Robin Marquis - Mar 2 2020

**SPEAKERS**

Molly Joyce, Robin Marquis

**Molly Joyce** 00:04

So first question is what is access for you?

**Robin Marquis** 00:13

I think access is being able to show up as my full self, in a space, in a space or with other people or by myself, not necessarily just physical space, but really being able to be fully present. Having my emotional and physical means that having them be listened to, and preemptively thought of. Access is a verb to me it's not a noun. It's static. I mean, it's not static accesses is very it's a moving and ever changing. It's communication. It's radical celebration. Yeah, I think it's a it's a very, it's a question. I think when I think about access, like what is it's a continual question, I think, when it's thinking up again, about it not being a noun, but a verb, ever changing and moving. And I think it's fun. I think access is fascinating. I'm really intrigued by I think starting with access is one of the most interesting ways to approach life in the world and other people and....and both for myself and others. Yeah.

**Molly Joyce** 01:55

What is cared for you?

**Robin Marquis** 01:56

I think care is being open and really listening to another person being humble. I think one of the most important things about care and access is, is being open to hearing feedback around what care doesn't look like, again, cares is is also ever changing. And so I feel cared for and caring for others when I'm being responsive and flexible and open to really whatever. Yeah, open to people's full selves, I think you can't provide access without providing care. And and in some ways, I think they can be interchangeable. And for really thinking about what I said about access, being about showing up as your full self, if you're providing care for yourself or others, you have access to care, that's a similar a similar thought.

**Molly Joyce** 03:30

What is control for you?

**Robin Marquis** 03:40

Control... I feel really mixed about control, I think in some ways because of having PTSD and anxiety control is like a super something I am seeking and searching for all the time. And, and feel that I need a lot of ways. I think when I became physically disabled, it was something that I all of a sudden had less access to. And and becoming more a part of a larger disability community. I was...I got pushed back...I was pushed of what my idea of control was or my need for control or my need to, to determine what that my needs were most prevalent or necessary in a space and, and to be more flexible, to have more to have more willingness and openness for things to change on a dime or not to expect my needs to be met. And so to be flexible and getting them that And I feel a lot less in control than I used to and I'm slowly more comfortable with that and and that's another thing that disability has taught me about being in control is something we have so much less access to being an interdependent is is required and so then how can letting go of some control not feel like something's being taken away, but that it's that there's an biting in of others.

**Molly Joyce** 05:55

What is weakness?

**Robin Marquis** 05:56

Weakness? Gosh, that's so loaded. Yeah, I..

**Molly Joyce** 06:15

don't have to answer or I definitely feel

**Robin Marquis** 06:19

Thank you. If I didn't feel comfortable, and I'm glad that they are....much more interesting questions that a lot of people ask to rise and rise from disabled person. Of course, they're more interesting. Yeah, I think weakness, it brings up so many systems, like so many structures of oppression and power. And think immediately about the idea of women. being weak of people with disabilities being weak of you know, queer people and trans people and people gender non conforming feminine people being weak, and that and that those are all US, US. It's like a system that's set up to disempower folks and to devalue people. And and it's in my eyes very connected to capitalism of of if you are weak, therefore, you cannot produce for the machine and and and continue this kind of cycle of production and value being connected to body. And so weakness being in a more terms like and thinking of it in the terms of a power and oppression. I see, I see folks with disabilities and queer people and women kind of reclaiming narratives that have that have especially in disability culture, I think I'm saying I'm not about I'm my value is not dependent on my production and on me being able to perform a certain task. I mean, I think weaknesses. Physical it's also emotional, though. I see. Yeah, that word is used in emotional context. But yeah, it's not a word. I think about that much. And I wonder why. I think it just has such a negative connotation that doesn't I don't find value in it and maybe that's...Yeah, I wonder about that. Although, if I think about my body often it would qualify as being weak and my gender and you know, my sexuality all those all those identities fall into a category of that work being used as a slur.

**Molly Joyce** 09:07

Yeah, to counter that next question, what is strength for you?

**Robin Marquis** 09:15

Strength... I mean, I think weakness and strength and thinking about that it creates this you know, these opposites are these binaries and, and how does that serve us? You know, if if binary is strength and we power oppression. And I'm just like, very much visualizing those words kind of like coming together more of what is is it's They seem to be harmful by themselves if strength is power and weak is as oppression, what if they're together? And what if there's strength and weakness and weakness and strength? And especially when I think about the more literal words strength and disability and how disabled people are like, the strongest people I know. You're navigating the world daily as a disabled person, you have to be incredibly strong. And, and yet, that's not often a term used. I mean, literally, the word impaired is one of the most common words I see relating to people with disabilities and, and that to me, as easily translated to meaning weak. Yeah, goodness, we're not that. Yeah. So double targets. You know, yeah, no, that's good. opens, it's gonna get really loud. So there's not a lot of children

**Molly Joyce** 11:22

I kinda like that, that we're actually up here. Right. And this is controversial. controversial. What is cure for you>

**Robin Marquis** 11:41

cure? God, eugenics. Care is such a it's such a scary, it for me becomes scary so quickly. And it feels really complicated. And I want to talk to more disabled people about this, because I've been in my own head a lot recently, and kind of diving down the stories of CRISPR and yes, so I've been very obsessed lately with, with technology and what's happening in the world right now. And, and learning about CRISPR and what's happening with, you know, designer babies, and it's just, it's terrifying. And I also, yet I also, like, would love to be talking to more disabled people about this because my disability and my body are, I'm able to navigate the world pretty easily, I'd say my, my access needs can be met relatively easily. And I'm not a chronically ill person. And I think chronic illness in particular with the word cure has a whole nother context. I mean, maybe I guess, around mental health that would relate to me, but I don't know, a it's, it's so hard to disentangle ableism with the word cure. And, and yet, I also know I sit in a very privileged space to say, well, we shouldn't look for anything, it's all ablest. And like, let's not, you know, just completely critiquing and trying to throw away options for people. But there's so much, that's just a miniscule part of of it. And I think the more more what happens in these conversations, and what will happen is, is just so incredibly ablest and and is deeply connected to eugenics. And, you know, looking back on the history of how the word cure has been used, it's totally racialized, and I'm connected to trying to completely destroy people with disabilities. So I don't know. I also see it coming a lot from parents, which is complicated within the disability community, of course, the parent, child of conversation, and yeah, and I think if I was if Someone said, Here I can change everything that you are to be normative and able bodied. That would be hard. That would be hard. I would never want to leave the disability community, I wouldn't go back and change anything that's happened in my life. But it's hard being disabled. So it's a that's it's a very eggs feels very existential. But I think the one thing that is not completely confusing to me is that disabled people need to be the people leading those conversations about cures. And, and non disabled people need to do a lot more work about where they're searching for and what that's coming from. And unpacking the motives and the ideas and thoughts behind what a cure even means. Because it's also it's a ratio. And it's not just about having a more fulfilling life, because that's what a cure is plenty of us have that without, quote unquote, cures.

**Molly Joyce** 16:24

What is interdependence for you?

**Robin Marquis** 16:28

Another thing, interdependence is another thing that I feel and I think about blessings I've received from the disability community and being disabled. Interdependence is a huge one. And I think especially in like a white westernized society that I live in and come from, there's such a critique of interdependence and such a massive devaluing of it, which I think has led very much to more mental illness and and hardship. And, and interdependence is something that I see not a strange from a lot of my family of origin and disability community has created an entirely new family, for me and a family structure because of interdependence, and because of our commitment to an understanding of what that means. And that really does replicate to me, oh, how a lot of people connect to their blood families or their families of origin and it's about being invested in others lives just as much as your own. which, to me just creates, it amplifies and expands, joy and, and really the purpose for living being being connected. I mean, we are all connected, whether we like it or not. So finding ways to have those connections, be intentional and be thoughtful and be mutually beneficial. I also think it's really in its interconnectedness. And it's the most wonderful form is not a one for one ratio of trade. It's not I show up for you this amount of time you show up for me this amount of time. I think that's one of the thing I love about disability community is recognizing that we can and will show up for each other incredibly different ways and they're not it's not an economy of "Okay, I did this for you tomorrow, you're gonna do that for me" and, and how liberating that is to just to be connected to each other. Because you want to be in because you need to be not because they're expecting something in return.

**Molly Joyce** 19:07

 And last one, what is assumption for you?

**Robin Marquis** 19:20

I think assumption in this context, especially because usually my disabilities are invisible. Ties greatly into assumption being being a visibility and an array sure of forms full self. Also thinking kind of politicized identity spaces like disability community. We can sometimes lose our full selves when we identify so strongly with labels, which is something I'm really thinking a lot about. As someone who strongly identifies as many labels and identity spaces. But assumptions can so quickly. Just just erase our full complexity. And, and especially, I mean, the disability community, how much incredible richness and diversity of experience there is. assumptions about that are something we have to deal with, amongst each other as well. And in, in assumptions limit the opportunity to fully know another person to fully learn from our experience something going in with ideas ahead of time. And that's such a huge thing that we have to deal with about what's assumed of us. And, you know, and again, my invisibility of, mostly of being disabled. The assumptions made about me, I often have more power connected to, but what does that mean when I trade that for in a ratio of what my experiences

**Molly Joyce** 21:34

Thank you.