**Season 2 Episode 3 – With Toby Mildon**

00;00;04;26 - 00;00;05;25

Hi everyone, and

00;00;05;25 - 00;00;09;20

welcome to

another episode of The Wheelchair Activist.

00;00;10;02 - 00;00;14;10

This is a podcast hosted by me,

Emma Vogelmann, where I interview

00;00;14;10 - 00;00;19;12

some pretty amazing disabled people

as well as allies of disabled people.

00;00;20;02 - 00;00;24;29

Today, we're going to be talking to

Toby Mildon, who is a diversity

00;00;25;05 - 00;00;28;05

and inclusion architect

and the founder of Mildon,

00;00;28;15 - 00;00;31;03

a consultancy and advisory business

00;00;31;10 - 00;00;34;02

on all things diversity and inclusion.

00;00;34;18 - 00;00;38;29

We're so excited to talk to Toby today

about his practice

00;00;38;29 - 00;00;43;19

as a diversity and inclusion

strategist and consultant.

00;00;43;20 - 00;00;48;03

He's also an SMA-er,

which we all know I love the most.

00;00;48;16 - 00;00;51;14

I'm so excited

to hop into today's episode.

00;00;51;24 - 00;00;54;21

I think actually a lot of the role models

 I grew up with

00;00;54;21 - 00;00;57;04

were in the SMA community.

Other adults with SMA

00;00;57;22 - 00;01;00;21

who were just living a quote

unquote normal life.

00;01;01;05 - 00;01;03;21

And opening my eyes

00;01;03;21 - 00;01;08;18

up to things like the ability to be able

to drive with SMA from a wheelchair.

00;01;09;05 - 00;01;12;01

One of my first jobs,

I was working in consultancy

00;01;12;15 - 00;01;17;02

and one of my clients

banned me from their office

00;01;17;19 - 00;01;21;06

or the Health and Safety Manager

came around and, and basically

00;01;21;06 - 00;01;24;24

banned me from the office because they said

that, you know, I was a fire hazard.

00;01;25;04 - 00;01;30;05

A lot of disabled

people are not seen as sexual beings,

00;01;31;08 - 00;01;34;14

that we are asexual. And,

00;01;34;14 - 00;01;38;16

you know, and the focus needs to be

on fixing us and going for surgery.

00;01;38;16 - 00;01;43;10

And having physio and treatments

and not a lot of emphasis paid

00;01;43;11 - 00;01;48;11

on our emotional well-being

and our sexual health.

00;01;50;27 - 00;01;52;11

Lovely, well

00;01;52;11 - 00;01;55;12

Toby, thank you so much for joining us

00;01;55;12 - 00;01;59;12

on The Wheelchair Activist.

I was just saying

00;01;59;21 - 00;02;03;20

before I started recording that

I feel that I know you

00;02;03;20 - 00;02;09;26

because of being in the disabled community

and we both have SMA.

00;02;09;26 - 00;02;13;20

So I don't know how,

but all of us tend to know each other.

00;02;14;14 - 00;02;18;01

But it'd be great

if you could tell our listeners

00;02;18;01 - 00;02;20;13

a little bit about you and what you do.

00;02;20;18 - 00;02;22;01

Yeah Emma, it's great to meet you.

00;02;22;01 - 00;02;25;18

And the SMA community is really small, so

00;02;25;28 - 00;02;29;17

it's very easy for us to know,

 know one another.

00;02;29;20 - 00;02;30;11

Yeah.

00;02;30;25 - 00;02;34;00

So I am a diversity and inclusion

00;02;34;00 - 00;02;36;19

consultant running out of my own practice,

00;02;37;02 - 00;02;39;19

and I work with my clients

00;02;40;01 - 00;02;43;24

who are medium to large ish organizations

00;02;44;17 - 00;02;47;27

to help them develop

their diversity and inclusion strategies.

00;02;48;26 - 00;02;50;10

And then I also develop

00;02;50;10 - 00;02;56;01

training and speaking and mentoring

and consultancy as well.

00;02;56;04 - 00;03;01;05

Amazing and can

you tell us a little bit about how

00;03;01;22 - 00;03;06;13

that career evolved for you

and sort of how you decided

00;03;06;13 - 00;03;11;10

to set up your own practice

for doing this type of work?

00;03;11;10 - 00;03;15;04

Yeah so I actually started off

working in technology,

00;03;15;17 - 00;03;19;09

so I used to work for Accenture,

00;03;19;27 - 00;03;22;16

an American healthcare technology company,

00;03;22;27 - 00;03;26;29

and then I ended up at the BBC

as a project manager

00;03;27;09 - 00;03;30;15

working on the BBC News website and the

00;03;31;03 - 00;03;33;26

TV on demand platform,

which is called iPlayer.

00;03;34;14 - 00;03;38;02

And I did that for, for many years.

00;03;38;02 - 00;03;42;19

And I, I, I kind of fell into diversity

and inclusion.

00;03;43;14 - 00;03;46;22

I used to work very closely

with our chief operating officer,

00;03;47;08 - 00;03;52;20

and he was concerned

that our department within the BBC, um,

00;03;53;28 - 00;03;54;16

had

00;03;54;16 - 00;03;57;19

a gender imbalance compared

to the rest of the corporation.

00;03;58;00 - 00;04;01;14

So only about 14% of our workforce

00;04;02;13 - 00;04;05;09

in the department were women. And the BBC...

00;04;05;11 - 00;04;06;08

Oh my goodness.

00;04;06;08 - 00;04;09;00

... at the time,

you know, had a 50/50 gender split.

00;04;09;10 - 00;04;14;10

It's a challenge

that a lot of organizations

00;04;14;10 - 00;04;17;15

in the technology and science

and engineering space have.

00;04;18;17 - 00;04;21;16

And I worked in the department which ran

00;04;21;16 - 00;04;24;25

the BBC's technology

so we were no exception.

00;04;24;25 - 00;04;26;16

We were, you know,

we were in the same boat

00;04;26;16 - 00;04;32;28

as Facebook and Google and, and such like.

So I worked with the management

00;04;32;28 - 00;04;37;04

team to really address

that to get more women into technical jobs

00;04;38;13 - 00;04;40;12

and loved doing it.

00;04;40;12 - 00;04;44;15

And then twisted a few arms

and turned it into a full time job.

00;04;44;27 - 00;04;48;16

I think that that's really interesting

because, you know,

00;04;48;16 - 00;04;52;23

I think we all know

a couple of people who are disabled,

00;04;52;23 - 00;04;55;23

who end up working in diversity

00;04;55;23 - 00;04;58;18

and inclusion in various capacities.

00;04;58;24 - 00;05;02;04

I think that's so interesting

that you came to it

00;05;02;04 - 00;05;06;26

not because you were trying

to push the disability agenda,

00;05;07;03 - 00;05;11;04

but because there was, you know,

like you say, a gender imbalance.

00;05;11;24 - 00;05;14;24

Yeah, that, that was my first introduction.

00;05;14;24 - 00;05;17;26

It was, it was looking at gender

00;05;17;26 - 00;05;20;12

and I was on a steep learning curve

00;05;20;17 - 00;05;23;12

in terms- you know,

learning the diversity

00;05;23;12 - 00;05;25;20

and inclusion trade and

00;05;27;16 - 00;05;28;16

yeah, I suppose-

00;05;28;16 - 00;05;29;22

One of my first learnings

00;05;29;22 - 00;05;33;23

was that actually

diversity is a lot more than just women.

00;05;33;23 - 00;05;34;18

Yeah.

00;05;34;18 - 00;05;39;09

Or gender. And so I worked

with the senior leadership team

00;05;40;02 - 00;05;42;19

to expand our

00;05;42;19 - 00;05;46;17

strategy

to look at other dimensions of diversity.

00;05;47;00 - 00;05;48;02

And you know, that, that

00;05;48;02 - 00;05;51;23

then included race and ethnicity,

disability, and etc.

00;05;52;05 - 00;05;56;19

I have a really big question

I ask all of my guests and I'm aware

00;05;56;19 - 00;06;01;03

it's a bit mean,

but what does disability mean to you?

00;06;01;12 - 00;06;03;18

Um, so for me,

00;06;04;28 - 00;06;07;04

one of the first things that comes to mind

00;06;07;23 - 00;06;08;14

and I don't know

00;06;08;14 - 00;06;12;15

if this is really discussed in the States

or not, you'll have to enlighten me,

00;06;13;05 - 00;06;17;18

is the kind of the difference between

the medical and the social model of disability.

00;06;18;01 - 00;06;22;00

So you know, the medical model

basically says that effectively,

00;06;22;00 - 00;06;24;17

you know, there's something wrong with me

that needs to be fixed.

00;06;24;17 - 00;06;29;11

And, you know, that could be the SMA

that we both have and the focus is on

00;06;29;11 - 00;06;33;14

what medical interventions are

there or therapies like the new gene

00;06;33;14 - 00;06;37;20

therapies and physio and stuff like that.

00;06;38;03 - 00;06;43;17

But then the social model says actually,

you know, we could be disabled by barriers

00;06;43;17 - 00;06;47;18

that are presented like physical barriers

where you know,

00;06;47;20 - 00;06;49;13

where there are steps

where there should be a ramp

00;06;49;13 - 00;06;53;07

or a lift; attitudinal barriers;

or procedural barriers.

00;06;54;08 - 00;06;55;09

And so

00;06;55;09 - 00;06;57;18

that that's the first thing

that comes to mind.

00;06;59;02 - 00;07;02;29

Yeah, it's,

it's a really interesting dynamic.

00;07;02;29 - 00;07;07;27

I, I think I've,

you know, said this before on the podcast,

00;07;07;27 - 00;07;11;28

but my background with the social model

00;07;11;28 - 00;07;16;17

was, it was very interesting

00;07;16;17 - 00;07;19;15

I suppose is the way to say it. I thought-

00;07;20;09 - 00;07;24;22

and, you know, I'm just thinking of this

because you mentioned about the States,

00;07;24;22 - 00;07;29;07

but I think it could be that I was working

00;07;29;08 - 00;07;33;21

under the assumption of the medical model

because, you know, with SMA,

00;07;33;21 - 00;07;38;13

it's this, it's that, you know,

that is quote unquote lot

00;07;38;15 - 00;07;42;21

wrong with us,

which causes our disability,

00;07;42;27 - 00;07;45;08

which means we use a wheelchair

and all of that jazz.

00;07;45;08 - 00;07;48;22

But it was really only when I was

00;07;48;22 - 00;07;51;22

first prevented from doing something

00;07;51;29 - 00;07;55;23

that was directly related to my disability

that it clicked for me.

00;07;55;23 - 00;07;58;08

And I thought,

Oh, I get the social model now.

00;07;58;21 - 00;07;59;02

Yeah.

00;07;59;02 - 00;08;02;21

Because it, you know, I up

until that point

00;08;03;08 - 00;08;08;02

wasn't prevented from entering anywhere

or doing anything that

00;08;08;03 - 00;08;11;04

I wanted to do

because of my disability.

00;08;11;04 - 00;08;14;19

So it made the social model

really relevant to me.

00;08;14;19 - 00;08;18;13

And I now

completely, you know, stand by it

00;08;19;14 - 00;08;21;06

and really identify with it.

00;08;21;06 - 00;08;24;07

So I think that that's- it's

really interesting that, you know,

00;08;24;08 - 00;08;27;24

you sort of

have brought up both of those definitions

00;08;27;24 - 00;08;31;26

in, in the way that, you know,

disability is presented.

00;08;31;26 - 00;08;32;22

Yeah. Yeah.

00;08;32;22 - 00;08;37;24

So I wanted to ask you about the work

that you do

00;08;37;24 - 00;08;42;18

at the moment in diversity and inclusion.

00;08;42;18 - 00;08;47;24

Sort of first of all, what does that look

like on the day to day?

00;08;47;24 - 00;08;51;08

You know, sort of what does your average

working day look like?

00;08;51;15 - 00;08;54;11

So the work that I do

00;08;55;07 - 00;08;57;26

probably falls into three buckets.

00;08;58;15 - 00;09;03;26

So the first bucket is diversity

and inclusion strategy.

00;09;04;10 - 00;09;10;19

So basically a lot of organizations,

they know that they need to be doing

00;09;10;19 - 00;09;14;14

something around diversity and inclusion,

but they don't know what or how.

00;09;14;24 - 00;09;18;07

So I go in and help them create a plan.

00;09;18;24 - 00;09;24;00

And that plan is based on data though,

because that is often what's missing.

00;09;24;00 - 00;09;29;22

And we, we need to identify the, the issues

that staff are facing in the workplace

00;09;31;01 - 00;09;33;17

and why a business is not

00;09;33;17 - 00;09;36;23

representative of the customers

that they serve

00;09;37;16 - 00;09;40;02

or the geographic location

that they're based in.

00;09;40;15 - 00;09;43;16

And so that's kind of like bucket

number one.

00;09;44;01 - 00;09;46;24

Bucket number two is training,

00;09;47;12 - 00;09;49;16

and I've developed a number of

00;09;50;17 - 00;09;54;10

training courses that I can just easily

rollout off the shelf, that are

00;09;54;19 - 00;09;58;24

really popular, ranging

from looking at how we make-

00;09;58;24 - 00;10;03;23

how bias affects our decision

making, all the way through to a talk

00;10;03;23 - 00;10;07;16

where I talk about my own

personal experiences of having SMA

00;10;07;16 - 00;10;10;12

in the workplace

and how it's been more disability

00;10;10;24 - 00;10;12;11

confident as an employer.

00;10;12;11 - 00;10;13;29

Hmm.

00;10;13;29 - 00;10;16;24

And then the third area is really,

00;10;18;13 - 00;10;22;02

you know, me working consultancy,

coaching, mentoring,

00;10;22;25 - 00;10;25;03

really guiding my clients,

00;10;25;03 - 00;10;28;00

helping them have clarity around D & I

00;10;28;01 - 00;10;31;16

because it can really be a minefield

for some organizations.

00;10;31;19 - 00;10;33;03

That is so interesting.

00;10;33;03 - 00;10;38;15

I, I'm really fascinated by the bias

00;10;38;16 - 00;10;42;05

and I think I, if- hopefully

00;10;42;05 - 00;10;46;09

a few of our listeners will be familiar

with the Harvard

00;10;46;12 - 00;10;51;24

unconscious bias test. I don't know if that's

something that you endorse or not.

00;10;51;24 - 00;10;52;29

Yeah.

00;10;52;29 - 00;10;58;05

But essentially what it is, is there are different

tests for different characteristics.

00;10;59;02 - 00;11;03;12

And as far as I know

that- there isn't one on disability,

00;11;03;12 - 00;11;05;01

or at least there wasn't last time I checked.

00;11;05;01 - 00;11;07;03

Yeah, there is one now. Yeah. Yeah.

00;11;07;11 - 00;11;08;22

Oh cool.

00;11;08;22 - 00;11;11;22

And it essentially gives you

00;11;11;22 - 00;11;17;13

a series of prompts

or associations to detect

00;11;17;13 - 00;11;22;05

if you have any unconscious bias towards

a particular group of people.

00;11;22;05 - 00;11;26;12

And is that a test that you endorse?

00;11;26;12 - 00;11;27;23

Or do you think it's accurate?

00;11;29;09 - 00;11;30;10

It's not one that

00;11;30;10 - 00;11;33;04

I endorse but I do talk about it

in my training.

00;11;34;27 - 00;11;37;21

The Harvard implicit association tests

00;11;38;23 - 00;11;42;16

basically tell you

if you have any bias in favour

00;11;42;16 - 00;11;45;24

or against different groups of people and

00;11;48;10 - 00;11;51;07

I took the test

00;11;51;07 - 00;11;52;27

for disability and found out

00;11;52;27 - 00;11;56;00

that I was mildly biased

against disabled people.

00;11;56;00 - 00;11;56;29

Interesting.

00;11;56;29 - 00;12;01;20

Which is interesting given, you know,

given that we were both born with SMA.

00;12;02;10 - 00;12;06;11

My brother's got SMA as well,

and I went to school

00;12;06;11 - 00;12;10;09

with disabled kids, I've worked with loads of

disabled people at work.

00;12;10;27 - 00;12;14;11

Um, I mean, the reason

why that bias exists

00;12;14;11 - 00;12;16;13

is because of the social conditioning -

00;12;17;09 - 00;12;19;20

you know, growing up in a world

where we don't have

00;12;20;08 - 00;12;24;09

that many disabled role models yet,

looking at how disabled people

00;12;24;09 - 00;12;30;01

are portrayed in films and TV and books.

Um, you know, most Bond villains,

00;12;30;01 - 00;12;35;07

for example, have some form of disability

or disfigurement and, and

00;12;36;19 - 00;12;37;18

and so therefore,

00;12;37;18 - 00;12;41;10

you know, that, that bias is a product

of that, that, that social conditioning.

00;12;41;10 - 00;12;43;02

And, and that's how bias works.

00;12;43;02 - 00;12;45;13

You know, it's partly

the way that our brains are wired

00;12;46;01 - 00;12;48;00

and partly through social conditioning.

00;12;48;00 - 00;12;51;13

And I think going back to the Harvard

implicit association test, I mean,

00;12;51;28 - 00;12;53;08

it's useful.

00;12;53;08 - 00;12;54;12

It's a good conversation

00;12;54;12 - 00;12;57;06

starter, but if it's managed poorly,

00;12;57;22 - 00;13;02;00

people can mislabel themselves

as being ableist,

00;13;02;08 - 00;13;06;25

homophobic,

racist, sexist, etc, etc.

00;13;07;20 - 00;13;11;14

And interestingly, you know,

once I became aware of my mild bias

00;13;11;14 - 00;13;15;07

against disabled people... what were then

the consequences?

00;13;15;28 - 00;13;18;21

If I was in a situation

with that knowledge,

00;13;19;03 - 00;13;24;23

say that, you know, interacting

with a disabled person like doing a job

00;13;24;23 - 00;13;29;23

interview, for example, or deciding

who on my team should get promoted,

00;13;30;15 - 00;13;35;11

am I now going to go easier

on disabled people because I know that

00;13;35;19 - 00;13;38;04

I've got that bias, am I gonna give them

the benefit of the doubt?

00;13;38;18 - 00;13;41;02

And so it is- it's useful.

00;13;41;11 - 00;13;44;16

I prefer to use the neuroleadership

institute framework

00;13;45;14 - 00;13;49;11

when I do bias training, which looks more

at bias within decision making,

00;13;50;00 - 00;13;53;26

and then ultimately how

those decisions impact on other people

00;13;54;04 - 00;13;57;19

and diversity or inclusivity as a result.

00;13;58;06 - 00;14;02;29

I'm definitely going to go away

and do those tests immediately after this.

00;14;02;29 - 00;14;05;25

But I, I think that's so interesting.

00;14;05;25 - 00;14;09;04

I was going to ask you as, you know,

just as you mentioned,

00;14;09;08 - 00;14;12;21

that it showed a slight bias

against disabled people,

00;14;12;21 - 00;14;17;04

I was going to say, is that a result

of any internalized ableism,

00;14;17;05 - 00;14;22;11

which is something that, you know,

we talk a lot about on this podcast. But I-

00;14;22;11 - 00;14;26;11

you know, the way that you talked

about social conditioning,

00;14;26;11 - 00;14;28;23

that makes complete sense.

00;14;28;23 - 00;14;31;17

You know, we are disabled ourselves.

00;14;31;17 - 00;14;34;23

But we do still consume the same media.

00;14;34;23 - 00;14;39;24

And, you know, when you said about Bond villains and things like that, you know, we

00;14;40;02 - 00;14;41;02

we do see that.

00;14;41;02 - 00;14;44;28

We do internalize

that from a very young age.

00;14;44;28 - 00;14;50;01

So, you know, it's

it's it's not hugely surprising to me

00;14;51;09 - 00;14;54;09

that we would have that bias.

00;14;54;09 - 00;14;57;24

And, you know, there's so many layers

within that,

00;14;58;22 - 00;15;01;18

but I'm definitely going to go away

and have a look at that

00;15;01;25 - 00;15;02;27

other test.

00;15;02;27 - 00;15;04;23

Because I wasn't aware of that.

00;15;04;23 - 00;15;09;02

Yeah the neuroleadership institute, um,

00;15;10;04 - 00;15;12;14

I don't think it comes with the test

00;15;13;08 - 00;15;15;16

that you can do for free online,

00;15;16;14 - 00;15;20;23

but it's worth looking it up. You know, the neuroleadership institute are

00;15;20;26 - 00;15;23;15

based out of the states. Um, they

do various

00;15;24;09 - 00;15;26;16

training programs and things like that.

00;15;26;16 - 00;15;30;09

And bia- bias is one of their,

one of their training programs.

00;15;30;09 - 00;15;33;23

And they talk about

five different types of bias that we often

00;15;34;13 - 00;15;37;02

see in the workplace

that impact decision making.

00;15;37;02 - 00;15;40;02

So they talk about: similarity bias -

you know, the fact

00;15;40;02 - 00;15;44;28

that we like to hang out with people

like ourselves; Um, expedience bias -

00;15;45;09 - 00;15;49;03

you know, we we we like to get things done

quickly rather than take our time;

00;15;49;19 - 00;15;52;24

experience bias -

where we take our perceptions to be

00;15;53;04 - 00;15;57;06

the objective truth; distance bias -

which is where we have a preference

00;15;57;06 - 00;16;00;17

for things

closest to us in terms of time and space;

00;16;01;01 - 00;16;04;04

and then safety bias - which is where

we we like to play it safe.

00;16;04;14 - 00;16;08;12

You know, we like to err on the side of caution

and we want to protect ourselves

00;16;08;12 - 00;16;11;00

against losses

more than we seek out gains.

00;16;11;12 - 00;16;15;01

And then when you have that conversation

with managers in an organization,

00;16;15;09 - 00;16;18;01

we can apply it to some of the decisions

they're making,

00;16;18;13 - 00;16;21;26

like who they're going to hire

or who they're going to promote,

00;16;22;09 - 00;16;24;23

who they're going

to award the next big project to,

00;16;25;02 - 00;16;29;05

and then ultimately how that can

impact on inclusivity in their team.

00;16;29;19 - 00;16;31;11

I think that that's really interesting.

00;16;31;11 - 00;16;35;15

And I was going to, sort of.

as you were listing off those different

00;16;36;00 - 00;16;40;02

factors, I was going to ask you

how you feel disability

00;16;40;02 - 00;16;45;24

comes in to all of those, and particularly reflecting on conversations

00;16;45;24 - 00;16;49;28

you've had as a consultant because I,

00;16;50;01 - 00;16;54;29

I find that people are very unfamiliar

with disability.

00;16;55;00 - 00;17;00;20

So, you know, that I'm sure comes into one or,

you know, multiple of those factors

00;17;00;20 - 00;17;04;27

that you just listed because people won't

want to go with the unknown.

00;17;05;05 - 00;17;07;29

And, you know, there's this perception

00;17;08;08 - 00;17;11;00

that, you know, disabled employees

00;17;11;00 - 00;17;15;25

are less productive and therefore,

you know, have an impact on profit.

00;17;15;25 - 00;17;19;06

And, you know, it's

something that is talked about so much

00;17;19;25 - 00;17;23;27

and particularly by the wrong people

sometimes, which is very unhelpful.

00;17;24;05 - 00;17;27;01

And I wanted to ask you

00;17;27;07 - 00;17;29;25

how did you go about challenging

00;17;30;04 - 00;17;33;25

those preconceptions regarding disability?

00;17;34;04 - 00;17;35;18

I do it quite softly.

00;17;35;18 - 00;17;39;14

So first of all, I get clients to try and

00;17;40;24 - 00;17;43;05

air their assumptions or presumptions

00;17;44;08 - 00;17;46;19

and false stereotypes

00;17;46;19 - 00;17;49;03

and then then have a conversation

about it.

00;17;49;17 - 00;17;52;05

So if we looked at, you know, disability,

for example, if we looked

00;17;52;05 - 00;17;54;28

at the neuroleadership SEEDS Model,

00;17;56;08 - 00;17;58;29

the expedience bias says

that we prefer to take,

00;17;59;07 - 00;18;02;09

you know, we prefer to get things

done quickly rather than take our time.

00;18;03;00 - 00;18;07;01

And there's this maybe this unspoken

and indeed sometimes

00;18;07;01 - 00;18;11;07

spoken assumption that disabled people

can't work as fast as anyone else,

00;18;11;18 - 00;18;12;15

that they're going to get-

00;18;12;15 - 00;18;14;07

You know, they're going to be slower.

00;18;14;07 - 00;18;16;25

Now, managers

don't often like to admit that

00;18;17;18 - 00;18;22;04

but if I can draw it out from them, then

we can have a conversation about, well,

00;18;22;09 - 00;18;26;08

where's that stereotype

or assumption coming from?

00;18;27;10 - 00;18;30;10

Is it true or not? And it's not often true.

00;18;30;18 - 00;18;31;06

So it's like,

00;18;33;02 - 00;18;35;04

yeah, once we once we

00;18;35;04 - 00;18;37;19

move it into our consciousness,

we can then talk about it

00;18;37;20 - 00;18;39;10

and, and try and break it down.

00;18;39;10 - 00;18;42;12

I yeah, I really resonate with that.

00;18;42;12 - 00;18;46;00

I consider myself quite a fast worker

00;18;46;00 - 00;18;51;28

so, and a quite productive worker as well,

so when I hear that from other people.

00;18;51;28 - 00;18;55;29

I think, 'No, it's not true,'

but I, I really hear what you're saying

00;18;55;29 - 00;19;00;16

about moving it into that conscious space

00;19;00;16 - 00;19;05;22

and giving people the opportunity to air

that and then you can address it.

00;19;05;22 - 00;19;06;10

Yep.

00;19;06;13 - 00;19;09;01

Yeah, but it's doing that in a way

that doesn't make

00;19;09;01 - 00;19;12;10

people feel judged or,

you know, criticized.

00;19;12;10 - 00;19;16;28

So I completely see why you, as you say,

go about that softly.

00;19;17;17 - 00;19;20;28

Um, so I just want to get back

00;19;20;28 - 00;19;24;06

to something that you said earlier about,

00;19;24;06 - 00;19;28;13

you know, us

being the product of our environment

00;19;28;13 - 00;19;32;26

and of our culture and, you know,

the way that disability is portrayed.

00;19;32;29 - 00;19;37;11

So I wanted to ask you,

who were your role models

00;19;37;12 - 00;19;42;03

when you were growing up? Were there

any disabled role models?

00;19;42;07 - 00;19;47;12

Um... no, not particularly if I'm honest, um...

00;19;49;04 - 00;19;50;07

no, no.

00;19;50;07 - 00;19;52;23

You know, and people would always, I suppose

growing up, you know,

00;19;52;23 - 00;19;56;17

people would always say, 'well...', you know,

'there's that guy in a wheelchair

00;19;56;17 - 00;19;58;06

on James Bond.'

00;19;58;06 - 00;20;00;14

And I'm like, 'yeah,

I don't want to grow up to be like him.'

00;20;00;23 - 00;20;01;24

To my knowledge,

00;20;01;24 - 00;20;05;25

I think he got scooped up by a helicopter

and thrown down a chimney and died.

00;20;05;26 - 00;20;07;29

Oh, yeah. No, we don't want that.

00;20;07;29 - 00;20;11;14

I can't remember what Bond film it was,

but I was like, OK, yeah, that's not

00;20;11;14 - 00;20;14;17

that's not a great model,

great role model.

00;20;14;27 - 00;20;19;19

I mean, you know, there are a number of

disabled business leaders out there.

00;20;19;19 - 00;20;24;02

You know, Richard Branson talks

very openly about his dyslexia

00;20;24;14 - 00;20;27;26

and you know, to me,

he's a fantastic role model.

00;20;28;08 - 00;20;32;25

You know, Elon

Musk is on the neurodiversity spectrum.

00;20;33;08 - 00;20;36;22

Um so, you know, they are,

they are out there.

00;20;37;00 - 00;20;40;26

But obviously, you and I have got

a visible physical disability.

00;20;42;13 - 00;20;47;03

And... I think actually

00;20;47;03 - 00;20;50;20

a lot of the role models that I grew up with

were in the SMA community.

00;20;51;05 - 00;20;55;20

Um so just other adults with SMA

00;20;55;20 - 00;20;58;17

who were just living a quote unquote

'normal life'

00;20;59;24 - 00;21;03;20

and opening my eyes up to things

like the ability

00;21;03;20 - 00;21;06;17

to be able to drive

with SMA from a wheelchair.

00;21;07;12 - 00;21;11;00

And and we've got some high profile

people with SMA as well.

00;21;11;00 - 00;21;11;21

You know, we've got Jane

00;21;11;21 - 00;21;15;10

Campbell, Baroness Jane Campbell

over in the House of Lords in the UK.

00;21;15;24 - 00;21;18;19

Um so,

00;21;18;19 - 00;21;21;03

yeah, I mean,

those are some of the role models I had

00;21;21;08 - 00;21;24;14

when- more when I kind of

probably reached teenage years.

00;21;25;10 - 00;21;29;15

I remember the first time

I heard about Jane Campbell and yeah,

00;21;29;16 - 00;21;30;18

I completely agree.

00;21;30;18 - 00;21;34;12

I find her an amazing person. And

00;21;35;23 - 00;21;37;16

she very kindly

00;21;37;16 - 00;21;41;09

once took me on a sort of back

behind the scenes

00;21;41;16 - 00;21;44;06

tour of the House of Lords once

00;21;45;05 - 00;21;47;14

and she said to me, 'I shook Barack

00;21;47;14 - 00;21;50;15

Obama's hand in this room,'

and I just thought,

00;21;51;01 - 00;21;53;19

'that's the coolest sentence

I think I've ever heard.'

00;21;53;19 - 00;21;54;21

Yeah.

00;21;54;21 - 00;21;57;29

So no I- and I'd love to have her

on the podcast

00;21;58;21 - 00;22;03;22

at some point, but she's busy, you know,

trying to better all of our lives so.

00;22;03;22 - 00;22;04;24

Yeah.

00;22;04;26 - 00;22;06;08

But at some point we'll get there.

00;22;06;08 - 00;22;09;23

Um but I think that's a really interesting

00;22;10;04 - 00;22;12;21

point about your role models.

00;22;12;27 - 00;22;17;23

Essentially, as you were getting a bit

older, just doing the everyday things

00;22;17;23 - 00;22;22;19

that, you know, even us

can think that we can't do.

00;22;22;19 - 00;22;25;28

Like you mentioned

about driving a car, being an example.

00;22;25;28 - 00;22;30;22

And I think that that's really powerful

because,

00;22;31;06 - 00;22;35;12

you know, I talk about representation

a lot and really like that's

00;22;35;13 - 00;22;39;02

a huge motivator behind

this podcast is showing

00;22;39;10 - 00;22;47;05

disabled people doing a wide

variety of things so that I can provide

00;22;47;05 - 00;22;52;01

that representation and people can start

to see themselves doing that.

00;22;53;00 - 00;22;54;04

Whatever it may be.

00;22;54;04 - 00;23;00;03

So that's that's really powerful

and I'm really interested in,

00;23;00;19 - 00;23;03;13

you know, what you find

00;23;03;13 - 00;23;08;05

are the biggest challenges

that you face in your work

00;23;08;05 - 00;23;11;18

in terms of convincing people

00;23;11;18 - 00;23;15;28

on the diversity and inclusion point.

00;23;16;09 - 00;23;20;18

Because just before

I'm recording this with you, I was recording

00;23;21;09 - 00;23;24;06

another podcast episode with Chris Fry,

00;23;25;03 - 00;23;30;11

who is a lawyer,

and he talks about the challenge of

00;23;30;26 - 00;23;33;22

convincing people of the commercial aspect

00;23;34;02 - 00;23;37;01

of, you know, inclusion and equality.

00;23;37;01 - 00;23;41;16

So how, you know,

how do you go about those barriers

00;23;41;16 - 00;23;44;21

and what are those barriers

that you come across?

00;23;45;12 - 00;23;48;02

The, the most common barriers are

00;23;50;22 - 00;23;51;08

diversity and

00;23;51;08 - 00;23;54;02

inclusion not being a high enough priority -

00;23;54;19 - 00;23;56;25

that the other things in business

00;23;58;08 - 00;24;02;03

take priority - and

00;24;02;07 - 00;24;04;03

I talk to loads of organizations

00;24;04;03 - 00;24;08;09

and there- there seems to always be

something that comes along. Um...

00;24;09;09 - 00;24;09;20

a couple of

00;24;09;20 - 00;24;13;10

years ago it was Brexit,

then it was the pandemic.

00;24;13;27 - 00;24;16;04

In a year or two

it will be something else.

00;24;16;16 - 00;24;19;16

So one,

I think one of the biggest challenges

00;24;19;16 - 00;24;24;04

is really prioritizing diversity and inclusion. Um,

making sure it's

00;24;24;04 - 00;24;27;27

prioritized by people at the top of the business,

because if the chief executive

00;24;27;27 - 00;24;32;02

and the board of directors of a business

are not talking about it

00;24;32;17 - 00;24;37;11

with a sense of urgency and

and as a high priority, nobody in that,

00;24;37;11 - 00;24;40;11

nobody else in the business

is going to take it seriously.

00;24;40;27 - 00;24;43;19

So first of all, it's

that - it's that priority.

00;24;44;00 - 00;24;46;29

Um, the second thing is

00;24;49;00 - 00;24;51;08

understanding and realizing that if if

00;24;51;08 - 00;24;53;28

if an organization wants to do this

properly,

00;24;54;11 - 00;24;57;06

they're going to have to put resources,

people,

00;24;57;06 - 00;25;00;03

time and money behind it.

00;25;00;16 - 00;25;03;17

They can't do it on a shoestring and

00;25;05;09 - 00;25;08;05

and and

00;25;08;11 - 00;25;12;02

the benefits

of doing diversity and inclusion

00;25;12;02 - 00;25;15;11

well will reap rewards

for the organization.

00;25;15;25 - 00;25;19;17

Um so- but the thing is,

there has to be that commitment

00;25;20;00 - 00;25;25;02

that people's time and budget

is going to be invested in it as well.

00;25;25;12 - 00;25;28;04

I completely agree and it's something that

00;25;28;11 - 00;25;30;27

that came up when I was having

00;25;31;18 - 00;25;36;08

a conversation on this podcast

with Jason Bates over at Tesco.

00;25;36;08 - 00;25;41;11

And we talked about how Tesco,

I think it was me who said this really, has

00;25;41;11 - 00;25;43;22

put their money

where their mouth is in terms

00;25;43;22 - 00;25;46;28

of their commitment

to diversity and inclusion.

00;25;46;29 - 00;25;49;18

And particularly the way that they

00;25;50;19 - 00;25;52;27

serve their disabled customers.

00;25;52;27 - 00;25;57;05

So I completely agree with you there

that the resource needs to be there.

00;25;57;05 - 00;26;00;08

It can't just be,

you know, it can't just be all talk.

00;26;00;08 - 00;26;02;06

No, no.

00;26;02;06 - 00;26;04;03

So that's really interesting.

00;26;05;22 - 00;26;10;28

I wanted to ask you,

you know, with- you said that, you know,

00;26;10;28 - 00;26;16;24

you've sort of ended up in diversity

and inclusion almost by accident.

00;26;16;24 - 00;26;21;27

You said you started in tech

and now you run your own company.

00;26;22;27 - 00;26;24;29

Has anyone ever told you that

00;26;24;29 - 00;26;28;06

you can't do

the job that you're doing now?

00;26;28;15 - 00;26;31;19

No, no. (laughs)

00;26;31;19 - 00;26;33;00

No one's ever said that to me.

00;26;33;00 - 00;26;34;06

Well, that's really good.

00;26;34;06 - 00;26;35;03

Yeah.

00;26;35;03 - 00;26;38;11

I'm so pleased. I think- you know, people

00;26;38;11 - 00;26;42;16

can subtly imply things

00;26;42;16 - 00;26;45;19

or you know, in my case,

I was outright told, you know

00;26;46;18 - 00;26;51;02

I won't be able to be a barrister

because of X, Y and Z, which, you know,

00;26;51;03 - 00;26;54;28

I didn't end up doing, but sort of goes

along those same lines.

00;26;56;10 - 00;26;57;14

So-

00;26;57;14 - 00;27;00;13

I have,

I have had that though - in previous jobs,

00;27;00;13 - 00;27;00;14

So. I have

I have had that day in previous jobs.

00;27;01;07 - 00;27;03;22

Um, when I was working at the BBC,

00;27;03;22 - 00;27;07;05

as I was a project manager in technology

00;27;07;21 - 00;27;12;16

and I wanted to move into production

management and TV; I thought it would be

00;27;12;16 - 00;27;16;13

sexier working in TV rather than,

you know, on a website or apps.

00;27;16;25 - 00;27;19;17

And I kept coming up across these barriers

00;27;19;28 - 00;27;22;25

and they were often unspoken

00;27;24;03 - 00;27;27;03

concerns

and it wasn't until I had a mentor

00;27;27;03 - 00;27;30;06

who was quite forthcoming

00;27;30;06 - 00;27;33;19

and basically said that some people

00;27;33;19 - 00;27;37;22

that I had been networking with

to try and move into production management

00;27;38;07 - 00;27;41;26

had a concern that I wouldn't be like

physically able to do the job.

00;27;42;05 - 00;27;46;16

That if, for example,

I had to go and do a TV show

00;27;46;16 - 00;27;50;16

in the middle of a field somewhere,

how would I get there in my wheelchair?

00;27;50;16 - 00;27;54;22

And, you know, production assistants

or managers are expected

00;27;54;22 - 00;27;58;27

to also be able to help out and lift

heavy camera equipment.

00;27;59;04 - 00;28;00;25

How would I do that?

00;28;00;25 - 00;28;03;09

And it was a lesson that I learned that

00;28;04;16 - 00;28;07;10

basically with those,

with those people,

00;28;07;10 - 00;28;11;13

there was a lack of creativity

in trying to flex the job.

00;28;12;01 - 00;28;15;10

Um, it's true

that I would struggle to lift heavy

00;28;15;10 - 00;28;17;19

camera equipment

because our muscles don't work properly.

00;28;18;12 - 00;28;21;29

However, there are other people

on the team that could do that.

00;28;22;07 - 00;28;25;28

And then I could do the bits that I could

do, like work on a spreadsheet

00;28;26;10 - 00;28;28;23

and, and also, you know,

00;28;29;00 - 00;28;32;16

who said that I would work in the genre

where I would have to film

00;28;32;16 - 00;28;34;17

in the middle of a field

or a middle of a desert.

00;28;35;01 - 00;28;39;23

I could have a nice cosy- you know,

I could work in the Newsnight studio,

00;28;40;15 - 00;28;43;15

which is lovely and warm in a basement

in London.

00;28;43;26 - 00;28;45;12

So um it's,

00;28;46;11 - 00;28;46;29

you know,

00;28;47;02 - 00;28;50;05

I learned it was just often a lack of creativity

00;28;50;16 - 00;28;52;22

when it came to designing the job

00;28;53;13 - 00;28;55;19

and thinking about how the job

could be completed.

00;28;55;23 - 00;28;57;27

Yeah, I completely see what

00;28;57;27 - 00;29;02;01

you mean though. I think it's

first of all, a lack of awareness

00;29;02;01 - 00;29;05;25

of reasonable adjustments

there, you know, and like you say,

00;29;05;25 - 00;29;10;15

getting another person on the team

to do the lifting of the equipment.

00;29;10;15 - 00;29;14;16

But I'm forever saying that disabled

people

00;29;14;16 - 00;29;17;17

are the best creative problem solvers.

00;29;17;18 - 00;29;18;04

Yeah.

00;29;18;05 - 00;29;21;03

Because, you know,

we have to come up with little

00;29;21;11 - 00;29;25;26

adaptations of ways of doing things

to go about our everyday life.

00;29;25;26 - 00;29;30;22

So, you know, let us work with you on that

and like you say,

00;29;30;22 - 00;29;34;23

you could very well

have worked on different programs.

00;29;34;23 - 00;29;39;21

You know, you don't have to be on Planet

Earth with David Attenborough

00;29;40;07 - 00;29;44;18

in the middle of Iguana Island

or whatever it is. You know,

00;29;44;29 - 00;29;48;12

there are so many programs

that the BBC makes

00;29;48;13 - 00;29;51;22

that would be completely accessible.

00;29;51;22 - 00;29;55;01

So I- yeah, it's it's challenging

00;29;55;01 - 00;29;59;21

when people make assumptions

of what you can and can't do.

00;30;00;03 - 00;30;00;16

Yeah.

00;30;02;04 - 00;30;02;19

What would

00;30;02;19 - 00;30;06;07

you say that you are the most proud of?

00;30;06;20 - 00;30;09;20

And that can be career

wise, personal wise,

00;30;09;20 - 00;30;10;21

anything really.

00;30;10;21 - 00;30;14;05

Um I think- I mean, there's been

00;30;14;05 - 00;30;16;20

lots of achievements along the way, um...

00;30;18;26 - 00;30;21;11

since I started doing diversity

and inclusion

00;30;21;11 - 00;30;25;23

work at the BBC,

I've seen things change and improve.

00;30;25;23 - 00;30;29;19

And, you know, people getting jobs

00;30;30;22 - 00;30;34;19

where they might have struggled beforehand

and that kind of thing.

00;30;34;19 - 00;30;35;29

That always pleases me.

00;30;35;29 - 00;30;38;23

That I've felt like I'm

making a personal difference.

00;30;39;18 - 00;30;42;15

I mean, since running my own practice

00;30;42;28 - 00;30;45;18

um, I've been particularly proud

of being able to, like,

00;30;45;19 - 00;30;47;10

write a book and get that published.

00;30;47;10 - 00;30;49;18

And now it's an audio book as well.

00;30;49;18 - 00;30;53;18

So um- and that was one of the reasons

why I left the corporate world.

00;30;54;14 - 00;30;59;05

You know, I wanted the freedom

to to do my own creative projects, like

00;31;00;15 - 00;31;01;27

write a book, and I've

00;31;01;27 - 00;31;05;20

got my own podcast and

00;31;05;25 - 00;31;09;11

do lots of blogs and things like that, you know,

and so that that's good.

00;31;09;11 - 00;31;11;24

And people learn a lot from those things.

00;31;11;24 - 00;31;15;00

And, you know,

they say it's helpful on their own

00;31;15;00 - 00;31;17;28

diversity and inclusion journey.

00;31;18;08 - 00;31;19;28

And...

00;31;20;24 - 00;31;23;25

as my, you know, as my business grows, I'm

00;31;23;25 - 00;31;27;02

working with more and more organizations,

growing my team

00;31;28;19 - 00;31;31;25

and and hopefully

00;31;31;25 - 00;31;35;08

making more of an impact

in the working world.

00;31;35;08 - 00;31;37;13

And reducing inequality

in the working world.

00;31;38;07 - 00;31;40;19

I think that that's really amazing.

00;31;40;19 - 00;31;44;09

And I completely understand

what you mean about that

00;31;44;16 - 00;31;47;04

creative freedom when you're not-

00;31;47;16 - 00;31;50;26

In my case, you know,

I always make it really clear

00;31;50;26 - 00;31;56;20

that when I do things like this podcast

or if I'm interviewed by any media outlet

00;31;56;20 - 00;31;59;21

in a personal capacity,

I always have to sort of go,

00;32;00;02 - 00;32;01;25

'I'm not representing Scope here.'

00;32;01;25 - 00;32;03;26

You know, I'm, I'm just representing me.

00;32;03;26 - 00;32;08;06

Even though so much of what

I say Scope would 100% agree with.

00;32;08;25 - 00;32;12;14

But, you know, it's,

it is always trying to make those barriers

00;32;12;21 - 00;32;15;14

clear, which... yeah,

00;32;15;14 - 00;32;17;24

can be challenging at times.

00;32;17;24 - 00;32;18;25

So I get what you mean.

00;32;20;17 - 00;32;22;05

So I think it's-

00;32;22;05 - 00;32;25;27

it's also really interesting that,

you know, you say that you're growing

00;32;25;27 - 00;32;29;22

your team and I'd love to know,

and I say this because I know

00;32;29;22 - 00;32;34;21

that you have recently,

am I right you've recently hired another SMA-er?

00;32;34;21 - 00;32;36;26

I have, yeah, yeah.

00;32;37;00 - 00;32;41;21

So I'm wondering sort of your, your team,

how are you building that?

00;32;41;21 - 00;32;45;02

You know, what do you see

as the future for your practice?

00;32;45;02 - 00;32;45;11

Yeah.

00;32;45;11 - 00;32;49;25

So I, I appointed a guy called Louie who's got

SMA.

00;32;49;27 - 00;32;51;26

Um interes-

00;32;51;26 - 00;32;53;17

That, I mean, that's

an interesting story in itself

00;32;53;17 - 00;32;57;09

because the person listening to us

right now might go, 'hang on a minute,

00;32;57;17 - 00;32;59;02

he's just recruited another guy

00;32;59;02 - 00;32;59;23

with SMA.

00;32;59;23 - 00;33;03;01

Isn't that like even consc-

like conscious bias going on, right there?'

00;33;03;01 - 00;33;04;05

Exactly.

00;33;04;05 - 00;33;08;00

It goes against one of those theories

you said about people hiring ones

00;33;08;00 - 00;33;08;20

who look like you.

00;33;08;20 - 00;33;09;22

Exactly.

00;33;09;22 - 00;33;14;17

And it's interesting because I thought about this because I was thinking you know,

00;33;15;17 - 00;33;16;07

when we

00;33;16;07 - 00;33;18;25

when we look at

like the neuroleadership model, you know,

00;33;19;09 - 00;33;21;22

as I mentioned earlier,

we've got that similarity bias.

00;33;22;02 - 00;33;25;26

So, you know, Louie, Louie, who joined

my team

00;33;25;26 - 00;33;29;24

is- there,

there is that similarity bias going on.

00;33;29;24 - 00;33;33;14

You know,

we are both white blokes with SMA.

00;33;34;12 - 00;33;37;07

He's late thirties, I'm early forties.

00;33;37;07 - 00;33;40;01

There's not a lot of age gap between us.

00;33;40;01 - 00;33;44;11

And it's, you know,

I did lie awake at night thinking,

00;33;44;21 - 00;33;47;29

'has my unconscious

bias got the better of me?'

00;33;49;19 - 00;33;51;06

And yeah-

00;33;51;06 - 00;33;53;28

So I mean, Louie,

Louie joined the team.

00;33;53;28 - 00;33;57;27

Um, his his focus right now

is on business development and sales

00;33;57;27 - 00;34;01;15

because we're getting a lot of interest

from clients to work with us.

00;34;01;15 - 00;34;05;03

So I need help with,

you know, with that side of things.

00;34;07;05 - 00;34;07;21

A lot of the

00;34;07;21 - 00;34;10;14

work that

I do, I do one to one with clients.

00;34;10;27 - 00;34;15;04

But you know, I will be looking to expand

the consultancy team

00;34;15;15 - 00;34;18;01

so that people can deliver that work

with me.

00;34;19;09 - 00;34;21;07

And, and, you know,

00;34;21;07 - 00;34;24;05

I'm developing training courses

and I'd like people-

00;34;24;09 - 00;34;27;06

I'd like to train people up to be able

to deliver those training courses.

00;34;27;16 - 00;34;30;16

So that's my, that's my plan.

00;34;31;00 - 00;34;32;12

And I'm interested,

00;34;32;12 - 00;34;37;06

when you're working with clients,

do you more focus

00;34;37;06 - 00;34;42;21

on their sort of recruitment

and employee side of diversity

00;34;42;21 - 00;34;47;24

and inclusion,

or do you bring up anything around their

00;34;48;09 - 00;34;54;00

customer base or their service users

and how if they have a diverse workforce,

00;34;54;00 - 00;34;58;21

they can better meet

the needs, and understand

00;34;58;21 - 00;35;01;16

the needs rather, of their consumers?

00;35;01;23 - 00;35;04;16

So I cover everything.

00;35;04;16 - 00;35;07;02

And the the model that I've created,

00;35;07;07 - 00;35;10;15

which is the

I call it the Inclusive Growth Framework,

00;35;10;25 - 00;35;13;18

which is detailed in my book,

which is called the Inclusive Growth...

00;35;14;09 - 00;35;16;13

no, it's called Inclusive Growth. Um,

00;35;17;28 - 00;35;21;23

covers seven key areas ranging from,

00;35;22;16 - 00;35;25;27

first of all, getting clear

on your business case for diversity

00;35;25;27 - 00;35;29;21

and getting the data to support

your strategy and developing a strategy

00;35;30;12 - 00;35;33;09

through to looking at creating inclusive

00;35;33;12 - 00;35;38;06

employee journeys and experiences

through to how you communicate

00;35;38;22 - 00;35;41;07

to the world in an authentic way

00;35;41;15 - 00;35;44;01

that you are a diverse

and inclusive place to work.

00;35;44;10 - 00;35;48;18

So the, we, th-

the model itself is very holistic

00;35;49;01 - 00;35;52;11

and and that's deliberate

because so many organizations

00;35;52;24 - 00;35;55;03

and other consultants

00;35;55;15 - 00;35;58;26

or other models

focus on particular groups.

00;35;59;06 - 00;36;04;00

So, you know, they they might have a focus

on women in leadership or women

00;36;04;01 - 00;36;07;13

in technology or people of an ethnic

minority background,

00;36;07;24 - 00;36;12;17

ignoring the fact that we've got

this intersectional experience.

00;36;12;26 - 00;36;17;09

That, you know, you can,

I suppose, face multiple discriminations

00;36;17;13 - 00;36;22;00

based on being,

you know, a woman who's disabled

00;36;22;00 - 00;36;28;03

and black versus me,

who's disabled, male, white and gay.

00;36;29;06 - 00;36;31;00

So- and a lot of

00;36;31;00 - 00;36;33;12

kind of, a lot of organizations,

00;36;34;05 - 00;36;36;23

I think, fail to acknowledge that

00;36;37;16 - 00;36;41;15

that that intersectionality, when they

start putting their plans together.

00;36;42;03 - 00;36;45;01

And that you just don't get- it's

just not an efficient way

00;36;45;12 - 00;36;47;19

of creating an inclusive culture.

00;36;48;01 - 00;36;50;24

Yeah, I really hear what you mean there.

00;36;50;24 - 00;36;56;09

I won't say who it was with,

but I had a meeting with a,

00;36;56;18 - 00;36;59;26

at the time,

someone who was fairly prominent

00;37;00;26 - 00;37;04;06

and got just completely talked over

00;37;04;17 - 00;37;08;09

and interrupted

and shut off all those things.

00;37;08;09 - 00;37;12;18

And I went away

thinking, 'is it because I'm disabled?

00;37;12;23 - 00;37;17;26

Is it because I'm a woman or is it

because I look somewhat young?'

00;37;18;06 - 00;37;18;25

You know?

00;37;18;25 - 00;37;22;02

You know, people perceive me to be younger

than I actually am.

00;37;22;02 - 00;37;26;25

So it's it's a fun game of

Why Was I Treated Poorly?

00;37;26;27 - 00;37;31;07

Let's look at the different

characteristics that I have.

00;37;31;07 - 00;37;33;12

And so I think that that's-

00;37;33;12 - 00;37;38;17

It makes so much sense that you approach it

from, as you say, the holistic...

00;37;38;20 - 00;37;39;12

Yeah.

00;37;39;12 - 00;37;42;02

... angle, as opposed to just focusing

00;37;42;11 - 00;37;44;28

on one particular characteristic.

00;37;44;28 - 00;37;49;23

Yeah. And like you were saying,

'do I focus on customer inclusion?' Um,

00;37;50;22 - 00;37;53;15

I do talk about it in my book

00;37;53;15 - 00;37;56;19

and it's within the Colleague

Experience chapter

00;37;56;19 - 00;38;00;14

that I talk about in terms of journeys

like, 'what is your customer journey?'

00;38;00;25 - 00;38;01;12

Can you-

00;38;01;12 - 00;38;03;10

could somebody

00;38;03;13 - 00;38;06;26

buy something from your website

or does your website not work

00;38;06;26 - 00;38;07;27

with a screen reader?

00;38;07;27 - 00;38;09;11

So somebody who's blind

00;38;09;11 - 00;38;12;25

or visually impaired might have difficulty

purchasing something from you.

00;38;13;04 - 00;38;18;03

I do talk about that, but my, my, my

specialty really is around the workforce.

00;38;19;02 - 00;38;24;03

But I- a lot of my clients do

ask me questions about customer inclusion.

00;38;24;06 - 00;38;25;26

Customer experiences.

00;38;25;26 - 00;38;30;00

But I, you know,

I refer them on to people in my network

00;38;30;00 - 00;38;33;12

who kind of specialize in that area,

whether it's

00;38;33;23 - 00;38;39;03

you know, that physical built environment

accessibility or digital accessibility

00;38;39;04 - 00;38;43;05

on apps and websites or creating inclusive

customer experiences.

00;38;43;05 - 00;38;44;05

That kind of thing.

00;38;44;05 - 00;38;50;18

But I think, you know, by addressing

the workforce, you will inevitably see

00;38;50;18 - 00;38;55;20

a trickle down into the awareness

of the diversity of your customers.

00;38;56;00 - 00;39;00;05

And, you know,

if you only have people who are

00;39;00;22 - 00;39;05;24

non disabled or you only have people

who are white, you're not going to know

00;39;05;24 - 00;39;09;14

how to attract the customers

that are outside of that group.

00;39;09;14 - 00;39;15;04

So if you have a diverse workforce, you're

sort of one step ahead in the journey

00;39;15;04 - 00;39;19;01

towards addressing the diverse

customer base that you have, I think.

00;39;19;01 - 00;39;21;07

Yeah. Yeah, definitely.

00;39;21;25 - 00;39;24;15

What was the hardest

00;39;24;15 - 00;39;27;22

barrier that you've had to overcome?

00;39;27;22 - 00;39;31;29

And again, not just in the practice

that you're leading now,

00;39;31;29 - 00;39;35;14

but overall what's

been the hardest barrier for you?

00;39;35;14 - 00;39;36;27

Um...

00;39;37;27 - 00;39;40;08

it's probably

00;39;40;08 - 00;39;42;21

other people

00;39;43;11 - 00;39;46;03

thinking

that there are obstacles or challenges

00;39;46;03 - 00;39;48;13

when there really isn't or shouldn't be.

00;39;49;25 - 00;39;52;14

For instance, when I was trying to move from

project management

00;39;52;14 - 00;39;55;12

into production management, for instance,

00;39;57;14 - 00;40;01;09

or...

I don't even know what category

00;40;01;09 - 00;40;04;00

to put this in,

but just other instances of

00;40;06;06 - 00;40;07;00

I don't-

00;40;07;00 - 00;40;10;06

is it discrimination

or- discrimination or inequality?

00;40;10;08 - 00;40;14;14

I remember like when I, you know,

when I- one of my first jobs

00;40;14;15 - 00;40;19;01

I was working in consultancy

and one of my clients

00;40;19;24 - 00;40;23;04

banned me from their office,

or the health and safety manager

00;40;23;05 - 00;40;26;14

came round and

and basically banned me from the office

00;40;26;14 - 00;40;28;28

because they said that

I was a fire hazard.

00;40;29;04 - 00;40;30;08

Oh.

00;40;30;12 - 00;40;33;25

And you know that-

and that was really distressing.

00;40;33;25 - 00;40;39;08

And at the time I felt like my employer

didn't really have my best interests

00;40;39;08 - 00;40;43;14

at heart. That they were more concerned

about not upsetting the client

00;40;44;14 - 00;40;45;18

and that was one of

00;40;45;18 - 00;40;49;08

my reasons for leaving that

particular organization. So there,

00;40;49;12 - 00;40;52;09

there have been instances like that

that have happened.

00;40;52;13 - 00;40;56;26

Yeah I wish

I didn't have multiple stories

00;40;56;26 - 00;41;00;03

that spring to mind

00;41;00;03 - 00;41;04;01

that, you know, are similar to that experience

00;41;04;01 - 00;41;07;12

of being told that you are a fire hazard.

00;41;07;12 - 00;41;10;14

I think that, you know, it's

00;41;11;10 - 00;41;13;20

yeah, it's so disappointing that

00;41;14;08 - 00;41;16;13

you felt that you had to leave.

00;41;16;29 - 00;41;21;03

In that circumstance,

I completely understand why.

00;41;22;06 - 00;41;24;23

But yeah, it's-

00;41;25;10 - 00;41;29;19

I find that other people's sort of rigidity

00;41;29;26 - 00;41;34;17

in their perceptions of disability-

and like I was saying earlier,

00;41;35;04 - 00;41;39;18

what we can

and can't do, is really difficult

00;41;39;18 - 00;41;45;09

because we're the experts

on what we can do or not do.

00;41;45;09 - 00;41;47;01

I remember

00;41;47;15 - 00;41;49;14

I was working

00;41;49;14 - 00;41;52;26

on employment policy in a previous role

00;41;53;06 - 00;41;59;01

and I was trying to think about a job

that I as a wheelchair user

00;41;59;12 - 00;42;03;16

just wouldn't be able to do

because I'm a wheelchair user.

00;42;03;16 - 00;42;07;21

This was when I was at Muscular

Dystrophy UK, so it was just looking at

00;42;07;29 - 00;42;12;19

physical disabilities and I immediately

thought, 'Oh, what about a dog walker?'

00;42;12;19 - 00;42;14;05

But then I thought, 'Hang on.

00;42;14;05 - 00;42;19;06

No, there are definitely ways that I could

walk a dog or walk several dogs.'

00;42;19;14 - 00;42;21;04

But again, you know, it's,

00;42;21;04 - 00;42;25;12

it's the word walker I thought that people

might initially think, 'ah, well,

00;42;25;19 - 00;42;29;23

she obviously can't do that,'

but no, let us work with you

00;42;29;23 - 00;42;33;16

and let us collaboratively

come up with a solution

00;42;33;16 - 00;42;37;25

to that as opposed to the approach

that was taken with you.

00;42;37;25 - 00;42;40;00

You know, 'you're a fire hazard. Get out.'

00;42;40;12 - 00;42;41;15

Yeah. Yeah.

00;42;41;15 - 00;42;44;10

And maybe it's that internalized

ableism

00;42;44;12 - 00;42;48;16

again. And you reminded me

that when I was really young, I had a-

00;42;49;14 - 00;42;52;20

I think I was, I don't know, maybe 14 or 15,

00;42;53;29 - 00;42;57;03

and I had a social worker

who was fantastic

00;42;57;03 - 00;42;59;17

because she had a disability herself.

00;42;59;17 - 00;43;04;00

And I remember we had this this session

where I think we were talking

00;43;04;00 - 00;43;07;08

about what I wanted

to do with my life or go off to-

00;43;07;08 - 00;43;09;16

I think it was going off to university

and stuff like that.

00;43;09;16 - 00;43;12;29

And she was helping me get my care

packages set up and things like that.

00;43;13;14 - 00;43;17;08

And I do remember now

having this conversation where she-

00;43;19;04 - 00;43;21;21

another one of her clients

00;43;21;21 - 00;43;23;05

wanted to become a farmer.

00;43;23;05 - 00;43;27;14

And I grew up in the West Country

near Glastonbury.

00;43;27;23 - 00;43;30;15

So obviously

a lot of people go into agriculture

00;43;31;00 - 00;43;33;22

and I said to her, 'Oh, that's ridiculous.

00;43;33;22 - 00;43;36;27

How can somebody in a wheelchair become,

you know, be a farmer. Like,

00;43;36;27 - 00;43;40;24

how on earth could you drive a tractor

or get across a muddy field or

00;43;41;15 - 00;43;43;00

run after sheep or whatever?'

00;43;43;00 - 00;43;45;20

And then and then she was like,

'no, no, no.

00;43;45;20 - 00;43;49;08

You know, if this person wants to

become a farmer, then that's that's their,

00;43;50;06 - 00;43;52;29

that's their,

you know, that's their prerogative and,

00;43;54;02 - 00;43;56;10

and, you know,

00;43;56;10 - 00;43;58;28

adaptations can be made,

00;43;58;28 - 00;44;03;19

you know, we can find ways

of making the tractor accessible.'

00;44;03;21 - 00;44;04;17

Yeah.

00;44;04;17 - 00;44;08;26

And that was one of my first memories

of um, I suppose,

00;44;08;28 - 00;44;12;17

you know, mak- making things accessible

by putting adjustments in place

00;44;13;01 - 00;44;14;22

for the individual to do the job.

00;44;14;22 - 00;44;18;24

What a good example though

because I immediately thought

00;44;19;04 - 00;44;21;12

what you did like, 'oh,

there are going to be problems

00;44;21;12 - 00;44;25;24

for that person when they realize

that they can't be a farmer.'

00;44;26;00 - 00;44;30;03

But yeah, you're completely right -

with the right adaptations.

00;44;30;12 - 00;44;34;24

Um, when I was working, again

in employment, but at that point

00;44;34;24 - 00;44;39;03

I was advising young disabled

people with muscular dystrophy

00;44;39;27 - 00;44;42;26

on the paths into employment.

00;44;42;26 - 00;44;46;00

I had this mum who called me and said

that her son

00;44;46;01 - 00;44;50;04

wanted to be a train driver,

so how could he get into that?

00;44;50;04 - 00;44;52;05

And I thought, 'Jesus. I don't know.'

00;44;52;05 - 00;44;52;18

(laughs)

00;44;52;18 - 00;44;56;25

First of all, I know nothing about trains,

but also I thought if, you know,

00;44;56;25 - 00;45;01;17

if he's a non-ambulatory

wheelchair user, how was he going

00;45;01;22 - 00;45;06;22

to get into the, you know, train

driver compartment and, and all of that.

00;45;06;22 - 00;45;08;19

But, you know,

there are ways around everything.

00;45;08;19 - 00;45;09;12

Yeah, yeah.

00;45;09;16 - 00;45;13;10

And it

yeah, I think that's such a good example

00;45;13;25 - 00;45;19;02

about the, the farmer - I really hope

they went in and became a farmer.

00;45;19;02 - 00;45;21;02

I never found out. I never found out.

00;45;21;19 - 00;45;26;01

But I mean, the thing I took away from

that really was the mindset.

00;45;26;15 - 00;45;29;14

And even when you were describing

about whether somebody

00;45;29;14 - 00;45;33;29

with muscular dystrophy could become

a train driver, you know, it's like, well,

00;45;34;06 - 00;45;38;24

it's going to be difficult because trains

are not accessible at the best of times.

00;45;39;23 - 00;45;41;02

Like getting a

00;45;41;02 - 00;45;45;01

wheelchair into the driver

compartment is going to be impossible.

00;45;45;17 - 00;45;48;29

And it would take a lot

to make a train accessible

00;45;48;29 - 00;45;52;01

and is a train company going to want to

00;45;52;15 - 00;45;56;06

or able

to make a train driving compartment

00;45;56;06 - 00;45;58;17

wheelchair accessible

with hand controls or whatnot?

00;45;59;14 - 00;46;00;26

I doubt it.

00;46;00;26 - 00;46;06;09

Um but but I think you have to start

from a place of, um, like looking

00;46;06;09 - 00;46;10;03

at the possibilities rather than just like

shutting it down right at the beginning,

00;46;10;03 - 00;46;12;09

going, 'no, no it's not possible for somebody

in a wheelchair to do this

00;46;12;09 - 00;46;16;07

job.' It's thinking like, 'yes,

and how do we make this possible?'

00;46;16;08 - 00;46;17;19

Yeah, completely.

00;46;17;19 - 00;46;21;13

I think you know,

you don't know when to give it a shot

00;46;21;24 - 00;46;24;00

um, you know, it's...

00;46;24;24 - 00;46;28;02

when you say,

you know, all of those aspects of trains,

00;46;28;02 - 00;46;33;18

you know, I completely agree that even

as passengers, as a wheelchair user,

00;46;33;19 - 00;46;39;00

good luck. You know, in a lot of cases -

we do, we do occasionally have success -

00;46;39;00 - 00;46;41;17

but, you know, it is challenging.

00;46;41;17 - 00;46;45;15

And- but again, what struck me

about what you were just saying about

00;46;45;24 - 00;46;50;09

the train companies

making those adjustments, it reminded me

00;46;50;09 - 00;46;56;00

of what you said about putting resources

behind diversity and inclusion.

00;46;56;00 - 00;47;01;09

And, you know, there are ways

to make it work if you want it to

00;47;01;13 - 00;47;04;08

and have the resources to. So,

00;47;04;14 - 00;47;08;25

you know,

if that kid is somehow listening to this,

00;47;08;25 - 00;47;13;01

first of all, I hope you did become

a train driver, if that's what you want to do.

00;47;13;05 - 00;47;17;06

And if not, you know, there- it's,

you know,

00;47;17;06 - 00;47;20;08

not impossible. I suppose is what we're saying.

00;47;22;17 - 00;47;24;24

So, I want to ask you...

00;47;25;28 - 00;47;28;05

sort of this is a two part question.

00;47;28;05 - 00;47;31;21

First, I'll ask, what advice

would you give to your younger self?

00;47;32;04 - 00;47;34;28

And what advice

would you give others like you?

00;47;35;04 - 00;47;36;25

That's a good question.

00;47;36;25 - 00;47;42;06

Um... I think first of all,

00;47;43;16 - 00;47;45;20

it would be

00;47;47;11 - 00;47;50;03

I think I think the first bit of advice

would be,

00;47;51;03 - 00;47;53;25

you know,

like you're following the right path.

00;47;54;12 - 00;47;56;20

And the thing is, you know,

00;47;57;16 - 00;48;01;07

the path might not lead

where you think it's going to lead.

00;48;01;24 - 00;48;05;00

And it very rarely does in terms of like,

you know, career development.

00;48;05;03 - 00;48;08;24

I mean, when I was a kid,

I wanted to be a police officer and I

00;48;09;05 - 00;48;11;17

and and then I ended up working in IT

00;48;12;26 - 00;48;14;27

and then I ended up

getting into diversity

00;48;14;27 - 00;48;18;14

and inclusion. I probably, when I was a teenager,

I probably didn't think I was ever going

00;48;18;14 - 00;48;18;28

to do

00;48;19;28 - 00;48;21;13

diversity and inclusion work.

00;48;21;13 - 00;48;24;12

I didn't even,

I didn't even know what it was. Um...

00;48;25;20 - 00;48;27;21

I think the biggest advice

actually was around

00;48;29;00 - 00;48;32;25

probably around sexuality. You know,

I didn't come out as gay

00;48;32;25 - 00;48;37;03

until I was 29

and I wish I'd come out earlier.

00;48;37;17 - 00;48;40;16

And I think that was

because there was a lot of shame.

00;48;41;15 - 00;48;43;20

And also I think that

00;48;46;02 - 00;48;47;14

growing up,

00;48;48;13 - 00;48;51;19

I suppose growing up with a disability

and being gay,

00;48;52;09 - 00;48;56;14

there was probably more emphasis

on like the disability

00;48;57;08 - 00;49;01;05

and like the medical side

of the disability as well

00;49;01;24 - 00;49;04;10

rather than other aspects

00;49;04;10 - 00;49;07;02

of human development like sexuality.

00;49;07;16 - 00;49;12;17

Um, and I think that's

a really common issue for disabled people

00;49;13;02 - 00;49;19;01

that a lot of disabled

people are not seen as sexual beings.

00;49;20;01 - 00;49;25;19

That we are asexual and, yeah,

and the focus needs to be on fixing us

00;49;25;19 - 00;49;29;15

and going for surgery

and having physio and treatments.

00;49;29;25 - 00;49;35;14

And not a lot of emphasis placed

on- paid on our emotional well-being

00;49;35;14 - 00;49;39;03

and our sexual health

and things like that.

00;49;39;24 - 00;49;43;09

Yeah,

I mean I couldn't agree with that more.

00;49;43;09 - 00;49;46;06

You know, I, I know that, you know,

00;49;46;23 - 00;49;51;03

I've had this myself but you know,

I know so many friends as well

00;49;51;15 - 00;49;54;07

who, you know, medical professionals

in particular,

00;49;54;07 - 00;49;58;00

just assume that,

'oh, you're definitely not having sex.'

00;49;58;11 - 00;50;01;26

So, you know, and that's in..., you know

00;50;02;03 - 00;50;08;04

I think it's so interesting,

your comment about sexuality. And, um,

00;50;09;07 - 00;50;09;26

I just

00;50;09;26 - 00;50;13;25

I have to share this really amazing thing

that I heard

00;50;13;25 - 00;50;18;22

on the Guilty Feminist podcast

with Rosie Jones

00;50;18;22 - 00;50;23;04

who is,

you know, a famous disabled queer person,

00;50;23;04 - 00;50;28;01

and she talked about her experience

growing up and how she thought, 'well,

00;50;28;16 - 00;50;32;13

surely I can't be gay and disabled.

00;50;32;13 - 00;50;35;09

You know, they don't exist, do they?'

00;50;35;15 - 00;50;39;26

And so I think it's, you know,

I think that's really good

00;50;39;26 - 00;50;45;05

advice is to not ignore

the other parts of what make you you.

00;50;45;06 - 00;50;45;20

Yeah.

00;50;45;20 - 00;50;48;10

Because everyone just focuses on

00;50;48;24 - 00;50;51;14

this one aspect of who you are

00;50;51;14 - 00;50;56;01

and have ideas of what that means for you

in your life.

00;50;56;05 - 00;51;01;26

And yeah, that's that's so important

for everyone to hear, I think.

00;51;02;06 - 00;51;04;06

Yeah. Yeah, definitely, definitely.

00;51;04;07 - 00;51;09;23

So what advice would you give to others,

00;51;09;23 - 00;51;14;26

sort of, like us? I don't

just mean SMA-ers, you know, but people just...

00;51;15;09 - 00;51;15;21

yeah,

00;51;15;21 - 00;51;21;05

occupying the same space as us. Other

people in the disabled community.

00;51;21;05 - 00;51;22;03

Um...

00;51;23;16 - 00;51;25;10

I would say,

00;51;25;27 - 00;51;27;14

first of all,

00;51;27;21 - 00;51;30;01

if you've got, if you've got an idea

00;51;30;01 - 00;51;32;19

of doing something then

00;51;34;06 - 00;51;36;09

just go ahead and do it.

00;51;36;09 - 00;51;38;28

And if people tell you that

00;51;40;08 - 00;51;42;20

it can't be done, or it's going to be too

difficult,

00;51;43;17 - 00;51;46;06

just be stubborn and go and do it anyway.

00;51;46;23 - 00;51;52;18

Um, like, I'm a really stubborn person

and and, I've heard this about

00;51;52;18 - 00;51;57;07

lots of people with SMA,

we're very- we are fiercely independent

00;51;58;13 - 00;52;00;24

people and we-

00;52;00;24 - 00;52;03;22

there's a lot of high achievers

within the SMA community.

00;52;04;14 - 00;52;07;00

And I think that's because

we just don't take no for an answer.

00;52;08;15 - 00;52;10;14

And so yeah,

00;52;10;14 - 00;52;13;20

if you've got an idea,

just like go and do it.

00;52;14;02 - 00;52;16;27

Um, I don't want to kind of prescribe

what ideas

00;52;16;28 - 00;52;19;26

people might have,

but it could be a business idea,

00;52;20;15 - 00;52;23;21

it could be a personal goal, um...

00;52;26;07 - 00;52;27;06

it could be anything.

00;52;27;06 - 00;52;28;00

It could be anything.

00;52;28;00 - 00;52;30;29

But, you know, don't let anybody tell you

you can't do something

00;52;30;29 - 00;52;32;20

because of your disability.

00;52;32;20 - 00;52;36;23

I think SMA-ers are notoriously

stubborn.

00;52;36;23 - 00;52;42;02

I've never met an SMA-er

who's comfortable taking no for an answer.

00;52;42;02 - 00;52;45;03

And why should we? To be quite honest.

00;52;46;07 - 00;52;47;04

I I absolutely

00;52;47;04 - 00;52;49;10

love that advice.

00;52;49;10 - 00;52;52;20

And yeah, I just want to say a huge

00;52;53;05 - 00;52;57;27

thank you for coming on this podcast

and for talking out

00;52;57;27 - 00;53;01;10

so openly about your experiences

00;53;01;10 - 00;53;05;16

and about the amazing work

that you're doing.

00;53;05;16 - 00;53;07;16

It's been really, really interesting.

00;53;07;16 - 00;53;10;03

So yeah. Toby, thank you so much.

00;53;10;06 - 00;53;11;07

You're welcome. Thank you.

00;53;11;07 - 00;53;12;15

Thanks for inviting me along.

00;53;12;15 - 00;53;13;24

And it was, it was really great

00;53;13;24 - 00;53;15;02

to chat with you.

00;53;16;06 - 00;53;18;11

Thank you so much for listening

00;53;18;11 - 00;53;21;29

to this episode of The Wheelchair

Activist with Toby Mildon.

00;53;22;10 - 00;53;26;23

It was so interesting

to learn about all things unconscious bias

00;53;27;00 - 00;53;32;12

and how he goes about addressing that

in the diversity and inclusion space.

00;53;32;21 - 00;53;35;16

Before you go,

I want to remind you that we do

00;53;35;16 - 00;53;38;15

have a Go Fund Me set up for this podcast.

00;53;38;24 - 00;53;43;23

We are 100% committed to accessibility

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00;54;00;03 - 00;54;03;15

Thank you so,

so much to everyone who has donated

00;54;03;22 - 00;54;08;29

so far and has allowed us to continue

making this amazing podcast.

00;54;09;09 - 00;54;12;00

Please give this podcast

a share far and wide

00;54;12;06 - 00;54;15;10

so everyone can enjoy the amazing content.

00;54;15;22 - 00;54;20;04

This podcast has been hosted by me,

Emma Vogelmann, produced by me

00;54;20;04 - 00;54;23;20

and Isabelle Anderson

and edited by Joe Tapper.

00;54;24;01 - 00;54;28;14

Thank you so much for listening and

I can't wait to see you in the next one.