

1

00:00:00,066 --> 00:00:03,635

Hello and welcome to Skipping the Small

Talk with Empower Autism, a podcast

2

00:00:03,635 --> 00:00:07,505

where we discuss everyday experiences,

Autism affirming advice and more.

3

00:00:08,039 --> 00:00:10,841

My name is Riley and today

I'm joined by Casey.

4

00:00:10,841 --> 00:00:14,310

Casey is a proud Autistic individual

who has served our community

5

00:00:14,343 --> 00:00:18,413

through a variety of initiatives,

including through working groups with the

6

00:00:18,513 --> 00:00:19,514

National Disability

7

00:00:19,514 --> 00:00:23,550

Insurance Agency and the Queensland
Train Manufacturing Program.

8

00:00:24,017 --> 00:00:27,019

And he's a member of the Autistic
Self-Advocacy Network.

9

00:00:27,719 --> 00:00:31,522

On top of all of this, he's also
the Managing Director of Empower Autism.

10

00:00:32,156 --> 00:00:35,158

Welcome, Casey.

11

00:00:37,093 --> 00:00:41,129

So today I thought we'd start with sort
of a more basic topic,

12

00:00:41,129 --> 00:00:45,366

going back to the central core
of what we do, and maybe a bit

13

00:00:45,366 --> 00:00:49,902

about why we started this podcast
and just discussed Autistic identity.

14

00:00:49,902 --> 00:00:53,171

You brought this topic up, of course,
but it's sort of

15

00:00:53,905 --> 00:00:55,506

a very broad topic to discuss.

16

00:00:55,506 --> 00:00:58,542

So we're just going to see
what happens for this episode.

17

00:01:00,543 --> 00:01:02,545

What made you

18

00:01:02,545 --> 00:01:05,547

decide to start talking
about Autistic identity?

19

00:01:06,147 --> 00:01:08,049

I found that a lot of the way

20

00:01:08,049 --> 00:01:11,151

that we're talked about

21

00:01:11,151 --> 00:01:16,021

is with a lot of deficit language, and,

22

00:01:17,956 --> 00:01:21,358

that's not the way I see myself

23

00:01:21,692 --> 00:01:25,661

and not the way

I see other Autistic people.

24

00:01:26,062 --> 00:01:29,064

The other morning, I brought my daughter

25

00:01:29,464 --> 00:01:32,466

to childcare and

26

00:01:32,800 --> 00:01:35,168

found the book The Ugly Duckling.

27

00:01:35,168 --> 00:01:38,471

And I read it to her

and it actually brought me to tears

28

00:01:38,471 --> 00:01:42,340

because I realised that my whole life

29

00:01:42,974 --> 00:01:45,976

I didn't feel like

30

00:01:46,810 --> 00:01:49,879

all the other people did

and I didn't understand why I

31

00:01:51,080 --> 00:01:54,082

was different and

32

00:01:54,882 --> 00:01:56,550

this moment in the story of the ugly

33

00:01:56,550 --> 00:01:59,552

duckling where the duckling looks up

34

00:02:00,420 --> 00:02:03,689

and sees the swans in the sky and,

35

00:02:04,389 --> 00:02:08,259

and then realises that they're a swan.

36

00:02:08,892 --> 00:02:10,394

It's like that for me when I,

37

00:02:11,761 --> 00:02:13,563

first started to

38

00:02:13,563 --> 00:02:16,932

meet and interact

with other people who identify

39

00:02:17,565 --> 00:02:20,568

as Autistic and

40

00:02:21,035 --> 00:02:23,203

I feel like I've found my people

41

00:02:23,203 --> 00:02:26,939

and it's a beautiful thing

42

00:02:26,939 --> 00:02:29,941

to not feel so alone

43

00:02:30,541 --> 00:02:34,344

in the world,

to feel understood by others.

44

00:02:35,211 --> 00:02:38,214

That was a big thing for me about some

45

00:02:38,614 --> 00:02:41,616

getting my badge and wearing my badge.

46

00:02:47,921 --> 00:02:50,723

When I,

47

00:02:50,723 --> 00:02:54,659

when I first wore it, I noticed that,

48

00:02:56,594 --> 00:03:01,330

people would make efforts

49

00:03:01,330 --> 00:03:05,867

to, to understand and communicate

with me, in particular

50

00:03:05,867 --> 00:03:10,103

service staff,

and it was actually really good.

51

00:03:12,872 --> 00:03:15,707

Because, people would speak clearly

52

00:03:15,707 --> 00:03:19,110

and literally and say what they meant and,

53

00:03:23,746 --> 00:03:26,749

I read a little piece of research

54

00:03:27,049 --> 00:03:30,051

that showed that when

55

00:03:31,018 --> 00:03:34,021

we Autistic people

56

00:03:34,321 --> 00:03:36,923

meet someone who is not Autistic,

57

00:03:36,923 --> 00:03:40,525

that they have a certain feeling of,

58

00:03:44,128 --> 00:03:44,895

maybe

59

00:03:44,895 --> 00:03:47,897

an uncomfortable-ness

or a cognitive dissonance

60

00:03:47,897 --> 00:03:50,733

that they can't put their finger
on why we are different.

61

00:03:50,733 --> 00:03:53,735

But when

62

00:03:55,269 --> 00:03:58,271

when they know that we are Autistic
and they meet us, that

63

00:03:59,139 --> 00:04:02,141

feeling doesn't exist.

64

00:04:05,677 --> 00:04:06,277

So I think

65

00:04:06,277 --> 00:04:09,279

bringing our identity out into the,

66

00:04:10,447 --> 00:04:13,516

out into the open and claiming it

67

00:04:15,217 --> 00:04:18,219

as our own is

68

00:04:19,153 --> 00:04:22,089

maybe the next step forward

69

00:04:22,089 --> 00:04:25,091

for our movement as a people.

70

00:04:25,324 --> 00:04:28,293

I think when I was growing up,

I also felt like

71

00:04:28,293 --> 00:04:31,262

there was just something different

about me.

72

00:04:31,262 --> 00:04:35,698

And for me it was always put down to just
being anxiety.

73

00:04:36,366 --> 00:04:38,801

And in primary school, I like,

74

00:04:38,801 --> 00:04:42,737

got diagnosed with anxiety quite young,
so I always thought “well,

75

00:04:42,737 --> 00:04:45,339

I just had social anxiety
and that's why I never, like,

76

00:04:45,339 --> 00:04:48,341

learned to socialise with other people,
because I just never did it.”

77

00:04:48,541 --> 00:04:52,544

But being able to go “well

78

00:04:52,644 --> 00:04:57,381

no, this is something bigger than this,
this is something that's a part of me.

79

00:04:57,981 --> 00:05:02,885

And I want to take steps
to understand that," even if it's not

80

00:05:03,352 --> 00:05:07,555

through their formal diagnosis and stuff
like that can be really affirming

81

00:05:07,688 --> 00:05:11,124

and has really made me
just more confident in myself.

82

00:05:11,758 --> 00:05:14,093

I think it was very scary

83

00:05:15,427 --> 00:05:18,463

for me, even starting working here.

84

00:05:19,096 --> 00:05:22,099

And when people would ask me like, “what
do you do for work?”

85

00:05:22,132 --> 00:05:25,434

I'd be like, “well,
I work for, Empower Autism”

86

00:05:25,434 --> 00:05:28,436

and you can immediately
tell what that organisation is.

87

00:05:28,737 --> 00:05:32,273

And I don't know what your response
to that is, but it's been really good.

88

00:05:32,273 --> 00:05:36,109

I don't think
I've had any bad interactions with anyone.

89

00:05:37,009 --> 00:05:39,678

When I've said
that they've all been very lovely

90

00:05:39,678 --> 00:05:42,680

and like, "wow,
that's really interesting."

91

00:05:42,914 --> 00:05:45,882

Where even, telling my parents that,

92

00:05:46,516 --> 00:05:49,251

and having them, you know,

93

00:05:49,251 --> 00:05:52,254

previously just not think about that.

94

00:05:52,254 --> 00:05:53,988

It would be like, "oh

yeah, maybe you're Autistic

95

00:05:53,988 --> 00:05:57,491

but we'll just not talk about that.”

96

00:05:57,491 --> 00:06:02,027

Having them have to look it in
the face like, “oh, this is part of me.”

97

00:06:02,695 --> 00:06:05,897

It's been a really,
definitely an interesting process,

98

00:06:06,164 --> 00:06:07,832

but I think it's a good one so far.

99

00:06:09,333 --> 00:06:12,335

It really is part of

100

00:06:12,502 --> 00:06:16,338

our responsibility as Autistic people to,

101

00:06:17,505 --> 00:06:20,507

to acknowledge

102

00:06:20,841 --> 00:06:23,843

the fear that we have within ourselves

103

00:06:23,910 --> 00:06:26,678

to identify, to say this is who we are.

104

00:06:26,678 --> 00:06:27,979

Yeah.

105

00:06:27,979 --> 00:06:29,514

Because

106

00:06:29,514 --> 00:06:33,517

my experience when I, you know,

wear my badge, and it sounds like

107

00:06:33,517 --> 00:06:35,552

your experience,

108

00:06:35,552 --> 00:06:37,686

is that largely people

109

00:06:37,686 --> 00:06:40,689

are positive and accepting.

110

00:06:41,589 --> 00:06:44,591

So, you know, maybe

111

00:06:45,392 --> 00:06:48,194

it's a sticky floor

112

00:06:48,194 --> 00:06:53,064

rather than a gold ceiling that,

you know, holds us back.

113

00:06:53,064 --> 00:06:53,865

Yeah.

114

00:06:53,865 --> 00:06:57,834

Sort of a pick up on something
you were saying about being diagnosed as,

115

00:06:58,668 --> 00:07:01,670

you know, having anxiety.

116

00:07:03,405 --> 00:07:06,741

I understand that most women are diagnosed

117

00:07:06,874 --> 00:07:11,444

with three other things
before they realise they're Autistic.

118

00:07:11,778 --> 00:07:13,145

Yeah.

119

00:07:13,145 --> 00:07:16,148

And are diagnosed, medicated,

120

00:07:17,315 --> 00:07:20,117

you know, incorrectly
and inappropriate often.

121

00:07:20,117 --> 00:07:21,685

And I think that,

122

00:07:23,286 --> 00:07:25,621

you know,

123

00:07:25,621 --> 00:07:27,522

I just want acknowledge
that the experience

124

00:07:27,522 --> 00:07:30,525

is probably different for,

125

00:07:31,325 --> 00:07:34,861

People of Colour and people
for all kinds of other different people.

126

00:07:34,861 --> 00:07:39,164

It's a little it's a little more difficult
for people to identify.

127

00:07:39,831 --> 00:07:44,701

So there's no judgment at all
on anyone who doesn't identify,

128

00:07:44,701 --> 00:07:50,039

but I think it's important for those
who can do, and do so with confidence.

129

00:07:50,772 --> 00:07:55,476

Because it's all, if you listen to

130

00:07:57,244 --> 00:08:01,413

the leading professors in

131

00:08:02,414 --> 00:08:05,650

Autism, you know, in Australia today,

132

00:08:06,551 --> 00:08:09,553

they will,

133

00:08:10,520 --> 00:08:12,488

speak of success

134

00:08:12,488 --> 00:08:16,324

as a reduction in the diagnosis of Autism.

135

00:08:16,858 --> 00:08:23,029

Or- it's

136

00:08:23,029 --> 00:08:27,666

very hard to get away from it

because if you accept

137

00:08:28,400 --> 00:08:31,402

deficit based criteria at your definition,

138

00:08:31,535 --> 00:08:35,838

let's say "Autistic people have profound
difficulty with social communication,"

139

00:08:36,372 --> 00:08:39,374

then, of course,

we can justify any intervention

140

00:08:39,608 --> 00:08:43,110

that will help "fix

Autistic people's communication."

141

00:08:44,178 --> 00:08:46,913

But it doesn't,

142

00:08:46,913 --> 00:08:51,583

this approach of intervention
by Allistic people,

143

00:08:51,583 --> 00:08:55,186

often with a lot of money from the
from the state, from the government,

144

00:08:56,453 --> 00:09:00,723

doesn't actually help us
to communicate better. No.

145

00:09:00,723 --> 00:09:03,725

It would be better if,

146

00:09:04,926 --> 00:09:07,928

Autistic people led

147

00:09:08,362 --> 00:09:10,463

our own interventions for,

148

00:09:10,463 --> 00:09:13,465

for our community because we-

149

00:09:14,633 --> 00:09:16,568

Well, if we think about, like,

150

00:09:16,568 --> 00:09:19,537

the double empathy problem,

it would mean that we

151

00:09:20,871 --> 00:09:23,206

didn't see our communication

as a deficit at all.

152

00:09:23,206 --> 00:09:24,073

No. Just different.

153

00:09:24,073 --> 00:09:27,075

I think that,

154

00:09:27,576 --> 00:09:30,811

the harm created by interventions,
including

155

00:09:32,279 --> 00:09:35,281

behavioral interventions

156

00:09:35,315 --> 00:09:38,417

that try to suppress our Autistic traits.

157

00:09:38,417 --> 00:09:43,287

like our natural movement,
our stimming of our body.

158

00:09:43,287 --> 00:09:46,289

Our, you know, again,

159

00:09:46,956 --> 00:09:49,358

deficit based

framing says it's "restricted

160

00:09:49,358 --> 00:09:52,360

and repetitive behaviour.”

161

00:09:53,027 --> 00:09:54,795

The reality is it's,

162

00:09:54,795 --> 00:09:57,931

an intense focus on one thing.

163

00:09:58,798 --> 00:10:02,534

And I think that we as a human society,

164

00:10:02,534 --> 00:10:06,070

need to understand the value
of our Autistic people in doing this,

165

00:10:07,004 --> 00:10:10,006

and having this, the ability

166

00:10:10,540 --> 00:10:14,243

to hyperfocus, and what's referred to

167

00:10:14,243 --> 00:10:19,947

as our special interests

and seeing those as valuable.

168

00:10:19,947 --> 00:10:24,984

The suppression

of our special interests, our,

169

00:10:25,184 --> 00:10:28,653

you know, Autistic children in classrooms

who are not allowed to engage

170

00:10:28,653 --> 00:10:32,122

in their special interests,

but instead forced to

171

00:10:35,325 --> 00:10:38,327

switch between activities

172

00:10:38,960 --> 00:10:43,964

into a neurotypical design of curriculum,

173

00:10:44,698 --> 00:10:49,435

is the reason why we

174

00:10:51,303 --> 00:10:55,639

protest and our protest is

175

00:10:56,106 --> 00:11:00,910

pathologised as behaviour and behaviour

is something which needs to be changed.

176

00:11:01,377 --> 00:11:05,380

And then we have, organisations that have

a whole lot of money invested in,

177

00:11:06,414 --> 00:11:07,548

changing behaviour.

178

00:11:07,548 --> 00:11:10,550

And it's,

179

00:11:11,617 --> 00:11:16,021

as, I think professor, Alicia Broderick,

180

00:11:17,488 --> 00:11:20,624

used the term,

“Autism Industrial Complex.”

181

00:11:21,124 --> 00:11:25,261

So much is involved in this,

and it's hard to look backwards.

182

00:11:26,028 --> 00:11:28,863

Well, I think a lot of the,

183

00:11:28,863 --> 00:11:30,531

problem, at least in my mind, comes

184

00:11:30,531 --> 00:11:33,933

from how these organisations define

185

00:11:34,467 --> 00:11:38,270

what is valued and what is a deficit.

186

00:11:38,370 --> 00:11:39,938

In what context?

187

00:11:39,938 --> 00:11:45,275

In what context are they say “this is good

because it contributes to this value,

188

00:11:45,275 --> 00:11:48,277

and this is a deficit

because it contributes to this value.”

189

00:11:48,577 --> 00:11:51,946

A lot of the times it's merit based or,

190

00:11:52,313 --> 00:11:56,617

you know, your capacity

to contribute to an organisation's

191

00:11:57,150 --> 00:11:59,719

ability to make money in some way

192

00:11:59,719 --> 00:12:02,721

or some other programs similar to that.

193

00:12:02,921 --> 00:12:06,991

I think it's also helpful to take a

step back and look at, well,

194

00:12:07,958 --> 00:12:09,626

humans are not designed

195

00:12:09,626 --> 00:12:12,661

just to make money, and we have value,

196

00:12:13,162 --> 00:12:17,298

regardless of our capacity
to contribute to someone else's schemes.

197

00:12:17,798 --> 00:12:20,801

We are intrinsically valuable,
just as people.

198

00:12:21,134 --> 00:12:25,170

It doesn't necessarily
have to be through someone else's system.

199

00:12:26,538 --> 00:12:29,607

So I think
as long as we can find value in our lives

200

00:12:30,141 --> 00:12:33,143

in a way that makes sense to us,
I think that's what's important

201

00:12:33,143 --> 00:12:36,145

to me.

202

00:12:36,345 --> 00:12:37,413

Absolutely.

203

00:12:37,413 --> 00:12:41,049

And, it is interesting,

204

00:12:43,050 --> 00:12:46,052

also that if we were only to define people

205

00:12:46,052 --> 00:12:49,788

according to the economic worth,

Autistics would actually do pretty well.

206

00:12:49,788 --> 00:12:51,389

You know. Yes.

207

00:12:51,389 --> 00:12:55,459

You know, take the list of the,
top ten most successful

208

00:12:55,459 --> 00:12:59,595

people in the world
and half of them are likely Autistic.

209

00:12:59,595 --> 00:13:00,129

Yeah.

210

00:13:00,129 --> 00:13:03,131

That's not to say that-
you've got a point,

211

00:13:03,298 --> 00:13:06,434

we need to values selves outside of,
what do we call it?

212

00:13:06,700 --> 00:13:08,735

A Neo-Liberal Capitalist system. Yes,

213

00:13:09,969 --> 00:13:11,637

yes. Well,

214

00:13:11,637 --> 00:13:14,773

yeah, more on your point
about the school systems

215

00:13:15,040 --> 00:13:18,709

where, a lot of Autistic children
would be much happier

216

00:13:19,009 --> 00:13:22,679

and would probably thrive a lot more
if they were just allowed to focus on

217

00:13:22,679 --> 00:13:24,447

what actually interests them,

218

00:13:24,447 --> 00:13:28,449

their special interests, as opposed
to switching between different subjects

219

00:13:28,716 --> 00:13:31,652

in the way that the school system
has decided

220

00:13:31,652 --> 00:13:34,654

it is most productive to work.

221

00:13:35,988 --> 00:13:39,391

And maybe they would invent the things
we need to save ourselves.

222

00:13:39,391 --> 00:13:41,993

Yeah. Quite possibly.

223

00:13:41,993 --> 00:13:45,362

Greta

Thunberg is doing a pretty good job of,

224

00:13:46,129 --> 00:13:49,098

advocating

225

00:13:50,465 --> 00:13:53,167

around climate change.

226

00:13:53,167 --> 00:13:53,934

Yeah.

227

00:13:53,934 --> 00:13:56,603

She's not following anyone else's rules
when she's doing that.

228

00:13:56,603 --> 00:13:59,105

She's not following any system.

229

00:13:59,105 --> 00:14:00,539

In a very Autistic way.

230

00:14:00,539 --> 00:14:02,040

She's, she's authentic.

231

00:14:02,040 --> 00:14:04,576

She, you know,

she takes her boat, power by the wind.

232

00:14:04,576 --> 00:14:07,878

Yeah. Yes. And it's,

233

00:14:09,813 --> 00:14:12,648

I find in that kind of climate

as soon as you mentioned someone's name

234

00:14:12,648 --> 00:14:15,650

you're immediately assumed

235

00:14:15,650 --> 00:14:18,652

to be arguing a political particular,

236

00:14:19,553 --> 00:14:23,389

particular side of what is now,

237

00:14:24,790 --> 00:14:26,758

you know a

238

00:14:26,758 --> 00:14:28,626

hyper polarised,

239

00:14:28,626 --> 00:14:33,029

social media landscape.

240

00:14:33,029 --> 00:14:34,197

Yeah.

241

00:14:34,197 --> 00:14:38,166

That's why I like to use, both Elon

Musk and Grace Tame.

242

00:14:38,633 --> 00:14:44,137

Well, yeah, I would assume, you're not
rooting for every part of these people,

243

00:14:44,304 --> 00:14:47,473

everything that they've done,
when you point them out as examples.

244

00:14:48,074 --> 00:14:48,541

Yeah.

245

00:14:48,541 --> 00:14:51,543

Yeah, that's, that's true.

246

00:14:52,777 --> 00:14:54,878

And, just,

247

00:14:54,878 --> 00:14:56,980

just to put the,

248

00:14:56,980 --> 00:15:01,650

the, the final person on there,
if it wasn't controversial enough,

249

00:15:02,117 --> 00:15:06,487

Luke, the Gospel of Luke, chapter 48.

250

00:15:06,820 --> 00:15:07,154

Sorry.

251

00:15:07,154 --> 00:15:09,256

Yes, you've said this. Sorry.

252

00:15:09,256 --> 00:15:12,258

Chapter two, verse 48 to 53.

253

00:15:12,625 --> 00:15:13,559

It's story about

254

00:15:15,260 --> 00:15:16,728

Mary and Joseph bringing

255

00:15:16,728 --> 00:15:20,063

Jesus to a festival in Jerusalem

256

00:15:20,564 --> 00:15:23,699

if I'm not mistaken, and they traveled

257

00:15:23,699 --> 00:15:27,369

as a large group of people,
and then they left the festival.

258

00:15:27,602 --> 00:15:31,238

So Mary and Joe supplies the festival,
assuming the young Jesus would be

259

00:15:32,305 --> 00:15:33,239

with them.

260

00:15:33,239 --> 00:15:36,042

And, couple of days later,

261

00:15:36,042 --> 00:15:38,410

they're like, "Oh no, where is

262

00:15:38,410 --> 00:15:40,345

little Jesus?" And so they go back

263

00:15:40,345 --> 00:15:45,148

and find him in the temple

and he's talking with

264

00:15:45,982 --> 00:15:52,987

the rabbis, which are like,

they're the religious intelligent people.

265

00:15:52,987 --> 00:15:54,188

And that, you know,

266

00:15:54,188 --> 00:15:57,824

they're surprised at his intelligence

for a child of such a young age.

267

00:15:58,491 --> 00:16:01,493

But, you know, his parents say to him
like,

268

00:16:02,527 --> 00:16:05,463

“how could you,” you know,

269

00:16:05,463 --> 00:16:08,899

I’m paraphrasing,
but “how could you not know

270

00:16:08,899 --> 00:16:11,133

that we'd be worried about you?” And then,

271

00:16:11,133 --> 00:16:14,136

you know, Jesus turns around and says “how
could you not know I was about,

272

00:16:14,469 --> 00:16:17,605

just doing my father's business”

meaning I was doing the work of God.

273

00:16:18,739 --> 00:16:21,508

So, you know,

274

00:16:21,508 --> 00:16:23,643

Jesus had Autistic traits.

275

00:16:23,643 --> 00:16:24,677

Yeah.

276

00:16:24,677 --> 00:16:28,880

It's a it's a really interesting lens

to look at Jesus through because I think,

277

00:16:29,647 --> 00:16:33,149

he's such a mythologised,

278

00:16:33,149 --> 00:16:36,285

character essentially.

279

00:16:37,319 --> 00:16:39,821

That people look at those things

and they go, “well,

280

00:16:39,821 --> 00:16:44,124

this is the work of like, a myth” or a,

281

00:16:45,158 --> 00:16:47,626

yeah, I mean, a holy man.

282

00:16:47,626 --> 00:16:50,629

These traits are different

because we're viewing them

283

00:16:51,129 --> 00:16:55,932

through this lens of-

or like you talk about Einstein

284

00:16:55,932 --> 00:16:58,935

or something as well, it's like, "well,
this is a genius, though

285

00:16:59,201 --> 00:17:02,004

these traits are explained by him
being genius."

286

00:17:02,004 --> 00:17:06,140

But when you strip away
the mythology and the,

287

00:17:06,140 --> 00:17:09,709

the rose tinted glasses and such,
and just look at these people as people.

288

00:17:10,009 --> 00:17:11,377

It's like, "well, no, these are the-

289

00:17:11,377 --> 00:17:14,379

how these actions

any different to anyone else today?”

290

00:17:14,980 --> 00:17:17,982

And why are we treating these people

291

00:17:18,482 --> 00:17:22,318

as if they're some sort of high being,

like the way people

292

00:17:22,318 --> 00:17:24,687

treat geniuses as having epiphanies

293

00:17:24,687 --> 00:17:26,955

and suddenly coming up

with all these things out of nowhere,

294

00:17:28,623 --> 00:17:29,690

but we're treating

295

00:17:29,690 --> 00:17:32,993

people, in our regular lives
so differently.

296

00:17:32,993 --> 00:17:36,195

I love the way you went meta on that

297

00:17:36,795 --> 00:17:40,465

and, deconstructed
the concept of genius itself or the

298

00:17:41,265 --> 00:17:45,401

you know, the concept of,
idolisation itself, if you like.

299

00:17:45,401 --> 00:17:47,470

Yeah. It's a very Autistic thing to do.

300

00:17:47,470 --> 00:17:51,439

And interestingly, it,
each of those people, Christ

301

00:17:51,439 --> 00:17:54,608

and Einstein, were probably fairly humble
about themselves.

302

00:17:54,608 --> 00:17:55,609

Yeah.

303

00:17:55,609 --> 00:17:59,945

They were written about afterwards,
they were idolised afterwards, but yeah.

304

00:17:59,945 --> 00:18:02,347

Yeah, I'm sure they were

305

00:18:02,347 --> 00:18:04,215

very much not treated in that way.

306

00:18:04,215 --> 00:18:08,051

But it's just interesting how we think

about people of the past or justify

307

00:18:08,685 --> 00:18:11,187

why people do great things

308

00:18:11,187 --> 00:18:14,556

and why people now

couldn't do those great things.

309

00:18:15,223 --> 00:18:17,758

I think in my classes

310

00:18:17,758 --> 00:18:21,261

at uni we've been talking about

fixed versus growth mindsets

311

00:18:21,828 --> 00:18:24,363

and the idea of fixed mindsets

312

00:18:24,363 --> 00:18:27,365

being that, “well,
everyone just is born with

313

00:18:27,465 --> 00:18:30,834

this innate level of intelligence,
and they'll never grow beyond that.

314

00:18:31,034 --> 00:18:34,003

And you just have to get lucky.”
The same thing with creativity.

315

00:18:34,303 --> 00:18:34,637

Yeah.

316

00:18:34,637 --> 00:18:40,341

Where it's really like, this is a skills
that people build over time and,

317

00:18:41,108 --> 00:18:44,344

everyone has different ways
of going about this, but that doesn't mean

318

00:18:44,344 --> 00:18:48,013

any one person is more
or less capable of anything.

319

00:18:49,181 --> 00:18:50,849

And it's not fixed.

320

00:18:50,849 --> 00:18:53,851

No. It's as soon as you label it as fixed,

321

00:18:54,285 --> 00:18:57,087

even the label starts to create its own
truth.

322

00:18:57,087 --> 00:18:57,420

Yeah.

323

00:18:57,420 --> 00:19:01,089

So I, I hear, experts in Autism or,

324

00:19:01,256 --> 00:19:04,258

so-called experts in Autism talk about,

325

00:19:04,859 --> 00:19:09,095

“you know, the Autistic rights movement
is all well and good for,

326

00:19:09,796 --> 00:19:14,733

high functioning Autistic people.”

I don’t agree with the label high

327

00:19:14,766 --> 00:19:17,768

function, but, they'll talk about,

328

00:19:19,870 --> 00:19:22,872

“Oh, there's people with profound Autism.”

329

00:19:26,074 --> 00:19:28,342

In, you know,

330

00:19:28,342 --> 00:19:32,912

I want to charitably

say it's unintentional,

331

00:19:33,279 --> 00:19:36,081

but it's divisive of our community,

of our people.

332

00:19:36,081 --> 00:19:37,516

Yeah.

333

00:19:37,516 --> 00:19:40,251

You know, if you ask my wife,

she will tell you that

334

00:19:40,251 --> 00:19:43,453

I am, at times profoundly Autistic.

335

00:19:43,687 --> 00:19:47,656

If I'm going to use their language.

336

00:19:47,656 --> 00:19:48,357

Yeah.

337

00:19:48,357 --> 00:19:53,394

You know, I'm situationally

338

00:19:54,461 --> 00:19:56,830

nonverbal,

339

00:19:56,830 --> 00:19:59,231

so I, I,

340

00:19:59,231 --> 00:20:02,234

lose my voice and,

341

00:20:07,804 --> 00:20:09,439

When I,

342

00:20:09,439 --> 00:20:14,009

when I look at the situation

very carefully and pause it and slow it

343

00:20:14,009 --> 00:20:17,978

down, it's often in relation to,

344

00:20:18,612 --> 00:20:21,147

I feel shock

345

00:20:21,147 --> 00:20:25,417

at the

346

00:20:26,618 --> 00:20:29,253

The way that someone who is

347

00:20:29,253 --> 00:20:32,255

not Autistic is doing something.

348

00:20:32,289 --> 00:20:35,724

Or has labeled me

or has assumed something,

349

00:20:35,724 --> 00:20:39,394

it's like, “[gasp].” So,

350

00:20:39,394 --> 00:20:44,197

I just, I think we need to have, you know,

and I've been fairly critical

351

00:20:44,197 --> 00:20:47,600

of some Autism experts,

352

00:20:48,834 --> 00:20:52,270

but I think the answer to that,

or a better answer to that, is for us

353

00:20:52,270 --> 00:20:55,605

to speak more about ourselves,

354

00:20:55,605 --> 00:20:58,608

more about our own identity,
more about our own

355

00:20:58,941 --> 00:21:05,980

experiences and to do so without
the shame, without the need to mask.

356

00:21:05,980 --> 00:21:08,982

The last thing we wanted to talk about
was the importance of celebrating

357

00:21:09,148 --> 00:21:10,083

Autistic identity,

358

00:21:11,183 --> 00:21:13,285

because we've had

359

00:21:13,285 --> 00:21:16,154

kind of a serious discussion here,

360

00:21:16,154 --> 00:21:19,156

I don't think it's

been particularly negative, but there is

361

00:21:19,623 --> 00:21:24,660

a lot of value in, sort of putting aside

those negative things.

362

00:21:24,660 --> 00:21:26,928

Or even in the face of those negative

things,

363

00:21:26,928 --> 00:21:30,164

and saying "I'm

not listening to you right now.

364

00:21:30,797 --> 00:21:34,333

I'm going to take a moment and I'm going

365

00:21:34,333 --> 00:21:39,103

to sort of revel in just existing.

366

00:21:39,804 --> 00:21:43,874

Do you have any thoughts
about how you celebrate Autistic identity?

367

00:21:44,541 --> 00:21:47,109

Yes. Here, talking to you,

368

00:21:47,109 --> 00:21:51,312

I feel at home, I feel comfortable,

369

00:21:52,046 --> 00:21:55,315

and I think celebrating Autistic identity-
part of

370

00:21:55,315 --> 00:21:58,884

that is communicating

371

00:22:00,119 --> 00:22:03,621

in whatever way we feel comfortable
with other Autistic people.

372

00:22:03,955 --> 00:22:06,924

Yeah. And

373

00:22:06,924 --> 00:22:09,559

it's an incredibly validating thing.

374

00:22:09,559 --> 00:22:12,594

In a world that doesn't validate us.

375

00:22:12,628 --> 00:22:13,695

Yeah. To

376

00:22:14,929 --> 00:22:15,330

connect with

377

00:22:15,330 --> 00:22:18,332

other Autistic people in a way that,

378

00:22:18,365 --> 00:22:21,067

in whatever way that we,

379

00:22:21,067 --> 00:22:23,836

we like to, to do that,

380

00:22:23,836 --> 00:22:26,838

I think another way we can celebrate

381

00:22:27,405 --> 00:22:30,741

being Autistic is to be- where we have

382

00:22:31,875 --> 00:22:34,677

the ability

and sometimes the privilege to do so-

383

00:22:34,677 --> 00:22:37,679

to look after our sensory needs,

384

00:22:38,046 --> 00:22:41,048

even in ways

385

00:22:42,449 --> 00:22:45,451

that defy social norms.

386

00:22:45,685 --> 00:22:48,687

So wearing my sunglasses in places where,

387

00:22:49,387 --> 00:22:52,523

you know, people wouldn't

normally wear sunglasses-

388

00:22:52,523 --> 00:22:55,792

we've just come from lunch

with a with a group of people,

389

00:22:55,792 --> 00:22:58,794

and I put my-

390

00:22:59,595 --> 00:23:01,997

it was noisy and there was
lots of conversations happening,

391

00:23:01,997 --> 00:23:05,432

so I put my noise
canceling headphones on, and,

392

00:23:06,066 --> 00:23:09,068

I think that's

393

00:23:09,936 --> 00:23:12,337

a real celebration of self.

394

00:23:12,337 --> 00:23:12,504

Yeah.

395

00:23:12,504 --> 00:23:17,141

That, you know, important enough

to give myself some sensory

396

00:23:18,575 --> 00:23:21,577

relief.

397

00:23:22,345 --> 00:23:24,179

The- moving.

398

00:23:24,179 --> 00:23:25,080

Moving when I feel like moving.

399

00:23:25,080 --> 00:23:28,082

So stretching, even when it's,

400

00:23:28,816 --> 00:23:31,818

inappropriate, supposedly,

when everyone sits there and-

401

00:23:32,152 --> 00:23:35,154

It's funny

because, you know, I'm on some kind of,

402

00:23:37,589 --> 00:23:40,591

some kind of advisory group,
the group of experts in the room.

403

00:23:40,958 --> 00:23:44,094

And I get up and I stand up,
and I walk around and it's like, shock.

404

00:23:44,127 --> 00:23:48,197

Yeah, but it doesn't actually diminish
my Autistic voice. No.

405

00:23:48,197 --> 00:23:51,199

And when I

406

00:23:51,966 --> 00:23:55,769

embrace my Autistic self
and speak from what I call my

407

00:23:56,870 --> 00:23:59,405

unmasked affect.

408

00:23:59,405 --> 00:24:02,173

So that's from my,
my part of my true self.

409

00:24:02,173 --> 00:24:05,542

That authenticity is,

410

00:24:06,276 --> 00:24:09,245

is, I think is refreshing in a world
that- Yeah.

411

00:24:10,079 --> 00:24:13,215

We're very constructed
and it's supposed to be a certain way and,

412

00:24:14,582 --> 00:24:15,216

Yeah.

413

00:24:15,216 --> 00:24:18,885

So yeah, I think celebration starts
by the little actions

414

00:24:18,885 --> 00:24:24,022

of looking after yourself and doing that
consistent with what your needs are.

415

00:24:24,189 --> 00:24:26,257

Yeah. So it's the little things.

416

00:24:26,257 --> 00:24:30,127

It's being openly
and unapologetically yourself.

417

00:24:30,861 --> 00:24:31,795

Yeah.

418

00:24:33,363 --> 00:24:34,597

Awkward and proud.

419

00:24:34,597 --> 00:24:35,698

Yeah. [Laughs].

420

00:24:35,698 --> 00:24:38,700

I like that.

421

00:24:39,600 --> 00:24:42,302

Yeah, it really
is the, the Autistic conversation

422

00:24:42,302 --> 00:24:46,272

that you have, that
just change who you are.

423

00:24:46,672 --> 00:24:48,407

Yeah. Yeah,

424

00:24:48,407 --> 00:24:50,708

Doctor Chris Edwards is on our board

425

00:24:50,708 --> 00:24:53,711

and the first time I met with him

one on one,

426

00:24:53,977 --> 00:24:56,980

there was this prolonged silence that

427

00:24:57,180 --> 00:25:00,282

neither of us felt the need to punctuate.

428

00:25:00,949 --> 00:25:04,985

And that was the first time I felt like

429

00:25:06,420 --> 00:25:09,222

“this is how we would communicate,

430

00:25:09,222 --> 00:25:11,490

if we didn’t feel like we had to follow

431

00:25:11,490 --> 00:25:15,026

some kind of turn taking rule.” Yeah.

432

00:25:16,961 --> 00:25:21,197

And it's a beautiful Autistic cadence.

433

00:25:22,331 --> 00:25:25,100

I think it's exciting to know

434

00:25:25,100 --> 00:25:29,470

that you can have these conversations

that break these social conventions.

435

00:25:29,703 --> 00:25:33,773

Ant to know that, you know, people are,

living their lives authentically like,

436

00:25:34,607 --> 00:25:38,510

it's lovely to speak with you

and to hear about your experience,

437

00:25:38,510 --> 00:25:41,712

because it really does feel

like you are being authentic to yourself.

438

00:25:41,712 --> 00:25:44,947

And I think that, is really encouraging

439

00:25:45,648 --> 00:25:50,518

to me as like a younger Autistic person,

and I would hope a lot of other people,

440

00:25:51,152 --> 00:25:53,787

who may be listening to this video

[both laugh].

441

00:25:53,787 --> 00:25:57,990

If there is anyone out there.

442

00:25:57,990 --> 00:25:59,591

Hello “out there.”

443

00:26:02,260 --> 00:26:02,560

Yeah.

444

00:26:02,560 --> 00:26:05,562

Thank you for,

445

00:26:05,729 --> 00:26:07,530

sharing

446

00:26:07,530 --> 00:26:12,134

your insight as an Autistic person

Was there anything you wanted to

447

00:26:13,335 --> 00:26:14,335

leave us with?

448

00:26:14,335 --> 00:26:18,939

Be be your Autistic self.

449

00:26:18,972 --> 00:26:21,107

You deserve it.

450

00:26:21,107 --> 00:26:23,475

It's your right.

451

00:26:23,475 --> 00:26:27,778

You are,

if I could use some of Grace Tames' words

452

00:26:27,778 --> 00:26:30,013

that you're perfect

just the way that you are.

453

00:26:30,013 --> 00:26:33,015

And, Yeah,

454

00:26:33,216 --> 00:26:34,950

anyone who has a problem,

455

00:26:34,950 --> 00:26:37,952

come and talk to Empower Autism

and we will

456

00:26:39,087 --> 00:26:42,089

have a good conversation about it. Yes.

457

00:26:42,389 --> 00:26:44,891

Yeah, we've got your back

and I'm sure there's plenty of

458

00:26:44,891 --> 00:26:46,492

other people out there too.

459

00:26:46,492 --> 00:26:47,226

Yeah.

460

00:26:47,226 --> 00:26:48,293

Thank you for listening.

461

00:26:48,293 --> 00:26:50,995

This has been Skipping the Small Talk.

462

00:26:50,995 --> 00:26:53,464

I'm Riley, and this has been Casey.

463

00:26:53,464 --> 00:26:56,065

Thank you for joining us on this episode.

464

00:26:56,065 --> 00:26:57,333

Maybe we'll see you again in the future?

465

00:26:57,333 --> 00:26:58,134

I hope so.

466

00:26:58,134 --> 00:27:00,802

We've got plenty of things to discuss,

467

00:27:01,936 --> 00:27:02,503

so thank

468

00:27:02,503 --> 00:27:05,572

you, and

we'll see you in the next one. Bye.