

Episode 44: Surgery and SADness

E: I don't remember how the intro goes...

E: Hi! I'm Emily Ladau!

K: And I'm Kyle Khachadurian.

E: And you're listening to another episode of "The Accessible Stall."

K: What are we going to talk about today, Emily, and are we going to lose the footage of it this time?

E: ...You mean the audio?

K: ...I do mean the audio.

E: Nobody wants to see this footage.

K: I think they do.

E: So, I don't know about you, but I've been feeling a little sad lately.

K: Me too...the holidays really get to me, and it's the weather, as well.

E: Yeah, and not "sad" like "sad," "sad" like capital "S-A-D."

K: What?? That's a thing? What does it stand for?

E: "Seasonal Affective Disorder."

K: Oh my God, what is that??

E: It's actually a perfect acronym, it's essentially being negatively affected by the weather outside, and the time of year.

K: Are you saying that if you have "SAD," you feel sad...because of your "SAD"?

E: That's exactly what I'm saying.

K: That *is* a perfect acronym, Emily. Did you make it yourself?

E: I sure did, just now—I did not at all pull that from the DSM.

K: Wow, you should be famous.

E: Is that *in* the DSM?

K: Who knows.

E: Is “Seasonal Affective Disorder” legitimate?

K: Probably. We’ll look it up and we’ll let people know. Oh, it’s legitimate—if it’s not in the book it’s still real. But I think we should talk about it because we’re both sort of going through it right now.

E: As evidenced by the slight lack of...I would say pep in our step but...let’s be real.

Neither of us have peppy steps, and also we’re not steppin’ right now.

K: Hey, speak for yourself, I have plenty of pep in my step.

E: You have kind of like a wobble. In a nice CP sort of way.

K: Yeah, no, I look like a grandfather clock. Like anyone...I mean, seriously, I’m a mess.

E: I don’t think so, I mean the good news is...I was going to say the good news it you can walk, but that’s really ableist...

K: No, that’s pretty good news. That’s true, it is, but it’s also good news. To me, anyway.

E: Incidentally, before this, we were talking about the concept of people amputating their legs if they have some kind of an orthopedic disability, replacing them with prosthetics so that they can walk.

K: You know, now that you say it on air, it sounds like that might have been a better episode, but too late for that!

E: We could talk about that. ...For, like, a minute.

K: Yeah, alright. Sure. Go for it.

E: See, this is what happens when you’re seasonally affected. You’re just all over the place. ...I don’t know, I can’t even imagine what my life would be like if my parents had

chosen to intentionally have my legs amputated in the hopes that I would be able to walk better.

K: Me neither. Although it's funny because that's how I found out that CP affects your brain—I had that thought when I was a little kid, I've probably mentioned that on the show. I've definitely told you that. That one day when I was six or seven or eight and I was sort of realizing that I was different even though I always sort of knew—but I was sort of really coming into knowing what it was—I remember asking my parents, “Well, if my legs don't work, why don't you just amputate them and replace them with prosthetics that are objectively better, because they won't have CP and they're made of metal and they're less destructive and they're lighter and just...everything about artificial legs would be better.” And then that's when my mom told me that it wasn't my legs, it was my brain that didn't work and that my legs are actually fine. As a kid, I was like, “Oh.” But years later, I realized that that's a heavy conversation to have with your young son—it probably affected her at the time a lot more than me.

E: I mean, heavy in a productive way, though.

K: Oh, for sure. Not negatively. But I feel like maybe if I were her, that would hit me a little bit. I should ask her about that one day.

E: I suppose that, actually, the idea of having surgery to make parts of my body work better has never gone according to plan. A lot of the surgeries that I had when I was a baby to try to fix knee contractions and hip dislocation and whatever fun stuff, they put all this hardware in, and then I started seeing another doctor and they took all the hardware out.

K: Really?

E: Yeah. So, I don't know. I think that some doctors are really overeager to try to fix you and make you work a certain way.

K: I think I agree, but I have to say that all of my surgeries have been hugely successful in what they were intended for.

E: Well, the one surgery in particular I had that was definitely the most successful was—I mean, I've had a few, none of them were failures or anything, they just didn't have the intended effect. But the most effective surgery I had was one where I couldn't even have felt tangible results. They were straightening a curve in my spine and there wasn't a way to feel that my spine is curved. You don't feel that. You can, but..

K: I guess so. That's true.

E: So basically, they showed me MRIs and X-rays and they were like, “No really, but the spine in your neck, your cervical spine, is in the shape of an S. And if you don't fix it, you can end up becoming completely paralyzed or it can kill you.” And then they were like, “So, you can have surgery to fix it, and the surgery can cause you to become completely paralyzed or it can kill you.”

K: I mean, with those odds, why not, right? If either one might happen anyway...you may as well take the bet.

E: But, it wasn't like I felt it, and could be like, “Yeah, this is wrong and I need you to fix it because it's affecting my function right now.”

K: You know, it's funny, as you were talking I thought of all the surgical options available to me at this age with CP. And there are some, right, there are a lot of them—some of them I'm too old for, or I'm too mild for. Like the SDR, “Selective Dorsal Rhizotomy,” which special needs parents across the globe treat like a Godsend miracle cure...

E: Are you calling [it], like, special needs parents' trademark?

K: Yes, I'm using that term extremely in jest.

E: That's kind of what I figured, but I would double check.

K: Essentially what they do is they flip you over onto your back and they poke your spine until they find one of your nerves that are over-firing, so they make you spaz more, and then they cut them. And if you are a candidate for this kind of surgery—and I'm not, because I don't have enough CP—it can massively improve your ability to maneuver, or not.

E: Can it also go horribly wrong, and/or do nothing?

K: Yes, but that was never available to me. But it's something that as I start to follow more people with CP on the internet, and in the world, it's almost like a meme in our community, where it's like, "Have you tried yoga? No. Have you tried SDR?" There are other surgical options that are available to people like me, and when I was younger I was so against that, because I had this enormous fear of surgery. To the point where it was irrational, because it would never happen by accident.

E: Was it the fear of going under, or the actual surgery, or...

K: No, it was all going under. Couldn't handle that.

E: Oh my God, me, too! Like, I don't care what you do to me while I'm sleeping, but holy hell, the thought of that particular moment...I almost feel like we should put a trigger-warning on this episode, because I guarantee we aren't the only people who are scared out of our minds about that.

K: Consider this that. But it was hellish, truly, and I know that as an adult now I probably could go along with it, but I also know that the moment before, I'll have flashbacks to being a kid and it would temporarily stun me, or paralyze me, or whatever.

E: I had elective surgery shortly after I had my neck surgery, and literally, while they were making me inhale something to keep my airways open so that they could intubate me—because they had to be really careful, because I'd had neck surgery—I'm sitting there and I'm thinking, "I signed the papers for this surgery. If I just say right now that I don't want to do this, I could just yank this needle out of my arm and get up and go."

K: It's a bit surreal, isn't it...you're actually in control up until the last second. But the surgeries available to me now—now I'm not against surgery. At all. But I often wonder if the ones available are worth doing, because...I'm fine with this, and unless such a procedure would offer a huge, massive improvement to my mobility, then I'm pretty much at an "I don't want to bother" stage. I remember when I was in high school, one of my physical therapists would tell me about this procedure that would make the lengths of my legs equal, because one of my legs was, like, a centimeter longer than the other.

E: Was it some kind of a limb lengthening procedure? Where you had to...

K: No, it was a limb *shortening* procedure, where they would make the longer one smaller. And it was like, "Well, your limp will be gone, but you'll be shorter." And I was like, "...I don't want to be shorter."

E: I think about this so much, like there are so many pros and cons. I know that limb lengthening surgery is something that's very divisive, especially in the little person community, so—I know little people who have had limb lengthening, and then I know little people who are so vehemently against it, because it's completely body-altering. But the people who have had it, their argument is less so that they're unhappy with their height and more so that their height literally makes it difficult to function in the world. And so, by lengthening their limbs, it can make it a little bit easier. That being said,

though, the pain of going through stuff like that—you have to get these things called external fixtures put on your legs, and you literally crank the length of your leg.

K: (Sigh of discomfort)

E: So, for me, I guess sort of in a similar way, but not really—my arms don't go out all the way, my arms only extend to 90 degrees, so my elbows are kind of locked at a 90 degree angle. There is a surgical way, I believe, to get my arms to straighten, but I don't think that's the kind of pain that I would want to go through for that. So I guess it kind of raises the question, especially if surgical intervention is optional, of what would drive somebody to pick that?

K: I mean, it's personal choice. That's really what it comes down to.

E: Yeah, you're right.

K: If you're willing to put up with it... I don't know, I just, for me, there's not enough gain, but I guess if I were a different person I would appreciate a marginal gain, at any cost. That's just not for me, but I could definitely see—that doesn't scream a strange type of person to me, that just seems like...not me.

E: I think the personal choice thing is actually a big thing, because I can't even imagine if my parents had had me undergo surgery that was their decision for me to do it, and then I would have to live with whatever the outcome was for the rest of my life. I think that it's tough, because a lot of these surgeries are things where you have to act while the child is young, in order to be the most effective, but at the same time, I also feel like the child needs to have full input because it's their life that's going to be impacted whatever the outcome of the surgery.

K: I agree with you, but I don't resent my parents, nor regret their decision to do that exact thing to me one bit. In fact, quite the opposite, I am eternally grateful for them doing that.

E: To do what?

K: I don't know the exact names of the procedures that I had because I'm such a good, well-educated, well-informed disabled person.

E: Trademark.

K: Yes, trademark. However, had I not had the surgeries that I did have at approximately the ages of 5 and 7, my CP level would be the same but my mobility would be severely limited, because it wasn't so much the procedure that fixed whatever mobility impairments I don't have because I had the surgery—instead the procedures made my muscles loose enough to be able to be retrained through many, many, many, many years of physical therapy. So, it was the PT that did all the heavy lifting, but without the surgery, my muscles—and all that—wouldn't have gotten to the point where they would be able to be retrained. At least that's how I understand it. So it's very likely that I would at least use crutches, and perhaps maybe even a manual wheelchair. Not that there's anything wrong with that. But I am this version of me, and therefore I can't imagine a life like that. Not that it's bad, I just literally can't imagine it.

E: But how can you envision something that you haven't experienced?

K: Yeah.

E: I get what you mean. I don't know, I'm sure there are plenty of surgical interventions that could have been done when I was younger, that perhaps would have been useful, but—I don't have full recollection of this, but—I know that when I was about 7 or 8 there was actually a surgery that was planned for me to have, and then I ended up going back

to the doctor's office, this was right around my birthday, too, and the surgeon was like, I actually changed my mind and don't think we should do this surgery on you. It was something on one of my legs. I was so relieved and excited, and somewhere in my really young mind, I understood the magnitude of somebody deciding that they were going to do surgery and then changing their mind, because they thought it had the lifelong impact of it.

K: Yeah. And that's a good point, because—I'm not a parent myself, but—sometimes I wonder with these, again, special needs parent TM, where they hear these things that are essentially huge, humongous undertakings for themselves and their children, that all they're focused on is tomorrow and not twenty years from now. Or maybe even the opposite, maybe they're only focused on twenty years from now and don't see what's in front of them for tomorrow, and I think that either of those outlooks is really—not that they're bad, but—both of them are quite literally short-sighted. And when you're talking about something like a surgery, you have to really do like you did and consider every possible angle, even if you're that young—I don't think that's completely out of the ordinary.

E: No, no, but what is out of the ordinary—sometimes, unfortunately—is having family members who don't try to push and push and push to have you surgically turned into a “better version of yourself.”

K: No, my parents did that, though. They did. Sorry I interrupted you, but it's totally, exactly the point that you're trying to make.

E: I guess it depends on the situation, but I know for me, obviously I have zero recollection of the surgery I had as a baby and no one can say jack about whether it really did anything or me, but I can say that as many times as surgical options were

brought up to me, my parents had the—...you know what, this is all because my mom is disabled, and she knew exactly what it was like to go through surgery after surgery, and, she told me this before, to have her parents pulled out of the room to talk to the doctor while she was just supposed to sit there. And she learned after a while that when her parents left the the room, they were going to come back in and tell her that she was going to have surgery.

K: Really?

E: She was never really consulted. So my parents just consciously chose never to do that to me. And to always be like, “Hey, this is what’s happening.”

K: That’s admirable. I’m trying to remember if my parents did the same to me. I imagine that they didn’t. I imagine that they just heard a doctor say that your son will walk better, or walk at all, and they were just like, “Take him and do whatever you need.” But the last surgery I had had nothing to do with CP, it was something that I absolutely needed and so it didn’t matter whether or not I wanted it, because it had to happen. ...I did want it, it was just something that even if I didn’t, it was going to happen...

E: I don’t think that’s any kind of parental flaw, especially not when you were younger, and you couldn’t jump on the internet and google everything about a particular procedure. You know?

K: Right. You needed to consult the doctor, like you couldn’t do anything yourself.

E: I mean, you can grab a medical textbook, but really, let’s be real. What I mean is, my parents probably approached it differently because of my mom’s experience, but I don’t blame the average parent for going with whatever the doctor says. Especially because of the fact that they have no prior knowledge of disability, so they’re relying on medical professionals. But now, nowadays my hope would be that if a parent was confronted

with a particular surgery option for a child, and the child was really too young to have authority over the situation, the parent would do their due diligence.

K: Yes, I agree. I mean, I'm thinking, "What if it's something that the child really needs and is too young to understand why they do need it, and even though they don't want it, they have to do it because in the long run it really will benefit them," but I think that's a whole different...

E: I think that's a separate thing.

K: Yeah, I agree, that's not for today.

E: But the long and short of it is that there are some times when something is just not optional—when a medical intervention really is the only way to ensure a child's wellbeing, but that often comes more with things like...your kid has a hole in their heart.

K: Yeah, I mean, that's extreme, but yes.

E: Well I guess I only think about that because my particular disability—Larson's Syndrome—can come with a lot of cardiac issues, I just didn't really get that side of things.

K: CP, too. I was one of the lucky ones.

E: I guess I have some things that are possibly related, but on the whole I've never had to have open heart surgery because of anything disability-related.

K: But at the same time, my life probably—I say probably because, you know, there's no such thing as a crystal ball, but—if I didn't have any of the surgeries, my life would have been, being generous, it would have been different. It wouldn't have been worse... But I say that from this angle here, in this version of me right now. I don't know...

E: Yeah, you wouldn't have known any better. That's kind of like me, I just don't know a life where walking is an easy thing for me to do, so I'm okay with that. But, I don't know,

I've never really wondered whether surgical interventions would have done anything for me. I do know that there was one time when surgery saved my life, potentially, and that was the big surgery that I was talking about before. And at that point, I was 17 years old, and I was very actively part of the decision to have the surgery.

K: ...Yeah, but I mean, if you said no, your parents, I imagine—they're good people, do you think they would have let you just say, "Well, ok."

E: Nope. That was non-negotiable.

K: Of course not. Exactly, that's what I'm saying! I understand your case is extreme because it was potentially-life-saving, but...that line is somehow blurry and not at the same time.

E: But now, as a result of the surgery, a problem that was never there before was having a lot of neck pain, and now I have a lot of neck pain. And so, the thing that overall was supposed to ensure that my life is preserved also caused ridiculous amounts of pain on any given day. Lots of that is also due to my computer usage and cell phone usage and generally-terrible ergonomic setup, but, you know...

K: To that end, I suppose that my surgeries gave me the first instance of CP-pain, because at the time it wasn't CP-pain, it was, "Oh, you've just had orthopedic surgery, yeah, people get pain in the areas in which they've had orthopedic surgery." That's a normal thing, no one knows why it happens but it happens to everyone. And at the time that that was true, it was like, oh, I could just take Motrin and it would go away for a while. As I got older it got worse and it became...different, but, you know, I suppose without having the surgeries I would have experienced CP pain potentially later in life. But instead it got a head start, I guess.

E: Yeah, like once you have surgery on something, I know that they say that it's supposed to eliminate pain in a lot of cases but...nah.

K: Small price to pay, honestly, though. It really is, because I've lived with it all my life where it's like... Again, I don't know a life where I wasn't able to walk, but I feel like, for me that's a fair trade. I realize talking to you that's a bit...

E: Well, I no longer remember a life where my neck didn't hurt, because I'm so far removed from being 17 years old—that was 10 years ago.

K: Jesus Christ, we're getting old, Emily.

E: Wow, this is not where I was expecting this conversation to go at all.

K: Sudden existential crisis!

E: Well, I suppose existentialism is a good segway back into Seasonal Affective Disorder, and this can just be a two-topic episode.

K: Hell yeah it can.

E: So now that we discussed surgery, let's talk about being seasonally depressed. Which I am.

K: Well, it sucks a lot. I'll give you that. I don't know what to say about it other than it happens to other people, too; you're not alone; and it's totally normal.

E: I think we need to be nicer to ourselves.

K: I think everybody needs to be nicer to themselves.

E: ...Not everybody. Like, Jeffrey Dahmer doesn't need to be nicer to himself.

K: I mean, you picked a serial killer. In general, people should. It's funny, because—selfishness, right, is something that is generally seen as a negative aspect in somebody, but I kind of think that a certain amount of it is not only healthy, but necessary. Because if you take care of yourself and learn to—I don't want to say “love yourself,” because

that's cliché and also hard to do when you're dealing with SAD, but if you don't take care of yourself, you're not being the best version of yourself to other people, either.

E: I know that very objectively and should probably also write it on several million post-it notes and put them everywhere.

K: No, but that's the point, right, because even though you know that, none of that matters because the sky is gray and you are sad.

E: Yeah, man. Weather really does me in. I mean, I will never live anywhere but the Northeast, so I'm aware that this is just how it is up here, but oh my goodness. Once it's, like, November, I'm over it.

K: I say every year, I'm very seldom aware of my SAD, but I know it's there, because every summer I make it a point to say, "The weather cured my depression." There's always a day of the year where I will say that, and I will mean it. I mean in jest, because you can't really cure depression, of course. But like, there will come a day where I just feel so good and it's got nothing to do with anything except the weather. To the point where I could have a bad day and still feel better than a good day in the winter.

E: That's me in the spring and the fall. I'm, like, whatever in the summer. The winter, just—down with the winter. Sorry if you're a winter lover out there, but oh my goodness....snow is only good for me inside, and only good until people drive over it and dogs pee in it and then it's ugly.

K: I love the cold weather, the cold weather does not love me, and I hate the snow.

E: You know, that's probably a good way to explain it. Being cold is okay because you can put lots of layers on, but the cold weather is difficult to navigate, and it makes you hurt. I hurt worse in the winter.

K: I've never met a single person with CP who likes the winter. I mean, they might like snow and they might think it's pretty and they might like the holidays, but if you ask their opinion on winter the season, I've not met a single one that likes it. In fact, I've not met a single one that doesn't hate it.

E: That's because winter is bad.

K: Yeah, but, it's just an odd coincidence. You'd think there'd be one. Somebody, somewhere.

E: Oh, there are totally people who like the winter.

K: That's going to be our hate mail for this episode.

E: You know what, hate away. I don't even care.

K: Dear Kyle and Emily, I'll have you know the winter is great. Signed, a literal snow angel.

E: It's nice for like two seconds, but when you have to go out in it...it no longer is nice and it's just a giant nuisance.

K: Does it not also make an already-inaccessible world worse?

E: Yeah, but that's not why the SAD kicks in. I just don't like it when—

K: Oh, of course not, it just doesn't help. It's not even the cold either, for me the SAD kicks in when the sun starts going down at 5:00.

E: Yeah. But I don't think I've fully mastered what to do to handle that. One thing that I definitely did differently this year which actually is helping is I'm Jewish so I don't decorate for Christmas, but we went a little bit all out decorating for winter, and that's really nice. So despite my dislike of winter, I like winter color palettes.

K: Oh yeah, and I love the holidays, and Christmas is my favorite day of the year.

E: Christmas is not my favorite day.

K: Well, it wouldn't make sense for it to be your favorite day, but it's my family's day.

E: Well actually, Christmas is go to the movies and eat Chinese food day for me every year without fail with one of my best friends. And we're doing it again this year, so I guess I can't really complain. It's just, I don't like it because it's Christmas.

K: What's wrong with Christmas?

E: No, I mean my reason for liking December 25th is not because it's Christmas.

K: Oh, I get it, I get it, I get it.

E: It's because it's annual "See a Movie and Then Stuff Your Face With Chinese Food Day," which is always a good day.

K: For me it's just like, family gifts, food, sweaters, and one week til Armenian Christmas. Which is, like, the best Christmas. Which Catholics call "Three Kings Day," in case you were wondering what that is.

E: I kind of want to experience Armenian Christmas.

K: If you know anyone who's Catholic, Orthodox, Armenian or probably Greek, too, all you have to do is ask them.

E: Kyle, I'm asking you right now.

K: It's pretty great. Two years ago, or some recent time ago, me and my family went to church which is, like, hilarious, because we don't do that, and we all said our yearly prayer and we ate delicious food, and it was amazing. It was just so good.

E: I mean, let's be real, holidays are all about the food, right?

K: For me it's food and family but if I had to pick one I'd honestly pick the food. Here's the thing—I love my family, but they're always there. Christmas dinner is not always there. Christmas dinner is only there on Christmas. Like, I love my family, don't misunderstand... Oh, you know what else gets me about the winter, like truly, in relation

to the holidays? I love giving gifts, but I have the stupidest anxiety in the world when it comes to getting gifts. Because I am notoriously hard to shop for. It's true, I mean you should know this.

E: I have you figured out, it's fine.

K: Well, yeah, if you know me it's fine. But I can't tell you, and I feel so bad, the amount of times I've had to feign appreciation for a crappy gift. But here's the thing, though—If you nail a gift, I keep you, because that means you pay attention. I have this, like, mental list of people who have given me—and you're on it, don't worry.

E: That's some harsh judgment.

K: No I'm serious, look, I have no doubt I've also given a crappy gift. It is the thought that counts...

E: Not to me.

K: Not to you? What are you talking about?

E: I don't think I've ever gotten a crappy gift from you.

K: Oh, no, I didn't mean—thank you. But I mean to say, I'm obviously going to be thankful. It really is the thought that counts, but I just have this stupid social anxiety where I can't just smile and say thank you. I mean, I do it, but—

E: I have the reverse social anxiety where getting gifts is a challenge for me, because I don't know how people will feel about me spending money on them. And I think that the whole idea of gift giving can be really difficult, because there's always this expectation of reciprocity, and that's not easy for some people.

K: I agree, but I still love to give gifts. I really do.

E: Oh, yeah, me too. I'm not saying that I don't like giving gifts, I'm saying that I always get concerned that it's going to make somebody feel weird.

K: True, although—as long as we’re still on this topic, I find it funny that we relegate giving gifts to specific days. Or regulate, I don’t know why I said—

E: No, relegate, it is relegate.

K: Oh, it is relegate. Smart. I don’t know, because if I see something for someone, I just get it if I can. It doesn’t need to be on Christmas...

E: You did that to me earlier this year with the Parks and Rec shirt.

K: See?

E: Kyle’s good, guys, that’s why I keep him around.

K: Really, is that why you keep me around? Not for my smooth, buttery voice?

E: Ugh, I’ve heard so much of it that sometimes I get a little sick of it.

K: Just like...butter.

E: I kid, I kid.

K: It’s fine, I get sick of myself all the time.

E: I’m not sick of you. Although Kyle and I just agreed that if we were to live together we’d literally need separate rooms.

K: Yeah, because we hate each other.

E: Or as Kyle so aptly put it, so we could slam the door on each other.

K: To be honest, we don’t need separate rooms. We just need a door. We could put a door on a wall. ...But I guess that would make it a room, wouldn’t it.

E: Do you mean like a door that goes nowhere, and that when we’re yelling at each other we can just open it and slam it?

K: I meant a door that goes through a hole in the wall, kind of like what a room is, that’s what defines a room, it’s a separate area...

E: What if we had the same room with a door in the middle and there was still open space around the door?

K: So it's sole objective would be to slam?

E: To walk through and slam it and then walk around and go back to the other person's side.

K: Okay that's the dumbest idea I've ever heard, we should do that immediately.

E: I think that would work, though.

K: Of course it would. But it would need to be, like, ADA-compliant, even though we're never actually going to use it as a door.

E: I need to get my wheelchair through it. I need to be able to slam it,

K: But why? You're not going to go through it.

E: Yeah, I'm going to go through it, so I can slam it.

K: Okay, well, you know...

E: Seasonal Affective Disorder, everyone. You know what, it's been a long year, and this is what it's devolved to.

K: No, 2017 has been a great year for everyone who's not a Hollywood A-list celebrity.

Otherwise... No, I actually have zero complaints about 2017, man. Truly.

E: On a personal note I don't have any complaints, but on a broader social, socio-economic, socio-political note...screw everything.

K: Oh, it's awful. But my life's pretty cool.

E: But you know what, because I have to bring it back to the point we were trying to make thirty-eight minutes ago, Seasonal Affective Disorder is real, and it's hard to deal with, and even when things aren't actually going particularly terribly, it's still a perfectly normal feeling to experience depression in the wintertime.

K: We're doing it right now. And it's funny, because I don't know about you, Emily, but does that ever lead to, like, self-guilt? Like, "My life is fine, why do I feel like crap?"

E: Because you're being self-indulgent by letting yourself feel like crap?

K: Yes, and then you also sometimes maybe feel guilty when you do something nice for yourself, because you "should" be feeling like crap? And then it becomes this circle where it's like, "Well I shouldn't feel like crap, my life's great, but I'm going to do something nice for myself so I don't feel like crap, but I don't deserve to feel like crap because my life's great," and it repeats *ad-infinitum* until the weather gets nice.

E: Is it *ad-infinitum* or *ad-infinitum*?

K: It depends on whether you, uh, want to pronounce it right or not.

E: Wait, which is correct?

K: I've always been taught *ad-infinitum* but I learned that expression in college latin class. So that means that—

E: Imma trust that.

K: Well, it's just one of those words. I don't know if you take the Latin pronunciation in English, though. Sometimes you do and sometimes you don't. Like, the expression *ad hoc* is not pronounced "ad hoc" in Latin. But it is in English.

E: How is it pronounced?

K: Well, are you speaking Church Latin, like the Catholic Church, or are you speaking Classical Latin like the Romans?

E: I'm speaking neither, because I don't.

K: Well, then you say "ad hoc."

E: How would I say it?

K: Like "odd hoke."

E: I think you're making this up.

K: No, I'm not, I swear.

E: Like "a dock?"

K: Yeah, a dock. Like sitting on a dock by the bay. Precisely.

E: Winter is hard, talk to me again in April.

K: Oh, you know, winter is also—41 minutes—for anyone with CP listening, tell me if I got this right, and I know I do, winter is not only difficult, but it's hazardous, because of ice, am I right? Yeah.

E: That ain't just a CP thing, though.

K. No, it's not—

E. But when you already don't have balance...then sure, it's harder. And the interesting thing is, we have plenty of people, I'm sure, who are listening to this and thinking, "It's not even winter in my part of the world, would you stop being such downers?"

K: If you're from Australia, which I know, like, at least 3 of you are, I'm jealous of your being summer right now.

E: I think that means we need to go to there.

K: Just tangentially related, not at all related to anything we're actually talking about, but Facebook reminded me that on this day last year, my buddy from Australia sent me a Christmas card of a koala bear sun-tanning. And I thought that that was the weirdest thing I've ever seen. Like, what? That doesn't make sense. It's supposed to be cold. But obviously it's not cold there.

E: Just here. Just in our hearts.

K: Yeah. Because we're all Scrooge and grinch.

E: But sometimes you have a really good conversation, and then your heart grows three sizes.

K: Final takeaways, Emily?

E: Even though I want to slam a door in your face, every day, like at least five times a day, I've been really grateful for all that we've done with this podcast in 2017. And that has literally nothing to do with what we've talked about, but that is my final takeaway.

K: And beyond, my friend. My final takeaway is, if your name is Ebenezer Scrooge, you have every right to be a grumpy guy. Because your name is Ebenezer Scrooge. I'm just saying, it sounds like a grumpy name.

E: I say something perfectly nice about you, and you're like, let me talk about Ebenezer.

K: Hey man, A Christmas Story is always on my mind. No, my final takeaway is—on the topic of surgery, do it if you want. On the top of SAD, it's real and you're not alone. And on the topic of this podcast and 2017, we kicked ass, and we're going to keep doing that for as long as we can.

E: I feel like that sums it up pretty nicely.

K: I agree.

E: And Happy Holidays to all, and to all a good night.

K: See you next year.

E: 2018!

K: Here it comes...

E: Are you ready?

K: You're probably going to hear this in—

E: You know, last year we put a video on the page on New Years. Do you remember that? It was us in our pajamas.

K: We've got to do it again, don't we.

E: Let's make a good one.

K: Let's not...make a good one. Let's just make one.

E: Thanks for listening, everybody!

K: Good night. Happy Holidays, Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Happy Kwanzaa, Happy whatever I'm forgetting.

E: Don't do that, you're leaving people out.

K: Okay, Happy Decembermas!

E: Why'd you do that? December!

K: No wait, I forgot the secular people who like Seinfeld. Happy Festivus to the rest of us. There we go—now I've included everyone.

E: Festivus for the rest of us.

K: Remember, kids, put up your Festivus poles. I don't know the rest of it.

E: I don't watch Seinfeld, but I remember that.

K: What?

E: I know, I'm a horrible Jewish person.

K: Okay good night everyone, I have to show Emily Seinfeld!

E: Bye!

