

The Heumann Perspective Podcast
Creating Joy with Lolo Spencer
Transcript

Kylie Miller

Welcome to The Heumann Perspective, a podcast with the internationally recognized, bad-ass, disability rights activist, Judy Heumann. This episode, Judy interviews Lauren aka Lolo Spencer. Lolo is an actress, model, and social media content creator. She currently plays Jocelyn in HBO Max's *Sex Lives of College Girls*. She also played Tracy Holmes in the Award Winning film *Give Me Liberty*. Lolo has a YouTube channel called Sitting Pretty, where her journey to activism and media all started. Lolo and Judy chat about Lolo's impressive career path and aspirations, as well as her experience acquiring a disability as a teenager. The Heumann Perspective is produced by me, Kylie Miller and Judy Heumann. So let's roll up, lay down, dance around, whatever makes you feel best, and let's meet this episode's guest.

Judy Heumann

Hello, everybody. Welcome back to The Heumann Perspective. Today, I'm very excited that we're going to be speaking with Lolo Spencer, who is somebody that I've admired since I met her a couple years ago, and we were just talking about how we met and what we've done over the last couple years in quarantine. So in some way, who knows if we would have gotten to spend time together if we weren't in quarantine, but being in quarantine, we've done a couple of Zoom calls together. So welcome Lolo.

Lolo Spencer

Thank you. Thank you, Judy, so much for having me.

Judy Heumann

So how do you define yourself?

Lolo Spencer

This question. You know what? I define myself as a fun person, a joyous person, as fearless as I can be as much as I possibly can be. I'm outspoken, I like to be in peace and joy and fun and like good, positive energy. So yeah, I would describe myself as that.

Judy Heumann

What drives you?

Lolo Spencer

You know what? Multiple things drive me, but I will say that after doing this online work via social media and YouTube prior to even all the acting things, like my main driver is recognizing that disability advocacy and representation within entertainment and beauty is my purpose. Like I genuinely feel like I am here, I get the blessing of being able to wake up every day to keep doing this work, to keep advocating, to keep representing. And so that's always the driving force, especially when I know I'm in a good mood to do the work. Like when I'm in the mood to do the work, oh I'm doing the work heavy. I'm always trying to be innovative and creative of what can I do next? How can I help this time? Where can I be of service to others in this way? And I just kind of do it in my own unique way of doing things, but that's what drives me, for sure.

Judy Heumann

When did you acquire your disability and how does it affect you on a day to day level?

Lolo Spencer

Yeah, so I acquired my disability when I was 14. I was diagnosed with ALS, but as of a few years ago, that diagnosis may be in question. So I just say I have like a form of muscular dystrophy. And day to day, it's literally a balancing act because I do have the ability to still ambulate. So literally I am balancing myself all day, just trying to ambulate, work my body as much as I possibly can. Balancing between work and my health, which can be a struggle for me, and balancing between knowing when it's time to rest, and give my body a rest, and give my body a minute to just like relax. Because I sometimes can be a little too driven and push myself a little too far, which I know isn't good, but I'm doing my best.

Oh shit, I done ripped out my whole earring. I done ripped out my whole earring. Here we go. And it's clear on the other side. We're just going to take these off. But this is a prime example of my life. That something will drop and fly across the other end of the room. And I have make the decision. Do I want to struggle to go get it in this moment? Or am I going to take a break and be like, you know what? I'm going to get it when I can.

Judy Heumann

Exactly.

Lolo Spencer

And that is the story of my life.

Judy Heumann

Do you have a picker upper?

Lolo Spencer

No, I don't. And you know what? I need to get one. Wesley told me I need to get one. He was like, "Yo, you need to get one of those claw things to pick up stuff." And I was like, "You're right."

Judy Heumann

Exactly. Although when you drop things, you have to then go get the picker upper.

Lolo Spencer

Exactly.

Judy Heumann

Yeah. But they're good to have.

Lolo Spencer

They are good to have.

Judy Heumann

So how old were you when you were first identified as having a disability?

Lolo Spencer

I was 14. And the interesting part was at 14, I never identified myself as having a disability. I just knew some changes were happening in my body. I was told whatever I was told from doctors and my mom did her best to explain to me what was going on. But "disability" and "disabled" was never terms I was using as a teenager. Truthfully, I wasn't using disability until like my later years in college, when I had to go to the... You know, the centers on every campus that specialize with disabled students' needs and stuff like that. So it wasn't until having those conversations with those counselors that I was like, oh, okay. Disability. I go to the disabled part. This is the disabled ... Like this is where I go. So yeah. So disabled was never like the term, but now looking back, yes, at 14 is when it was the first sign of being able to identify with a disability.

Judy Heumann

Prior to being identified as having a disability, do you remember what you thought about disabled people?

Lolo Spencer

Unfortunately I didn't think about disabled people. It never crossed my mind. Like I knew disabled people existed, but I never identified with them so I didn't care to really know. And me being so young, there were so many other things that I was thinking about that just was pointless, just being a teenager, boys, music, B2K, like it was a thing. It was a thing back then. And so, yeah, I knew that they had classes at different times. I knew those classes were different from my classes at the time, but I literally had no relationship with disability at all. Even knowing that my best friends had deaf parents, it didn't even cross my mind that their parents were disabled. It was like, oh, their parents are deaf. So yeah, I had no relationship with disability prior to acquiring one.

Judy Heumann

How did your family and friends respond when you were first realizing you were doing things different and were identified as having a disability?

Lolo Spencer

My friends and family, they didn't really change once I acquired a disability. It was like this weird kind of understanding of more like, okay, Lauren just gets around differently now. Like I don't think the seriousness of what was happening with my health was being on the forefront of how they decided to treat me. I think it was literally kind of happenstance kind of response than oh, Lauren is actually dealing with something really, really serious. At least that's from my perspective of what was happening. So nothing really changed. I know my mom had a conversation with my family for sure about moving forward. "This is how Lauren has to get around with her AFOs, her leg braces. This is what they're for. Doctors are saying she may end up using a wheelchair or not. We're just going to kind of see how life goes." And that was kind of the approach that all of my family and friends took is like, let's just see what keeps happening, but until then, we're just going to keep rocking with you and have a good time.

Judy Heumann

So what were some of the humorous moments in your life when you were younger and you had your disability and you were transitioning from being one who walked a lot to beginning to use a wheelchair?

Lolo Spencer

One of my favorite memories was senior year in high school. There's this big event that happens called Grad Night Disneyland where literally all the senior high schoolers will go to Disneyland. For one night, Disneyland was shut down, we go in after hours and just have a blast at the park. And so at the time I was using the AFO kind of leg braces.

Judy Heumann

What is an AFO?

Lolo Spencer

They're like these leg braces that help, like if you have drop foot. So they were helping me lift my foot in my shoes. So that way I wouldn't trip over anything. But at the time I was calling them my Forrest Gump legs, because that's all I knew at the time. That was the only reference I had. But at the time I was using those, but when it was time to go to Disneyland, I knew I would be completely exhausted. There would be no way I could get around the park. And so the nurse at my high school suggested that I use an electric wheelchair. And so we did a quick test on campus first. And as soon as I got in the chair, I was like, oh yeah, this is it. I need this at Disneyland. It's time to turn up. It's a vibe. Like I need this. This is amazing. It was like the best thing I had ever tried.

So then when we actually get to Disneyland and my friends actually see me using the wheelchair for the first time, they went bananas. They had so much fun with me being in my chair. They literally were hopping on the back of it. We were speeding down in the middle of the park. We were busting donuts. It was a whole thing. It was such a monumental moment that when we got back, I changed my MySpace name to I Do Donuts In My Chair. What Y'all Know About It? Literally everybody remembered that. So yeah, that was the kind of friends that I had in high school.

Judy Heumann

Great story.

Lolo Spencer

Yeah. It's the best. It's the best.

Judy Heumann

I love it. Now, one of the words that you used when we were beginning of the discussion is that you're an advocate in the area of disability. What made you feel that advocacy in the area of disability was something that you were driven towards?

Lolo Spencer

I would actually say that I more fell into disability advocacy versus being drawn to do it. When I started my YouTube channel, Sitting Pretty, a few years ago, I was documenting my life because

throughout high school and college people kept telling me, like you need to share your story. You need to share how you do this positively and all these different things. So I was like, okay, I'm just going to share what I do and how I do things.

But it wasn't until getting the responses from viewers on my YouTube channel that I realized that what I was sharing was actually impacting people in a way that I didn't even necessarily intend to. But once I started getting those messages of people saying, "Oh, this particular video helped me feel more confident about myself. I have cerebral palsy or am an amputee" or whatever their disability was. That's when I realized, like I'm doing something much bigger than myself and I like this feeling, I like what I'm doing. So how can I continue to contribute? And so the more and more I did by creating content or speaking on panels, I realized like, what I was doing is considered advocacy work and I dug it. And so I kept doing it and found new and innovative ways to keep the message going.

Judy Heumann

I agree with you, and I completely understand that. I think there's been such an absence of disability in media that when people really of all ages, meet people like us and others, they in many cases for the first time are listening to someone who's in many ways, sharing similar views.

Lolo Spencer

Yeah.

Judy Heumann

And being public about it. I think that's really important. When you were in high school and beginning to start thinking of your career, what were you originally thinking of? And did your disability make any difference in the career path you originally thought about?

Lolo Spencer

So my original career path was journalism because I've always been obsessed with people's stories. I don't know. Maybe I'm just like nosy by nature or something, but I just loved asking questions and getting to know people. I used to obsess over like celebrity interviews and documentaries. And so I just always gravitated towards journalism. And so in high school, I was part of the school newspaper, which was a very proud moment for me. And that was kind of like the first introduction into, I guess, sharing stories and learning how to share stories and learning about more and more people and things that were happening in the world or on campus, being on the newspaper.

And then when I moved out to LA after high school, I joined the community college newspaper that I was attending at the time. And then from there, that transitioned into video journalism, which is where I learned how to edit video content, which then that ended up turning into my passion, which ended up being my focus to get my degree in TV production. And then now fast forward to where I'm at now, all of those skill sets play into my career. Not even like planning it, just one thing fell into another thing. And here we are.

Judy Heumann

So you've been doing more and more things. Can you tell us a little bit about your first film, *Give Me Liberty*?

Lolo Spencer

Give Me Liberty is such a unique film. So the story of *Give Me Liberty* is about a medical transport van driver, who literally has the most unexpected wild day of his life. And I play Tracy Holmes, who is one of the passengers on the van who he picks up. And I don't make the day any easier for him is what I'll say. So it was such a beautiful experience, a very challenging one in many ways, but it was a great experience and really launched my career into acting.

Judy Heumann

How did you get involved with that film?

Lolo Spencer

So I was involved with my agent at the time.

Judy Heumann

When did you get an agent?

Lolo Spencer

Oh, it was a recommendation from my stylist, Stephanie Thomas. Stephanie saw what was happening on my YouTube channel. And she was just like, "If you're interested in maybe like being in commercials or anything like that, you should probably get an agent. I know someone." So I was like, great. And so Stephanie set up the meeting and the agent was like, "Yeah, I represent talent with disabilities, would love to add you to the roster." So I was like, cool. And I didn't think anything of it past that point until one day she called me and she was like, "Hey, there's this indie filmmaker who is creating a film. And they would like you to audition because they're specifically looking for a young black woman, who's a wheelchair user. And you're like the only client that I have that fits that description. So you want to audition?" And I was like ...

Judy Heumann

Why not?

Lolo Spencer

Why not? And the rest is history.

Judy Heumann

So what did you find challenging and what did you learn from being a part of *Give Me Liberty* that helped you continue to move forward?

Lolo Spencer

So the challenging part about *Give Me Liberty* was first, I've never acted prior to *Give Me Liberty*. So for me, my challenge was memorizing the lines and then let alone, having to deliver whatever the emotion was at the time, having to create a story about this character that I essentially didn't create. So I'm like, well, who is this girl? And what about her do I resonate with, in order to know how she would respond? And then finding the unique ways that were different between myself as Lolo and Tracy as a character. Like, what are those differences?

Like getting out of my own way, like being like, oh no, I would never do that. And it's like, this isn't about you. This is about Tracy. So would Tracy do this? So I was luckily able to build a great relationship with my director, Kirill Mikhanovsky, and our producer, Alice Austin. And we would have those conversations on a regular basis. And then some other challenges, we shot in Milwaukee, in March, I don't do the snow. I don't do cold. I am a California girl through and through. So they were talking about, "Oh, it's 17 degrees tonight." 17? Oh no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. And you want me to go outside?

Judy Heumann

But you did it.

Lolo Spencer

But I did it because I had to. But I still did it. So it would be like those things and it was an independent film. So there were a lot of things that were happening that I just had to work my way around just because we were thugging it. We were thugging it to make it happen. And what I've learned from that experience is learning to be even more the kind of person that just goes along with the flow, being a team player, enjoying the process no matter what the challenge may be. And having the tenacity to keep going and push as far as you can, to make something happen until something is like a complete definite no, then you can accept it as a no and move forward, and be creative and innovate on out to make something still work even if plan A wasn't sought all the way through.

Judy Heumann

It seemed to me and *Give Me Liberty* also, that there were a lot of disabled people in the film.

Lolo Spencer

Yes.

Judy Heumann

Compared to other things that you've done where you're really one in a group, you have a disability, that's not the predominant purpose of your being in the film. How was it in *Give Me Liberty*? You went to Sundance as a result of this film?

Lolo Spencer

Yes. And Cannes.

Judy Heumann

Oh, great.

Lolo Spencer

Yes.

Judy Heumann

So what was it like being in a production with so many other disabled people?

Lolo Spencer

It was actually really dope. I had a great time and it was great getting to know other people who were like me because like you said, I'm usually the only person with a disability in a room or at least a visible disability. And so it was dope getting to know the other actors on set, having conversations with them, learning about their disability. Steve, he is the one that I have the scene with on the van and he's non-verbal. And so learning to communicate with him and understand him was a really, really dope experience because the patience and just the fun conversations we were able to have, like he was so funny, and I never even expected necessarily to interact, I guess, with someone who was non-verbal, like that was a first for me. And so it was great. It was great. It was really dope. Like I was able to build like some great relationships with people and the fact that the crew completely understood how to interact with people with disabilities and varying disabilities was amazing to witness as well.

Judy Heumann

So when you think about productions that you've done since then, do you find the crews equally knowledgeable or do you find that in any of the other roles you've played, for example, as Jocelyn in *Sex Lives of College Girls*, have you had to do more training or finessing with people on the set?

Lolo Spencer

I did have to at first, kind of explain certain things that I needed, certain things that I just knew wasn't going to work as far as actual like movement and blocking on set. Wardrobe conversations, had to have conversations about that. But the beauty about the crew on *Sex Lives* is that they were eager to learn. They were eager to want to know how can we be of assistance? How can we do better? And how can we learn now so that when we don't have to keep bugging you about what can we do? Is this right? Is this appropriate? Is this not? Does this work for you? Is this considered accessible for you or not? Like those kinds of things. So they have been an amazing crew to work with, and the dialogue, and the support that I'm able to have with everyone is monumental, for sure. So it's been amazing so far.

Judy Heumann

So *Sex Lives*, you've finished season one?

Lolo Spencer

Yes.

Judy Heumann

And is season two being done now?

Lolo Spencer

Season two, we're working on it. We are on our way to start filming season two. So it's very exciting.

Judy Heumann

Do you have any idea when it's going to be coming out?

Lolo Spencer

No idea at all. The actors are usually the last ones to know any news. A lot of times we learn stuff when the press release comes out and when the rest of the world learns. Yeah. And it's so funny because people ask me all the time, "Oh, do you know?" And I'm like, "Honey, I don't know nothing."

Judy Heumann

So tell us a little bit about what you have learned through acting.

Lolo Spencer

Acting is such an interesting craft. I think kind of what was happening during Give Me Liberty is continuously learning how to take myself out of a role and focus more on what I believe and what the directors and producers want the character to be. But also finding that balance and still letting a piece of who I am shine in the character as well and making the character feel authentic to viewers. So that's been like the biggest learning, and still it's like learning the lines, because now with Give Me Liberty, a majority of our cast were first time actors, but this time, I'm sure if I'm not mistaken, I'm the only person who is still very, very new to acting. Everyone else went to school, they've been in theater, been on Broadway, the whole nine. I'm like I did one film and that's about it. So just learning to have confidence, that I deserve to be there as an actress, that I deserve to be part of this role and that everyone wants me there. So kind of fighting those feelings as well.

Judy Heumann

How do you push yourself forward?

Lolo Spencer

I would say the way I push myself forward is recognizing that the thoughts or the feelings that I don't deserve to be there isn't true. Recognizing that it is a false thing that I'm creating out of my own insecurity and that because I know that's not true, I can make the choice to think about it a different way. And to understand what my experience being on set and being with the crew and the cast, I can understand it from a different perspective. And then once I saw the show, once I was actually able to see the show along with everybody else, I did a good damn job. And I was like, you know what? Chill out girlfriend, you did a good job. Everyone else likes it. Everyone else has been telling you, you've done a good job. They asked you to come back so that's a good sign. So it's like, I recognize that those feelings were all my own and it rooted in fear and insecurity. So I have my own kind of way of choosing to think about things differently.

Judy Heumann

I think that's really a great message because whether you have a disability or not, those are things that we feel when we're going forward and trying to do something new. And even when it's something that we've done before, it's having to accept what other people are saying and really believing it. Like, do they really mean what they're saying, that it really was good or are they only saying it that way?

Lolo Spencer

Exactly.

Judy Heumann

I appreciate very much the way you've been explaining this and it's a challenge and I think that's really important that we challenge ourselves on a regular basis to keep moving.

Lolo Spencer

Yeah.

Judy Heumann

How has your mother been involved with you in the work that you're doing?

Lolo Spencer

You know what? My mom has honestly been like the biggest supporter. She lives like on the other ... Like I'm in Southern California. So she lives in Northern California. So she's always supporting me from a distance, whether it's like behind the scenes, like with invoicing stuff, like she handles all my money stuff and she's just my biggest supporter. She's always watching my things, leaving comments, sharing with the rest of family, with her coworkers, stuff like that. So she is a very, very proud, proud mommy. And anytime I'm going through something personally, she's always the first one I call.

Judy Heumann

Oh, that's very sweet.

Lolo Spencer

Yeah.

Judy Heumann

What other work have you been doing that we should let our audience know about?

Lolo Spencer

Some of the other work that I've been doing is a lot of social media content in the form of advocacy. So using my YouTube channel, Sitting Pretty, to just continuously create content, talking about my experience as a disabled person, sharing my perspective on disability because I do have my own opinions around certain things that are prevalent within the disabled community.

Judy Heumann

Give us an example.

Lolo Spencer

An example? I'm not a fan of the word differently abled or handi-capable.

Judy Heumann

Me either. I hate it.

Lolo Spencer

I can't stand it. I think it's stupid. I think it's a sugar coated way of saying disabled, and there's nothing about disabled that needs to be sugar coated.

Judy Heumann

It's non-disabled people, wanting to reframe us.

Lolo Spencer

Yes.

Judy Heumann

And I think more and more disabled people are willing to listen to us saying this and getting confident that they can own themselves and they don't need to take terms that other people have crafted.

Lolo Spencer

Exactly, exactly. And so those kinds of things, having those kind of discussions, but also just sharing my most embarrassing stories and ...

Judy Heumann

Tell us one.

Lolo Spencer

Oh, okay. So there we was ... Oh boy. So there was this one time I was at a party and I was drinking and I had to use the restroom and my home girl who I was at the party with, she had stepped out because she had to take a phone call for her job. But as soon as she left, I ended up having to go to the bathroom. This random guy saw the look of panic on my face. And he was like, "Do you need help with something?" I was like, "Yes, I actually have to go to the restroom." But there are stairs to get inside the house where the bathroom is at. So he carried me all the way into the bathroom. Literally, I was like, just come all the way in, close the door, just turn the other way. I use the restroom. I go to wash my hands. He goes to flush the toilet because in my drunken mind, I thought I flushed the toilet. I didn't. And he goes, "Oh shit." And I was like, "What happened?" And he was like, "There's blood in the toilet." And I was like, "Oh yeah, I'm on my period." This is not fun. This is actually very embarrassing for me. And he was like, "No, it's cool. Like I've had girlfriends so it's fine." He was like, "But I didn't know, like if you were experiencing like internal bleeding." Like he thought like my kidney was failing or some shit. I was like, "No, it's just my period. Thank you."

Judy Heumann

Oh my God.

Lolo Spencer

And so yeah, that was pretty bad.

Judy Heumann

Thank you for being so clear.

Lolo Spencer

Yes.

Judy Heumann

No, seriously. These things happen. And for me, I also like to be pretty explicit in what I'm saying, because I think it allows other people to realize that they're not the only one who's had some kind of a story, which at the moment probably made you like blush all over the place. And now you can look back. For me when you said this, I thought, wow, this guy sounds cool because he could look at your face. He didn't know who you were. And he asked, "Do you need something?" That to me is like very unique. You hardly ever have someone who knows that.

Lolo Spencer

100%. And that's why I trusted him enough to take me to the bathroom. And I have no idea who the man was.

Judy Heumann

Oh, you never saw him again?

Lolo Spencer

Well, no, I haven't seen him since. Like we danced a little bit after we went back outside to the party. But after that, I haven't seen that man since.

Judy Heumann

What are some of your future goals, personal and professional?

Lolo Spencer

Oh, I love that. Some of my personal goals. I would like to ...

Judy Heumann

What is your wildest fantasy?

Lolo Spencer

Oh, well now Judy, now that's a different kind of conversation. It involves Michael B. Jordan with his shirt off. No.

Judy Heumann

I love it.

Lolo Spencer

As far as like personally, I would say I would love to be able to find my life partner and start a family. That is definitely something very important to me. I'm in the process of learning ways to build like generational wealth, those kinds of things. I'm really thinking about family a lot for my future on a personal level. So I've been doing a little bit of dating, it's hit or miss right now still, but you know what? I am trusting the universe. I am trusting God that it will happen soon however he shows up. So that's really been more of like the personal goals that I'm working on. And then just continuing to work on being the best version of myself at all times, and adjusting

to my own growth and what that looks like from a personal perspective. And then professionally, I would love to be cast in a rom com next.

Judy Heumann

Who do you want to play? And what do you want the romantic character to look like? Be like?

Lolo Spencer

So I would definitely be the leading lady in the film who was actively being sought after. And I would love my co-star, my better half in the film, to be of the caliber of Michael B. Jordan, looks wise and talent wise. That's the goal. I know he traditionally doesn't do comedy, but every actor likes to take a chance. So we'll see. We'll see if we can make that happen. But also I am working on my own lifestyle brand. I'm really building that up.

Judy Heumann

What is a lifestyle brand?

Lolo Spencer

So a lifestyle brand, the way I see it is a brand that others can use as a resource to be able to find ways to live the best version of their lives. So I'm essentially doing that, but it's going to be dedicated to young adults with disabilities who are seeking independence and self-empowerment. I should of be launching that fairly soon. And then I have big, like 10 year goals and 5 year goals. Some of the goals include, of course, taking Sitting Pretty Productions up a notch, having it really be a production company where I can support talent with disabilities or content involving disability and help with the funding and the production of those projects. But also creating something that can be franchised. I'll just say that. And I would love to open— This is something I'll share. I would love to open a cafe or some sort of restaurant/lounge out here in the LA area that will be fully next level accessible.

Judy Heumann

I want to be there.

Lolo Spencer

Yes. Oh my gosh Judy. Absolutely, absolutely. Where we would do different things on the weekends, but we'll also be able to have panels. Like it'll be the place where anything involving disability, people will know this is a spot to go to.

Judy Heumann

I want it to be designed around you.

Lolo Spencer

Yes.

Judy Heumann

I love the way you do your colors and the way you move. And I think to have a really lovely cafe, bar where the accessibility was kind of universal, so it wouldn't stand out. It would just kind of be

there and people would be drawn into the colors and the vibrations and the movement of the rooms.

Lolo Spencer

Exactly, exactly, exactly that. Judy, you actually explain it better than I could ever do. Thank you. But yes, exactly. That is exactly the goal. Because I love to go out, I love going to parties, I love getting drunk sometimes, I love eating good food. I love dancing.

Judy Heumann

We need a big dance floor.

Lolo Spencer

A huge one, a massive one.

Judy Heumann

Exactly.

Lolo Spencer

Absolutely. But I also love going into spaces and being able to chill and meet new people under like chill conversation and chill loungey kind of vibes. So that is definitely like five year goal. I'll hit it before five years, I know that much, but like I'm giving myself at least five years to make it happen.

Judy Heumann

So we're coming to the end. And I like to ask my guests, what is something that people may not know about you that brings you joy?

Lolo Spencer

That they may not know about me that brings me joy? Well, two things I would say, as much as I like to be social, it really brings me joy when I'm in solitude. And a lot of people don't like really expect that from me because I am so like high energy, a lot of the times. And when I say solitude, I mean complete quiet.

Judy Heumann

How long do you like to have moments of solitude? Five minutes, a day, a week?

Lolo Spencer

You know what? Just whenever the spirit calls. It's one of those things. Sometimes it'll be in the morning for like three hours and I'm just chilling, just thinking, just... Maybe not even thinking.

Judy Heumann

You're not working, you're not writing, you're not listening?

Lolo Spencer

No. Exactly, exactly. So I love that. And then also, although I can't call myself a singer yet, I actually do enjoy music and I do love to sing in the privacy of my own spaces.

Judy Heumann

And you're going to take singing lessons, right?

Lolo Spencer

I am, I am. That's on the next list of things to do, is take vocal lessons. So that way I can say, "Yeah, I can sing" and just start hitting some notes.

Judy Heumann

You need to do jazz.

Lolo Spencer

Oh, and learn how to scat.

Judy Heumann

Yep.

Lolo Spencer

That would be fire. That would be fire.

Judy Heumann

So I'd like to thank you so much for spending time with us today.

Lolo Spencer

Of course.

Judy Heumann

You know, who you are brings such joy and allows people to think on so many different levels. So thank you very much, and obviously we will continue to be in touch.

Lolo Spencer

Of course.

Judy Heumann

And I really look forward to all the work that you're going to be doing in the future and for all of our audience, plus, plus, plus more people to know about you and to share in the joy that you bring.

Lolo Spencer

Yes. Thank you so much Judy, for having me. This was awesome.

Judy Heumann

Thank you so much too.

Kylie Miller

Now it's time for Ask Judy, a segment where Judy answers questions sent in by listeners. Lolo is a really fun person.

Judy Heumann

I love talking with Lolo. She makes me laugh at the same time that she is as strong, committed person to her craft and also to helping make changes in the world. So she's got this really good balance, from my perspective, that I can go from serious to laughing to being thoughtful to becoming energized.

Kylie Miller

Totally. And she just is so true to her. You can tell, you know, everything she says is completely who she is, and she has no problem explaining that.

Judy Heumann

Yes, and I want to meet her mother.

Kylie Miller

Yes.

Judy Heumann

As I told her. And her family. But I'm sure, like me and you, we've been fortunate to have families that have given us really great strength and resilience.

Kylie Miller

Yeah

Judy Heumann

Lolo is a great example as a businesswoman for what we need to be looking at when businesses are trying to become more inclusive, not just in the area of disability. And I believe we have a question from somebody.

Kylie Miller

Yes, that is exactly what we're talking about and asked Judy today. So I have a question from Kat Harden on Instagram and they asked, How can I use my business platform to advocate for people with disabilities?

Judy Heumann

So I don't know your company, so I'm going to be talking more broadly. I think what's important is to put on what I call a disability lens. And what that means is if you're starting a company or if

you have a company that's already up and running and you're wanting to expand your base, which thank you for thinking about this, then I believe you need to look at do we right now allow people to see that part of our customer base, our disabled individuals? And if not, what do I need to do in order to make that happen?

One thing that would be important, from my perspective, is do you know who your customer base is and are there certain customers in your base that you know, because you come from those different communities, so you're reaching out to them or you feel confident in what you're doing? If you don't really know disabled individuals who could give you valuable input on what you're trying to do or what you may already be doing, that could be strengthened a little bit. Or it could be lifted up saying, "Oh, this is really great. It spoke to me." That's one thing.

So knowing your customer base, reaching out to your customer base, are you using visualizations? And do you have pictures of disabled people in pictures that you may be using? Are you engaging disabled people in the way you're marketing what you're doing? Are you sincerely looking at if your company is growing, what you need to do to authentically reach out to prospective employees who may have visible or invisible disabilities? Are there any practices within your company that might make it more difficult for disabled people to really believe that you're looking to hire them based on the qualifications and what you have for your company? I think there are many, many things to do, and for me, the bottom line also is talk to other disabled people, talk to people who are knowledgeable in the area that you're working in, and look at joining organizations like Disability and National Organization on Disability and others, like maybe some of your local chambers of commerce, maybe doing particularly good work in the area of disability, learn from others and view self also as a teacher.

Kylie Miller

Great. That was a wealth of knowledge. And there are also many resources out there, and I would say one that comes to mind specifically is Lavant Consulting. On Instagram, there's a lot of tips and tricks and just good practices for businesses and how to be accessible and include disabled people in your planning and marketing and everything Judy just outlined. So thank you for the question, Kat, and thank you, Judy. If you have a question for Judy you'd like to hear in a future episode, please send it to media@judithheumann.com, or you can DM it to Judy on Twitter or Instagram.

Judy Heumann

Thank you, Kylie.

Kylie Miller

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published. Otherwise, be sure to check back every other Wednesday for a new podcast episode. The intro music for The Heumann Perspective is Dragon, which is produced and performed by Lachi, Yontreo, and Jaurren. The outro music is I Wait by Galynn Lea.