Gavin Clarke

Hello and welcome Kate Nash o b e thank you so much for ah for coming on today. Um, as is typical and tradition really now with guests I'm gonna hand.

00:06.85

Kate Nash

Pleasure.

00:29.90

Gavin Clarke

Straight over to you so that you can introduce yourself.

00:26.33

Kate Nash

Wonderful, well look. Gavin. Thank you so much for the invitation to join you I'm Kate Nash and I have the very great pleasure of heading up purple space which is the world's only network of disability employee resource group. Leaders. Yeah, been around for 7 years we grew out of the work that I've been doing globally to help businesses set up employer resource groups and growing like topsy and I'm sure we'll tuck into that for myself I live in mumbles in in Swansea. Um.

01:34.88

Gavin Clarke

Um, yeah, definitely.

01:42.47

Kate Nash

In South Wales I also live in London and I'm I've constantly frequent the Middle East so yeah busy bunny but lovely to stand still sit still and to have a little chat with you. Wonderful.

02:13.20

Gavin Clarke

Indeed and I think what will be really really kind of insightful is to understand how you arrived at setting up purple space and kind of getting to that point and but about. Where all that came from and your own experiences with with disability.

02:50.29

Kate Nash

Yeah, for sure. So you know the expression. The personal is political it was ever thus and for me I suppose my own personal experience of disability came many decades ago when I was.

03:09.74

Gavin Clarke

M.

03:27.47

Kate Nash

15 and I acquired quite dramatically the onset of juvenile chronic arthritis or stills disease I think there are None different types of arthritis and the 2 most known are rheumatoid and osteo and.

03:49.58

Gavin Clarke

Yeah.

04:01.59

Kate Nash

And I got early onset of JC yeah juvenile chronic at the at the age of 15 And yeah it was it was hard. You know as a teenager although you don't know everything about the world. Um, yeah, exactly.

04:33.58

Gavin Clarke

Though you like to think you do.

04:37.15

Kate Nash

You do even in those young years you have ah I suppose an expectation about how life might unfold and you kind of get used to legs that work and to arms that work and the physicality I suppose that comes with youth.

05:04.62

Gavin Clarke

Um.

05:11.35

Kate Nash

Um, but yeah, it was very dramatic um had to go into hospital for a year I couldn't walk I couldn't dress myself I couldn't feed myself. Um, and I remember I often tell the story I remember when I was then a wheelchair user. Thanks to great surgeons. And good drug therapies and physio and what have you I am ah the moment Ambulant. Um, but at that time I was a permanent wheelchair user and I remember one day I wore sitting at the kitchen table I was hoping one day I would go to University I had an expectation.

Ah, but it was only a hope because this was meant many years before the legislation the DDA then Disability Discrimination Act special educational needs act so to go to a University it would be in their gift I had no right.

06:48.14

Gavin Clarke

Yeah, yeah.

07:02.71

Kate Nash

So I could not imagine how that would happen Anyway, my story my mom turned to me as I as I looked through newspapers back in the day there was no virtual advertisements for jobs. But I was looking through newspapers looking at Jobs board and I was thinking what the heck can I do when I grow up.

07:12.36

Gavin Clarke

Yeah.

07:41.31

Kate Nash

Ah, my mum watched me and she said Kate it would be fantastic if one day you could get a little job and as a teenager I didn't hear the word job I mean luckily still have my mum and we joke.

About me telling this story on platforms global platforms. She put the stretch target in that sentence for me when nobody else was but she also put the word little in there and although she didn't mean to do it. She was like many unfortunately individuals. Who don't have experience of disability to I suppose offer up that soft bigotry of low expectation that so many of us face. So that's my backstop that drove me Gavin it just drove me I didn't want a little job I wanted a massive job.

09:29.58

Gavin Clarke

Well rightly, so.

09:27.11

Kate Nash

yeah and um yeah I didn't know it at the time but I I knew I suppose I I ah knew I wanted to do something interesting and different and massive to support. The world to think differently about the talent that people with disabilities I wanted to be part of that change program didn't know of course at None what that was going to look like and feel like but that's my backstory That's why I do what I do because I did get to university I did work for the lobbying sector.

10:42.91

Kate Nash

You know and then obviously help set up purple space but like many people doing you know change work in this space. It's live. It's the lived experience that drives us.

11:12.12

Gavin Clarke

Yeah I think we see that quite commonly I mean as you know I live with, Osteoarthritis in the main and have done since I was. As far back as I can remember is the reality of it and it's the funny odd little sentences like little job or it's okay because you can play for me. It was rugby and basketball. But I don't want to just.

12:26.80

Gavin Clarke

Play it I Want to be great at it. Yeah,, there's no,, There's no reason why I shouldn't um and more most recently and I'd be interested to see if you've had experience of this.. It's the mindset of people around the use of wheelchairs and. Crutches and that that's a bad thing.

13:05.35

Kate Nash

Yeah, absolutely And of course you know we are touching on the very human tendency I mean when you know any of you and I we talk about our experience many of your listeners too will be navigating tough. Tough moments in our life and that that doesn't that doesn't come easily.. It takes time for us as individuals I think to make sense of and I'm not a fan of the language of coping with I think that belittles our experience but the.

14:23.90

Kate Nash

The journey of us making sense of assimilating a human experience that let's face it if pushed the majority of us would say if I had a choice I'd probably choose not to that's not to say that we get jolly good and now.

15:01.35

Kate Nash

You know I'm hurtling towards my sixty s don't tell anyone your listeners please don't pass the news on but you know I can't now be bothered to think about what life would look like and feel like's it's part of my being and it brings us much joy and deliciousness. About watching others and seeing how people react and I'm being a supportive change agent anyway, I ramble. But yeah, it's hard. It's hard that doesn't take moments It takes ah a long time to make sense.

16:17.20

Gavin Clarke

It definitely did I mean I like to tell the story that it's taken me 36 years to realize that I'm disabled because it has only the last six months really where I've been fully confronted.

16:27.99

Kate Nash

Yeah, yeah.

16:56.10

Gavin Clarke

With the things I've always had but I've just hidden because I've been able to hide. Um, yeah, hiding pain is not much fun but you become very good at being able to mask. Symptoms or just to divert conversation away from those topics. Um, but the earth thing and I'm sure you've seen this in your work with purple space is that you also become exceptionally good at overcoming things and adapting to. To change. Um, and for me, that's probably None of the most profound things about people with disabilities that you can kind of have is that these are ah immensely kind of um proud group. Ah, people that just overcome things that they shouldn't need to overcome and do it with grace and dignity every single moment every day and that's a wonderful thing.

19:05.79

Kate Nash

Yeah, yeah, you're so right Gavin I agree with you and you you trigger a memory. You know you talk about how good we become I suppose that making it easier for those in our presence ah to not get overly hooked or inquisitive.

19:37.96

Gavin Clarke

M.

19:44.59

Kate Nash

Ah, about some of the stuff that actually would prefer not to talk about and that notion you can't remember what you called it deflection or distraction. You know my hands are differently shaped just you know one of the many manifestations of having rheumatoid Arthritis and um.

20:03.68

Gavin Clarke

And.

20:24.21

Kate Nash

And I love buying and selling second-hand Jewellery and I wear rings and I paint my nails and you know it all goes back I remember meeting many young people with Arthritis when I headed up Young Arthritis care from all over the world and I remember it was the swedes and the Norwegians.

21:03.53

Kate Nash

Who said, if you've got it flaunt it and if you haven't got it flaunt it anyway which I loved but you know it's about just people will often say to me Kate do you wear copper bracelets I mean copper just doesn't hit the sides when it comes to arthritis it may it might help.

21:36.80

Gavin Clarke

Yeah.

21:39.39

Kate Nash

Some might I don't want to belittle if it does it certainly doesn't help me um and my deflection is no I don't wear Coff ah copper but I love silver and you know judicious use of sarcasm is ah like for all of us. Ah a technique that we weave. But.

22:15.90

Gavin Clarke

Yeah.

22:17.63

Kate Nash

Yeah I agree with you Gavin it's hard I think and I come back to you I think sometimes distraction can sometimes make us a little brittle and I think that's something we have to get better at managing for ourselves.

22:54.50

Gavin Clarke

Yeah, and I would I would now strongly agree with that if you'd if you'd asked me or if you even said that to me even a year ago um I would have deflected and we'd have gone off and talked about something different. Because at that point, um and I know having conversations with different listeners that there's many people that are at this sort of point in their lives that you're just not ready to confront your kind of whole being. Um, and everything that you got going on because it's hard. Um, and it reminds me of a story that that I know um that you've told before around being at work and um your secretary and the none time you. You kind of asked for help. Do you want to you want to just share that story with us.

24:44.53

Kate Nash

Yeah I when I was heading up young arthritis care. Um, many years ago I had a small group of fantastic staff and we did many fantastic projects to support young people with arthritis mom was an international youth congress. So we were young early part of our career work really mattered to us we would we would work long hours and into the night for conferences and projects etc. Um, but I but I remember I found it really hard for asking for.

26:00.93

Kate Nash

Practical assistant like carrying a box picking a box and I and I had to do that and I remember I did and there was no questions asked. There was no animosity. Fantastic individual. Um. But I went into the ladies' Lou and I cried my eyes out simply for the effort. The courage that it took me then to ask for something that the majority of individuals don't really have to ask others now. Of course this was actually some years before.

27:17.28

Gavin Clarke

Yeah.

27:09.67

Kate Nash

Then Disability discrimination act Now the equality act but nonetheless and I think even the legislation doesn't you know that it still doesn't help the process of us making those asks. It's hard. We have to dig deep.

27:33.28

Gavin Clarke

Yeah. Yeah, and what was going through your mind at that point = was it was it fear, angst or something else going on?

27:56.11

Kate Nash

It was both. You know it was having to um I suppose admit to myself that there are some tasks and actions I simply cannot do and that's hard because you've got to confront it for yourself.

28:41.12

Gavin Clarke

Oh.

28:33.61

Kate Nash

You have to find workarounds. Um, you know it required a degree of courage to say to another human being This is something I can't do and of course we're worried you know to give information about ourselves is to entrust in the other person. Part of our story and we don't want to be seen as less competent at Work. We don't want to be seen as swing in the lead. We never know what the other person is thinking and feeling when we are something deeply legitimate that we can't do.

29:37.72

Gavin Clarke

Yeah.

29:42.47

Kate Nash

Um, and of course fluctuating conditions Notoriously you can have a really good day and you can have a really rubbish day so again. So that's what it was fear it was concern. It was not wanting to be less of a high performing individual.

29:55.20

Gavin Clarke

Yeah.

30:18.37

Kate Nash

In the context of work and it was admitting to myself. There's some things that are just not going to happen and I need to get over myself. Yeah.

30:32.46

Gavin Clarke

Yeah, and then I suppose the going off into the bathroom and and kind of that release of emotions that was probably as much just pure release.

30:54.53

Kate Nash

That was.

31:10.22

Gavin Clarke

In the sense of everything gets so built up and certainly ah my experience of it is that I still find it really difficult to ask for any form of adaptations. Um it. It. It's just something I've always really struggled with and when I do I become really almost tired from it because it's such a such a kind of core subject to my own mental space that. Just having to ask for something. It's emotionally tiring is that it and do you think that's going to wear that that that that those tears came from.

32:23.91

Kate Nash

So yeah. Huge yeah absolutely Gavin I think you know it's one of the most challenging aspects of employers building an accessible working world for people with disabilities. Because of course it does require great policy and practice and procedure and utterly sublime workplace adjustment processes some great line managers. It requires all of that but you have to dig a little deeper in this dynamic.

33:32.46

Gavin Clarke

And.

33:42.71

Kate Nash

And ah a lot of the ability of employers to make it easier for people to access the workplace adjustments that might exist is predicated on our ability as individuals to share an aspect of our story or our truth and that takes a lot of effort. A lot of courage doesn't come quickly. And it comes with practice over time because sometimes we might make an ask didn't land quite well we go away. We lick our woods. We come back and we ask again, you know and some of our number will never ask again. None bad experience and you know regrettably that sometimes for some of us. Means that we will never ask again so being prepared to go away and learn. What did I do what could I do differently you know what? what do I need to accept in terms of human truth and what do I just not accept at all what is the unacceptable now given. We. Do you know thankfully have legislation in place that protects our rights or it's an ongoing journey and storing and it's never once and done you know, never ever once and done.

35:55.80

Gavin Clarke

Oh.

36:07.54

Gavin Clarke

I definitely agree with that. Um, and I think this space will always be evolving I mean you've and you've only got to look at the kind of mental illness side and I know that. There is certainly hope that the government's going to be doing a more focused review of mental health legislation. Um, which I think is a very positive thing because I think there's a lot a lot to do but also I think there's a. A huge crossover in these things. Um, one of the things that you said before was around that some days are better than others. Um, and I've certainly experienced that across both sides. So as my listeners know I live with depression and ah. A disorder called this dissociative disorder and that's really very heavily linked with pain. So I get to such a space because I'm rubbish at looking after my own pain because I see that as ah as a failure that I need to take medication which I know is a ridiculous. Ridiculous statement to make but that's just how I've grown up. Um, always kind of fighting against these little adaptations. Um, and that that kind of then plays onto the kind of mental. Health side of it and obviously yeah at the age of None you kind of suddenly having such a significant change to your life. How have you experienced that management of pain and but also management of change of perception. That you might have experienced.

39:53.55

Kate Nash

Great questions I think um, much of my pain management has been born from wanting to live a purposeful life. It's the only way I can describe it so going back to. That seemingly innocuous statement from my mom. Be nice if you could get a little job it if it fuelled me I mean it angered me in the way that teenagers I think experience Rage you know I didn't want a little job I wanted a big job.

40:46.00

Gavin Clarke

Yeah.

41:06.47

Kate Nash

But I realize bearing in mind I was a permanent wheelchair at that wheelchair user at that time and it wasn't until I got to my twenty s that I started the round of having hip replacements and knee replacements and I'm now going round again with revisions. Um, but.

41:33.84

Gavin Clarke

Um, yeah.

41:44.50

Kate Nash

I Knew that the pain was going to be a long-lasting feature of my life I Knew that there was only so much that good drug therapy and surgery could do and therefore I needed to personally find a way of managing pain. And so for me, it was about living a purposeful life. It was about thinking I'm on this planet and then we all have different thoughts and feelings and views and beliefs about life and and spirituality and afterlife for me. Ah, there is no other life than this one. So That's my own personal choice and therefore when I met lots of other youngsters when I went into hospital who also had JCA Juvenile chronic. Um, we were on large doses of steroids.

43:26.70

Gavin Clarke

M.

43:24.41

Kate Nash

You know that you didn't have the biologic drugs that we have now or the other ah disease modifying job drugs that are available now which are just fantastic. But at that stage I only had steroids and the 1 thing that large quantities of steroids. Do.

43:45.88

Gavin Clarke

Yeah, yeah.

43:56.47

Kate Nash

Unfortunately is shorten your life so somewhere along the line I got it into my head that I wouldn't be around at 60 So with that degree of finite I mean you know hopefully I'm wrong because ah next year I hit the big one. Um.

44:28.64

Gavin Clarke

There.

44:30.10

Kate Nash

But that was my truth and that was very helpful because that means you work to a timeline that might be a bit artificially engineered, but it means that you have to think deep thoughts about you know where you want to be who you want to be who do you want to love? you know how do you want to receive Love. What is the focus of your work. How do you deliver your energy. So That's how I've managed pain Now you know have I worked too hard possibly you know has that come at a cost. Yes, it. It has you know I have a great family and a fantastic partner and good friends. But ah. Possibly erred on the side of working too hard rather than playing too hard but that was a choice. It was conscious and and I hope if I mean we don't always know if our lights are going out. But if that ever happens for me I hope that I feel good.

46:03.30

Gavin Clarke

Me.

46:26.39

Kate Nash

About the way in which I've managed my pain because yeah I don't have children has a legacy um but hopefully I've helped in 1 way or another to support in this case, large large numbers of employees with disability.

46:43.70

Gavin Clarke

Yeah.

47:03.67

Kate Nash

Feel Jolly good about themselves but to come out to your question. That's how I've done it not very well still experience pain still have low days. Of course you know and in Covid we were moving the furniture around and I tripped on a mut on a rug.

47:26.24

Gavin Clarke

M.

47:35.83

Kate Nash

And done something to my hip and it's deeply painful but it's about how do you actively manage the fact that I'm likely to have to live with that. But we're not alone I think that gives comfort too.

47:58.96

Gavin Clarke

Yeah I would agree hugely. Um, and again it's something I've only really over probably the last couple of years started to realize. What I don't like the word extraordinary community it is but it kind of is um and not because it's people with disabilities but because it's people that experience lots of different things in lots of different ways because obviously everybody's. Disability journey is their own you. You're not really going to find None that are completely identical, but everyone understands that it's tough. It's hard and that just brings a sense of ah. Connection um to just such a wider group I mean was it None in None people have some form of disability. So when you start to think about that on a kind of global level that yeah, we're talking none of people that. Within that that community to have to have that type of connection is it's actually quite a rare thing these days and particularly from a mental health perspective is also really important. Um I was reading a book called lost connections by um. Ah, Johann Harry um and he basically explores some of the interconnectedness that that we need to thrive and one of the things that that he talks to is that community aspect. Um. And I wish that I'd kind of found this community ten fifteen twenty years ago um because actually it would have it would have allowed me to connect with myself more I think.

52:07.10

Kate Nash

I totally get that and you know Gavin you make such an important point you know although I share it now we live in a world where you know youngsters who may be diagnosed with arthritis. Ah, likely to experience drug therapy that won't necessarily lead to some of the joint damage that that some of us oldsters have experienced and yet I think what I what I did have in those days because I went into a long-term hospital was there for a year tableau.

52:59.76

Gavin Clarke

And.

53:22.43

Kate Nash

Canadian red cross memorial hospital under the wing of a remarkable rheumatologist Barbara Ansell and I was on a ward with teenagers of others with arthritis and there was a degree of camaraderie. Um.

53:59.12

Gavin Clarke

Um.

53:58.91

Kate Nash

And I write about this in in my next book. But this this sense of you know we built ironic humour you know, gallows humour excuse me a little frog in my throat. But I think you know you touch on an incredibly important point.

54:20.46

Gavin Clarke

Um, yeah.

54:32.10

Kate Nash

That our experience is often of disability might isolate us for a time from our family and our immediate loved ones and our and our friends or indeed our colleagues at work. But if we can find ways of connecting with and building community and Unity. Amongst others doesn't it doesn't actually it doesn't have to be the same impairment as us on the contrary I think we learn a huge amount from others who experience disability or mental Ill Health or indeed neurodiversity by sharing our stories because it's not the actualities of our impairment.

55:22.64

Gavin Clarke

And.

55:41.46

Gavin Clarke

Oh.

55:47.95

Kate Nash

That it's actually creating challenge often. It's the soft bigotry of others and that's what's common in our experience.

56:09.24

Gavin Clarke

It definitely does and just to go back to your story. So you'd been experiencing all this different um different pain. You'd got to kind of a point where you'd finally asked for help. What happened next in in your in your story where did you get to next?

56:49.63

Kate Nash

I Think for me the experience of asking for help and then learning how that's received and improving the ways in which I ask in the future that that process of doing reflecting. And then doing it slightly differently Next time is a constant. It's an absolute constant in my life and I think in all of our lives. Um, and I think what I have learned is it actually takes nothing away from us. Yeah, having. To ask for something that that that others that we can do that We can't it takes nothing away from our self-worth our brilliance. Our awesomeness. It's simply a fact. It's not a comment on our productivity or our competency level or our willingness to do things um or our energy it. It has nothing to do with that. So I think that's what I have learned over time and actually we do have an opportunity to it. I suppose influence. The outcome of others and what I mean by that we purpose Space. We do a lot of work to support others to build in a confidence of resilience as much of what we do through the resource group leaders and we talk about our definition of Confidence. It's not.. It's not a fact, it's not ah, an act.. It's not a feeling our definition of confidence is a strong expectation of a positive outcome and I think if you sit within that definition and you think about So How does that apply to asking for somebody to do something around you. Or indeed in a more formal way by asking for a workplace adjustment if you have a strong expectation of a positive outcome that actually supports you to frame that ask in a way that others can deliver it means that you're not, You're not arrogant with that ask you're not cocky.

01:01:11.50

Kate Nash

That ask you're simply expecting in this case, maybe an employer would want to deliver in the same way as they would deliver against all of their diverse talent. So it helps you to kind of make the case it might nip in the buds. The fears might.

01:01:36.88

Gavin Clarke

Yeah.

01:01:48.87

Kate Nash

That might sit in in our in the minds of our non-disabled line managers who may not have experience of about our Disabilities. So that's what I've learned I think is it takes nothing away from us that we have a role to Play. Have to lean in to think about how we can make it easier for others to deliver to us and that's partly about being very confident that the experience of Disability mental Ill Health or Neurodiversity does nothing to diminish our worth at all.

01:03:08.38

Gavin Clarke

Yeah, and one of the obviously outstanding things with your past is it was 2007 wasn't it that you got your obe.

01:03:02.29

Kate Nash

Even if others don't know that.

01:03:47.80

Gavin Clarke

Just tell us a little bit about how that came about and the experience of getting it. It's a huge accomplishment.

01:04:03.35

Kate Nash

That's kind of you Gavin. So yes, 2007 but prior to that I'd been working as chief executive to then radar now called disability rights uk headed up by the wonderful Cameron Malick

01:04:37.29

Kate Nash

Um, and I was chief executive of radar for around 6 years 13 years and it was through the period where ah the then conservative government in 95 had had had secured the disability discrimination act and yet there was still a number of impairments that we wanted on the face of the act a particular HIV and people who experience cancer and MS um, so I was working with a Lobbying team. So and I was a lobbyist chained lobbyist I eye board ministers for a living not for the fainthearted and I'm jolly pleased I don't do that anymore. Um, they say you can take the girl out of Westminster and white hole. You can't take the Westminster and white hall out of the girl. So I still enjoy that.

01:06:23.61

Kate Nash

The process the machine that we have although like every citizen I'm sure I held to the moon about some of the things that that comes out of that sausage machine. Um, but so to your point I was working long hard hours to get. Some of the ah improvements to the legislation worked with an extraordinary team and um it was when I secured that ope when I was needing to move on from Ra I'd done my bit I was very Tired. Um I had decided to go on a world cruise but I knew then I knew then that my next journey my next strategic contribution was going to be in building the community of Disability ERG Leaders. So The best practice guide was sitting in my head and it was needing to be written and I needed to move on. So yes I moved on from radar and I was awarded an obe for that for that work. Yeah.

01:08:44.56

Gavin Clarke

Does that kind of instil you with a sense of a come accomplishments or a drive to do more.

01:08:54.58

Kate Nash

Well, it's a tricky one to answer because not everybody is a fan of the honours system and um, you know I have no fixed views on that you know and another day we could do a podcast of views.

01:09:15.81

Gavin Clarke

Yeah.

01:09:30.81

Kate Nash

Of the monarchy and that that doesn't have a place you know in our conversation today but to to answer your point. Yes, that there was a level at which I was I was um it it stopped me in my tracks because I you know I. As I So say I have worked hard. It's been a characteristic of my of my being and and sometimes I've I've overdone it a little bit but what that means is I have no time to waste you know I have to keep going I work at a pace. You know some people call me Nashinator. Ah so to get yeah I suppose it was ah it was it was ah it was an acknowledgement from civil servants who ultimately put the list um together. That I was doing something that was helpful and useful. So Yeah I paused fleetingly and I yeah I was I was moved by it irrespective of as I say that that feeling about whether Honours have a place and whether the system is. Is quite as equitable as it as it could be.

01:11:58.92

Gavin Clarke

Yeah, and I think it's one of those things that it's almost better if you strip away any thoughts that you might have about the system and just acknowledge the fact that. It's to demonstrate accomplishment Now. We won't get into to kind of how that all arrives and that as could you say it's probably a couple a couple of podcasts worth that one? Um, but it is an acknowledgement of really outstanding work that you've done through your career.

01:12:53.65

Kate Nash

It's good.

01:13:15.80

Gavin Clarke

I Think that is something that is rightly um, a proud um a proud accomplishment in my view.

01:13:27.77

Kate Nash

Thank you Gavin and I hear you and you I don't want to belittle it I think for all of us. Sometimes we do have to stop and feel jolly good about some of the work that we do like you do yeah.

01:13:52.44

Gavin Clarke

Yeah, definitely and then what's a 202015 wouldn't it be that um purple space was founded so between 2017 Just left what was radar. What? what? What filled that gap between apart from the cruise of course a bat.

01:14:37.29

Kate Nash

Yeah, that was a beautiful interlude. Yeah in and of months on a cruise liner. Yeah taking my little hotel room around the world and seeing the most remarkable places which for me was ah, an adjustment to be able to do some of the physical traveling that I'm just not able to do.

01:15:14.10

Gavin Clarke

Yeah.

01:15:15.45

Kate Nash

So What did I do as I say I knew that the next part of my journey was going to be about helping businesses to set up disability employee resource groups I had been looking and researching and reading about and talking to employers that had very purposeful high performing Fabulous communities. Ah, when it came to gender when it came to their minority and ethnic communities. Um, and also to a large extent their LGBTQ+ communities and my prediction was if we're really going to start to see a sea change in how.

Ah, employees with disability secure their workplace adjustments if feel good about themselves and employers recruit us in the way that is proportionate to the population then it was going to take us to lean in and to think about our experiences build our inner confidence. And actually help our employers to do differently and better at the top of the shop ah change comes in many forms. It's not just policy and practice and procedure so having helped secure the legislation and helped many employers manifest that legislation my gut. My instinct. That would count for nothing unless we as people with disabilities are prepared to be open about our experiences when we can um to share our stories of disability and discomfort to learn from each other to be ah to be challenging. To ourselves etc so to your question to your point. So I came off the world cruise set up my own consultancy Ken National Associates then worked with many hundreds of employers to help them set up disability networks and it was great. It was very. Very energizing period I'd help companies who were worried you know we don't have enough disabled people. Yes, you do you know? even though they may monitor then they often say we've only got None or two percent I'd say ignore what you think is the accurate data.

01:19:40.88

Gavin Clarke

Yeah, yeah.

01:19:38.91

Kate Nash

Guarantee you that that's not correct any employer of any size of any geography of any footprint will have around 10 to 12% which is a big community. That's what I did bit by bit by bit and then wrote to the book secrets and big news.

01:20:01.92

Gavin Clarke

M.

01:20:11.41

Kate Nash

Which then became the trigger point the messages within the book was the thing that set the demand for purple space.

01:20:32.48

Gavin Clarke

And perhaps a slightly odd question. But why purple.

01:20:39.97

Kate Nash

Ah, Wow Jolly good Question. So when we when I was writing secrets and big News. So This is a book that was ah published self-published but sponsored by some fantastic companies like. Gsk post office Metropolitan Police. Ah, and when we talked and surveyed the views of None disabled people. The premise of the book secrets and big news is that. Employers need to move on from using the language of declaration and disclosure. It's very unhelpful semantics and if you use that semantics you're suggesting that the None party might has a secret if you use the word disclose you're suggesting that the other person has a human experience is a wee a bit of a secret. If you use the language of declaration you're suggesting that that person has a big piece of news and these types of words and languages and semantics are not helpful in our lives. So um, in terms of our so we were talking to Non-disabled people through the messaging in the book.

And it was around the time that the yeah Uk government had started to talk about the purple pound as a way of describing the I suppose the um the the ah the custom base that's with the market when it comes to. Ah, the purchasing power of people with disabilities. So we've heard about the grey pound which is an ironic term I suppose to refer to people of a certain age. We've heard of the pink pound again using the colour pink ironically to help describe the purchasing power of our LGBTQ2+ colleagues and so too was born. This notion of the purple pound so we did some research and there were pockets of that use and association with that colour around the world but it really has been organic. Um. And we were one of the None organisations that chose to come out very quickly and very deliberately and very consciously and to attach and to symbolize and to make emblematic the colour purple with the experience of disability and that's partly because many of us find it hard.

01:25:32.18

Gavin Clarke

Yeah.

01:25:24.23

Kate Nash

To use the language of disability when we talk about ourselves and just like the rainbow flag has been a very strong and purposeful emblem to bring together the community there so too we wanted to do that. Not just in the uk very ambitious. We wanted to do that across the world. And then by doing that and infamously when I sent the tweet about the purple light up into the world just a year or two later we've now built a global movement to help bind and support people with disability together. So why purple don't know it could have been yellow it could have been green. And of course colour is not the point or the type of colour it is using colour as a metaphor to make it easy for us to join a community when we're struggling sometimes to even describe ourselves.

01:27:16.18

Gavin Clarke

Yeah, and I ask about the purple um slightly knowingly. Um, but I think and again for me. It's only recently that i've. Started to use any of these things. Um, but it is something that's very easy to use. So even simple things like yeah, um, on social media. Ah, you can use purple hearts little tiny things that seem so small and and kind of innocuous but actually have such deep meaning behind them I think is a real positive um that you can take out of that. Ah situation. So you've now got purple space set up. Um and the infamous tweet which would have been 2017, and you've got this this light up campaign. We're now what seven years in and you're a global um player in the in the particularly in the ERG space. You've got all sorts different offerings. How have you kind of gone from. What feels like that tweet I know it wasn't I know there's a lot behind it to building such ah an important organization for people with disabilities.

01:30:42.10

Kate Nash

It's about being purposeful. You know that the topic of disability touches. So many people's lives and I um. As I've shared I've been around the block a little bit I've seen many organizations particularly disability organizations actually lose sight of their primary purpose and ah we at purple space I have a fantastic team. We're a small team with a massive global footprint as you say. Ah, None of us. So I choose very carefully in terms of how I appoint and attract talent and coach and mentor. Not just the staff and the secondi team but equally the incredible ambassadors that that support. We're a very broad team. Um. And um, we stick to purpose. So although our higher purpose is to support employees with disability to build inner confidence and resilience through community and deep discussion about what we bring to the world and how we. How we lean into our careers. We do that through the vehicle of disability employee resource groups. It's a crowded and a messy market out there. You know there are some fantastic employer trade associations many of whom we work with and you know we really rate their work whether that's. Business disability forum whether that's valuable None whether it's Cameroon in the Middle East australian network these are really brilliant organizations that are making it employers to get excited. We do something altogether different so we work in that space.

01:34:18.32

Gavin Clarke

Yeah.

01:34:24.27

Kate Nash

To Support the leaders of disability employee resource groups who have a regular job on the side of their desk. Um, they have to deliver against that regular Job. You know that's the bit that pays the mortgage. And they have to deliver they want to be high performing individuals in their own right in the businesses that they work but meanwhile they've got it on them and they want to use their experiences to support their companies to go further and faster. So They have to find courageous ways of speaking truth to power in a way that doesn't damage and ruin relationships they have to push they have to be energetic. They have to yeah sometimes describe the unpalatable experiences So That's what we do to come to your quit. How have we done it.

01:35:45.40

Gavin Clarke

Yeah.

01:36:10.15

Kate Nash

We've been very clear about our purpose and everything that we do is measured against our higher purpose. How does this support people to build inner confidence through the vehicle of disability employee resource groups. And then leveraged through the purple light up through the movement where we celebrate the economic contribution of employees with disability through the united nations international day on the third of December so that's how we've done it purposefully? yeah.

01:37:25.80

Gavin Clarke

That's great, really great um and you've got another book coming out as well. Your None tell us a little bit about that.

01:37:35.55

Kate Nash

So yeah, it's been a labour of love. It's called positively purple. It's coming out on the none of October published by Cogan Page um and the wonderful Chris cudmoll the publishing editor there who's been remarkable. Um, so I wrote it during covid so it is autobiographical. Um it is largely about the story of my life but it's chock full of lessons learned so bit likes secrets and big news. Um, it's not nothing like the same. But.

01:38:39.14

Gavin Clarke

Yeah.

01:38:47.33

Kate Nash

The technique of mirroring the lessons for employers as well as the lessons for employees with disability so that is woven throughout the book. Um I wrote as I say I wrote it through Covid and it has been a labour of love and I've had to dig deep. To think deeply about what those lessons are so yeah fingers crossed others will enjoy it. But that's where I'm heading I'm not yet ready for swan song and retirement. But I am as coming back to your opening questions I'm.

01:39:59.63

Kate Nash

Have been wholly conscious. Some would say haunted by this notion of that Our life is finite and therefore I need to find the time to write some other thought pieces about how we navigate our inner worlds. Yeah yeah.

01:40:34.00

Gavin Clarke

And it's an important side of the story to be able to tell. Um I mean I like to kind of go back. And kind of think back to the things that might have might have helped when I was when I was growing up. Um, so yeah I was I was born with lower limb deformities which then largely because of surgery which without surgery I wouldn't I wouldn't have walked. Let alone than anything else. Um, but all these things have ah have an impact and actually having lessons that other people have learnt and have gone through and experienced and can reflect on. It helps parents as much as anything else because it's really difficult for a parent of a child with disability if they haven't experienced it themselves to understand and know what to do and how to act. And yeah, where to push and where to. Paul and all these different types of things. So any resources that can help parents but also any resource that can help particularly young, um, kind of disabled people just get there. Quicker. So not wait until they're 36 to start to understand that actually it's okay so what you know, um and get there a lot quicker because I think you just get to experience more of life that way.

01:44:05.69

Kate Nash

Hundred percent Kevin 10000% I love it and you know youngsters now grow up in the world of social media in the way that I didn't and the work that you're doing I think is extraordinary so making it easier. For people to think deeply about our experiences in order to share in order that we can pay it forward in order that others can reach some conclusions a little bit earlier in their life. So well done. Yeah, and thank you for today.

01:45:08.26

Gavin Clarke

Yeah, thank you? So as you know there's just 2 last questions as we as we wrap up so first is to your 5 year old self.

01:45:45.32

Gavin Clarke

What advice would you now give.

01:45:38.75

Kate Nash

Oh my 5 year old self I would say laugh loudly and often you know I didn't know at None what life was going to look like or feel like and. You know the experience in this case of arthritis it derailed me for a wee while before I could regroup and go again and for all of the challenge for all of the pain for all of the discomfort for all of the surgery for all of the frustration. Ah about. Certain aspects of my life I think humour is such a fantastic vehicle to and therefore nurturing that part. It doesn't mean to say that we always have to be happy. We're not, you've shared and you know I too have experienced bouts of.

01:47:09.46

Gavin Clarke

Um, yeah.

01:47:34.13

Kate Nash

Mental Health that are just awful. Just awful. But what I say to my I'd say laugh loudly and often if you can um I would say all tough times pass largely. Um, there are plenty of them and and sometimes those.

01:48:10.60

Gavin Clarke

Yeah. Um, yeah.

01:48:11.65

Kate Nash

Tough moments have a beat rate for the rest of your life and then the last piece of advice would be find your purpose find your purpose. What is it is it tinkering with train engines is it chemical engineering is it art is it. You know what is it? What is your thing. What is your red thread. What is your purpose because wherever life throws at you. You know might be.. It may be your family. Maybe none of the above. It may be you know, breeding Nasturians or Roses. You know what is your thing nurture your thing.

01:49:27.96

Gavin Clarke

Love that love that and then finally um, so we're just going to pretend for a moment that I am the world's best Chef I Mean we don't have to pretend that hard Obviously um, but let's just pretend So first of all, it's a dinner party.

01:49:47.90

Kate Nash

Um.

01:50:07.96

Gavin Clarke

Um, what's the meal that you'd get me to cook.

01:50:03.45

Kate Nash

Ah, Gavin if you would serve anything with fish I would love you forever well look I love you forever anyway, but fish yet salmon I love I love monkfish I love lobster I love cod I love pollock.

01:50:26.72

Gavin Clarke

Um.

01:50:40.13

Kate Nash

So if you serve a fish dish that would be superb.

01:50:51.00

Gavin Clarke

Fish dish is certainly yours. Um, and the best fish dish that they could possibly be and then at the table so there's 4 other 4 other chairs there living dead obviously not actually dead.

01:50:59.93

Kate Nash

I'm excited already.

01:51:30.38

Gavin Clarke

But reincarnated whoever you want who who would you like to be there as your guest to converse with.

01:51:30.71

Kate Nash

Wow. Wow! Wow wow! First would be John Amaechi so he if any of you know is ah he is a ah workplace psychologist. He's. After known for being one of the None uk black gay basketball players who played over in the states he came out as openly gay man and now he works as the most extraordinary workplace psychologist. Ah, particularly when it comes to diversity and inclusion and supporting businesses to think very deeply. He's an extraordinary man his book the promises of giants is wonderful. He's a dear friend I don't see him enough because of covid so he would have to be there.

01:53:22.68

Gavin Clarke

Yeah.

01:53:28.47

Kate Nash

Liz Carr the actress in silent witness I think what she has done to use her influence and her platform as an actress and as a comedian to break down barriers when it comes to disability is quite extraordinary. Ah, many many moons ago I had the great privilege when I was running personal development courses at young arthritis care to have her come on None of our courses and I remember watching her. She's younger than me obviously but I remember watching her and noticing how her appetite around the politics of this disability was growing but she's fun. She's naughty. She's irreverent. She doesn't take prisoners but she's also a great thing so she'd have to be around the table. She keeps me laughing. Um I'd probably have Caroline Gooding the late Caroline Gooding sadly no longer with us.

01:54:58.12

Gavin Clarke

Yeah.

01:55:13.82

Gavin Clarke

Fap.

01:55:19.29

Kate Nash

Ah, but she was ah someone very important in the creation of the disability discrimination act. Um, so she pretty much wrote the disability discrimination out worked with Lord Ashley and a number of lobbyists. A wonderful woman who we missed dearly. Um.

01:55:47.00

Gavin Clarke

Yeah.

01:55:56.63

Kate Nash

And arguably we wouldn't have the legislation had it not been for Caroline and then lastly Julia Middleton Julia Middleton the ex-founder of common purpose that brings different sectors together. She gave me a ah bursary many many many years ago. To go on a leadership program at a common purpose funded then by railtrack. Um, but she was I like to think she was talent spottting and she broke the rules in order to help people with disabilities climb up the greasy pole. So. Again, she's naughty and irreverent. She's purposeful so those would be my 4 guests over fish I'm looking forward to it when I come around is it next slide.

01:57:13.84

Gavin Clarke

Amazing. Well we'll book it in. We'll get it sorted that Kate that that was a ah wonderful conversation. It sounds like an ah, an amazing dinner table to um to be at as well. Um, thank you. So much for coming on. Um I always wish my guests away with love compassion and kindness and I'll do the same to you. So thank you very much for today. Um, and I know my listeners will be so thankful for you as well. So Thank you very much.

01:58:20.95

Kate Nash

And thank you Gavin for what you're doing. It's wonderful. Um, let us know and where we can help.

01:58:39.54

Gavin Clarke

Amazing.