

00:00:06 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Hello and welcome to this new episode of Let's Talk about Autism. The podcast for our autism community in Spanish and this is their hobby. Tony Hernández Pumarejo in this new episode of let's talk about autism, today I will have the honor and privilege of being interviewing and teaching, teaching the story of a young autistic Puerto Rican, an adult like me.

00:00:33 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

A friend of mine who has a very inspiring story and who has done extraordinary work for our autism community in Puerto Rico, so also the first one who is interviewing Gualberto Rodríguez became one of the ambassadors of our autism community. autism, so Gualberto, thank you for participating in this episode today. Let's talk about autism.

00:00:58 Gualberto Rodriguez

Yes, many thanks to you, Tony, for the opportunity and to all those who listen to us from Puerto Rico and other countries in Latin America and the world as well.

00:01:10 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Thank you Gualberto, this we don't know what it's been for a couple of years that we've been in contact and.

00:01:18 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

And he even won the prize of knowing you well in 2022, which was when he visited Puerto Rico. That's right?

00:01:29 Gualberto Rodriguez

And I think it was 2022, 2023 somewhere around there, but it was. It was within that period with 20 to 22, but it had to have been like the end of 20 to 22 around there or the beginning of 2023 on 13 TV.

00:01:46 Gualberto Rodriguez

Don't expect a correction, I think it was in 2022 that came for the month of November.

00:01:52 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Yes, it reminds me the most that it was in the month of November, why do you remember that too?

00:01:58 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Who knows nothing about television in Puerto Rico, he interviewed us for a series on autism.

00:02:04 Gualberto Rodriguez

Yes, that is correct.

00:02:04 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

What is the Guapa channel if I'm not mistaken and.

00:02:08 Gualberto Rodriguez

Yes, that is correct.

00:02:09 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

So yes, yes, well no, no, we can't remember Gualberto, you are one of the ambassadors, you go throughout the island. And also outside of Puerto Rico, also talking about history.

00:02:21 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

And I want to ask you how this story began, how this?

00:02:29 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

When you felt like you were different, if you can, a beginning at the beginning of your life.

00:02:35 Gualberto Rodriguez

Well, my story, actually feeling different. I would say that since I was a child, one can feel some different things, but perhaps it was like the most adult stage.

00:02:48 Gualberto Rodriguez

Or maybe part of adolescence, but I would say, the adult stage that when you know more about autism than 1, you know the challenges and the symptoms.

00:02:58 Gualberto Rodriguez

And then, well, I started to realize that I could be.

00:03:02 Gualberto Rodriguez

Someone different than today I felt maybe different, but.

00:03:08 Gualberto Rodriguez

No, I didn't feel it so marked, perhaps as an adult, because as one knows more, one can know how I can, how I am different, from what people call typical.

00:03:21 Gualberto Rodriguez

OOA society.

00:03:22 Gualberto Rodriguez

In general.

00:03:25 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

OK, anyway, when were you formally diagnosed with autism?

00:03:31 Gualberto Rodriguez

I was diagnosed with autism at the age of 3, when I had a study done by a pediatric neurologist named Doctor Jesús Vélez Borrás. He was the one who diagnosed me. He is a Puerto Rican neurologist, that is, he is from here in Puerto Rico and he did the evaluations for me and he himself certified the condition of autism. My first symptoms of autism, I don't know if that's going to be a question.

00:04:00 Gualberto Rodriguez

But the symptoms of autism that my parents detected in me, they realized that I was different in the sense that I didn't socialize with almost anyone, I only spoke in the third person, I spoke in the third person. It's just that if he did something instead of saying I did this, the other guy did, the boy said. The boy was talking about a boy who was this servant.

00:04:28 Gualberto Rodriguez

They realized that I had some sensory manias, being selective with food that did not tolerate physical contact, such as hugs, kisses, having someone close.

00:04:40 Gualberto Rodriguez

How true, we are a culture, an emotional culture where we greet with hugs, with shaking hands with kisses.

00:04:47 Gualberto Rodriguez

It's too difficult?

00:04:52 Gualberto Rodriguez

This what else? Well, someone could say this about noises that I had little or no tolerance, and that's when my parents, well, then they realized that I had something different. They took me for an evaluation and then the pediatric neurologist certified it.

00:05:18 Gualberto Rodriguez

That I then have traits of autism, what was called atypical autism at that time.

00:05:25 Gualberto Rodriguez

OPRDNOS, which in English means perversy development disorder not other wise or in Spanish pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified, which at that time they called this, right, what they called it the zapacón of autism, right? So if someone listens to us in other Latin American countries, zapacón is what we say in Puerto Rico, where we throw the garbage.

00:05:54 Gualberto Rodriguez

They call garbage from work at home in Mexico a trash can in other countries, because they will say it differently, but it was a way of saying that it was a way of saying, it doesn't have it. The qualities of typical autism, but let's call it atypical autism, what it was called today. It was later called Asperger's syndrome and is now known as autism level one after CM 5 when it was updated more than 10 years ago.

00:06:25 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

OK.

00:06:26 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

And then yes, also my experience because I was adopted, like you at 3 years old, but I was only diagnosed with autism, because that was a little before what Emanuel DSM four is, which is here it comes, there were some definitions.

00:06:45 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

From autism to asperger syndrome and other definitions of autism. Then I revalued how aspeger in my case a few years later and.

00:06:55 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

And is that part of the process, that is, Gualberto, much of what you said, of the species that you faced, growing up as an autistic person, well, there are common things and the case is ME, but depending because autism always or I say to the family and also to society that we do have levels of autism, right? 1,2, and 3 for dysfunctional, moderate and severe.

00:07:21 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

But we cannot go by that alone, but each autistic person is different.

00:07:26 Gualberto Rodriguez

That, that's how it is and let's take those that are still level one.

00:07:36 Gualberto Rodriguez

We differ, no, we are not equal, that is, because level one, to give you an example, there may be a level one that.

00:07:46 Gualberto Rodriguez

May not tolerate noise.

00:07:48 Gualberto Rodriguez

But this server tolerates them here in Puerto Rico. Now these days we have a cultural event or an event called the San Sebastián street party during this weekend and it is an event that this server is going to attend. If God and the Virgin allow it and it is an event where there is a lot of noise, a lot of people.

00:08:11 Gualberto Rodriguez

Lots of sensory stimulation, lots of noise.

00:08:14 Gualberto Rodriguez

I mean, it's a very sensory environment, lots of food smells.

00:08:19 Gualberto Rodriguez

And there may be someone with level one autism who does not tolerate it, this server tolerates it, that is, those are examples of how autism is difficult to understand, because although there may be 10 young children or adults at the same level of autism, be it level 3, level two level one each one is different and that is the mystery, the enigma of autism.

00:08:44 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

No YY with when? Because as you mentioned very well, I mean I'm level one, I'm going to make a confession, I've gone to those parties on San Sebastián Street as well, I went twice.

00:08:57 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

And you mentioned very well that there are a lot of people, that's a party they have in the capital of San Juan than it is.

00:09:05 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Juan, every year is like there are some who say that it is over, there are officially Christmases because you know this, we, we have longer Christmases throughout the world, but I went, I went there.

00:09:20 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

I'm.

00:09:21 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

For me, whatever I mean, I have, sometimes I have problems in terms of hanging out with people, that is, in my case, because you go to those parties, other types of parties, well. I mean, but this doesn't bother me as much as maybe other autistic people, it could be because there can be different reasons. In my case, from my experience I could say that it was because of some experiences that I had in my life outside of my comfort room, I worked in environments that require a lot of social communication, for example.

00:09:51 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Or an environment that is loved very much.

00:09:53 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Maybe not, it's not the same for another autistic person or maybe it's not the same for me in your case, that is, I know that you are in different environments, because you work with the public, that is, you are used to it. to those pressures than perhaps another autistic person. I don't know, don't get used to it, but it doesn't mean that another autistic person is incapable of having a better life. Maybe I'll do it a different way.

00:10:21 Gualberto Rodriguez

Yes, exactly, because I think it depends on upbringing and it depends on how, right? Or it also depends on the way the child gets used to it, because that is why I believe that children with autism may have the capacity.

00:10:38 Gualberto Rodriguez

It's about coping with the social and sensory challenges in these types of activities, but it's also all in common, right? In part, the parents wrap it or how the child wraps it.

00:10:53 Gualberto Rodriguez

This is because the truth is, not everyone adapts in the same way and those who adapt partially, others do not adapt, others adapt completely.

00:11:02 Gualberto Rodriguez

Seeing it, I don't deny, right, is this just to give an example?

00:11:09 Gualberto Rodriguez

Last year I went to the San Sebastian street party and I give these parties as an example because they are events that bring together thousands of people, we are not talking about what they are.

00:11:19 Gualberto Rodriguez

Tens or hundreds of people we are talking about thousands, but thousands of.

00:11:24 Gualberto Rodriguez

Hundreds of thousands.

00:11:26 Gualberto Rodriguez

If we add the 4 days and sometimes in one night to see if 100,000 people there can be 200,000 or 50,000, that is, a fairly high number.

00:11:36 Gualberto Rodriguez

And, well, one also gets anxious, at least I'm going to give you an example, if I need to go to the bathroom, the bathrooms are miles long and God forbid. An emergency that I have in the bathroom, right? Well, one thing sometimes gives me anxiety, I don't deny, that's an example, but if I'm calm normally, well no, it doesn't tend to give me a lot of anxiety.

00:12:00 Gualberto Rodriguez

And it's something that.

00:12:01 Gualberto Rodriguez

The laptop was able to overcome these challenges with the grace of God, which are social and sensory challenges, which is why it is very important that it be exposed. Little by little I do not intend, it is not to expect that you adapt suddenly or that you have to live like this, but that you have little by little or try to adapt.

00:12:25 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Exactly and what I always say, fathers and mothers, that is, you have to expose your children to situations that take them out of comfort, because the reality is that life is hard and it is better to prepare them, possibly to face that world. And I agree with you in those areas, I say Alberto and we have gone back a little to your childhood. Did you have any particular hobbies or hobbies?

00:12:54 Gualberto Rodriguez

Well look, I thought I had a childhood that wasn't very technological like it is now.

00:12:59 Gualberto Rodriguez

That today we have access to electronic devices, social networks, digitalization, among other things. The Internet. At that time, internet access was extremely limited. The World didn't have it all.

00:13:15 Gualberto Rodriguez

And well, I was raised so to speak, right? A more sociable childhood than that also helped me.

00:13:24 Gualberto Rodriguez

To strengthen social skills. That's also a great one. Because? Because not having so much electronics, we had a very sociable childhood, for example, as a child I liked it, because I would ride my bike around the neighborhood, where I live when I was an adult, well as another hobby, but well I played with the neighbors, we were going to ride our bikes.

00:13:54 Gualberto Rodriguez

With the entire neighborhood or as we say here in Puerto Rico, urbanization.

00:13:58 Gualberto Rodriguez

Let's go as we say in Puerto Rico, around the block. What does it mean, then, to run the entire organization or neighborhood on a bicycle and then?

00:14:13 Gualberto Rodriguez

We rode bikes, I invited my friends because I played baseball to jump on the trampoline.

00:14:21 Gualberto Rodriguez

This, that is baseball with my neighbors.

00:14:24 Gualberto Rodriguez

He invited them to what is now the swimming pool or in other countries they call it a swimming pool, in Mexico they call it a swimming pool, in Argentina they call it a swimming pool.

00:14:34 Gualberto Rodriguez

Maybe in other places they call it, let's say pool.

00:14:38 Gualberto Rodriguez

Instead of snowing, a place to swim, well I had this in my house and then, there I invited them to swim or participate.

00:14:49 Gualberto Rodriguez

More I attended birthdays, I attended social events of the Catholic Church of the Nuestra Señora del Rosario mission, the well in Sabana Grande, a devotion of the Virgin that we have in Puerto Rico, we have and spread in El Mundo too and we .

00:15:08 Gualberto Rodriguez

In all sail those spiritual, recreational, social activities, well I was like that.

00:15:16 Gualberto Rodriguez

Key to being able to improve my social skills, what is true, what is true today for children and especially children with autism.

00:15:28 Gualberto Rodriguez

Who have a tendency towards technology, then.

00:15:32 Gualberto Rodriguez

Nowadays, since we are in a very technological society, well, that's it.

00:15:37 Gualberto Rodriguez

This, without a doubt, greatly delays social development. Well, children, let's say regular or without autism, delay it. Imagine the child with autism even more so, that is why my generation was a sociable generation.

00:15:57 Gualberto Rodriguez

Versus the generation of that time than the generation of now that is more technological and we can see that on Christmas Day in the old days, in my time, on Christmas Day you saw the children in the streets?

00:16:14 Gualberto Rodriguez

Introducing the gifts today, not today, the gifts are technological and they stay inside the houses that day and that is an example of how to see it. My hobbies were listening to music, I liked it, I liked walking.

00:16:30 Gualberto Rodriguez

Watch television be on the computer.

00:16:35 Gualberto Rodriguez



And that was my favorite hobby to watch.

00:16:39 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Nobody me.

00:16:41 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Is it that you don't know my childhood, that is, you and I are not over, we are not, you know? There's not much difference, I mean.

00:16:48 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Almost in that period, that is, technology was entering in the 90s, yes, but there were more outdoor activities this time and I have always said, you know? And you know precisely about Puerto Rico, because I was born, I was created.

00:17:05 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

And what fascinated me and what I miss are what is Community of Peoples.

00:17:11 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Do you understand me about family? Do you know all that? We had hospitals for socialization, today it is completely digitalized and for me it is not the same, it is like a digital world, only you sexualize yourself in the digital world through these electronic devices.

00:17:27 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

And that is and has a much greater impact on our autism community because that also creates addictions to these electronic devices and this contributes. This contributes to what are mental health cases, which is why today there is a.

00:17:44 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

There is a crisis, there is an epidemic, I'm going to say it of mental health and much more in our autism community and I am in that line. Gualberto, throughout your hobbies, this, do you believe in cases of bullying, bullying, rejection before you are growing up?

00:18:02 Gualberto Rodriguez

Yes, well, the case of Bullying or Rejection is characteristic.

00:18:07 Gualberto Rodriguez

In many cases of autism, because we behave in a different way, for example, or because we behave what we would call good. Peculiar, we develop manias, behaviors.

00:18:22 Gualberto Rodriguez

Repetitive or modeling, for example? Oh, I liked this television character, I'm limited in school or I start naming a character YY, so what?

00:18:35 Gualberto Rodriguez

OO I start making movements to isolate myself, well, then there are some behaviors that could be.

00:18:43 Gualberto Rodriguez

Hello, with my fixations or my intense interests and well, that truth has been the object of harassment, ridicule or rejection, not only seeing it, childhood is also the adult stage, because already in the adult stage, more than harassment, it What is experienced most is rejection.

00:19:03 Gualberto Rodriguez

Because they look at you strangely or say he is strange, he can have this behavior that is even dangerous and give him labels.

00:19:13 Gualberto Rodriguez

From where they marginalize someone I realize I realize because sometimes they think that Ah has autism, it is very easy for them to deceive, how easy it is to grab him, as we would say in Puerto Rico, with a short handle or do OO as they would say in Mexico, it is very easy to grab him by his little pig as they would say there and well and well look at this.

00:19:40 Gualberto Rodriguez

Well, this is true to me, because first they were wrong and my life experience has made me see that he will be an adult.

00:19:48 Gualberto Rodriguez

Eh, at least I can pursue when there is a pattern of rejection or exclusion. And well, yes, that is, the pattern of exclusion of bullying, that dances, unfortunately it has accompanied me, perhaps as a child it is more mockery.

00:20:03 Gualberto Rodriguez

Rejection is more mockery in adolescence, since rejection is seen more in the adult stage.

00:20:10 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Yes, you mentioned, they are very important because it is not a message, many times we associate what it is.

00:20:16 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Harassment or bullying or rejection in school and childhood, but this can extend to adulthood, but it solves differently. I have and going along that line, Gualberto, through growth as adults, you had that experience when you were, worked or in the market.

00:20:37 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Durán this as if I say, because image details of not only that, but what makes self-experience in the labor market.

00:20:44 Gualberto Rodriguez

Palmira in the labor market well well well my relationship with my colleagues has been very good.

00:20:51 Gualberto Rodriguez

Yes, like everything else in the world of work, in the years that I have been working in different places or companies, well yes, there have been isolated cases of or some cases of.

00:21:07 Gualberto Rodriguez

Really?

00:21:09 Gualberto Rodriguez

But mostly about bullying or rejection, I did have it in one of the jobs I had.

00:21:19 Gualberto Rodriguez

Where a co-worker.

00:21:22 Gualberto Rodriguez

You made fun of me, but I never realized, she made fun of me.

00:21:28 Gualberto Rodriguez

Let's say behind my back.

00:21:32 Gualberto Rodriguez

In other words, behind my back she made comments about me, she made fun of me.

00:21:38 Gualberto Rodriguez

And then, well, I never knew about that behavior until she saw it, well, it was until she wrote to me, one day she wrote to me asking for forgiveness for making fun of me. He didn't say it to me explicitly, but he did for making comments about me and all that. And there I was surprised, but...

00:22:05 Gualberto Rodriguez

When did you do it to me? And of course, I forgave her, no, she can't be living with resentment. Resentments for someone who has made fun of you, if someone had the courage to ask for forgiveness, that is something that one has to recognize and accept it. Forgive her, of course, that was a Christian attitude and.

00:22:25 Gualberto Rodriguez

And she, well, I would say that that was an isolated case.

00:22:31 Gualberto Rodriguez

Like that, but in the rest of the jobs that I know of, right? Well, there wasn't that bullying experience, yes.

00:22:37 Gualberto Rodriguez

As with all work, productivity can sometimes happen, at some times it is not the same, sometimes due to the same condition, if one puts it under pressure.

00:22:49 Gualberto Rodriguez

And and well.

00:22:51 Gualberto Rodriguez

But, but in reality when it comes to dealing with colleagues, well yes, that can be the case, right? In an adult work environment, more is more, for example, what rejection tends to be does not tend to be as marked as in childhood, because since one is an adult, one is already more mature, among other things, but there may be cases of rejection, that does not remove or eliminate.

00:23:20 Gualberto Rodriguez

What, even in adulthood, that's true.

00:23:25 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Exactly, it has different important points, that is, what is rejection, discrimination, bullying can happen in different ways as adults, but it is not as difficult to perceive it as it was when I was a child, when it was evident that they wanted to bully you and kid. of the life.

00:23:46 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

YYY the important thing in the labor market is that.

00:23:50 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Let's focus on how to know beyond the labels, focus on what the human or autistic being can contribute because YY not only another type of challenge, also the labor market is the opportunities and let me explain, because many times I say that we are going to look for a job for children or for the young cattle and tautist, but many times, for example, they are not very, very well advised in terms of how to create one.

00:23:58 Gualberto Rodriguez

Starz Thompson.

00:24:19 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Career because there are two different things between getting a job.

00:24:23 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

And creating a career are two different things.

00:24:27 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

A cashier doesn't mess around, she gets everything, otherwise you can grow. It's a company.

00:24:33 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Have a better position, better salary, better opportunities and not only but an advisor, being well-off of the benefits. Medical plan, retirement benefit. These are things that I often see, they are not adults with autism who are not very well accessible in the German market.

00:24:51 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

So that's what you think the same or.

00:24:53 Gualberto Rodriguez

Good? Yes, no, no, you are crazy and high because I see a lack of interest.

00:25:01 Gualberto Rodriguez

From society in general, such as including people with autism, sometimes in the labor market. I can tell you about that, I'll give you an example.

00:25:13 Gualberto Rodriguez

This server was a consumer of.

00:25:17 Gualberto Rodriguez

What we have in Puerto Rico is an agency called vocational rehabilitation, it is a Government agency, perhaps in other countries they have other names or perhaps sadly, perhaps it does not exist.

00:25:29 Gualberto Rodriguez

Vocational Rehabilitation is a Government agency that is in charge.

00:25:34 Gualberto Rodriguez

To help people with various conditions or impediments to enter the world of work, but as there are jobs that require academic preparation, they help you.

00:25:50 Gualberto Rodriguez

Study process once you finish studying, because they must ensure that you are in the labor market, but sadly not.

00:26:01 Gualberto Rodriguez

At least in my experience.

00:26:04 Gualberto Rodriguez

My counselor did not meet expectations. It was like, Oh, you're going to graduate.

00:26:11 Gualberto Rodriguez

You are going to finish the University, manage as best you can and that should not be like that, that is, you as a counselor your duty is your duty to make sure that the student, that is, your client, your consumer.

00:26:31 Gualberto Rodriguez

The job may not work at the moment in what you studied, but at least you have a job. And then what happens? Sometimes they don't prepare, because sometimes the challenge of the work is no. It is both the writing of the summary or the resume or the resume that is our letter of introduction to enter the world of work, but one of the challenges is that for a company, a business, an establishment.

00:27:03 Gualberto Rodriguez

Or anywhere.

00:27:04 Gualberto Rodriguez

Can I hire you, what do they have to do in an interview and what does it mean? Interview, job interview is a dialogue, an interpersonal relationship, and that is where it is a challenge. Because? Because sometimes you don't know what to answer. Now I am better prepared, of course, but 12 years ago, so to speak, or 13 years ago, I did not feel prepared for The World of Work, that is, in terms of what an interview is.

00:27:35 Gualberto Rodriguez

How to answer the questions? What are those keys that one should bring on the day of the interview?

00:27:45 Gualberto Rodriguez

For example, eye contact.

00:27:48 Gualberto Rodriguez

The way you dress really depends on the nature of the job, if it is a company, well of course, one is going to be dressed elegantly if it is for a fast food establishment, well one goes in a more casual way.

00:28:05 Gualberto Rodriguez

The questions, looking into the eyes in the questions, answering, answering justly, neither more nor less. That is why these types of details must guide and sometimes, well, that is what fails. The interview does not also focus on benefits, which is very important when looking for a job. Make sure where you are going to work and if the salary is offered in a medical plan, what is it, what is the minimum salary?

00:28:36 Gualberto Rodriguez

If there is a possibility that over time they will increase your salary, they will increase your salary.

00:28:42 Gualberto Rodriguez

This is very important, what happens is that not everyone in the world is prepared, that wherever you go to apply for work, the accommodations will honor you. Here in Puerto Rico we have laws that protect people with disabilities.

00:28:59 Gualberto Rodriguez

Especially in Puerto Rico, because Puerto Rico is a territory of the United States, some federal laws apply, such as the ADA law, which was signed in 1990 by then-president George Herbert Bush. Rest in peace Y And those were true? Well.

00:29:19 Gualberto Rodriguez

Well see it. All those are the challenges that pass, but not satisfied. With that, there are people with autism, functional people, people who can produce more and sometimes they are put in jobs or jobs that no job, no job is bad, but then putting them in really better jobs, jobs that maybe the one that is more functional, as such in a more competitive job.

00:29:49 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Excellent YYY quite the points you mentioned. Gualberto, has there been progress? Yes, in terms of the area of employment and there are more initiatives now, more than ever to help autistic people obtain employment, but there are different areas that still have a lot, a lot, a lot to do.

00:30:07 Gualberto Rodriguez

Yes of course.

00:30:09 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Definitely, and speaking of your job, I mean, I know it has your job.

00:30:14 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

But employment, but you also have your job for you know on your own account. He is a lecturer who gives talks specifically to different schools in Puerto Rico and also outside of Puerto Rico. How did it motivate you? What motivated you to become an Iraqi speaker?

00:30:30 Gualberto Rodriguez

Well look, when I started to learn more about the condition of autism, that's when I decided I felt a voice.

00:30:41 Gualberto Rodriguez

That I kind of have to share my story with other people.

00:30:46 Gualberto Rodriguez

Because I had such a great acceptance of autism because it was like knowing myself more, accepting myself more and I said this story, I have to share it with other people, I want to meet people with the same condition. And it was in 2008 that I started this project of giving talks on autism.

00:31:09 Gualberto Rodriguez

I first started with a support group in the. In fact, the organization that first helped me make my story known and still continues to help me today is the Puerto Rico Autism Alliance, an entity.

00:31:22 Gualberto Rodriguez

Helping since 2003, it was founded and they help the population with autism by finding therapies and finding accommodations in schools, they have worked directly with the department of education to ensure that students have their accommodations, their assistants are well in the school where they are enrolled.

00:31:48 Gualberto Rodriguez

And they helped me give a talk and share my story with 3 adults with autism in August 2008 and I eventually became involved with them.

00:32:00 Gualberto Rodriguez

With another person with autism and it was then that in the year 2009 onwards, well, I continued to give talks little by little at that time, of course, I studied, I studied music at the Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico, Ponce campus and once I finished university, well I had some jobs and then since 2016 you could say or two.

00:32:28 Gualberto Rodriguez

15 onwards then.

00:32:31 Gualberto Rodriguez

I have dedicated myself more fully to the talk. I have received a request for a talk, schools call me to share my story, school around Puerto Rico and of course, one of my goals. That's why I take advantage of the podcast I am.

00:32:46 Gualberto Rodriguez

I already want to expand to other countries in the world, both here in America and in the old continent, for example Europe, Asia, Africa.

00:32:57 Gualberto Rodriguez

From Toceanía, South America, North America and to be able to share this story in other countries of the world, in schools, in churches, in communities, in general, foundations. And this story has had an impact on families, on children, on young people like.

00:33:17 Gualberto Rodriguez

How to know someone who has overcome themselves, because they have been able to move forward. See, and that's a story, anyway. I know I'm not the only one.

00:33:28 Gualberto Rodriguez

Or who has shared stories of autism, I have had a good time meeting you Tony, who also carries the message to another young man in Puerto Rico called hostia. There is also a young man who is somewhat of an influencer. I think the influencer is very active in the church, I don't remember his name, but he resides in the Dominican Republic. I think you shared the story precisely these days.



00:33:52 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

There yes for the.

00:33:54 Gualberto Rodriguez

The same is true that yes In fact he has a girlfriend with autism, if I'm not mistaken YY, well that's why I say let's talk another story. Autism ambassadors here in Puerto Rico are Josian, who also transmits his life testimony through sharing his talent.

00:33:56 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

That is, Polanco.

00:34:16 Gualberto Rodriguez

The people of Puerto Rico, the countries.

00:34:19 Gualberto Rodriguez

And I believe that here we are a team in many ways, we can carry the message of autism in other countries of the world and it is one of my goals, to be able to expand to other countries and to be able to promote myself more on social media.

00:34:35 Gualberto Rodriguez

This on YouTube, on Facebook, on Instagram and actually on different social networks to receive invitations to.

00:34:44 Gualberto Rodriguez

To see it continue in Puerto Rico, of course, and also in other countries around.

00:34:51 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

And I don't respect.

00:34:52 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Your work immensely, your story has had an impact on life, there are many, many people.

00:34:58 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

And you and I have that goal of expanding the message. Through our stories you see that there is nothing impossible that there is no sys, there is nothing impossible that everyone in the world can fulfill a life and with a purpose that God gives that purpose to each human being to be able to fulfill those goals and going and that Gualberto idea, a very important question that I accept, that is, one of the last that I am going to ask before our era.

00:35:24 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

For you what is so important is faith. What is so important is the relationship with God in your life.

00:35:32 Gualberto Rodriguez

Well, look, it's very important because because.

00:35:37 Gualberto Rodriguez

Sendio has been key, that is, since I was a child, since I was raised in the Catholic Church, in the case of mine, but right? I know there are other other young people, right? With autism who have been raised in other denominations, in other Christian churches, this with evangelical and other denominations. Likewise, there are cases of people from other religions who are not Christians.

00:36:01 Gualberto Rodriguez

And religion or faith for me has been very important because believing in God gives me strength, gives me hope, gives me strength to fight, to move forward on this path and he has helped me greatly. In other words, every day of life is a great privilege. And to be able to have the strength to carry the message to other people, to carry it waiting.

00:36:29 Gualberto Rodriguez

Use and that without a doubt, because having God in my life has been the key to success, faith and that's true? Well, it is also transmitted. I am very active in the parish, I attend here in Puerto Rico, the Santa Ana parish of Vegata, a town that is north of Puerto Rico, 5 minutes from where I live in Dorado, in the town of Dorado which is north of Puerto Rico too.

00:36:55 Gualberto Rodriguez

Here I am a catechist, I am catechizing the children that I am also actively participated in the Virgin of the Well mission that, as a result of the appearance of the Virgin of the Well in Puerto Rico and that devotion has spread to other countries of the world. And that too, participating in the mission has helped me greatly in social terms, in terms of meeting more people and strengthening, above all, my faith, which is without a doubt very important.

00:37:28 Gualberto Rodriguez

And I know cases of people with autism who.

00:37:34 Gualberto Rodriguez

That they have been very active in the churches, it does not matter if it is true of other denominations, we also have it in the case of young Polanco, that he is very active in the Catholic church, there in the Dominican Republic I have a young man with autism that I know He is very active in the evangelical church, as a dancer and with the Dance Ministry.

00:37:59 Gualberto Rodriguez

And and this without a doubt for people with autism faith is so strong and so important because.

00:38:06 Gualberto Rodriguez

God accepts us, God loves us, God accepts us and loves us, of course, it is not that we do bad things, things that he does not like, but that we feel that God loves us.

00:38:20 Gualberto Rodriguez

Someone who doesn't love someone who accepts us, someone who doesn't love us and that, well, that, right? For us faith is extremely important, that is why I tell the truth to them.

00:38:31 Gualberto Rodriguez

Do not be discouraged if a church does not accept your child, look at one church they throw you forest to another, because first of all God is looking for God or they are looking for man, but rather they must maintain and cultivate faith in their children because Faith is what will sustain them and they will succeed in everything they set out to do.

00:38:57 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

And with a neck, that is, it is faith in search of God, this does not matter, you know? Regarding denominations religions, but in reality it is that God gave a purpose for each of us and.

00:39:10 Gualberto Rodriguez

Now you see me easy.

00:39:11 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Yes, what if to a parent who is watching this podcast? Well, it is important not to forget that because faith is very important, we have to talk about this more in our autism community.

00:39:24 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Your story has also been a very inspiring one and I thank you for sharing it from your perspective and experience as an autistic human being. I want to ask you about yourself and interview me.

00:39:37 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Speaking of autism, what table do you have for our society, for our community, for what we have to do, for autism, peace, having a memory of what I know what has been achieved, but what more is needed? ?

00:39:50 Gualberto Rodriguez

No, well look, there is still a lot of work to be done there, especially the adult population.

00:39:59 Gualberto Rodriguez

Here in Puerto Rico and unfortunately it also happens in other countries. I dare say that society cares more or takes care of the child, of the cuauhtism person, when he is a child there we are going to ensure that I have a school that accepts him, that he has an education that.

00:40:20 Gualberto Rodriguez

But here in Puerto Rico.

00:40:23 Gualberto Rodriguez

The education department, for example.

00:40:26 Gualberto Rodriguez

It helps you until you are 21 years old here in Puerto Rico, 21 is the age of 21 in complete adulthood.

00:40:34 Gualberto Rodriguez

Other countries or states at 18 here after 21.

00:40:41 Gualberto Rodriguez

Goodbye, good luck, and that's not the case and it shouldn't be like that. Child who has autism becomes an adult. Is society's duty to ensure that he can be independent, because one of the great concerns of his mother, mothers and fathers, is what will happen to my son when he becomes an adult?

00:41:04 Gualberto Rodriguez

And, so I think that society has a lot of work to do, the government, private companies have a lot of work to do, those that have to ensure themselves first.

00:41:17 Gualberto Rodriguez

They have to secure housing.

00:41:21 Gualberto Rodriguez

That they can acquire housing or do assisted living projects, where if the person with autism cannot live alone, then they have an assistant, a caregiver, someone who makes sure, for example, that their house is clean, that they cook for them and, if necessary, it is possible, right, to help you with your cleanliness.

00:41:41 Gualberto Rodriguez

Anyone who has mild autism who can be independent, well.

00:41:44 Gualberto Rodriguez

Look, let's have at least minimal supervision, maybe I can help you in the kitchen or I'll teach you how to cook and you do the rest of the tasks on your own, the economic part, the work, making sure that the person with autism can work according to their abilities and talent. There is work that he may not be able to do, but let him do work in which he can feel useful and productive.

00:42:11 Gualberto Rodriguez

In the same way, help someone with autism if they want to undertake, do their business, that this server is going along that line, is going to go along that line of entrepreneurship that I have not realized that there is my my my place in entrepreneurship, Well, we are going to make it easier for you.

00:42:27 Gualberto Rodriguez

Like that young man with autism can be his own business.

00:42:33 Gualberto Rodriguez

Can take care of himself. This also helps, for example, to do social activities, where the person with autism can socialize, make friends, even in these social activities it can help someone with autism to find their partner also if they want to fall in love for the person with autism. , No.

00:42:56 Gualberto Rodriguez

That this is not because we have autism we are asexual, that is, we feel, we suffer, we fall in love and well that can also be of great help in the same way, in the same way if there is someone who can handle it, then we are going to help him get out of it. your license or your permit or your driver's license.

00:43:17 Gualberto Rodriguez

Go and so that to acquire a car, a car, a car.

00:43:22 Gualberto Rodriguez

Hey this.

00:43:24 Gualberto Rodriguez

In short, there is a lot of work, give him more independent living activities, such as cooking and cleaning a house.

00:43:34 Gualberto Rodriguez

How they do household chores, they wash their clothes, even the toilet itself, because sadly not everyone has mastery of toilet and that is sad because I have seen the case of autism where the young man.

00:43:49 Gualberto Rodriguez

Well, it doesn't look like it's well-groomed.

00:43:53 Gualberto Rodriguez

Sadly, these are tasks that must be worked on, and one must continue to work hard. In short, to all independent life, social life and economic life.

00:44:08 Gualberto Rodriguez

And spiritual too, of course.

00:44:11 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

With which of all those points you mentioned is quality of life?

00:44:15 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

How to create once to give the tools and supports for families, including autistic adults, and be able to achieve better quality in all those areas and we have to go, we have to go beyond the pretty words.

00:44:29 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

And you take the action and 5.

00:44:33 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Not anymore and he doesn't talk and not only about autism in the month of April.

00:44:37 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Which very few of us are going to do.

00:44:38 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

I'll have to open it again, otherwise.

00:44:40 Gualberto Rodriguez

Perfect, I have you, I already have a scheduled talk and the ones that are still missing, because when April approaches, bad people break up there, this time a few of them did it ahead of time.

00:44:52 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Exactly and speaking of that, Gualberto and how much you have shared your story, are these audiences paying to see you and listen to you, how can they get you if there is a school, organization that is interested in contacting, do you remember the contact?

00:45:08 Gualberto Rodriguez

Of course yes, well look, this can contact me right? No, so write it down there.

00:45:15 Gualberto Rodriguez

You can contact me with my telephone number if you are going to contact me from Puerto Rico or the United States, you can contact me at, well, 17 at 7:08 h 76327534, the area code Puerto Rico is one, but also 787, but it is 17876327534. If you are going to contact me from a foreign country, Mexico, Argentina, Venezuela, Colombia.

00:45:47 Gualberto Rodriguez

Press, they write to me on WhatsApp, press the Cross and add one, which is the code.

00:45:54 Gualberto Rodriguez

7876327534. Code 1 is like the international code to call Puerto Rico or the United States. The symbol is the Cross 17876327534, but you can reach me.

00:46:10 Gualberto Rodriguez

Also on social networks, I'm on Facebook, you can get me on Facebook by Gualberto Omar Rodríguez

00:46:21 Gualberto Rodriguez

Well, the way to write my name is with a cat g EUAL.

00:46:26 Gualberto Rodriguez

Berto.

00:46:31 Gualberto Rodriguez

Rodríguez, I can compose myself until Rodríguez, it's okay because they are going to see my profile photo, this is the other last name, he says. Husti is pronounced Justin by an Italian surname, but is spelled

00:46:47 Gualberto Rodriguez

You can also find me on Instagram on Instagram my username is walvi how to write my name GUABLB for good and for 77.

00:47:01 Gualberto Rodriguez

BP from Virgen del Pozo there you can contact me on Instagram too, so there you have social media to contact me for future talks both in Puerto Rico and abroad.

00:47:15 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Excellent, perfect and Gualberto. I am going to put all those links once the episode is published so that the public can have access to your contact.

00:47:20 Gualberto Rodriguez

Very good.

00:47:26 Gualberto Rodriguez

Exactly, well, even better, all my information is going to be there for anyone who wants to contact me and they can really, they can write to me, right? Well, through these means, not only for talks, if you have any questions or queries, in the same way I also like to make friends with young people.

00:47:46 Gualberto Rodriguez

That they have the condition if you, mom or so that you listen to me, if you have a teenager or adult child who really wants it? Well, have more friends or here, well, they can do it in Puerto Rico, well, I like to do social activities with young people, we go to the movies, to the beach to eat, and then we, right? Well.

00:48:10 Gualberto Rodriguez

We do this.

00:48:12 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Excellent perfect YY. Your story is one of great inspiration, you also inspire me Gualberto Este.

00:48:19 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Because you know, I say, you know how you base it because I'm talking to you about that goal, also about doing talks in different places, but this we are here for a mission of welcome and welcome to this podcast let's talk about autism and my best wishes for you in your goals. Keep doing it, keep

moving forward making that lasting positive difference, especially cases like autism and I thank you very much.

00:48:47 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

That you have participated in this interview about let's talk about autism with me.

00:48:51 Gualberto Rodriguez

Thank you Tony for the opportunity, I hope to see what we continue to see in this communication, we are united in this same mission of carrying the message not only in Puerto Rico but in El Mundo, because I am sure that although here we, both in Puerto Rico, as in the United States, there are resources in a certain way for people. Continuous, but sadly in other countries there is not one, which is why it is the most reasonable. We must call for that in other places in the world.

00:49:20 Tony Hernandez Pumarejo

Well Gualberto, thank you for this interview where we talked about autism and many blessings to you always and to your family.

00:49:27 Gualberto Rodriguez

Same for you Tony, very grateful.