

Syd Chasteen

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SPEAKERS

Hannah Soyer, Syd Chasteen

Hannah Soyer 00:00

Today is November 21 2020. My name is Hannah Soyer, and I'm about to talk to Syd Chasteen for the COVID disability archive. These oral histories are being recorded as a way to document the lived experiences of disabled, chronically ill, and neurodivergent individuals during the COVID 19 pandemic across the world. Okay, so, thank you so much for joining me and agreeing to be interviewed for this project. So if you could start just by giving your name, age, pronouns and where you live.

Syd Chasteen 00:44

My name is Syd Chasteen. I'm 30. And my pronouns are she/they

Hannah Soyer 00:52

Thank you Syd and how do you identify? Do you identify as disabled, chronically ill, neurodivergent, etc.?

Syd Chasteen 01:05

Disabled and most recently, self diagnosed autistic.

Hannah Soyer 01:12

Thank you. Um, are you located in the US?

Syd Chasteen 01:17

Yes.

Hannah Soyer 01:19

Okay. All right. Well, yeah, we'll just go ahead and get into the questions. So, um, when did you first learn about the pandemic? And what was your experience with this?

Syd Chasteen 01:42

This has honestly been the longest year. I think it was probably early February, late January, maybe? It seems so, so long ago. Um, we're from a very, very small town in Indiana. And so I think the—the general initial feeling was just sort of a shared shock/not really knowing how to prep for this, what to do. But, you know, then we quickly dealt with, "Okay, well, everyone's running around and buying up everything and where's the toilet paper?" And, you know, it was just

Syd Chasteen 02:34

a little

Syd Chasteen 02:36

frenzy. And then, everyone else kind of very quickly got bored.

Syd Chasteen 02:48

And, "Okay, well, this was fun. But let's, let's get back to life." And

Syd Chasteen 02:57

especially in a small town where you know everyone, where you're related to everyone. And you have—I have friends and family who were like, "This, this is just this is too much. being quarantined. This is, no." I'm like, Okay, you do realize that this was my life before COVID, any quarantine, anything? With transportation issues, and just me being disabled in general. Um, I've been largely housebound. And so for me, my daily life didn't necessarily change. But I saw other people slowly start to get bored, essentially, of what my everyday was. Is.

Hannah Soyer 04:01

Thank you. Um, so could you speak a bit more to that idea of, I guess, how perhaps, the lockdown or the safety precautions of staying home, sort of was a similar or a not similar excuse me, a familiar experience for you?

Syd Chasteen 04:26

Oh, sure. Um, like I said, and I said this to several different relatives, my daily routine didn't change at all. My husband works retail and didn't have the ability to shelter in place, didn't have the ability to quarantine, even though technically, at least I would be considered high risk. But I feel like already being in the mindset and living like this helped me kind of compartmentalize. And it helped me really drive home to other relatives who are high risk and didn't necessarily get it at first, that this is serious, and you need to take as many precautions as possible, because this is, this is big.

Hannah Soyer 05:34

Yeah, I think that has been a very common experience for a lot of high risk and disabled individuals. Um, so has your experience changed throughout the course of this pandemic? I know, you mentioned earlier that, you know, at the beginning, you felt like everybody was really, like freaking out about everything, not not in a not in a invalid way by any means, but really taking it more seriously. And then over time, you noticed that people were sort of like, getting bored of this? How has your specific experience changed? With the pandemic over the course of the pandemic? If that makes sense?

Syd Chasteen 06:22

Yeah, sure. Um, oh, like I said, the day to day doesn't really, you know, shift all that much. But I think the longer this has gone on, it's been much more of a, a mental toll than I would have considered it because, like I said, nothing changed for me. Except now I'm worried about relatives who aren't necessarily taking this as seriously as they should. Relatives who can't take the necessary precautions, that they should be able to. Worrying that tomorrow, my husband might be out of work, and that would be it. And just so much extra, almost constant, things that I had to process and keep triaging. And okay, how do I, how do I work through this? How do I solve this? Or even if I couldn't solve it, how do I at least deal in the moment. And again, watching other people not really be affected to that degree. I mean, I'm not not to discredit or devalue anybody else's experience, because we're all suffering on some level with this. But it, it's different, to watch your life be devalued. And your daily life be so misunderstood, on top of the rest. And it just sort of created this major disconnect for me. I don't know how to talk to the people that I've always been able to talk to, because we're experiencing this in such completely different ways.

Hannah Soyer 08:47

Yeah. That brings me to another question. So what have your relationships with people been like throughout this, and have they changed

Syd Chasteen 09:06

This entire year and a little bit before this year, I was sort of shifting in a lot of my relationships that didn't have anything to do with COVID. Realizing after 30 some odd, not 30, some three solid decades, that, "Oh, I'm pretty sure I'm autistic. That explains a lot." I Also came out to most of the, all of the internet that I'm affiliated with, and some family and others much closer. As

Syd Chasteen 09:59

I'm saying um a lot I'm so sorry.

Syd Chasteen 10:02

I'm, I'm a Communications student. I'm

Hannah Soyer 10:06

it's totally okay.

Syd Chasteen 10:07

This is absolutely hurting me.

Hannah Soyer 10:10

No, no, don't worry about it.

Syd Chasteen 10:13

So, I came out as queer, demisexual and agender. And just kind of getting into all of these new identities. And then COVID. And watching so many people not get it, and not care. People that I care about people who, I want to believe, care about me just be so completely removed from the effects that

this has had on the larger disability population, that I am very much, you know, I very much consider myself a part of. My community has hurt, has been hurt so much this year. And I don't have anybody to talk to about it, except for other people in the community. And we can't just keep bringing each other our hurt. But I don't feel like anybody else is listening. Babe? Can I tell in-law stuff? Yeah, I'm going to tell in-law stuff.

Syd Chasteen 11:40

We got invited to Easter

Syd Chasteen 11:44

in March, and I said no. Flat out, I was told by my brother in-law that I was living in fear. And that I shouldn't let fear control me. I received text messages from my mother in-law about Thanksgiving, asking me what I wanted at Thanksgiving. And I wrote her a lovely, I think, very succinct message, where I said, personally, you're the only person I know who makes green bean casserole and I love it dearly. But I don't feel like getting together is safe. And I would much rather we all stay as safe and healthy as possible, than have dinner together once. And her response not to me, her response to my husband was, "Well you guys can come pick up food since I know how Syd feels about this". Floored, absolutely floored me. And my family aren't doing anything. We, we haven't seen each other. I haven't seen my grandfather since February.

Syd Chasteen 13:14

I used to live in this man's house. I love him almost more than anybody else on this planet. And I have not seen him since. So my family get it.

Syd Chasteen 13:34

And just that juxtaposition is kind of killing me.

Hannah Soyer 13:41

So, um, how have you approached then? I mean, let me reframe that. Have you felt like you have needed to? In some ways, distance yourself from certain people?

Syd Chasteen 14:03

Oh, definitely.

Hannah Soyer 14:05

So then how have you approached that?

Syd Chasteen 14:10

Well, like I said, on my, on my side of the family, it's pretty much just been understood. My mother is a school teacher. My husband works in retail. My grandparents are both at very high risk. We understand that we need to stay separate, and, you know, keep everyone as safe as possible. And Nate, my husband Nathan, continuing to work has been a major piece in why I've continued to distance. Because he sees upwards of 150, 200 people a day and I am in direct contact with him. Regardless of how much I am sheltering, I am still exposed to whoever he has been around. I cannot bring that to anybody else.

I can't do it. And that's caused a lot of, not a lot, it's caused several difficult conversations. But I feel like they're difficult conversations that needed to be had.

Syd Chasteen 15:39

I mean, I don't want to say

Syd Chasteen 15:45

"You don't care about yourself. So I'm going to", but that's about where I'm at. Because that's not going to go over well, none of the in-laws are going to take that nicely. But that's where I'm at. They don't, they can't, or won't care. I have to. And I do. They're cantankerous, but I love them.

Hannah Soyer 16:21

So, um, you mentioned earlier that you used to live with your grandpa. So this is sort of related, this question of, who do you currently live with? I assume your husband? Yeah. And then has this been impacted at all, by the pandemic?

Syd Chasteen 16:47

Yeah, I guess, in a way, because he's, if anything, his hours have increased at work. And he's working, or at one point, upwards of 40 hours a week as part time. So I've seen him a lot less than I would like to, or that I've, some weeks needed to. And that's been really hard for both of us, because he's also autistic. And so any change in schedule, especially an increase in working and being in the public, and having to deal with strangers, who, you know, aren't necessarily always happy to be dealing with retail people. It's, it's just majorly stressful.

Syd Chasteen 17:48

And I miss him.

Syd Chasteen 17:52

He's down here on the floor, and I miss him. You hear me right? Okay, good.

Hannah Soyer 18:02

Um, so this is a very broad question. But I think that a lot can come from it. So what is your experience been specifically as a disabled person throughout the pandemic? So I know, since you mentioned that you identify as disabled, and then also as recently self diagnosed as autistic. Maybe we could talk about both of those, and how they have impacted how you experienced the pandemic. If that makes sense. Yeah.

Syd Chasteen 18:38

Um, I mean, kind of going back even farther than me realizing, Oh, hey, you're autistic. I've spent the last several years several, three, working through a lot of medical trauma and actually recognizing that it's medical trauma. And so I've, this has been the first year where I've really kind of gotten above that, and I'm treading water with it, and trying to actually pay attention to my mind-body. And am I stressed? Am I tired? Am I, Am I over exerting myself in any kind of way? And what can I do about that? Is it my environment? Is it my mind? Is it, am I hungry? You know, what, what's the input? So getting better at

that and actually having the space to, I guess practice has been sort of helpful, because in the same way as better understanding my queer identity, I've had this bubble of nobody else. It's just, it's just basically been me. And, of course, you know, the greater disability community online. And I've been able to really work on how I am processing. And most days, it's not good. Most days, I'm stressed out, I'm freaked out. I want to sleep all day. Or I haven't slept in two days. It's

Syd Chasteen 20:45

it's been

Syd Chasteen 20:49

It's definitely been a bell curve. But having that space where I'm not obligated to meet someone else's normal, has, or meet society's normal, has really helped me find my baseline and, and understand where I'm comfortable, like, actually truly comfortable. And I've been really grateful for that time in that space. But at the same time, I'm always aware of why I have that time and that space. And there's been a lot of guilt. As far as I've grown, and I've gotten better, and I feel better on so many levels. But is there a meme I think that says, but at what cost? That's, that's how I feel. Like, I know, it's not my fault. I know, it could have happened anyway. I could have been able to do this regardless, but it's happening at the same time. And so I'm gonna feel guilty about it. Feeling guilty, something I'm good at.

Hannah Soyer 22:29

Um, so, yeah, would you say that the sort of the maybe increased time and I don't want to be putting words in your mouth. So please correct me if I'm wrong. This is something that I've heard from other individuals as well, this idea of like, the increased time that they have now to spend, right, by themselves has been great in many ways. But it's sort of like a double edged sword, right? Like there are, there are definitely some benefits to that. And then there are also, obviously, as you were saying, right, like, at what cost? Does that sound? Is that sort of what what you're?

Syd Chasteen 23:18

Oh, yeah. Another, Another thing with having so much extra room in my life, to do things, to kind of explore whatever I want to, you know, is, as we discussed in email, I'm a blogger. And so, having all this extra "Well, I should be writing, I should be drafting I should be", you know, "I should be eight posts ahead. And by the end of the year, I can have, you know, 500," which nobody can do that. But there's just that, that urge to create and to do and to, to have something to show for having had this time and it's it taking so much will and effort, and I'm assuming an extremely high stress level from Husband, to get me to refocus and realize I don't have to do that. And I've also shied away from something I've seen a lot of non disabled people do, where they're acquiring all these new skills. Learning all these new languages and learning how to paint and Marie Kondo and sourdough bread. And I'm just like, y'all are creating so many trauma triggers for yourself. Try doing Marie Kondo in April, tell me how you feel. So I've tried to not necessarily learn anything new that's not like, in me. If I don't know, if I don't know what's there, it's still new. So that doesn't count. But I haven't learned a new skill or you know, I don't speak another language all of a sudden, because I don't want the thing that I've learned how to do that I've worked so hard for to be traumatic for me later on. And the blog has always been a way to get all of my feelings and all of my thoughts and ideas about my life out, and share my experiences with people and hopefully connect.

Hannah Soyer 26:10

So has your writing, and blogging changed at all over the course of the pandemic? That you've noticed, I guess?

Syd Chasteen 26:21

Um I'm not really sure.

Hannah Soyer 26:32

Or maybe maybe a better Yeah, maybe a better way to word that would be are you still? Do you still view your blogging as like a way to sort of make sense of everything that's happening and like, process your emotions? And connecting with people?

Syd Chasteen 26:57

Oh, definitely. Kind of the only way I know how to operate the blog, is to sort of mine my brain for Okay, what am I thinking about a lot?

Syd Chasteen 27:13

What do I think about this thing? Can I turn that into enough words on paper, screen, that someone's going to get where I'm trying to go.

Syd Chasteen 27:34

And it doesn't matter what it's about. It could be about COVID, it could be about queer identity, it could be about you know, ableism, it could be anything that's churning away back there. But that's how I, I process what I write about. Where, where does my brain go, when I let it just kind of do its own thing? Because that's probably what needs out next.

Hannah Soyer 28:10

Yeah, I'm a writer, too. So that's really interesting to hear you talk about that. And just like your process of going through that. Yeah, that's really, really neat and relatable. Um, so have you connected, have you found that you have connected more within or with people within the disability community throughout this pandemic?

Syd Chasteen 28:35

Absolutely.

Hannah Soyer 28:37

Could you speak a bit more towards that maybe like, how that first started happening? Yeah, where it's grown, how it's grown.

Syd Chasteen 28:48

Sure. I think I've only been on Twitter, not even two years. It'll be two years next January. I think. I'm honestly not sure it's I've been there very, very little, or a very, very short amount of time. And I went there for the disability community on Twitter. Because I wasn't finding it on Facebook. And Facebook is

just toxic anyway. I didn't really find it on Tumblr. Tumblr is good for like, fan stuff. Like if I want to be a nerd about something I'll do it on Tumblr. Well, I'll do it anywhere. I I nerd out constantly and whenever, wherever I am given the space to, that was a lie. But I went to Twitter for that community specifically. And I've spent so much time kind of like following and not even really interacting, but learning from, I actually call them like the the big names in the, you know, Rebecca Cokeley and Imani Barbarin and Lawrence Carter Long and Matthew Cortland. And people that I would have a year ago, never thought about saying hi to never would have, you know, I'm here to learn. I'm here to listen. Imani's content, Tinu's content, T Franklin's content. Follow black disabled women on Twitter. They are just, they're a wealth of knowledge and love. And I'm just so grateful. But in this last year, I've realized not only do I follow them, they know, I follow them. They're aware of me. They like me. I'm now interacting on a regular basis with people that a year ago, a year and a half ago, were famous as far as I was concerned. And they're telling me oh, yeah, I follow your blog. I'm sorry, what? You? Little Podunk me? Really? Why?

Syd Chasteen 31:52

No, seriously, why?

Syd Chasteen 31:54

But it's been, it's been so nice. Because on one hand, it's a little bit validating, like, I'm at least headed in the right direction. I'm not where I want to be yet. But I'm, I'm getting my foot in the door. I'm a wheelchair user. Am I allowed to say that? Um, don't laugh at it. He's laughing at me. Um, but I'm getting there. And people are actually listening and paying attention. And it's not nearly as scary as I assumed it would be to interact with people that I've looked up to for I don't know how long because we are, amazingly, the same. And I don't know if that makes me feel better or not. Because if we're the same, man are we all in trouble.

Hannah Soyer 33:07

Yes, thank you. Yeah, these are great. This is, I'm so glad that we connected. These are fantastic answers. Yeah. So has your disability impacted specifically, how you have dealt with the pandemic? Or I guess informed how you have dealt with it? So I know you mentioned earlier that like, your daily schedule, and routine has not changed much. But I guess, Has your disability impacted, like how you thought about the pandemic? If that makes sense?

Syd Chasteen 33:57

Yeah. Honestly, I feel like disabled people in general, myself included, are unfortunately uniquely suited

Syd Chasteen 34:09

to these kinds of situations.

Syd Chasteen 34:12

And that's what makes it so frustrating to not be listened to. Because we are really in our wheelhouses here. No pun intended. We, we know how to do this. We know how to shelter in place for a long, long periods of time. We know how to connect online. We know how to be a community without being in person. We know how to meet needs without physical contact, without eye contact, without that literal

person in front of your face. And it's just been so increasingly frustrating to know that we have these skills, that I have these skills, and be able to utilize them, for yourself, for your community, but not have everyone else want to take advantage or even want to listen to the idea that maybe you could have a leg up, you could have a way to get through this a little easier.

Hannah Soyer 35:45

Yeah. Um, so do you feel like your relationships with different institutions, so such as healthcare, has changed during this time?

Syd Chasteen 36:03

Well, since you mentioned healthcare first, going back to the years of trying to just get above all of my mental stuff, I was behind on keeping up with my health regularly, for quite some time anyway. COVID has not helped. I see my primary care, whenever she calls and yells at me to come in. Again, small town, she's like another mother. I can't say no. Partially because she fills my script for my serotonin. I need that. Um, but aside from seeing her every, I don't know. I've seen her once this year, I'll probably have to see her again before the New Year. There's nothing else. I don't, there there are no just because appointments, there are no checkups. Unless I'm having an issue and it has to be an issue. I'm not risking it, I don't drive. We don't have transportation that's easy for me to get in. It's gonna require somebody else. And I'm not. I'm not doing that.

Syd Chasteen 37:39

And, as I mentioned, with the notes that I wrote, I said this pretty much verbatim in regards to the government. They've never been for me. And I am not for them. And this year has completely cemented that. I do admit, I feel a little, a little bit of hope. In that we now have slightly more room to move forward, to make change, to maybe actually be heard and listened to and for things to be different. But it's a very small amount of hope, because I don't want to lose any more than that. That's all I'm willing to risk. He gets this much. I voted for Joe, but he still just gets this much. And as far as the media goes, I have a communications degree. I would have, I wanted to be a journalist. Print, don't put me in front of a camera. And then I found out why the decisions that get made get made and how all of that works. And now I get it and I can look at media and I understand why things are done the way they're done. But I largely don't agree. Especially where the disability community the disabled community is, is dealt with. It's it's so messed up and done so poorly 99% of the time. Excuse me.

Hannah Soyer 39:48

Do you feel like that's been especially apparent during the pandemic?

Syd Chasteen 39:59

I lost count how many times I heard an anchor repeat the words "only the elderly and the already sick

Syd Chasteen 40:15

are at risk."

Syd Chasteen 40:18

We got written off in January

40:28

and it just kept being repeated. Nobody.

Syd Chasteen 40:34

Nobody sat back and thought, oh, this this might sound a little. This is a little rough. This is a little bit harsh, isn't it? Nope. I don't think that ran through any anybody's mind, because it just kept being repeated and repeated. And now we're in November. And it's a fact.

Syd Chasteen 40:57

Because we were,

Syd Chasteen 40:59

we have been, we continue to be obliterated. I can't remember who I was speaking to a few weeks ago, but I told a friend online, I will never forgive this administration. I can't. It's been responsible for too much death, and too many, too much loss from my community. And I don't feel like enough people care. And I'm not I, that sounds bad. I know people are upset. And I know people, so many people have lost loved ones. But I feel like it's going to hit en masse. There's going to be this critical mass of grief. But right now, there's just nothing. And it feels a little hopeless.

Hannah Soyer 42:09

So, um, as someone with a communications degree, who, you know, was really wanting to become a journalist. What if, if you could change media's representation of people with disabilities, specifically, during the pandemic so the coverage that we have seen of them throughout this pandemic? How would you like that to be portrayed?

Syd Chasteen 42:44

Can I ask you a question back first?

Hannah Soyer 42:47

Absolutely.

Syd Chasteen 42:49

What coverage?

Hannah Soyer 42:52

It's a very good point.

Syd Chasteen 42:54

Where have we been?

Syd Chasteen 42:59

I haven't seen us. But I think

Syd Chasteen 43:05

the issue starts with the fact that we're not on the other side either. I'm a disabled person who was in J school, who was in a communications program, and I graduated with a degree and I'm not in the field. If we're not there, if we're not in newsrooms, in editorial rooms, if we're not on ed boards, if we're not anchors, camera people, production. I don't know that there's enough work to be done on the non disabled people in the industry to make the changes that need to be made for us to be seen the correct way. I think it has to be an inside job. Because otherwise it's not complete. And you get these fluff pieces about you know okay, I used to give disability talks to my media classes, to other media classes, professors who weren't mine would bring me in to talk to their students about how disability is portrayed in media. And I always used this example. Tell me if this sounds familiar. Joe Schmo, 36, from Kokomo, put his socks on this morning. An award ceremony will be held this afternoon where Joe will be given the key to the city. Because we are either trophies, heroes for nothing,

45:11

or victims.

Syd Chasteen 45:14

And there's no, no middle ground. And I graduated, not knowing how to, how to fix that, if I could fix that, if I could deal with it, if I couldn't. And I ultimately decided that the industry as it stands would have killed me. I would have either succumbed to their normal. Their schedule, their work ethic would have just wiped me out. Or I would have become something that I didn't want to be, a token. I couldn't do that. So now I'm

Syd Chasteen 46:17

a writer.

Syd Chasteen 46:21

That felt really Joey Tribbiani. That was bad.

Hannah Soyer 46:28

So, do you see your blog as sort of a way of like, pushing against those harmful narratives?

Syd Chasteen 46:36

I, I didn't, at least not explicitly. But I do now. Because I realize there are people that I graduated with in the industry, who are still paying attention. And they read my stuff, and they see what I'm saying. And so maybe I'm not going to be responsible for fixing everything. But I'm at least responsible for putting the, the seed in somebody else's head. And for now, I can deal with that. I can accept that.

Hannah Soyer 47:28

So um back to talking about the pandemic. You mentioned earlier that you had to have some difficult conversations with people, but they were conversations that you felt absolutely needed to be had.

Could you talk a little bit about sort of how those conversations went? If there were specific emotions surrounding that experience? Did they, were they successful? not successful?

Syd Chasteen 48:03

Well, again, to compare my family to my in-laws.

Syd Chasteen 48:11

Easter conversation did not go well. Kind of killed the family group chat. Oops, don't care. Stay mad. And they are. Thanksgiving, much the same. There's they're still not happy with me. It's okay. They can continue to not be happy. It's fine.

Syd Chasteen 48:37

I have routinely Oh, not currently, but early on. Had to check in with my grandparents. I called those people, every sorry, those old farts, those old people every day for a week to make sure they were staying in their house, not going to get groceries. Calling my mom to go pick them up stuff. Only to be told every day. Oh well. Your Pap ran to Menards. NO NO NO NO you stay in the house. And it finally, God love them, it finally sunk in. Well I think it took til like July, give or take July. Until my grandparents were like, Oh, wait. This isn't going away? No, babe it's not and you got a heart condition. And if you die, she's going to die. So no, no, no, no, no. Stay inside, stay healthy so I don't have to hurt you. But no. They know I care. They they understood after a point. And regardless, they always understood where I was coming from was love and concern and not fear. Well, I mean, fear, but well placed, well deserved. And so talking to my, my family has been hard insofar as realizing that we have to continue to be apart. But I don't have to fight them on it.

Syd Chasteen 50:34

It's not

Syd Chasteen 50:37

I'm refusing to fulfill an obligation to come see them. They understand that they can't see me. Although it did kind of break my heart. Early on this year. My gran my Nana's my best friend. I love her to death. And she told me "Oh, next Monday, I'm gonna come see you." No, you're not. "Yeah I am. I'll come. I'll sit in your living room. We'll we'll just we'll chat. I won't do anything. I won't clean." She cleans my house all the time. Just cuz I'm like, Nana, no, you're not. "But, but that's not what lockdown means. Like, I can come see you. I just can't go out places." No, Nana, you can't go anywhere. Stay in ya house. We both got so upset. I'm so close to my grandparents. And we're very physically affectionate people. Not being able to hug all over them has been the worst. I've only seen my mom a handful of times this year. We're also pretty huggy.

Syd Chasteen 51:55

I, it's just

Syd Chasteen 51:59

that that still hurts. That's not something I've gotten used to with this pandemic, and I don't.

Syd Chasteen 52:11

I don't want to. But I also don't think I will.

Syd Chasteen 52:18

I am a kid who was raised on love and affection. Oops. I kind of need it regularly from the people I've always had it from.

Hannah Soyer 52:33

Yeah, so, um, I think that you've already touched on this, sort of, but I'm interested to know, there's just one thing that has been the hardest about living during the pandemic.

Syd Chasteen 52:51

Realizing where most of society puts me and realizing that I rate so incredibly low, that my community rates so incredibly low. That just because someone else isn't going to get sick, they think, Oh, well, they can do whatever they want. I just, I still can't wrap my head around that. You know, you hear the phrase, in numerous different connotations, the disregard for human life. And this blatant disregard for mine and my people's lives.

Syd Chasteen 53:52

It hurts.

Syd Chasteen 53:56

And I'm so, so angry. And it's not that, you know, I thought there weren't tensions. I mean, look at society.

Syd Chasteen 54:14

Nothing's accessible

Syd Chasteen 54:17

if if, if society were accessible we would be everywhere. We would be in every occupation, we would be in every station in life. And we're not. And you know that and you adjust to that. And it just kind of becomes background noise in your life. Because you have to just go on and make a way and I have been, and I did. Until this year, when I realized that even this, even a global pandemic that's killing a quarter of a million people in our country as of last check, isn't enough

55:15

to make people care

55:19

it just, it hurts.

Hannah Soyer 55:22

Yeah, I very much very much relate to that. And that is very resonant with me. So, have there been any silver linings that you can think of with the pandemic? And it's okay if you say no

Syd Chasteen 55:43

My community kicks ass. I have I love disabled people. I always have. But this year I love us so much more. We are, we are incredible. We are. We are so strong and powerful. And just constantly continuously there for each other. And it's just been incredible. It's just been so wonderful. To have my community to fall back on when, not necessarily my local community like because there are people here who you know they got me, but when the world just

Syd Chasteen 56:58
doesn't

Syd Chasteen 57:01
My community has had me, my community cares. And this is more just a coincidence, not necessarily COVID related but

Syd Chasteen 57:17
my blog is also had two of its best month ever this year

Syd Chasteen 57:26
I don't know what to attribute that to. Well I do, once was not my fault. One of the guys from Crip Camp found me and was like oh, you're good. Everybody go read this, best month ever.

Syd Chasteen 57:43
I don't know what else to attribute

Syd Chasteen 57:47
I don't want to give myself the credit. That's creepy. I don't do that. I go to I go to that one for the validation the one whose offscreen

Syd Chasteen 58:02
but yeah, I

Syd Chasteen 58:04
I guess I've gotten comfortable. And I've, I found my stride. I found my place. And hopefully I'll eventually stop apologizing for it. That's the next step.

Hannah Soyer 58:20
Well, yeah, again, I relate a lot. So that's all the questions. I have, I think. This has been really fantastic. Alright, is there anything else that you want to add?

Syd Chasteen 58:38
I don't think so. This has been okay.

Syd Chasteen 58:44
This has been Yeah,

Hannah Soyer 58:46

I'm gonna go ahead and I'm gonna go ahead and stop recording