

TIOW - S2E11 - Panel

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Description:

Jordan 0:00

I just want to tell my story through my eyes, from my point of view, not from anyone else's

Ally 0:13

Welcome to the telling it our way Podcast. I'm Ally

Becca 0:16

and I'm Becca

Ally 0:18

In this podcast, we bring you stories by disabled people about disabled people, stories from the daily lives of self advocates with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Becca 0:27

These are real people with complicated lives. They don't want your pity, and they don't exist to inspire you.

Ally 0:32

This is not inspiration porn

Becca 0:37

Hello. Hello everyone. So first up, before we get into today's episode, we have some big news to share. We are honored to have received the 2025 Media Award from the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, also known as a, a, i, d, d. This award is given annually for, quote, significant contributions in depicting Americans with disabilities in a positive light."

Ally 1:03

We are so grateful to WGTE for supporting our show, to our producer, Chris Peiffer, for being the best person ever, and to all of our contributors, and of course, to you our listeners, and speaking of contributors, as we wrap up season two, we wanted to give you all another peek behind the curtain today, this time from the perspective of some of our returning guests.

Becca 1:22

That's right. So today, we're so excited to share. You know, in the past, we've talked a little bit about our process of creating this podcast and creating the stories, but now we really want to hear from the folks who make Telling it Our Way possible, our contributors, our storytellers.

Ally 1:39

We invited back in the studio with us today, three storytellers who appeared on both seasons of telling it our way, Cassandra Jordan and Matthew. We really wanted to get their perspectives on why they came on the show and what the process was like for them. Unfortunately, Matthew was not able to make it at the last minute. But you may remember Matthew from season one, when he talked about community and his relationship to animals, and then again on season two, on our episode about making connections, when he talked about his experience riding the bus, we are sorry to miss him on our panel today,

Becca 2:08

but we do have Cass and Jordan here. So you may remember Cass from Season one's episode on romance, and then on our most recent episode in Season Two, about making change. And Jordan appeared in season one on an episode about school and work, where he talked about finding a place to celebrate his talents at his job at the Toledo Zoo. And then he also appeared on that making change episode with Cass to discuss how he grew into becoming a self advocate. But they're gonna both come here now and tell us a little bit about what it's like to create and share your story on a show, like telling it our way. So let's hear from them now. So first, Cass Jordan, if you could just introduce yourselves for us.

Jordan 2:51

My name is Jordan, and I'm a self advocate, and I'm proud of it.

Cassandra 2:54

I'm Cassandra and I'm a self advocate and on a DD console.

Becca 2:59

Great. We're so excited to have you both back in the studio today. It's really nice to see you. So first, I just wanted to ask you, in general, what made you want to come on a show like this and share your story?

Jordan 3:13

Well, I just thought of it. I would just like want to tell my story through my eyes, from my point of view, not from everyone else's. So I just watched a lot of documentaries. I thought to myself, if they could tell their story, why not me? So I just don't know where to turn. And that's where I heard about Telling it Our Way podcast from Becca, and I'm proud of it, and looking forward to tell them the rest of my life story, so anyone can hear and experience what's it like to be a little different from the others, and don't let that get you down.

Cassandra 3:51

And then for me, like, I want to inspire others and then, like, share the story of like, all that stuff that I've gone through, and then keep doing it, coming here, and showing it on the podcast.

Ally 4:03

I wonder if you guys could say a little bit more about this idea of wanting to share your story, to inspire others. Because sometimes we think of that inspire word as kind of a dirty word, but in this way, we mean it in a more positive way,

Cassandra 4:18

like for like to so the reason that I say inspires like, um, for stuff like, I've gone through, and then, like, if they have been told, No, they can't do it. Um, just go up and do it, go out there and do it.

Becca 4:34

Yeah so you're like, talking about people who might have similar experiences to you, that you can serve as a model for. I think that's really important, especially the kinds of things that we talk about on the show here. Often, you know, if you're talking about Jordan and in season one, you talk about bullying, and that's something I know that when people experience something like that, you can feel like you're the only person in the world who's ever gone through that. And so to hear someone on a show like this share their experience and talk about how they've grown and changed from it, I bet that really impacts a lot of people. So Jordan, you said that part of the reason you came on the show is because you wanted to tell your story from your perspective, through your eyes. And I think that's a really important thing to emphasize. I think a lot of the times people with disabilities have other people feel like they can talk for you, right, or talk on your behalf. You know, whether that's you know, a parent or a provider or a professional who feels like, well, I know this person, so I know what they're gonna say, right? And so I think it's really important to say like, No, I've got my own voice. I have my own things to say, and so I'm glad that you emphasize that. I don't know if you want to talk about that a little bit more. Either one of you,

Jordan 5:48

Well, I don't mind talking about much more of it. And then during high school, I tried to volunteer one of my awesome places at the zoo, but there's a bit of a snag, and they don't know how to handle or train someone who has a developmental disability or Autism in that case, so thanks to my mom, who knows how i work like a clockwork perfection. But so we created little programs called the SNAP program, and then that became a huge progress. And I was, yeah, I was like a guinea pig to them. But then I met some many other amazing individuals who also had developmental disability and and then after that, after graduating high school, and then all the bullies were just like, fall behind. And once I heard from my old classmates that some bullies just never change and they got themselves into trouble. But hey, you have to live and learn with the consequences.

Cassandra 6:55

And then with me, like, um, so I would go to, like, the recent one, with all the Special Olympic stuff that I've gone through, and then taking, like, the next step of being on DD Council and showing, like, how I became the first person from Lucas County to be on DD Council with a disability. And like, how, like, proud I am to do that, and then help with the state of Ohio, and then going in April, like, I probably do that as one of the next stories on the podcast. Or, who

knows, I have so many like, because I'm like, I've just been chosen last month to go to Washington, DC, and I'm going to talk on the federal level, like I've done that before. So like, I probably do with what I did in 2004 with the Epilepsy Foundation, and then, like, mix it in, like, with what I'm going to be doing in April, the next story and podcast, because I'm going to be talking about transportation in DC, because, like, you need, like, suburban areas better transportation, and of course, like the federal law with the marriage law. Like, I want people with disabilities, like, I know like this, many of them want that. Want to get married, but they are afraid they will lose the benefits. And so I want to do that, like, help them with that. And then also, like, what about employment like? Because like, you don't want like, discrimination with people with disabilities to get cut hours. I want like, help with that as well.

Ally 8:33

Next question is, what is the process of creating a story like for you all? Because it seems like they just kind of roll right out for you that you're ready with these stories before we even come to you.

Jordan 8:45

Well, for me, I just it just came naturally, or just had to find that inspiration. Or for me, what talking about bullies and how do I get through work is just through experience, from my own experience for high school, because different schools, like average middle school, high school has differences, but a school that has individuals with different disabilities is a little bit tricky, because some have higher autism function or low function, or people need to communicate through the tablet, because I know someone who's a zoo ed, and he also has his own interpreter help me, like we have our own way of communicating. But there's some visitors that were out on the shift, and I just recognized right away. He's like, hey, he has asked the parent who is like, does he have a developmental disability? He's like, Yes, he has autistic. I was like, Yes. I was like, the only one I can finally understand him, kind of a coincidence, but for me, and then I just want my voice to be heard and then, but how do I do it? Eventually, I just, like, came to my head when I was just, just comes to you while you're watching a movie or watching a show. It just kind of clicks to you, like, maybe I could tell my story through their perspective or through inspiration of that

Cassandra 10:27

For me, it's like, um, you think about it, and then like, um, you have it, like, all bottled up, and then you want, like, actually, like, let it out finally. Like, but with me, like, I love public speaking, so like, I'm used to it, and then, like, I just come with it naturally, and then I want to hear by them directly like, what the stories happened like in future, in the past?

Becca 10:50

Yeah I mean, I think part of the reason that we invited both of you to come today is that I know both of you have often brought me story ideas for things that you want to share on the podcast or in some other other venues that we've worked together on that, you know, I one of the questions that we wanted to ask you is, you know, why did you come to share your story? But then, why did you come back for season two? And I think the thing that becomes really obvious

is that you have so many different stories to share. You have so many different things that you're passionate about. You know what we say at the beginning of every episode. You know, these are real people with complicated lives. You're not just one thing, right? You don't just have one story. And so I think it's really important to hear lots of stories from lots of perspectives, from a single person, right? And as you, as you move through time, your life will change, and you will find different things that you're passionate about. And we hope you'll come back and share those things too. Yeah, so I you know, just to reiterate our process, we've talked about this on previous episodes too. We'll meet with you before you come on the show, and we'll talk about what kind of story you want to tell, and often will record you sharing those stories in advance, and that's how we make the scripts that you will then read on the show. And so I know that's been the process with both of you. So I just wanted to reiterate that as well.

Ally 12:13

I'm really wondering what advice you guys may give for future guests of the show?

Cassandra 12:17

I would say, give it a try and take deep breaths and then always, like, what I do beforehand is like, pray and then just go for it. Don't be nervous to try it

Jordan 12:31

well for me super just wipe your feet. Just get it all out of your system. Just go up there and just talk it out, like some of the few people I know have have very nervous, just like, I can't do this, get me out of here. Get me out of here. But for me, I just, like you, have done this before lots of times. Why is there? a need to be nervous about it? Just get there and do it. Wipe your feet. Wipe your feet. And I just nailed it like a professional.

Becca 12:59

The other question that I want to ask you is, why do you think it's important for people with developmental disabilities to share their stories, not just you, but all self advocates?

Cassandra 13:09

Because people with disabilities can do anything that non people with disabilities can do. We would put here on earth the same way. And so, yeah, we have, like, a disability, but we can just go out there and do it

Jordan 13:25

for me. I just if I could do this for my county, which is the Lucas, and maybe I could just do on the big scale, like from here to the next to the next, until I find that silver line in all the biggest achievement. That's why I joined Idance for big challenges for me to tackle, because I've been to the Detroit Pistons, I've been to just any other those places, and I spread all just to make me feel like I'm one of them. I just like having a good time. Spread that positivity. Whoop, Whoop, and yet I'm still trying to find that next obstacle. And the biggest thing is those three things. One, have the statue in the city of Toledo with the statue's arms in the air, saying, This is me. I'm not afraid. And then there's this. Have a street, called Idance groove or groove, or Idance

Boulevard, and then have one day of dance day just to dance the night away. Just doesn't matter. You just go out there and dance.

Ally 14:29

What kind of stories would you like to hear in the future? So what are some topics that we haven't covered yet that you want to see on the show?

Jordan 14:39

For me, my next story for season three or future episodes. I say, if you want to learn much more about me or my experience of all of the past traumas I had to endure just ask away. Like, what's the biggest downside? or what's the most shocking news you have ever heard or witnessed on the TV, and how do you handle it? And, like, just, how do you get through that? Because I know some individuals don't know how to handle the shocking news. Like, if you're animal lover or just it's too much going on. And how do you handle after school or college? Or how do you handle the craziness of the outside world? How do you handle it? You had to go to three choices, your folks, your psychiatrist, or you just want to come out here and tell from your perspective here in the podcast, like I was doing. So here I am,

Becca 15:45

yeah, I mean, I really like that as a topic, this idea of having to, like, how do you get through hard things, right? And so we've, we've talked about grief on the show before, but this feels a little bit different than that, right? So there are all sorts of difficult things that we encounter in life. And I think that would be one of those stories that people would listen to and feel a little bit less alone. You know, because when you go through something really difficult, you can feel really isolated. And so hearing how other people have gone through that, I think that's a great idea. Jordan, what about you, Cass?

Cassandra 16:17

have you had a topic of, like, music?

Becca 16:19

No,

Cassandra 16:21

that would be a good one. Because, like, also, like, with my neurologist I had when I lived in Dallas, he was saying, like, foreign language and music is actually good for the right brain, and it connects to the left brain. And so, like, I've always been fascinated with music, and then, like, I've done, like, actually a foreign language, like, I actually aced it, like, when I did college was Spanish,

Becca 16:43

oh, cool,

Cassandra 16:44

yeah. So, like, that would be like a good one, um, trying to think about getting other ones. Like, maybe, like, if somebody likes to write, that would be a good one. Like, oh, I mixed in with poetry, yeah.

Becca 16:57

So some people sharing,

Cassandra 16:59

yeah,

Ally 16:59

we could do it whole episode with poetry that would be fun,

Cassandra 17:03

yeah? Or, like, maybe somebody's consult or travel, yeah?

Becca 17:10

All great topics, yeah.

Ally 17:12

Oh, I think travel has been on our list of things we want to do for sure,

Becca 17:17

yeah. And some of the things that you brought up already Cass that I know that I know that we're interested in talking more about are things like transportation. We've also talked a little bit about the marriage penalty on the show, but I think that that's something we'd like to get into a little bit more. Some of these policies that hurt people with disabilities

Cassandra 17:21

or like, anybody that is going to college needs some guidance that would be good anything like that. Or like, how Jordan said like animals I like it could see up like your favorite animal, like at the zoo, or like, if you have like a dog, talk about that, or if you're getting like an assistance dog, that'd be a good one.

Becca 17:56

Yeah this is what I love about this show, is that there's never an end, right, right? We could be doing this for years and years and years, and we could never run out of topics.

Cassandra 18:05

or, technology, anything with technology?

Ally 18:08

That's true. I mean, I would wonder what something like technology and AI does for folks with disabilities. That could be a really cool show.

Becca 18:15

Yeah, I totally agree. Yeah. Are there other things that you want to share about your experience being on the show

Jordan 18:22

me, I had to say it was awesome, like you get to talk it out, the reasons why you're here. Why are you doing this? And I just want to make sure there you're not alone. Because if you feel down in the dumps or just feel like you're stuck in a cesspool, or you just don't know, how do you cope with it? Otherwise, yeah, just found that same someone who's feeling the same thing, just playing a card. Just be who you are. For me, from my perspective, I'm a loser, just like myself, and I'm proud of it, and I'm not ashamed

Cassandra 18:59

with me, like I said like before, like, I'm just, like a natural of public speaking, and then this is, like, a great thing to do, like, talk with you guys, and then, like, it's like you're talking to like an old friend from the past, like you're just, like, Like it's like a family reunion

Jordan 19:24

here, here,

Becca 19:26

Well I think that is a great place to wrap it up. And so thank you so much, Jordan and Cass for being with us here today. We also want to thank our associate producer, Conor Smenner, our intern, Ava Gottschalk, and our Telling it Our Way advisory board members, JoRita Fox, Quinn Thomas and Gavin Dailey

Ally 19:44

And special thanks to WGTE and our producer, Chris Peiffer,

Becca 19:47

to access transcripts for the show and any other show notes, please visit wgte.org/our way.

Ally 19:55

I'm Ally Day

Becca 19:56

and I'm Becca Monteleone, and you've been listening to Telling it Our Way.

Unknown Speaker 20:07

WGTE

Unknown Speaker 20:09

Voices around us.

Speaker 1 20:11

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