

The Accessible Stall Podcast
Episode 48: An Abundance of Ladaus

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: Hey, Emily?

E: Hey, Kyle.

K: Is there anyone else in here with us this fine evening?

E: There is! My mom is with us! Say "Hi, everybody!"

Mom : Hi Everybody!

K: And why is your mother with us on this fine evening?

E: We have a story for you Kyle

K: Just for me?

E: Kyle, I have been waiting all day to tell you this.

K: I actually have no idea what she's talking about

E: Okay!

Mom: We had our earwax removed today at the ENT office

K: Really?

Mom: And we had a very uncomfortable experience

K: Do tell!

Mom: You tell, Emily

E: I just wanna make sure everybody is clear on the fact that we got our earwax cleaned because that is obviously the crucial detail in the story.

K: I am sure that everyone heard that loud and clear!

(Emily laughs)

E: So now that you know we both have really clean ears...So we were both in our powerchairs today, and we were coming down the hall to exit the doors of the doctor's office and a man is coming out of the elevator just as we were coming down the hallway. And did you stop short, or did he kind of walk into you?

Mom: I think it was a little of both. I mean, we were just kind of going along, maybe we should've been going a little slower, but I stopped a little short, and he was a little stunned by us.

E: So he sort of stumbled over my mom, and then he looked at us and did a little bit of a double take almost. Seeing double.

Mom: Mhmm. Because Emily and I are twins.

K: You are You look exactly the same.

E: So we are gonna like keep going but the the guy gets all excited in sight of us and goes, "Oh my God I wanna see you race! Oh my God, you gotta race, no you gotta race for me! No, I wanna see you race!"

Mom: So we try to just say like, "No, no no we gotta go!"

E: He like held us to get back at the end of the hallway and then he goes in front of the door and starts jumping like a monkey!

Mom: Like, setting up his arm to designate the lanes of a race

E: Yeah he's like trying to set up a race for us. And we're like, no, move, stop, we don't want to we're leaving, like get out of our way.

Mom: I mean, we weren't rude about it

E: No

K: You probably should have been.

Mom: Yeah, he was annoying

E: This isn't the half of it. He was being really annoying. And when he saw that we were annoyed, I don't think it registered that we were annoyed, he thought that he was hurting our feelings

Mom: So we get to the door, and he holds the door open for us.

E: But obnoxiously though! Like he stands in the middle of the door and tries to hold it open for us so that neither of us can get through.

Mom: Yeah it was like we had to pass under his arms like an arch. His arms were in an arch.

K: If I may back up for just a moment, what did you mean when you said he acted like you were hurting his feelings?

E: No, no, no, he thought that he was hurting our feelings

K: Oh! By doing what exactly?

E: When we got visibly annoyed...

Mom: About him wanting us to race

K: Oh I see, okay.

E: Mind you, my dad was with us so my dad was outside holding the door for us.

Mom: There are two doors to exit the doctor's office.

E: So, we're like trying to brush this man off, and we're trying to tell him like no, just leave us alone, like we've heard this before it's not funny, go away, have a good weekend, whatever.

Mom: You know, you didn't say, "Go away!"

E: No we didn't say, "Go away"

Mom: We just said, "Have a nice weekend."

E: But he follows us to our car and continues apologizing like, "Oh my God, like you shouldn't take it this way, I meant it as a joke" blah, blah, blah.

Mom: "I didn't mean to hurt you!" And we just said, "It's okay, have a nice weekend."

E: Like "Please, go!" So we got into the car and we're getting ready to pull out of the parking lot and the guy pulls up alongside of our car, he had gotten into his car, he pulls up alongside of our car, gets out of the car..

Mom: Goes around to the side of the car that my husband, Marc, Emily's dad is the driver, and signals him to roll down his window because he had taken money out of his wallet.

E: He pulled out a wad of cash and was gonna try to pay us off as an apology!

K: You took it, right?

E: What?

K: You took it, right?

E: No!

K: Disappointing

E: Hold on, it still gets better. So my dad was pissed off as all get out at this point so the way that the obnoxious guy had parked next to us was such that my dad still had enough room to get out and around him. So my dad pulls of really quickly and shakes his head, "No" at the guy because no we don't want your money! First you insult us, and then you insult us again! How obnoxious are you? Also, the guy didn't come to you, he came to Daddy.

Mom: Alright, let's not split hairs. Whartever

K: That could just be because he was the driver.

Mom: Maybe he thought I couldn't open a window!

E: So then...Oh yeah, we're very disabled and our feelings our hurt. So then this guy tries to offer us money, so then my dad is so pissed, drives off, and of course we have to wait until we can make a right turn out of the office building. So the man walks onto the sidewalk and gives my dad the, "What the F" symbol. Like, "How dare you don't take my money to apologize for the obnoxious this that I did!" And then my dad drives off like just in time. I was so convinced that the guy was going to follow us. I'm still like waiting for him to like, figure out who we are, and like knock on our door.

Mom: Oh yes, cause he just wrote down our license plate number.

E: I don't know man...

Mom: Has a friend in the police department. Okay Emily, don't be paranoid.

E: Whatever. But he made me so angry, so uncomfortable, so frustrated. I mean, I know I'm always saying like please don't make obnoxious comments about our existence in public but this is...

Mom: This, by far is the most infuriating episode we ever had. I think, you know Emily and I travel, go out in public a lot, and alone or without each other and we each individually get comments, but when we're together it's like the comments intensify, but this took it to a whole new level of uncomfortable. And almost threatening in a way.

E: Yeah, like the following us, the approaching the window.

Mom: Yeah.

E: I mean, our existence seems to be open for public comment to people, and then on top of that it's just, we're the bad guys for trying to shut it down.

Mom: But remember this afternoon you had this period of doubt where you felt that you handled it wrong? You had that little bit of time where you said you know, did we handle the situation correctly? It's hard to know. But in this case you just, you don't know how the other person is going to react just as they don't know how we're going to react, so...

E: But they don't think about how we're going to react, cause they just think they're being funny.

Mom: Right.

E: I don't know. Kyle, what would you have done?

Mom: Yes Kyle, we want your appraisal of this situation!

K: Um, I'm glad you didn't tell me this story before we recorded, Emily.

(Emily chuckles)

E: Was it worth waiting for?

K: Yes

E: Was it worth having my mom on for?

K: Absolutely

E: There ya go.

K: I don't know that I could have been so kind. I really don't. I mean, I don't think I would've mean about it, but I don't think I would've had the patience for any of that.

E: Yeah like the fact that you just kept on saying, "Have a good weekend."

Mom: Yeah, but I didn't want to escalate the situation. I just wanted him to go away (*chuckles*)

E: Well, the other thing too I'm really glad that we were with Daddy, but what would you do if you're two women? Like, this does point to the vulnerability of disabled women.

Mom: The disabled person

E: People in general, yeah.

Mom: Yeah a disabled man could feel vulnerable in a situation like that as well.

E: You would've taken the money, Kyle?

K: Yeah after all that trouble? Absolutely! You're out of your mind if you think I wouldn't take it after all that. That's exactly what that is, that is payment for wasting my time! Yes, thank you sir.

E: I guess I was just afraid of what would happened if Daddy had opened the window, because I could've seen a fight ensuing.

K: Was he...I hate to say this on a disability talk show, but was he all right, was he all there, was he okay?

E: Well, that's kind of the other thing we were wondering, we don't want to be Ableist, but like...

K: I don't know man, if there's ever a situation to be like

Mom: It was just all kind of weird and uncomfortable, and ugh!

E: But you're right though, I had so much self-doubt. Afterwards like maybe I should've explained why he was being annoying, and that e didn't hurt our feelings but that he was being rude, or that maybe Daddy should have opened the window and been like, "Bro. Not Cool." I don't know.

K: That whole thing is just so bizzare, like I believe you, I just can't imagine... that sounds like you tried to write a bad comedy sketch of what it's like to be yourself.

E: Yeah! We seriously for awhile were like, "What just happened?" And then you said something Mom about wanting to record the situation.

Mom: Oh yeah! I said we should go back to the Doctor's office. And Kyle you know Marc, he would do the part of the man justice and reenact what happened (*laughs*)

K: Yeah

E: In fact we have the man himself in the room if we want to get an all family account of what happened.

K: Oh my goodness, I feel so alone, my family's not here.

E: (*yells in distance*) Hey, Marc Ladau!?

Mom: Oh well, he doesn't feel that great so we'll give him a pass.

E: See, that is Marc Ladau's take on what happened today. He's rolling his eyes.

(*Mom chuckles*)

K: Noted!

E: The reality though is that he didn't even see much of it happen

Mom: Yeah he didn't really know what was going on until the guy came out.

K: Right, he only really saw the part where, yeah after you guys got out of the place

Mom: ...Out of the building

Emily's Dad: No, I saw what the guy was doing!

E: Come on over!

(*indistinct chatter*)

E: Come here, come over, you can do this!

Dad; Well what are you doing?

E: We want your recap of the story! So you saw the guy?

Dad: Yeah! I saw the guy! I was...

Mom: You can curse on this show, Emily and Kyle do it all the time!

E: You're allowed to curse!

Dad: It looked like he was a bumbling a\$\$hole! Dirty, bumbling a\$\$hole, okay!!

E: *(laughs)* there you have it folks!

Dad: The way he looked like he was stumbling to his piece of sh*t, beat up car okay?

(Mom laughs)

Dad: And the guy gets out and he's like fumbling with the dollar bill

E: Hahaha!

Dad: Like, get away from me, you know?

K: How much was he offering?

Dad: I don't know!

E: He had twenties!

K: He had twenties, you didn't take it?!

Dad: I just waved and was like, "I'm not taking your money, goodbye!"

Mom: *(laughing)* Kyle said he would've taken the money!

K: I would've cleaned em out, are you crazy?! Oh my goodness!

E: Yeah we should've liked opened the window and just like taken the whole wad!

Mom: If I would've taken the money, I would've said, "I'm gonna donate this to a charity that educates people about disabilities!"

K: There you go!

Dad: No, I... If you see a situation, if you see the way out of the situation just get out of it. That's all!

Mom: We were trying to!

Dad: Okay, so as soon as you see the guy walking to the car, and just pulled away okay?

E: What if we had not been with you and had to go through the whole process of getting into the car, which for Mom and I takes forever. Kyle, you know how long it takes me to get into my car!

K: It's a circus.

Mom: And it's a circus times two when I'm with Emily

Dad: Okay, you know what? You could sit here and you can debate this all you want. Okay, it is what it is.

E: I really hope that people can hear you because my dad is just walking around the room pontificating right now.

(Mom and Emily laugh)

Dad: "What if, what if what if?" The guy was obviously....

Mom: A couple sandwiches short of a picnic!

Dad: Yeah, really.

E: Is that a very nice thing to say?

K: Yes.

(Emily laughs)

Dad: Especially when it's true, okay? And then he had the nerve to say that he was hurt? Because you took it the wrong way?

E: Oh, he was hurt?! He did say that!

Dad: He said, "Now I'm hurt because you took it the wrong way!" You said, "I really didn't mean it like that!" But what can you do, you can't teach an a\$\$hole an education!?! You gonna try to give an a\$\$hole an education?

E: Well here's the thing though...Kyle, you love teachable moments though so would you have explained?

K: I don't know, Emily, I don't think that...this is not what I'm talking about when I say that!

Dad: This is not a teachable moment, this is "Let's just get away from this a\$\$hole as fast as we can," you know?

K: Yeah, I think I agree with your dad (*chuckles*)

Dad: (unintelligible) Hopefully you'll never run into this guy. I don't know what to tell you!

E: Oh my God, we're gonna have to go to a new guy to clean our ears!

(*Mom laughs*)

E: We can never go back there!

Mom: No

Dad: Alright, I'm getting ready to go to bed. Goodnight all!

E: That has been Mark Ladau!

K: This is the episode we've been needing.

Dad: Then you know... "Road rage, road rage, road rage," and you know..."Don't cut this one off and don't cut that one off.."(*continues on rant*)

(*Emily laughs*)

Dad: ...And you know. Who was wrong?

K: Wise words of wisdom!

Mom: Somebody put a quarter in him!

(*All laugh*)

Mom: This is what life in Emily Ladau's house is really like

E: This is the most accurate depiction of my life, I hope we're getting all of this.

K: Oh, we are. Thank God you said to omnidirectional!

E: He's still going! My dad just walked out of the room and he's still going!

(Laughs)

K: Well, we can't hear him anymore

E: I feel sorry for everybody that has to listen to this. Okay. But....

Mom: There are teachable moments and there are times where they will be effective, I just don't think that this was a time where it was effective, I just don't think that this was one of those times....If I may I'll just tell that story about what happened to me in CVS that day.

E: Yeah, let's get back to practical conversation!

Mom: Yes. I was on line, I was in my powerchair again and I was on a long line at our local CVS, and the woman behind me was tired or frustrated by the line or whatever, and she says to me, "Oh you're so lucky you don't have to stand on the line!"

K: Are you?

Mom:Yes. Uh, I was, at that point in time I didn't know what to say so I literally just kind of went off the line, I went down an aisle trying to just, I don't know, just trying to control myself. And I just said out loud, and I didn't mean it intentionally and I said, "Yeah I'm really lucky!" And she did hear me, I guess I spoke louder than I should have or no, maybe I wanted to speak that loud. So then um, she heard me and then she came over and apologized. And then I saw her a couple days later at the same CVS and she came over to me and she did say to me, "You know I really thought about our interaction and I know now to be more sensitive about what I say to people with disabilities." So in that situation it was a teachable moment, but in this situation I don't think he would've gotten the message. He was so hung up on his feelings that I don't think he would've been open.

E: Yeah, see now that we're done cracking up over it, how do you know that you're able to get through to somebody or that it's a lost cause?

K: When they ask you to race twice, it's probably a lost cause. I'm just gonna say that I think that's a bar that's very reasonable, at least. It's probably a lot lower than that, but I think without any other data points, it's a fine place to start. Is if your teachable moment asks you o race twice uh, that's enough. No more.

Mom: Yeah. So that was our fun day!

E: It's really bothering me though, I just don't know how to get the message across to humanity that doing this is not okay. That disabled people are not out for your public comment.

K: What, you mean you guys aren't zoo animals?

E: I mean, sometimes we act like zoo animals

Mom: I do not! *(Both laugh)* I'm always very uh, I try to always be aware and be careful when I'm out, being courteous and trying not to crash into people! *(chuckles)* with my chair and such.

E: Sometimes it just happens. And honestly if I do crash into somebody I probably will make a joke about not having a license just to diffuse the situation because I feel so bad.

Mom: Mhmm...

K: Yeah but I think that's...You doing that as a way to comedically admit your wrongdoing, is a lot different than someone saying, "Oh do you need a license to drive that thing?" is a lot different, you know what I mean? You're doing it for a purpose and their doing it because they think that they're the first person in the world to tell you that.

Mom: Well speaking of licenses, I was in an art museum in Washington

E: I knew this story was coming!

Mom: I know, we need new material.

(Emily laughs)

Mom: We were...Emily was actually at a conference and Mark and I were in DC with her, and we were at an art museum, and I was just going about my business looking at the pictures, reading whatever and the security guard comes up to me and says very seriously, "Ma'am, may I see your license and registration?"

K: And, did you pull it out?

Mom: No! I just laughed it off, but you know again, what other group has to feel like every time they go out in public, they're game to be you know, game for someone else's amusement?

K: That's true. I thought that because he said it so seriously that the security guard really had to verify who you were for a moment. Which is why I asked that.

Mom: Oh! Well he didn't ask me for my ID, he asked me for my ID, he asked me for my license and registration!

E: Did it catch you off guard though?

Mom: It did! It caught me very off guard. I think that's part of the problem with these comments is that these situations do catch you off guard and you don't always know how to respond. I mean, even though we've been through it so many times, and still they catch you off guard.

E: Well you know how it is, it's like you come up with the right thing to say at 3:00 in the morning or 10:00 at night when you're recording a podcast in your living room. (*sighs*)

Mom: Yeah. Can I talk about another pet peeve of mine?

E: Oh, of course you can!

K: Of course!

Mom: I can't stand when I'm in my powerchair, particularly in a grocery store or somewhere, you know where the amount of room you have to navigate is not large, and it may be even be able bodied people and they're just going about their business and wagons are just kinda bumping into each other. But any time someone sees us in a powerchair, they always say, "I'm sorry!" And I say, "You don't have to apologize! You have just as much right to be here as I do!" (*chuckles*)

E: Oh yeah, like I'm sorry I'm in your way. Even if you crash into them, they're like, "I'm so sorry!" Like, no!

Mom: Yeah it's...

E: But also I apologize when I shouldn't too. I always say sorry when I really didn't do anything wrong.

Mom: No, not me apologizing, them apologizing to me!

E: No, I know what you mean!

Mom: Just because I'm in a powerchair means that I automatically get the right of way.

E: Or does it?

K: No, it doesn't. I'm glad you think that.

E: No, it does. I think it does. Wheelchair privilege.

Mom: No I think you have to follow the rules.

E: I'm just kidding (*chuckles*)

Mom: I think we need to follow the rules of the road.

E: That is true! Oh man...

K: You guys are like the cyclists of the sidewalk.

E: How do we stop this?

K: What is "this?"

E: The world's pension for making obnoxious comments.

K: Education!

E: And how do we educate people who don't seem to want to be educated?

K: Nobody...

Mom: I can't, I don't think that they don't want to be educated but they're not unfortunately and no offense to you guys, the people who need to get the message are not listening to *The Accessible Stall!*

K: No, it's an unfortunate truth, we're very aware.

Mom: Oh, okay. I have to make a confession here. I don't listen to all your podcasts! (*laughs*)

K: Neither do I.

Mom: I hear enough disability talk Emily...

K:You live with it!

Mom: And I can't listen to it all day long.

K: Yeah, I...I don't blame you.

E: We're not that exciting, but also you've just heard us talk before.

Mom: Yeah, but sorry if I'm just saying things that you've already said.

E: No actually, none of this is stuff that we've talked about.

K: Yeah, oddly enough

(Emily sighs)

Mom: Yes, we're exhausted by this

K: I mean, as far as how to educate I think it's just, you expose from a young age same way you know that other people from other cultures exist, you know? When you say, "Don't want to be educated" it sounds like you're saying that these people don't want to be stuck in a classroom and be told to be kind to people. And you know, sure, no one wants to be lectured on how to behave. But like...

E: Everybody, Mark Ladau would like you to know that he's going to bed.

K: Okay

Mom: Yeah, I'm still their special guest though.

Dad: Goodnight!

E: Goodnight, everybody we'll be packing up soon!

Mom: Well he ruined my debut!

E: I'm listening to this episode! Did he ruin it or did he enhance it?

Mom: Oh, he enhanced it, I'm sorry.

K: But I think you know, if your best friend from childhood is in a wheelchair, you're not gonna grow up thinking that people with disabilities are weird. I understand that that doesn't happen to most people, but I'm just saying if that happens to you, you're probably not gonna grow up to be the guy in a doctor's office who's gonna ask people if they wanna race. That's all I mean.

Mom: Yeah

E: So like that guy just probably doesn't have any experience with disability.

K: Not that that's an excuse. I mean, you should know be being a human being. Was this man an adult?

E: A grown adult

K: Right. So there's a certain level of common sense that I think people should have at any age, and that crossed that line. But beyond that, yes, no experience means social faux pas. But that's beyond a social faux pas though. That's ridiculous.

Mom: Yup. That's our life.

E: I don't have any conclusion to come to about it because I know that we could go out the door tomorrow and it could happen again.

Mom: Yup.

K: Can or will?

Mom: Well, probably will.

K: I mean, I was gonna say is it more that when these things occur to you, such that when they don't it's sorta weird? Like, "Oh look at that! This odd thing happened to me where no one treated me like a zoo exhibit!"

Mom: I mean I don't consciously think about that. I think about it more than we have a situation that's distressing or even comical. I mean sometimes we do just laugh about em and brush em off but...

E: Well sometimes it is funny. But sometimes it just goes into awkward and uncomfortable territory.

Mom: Yeah

E: And then it's not something you can laugh off anymore.

Mom: But I think that ultimately we did educate that guy, it just took a really awkward incident to do so. I don't think that he'll be asking the next person he sees in a powerchair to race.

K: I hope for everyone's sake you're right.

E: I could be the pessimist here and say that perhaps he's gonna try it out on other people to see if they react like we do. Or he's gonna go around saying that disabled people are bitter and have no sense of humor. You see this is the stuff that cycles through my head which is why I don't know if we handled it correctly. Meanwhile, there is no right way to handle it. Honestly, it's this guy's fault, it's not our fault.

K: But to your point though, I think that if this guy thinks that all disabled people are bitter from this day forward he's not gonna wanna talk to any of them anyway. So, you know if all he had ot

say to them was, “Hey wanna race?” Maybe you did them a favor. There’s your silver lining right there. That’s #Positivity in 2018.

Mom: Yeah, if you could see us we’re both just shaking our head right now.

E: I feel at a loss for words. I mean, telling the story is one thing. And I always say that at least it makes a good story but...

Mom: Yeah, she needs this sort of material for te podcast.

E: But I don’t *want* this stuff to happen.

Mom: No. I really don’t see it stopping anytime soon. I mean....

E: And you know what’s funny? Is when I’m out with Kyle and he’s writing on the back of my chair...

Mom: Which by the way Kyle you shouldn’t be doing!

E: But he does it anyway

K: It’s extremely dangerous, I know. There’s really nothing responsible about it at all.

E: But when we’re out, we get a lot less comments than you would think. For something that is clearly a spectacle, when I would expect the comments is when we don’t seem to get a lot of them.

K: And when we do it’s like generally very positive. It’s not like, “Hey that’s unsafe!” Or, “Hey does she need a license for that thing?” It’s always like, “Oh hey, that’s cool!” It’s never been anything other than, “Hey, look at that thing I’ve never seen that before!”

E: Yeah it’s never been rude. And you you think that when we’re actively making a spectacle out of ourselves is when we would get knocked with comments, but nobody cares!

Mom: Well I think that situation is just really unusual, how often do you see someone riding on the back of a powerchair?

K: Right, but at the same time don’t you think it’s more unusual to see someone riding on the back of the powerchair than to see two people in a powerchair in the same room. I would think that me riding on the back of Emily’s powerchair is way more uncommon and yet we get treated as if it’s more normal.

E: Yeah that's the point that I was trying to make. When we're clearly creating something ridiculous for public spectacle, that's when I would expect comments. But somehow two people just minding their own business in wheelchairs is when we get all the comments. When we're not creating a spectacle. When we're just living our lives doing our grocery shopping, going to the doctor's office, to buy clothing. You know?

Mom: Yeah, I don't know. It's hard to...I don't have an explanation for that one.

E: No, I don't think there's an explanation, I just think that society has no idea how to handle wheelchairs. But, here we are. And it made for a good podcast episode.

Mom: Well, thank you for having me!

K: You're very welcome

E: It was our honor and pleasure. Truly.

Mom: Okay. Well, goodnight everybody!

K: Goodnight.

E: Do we have final takeaways?

K: I don't. I was the recipient of this tory. My final takeaway is that that was a good story!

(Emily laughs)

E: I don't have one either, I'm just tired.

Mom: Let's go to bed

E: That's about where we're at after this long day.

Mom: Yup. At least our ears are clean

E: Silver lining!

K: Hey, Emily?

E: Yes.

K: What do you call a row of bunnies moving backwards?

Mom: A row of bunnies moving backwards...Is this being recorded?

K: A receding hare line! And yes it is!

(Both laugh)

Mom: A receding hare line!

E: Okay, I don't think we could've possibly ended this show on a better note!

Mom: Okay.

K: Goodnight everybody!

E: Thanks so much for listening!

K: Bye

E: Bye!