

Eileen Lamb 10:19:20

Welcome to "Adulthood on the Spectrum," in this podcast, we want to highlight the real voices of autistic adults, not just inspirational stories, but people like us talking about their day to day life. Basically, we want to give a voice to a variety of autistic people. I'm Eileen Lamb, an autistic author and photographer and I co-host this podcast with Andrew. Hi, Andrew!

Andrew M. Komarow 10:19:43

Hey Eileen! Hey everyone! Today, our guest is GW. GW is a 21 year old autistic advocate who's originally from Chandler, Arizona, and currently lives in Eugene, Oregon. His mission is to spread acceptance and awareness of people with disabilities including those who have ASD and ADHD. Thanks for joining us.

GW 10:20:07

Yes, of course. It's a pleasure to be here. And just a quick correction. I'm 22 years old,

Andrew M. Komarow 10:20:14

What did I say?

GW 10:20:15

21.

Andrew M. Komarow 10:20:16

Oh, well, I was looking at 22. We did have it typed right. So I don't know where the 21 came. I apologize for that. Yeah, reminds me of the time when I accidentally got my while she was going to be my future mother in law's birthday wrong, but I made her a year younger, lucky to be alive, right? Otherwise, that would have been bad. So defaulting to younger if you're gonna get it wrong, right, Eileen? Right. Anyway, so we like to start the podcast with asking our guests how they like to be, you know, identity-defy or sorry, identity fide? Well, I think I just made up a word identified. And not just pronouns, although you can share those too. But for we're asking, you know, person with autism on the spectrum, autistic, do you have a preference?

GW 10:21:08

I don't have a specific preference. You can call me anything you want. Like person with autism, autistic, individual, autistic doesn't matter.

Andrew M. Komarow 10:21:18

If you didn't add anything after the anything you want, I would have just referred to you as anything you want. So for the rest of the podcast, you can call me anything you want. Anyway, moving on.

Eileen Lamb 10:21:31

So when were you diagnosed? Do you want to take us back in time and tell us a little bit about your autism diagnosis?

GW 10:21:38

Yes, I was diagnosed when I was five years old. My kindergarten teacher saw some traits that were very common among kids with ASD, most of it included stimming, which included hand flapping, walking back around and walking back and forth around in circles, sometimes, sometimes making crazy noises with my mouth or beatboxing. And my kindergarten teacher knew just from her experience, and years of teaching that these were potential signs of the autism spectrum or a developmental disability. So during the parent teacher conference, back in kindergarten, she recommended and strongly suggested to my parents that I get tested. Long story short, I went to a doctor and autism researcher, a clinical researcher, and he tested me under the five categories for autism, and they all came back positive. And that's when I got diagnosed.

Andrew M. Komarow 10:22:37

So my next question was going to be how your autism diagnosis helped you? And it sounds like you already answered that with some occupational therapy and music therapy. They're not therapies that we hear about as often on the podcast. Can you tell us more? What is occupational therapy? And how did that help you? And then the same question for music therapy.

GW 10:23:02

Occupational therapy was really fun. I mean, honestly, if I could step into that therapy office, I would do it all over again, if I would, or if I could, it was so much fun. Occupational therapy was basically interacting and socializing with other kids my age who had autism, and we're working on better socializing and interacting with their peers in class. And those were some issues that I had early on. When I was in grade school. Some of the things we did in occupational therapy, socialize, we're word searches, finding hidden images inside a big picture, or making, making certain Christmas cards if there was a holiday season, and even built using building blocks and stacking those on top. I know since you know, since my time as a child as a little kid around that time, things have changed. I know they do things with tablets and electronics, but you know, concerning this was back from 2008 to 2011. And those were the kinds of activities those physical activities with paper with crayons with coloring books that we did. And as far as music therapy, I didn't actually have to be an expert at playing any type of music or playing an instrument. I usually got usually sit with my music therapy teacher. And we would sometimes play the guitar and he would show me the notes or sometimes other music therapy teachers would teach me a little bit about the piano, I would play the piano with them. And we would just kind of solo and improvise with the piano. And they would work in social behavioral lessons into those obsessions. And it was really fun. Like I said, If I could go back and do it, I would, of course, I'm all grown up now I'm young adult, but again, if I could, I would, it was those therapy sessions were a lot of fun.

Eileen Lamb 10:24:55

Yes, that's great to hear. Because you hear a lot on social media, how therapy is trying to make the autistic person not normal. And you know, that it's very, like abusive, and all of that, but it seems like for you, it was fun, you actually enjoy the therapy.

GW 10:25:13

Right. It was so much fun. And here's the thing, you know, people are gonna say what they want on social media. You know, that's just what happens with the free speech platform with certain limitations.

But that's just what's you know, what's going to happen? That's the reality of it. But what people need to understand, and I say this, from an objective point of view is that, yes, there are some therapies that are really bad for individuals with developmental disabilities, specifically, in this case, autistic people. I can't name them at the top of my head, but I would say one, one area in the country, one center organization called the Judge Rotenberg Center, but you guys may have heard of their based I think in Massachusetts, and they use shock therapy on autistic people and people with ADHD. And I think that's where the people on social media are getting those false false analogies and misconceptions that therapy, especially from Autism Speaks, or other other organizations like Autism Speaks are being used for negative instead of positive. And I'm not saying that because it's true. I'm saying that just because it's in general, a false, you know, it's a common misconception. Like I said, from a personal point of view, I had a lot of fun and occupational music therapy. It wasn't violent, they never whipped me. They never, you know, put me in an electric chair. It was very fun and easygoing. And I feel like if we spread those types of messages on social media spread those types of facts, especially with a personal account, like mine on this podcast, then we're able to hopefully get a better point of view on social media about what Autism Speaks. What a better view about what ASAN, or the Autistic Woman and Non-binary network does.

Eileen Lamb 10:27:04

Awesome. Well, speaking on social of social media, you've grown a pretty big platform on TikTok. You have what, 150k now or something like that?

GW 10:27:13

Yeah, just hit 150k about a week ago.

Eileen Lamb 10:27:16

Nice. So what was your first viral video?

GW 10:27:20

My first viral video, funny that you say one thing that you ask that it actually had nothing to do with autism at all. It was about my three reasons on why I don't drink and it was very controversial because at the time, I was a junior in college going on a senior. And a lot of my my three reasons were a little bit joking and exaggerated, but they were also true, they were in a sense, exaggerated to make a point. But they it was nevertheless very controversial because drinking college drinking especially is very popular. And it's been a staple in college for centuries. Or at least at least for centuries. But what were my firrst viral

Andrew M. Komarow 10:28:03

What were the three?

GW 10:28:06

First ones are irrelevant. Now. My first my first reason was I'm underage. I'm still 20 That's irrelevant, because now I'm 22 I'm above the legal age to drink. Second one was, who was it? Number two. Oh, people, people who drink in college, you know, they're always drunk. We're always wobbly and trying to find their movement and I say well, they're the ones that look ridiculous. I'm the one that looks smart

and sober. And that kind of became a trend where everyone's like on TikTok like hey its the smart and sober guy. And then the third one was excuse me. The third one was the the taste Yeah, the taste of it. That personally I don't like the taste of beer or alcohol. That's why I don't drink but I know other people you know, like the taste of beer alcohol, but that's just the reason why. Like I those are those are my three reasons in general. It's pretty reasonable. But what do you think Andrew.

Andrew M. Komarow 10:29:13

No, I think it's pretty good. Well, I have a new third for you. I will let you steal one of the ones that I use and it's I don't need alcohol to say stupid shit. I do that just fine on my own.

GW 10:29:28

I'll go with that one. I like that one.

Andrew M. Komarow 10:29:31

And nobody who knows me disagrees with that statement especially right Eileen?

Eileen Lamb 10:29:36

Yeah definitely don't need it.

Andrew M. Komarow 10:29:41

Yes. Ah. What trends have you noticed on TikTok? And Eileen, I don't think I've ever I don't think I've told you this. You know, I still don't have a TikTok.

Eileen Lamb 10:29:53

Oh my good.

Andrew M. Komarow 10:29:54

I will get TikTok when you watch Star Wars. Okay.

Eileen Lamb 10:29:58

Deal.

Andrew M. Komarow 10:29:59

Yeah, no, okay, good. So what trends have you noticed on TikTok?

GW 10:30:05

So many trends, and they're not just in the field of autism, they're just in general. When when I mean, what I mean by that are, they're just general trends that just casually blow up. Just as with any social media platform, and the Autistic community will take advantage and jump on those trends and they're really fun to watch. There's a third party service for editing videos on TikTok called Capcut video editor, and a lot of Capcut video editor videos have gotten very popular on TikTok. It's one of those things where I can't describe it to you guys in words, you'd have to go on to Capcut video editor to see what I'm talking about. But visually speaking, if you were to see them on your screen, they're really fun videos, as far as I mean, from a certain movie. Like for example, there's a meme from the other guy

starring Will Ferrell and Mark Wahlberg that's getting very popular. The movie came out 13 years ago, but just now a meme is starting to from Capcut video editor is blowing up that movie again and again, it's you'd have to go check it out. It's really funny. And then of course, there are just the normal trends such as a certain dance or a certain movement, or even a filter that's popular on TikTok, such as a mirror delay where you're talking and then there's another clone of you right next to you. And they say things that you said that the actual, you said three seconds later, again, very hard to explain, like by words, you have to see it visually. So those are the kind of trends. And as far as like the specific autism trends, really honestly, the same stuff that I've been seeing the past two to three years as far as, as far as which organization is, you know, better than the other. And I don't really like to get involved in that debate too much. And then also masking in the autism community, what's what's going on with World Autism Awareness Month, World Autism Acceptance Day, those kinds of trends. So all sorts of fun, amazing trends both in autism, both in the autism community and you know, in general, and in all communities on TikTok.

Eileen Lamb 10:32:16

Speaking of World Autism Month, what do you think about all the controversies like blue versus red and the infinity loop? Puzzle piece and all of that?

GW 10:32:27

Yeah, well, that is a very, I love the question, and I'm more than happy to get into it. I have just so much to say on that. You know, and it's all in it's all positive. You know, I try to make it as positive and as objective as possible. You see, the thing is Eileen, and Andrew, is that I think the autism community has gotten, I'd say a little bit political, and I don't like the word. Okay. Somewhat to a lot. There are different opinions on it. But for me, it's gotten somewhat political as far as Okay, which which side is better? The Light it Up Blue or The Red Instead Movement. For me personally. I think both sides are amazing. You know, I know I've been involved with Autism Speaks somewhere even though I don't officially work for the company. And I've even talked to some advocates who are self advocates who are part of The Red Instead Movement and who believe slightly in what the Autistic Self Advocacy Network does, or even The Autistic Women and Non-binary Network do. I believe both sides are very amazing and special. And while I don't agree with everything Autism Speaks does or everything ASAN does. In the end for me, I just look at it, I look at it simple, common sense and objectivity for me comes first. So in the end with that said, in the end, it's all about the, you know, the the autistic person and spreading the acceptance and the awareness. That's what I really tried to get out of my company. And that's what I really tried to get out of posting on posting my TikToks as a content creator. You know, it's kind of funny that I go all the way back in time to two years ago when I first got TikTok. I initially downloaded it as a joke just to stay connected to all my friends who went to Washington State University with me I'll say no, that's the school I went to and I graduated from there last year with a bachelor's. But um, excuse me. As far as you know, the content creation field and getting involved I just downloaded as a joke but I started to get more involved in the Autistic community on TikTok when I started noticing all these Red Instead advocates posting all these new trends in the autism community. They were educating me on so much more than I was educated with from certain origin organizations years ago, before getting TikTok. I thought I knew everything about autism. When I got on TikTok, I'm like, wait, raincheck I didn't know everything about autism. And I still don't and I'm growing to this day knowing more about autism either on TikTok or from Autism Speaks. But going back to what I was

saying, when I first got onto the platform, and started posting my own versions of what I think certain followers and leaders of The Red Instead Movement or The Light It Up Blue movement are doing. I started to take notice to all these great content creators on TikTok that were starting to notice my videos, such as Tim Boykin, he goes by the Black Infinity King on TikTok, or even I don't know if you guys have heard of her name's Paige Lael. She's an autistic and ADHD activist, and she's on TikTok. But she's more popular on YouTube, she has millions of followers way more popular than I am. But she is pretty much the focal point and the the leader, the unofficial leader of that new movement of trends and education in the autism community. She posts amazing videos, she's very fun. And, you know, we both follow each other on social media, she's just she's an excellent person. But, um, what I started to notice is how deeper and more negative that kind of talk was getting in the autism community to the point where not only were, you know, especially in the comments were Red Instead advocates would post very hateful messages, either by comment or reacting to a certain video on the platform, about The Lighted It Up Blue Movement, but they will blow up blow up over small things. For example, the Light It Up Blue movement, and I don't know if Autism Speaks was a part of this or not. Last year, during

Andrew M. Komarow 10:36:44

I'm pretty sure they created the Light It Up Blue movement or the movement. So I think it's safe to say that that they were a part of that one, but

GW 10:36:53

Right. Yeah, right. Yeah, that's a good point noted. But the, I'm sure you guys have heard of the blue pumpkins, where you give an autistic individual blue pumpkin. And for some reason what I wasn't irritated about this, but I was like, strongly questioning it. The red instead movement was criticizing it saying, Why are you giving kids a blue pumpkin? Why can you give them an orange pumpkin just like every other kid. For me, I don't really care about that. I mean, it's, it's a blue pumpkin. Like, if you don't like a blue pumpkin for your autistic child or individual, give them a purple pumpkin or orange pumpkin or red pumpkin, I don't care. It's just like, it's a pumpkin. And in the end, it's a celebrate Halloween. And it's in the end, it's about trick or treating. But that's the those are just one of many examples of how it's gotten a little bit political in the autism community. And that's why I've, you know, in the past year and a half, I started you know, telling my life story, my personal life story on TikTok more. And I think that's why I've stayed so relevant as an autistic advocate on TikTok. And, you know, consistently getting views and follows. My viewership has staggered a little bit, it's going up and down more like my videos, as far as like getting in the hundreds of 1000s are getting more inconsistent. But that's just because of the overall TikTok algorithm changing, I've been able to keep my head in the game, stay consistent, stay relevant, post content that's not only funny and laughable, but also educational and entertaining. And to me, in the end, people don't want politics in the autism community. Remember, going back to what I said a few moments ago. In the end, it's about spreading acceptance, and spreading that education. That's what I'm trying to spread. But I've also evolved to realize, you know, what, I need to post stuff about my family life, other parts of my life story, because in the end, I've realized, and especially talking to recent people that I've just gotten to meet and now all my life becomes good friends with. I've learned from them that autism is not the only thing that makes me valuable. I would say being a black autistic content creator makes me valuable. You knowc just being on this podcast and having all these connections makes me valuable and it also makes you guys valuable as well. Um,

you know, being kind of people spreading love and compassion, that all makes me valuable. Having a bright family makes me valuable. Those are the kinds of things I'm spreading on the platform. And that's why I think that I've stayed relevant. On the other hand, and I'm not going to name names just out of respect, these are all people that I follow. Some of fellow autistic and ADHD content creators who are on TikTok, who I'm friends with have been posting videos recently of how their views have been declining so much in their, like, their autism related videos have been declining so much. And pretty much what they post a lot are jokes about autism and all the all the debate about autism, I believe that's why they're losing views, because people are getting disinterested, and that debate about autism. And that's why I believe my videos again, have been able to stay relevant and not to crack on my not crack on my fellow content creators videos, I think they're still posting great videos. But I feel like they need to switch things up. That would be my advice to them. If I could see them, if I were talking to them on this call today, they need to, you know, switch things up, switch their switch styles, they need to maybe post more about their life story, post something else that makes them valuable. In other words, they need to evolve, they need to grow as a human, you need to evolve, if you don't evolve, you're, you're not going to go anywhere. It just like no different. For example, if you know you're, you're one years old, and you're learning to take your first step, and then four years later, you're still learning to take your first step at five or six years old. That means you're not evolving. It's the same thing with your content, you have to grow, and you have to learn. And hey, I'm still evolving, and I'm still learning about autism community every day. But I'm saying that the autism community needs to, you know, get their head out of the political debate about autism, they need to stop playing the blame game. And they need to go go up to people directly, especially young, young people who are maybe in grade school who are learning about autism and say, Hey, if you're autistic, or if you have a developmental disability, you can choose which organization you're, you know, you're able to learn from or educate yourself from if you want to learn from Autism Speaks, learn, you know, get resources from Autism Speaks to your resources for Autism Speaks, if you're not interested in Autism Speaks, go over to the ASAN. And look at resources there. Regardless of what side you get your information on. In general, they all have the same mission, whether it's on TikTok, or whether it's on a zoom call like this, or whether it's just in person at the actual organization itself. Whatever side you get your information from, in general, everybody, every side wants the same thing is to spread education to spread acceptance, and to spread awareness. That's what I'm trying to get back to. And that's what I'm really are. That's what I have been really, with that said, showing in the past year and a half, you know, posting content on Tik Tok. So, I will

Andrew M. Komarow 10:42:25

So, I will say that that's not what every organization does. But I do think that's every organization worth following. Right? You know, if you're only following, and this is any organization at all, that's, that's only saying, like you said, like, it's good, the views are going down. Like, you know, if there's no value add, if you're just talking about, you know, I mean, why someone else sucks, right? Not like, not like, you know why to support your organization, you should have a reason on how to do that without putting the, you know, the other side down, I always think that's a good way to go. And I'm always kind of like, you know, talking about what trends are out there. I'm always thinking, Man, I'm so glad the autism community has solved every single issue. And the only thing that we should be fighting about is whether a few organizations suck, or which ones to like, support. I mean, so like, there's a lot more good we can do. Right to help. So like in Connecticut, last week, there was testimony on a bill that would have provided support to 10s or hundreds 1000s of people with autism in the state of

Connecticut who don't get support and services because their IQs high. Wait, where were we about that, right? Who was advocating about that? Like, that's an important thing. There's so much more. I agree with you, we should focus on trying to make you know, lives better. And that doesn't mean that I mean, some things like shock, you know, electric shock, I think Autism Speaks as against that too. I lean everyone is pretty much right. I actually don't know anyone who's for it, but I'm sure someone might exist. But, you know, sure. There's some things like that. But for the most part, if this therapy work for you, and that therapy work for someone else. That's okay. Right? So it's, yeah, no, thank you for having a good perspective. How do we get for others? To see your perspective? Or to see other perspectives? Because that's one thing I think we really noticed, as specially with autism, it's, you know, my way or the highway, right?

Eileen Lamb 10:44:49

How do we bridge the gap?

GW 10:44:50

How do we bridge the gap? Keep things simple. You know, I'm sure you guys have heard of the kiss method. My dad taught me keep it simple, stupid, or stupid, simple, or wherever you want to put it? And how does that apply to, you know, bridging the gap? Well, like I said, focus on the acceptance, just focus on helping autistic lives. And that may be a tough question, because everybody has a different opinion on how to help lives, help autistic individuals lives specifically. But I would say, in order to do that, you know, attend speaking engagements, get involved with your community, speak up about issues revolving around the autism community, and, you know, talk to both sides, you know, get and, you know, review all your research sources, do all your research, and come to your own conclusions. And, and, you know, most of all work, work together. You know, and, and this is a perfect example of that this podcast. I'm technically kind of objective around both sides, I, I'd say I support Autism Speaks in a lot of ways. And I support ASAN and Autistic Women and Nonbinary Network in a lot of ways. And, you know, you both work for and are heavily involved with Autism Speaks, bridging the gap. I'm talking potentially talking about our differences right now. But regardless, working with Autism Speaks or not, you know, Eileen, Andrew, you know, just me all all three of us on this podcast, for example, that's bridging the gap, potentially sharing our differences, agreeing, respectfully agreeing or disagreeing. We're bridging the gap right now. So if other people were to do that in the autism community, with the same type of passionate agreement, or disagreement, and that positive energy that I've talked about so much, so far, just imagine how much more we could, you know, create that bridge and bring those communities together?

Eileen Lamb 10:46:57

Oh, yeah. And I love that you're here. Because I mean, you know, we might not agree on everything. But I know, one thing is that if we don't agree, we're always going to be respectful with each other. And I think that's another big issue on social media is that when people disagree with each other, they attack and they can be very, very nasty, you know, and, you know, there's a way to disagree with people without putting them down and making threats and insults and like reporting their pages. I mean, it gets ugly very quickly. And I think, I mean, I would love to work more with you on finding ways to like bridge that gap, since you have kind of a foot on the other side of whatever the expression is, but you know what I mean? I feel like, you know, you could maybe, maybe help be that bridge we need but I

wanted to ask you about something on TikTok, you see a lot of videos about people sharing videos like, Okay, if you do these three things, then you have autism. Okay, if you do this one thing, then you have ADHD and all of that. What are your thoughts on this trend of like, you know, just kind of like TikTok diagnosis, I want to say?

GW 10:48:19

Yeah, so I'd vaguely seen those videos, if at all, um, I believe those from the way you're describing them, it sounds like yourself. Those are self diagnosis videos. And my opinion on those videos specifically are, you know, you I feel like you have to get tested for autism, you have to have a professional autism clinical researcher or somebody who professionally diagnosis, diagnose, diagnose, diagnosis, people with developmental disabilities, you've got to find those people. I mean, if you want to self diagnose yourself, that's fine. But the only problem with that is that you can't you don't have official records of yourself being diagnosed with autism, therefore, you can't get the necessary accommodations needed for people with autism or people with developmental disabilities. For example, there's a lady who I follow her name's Kara Sinclair and she's an autistic. an LGBTQ plus activist.

Andrew M. Komarow 10:49:22

Who is the person again?

GW 10:49:24

Cara Sinclair.

Andrew M. Komarow 10:49:26

Okay. Well, Bridget goes right Bridget Sinclair. That's why I thought I missed the name too. So okay, who is also LGBTQ. Anyway, moving on.

GW 10:49:38

Cara Sinclair. She's an advocate and activist for autism ADHD, she has both those disabilities. And she, she self diagnosed herself years prior to getting diagnosed with autism. Officially, she was late diagnosed with autism at the age of 19. Officially, she got tested, but beforehand, she diagnosed herself way before when she was little, and with ADHD as well. The only problem with that is when she was in Junior High in high school, she never was able to receive the necessary accommodations because she wasn't officially diagnosed. So to answer your question, Eileen, with with all that said, you have to get tested officially, by an a professional autism, clinical researcher, or else you're not ever going to receive the necessary accommodations. If we could live in a world where you could self diagnose yourself and get those accommodations. I'd be all for it. But unfortunately, that's not the reality we live in. So again, you got to get tested by professional clinical researcher.

Eileen Lamb 10:50:47

Yeah.

Andrew M. Komarow 10:50:48

Well, there's then there's a lot too. So with the "Adulting on the Spectrum,:" Facebook group that we have, that we run, where the name comes from, we have you know, are you you know, autistic, and we

say, you know, officially diagnosed or self diagnosed or suspecting being diagnosed. I really always liked the suspecting being diagnosed. Because, you know, it's still validating it's to nice way, you know, I mean to, because I think there is a lot of people who see traits in their kids or see traits in themselves. But it's important to get an accurate diagnosis. I know somebody who thought she had autism, because she wasn't like her two boys or her son. So she went to get tested. Well turned out the three of them had autism, and she didn't, that's why she would feel different than them. Right. So, but one thing you said earlier in the podcast, I just want to circle back to it is you said that you learned a lot about autism from a lot of these tick tock, you know, creators and but at the same time, you said that you really didn't watch a lot of the diagnosis videos. And I think there's really a thin line. You know, somebody's saying, I lean You look confused as shit. I think I'm gonna get to a point, I promise. Okay, so. Okay, basically, when somebody describes something about autism about themselves, and you're saying, you know, but that could just be something about themselves. It doesn't have to be autism. How do you navigate who is a good autism content creator, and the person who says, you know, I have autism, and I like to fidget? Okay, but that doesn't mean you have autism. Right? Do you follow me? How do you follow? How do you know the good tick tock people from the bad?

GW 10:52:41

If I could? I mean, if I could, like, comprehend the question as best as I can,

Andrew M. Komarow 10:52:49

if I could comprehend the question the best site, then that would be a positive as well. So

GW 10:52:56

I guess, you know, to me, there's no such thing as a bad content autistic content creator, every artistic content creator self diagnosed or not, has their own positive message or potentially positive message to share. I don't really decipher, I just view certain autistic content creators that I think are posting the the necessary, sensitive and positive kind of content that we shouldn't be seeing on the tick tock community. So I don't decipher. I just I just know which ones I'm following that are posting the positive and necessary videos on the platform.

Andrew M. Komarow 10:53:44

But there are people who any, I'm going to challenge you a little bit. Anyone can take a video can think they have, you know, autism can say and this is my autism, make a video about it, you know, in posted, and I think that could lead other people thinking, Oh, I have autism too. Right. So, but how do people you know, stay away from maybe the people who not everyone you said everyone either has or or has the possibility to have good intentions or something like that, or a positive message. But there are people who don't, who aren't currently sharing positive messages or, you know, there is misinformation out there it is the internet after all, is there any way to be on the lookout for misinformation? Is it the people who are talking? You know, not from a place of kindness and what you should be against? Not? What should you be for? Are those the people you should stay away from? Or?

GW 10:54:49

Oh, yeah, no, definitely, I totally agree with you, there are, there have been quite a bit of people and organizations who I've, you know, came across from who, I would say, are trying to not move autism

forward and move the spectrum backward. And take us back to a time when, you know, being being a person with autism was a lot harder, not only in your household, but just in public in general. For example, there's this organization, they ended up leaving tick tock because they got a lot of criticism, they were called the B Here foundation. I don't know if you guys have heard of them. But they posted a video that we need to find a cure for autism. And they gave these very crazy and outlandish misleading ideas of why we need to find a cure for autism. And first of all, for starters, I totally disagreed with the video, there's no cure for autism, there will never be a cure for autism. Autism is not supposed to be cured, it's a part of us, it's a part of who we are. It's what makes us our personality. It's what shapes us. So there's no cure for autism. And he didn't give a couple good, I guess he did, objectively, when I say this, objectively speaking, he gave one good reason maybe to one of the reasons that stood out from me is that and the life expectancy of kids with autism is half of that, or nearly half of that as somebody who's not autistic. The reason why that is the case, though, is because of the stress that autistic individuals sometimes go through by not receiving enough accommodations or resources to help them with their autism. And life expectancy always falls in general, not just with people with autism, but in general, when you're not receiving enough help and resources, such as any resources for medicine, or seeing a psychologist or things like that, in general. So that's the reason why but this makes such an outlandish claim there's a cure, which there isn't

Andrew M. Komarow 10:57:09

A lot of the other reasons why is a lot on the severe and to use Eileen's words, right? Have a lot of coexisting physical medical issues as well. So there are a lot of problems with that statistic. Because, you know, someone like yourself, or, you know, me or Eileen, you know, in theory, our life expectancy should be, you know, average, right, but it's a lot of the autism, it's not, and there's probably some relation to what you said, as well. But a lot of it is a lot of people with autism have other physical health concerns as well.

Eileen Lamb 10:57:56

I was gonna say, I don't have this stat but I know that a lot of people with autism also have comorbid conditions, like seizures,

Andrew M. Komarow 10:58:05

That's what I just said.

Eileen Lamb 10:58:06

I know, I know,

Andrew M. Komarow 10:58:07

Oh but you're saying it better?

Eileen Lamb 10:58:09

Andrew. Yeah, exactly. With the French accent,

Andrew M. Komarow 10:58:13

It is better with the French accent.

Eileen Lamb 10:58:14

Much better. But really, the other thing is the intellectual disability, and that a lot of artistic people don't have a sense of danger. That's why the number one cause of death in autistic people is death by accident. And a lot of time, it's, drowning, because, you know, you often see these stories in the news about how like another, you know, adult child can be is missing. And then sadly, a few days later, he's like, found that after drowning, I mean, we see this so many times a year, and it always breaks my heart because, you know, my son is the same way. He doesn't know you know that running in front of cars is dangerous. That's, you know, jumping in the lake is gonna get him himself drown. So, I think, you know, that's why I wish there was a different term for people who have like, profound autism, which is now recognized, and people like, you know, the three of us because the intellectual disability makes a big difference, I think, and it's hard sometimes to, you know, separate the autism from the intellectual disability and yeah, why were we talking about this? I lost my train of thought. Oh, yeah. Yeah. Yeah, it's been one of those episodes, but ya know, it's interesting, you know, I like that we can talk about the different perspectives and all of that with GW because it's, it's important, you know, Right. Right. And I wasn't trying to come down on you guys or anybody out there who may not be you know, who may be

Andrew M. Komarow 11:00:02

Intellectual disabled like Eileen.

GW 11:00:06

Not something like that. Overall, you know, some other examples. And these are just simpler examples, not a big one, like the Be here foundation. For example, if somebody you know, posts, you know, I try to shy away from the creators who maybe post a video that you know, calls another autistic person, an idiot or a fool and I have seen videos like that, where there's something on TikTok called duets or stitches, kind of like retweets, or repost where you play the first five to 10 seconds of a video and you react to it by on your own. And that's what some autistic content creators would do. They would react to other autistic individuals videos and disagree with them harshly, sometimes even flipping the middle finger, which, you know, obviously, is not very acceptable, and not very cool. I mean, you obviously can't control them from doing that. But it's not something that's okay. And acceptable, you know, if I was like, if I were, and I'm not going to do this, I'm talking theoretics. Like, if I were to say stuff like that, or do that, you guys right now, obviously, you can't control that behavior. But that doesn't make that behavior, okay. It's disrespectful and sensitive and callous. So I try to shy away from those creators like that. And don't get me wrong. That's one video they post. And they've posted other videos where they truly talk about autism and their beliefs in it from the heart, which I respect. But that for me that one video that they do, even if it's one mistake they made, that's still a turn off for me. And I tried to, again, shy away from that and try to focus on the creators that only want to post positive videos and videos that aren't going to mislead people and judge others, or even ourselves the wrong way.

Eileen Lamb 11:02:00

Yeah, I just want to challenge you just a little bit, because I do agree with what you're saying. And you know, I don't like when people are only posting just to tear each other down. But do like posting about negative things, I think that we can't just post about the positive side of autism, you know, because autism comes with challenges as as much as I want, you know, people to like see the good part, I also

want to be objective in what I'm sharing about autism. And you know, like we were just talking about for some people autism, as you know, you can find a lot of strengths, but from for other people, it's, you know, living maybe in an institution because they can't care for themselves at all and all of that. Eileen, I think it was more, not that I think he was referring to not necessarily the negatives of autism, but the negativity of autism. So you can talk about like, and correct me if I'm wrong, GW talk about, like, your weaknesses, how autism affects you. But what Eileen would say with, you know, hate, that's a different story, right, like acknowledging, you know, some of the deficits, that's especially yours. That's, that's not the negativity you're referring about. That's very helpful, like Eileen said, is that right?

GW 11:03:24

You're close. Just to clarify to the both of you guys, what I mean by when I say negativity, I'm talking about videos that directly attack other people. And those are the videos that I was talking about a few moments ago. With certain negative videos, I will admit are fine, just like the ones Eileen was talking about, such as the struggles and issues people go through with their autism or their ADHD or if they have any other type of developmental or physical disability. And a way those videos can be positive because in the end, you watch those videos and you sympathize with that person. And they want to be and they're sometimes intended inadvertently to be uplifting and motivating, but they are nevertheless negative in their own tone in their own concept. And that and again, I will, Eileen has a right to challenge me there because I I do admit that right there that there are some negative videos especially those ones she's talking about that are fine that are acceptable. There's a content creator. Her name's Rebecca Faith Quinn. Rebecca Faith Quinn. That's a real name and she goes by on TikTok and Instagram, Ribera, bong, bong. And she has way more followers than I do both on Tik Tok and iG I think she has about close to 300,000 followers on TikTok, about maybe 50,000 followers on Instagram. So she's a big influencer. And she's a comedian as well, she does a lot of comedy shows, either in LA or somewhere in South, the Southern California area. Because that's I think that's where she's from. But basically, she posts a lot of autism comedy videos that are not only funny, but sometimes she posts videos that are that have those kind of negative connotations that I think Eileen was referring to the challenges of growing up having autism, the negatives about it. I've posted a couple of those videos, although my style on posting, posting as a content creator is much different. But as far as what she does, she posts those kinds of videos as well as a lot of other autistic content creators.

Eileen Lamb 11:05:35

Yes, thanks for clarifying. We're on the same page. Andrew is going to ask you some quickfire question, and that will be it.

GW 11:05:46

Yeah.

Andrew M. Komarow 11:05:47

Okay. So just say the first thing that comes to comes to your mind. Do you have a favorite quote? If so, what is it?

GW 11:05:58

If you think you can, and if you think you can't, then you're right on both occasions. Henry Ford

Andrew M. Komarow 11:06:06

Favorite autism representation in a movie or TV show?

GW 11:06:11

I'm gonna have to go with Forrest Gump. Tom Hanks. You know he takes home the gold

Andrew M. Komarow 11:06:18

Developmental disability did he have autism?

GW 11:06:22

He did. Yes.

Andrew M. Komarow 11:06:25

Okay, didn't know. Next question. What is your favorite animal?

GW 11:06:33

Lion

Andrew M. Komarow 11:06:35

What is your favorite movie?

GW 11:06:37

Avatar.

Andrew M. Komarow 11:06:40

First or second?

GW 11:06:43

It's so tough. I thought they were both really good.

Andrew M. Komarow 11:06:47

Both is acceptable.

GW 11:06:50

Very nitpicky I have to go the first one but that is a very tough they're both really good.

Andrew M. Komarow 11:06:56

And it's glow in the dark a color like the I don't we usually show up what it looks like don't have that with me here today. But the glow in the dark with the lights on like that greenish yellow, is that a color or a property?

GW 11:07:16

I mean, from a common sense standpoint I think it's a color to me so.

Andrew M. Komarow 11:07:20

Okay, thank you

Eileen Lamb 11:07:21

Wow you found your person Andrew

Andrew M. Komarow 11:07:26

Sense prevails.

Eileen Lamb 11:07:30

Well, thank you so much for joining us today. Can you tell people where to find you on social media GW?

GW 11:07:36

Yes, you guys can find me on Tiktok and Instagram, on all platforms at Autism Chose Me and that's all one word autism chose me. And you can also go to my website at autism chose me.com. I have a lot of big tabling events and speaking engagements coming up especially next month for World Autism acceptance month. So with all my platforms to stay up to date and alert for those.

Eileen Lamb 11:08:08

Awesome, thank you so much. I mean, one of my favorite episodes, that was awesome. So thank you, of course. Thank you