

FF S3 Ep. 4

Caraline [00:00:00] Hello, everybody, and welcome back to another episode of Fibro Friends, your friendly neighborhood Fibro Friends. As always, I am one of your hosts Caraline I also have with me Mesha.

Mesha [00:00:12] Hey.

Caraline [00:00:12] And Skye.

Skye [00:00:14] Hello.

Caraline [00:00:16] And we're back to hit you with some more hard hitting facts about Fibromyalgia based on research and science.

Mesha [00:00:21] Boom!

Caraline [00:00:21] As always, don't we. Mostly. Maybe?

Mesha [00:00:26] Yeah.

Caraline [00:00:27] But anyways, just to kick off the episode. We're going to shout out the Mariposa Gala again because it's going to be October like soon. And that's when.

Skye [00:00:37] Super soon.

Caraline [00:00:37] The gala is happening. And we're so excited. All three of us will be there were reunited and united. Me and Skye will be meeting for the first time in person and it's going to be momentous.

Skye [00:00:47] Yes.

Caraline [00:00:48] So if you want to witness that with your own little eyeballs.

Skye [00:00:50] We'll video it, we'll have to.

Caraline [00:00:54] But it's happening on October twenty second from six thirty to ten thirty at the Loft Life venue in Newark, New Jersey. And all the ticket information and link is in the show notes. So if you would like to buy a ticket, go ahead and do that. There is general admission and VIP. So choose whatever you would like. Go ballin', if you want to. Be not ballin' will could be not ballin' money wise, but ball out when you come to the party that's up to you. But, you can also just donate. So if you are not a partier, if you're still like this pandemic is happening and the party is not the best idea, we know how people feel. You can also just donate. So. That's up to you, boo.

Mesha [00:01:35] You do you boo boo.

Caraline [00:01:35] We leave it in your hands, as always, but to jump right into today's episode, we're very excited to meet with you to meet our newest Fibro Friend. She's one of the only people no, the only person to leave us a voicemail.

Caraline [00:01:52] And we were so excited when we first heard it because she gave us a suggestion to talk about on our podcast. And I was like, well, I'm not just going to talk about this without her. So we want you to meet our new Fibro Friends Corinne. Welcome, Corinne.

Corinne [00:02:06] Hello.

Mesha [00:02:07] Hello!

Corinne [00:02:07] Hello, everyone.

Caraline [00:02:09] We are so happy to have you.

Corinne [00:02:11] I'm so happy to be here. Like, what an honor to be the first voice mail turned guest.

Caraline [00:02:16] Yes. And see, why do you think we keep telling you to leave us voicemails? Because maybe you can be on the podcast with us and we can have fun times. We don't just say it to say it.

Mesha [00:02:24] Do it.

Caraline [00:02:26] Do it. I mean, like I remember when you all said my name that I like. Oh, yeah. Thanks, Corinne, for the voicemail. I literally was like cooking in my kitchen was like, eek that's me!

Caraline [00:02:35] Shout out!

Mesha [00:02:36] That's awesome.

Caraline [00:02:38] Oh my gosh. Well, we always ask our guests the same question. So you're going to get that question, too. And that is what is the weirdest piece of advice then a professional medical person has given you or random lady on the street about your Fibromyalgia.

Corinne [00:02:55] Oh, boy. So I've been thinking about this, like every time you guys ask this question, like, what would my answer be? There's like so many, many strange things. Like so I have a lot of like woo woo health people in my life specifically like family members. So I think a weird one that I've gotten consistently is like eat more tumeric and it'll go away like, yeah, that'll help with the inflammation. It won't help with my brain sending signals to the rest of my body.

Caraline [00:03:31] Amen!

Corinne [00:03:31] You know, the inflammation is like the tiniest part of what I'm going through.

Caraline [00:03:34] Right.

Corinne [00:03:36] So that's definitely one that comes to mind. And then the other one I had like the world's worst doctor when I first started trying to figure out what the heck I was going through, like before I was actually diagnosed, who told me basically that, like, there's no way that, like, you could possibly be depressed. What do you have to be depressed about? When did your depression start? And I was like, well, I don't really know, maybe like middle school. And she's like, what's so depressing about being in middle school? I'm sure that's not it. I'm like.

Skye [00:04:09] Everything.

Corinne [00:04:12] Exactly! I was like have you ever been to middle school? Yeah. So those are probably the two that I'm like, how how? Just how. No.

Skye [00:04:21] Like do you not remember a middle school like everyone looks weird, your hormones are raging.

Corinne [00:04:26] Right under her logic as a doctor. She was like, I have a son in middle school. He's happy. Good for him.

Skye [00:04:34] That means all middle schoolers are happy. Everything single one of them.

Caraline [00:04:38] Right? Right. Thank you for invalidating my depression.

Mesha [00:04:43] Right.

Caraline [00:04:43] Oh my gosh.

Corinne [00:04:43] Love that!

Caraline [00:04:45] I mean, that's like that's like I um. I was just watching on TikTok like a clip someone had brought up of the new like Charlie Demilio show, and she was talking about how she was in therapy. And her therapist is like, oh, my daughter is such a big fan of you. And she's like, OK, but I'm still really depressed. .

Corinne [00:05:09] Like, thanks. But also.

Caraline [00:05:12] That doesn't help me at all.

Corinne [00:05:14] Right. Right. So needless to say, I'm not with that doctor anymore.

Caraline [00:05:19] Yay. Thank you. Next.

Corinne [00:05:20] Exactly.

Caraline [00:05:21] You don't need that. I hope they retired.

Corinne [00:05:24] Right.

Caraline [00:05:25] To take care of their precious son who's always happy. So, I mean, we like to start out kind of just gauging like everybody's story and like not gauging, but just like

I like to see where it all started for people. And I think it's so important to hear everyone's story, so if you want to share your thoughts, go right ahead.

Corinne [00:05:47] Yeah, totally. This is usually like one of my favorite parts to listen to in your podcast is like hearing people talk in their stories. And so, like thinking about it, I think I might be the first guest at least that I have heard that like has a pretty recent Fibro diagnosis.

Caraline [00:06:05] Oh!

Mesha [00:06:05] Oh wow.

Corinne [00:06:06] So I was actually diagnosed December twenty twenty.

Caraline [00:06:09] Wow.

Corinne [00:06:09] So like less than a year ago.

Mesha [00:06:10] Wow.

Skye [00:06:11] Wow.

[00:06:12] Yeah. So my kind of journey I guess starts like as it all does in childhood. Right. I have a lot of a lot of aces in my past adverse childhood experiences. So I definitely fall in the camp of having a little bit of trauma that I've gone through as a child but didn't really recognize it then as trauma. You know, it was just life like it was just like, you know, weird family dynamics and situations. And, you know, it wasn't until really like post college that I started realizing, like, oh, this is a problem. I need therapy and I should start unpacking this thing. So it really, like, come 2016, I finally found the right fit of a therapist and we started doing some work together in like twenty seventeen. And then I was in like the most toxic of corporate environments, jobs like toxic workplace to a T. Very much abusive and long hours and gaslighting and you know, not really where you want to work ever. Thankfully, that company is going through some very hard times right now because there's some systemic problems in it.

Caraline [00:07:32] Karma!

Corinne [00:07:32] Right, exactly. It's one of those things where, like, I was only there for seven months, but I still think about that job constantly.

Caraline [00:07:38] Right.

Mesha [00:07:38] Oh no.

Corinne [00:07:39] Let's add another little layer of trauma. And then, you know, come 2019, the kind of inciting incident for everything for me was a car crash.

Caraline [00:07:50] Very common.

Corinne [00:07:51] Yup. Got in a car accident. And it wasn't even like a severe one, like I had just turned a corner. So I was probably going like twenty, twenty five miles per hour at

the most. And a car came barreling through a stop sign didn't stop and hit right above my driver side. We'll slow enough to, like, whiplash me and, like, spin my car a little bit. And like, thankfully, this is the funniest part. So at that point, I was already on the way to a doctor's appointment. That's why I was in the car. I was headed to a doctor's appointment for some symptoms of like, oh, like my depression and anxiety, just like don't go away. And I constantly feel tense what's going on, you know? And so I was like trying to be proactive about my health. Had to cancel that doctor's appointment, though, after that car crash.

Mesha [00:08:43] Right.

Corinne [00:08:44] Thankfully, was all covered by insurance, though. So I ended up being able to take advantage of things like chiropractor appointments and massage therapy and physical therapy and acupuncture, all those parts of my recovery plan for this car accident. And the plan was for that to last about six months.

Caraline [00:09:03] Yeah.

Corinne [00:09:04] But of course, like when things don't start improving after you get in a car accident, my, you know, chiropractor, acupuncturist, massage therapist all started looking at me like, you sure you don't have anything else going on? Like you don't seem to be improving and you're still in a lot of pain and like your time between appointments is still pretty, you know, short usually, like starts getting better. You're weaning off of it. And I, of course, was just like I was always going, oh, yeah, my body is not feeling any better. And then I started with some new symptoms of, like, numbness in my arms and legs as I was sleeping and like being able to like easily at the drop of a hat, get like heartburn for anything like all of those kind of symptoms. Right. And then all of the like digestive symptoms that come along with it.

Caraline [00:09:54] Yeah.

Corinne [00:09:55] And I was like, this is not just chronic stress and a car accident anymore. Something's going on here. So fast forward to, oh, you know, another global trauma called the pandemic.

Caraline [00:10:08] Welcome!

Corinne [00:10:08] Right. Exactly. So early. Twenty twenty. Had to stop going to all of my appointments because, you know, pandemic times. And that's like when things really took like a hefty turn for me in terms of like the depression just being at an all time high, the anxiety and then like the fatigue and chronic pain just moving through my body, like constantly, consistently and like not finding any relief from pain medicine, you know. Anyway, so, like, fast forward to December getting like all of my. Tests done, blood work, x rays, yada, yada, with my new doctor, who is much better than my old doctor, I'm getting all my stuff done with her. And then, like, you know, you probably all know this feeling. You get the call of good news. All of your reports are normal. And you're like, what the heck? That's great for you. You know, so you probably have this thing called Fibromyalgia. And at that point, like, I had a little bit of experience with Fibromyalgia simply because my mom also has Fibro.

Mesha [00:11:15] Oh.

Corinne [00:11:16] So I was like, oh, no, great. Yeah. So that was December twenty twenty. And then since then it's been a lot of like experimenting tests, trying to figure out of course, like what actually helps my symptoms. And the biggest piece of it too is like really reevaluating what rest and work mean to me. It's like in our capitalist society which we'll get into a little bit today as we talk about like my job and what to do. But yeah, it's been a wild ride.

Caraline [00:11:52] Yeah. So I want to get into that because I mean, that's the whole thing about the topic of this episode. So basically what we want to talk about is Fibromyalgia and its role or nonexistent role in the entertainment industry. And I want Corinne I want you to tell us what you do and why that applies to this topic.

Corinne [00:12:12] One hundred percent. So I work in the theater industry specifically. I am a training program manager for a theater out here in Portland, Oregon, and specifically what that means as I run our apprentice program. So I oversee scheduling and classes and networking opportunities for about eight to 10 young artists who are making the jump from the educational setting, be that high school or college into the professional setting of theater. And so then in addition to that, running tons of like high school programing, middle school programing, yadda, yadda, all around theater education and getting kids excited about creative expression.

Caraline [00:12:51] Love it.

Corinne [00:12:53] Yeah, yeah. So I've been doing that for about. I mean, this role I've been in for only about a year now, but I've been working in theater education for about ten years and then I've been acting on stage since I was in like second grade and a long, long time of acting both for fun and professionally. And then now I'm directing, too.

Caraline [00:13:22] Cool!

Corinne [00:13:22] So that's another thing I can add to my list.

Caraline [00:13:24] So from your viewpoint, what have you seen? I mean, I know you're only newly diagnosed with a chronic illness, but what have you seen as far as where chronic illness plays a role in the community? If you see a lot of people that have chronic illness or.

Corinne [00:13:45] Oh, my God, this question who, first of all, I want to start by saying, like, I've been dying to talk about this, I got notes, ya'll.

Skye [00:13:51] Look at you!

Caraline [00:13:53] Wow!

Corinne [00:13:54] I was like Fibro brain, Fibro brain step back you are not taking over.

Skye [00:13:56] She's prepared.

Mesha [00:13:56] She's ready!

Corinne [00:13:59] Oh, yeah. So the like. It's been a wild to be newly diagnosed with Fibro and still working in this industry. And like it's almost been like a new set of glasses that I've had to wear in terms of like my own accessibility in the industry, but also seeing so many of the pitfalls that just exist in terms of like this is the way things are done. This is how you do it, you know. And so I think a lot of it transpires to multiple disciplines in the entertainment industry. But obviously I speak mostly towards like theater because that's what I'm immersed in.

Caraline [00:14:33] Right.

Corinne [00:14:34] But it's a lot. I mean, there's there's specifically like the show must go on mentality is the easiest way to start. Well, let's think about what that means. Like, you know, it's like capitalism in a nutshell where it's like you have to like, push through and productivity. And, you know, we have a deadline to meet and we have to get this thing up by these dates. And, you know, it's it's not conducive for things like a flare up at all. And also, it's like an entirely different beast when we talk about invisible illness versus like visible disability. Right? So you in the industry and I know we'll get more into this, but like in the industry specifically, I know a lot of people who identify as having some sort of either invisible disability or neuro divergence who often choose to, like, not disclose that because of the industry that we work in and what it kind of requires of you to be successful in the industry, to be successful in air quotes.

Caraline [00:15:38] Yeah.

Mesha [00:15:39] Right.

Caraline [00:15:39] Yeah. And I think recently, at least in the past five, 10 years, like the visible disabilities have been really pushed to the forefront. I think in theater. I mean, like the newer version of Oklahoma that had Ali Stroker, who is in a wheelchair or Deaf West's production of Spring Awakening, where it was half in sign language and have sung by non hard of hearing performers. But so that's of being really pushed forward. And while I love that, I think it's just as important to make sure that we're paying attention and taking care of the people who have those invisible illnesses as well.

Corinne [00:16:17] It's so true. Right. And I think like that comes from looking at the system itself of what exactly does the entertainment industry ask you to participate in. Right?

Mesha [00:16:28] Exactly.

Corinne [00:16:28] Like the examples that you're listing Caraline are so important and so valid, but also often still fall in this kind of professional model of theater, which is like we rehearse for a month. These are the rehearsal hours and then we perform for at least a month, you know, which like is still a lot to ask, especially if you're telling stories that not only are physically exhausting because you're moving around like wild, but then often involve some sort of trauma storytelling, like you're being asked as an artist to be vulnerable and to let yourself go to some pretty intense places. And hey, what triggers Fibromyalgia? Trauma and stress.

Caraline [00:17:10] That's so true. I didn't even think about it that way but yeah you're totally right.

Mesha [00:17:13] Yeah.

Corinne [00:17:13] It's wild.

Mesha [00:17:15] For sure.

Caraline [00:17:16] And I think too, we had discussed this before. What last time after we were done recording, just thinking about what we want to talk about for this episode, but just thinking even to just in the terms of the entertainment industry in general, how there is a handful of celebrity spokes people for different diseases and illnesses. And while there's no, like, official Fibromyalgia spokesperson, I don't know if I want there to be because anyone they've suggested is not doing a great job.

Corinne [00:17:47] Right, right.

Caraline [00:17:47] Or really don't want to talk about it. Like maybe they've mentioned it once in an interview and that's all they do. So.

Corinne [00:17:55] Right.

Caraline [00:17:56] I don't I don't know that we necessarily need one. I think it would make much more of a difference if people, just people, normal people feel comfortable and confident enough to speak out about it. And that's how it was coming to the forefront. I definitely don't think we need someone talking about it just because they're a celebrity, because and I'm just going to say because this is this is how it is Lady Gaga not not doing a wonderful job representing the Fibromyalgia community.

Mesha [00:18:27] Unfortunately not.

Caraline [00:18:28] And not that she has to, but if she is going to speak up about it, then you really need to think about what you're saying before you say, because I literally not even an hour before we just got on was scrolling through TikTok and a clip of her interview with Oprah came up and. And she was saying how she's not on any narcotics, she's not on any Xanax, blah, blah, blah. Great. But then you're also making the people who can't afford your magical treatments feel bad and you're putting down the people who do need those medications and do well on those medications. So you really help no one. But just trying to boost your own ego. Like, come on!

Corinne [00:19:06] Yeah, and it's wild.

Mesha [00:19:07] Shots fired. No, it's real, it's real.

Corinne [00:19:09] Part of it through part of it too is that sucks is like. There's a big stigma that I think is internalized ableism ultimately is what it boils down to, of like knowing that if you vocalize that you need those things or that you do have certain special requests that you need to make that, again, affect the system of how it's always been done in the entertainment industry that people will want to work with you less or people will see you as difficult. So, like, there's that piece, too, where I do understand Lady Gaga being like, I don't need any of these things because she's trying to like, in a way, also advocate for her

career. And it's such a stupid place to be in as a person where you have to, like, minimize yourself for your career.

Mesha [00:19:56] Yeah.

Caraline [00:19:58] And then something else we talked about, too, is like the general representation of Fibromyalgia and chronic illness in movies and television, because as we all know, that's where a lot of people get information from, unfortunately, because it's this how they take in that form of media and entertainment. And unfortunately, we've kind of been used as a community, as Fibromyalgia patients. We've been used as a punch line a lot. And it's disheartening because first of all, I just want to know who these writers are that are like researching this and being like, OK, yep, Fibro is the one we're going to make fun of. There's millions of other illnesses and you're going to choose ours to pick on, like, I really don't get it.

Corinne [00:20:51] Yeah.

Caraline [00:20:52] Because some of them I had like made a list of. So one of the most notable ones was an episode of House and a guy comes in and he's like, I think I have Fibromyalgia. And so House goes to the medication department, the pharmacy, and he goes to the candy machine, get some white candy out, puts it in a pill jar, and he gets to take the opioids that he was supposed to give that patient. And I'm like, OK, again, you're representing us as pill popping. Like druggies.

Corinne [00:21:23] Hypochondriacs.

Caraline [00:21:24] Yes!

Caraline [00:21:25] Yeah, and hypochondriacs are were like won't know the difference between a placebo, like what the heck?

Caraline [00:21:31] Yeah, and according to the Internet, there is like a handful of other episodes of TV shows that have done the exact same thing, it's like they just copy paste from other TV shows that they see. Well, they're making fun of Fibromyalgia. I might as well do, too. So it's a fun time. One one good. Well, two at least good representations of Fibromyalgia chronic illness I had seen was I don't know if you guys know the show Face-Off where they do like the I mean, that's a good representation of the entertainment industry as well, like make up artistry for movies and television. But there was a contestant who had Fibromyalgia and they they allowed her to speak about it on TV, let her tell her story, which is nice. And then there's an episode. There's like a two part episode of Golden Girls where why can I never remember this character's name? It's Bea Arthur's character.

Skye [00:22:22] Is it Bea?

Caraline [00:22:24] And she is having like similar symptoms that we do. She had the fatigue and pain and all these things, and these doctors aren't taking her seriously. And what's weird is that she's an older woman. So I for some reason, you'd think that the older you get, maybe your pain would be more well received from doctors, because usually it's us young young people that have the problems trying to convince people that we're in pain. But yeah, I mean she just like blows up at the doctor in one part of the episode, she's

like, you're not listening to me. I'm sick and I'm tired. And I think that's literally what the name of the episode is actually.

Corinne [00:22:58] So relatable.

Caraline [00:23:00] Yeah. And it's like you want to remain professional because you're like you want someone to take you seriously. But it's like there's many times where I wanted to scream at people.

Mesha [00:23:10] Right.

Skye [00:23:12] She played Dorothy.

Caraline [00:23:13] Yes, Dorothy. So, Dorothy she was ahead of our time.

Corinne [00:23:14] Yeah, it's a catch twenty two, it's like a total catch 22 in the entertainment industry specifically. Right, because like you don't want to have any sort of prejudice against you because it does affect casting things. Unfortunately, we live in a world where, like, bias is inevitable. And so especially with things like Hollywood, there's so much bias with saying, like, you exist as somebody with Fibromyalgia. Like that's why we don't hear people like Morgan Freeman talking about his Fibromyalgia.

Caraline [00:23:41] We love you, Morgan Freeman.

Mesha [00:23:41] That's what I was gonna mention.

Corinne [00:23:43] Right. Like, it doesn't mean that he doesn't care about it and he doesn't like want to talk about it. But it is such a risk for your career to, like, acknowledge yourself as someone with chronic illness, because then you also have to worry about being typecast. I mean, obviously, Morgan Freeman, they worry about typecasting because he's God he can do no wrong.

Mesha [00:24:02] God, literally.

Corinne [00:24:04] But like, you have to worry about typecasting, right, where people are going to cast you as like the the the person with disability who's like the martyr case for the hero to, like, say or like the person who, you know, is a villain. Often so often people with disability play roles that are like the villain and like that's not appropriate at all. So wrong or just like like you said, the stereotyping of like the hypochondriac right.

Mesha [00:24:31] That's the worst one.

Corinne [00:24:33] There's so rarely like in any sort of ability or chronic illness, it's so really rare that you get to just like play a person with complex problems and trauma and like, you know, just like a normal character on a TV show that then also just happens to have Fibromyalgia, which is the reality for most of us.

Caraline [00:24:53] Right.

Corinne [00:24:54] Like we're not all consumed by this diagnosis. It's not all we talk about all the time, but it's this weird, like in between of like two. If you don't talk about it, then

there's no representation. But how much you do talk about it can totally impact how much representation there is.

Skye [00:25:11] Correct. Oh, like a rock and a hard place. It really is, there's just.

Mesha [00:25:17] Yeah.

Caraline [00:25:17] Well then you get salty when you see these movies like Five Feet Apart with cystic fibrosis gets this romantic representation of the illness and where it's accurate information about what the illness is, but also like a romantic comedy. Where is that for.

Corinne [00:25:35] Fibro? And some of it is inaccurate though. And Five Feet Apart as like a really close friend from college who has cystic fibrosis. And like she posted this long thing basically about what we're just saying. It's like, why can't it just be like what it actually is like? Why do we have to romanticize this thing?

Caraline [00:25:52] Right.

Corinne [00:25:53] It's not all cutesie cute.

Mesha [00:25:54] Yeah.

Skye [00:25:54] It's not. It really isn't.

Corinne [00:25:57] It's like, where's the where's the girl with Fibromyalgia and IBS?

Mesha [00:26:02] Right?!

Caraline [00:26:02] And we don't care like.

Skye [00:26:03] Where is the girl running out of the party because she's pooping her pants?

Caraline [00:26:06] We don't care like we get through the majority of people. I hope hope, hope are getting through life with chronic illness through humor. Because if you're not laughing about how many times you've almost pooped your pants in a in a Wal-Mart, then you're not going to have a good time. Like you're just not.

Mesha [00:26:24] Right.

Corinne [00:26:26] Right. Like, if I can't, like, feel like I'm a fire breathing dragon when my heartburn flares up and like, just sit there and go rawr at my partner. What's that fun in it?

Caraline [00:26:34] It's not fun at all.

Corinne [00:26:34] Exactly.

Mesha [00:26:34] Right, what's the fun in it?

Caraline [00:26:36] And another movie I thought about too, because I had actually watched it because I wanted to see what all the hype was about. Not that there was a lot of hype, that there was some talk in the chronic illness community about it. But there's a movie called Cake with Jennifer Aniston in it, and she had a traumatic triggering event that triggered chronic pain. And then most of the movie is about how she is like a psychotic person and has to get drugs from over the border of Mexico. And Jennifer Aniston, you could have done better.

Corinne [00:27:08] Oh, man.

Skye [00:27:09] Typical. That's what we all do.

Mesha [00:27:11] Yeah, that's right. That's what we all do. That's our story.

Corinne [00:27:15] I wish there was video for this podcast just for that reaction from all of us the amount of eye rolling and sighs that just happen.

Skye [00:27:21] Oh, got to go to Mexico now and get my drugs.

Caraline [00:27:26] Right.

Corinne [00:27:26] You know like you do.

Caraline [00:27:28] And it's like.

Skye [00:27:28] It's inappropriate on so many levels.

Caraline [00:27:30] Come come and do a documentary and talk to real people who live with these illnesses. It's like think about all the times that actors have taken on a role and it's either about a person who like Stephen Hawking's or all these other people who have have lived these certain lives and and had these traumatic things happen to them. And they do all this research and all this work to really play that role the white way. And sometimes it's brilliant. When we watch it, they're like, wow, I really felt that story come alive whenever it's like, do that with us and see what it's like. You're going to get such a better representation.

Corinne [00:28:08] And that's part of it, too, right, like actors who have these disabilities exist, like why aren't we casting them in these roles? Like, yes, Theory of Everything was a beautiful movie, but like Eddie Redmayne.

Caraline [00:28:22] Not disabled.

Corinne [00:28:23] Not at all in any way disabled. And so why was he playing that role? Because he's pretty and he's an actor. And he made the moolah right. Like it's all about the box office sales. And so unfortunately, like what we see too often, even in theater, even in like, you know, not mainstage, not even New York theater, not even Chicago theater, like these big scenes. Even in these smaller markets, we see casting decisions being made based on like somebody who can play a disabled person versus like actually casting a disabled person in that role. And I can't remember who it was. There was a really awesome article that I read from American theater, and it was basically breaking down ableism theater industry. But somebody had mentioned this awesome quote about how

they are an actor with disability and how when they play a role, they're just playing a role. And like the disability is a subset to that role because that's just who they are as a person. Versus like when you cast somebody who's not disabled to play a role, they're going to dramatize the disability because they are not actually disabled. There's it's not an option. They don't know how to, not because they have to add that later on so that you're not going to get a factual story. Even if they had, like, interviewed a million people with Fibromyalgia and like know all about the ins and outs of what that looks like. If you're not disabled, you shouldn't be playing disabled roles.

Caraline [00:29:50] Yes. The end.

Mesha [00:29:52] You're dropping gems right now.

Caraline [00:29:57] Yes.

Mesha [00:29:57] I swear. But yes.

Corinne [00:29:58] I tell ya.

Skye [00:29:59] You know, when you when you mentioned that it also comes down to like our mannerisms and the way we carry ourselves too like a while ago, you know, I met a woman and she was like, you chronic pain, don't you? I was like, how do you know? She was like, well, look at the way you sit. She's like, I can tell by the way you walk in the way you sit. Because I'm like always moving.

Corinne [00:30:22] Can't tell if you should have been flattered or insulted.

Mesha [00:30:26] Right!

Skye [00:30:26] Right? I thought it was amazing. Now, like, I can pick it out in people too, because I'm like, oh, look at the way they're walking and look at the way they're sitting and the way they're moving. And like, it comes down to our mannerisms and like the little things I like actors who don't have these issues wouldn't even think about. So then to us, they're like, OK, well, that's not convincing at all because you're walking with your spine completely straight. That is absolutely not how it is, brother.

Corinne [00:30:49] Yeah.

Skye [00:30:49] You're not sitting like a weirdo in a chair and you're sitting and you're sitting with your, you know, butt on the seat feet on the ground. Absolutely not. That's not how it goes.

Caraline [00:31:01] You're back isn't hunched, that's not right.

Skye [00:31:04] Right. Absolutely not.

Corinne [00:31:05] Right. And then there's the flip side of the coin, too, right. We're like people who are disabled trying to play nondisabled roles. There's so much stigma around, again, doing things the quote unquote right way, you know, of like directors being like, oh, well, in this moment, can you just, like, be still or like hold your body this certain way or like wear high heels for this role and you're just like, no, I literally can that and so and so like

not getting cast in things because you're difficult when really it's just like, no, my body does not do the things that you want my body to do, like. And I think that's such a big thing in theater, specifically where there's a lot of movement right now in the industry to get people to think about accessibility when it comes to the audience, you know, and how we present performances for people who are deaf or people who are blind and different, you know, physical ability levels as well. But when it comes to the actors who are portraying these stories, often it's like a you can ah, you can't situation. It's so black and white, like sometimes you do thankfully have directors who will be like, OK, cool. Like let's rethink what we're doing here then. But if you have a set that like I imagine some people know this, but probably not everybody. So when you're looking at a set on a stage, often there's like a really steep incline on the back. If you have to get to a second story and it looks like a normal staircase on the front. Right. But if you have to get up this like super steep incline or sometimes a ladder to, like, make it to the other side and like, you can't do that consistently for sixty days. Right. Because there's the month of rehearsal and usually a month of shows. And that's just an average. Right. If you can't make sure that you can do that every day for sixty days which hey no, we can go Fibromyalgia our bodies, we can't predict anything like then you're seeing us like being an inconvenience to the process or like needing a. Extra tension and unfortunately, like we're not at a place as a society where that doesn't have some sort of impact on you then getting work the next time, whether that be because of like the director or not seeing the value and making accommodations or even just like literally time and energy and money. Right. Like thinking about your example of Lady Gaga. Right. The reason she's able to perform those like hell, a phenomenal dance concert, whatever shows is because she has, like, the ability to dish out for all of these pain treatments. Right. And the pain preventions were like theaters are not able to many of them, to financially invest in the same resources to keep people's bodies and brains. Well, and there's so much that needs to go into being especially an actor performer on stage that, like, I don't have the spoons. If I'm in a show, I don't have the spoons to, like, go to the show, do the show, come home and then make dinner.

Caraline [00:34:08] And do it all again the next day.

Mesha [00:34:08] And then clean the house like, no, no, no. Like, if I'm if I'm doing a show, like, my partner knows that I am like straight up, like I'm coming home and I am a potato, I cannot do anything but potato for the rest of the day. And it's like it's such a reality. We're like also what a privileged place you have to be in because so many other people who work in theater or work in entertainment industry, that's not how they're making their income. That's like a little bonus income. If they're because most people you know, we're not celebrities getting millions and millions of dollars, but like, how the heck do you work a second job?

Caraline [00:34:47] This is literally a real-time problem for me because.

Mesha [00:34:51] Yep. Same.

Caraline [00:34:51] Before the pandemic happened, I was about to audition for something at a local theater and I had an audition for anything like high school. And then the pandemic happened. But recently they started having audition again, auditions again for things with ensembles that I want to do. I want to be a background person. I don't want any lines, just put me in the back. I want to wear a costume and sing the songs and do the dances. But I looked at the schedule and I'm like, oh, I would die. I would never see my husband. I would never go to the bathroom or eat dinner. Like where like I'd be coming

from one job, going to another, going to sleep, going back to the other. I was like, this is a community theatre.

Mesha [00:35:29] Torture.

Caraline [00:35:30] I'm not even going to get paid for this. So I had to say no to that.

Corinne [00:35:34] And that's and it's such like that is the norm. That is the norm for theater. And like it's seen as, you know, it manifests in so many different ways, like paying your dues, like you have to work hard if you want the credits and the money eventually and yada, yada. And like, you know, we have a literal week that is called in the rehearsal process, how week it is called. We for able bodied humans who call it hell week. What is it for us like?

Caraline [00:36:03] Extra hell week.

Caraline [00:36:04] Demon Satan Underworld forever week?

Skye [00:36:05] Super hell week.

Corinne [00:36:09] So when you go into like for those who don't know in theater the week before your show opens, you're usually doing twelve hour tech rehearsals, which involve a lot of stopping and starting a lot of standing around, a lot of like, you know, costume fittings, Mike checks, It checks, all of it happening over and over again. It's a lot of hey, run that again and that again. Run them again. Run that again. And your body is just bent after like you're you're dead. You're done for, done for and like that is so common and so like yep, we're going into hell week. And I'm like, how, how are we still in a world in twenty, twenty one where people are like kosher with having a week that is literally like death dedicated to pushing your body beyond its limits.

Caraline [00:36:55] When we're doing that on the regular.

Mesha [00:36:58] Yeah.

Corinne [00:36:59] Right.

Mesha [00:36:59] Right. Think of how you know, like actors or especially in the theater environment are really athletes like you guys are performing your very physical like, yeah, you guys should be able to have like ice baths or something backstage when you're done.

Caraline [00:37:19] Yeah.

Corinne [00:37:20] Yeah.

Mesha [00:37:20] You know, get get massages, something someone there to help, you know like help de-stress.

Caraline [00:37:28] Recovery.

Corinne [00:37:28] Yeah, yeah, and thankfully, some companies are starting to do some of that work right, like the company that I work for right now, Portland Playhouse, they are like

constantly thinking about and I think it's part of because we have some staff members who identifies as differently like neuro divergent and disabled and, you know, having different experiences. And so one thing that they do right now and that we've just started doing is like having options for massage therapy days. Like this is the day that we have, like, paid for a massage therapist to come for the cast, sign up for your blocks and you can come like once a week and do your massage therapy with, like, somebody as part of being in the show.

Caraline [00:38:12] We love it.

Corinne [00:38:12] So there's all of yeah, it's great that we're thinking about people as athletes, but I think we also the piece that I want to see more of and that I am such a fierce advocate for, especially as a director, is like the mental wellness of the right, like you. I mean, today this is like just a drop in the bucket. But it's a perfect example. I don't know if anyone knows the show. Titus Andronicus by Shakespeare. It is an intense show. There's a lot of murder. It's a revenge story all about murder and rape and family drama and like raw, it is gruesome, gruesome and traumatic. And that's the point of the show, is to be like nobody wins when revenges of the center of things. But I had an audition this morning for a role in the show where, like, my audition scene was to do basically like the scene right before this character gets raped. And like, you have to have like go to that experience like that. What...what? That's an audition. And like, I don't know if people know this. When you're auditioning for something, you are like you have ten minutes of time typically that like you're expected to, like, come in, be bubbly, have some banter back and forth, talk about scheduling, talk about anything you need to know about the script that you're about to do and then drop into things, run the scene and then end it and be like, oh, so great talking to you. Yeah. Like what it that's just normal. That's normal for like a dramatic audition to have to do something like that. To have to do something that heavy.

Caraline [00:39:51] And that's difficult enough, like if you haven't experienced what you're acting out but like the people kind of like how, how do you just switch back and forth. It's similar to how I think like TV reporters are like they switch on and off.

Corinne [00:40:05] Yeah.

Corinne [00:40:06] They're like, OK, this is this is this is traumatic. But like, I have to be in this and whatever I have to ask this person about whatever just happened and it's going to be awful and then I have to snap out of it. It's horrible.

Corinne [00:40:17] Yeah.

Mesha [00:40:17] Right.

Corinne [00:40:18] And your body doesn't know the difference.

Caraline [00:40:20] Yes, right.

Corinne [00:40:21] Right. Like as I'm sitting there on the floor pleading for my life, like my body is like, oh, we are in danger. High red alert. And so I leave my audition room and my body is still going through that stress response of like, oh, oh, we're dying, we're being attacked. So I'm like sitting in the car with my, like, heart rate variability, like tech on and like trying to, like, calm myself down and singing happy songs in the car. So I'm like, calm

down vagus nerve we're safe, we're safe, we're safe same thing over and over again. Right. But like, truly, it wasn't until. Like an hour before we started recording, so that was like three, two to three hours after this audition that my body was feeling like, oh I think we're OK. Oh wow. Oh, OK.

Caraline [00:41:09] And that's good that it got there because sometimes it doesn't.

Corinne [00:41:13] I know. And I'm still at the point where I'm like, am I going to flare up tomorrow because of this.

Mesha [00:41:17] Dang.

Corinne [00:41:19] Right. But that's like it's like that is a slice of what it's like. That's an audition that's on a show. And so then when you think about like how you have to protect yourself as an actor with Fibromyalgia specifically, there's a lot of like, can my body handle doing the content of this show? Can my body handle when the run of the show was supposed to be? You know, if a show is slated for a two month rehearsal process and then a three month run or whatever, like that's an entirely different thing than being like, oh, we're going to rehearse for two weeks and then perform for a week. Right. And so then, you know, I'm going to tangent a little bit like there's this whole stigma, too, about if you have gaps on your resume as an actor, it is so much harder to get work because people look at your resume and they're like, oh, she hasn't been working. Like maybe that's because she's like, not very good. Maybe that's because she's hard to work with and people don't want to work. They connect the dots. And so many strange ways that, like, if you choose to take a break from it, you're seen as being lazy, you're seen as being like unreliable. And it's like, no, I'm just trying to, like, physically care for this thing that I have going on. And sometimes I just want to like right on top of my resume and like bold letters. I have chronic illness.

Mesha [00:42:38] Right.

Corinne [00:42:39] It's like it's it's wild that that is a ramification. And I think that's part of why we don't see more people with chronic illness that are in this like. Beginning professional stage of working in the entertainment industry, right, that's why we only hear about the Morgan Freeman's and the Lady Gaga who get diagnosed after they're already famous. Yeah. And it's like it's just there's not a waypoint into the industry unless you are creating your own work, unless you can, like, hide your symptoms and, like, fake it till you make it, which God I hate that phrase so much.

Mesha [00:43:13] I hate it too so much.

Caraline [00:43:13] Same.

Corinne [00:43:14] Oh, or like the alternative is like you're just really frickin bold and like make the clear designation to people. It's like, no, I can't do that. It's not because I don't want to, it's because my chronic illness will not let me. And like here's the price that I pay if I make those choices. And even then, like, you got to pray that you have a director, scenic designer or a theater company in general that's willing to be like, oh, yeah, there are different bodies and different abilities in the world.

Caraline [00:43:46] Oh, my gosh. You hit so many good points, though. This is why I was like to be a topic and we can't talk about it without Corinne.

Corinne [00:43:55] Now you understand why I left that voice mail and I was like, you guys.

Caraline [00:43:57] Listen!

Skye [00:43:59] This is important.

Mesha [00:44:03] Yeah, it is. It really is. Yeah. This whole topic is why I forced myself to not even try anymore to get sold to me just because I wanted to be an you artist and repertoire like a totally in the music industry or even like get into like eventually owning my own label. And like two things happen. One, I realized, you know, my personality doesn't really fit that, like I'm not. Assertive or mean or not, while everyone's more assertive or aggressive and then also. I've seen, like, people glorifying the the grind culture, like.

Corinne [00:44:48] Oh, yeah.

Mesha [00:44:49] Oh yeah, I'm up. Twenty four hours straight, you know, going to all these shows, well, I'm not sleeping. That's great.

Caraline [00:44:58] Yeah.

Mesha [00:44:59] So so I was afraid of that. Like, I was afraid of what people would think, how people are in general. So, yeah, this is definitely so it was provided a lot of perspective.

Corinne [00:45:12] Yeah.

Mesha [00:45:14] In real world examples because I didn't know it was it could actually be like that, like I'm just going off by my speculation so.

Corinne [00:45:22] Yeah, it's true. I mean, like think about how romanticized this idea of, like, the tortured artist is. Right. And how that is like, oh, that's such a good painting. What a tortured soul. Whatever the art form is, it's like, why is torture part of like the narrative of something being good or being worth it like.

Mesha [00:45:44] Right.

Corinne [00:45:44] Maybe like can we instead be like, oh, that person must have been so well rested. Look how great they're doing.

Skye [00:45:50] They slept so much. And that's why they can work hard.

Corinne [00:45:55] Right. Like, I don't know about you, but I don't really want to hang out with tortured people. I want to hang out with people who are like getting enough sleep and taking care of themselves. And I'm just like, yes, I want to be around you.

Mesha [00:46:06] Shoot.

Corinne [00:46:06] Yeah.

Caraline [00:46:07] Similarly to Mesha. And when I when I was coming out of high school, I wanted to work for Disney as a character performer. And I went to two auditions and those were just a day. And I was like dying from them and I didn't eventually end up getting in. But then so then I had to switch my major to I changed it to communications and media arts because then I was like, oh, I want to be a production assistant or work in the television industry. And I got the opportunity to be a production assistant on a TV show that was filming in our hometown. Weirdly enough, and that was a 12 hour day and I did not go to school or work the next day. Because it is I mean, I'm on my feet all day. It was go, go, go. It was you do what I'm asking you to because you are like a peon on this like chain of command. And so it's like, OK, there can be something else in this industry I could do and. Nope.

Mesha [00:47:04] No.

Corinne [00:47:05] Yeah, it's wild. I think like the that that's such a great point too. There's so much of it to I think because Fibromyalgia is such an all encompassing illness in terms of it not just being body pain and ability, but also the brain fog. And like all of the cognitive pieces of it to where it's like literally there's like a Venn diagram that is just like, a circle right, in terms of like.

Caraline [00:47:29] It all overlaps.

Corinne [00:47:31] What the arts. What the arts ask you to do and like how you utilize your body and your voice in your brain and then like what Fibromyalgia effects. It's like all perfectly overlapped, right? Like memorization. I don't know. I'll do my best, but who knows if my Fibro fog is going to let me remember the word like you like. I don't know.

Caraline [00:47:54] I think you need to go sit on a chair. I think.

Corinne [00:48:01] Yeah, so many of my nightmares are literally like me going on stage for this show and like the words of the script falling out of my head or like not knowing my blocking, so not knowing where I'm supposed to walk on stage and people just like pushing me around on stage and being like, oh no.

Caraline [00:48:19] That's why I'm like I should just join an improv comedy troupe because then.

Corinne [00:48:22] Yeah.

Caraline [00:48:23] Then I can just do whatever is going on in my head then if it's silence and that silence and then the other person has to say yes, and I love your silence.

Corinne [00:48:31] Exactly. Exactly.

Caraline [00:48:33] That's why Amy Poehler and Tina Fey became my personal heroes.

Corinne [00:48:37] True True.

Corinne [00:48:39] Corinne, this has been so wonderful having you on. I'm so glad that we got your voicemail.

Skye [00:48:43] Yes.

Caraline [00:48:44] And we got to connect with you. And I've loved this whole conversation.

Corinne [00:48:49] Right back at ya. I'm so grateful.

Caraline [00:48:51] Well we end every episode with our Visible Victories and our Tender Points, so if you want to start, you can go ahead.

Corinne [00:49:01] Sure, let's see, I think, you know. My I said this earlier about that audition. I think that was both my Tender Point and my Visible Victory were like Visible Victory I was able to, like, get my butt there on time and do the thing and, like, feel relatively good about the work that I put out in the room, which, you know, regardless of what happens from that audition, getting cast or not, like half the, like, success of being an actor is like feeling like you did go to an audition. So that was definitely a Visible Victory of like, hey, that's great. My body can't hold me down now. But then also, like the Tender Point of, you know, trying to regulate afterwards, that's like, you know, I talked a little bit about this, but like. Just like trial and error at this point for myself, especially being so early in my journey of like, well, how do I sustain a life doing this? And like, definitely have a little bit of fear edging into like audition season and covid restrictions lighting up of like, oh, I how do I make this work now, you know. Yeah, that's me.

Caraline [00:50:13] Mesha. What about you?

Mesha [00:50:14] *blows a raspberry*

Caraline [00:50:17] Oh, no!

Mesha [00:50:19] Yeah, oh.

Caraline [00:50:21] Her Tender Point is *blows a raspberry*.

Mesha [00:50:22] That is it. Girl I yeah, I'm in a flare right now physically, emotionally, mentally, all of it, like, you know, you all know I'm moving, hence the mess the chaos. Moving next week. I have a lot of homework that I have to catch up on that I haven't been able to. Because of, in fact, in the last few days or weeks, and it's just like I'm like really overwhelmed, but. I guess on the flip side, a Visible Victory is like I've been forcing myself to take I think I mentioned it last time to like take time in the morning, in the evening to do meditation and, like, yoga in bed. Um, there was something else that I forgot Fibro fog. So that's. Yeah, that's it. I guess.

Caraline [00:51:33] That's good. I'm glad you're still fourth, even if it's forcing yourself to take the time for self care. It doesn't matter as long as it's happening. Skye, what about you friend?

Skye [00:51:47] I guess my Tender Point was yesterday, I it was like the top 10 worst pain I've ever been in my life, my uterus just decided to be like, hey, bitch, you thought you're having a good day. And oh, my goodness, I, I was in so much pain. We were out at a party and had to leave. I had to leave my car there, Hunter drove me home, came home, sat in

the tub for an hour and then got out and crawl in bed and had my heating pad on. But it sucks because then some of our friends came to our house, our upstairs moaning and crying in pain and hearing them all downstairs, like laughing together. That's like one of the things that hit you because you're like this is what chronic illness does. This is what I have to miss out on when I feel this way.

Caraline [00:52:41] Yeah, especially when it's not the big things, too, is it's like small moments in life you're missing out on.

Mesha [00:52:45] Exactly.

Skye [00:52:46] Exactly right. But the on a on a more positive note, this upcoming week, I'm driving to Kentucky to see one of my best friend's wedding.

Caraline [00:52:59] Yay weddings!

Mesha [00:53:00] Awwe.

Skye [00:53:00] And I know I'm so excited for that. And I'm I'm hoping my body works with me because the drive is about twelve hours.

Corinne [00:53:08] Oof.

Mesha [00:53:10] Oh.

Skye [00:53:10] And my mom yeah. My mom and I will be driving because she's going to go see some of her friends in Tennessee while I'm at the wedding, so it'll be nice to get away. But twelve hour drive when your body's like this difficult and then when you're dancing the night away, the day after I'm going to feel it. But you know.

Caraline [00:53:29] The dancing is so worth it.

Skye [00:53:30] Yeah I can't wait.

Caraline [00:53:35] My Tender Point and victory like sort of overlap this week. I got to have a follow up appointment about I was diagnosed with mast cell activation over the summer and it's like the first appointment I've had since I've been diagnosed that I found out what to do about it. They kind of just gave you the diagnosis over my MyChart. And then I've just been like, now what? So I actually have a plan now. But and I hate seeing this as a negative because I don't I don't think medication is a negative. I just don't prefer to be on medication. And I like now I have a few more added on to my list. And I was getting really overwhelmed because, like, there were specific, very specific instructions for some of them. And whenever you're told a medicine is going to taste bad, like you're like, no, you can there's no other medication. But luckily that one was optional. So that's only like if need be. But and then my other one happened to be tasteless. So I'm kind of just convinced it's just water in little tubes that I'm drinking. But she was very nice and actually did recommend to see an acupuncturist. So and hopefully going to give that a toe dip in the water, see how that goes. But yeah, I just I would rather be taking it away medications off my regimen than adding. But if they're necessary then that's great. It's just it always sucks when it's like. For something other than Fibro, I'm like, I'm being treated for POTS as I'm being treated for and still got nothing for the Fibro that's all on me. So still so hopeful

that some of these things will help. And she did say that some of them hopefully maybe might do something to decrease my pain, but we shall see. You never know. But, Corinne, thank you again for joining us. We're so happy to have you.

Corinne [00:55:38] Absolutely.

Caraline [00:55:39] You have an Instagram, so if you would like.

Corinne [00:55:41] I do!

Caraline [00:55:41] We can add that on our show notes and people can go follow you. You also have a really gorgeous website that I would love to share.

Corinne [00:55:48] Yeah!

Caraline [00:55:51] So I'll put that in the show note as well. Don't forget to go on Apple Podcasts and review and subscribe. If you subscribe, you automatically get our podcast downloaded to your docket every Friday when we post. And if you leave us to review, it always makes our hearts feel happy.

Mesha [00:56:06] It sure does.

Caraline [00:56:06] So if you want some warm and fuzzies. We love it.

Corinne [00:56:10] And call and leave voicemail so you can be a guest.

Caraline [00:56:13] See what happens when you listen to us.

Mesha [00:56:16] Follow in her footsteps.

Skye [00:56:18] Yeah.

Caraline [00:56:19] All right. Well, thank you so much for listening. And we'll see you back for our next episode.

Caraline [00:56:23] We love you and goodbye.

Mesha [00:56:25] Peace out!

Skye [00:56:25] We love you!

Corinne [00:56:25] Bye ya'll!

Mesha [00:56:25] Bye!