail every single one of your exams. Can I go first or last, can you make sure I'm always first or last? And he was like Yeah. And we ended up, I did my exams like ten minutes after everyone else and he waited for everyone else to leave so that no one could, you know, give me answers, and he was cool about it. I ended up dropping the class because of hurricane Sandy. Because by the time, my college was closed for like two weeks, and that was the class I cared the least about so like I forgot everything by the time the class came back, but I'll never forget him. Well, I don't remember his name because it was like the coolest thing that a professor did because it was just so, it made so much sense to do it that way. He got to keep his method and I still got accommodated.

Emily: I still can't think of anything particularly awesome. I know that in the archaeology course that I took, we were supposed to go to, you know, like the Museum of Natural History or like the MET or something. And now I've been, but in college I was kinda scared to take the train into the city by myself, so rather than go, he let me, the professor let me view online exhibitions and write a paper about that.

Kyle: We had to do that for extra credit once I took a summer course once and we had to go to the Museum of Natural History for extra credit, and we all wanted extra credit but not all of us wanted to go to the museum. But the professor made it so that he would only do it if all of us agreed to go to the museum, so there was like a very big fight one day. We ended up doing it.

Emily: That's dramatic.

Kyle: Yeah, but he didn't want any part in it. He was like Just figure it out amongst yourselves.

Emily: Ok, so here's an unrelated question for you.

Kyle: Sure.

Emily: Did you have any disabled professors?

Kyle: Ooh. Oh. Oh, man. Um, no. Well, that depends on what you call a disability. I've had professors with you know, really bad anxiety and like SAD that did affect their ability to come in and teach some days. You know, that doesn't fall under the umbrella for disabilities for some people. I would say it is, but some people don't. so, not really, but sort of, but not physically.

Emily: I guess the better question probably would've been: Did you have any professor who disclosed their disabilities?

Kyle: I mean, no. Except for the ones that did about the like SAD and stuff, but no.

Emily: Yeah, because I did not have any professors that I recall, who disclosed, but in my senior year last semester, I needed to take like a random credit, and so there was this Sex Ed class that everyone signed up for in their last semester of senior year as like a joke. Just because it gave you credit, and then you could graduate, and it was like a ridiculous class. But the professor was this old blind guy, and it was a social experiment, for real, watching people's reactions to an old

blind guy teaching sex ed. And sometimes he was a little weird, not related to disability, he was just like a weird guy, but sometimes I found it interesting because he was teaching about specific anatomy, and he would describe the anatomy by feeling his way around a life-like replica. And I thought it was just interesting to watch how he adapted his course material, but the students took so much advantage of him. Like students would sign the paper saying they were in the class, and then get up and leave, or you know. I mean, that's awful, it's just awful. I mean, the only thing I will say, and this is horrible, but I took total advantage of the fact that I could like be on my cell and computer the whole time and he would have no idea.

Kyle: Yeah.

Emily: I feel like a piece of crap for that now.

Kyle: Although I didn't have, I've never had a professor with a problem with laptops. None, not a single one.

Emily: Yeah, I don't think I had anyone who had issues with that either. But there were definitely classes where I knew you just don't take it out. You just know.

Kyle: Yeah, seminar classes, I suppose, you could, but you're gonna be that guy if you do, because there was only like ten people in the class.

Emily: Oh my God, yeah we had these classes where we would sit around on these big like board room meeting tables. Oh my God.

Kyle: Yep, yep, yep. Exactly.

Emily: You know what, so, I think that I want to come to some kind of conclusion on all of this because my hope is that in all of this reminiscing even the negative aspects of it, it shows that you know, to Nicole, who asked us to do this and to anyone who's getting ready to go to college, that you're not alone in these What the hell am I doing feelings.

Kyle: Yeah I mean, you know, we came out okay.

Emily: Debatable, but I think so. And also, on top of that, college was by no means a series of all bad experiences like at all for me. I know that's not the case for everyone, but for me, I feel very lucky that my college experience was overwhelmingly positive.

Kyle: So was mine. I mean, I would say we did turn out okay, Emily. We're employed grads.

Emily: Oh, my god, you're right! Good on us.

Kyle: It's definitely because we're disabled, a hundred percent.

Emily: A hundred percent.

Kyle: If you want to be an employed graduate, just break your legs before you graduate. You'll be fine. Please don't do that. This is a joke, because I know that on the internet, sarcasm is a thing that you have to explicitly mention, otherwise it's wrong.

Emily: College was such a good time in my life though, you know. That's not to say there weren't really hard moments, but the reality is that a lot of those hard moments were not even related to my disability, whatsoever.

Kyle: Yeah I had a lot of, like some of my worse moments in my life happened during my college career and it had nothing to do with college or being disabled. It was just the way the cards fell. Consequently, it was also fun, you know. Even though I was a commuter with two friends and they both graduated before me so when it was my turn I was all- but still, it was funny, you know. It was all just, it was cool. It was cool.

Emily: I guess I've always been the more social butterfly of the two of us. That's putting it lightly

Kyle: No, yeah.

Emily: But yeah, I feel like lucky because I found a lot of really good friends in college, but the reality is since I've graduated I probably can count the number of people from college who I talk to on any regular basis, just on my two hands, and to some people that sounds like a lot, but to me, I've realized that- be friendly with whoever you want in college, but just remember that not everyone is gonna be your best friend for life. If you find best friends for life in college, that's amazing, but also remember that college doesn't define the rest of your life either.

Kyle: Surely not. Neither does high school. If you think, if you're going to college, the friends that you have now, you're not gonna have them, probably, and that's okay too.

Emily: You know, leaving behind high school I think, was one of the best things ever.

Kyle: Yeah.

Emily: And the people who still matter to me from high school, are the people who I still talk to. Everyone else I lost touch with. Fine

Kyle: Yep. I don't care. I hope they're well. That's about it.

Emily: Oh, I have no ill will.

Kyle: No, I have ill wills on one guy. Just one.

Emily: Okay, I actually hate a lot of people, but.

Kyle: Nah, I only got one, and I know his life sucks, so.

Emily: Oh, my God. Two girls, Bridget and Amanda. Oh, my God.

Kyle: Yo, fuck all those people, right? Or were they your best friends.

Emily: No, I hated them so much. So much

Kyle: Okay

Emily: Anyway, that's petty and ridiculous. The point is that yeah, transitioning from high school to college is scary, and college is probably just gonna be a series of scary moments, but I meant that in the best possible way. College is a time when you're gonna learn so much about yourself as a person, and when you're probably gonna have to stick up for yourself a little bit, in some cases. And that's really hard, but so worth it, and that is a skill that you are going to carry with you

Kyle: And use for the rest of your life too.

Emily: yeah.

Kyle: so yeah, I guess my final takeaway is Go for it, kid.

Emily: My final takeaway is it's just gonna be another chapter of life. Just take it on like you've taken on every other chapter of life.

Kyle: You sound like you're about to write Eat, Pray Love 2.

Emily: Okay, first of all, I love Eat, Pray, Love.

Kyle: Of course you do, oh my God. Of course you do.

Emily: And second of all-

Kyle: Did you have Live Laugh Love on you dorm room wall too?

Emily: Um, oh, no. Do you wanna know what we had on our dorm room walls?

Kyle: Yes I do.

Emily: We had post-it notes with funny things that people said at various times. We had condoms, just stuck along the wall to the entryway of our dorm room and at one point there was a recording- not a recording, a performance of the vagina monologues. And they were giving out chocolate vagina pops, and instead of eating them, we just stuck them on our wall, So.

Kyle: I wouldn't eat that, I'd keep that forever.

Emily: I mean, I did eat one, but yeah. And then we also had like Disney posters and like photos of people, and I had a lot of Any Warhol stuff on my walls. I love Anyd Warhol. So, no you know how weird I am, and Eat, Pray Love is a really good book. Don't hate.

Kyle: I hate.

Emily: Look, I think it's pretty cool that we're actually in a position where we can say like sage things about college because we've been out of it since 2013.

Kyle: I agree. So, go go Nicole and everyone else.

Emily: Get it, Nicole! You know, we've been out of college for four years this month.

Kyle: Jesus Christ.

Emily: So, I'm gonna go have an existential crisis. Thanks for listening.

Kyle: I'm gonna be right there behind you man. See you later. Goodnight.