

Priya Ray

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SPEAKERS

Priya Ray, Hannah Soyer

Hannah Soyer 00:00

Today is December 14 2020. My name is Hannah Soyer and I am going to be talking with Priya Ray 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 being here. If you could start by just giving me your name, age, pronouns and where you live.

Priya Ray 00:39

Sure my name is Priya Ray. I am 52 years old. I live in—Oh, my pronouns are she and her. And I live in Asheville, North Carolina.

Hannah Soyer 00:53

Thanks Priya. And can you also then give me your identity descriptions? So whether you identify as disabled, chronically ill, etc. And if there are any other identifiers you want to share, feel free to do so as well.

Priya Ray 01:13

Um, I identify as disabled. You know, I don't you know, as far as identity goes, I don't—it's odd, because it's not the first thing like if someone asked me, What are you? I'd be like, I'm Indian. And I'm a woman, and then disabled would probably be like, the third or fourth thing I would say, but, for this, I do identify as disabled.

Hannah Soyer 01:38

Thank you. Okay. Oops. Okay, sorry about that. Um, so we're gonna go ahead and get into the meaty questions of the interview. So when did you first learn about the pandemic? If you can remember? And what was your experience with this? So that could even be like, if you remember where you were, or sort of what was going on at that point, emotions that you had.

Priya Ray 02:08

Um, okay, so I go to, you know, because I have chronic pain from my spinal cord injury, I go to the gym, the YMCA here in Asheville every day. And you know, they always have the news. I try not to look at that, because I hate the 24 hour news stations. And so they always have it up there. So like, that's kind of when, that's I feel like that's when I first learned about the pandemic. I would go to the gym and the news, I believe in February, they were, they were talking about it. But at that point, it hadn't been, you know, it was just a little confusing as far as the media goes, because, you know, we're like, saying it's happening. Then not happening here. And then, I don't know, and then March came along. And then I don't know, I don't think I was really emotional about it, I was just—I just was a little confused. I wasn't sure if it was actually here. And then I do remember when they were like, Okay, this—it's here and something, we need to take action about it. And I went on Facebook, which I don't use very often, either. And, you know, I'm an artist and in Asheville, artists, like—we're very fortunate. There's a lot of crafting and art fairs that happen here. And that's how we make money. And one of my friends who's an artist posted online, you know, because this is how he made a living. And you know, he was freaked out that he wasn't going to be able to go into these art and crafting things, and posted online, like, what, you know, should I go? What should I do? And I was like, Well, I don't know. My question, and I was kind of joking at the time. I was like, well, when there's the black plague, like you just have to like, you can't do anything — there's nothing you can do to manage it. So I don't know, I think it's better to be safer. But I was kind of joking because at the time and hadn't been even put that seriously. And then literally I think a week later was like, they're like, Okay, we're closing everything down. And then even the gym I went to—which I really love going to the gym, because it's like, such a great way for me to manage my pain. So that's really when I got emotional was when the gym closed *laughing* and I was like, what? So like for a day I was—I was really upset for about a day and then I was like, okay, Priya, you gotta get up, figure out how you can exercise and you know, figure out how to deal with it. So I don't know. I don't get that emotional about things. I'm more of a person where when something bad is happening, I'm trying to figure out the best way to deal with it... is like the way my mind goes. So that's really what it was. I got upset that I couldn't exercise. And then that was when I had my emotional moment with the pandemic. And then yeah, I wasn't happy about, you know, I wasn't happy about it, let's just say.

Hannah Soyer 05:27

Well, yeah, I mean, that all makes, I think perfect sense. Yeah. Um, so how has — How has your disability impacted how you have dealt with the pandemic?

Priya Ray 05:45

Well, I, you know, I'm fortunate that I have a spinal cord injury, so I'm not really immune compromised. You know, I'm 52. So I guess I could be in the age group, but I'm actually a pretty healthy person, you know. I just got my physical, I don't have high cholesterol, or any, you know, or any of these types of issues. I feel like almost being disabled, helped me deal with the pandemic, because I was already isolated. So when, you know, we couldn't go out and stuff, it...I didn't feel it was, like, such a big difference for me, because I was already kind of not being able to go to places. But you know, I wasn't like completely isolated at home. You know, every day, I would go to the gym and things like that. So my life was impacted. But that was like, the only thing. I don't know, I was really able to shift really well into the quarantine stage of the pandemic. And, in fact, I think I even became busier during the pandemic, because I'm disabled. So. *laughing* So yeah, for me, that was the way it was.

Hannah Soyer 07:04

Um, so how has your experience with the pandemic changed over the past nine months or so? Has it changed?

Priya Ray 07:19

Um, I mean, yeah, I mean, in the sense that I have gotten used to it. So I think like, at first, it's like a shock to everyone, even including me. But even though I said it was a, you know, I was actually busier and the transition—but you know, still, it's like, it affected my life somewhat. And then, you know, like, I wanted to make, you know, I use a wheelchair. So, as far as social distancing, and the mask, wearing the mask, and all the stuff that we're supposed to do. I still do it. But because I'm sitting at home and not really going out, I often forget, there's actually a pandemic, because I don't really watch the news every second. And so sometimes even when I go out, luckily, I have my mask in this bag that hangs on the back of my wheelchair. But sometimes I'll even forget, like when I'm going out the door, and then I'm like, oh, boy, there's a pandemic, I gotta wear the mask. But you know, then of course, when I go out, then I'm just like, I don't know, I—I feel like other people's, like, I feel like right when the pandemic was happening, people were very cautious about trying to stay distanced. But now I feel like since we've kind of been living with it, and it's almost—it hasn't totally become normalized, but it has become more normalized than it was. I feel like other people aren't really paying attention and I'm like, in this wheelchair, like, literally watching people seeing like, which way are you—You know, if you go to the grocery store—which way you're going to go or you know so—. I feel like other people are I don't know they've become a little I don't know if I want to use the word lazy but I can't think of another word like ... They become lazy with the practices that we have to you know, be in this moment you know, so that's I don't know my actions I I just think I just forget about the pandemic because I get so lost and doing what I'm doing. But then when I go out I noticed other people aren't really navigating it the way they should I think.

Hannah Soyer 09:30

Yeah, um, so you mentioned earlier that—correct me if this is wrong, I don't want to be putting words in your mouth—you mentioned that you were really impacted in the fact that you were no longer able to go to the gym. And so was that—was your— before the pandemic was that a pain management routine? Yeah, definitely. Okay.

Priya Ray 10:05

Yeah, the exercise is definitely part of my pain management. So and you know, it makes you feel good and keeps you not depressed about life and stuff like that. So yeah, it definitely was a regimen that was part of taking care of myself as a disabled person.

Hannah Soyer 10:28

And so since then, have you found sort of a replacement activity for that or no?

Priya Ray 10:38

Yeah, actually, I, like I said, I was really sad for this one day that I couldn't go to the gym. But then I was like, Okay, you have to find other things. So I ended up going on YouTube and looking up, you

know. And I feel like we're really, you know, like the pandemics happening, but we're so fortunate to have the technology we have. So like, things like YouTube and Zoom and, you know, even like Facebook and stuff. They are ways to keep connected with your community, or, you know, find things to do. So YouTube was—I just looked up disabled wheelchair workouts and stuff like that. So I ended up finding this workout that really worked, you know, worked for me for my pain and stuff, too. So this guy suggested getting a broomstick and arm weights. So I do this, like, I go on a stander for about an hour. And then I do this cardio exercise for about half an hour with a broomstick and arm weights that I put on my wrists, and yeah, listen to music and do these like cardio things. So yeah, so that's yeah, I found, you know, I found a different way. I mean, I miss the, you know, the gym is actually way better, you know, because there's machines. So, I, you know, of course, I'm getting a much better workout, it's much better for my pain. But you know, this will do till, till I can get back to doing that.

Hannah Soyer 12:13

Yeah, so you also mentioned earlier, that you felt in a way, your disability sort of made it easier to undergo quarantine. Can you speak a little bit more about that?

Priya Ray 12:30

Yeah, I—as a disabled person do get isolated. I mean, I'm a musician and an artist. So a lot of my social life is like going to venues, and I'm also a DIY musician and artist, which DIY means do it yourself. So that means I'm in a kind of underground situation. So basically, a lot of the venues and spaces that are created for DIY spaces aren't really accessible. And so you know, so that's an obstacle for me to even go like, unless I have my partner with me, you know. I might not be able to get into a place, or, you know, the spaces are so small that when you're in a wheelchair—you know, if a space is that small, it's not really a space, you can just be in all the time. So a lot of times I would have to hang out outside. I didn't mind that. I would—I would listen to a band from outside and the bands are loud. So that was fine. So yeah, I ended up getting isolated a lot because of the way, the obstacles my community had, for me to take part in it. So a lot of times, I wouldn't be able to go unless I had someone with me. Or, you know, I didn't feel like going because I didn't feel like hanging out outside and listening to the band and so on. So yeah, like, so I did get isolated a lot that way. So, when the pandemic occurred, and the quarantine happened, I wasn't really that upset about the social aspect. It was more, you know, it was about the gym, which was my pain management. But the social aspect, yeah, it didn't really bother me. And I feel like the online aspect, I've even become more social because now people are doing things online. So I've been able to be a part of things more, I think because of that, you know?

Hannah Soyer 14:33

Yeah, that's definitely, um, that idea of like, almost, in many ways, increased accessibility. Now that so many things are online. That has been a very common theme in a lot of the interviews that I've done so that's really interesting. Um, yeah, can you speak a bit more? I mean, I know... I personally know a little bit about your music and DIY background, but for people who do not know, can you give a little bit of background since you did mention that idea of access barriers in that community?

Priya Ray 15:17

Yeah, sure. So DIY means do it yourself. And I don't know, I mean, I, I can't point to a date when it started. But the movement that I would say I was a part of, probably started more in the late 70s. And, and there's like, in New York, like, a lot of people, you know, that were doing things that were considered outside the norm. They would go to, you know, they would just open spaces, you know, find a space, maybe that wasn't accessible. So like, the point of that movement was like, just to find a space and make it into a venue. So you weren't attached to corporate money, or just big money. So it was more for the people. And actually, I tell people all the time that being part of the DIY community I felt helped me transition into becoming a disabled person. Because I was 29 when I had my spinal cord injury. So I felt like when you're part of a DIY community, you just have to like, figure out how to make things happen. Even though you don't have the money, or the space isn't, you know, something in the space isn't right, you will have to do something to make it work. And when you're disabled, the world is not accessible. So you have to figure out how—you have to figure out how you can be part of the world. And however you do it—with a friend, friends, your community, assisting you, reaching out to people saying, Hey, I'm coming, make sure you move that record shelf out of the way so I can get into the space, you know, things like that. And so yeah, so the DIY community is like, literally a community of people that, you know, it's, it's... it's a grassroots community. So they basically uplift each other by working together to make it happen. And so that's basically the community that I was a part of. And because it's like that, because it's not a lot of money involved, it's not big venues, it's like a small space that nobody wanted to rent, because it was too small for a store or whatever, then, you know, these people as a collective will rent it, to have shows or art, you know, music shows or art shows. And, you know, space wise, they're not accessible in the space. You know, a lot of people don't think about accessibility of space. But when you have a lot of people in wheelchairs, you need a bigger space, because wheelchairs take up room. That's just a fact. So, you know, so yeah, you know, when I became disabled those, I didn't think about those barriers before I was disabled. But then when I became disabled, I was like, Oh, wait, there's a step here. Oh wait, I can't get through this because it's not enough room for my wheelchair. So that's when I started realizing the inaccessibility of the DIY community and eventually started my grassroots group DIYable to inform the DIY community how they could include disabled people in their communities.

Hannah Soyer 18:41

Yeah, that's really neat. Um, so are there ways that your involvement in the DIY community, and that sort of, um, like, energy of the DIY community, then informed how you have approached the pandemic? Or do you not see a connection at all?

Priya Ray 19:05

That's a good question. So I have to think about that for a second. Um, can you repeat it again? Like?

Hannah Soyer 19:11

Yeah, I guess I'm wondering if you're—if there are any ways in which your involvement in the DIY community has at all impacted how you have approached the pandemic?

Priya Ray 19:30

Um, yeah, I think so. Because I think I'm always in the state of figuring out how to do things. And I think that—that's kind of why I was drawn to the DIY community because it is about community. It's about

people. Not one person doing it, but a bunch of people doing it together. And so I think I'm always in the state of mind of, you know, oh, there's an obstacle, how can I get past it to do what I need to do or what we need to do. And I think when the pandemic happened, the reason I was so busy was because, because I'm in a band. And so like going out and playing in public wasn't a thing that was happening anymore. And so I had to figure out how to do that, you know how to create events. So I feel like, just for my activism, and.. the pandemic, because of being in the DIY community, I figured out, okay, I'm going to use Zoom, I'm going to do this. And this is how I'm going to create this event. I have social media, I have this Zoom account, I have Instagram, you know, all these things are available to us, that we can actually create events, and people can come to it. And so I think that's how the DIY thought process has helped me as far as approaching the pandemic, as far as doing things not so much like, how to solve the pandemic obviously.

Hannah Soyer 21:05

Yeah, absolutely. So you're, you're sort of you already had the sort of skills and resources of like, figuring things out. But yeah, not obviously solving the pandemic, but just of like, different new activities and social connections.

Priya Ray 21:28

I know, actually, to be honest, Hannah I think I made this documentary called Disability On The Spectrum, and like, I think if the pandemic hadn't happened, I wouldn't have really made that documentary. Because I was, you know, I had, because of the pandemic, I ended up joining this safe space group for disabled people called Crip Chat. And we ended up I met, I met other disabled, like the first time I was able to make friends with other disabled people. And then I also I as a person, as a person, not even a disabled person, just as a person started realizing what other people's disabilities were. You know, what they had to deal with with their disabilities. And then also started noticing the diversity of ability within specific disabilities. And so that's when I started getting this idea. And then all these friends, I was like, Hey, guys, film yourself and send me the footage, and I'll make this documentary. And it's kind of like how it came about. So even I, you know, I have to give the pandemic credit for me actually being able to do that. So yeah, like a lot. And I think my DIY aesthetic also helped me figure out how to, you know, like, I just in the thought process, like, Okay, how I'm going to make this happen, how will I do this? So I feel like being in the DIY community also helped me do that, as well.

Hannah Soyer 23:02

So you said you, you joined that Facebook group after the pandemic already hit?

Priya Ray 23:11

Yeah, like not that long. Like, I think it was like a week after quarantine had happened. And, they had started it maybe two weeks or three weeks before I had joined. So. So yeah, it was just like, yeah, it was like, just these things happened. And I was like, Okay.

Hannah Soyer 23:31

And went with it.

Priya Ray 23:33

And it's really, yeah, I mean, for me, the pandemic has, I mean, you know, I hate that it's happening. And of course, I hate that people are, so many people are dying from it, and getting sick and actually acquiring disability from getting the virus. You know, I've read people are getting auto immune diseases from having COVID. And so of course, that I feel really horrible that that's happening. But for me, it's, it's been a really positive moment in my life. So, which, you know, I always think, of course, because I always think out of horrible things, great things can happen. So, so that's kind of my belief. And, you know, so I'm like, of course, in the middle of this horrible pandemic, some really something positive is happening for me, which is, you know, kind of my belief anyway, so I'm not that shocked by it.

Hannah Soyer 24:31

Yeah, yeah. Um, okay, so what have your relationships with people been like throughout all of this? Have your relationships with people changed?

Priya Ray 24:48

Um, hmm. I don't know, I like I said, like I had mentioned before, I I've actually made new friends, which I think has been really awesome. And I love people, I love meeting new people. So that's really exciting for me. And so and then meeting new disabled people has been, I like literally have a bunch of disabled friends now. So that has been really awesome for me. As far as like, a lot of my non disabled friends. I feel like I'm kind of like, telling them, telling them how to be able to deal with the isolation. So that's like, you know, because like, where they were going out and doing a bunch of things, and I was isolated. And they, I mean, I'm not like, I'm isolated, don't go out. Yeah, I'm not like complaining to them about it. But I do find that a lot of my friends are complaining, complaining about what's going on. And so, you know, I politely point out to them, like, well, you know, people that are disabled, are isolated all the time. So, you know, maybe you should, you know, understand that and talk to them, and maybe see how they deal with it. And that's kind of, you know, what I'm doing, you know, as far as like, close personal friends. And I haven't really lost any friends, but I have a lot of friends that I don't really like their actions during the pandemic. But you know, I just feel like also, I'm a big believer in people decide what to do for themselves. And even if it's something you don't really agree with. I don't know, I'm not into the idea of like, not being friends with someone because of their political views, or their religious views, or what they're deciding to do during the pandemic. And I also realize a lot of people with mental issues, they kind of need to be around people that's like, how, you know, so I understand that. But at the same time, I'm like, find another way, you know. But I don't say that to them. But I think it you know, so it's, I haven't really gotten into those, because I do know, they're struggling mentally, and I you know, but I don't know what the solution would be for people like that. And especially now with winter, and people already already get depressed during winter being isolated by the weather. So, so yeah, I don't know, I don't know what the solution to that. But I do. There are a lot, a couple of friends. I don't know a lot of friends, but you know, quite a few friends that are, go, you know, they're like, I just have to get out of town and they drive and I'm like, why? Don't leave, just stay where you are. So, you know, but I don't really say anything, because what can I do? It's like, it's how they're kind of dealing with a pandemic, in their, in their space in mind. So, but, um, you know, that's my belief and the way I am as a person. So I know a lot of people have just, like, cut off friendships and stuff. You know, a lot of people told me like, I don't even speak to this person or that. And I'm like, Okay, well, you know, but I haven't really turned it into like, I will never speak to that person again. And, and if someone's doing so we know, like, friends

that come over, they are already wearing masks, when they come over. They're not like so I don't have to tell them that. So that's the one thing I do like about some of my friends. Like, they'll come to me masked, and some friends have actually checked in because I'm disabled. They have this assumption that I'm part of this, you know, and they're probably reading a lot. Because the disabled community is talking a lot about how, you know, some of the protocol that's going on with the pandemic is literally putting disabled people's lives in danger. So a lot of my friends are checking up on me and being like, are you okay? And I'm like I'm okay. Yeah, I'm fine. You know, thanks for checking up what I'm doing good. Yeah. So. So I haven't had a lot of fallout or anything like that, but just kind of, personally to myself thinking, Yeah, I don't really like that action you're doing but I can't do anything about it. So.

Hannah Soyer 29:07

Yeah, that makes sense. Um, so Okay, has your current or has your living situation been impacted at all by the pandemic?

Priya Ray 29:23

Um, I am fortunate because I live in the apartment. But because of the pandemic, I'm an artist, so the way I supplemented my income to pay the rent was to sell art at these local businesses. And, you know, and a lot of local businesses opened up their, their spaces for artists to come and sell their things. So that's basically been shut down here because of the pandemic. So financially, it has really impacted like, the way I have to pay the rent and then you know. And then like I, you know, I live in an apartment complex, it's not like an individual landlord, like, I'm not, I don't have a relationship with my landlord. It's like, basically a corporation that owns the apartment complex. So, you know, so I'm kind of like, argue with them about signing a lease. And, you know, I've been paying it over the month. When before the pandemic, I, you know, I was a good tenant, I paid it on time, but now it's a bit of a struggle. So, you know, I'm, I get these notices every month. Man, like, Oh, you haven't paid your rent, you know, we'll have to take action. But you know, it, it's just like what they have to do, because they're corporations, that's their procedure. But, you know, I'm not worried about being evicted or anything like that. But, you know, it's just the money that's become a problem for me. That's how it's impacted me.

Hannah Soyer 30:59

Yeah. Um, so has that, has that, like, gotten worse over the course of the pandemic? Or?

Priya Ray 31:10

Yeah, definitely. Because, you know, as the pandemic goes, on the last, you know, I had some money saved from before, but you know, I'm going through that, and then I'm not really making money. So it's kind of like a month to month like, I'm like, hustling, trying to figure shifting money around figuring it out, you know? So yeah, it definitely has gotten worse, as you know, the longer the pandemic goes on, you know, I kind of say, I'm not affected by the pandemic, because of the isolation, but that I, that element has prevented me from making money as a disabled person. So, so it has impacted me that way. And so yeah, that's not a great thing.

Hannah Soyer 31:58

Yeah, that makes sense. Um, do you have personal care attendants at all?

Priya Ray 32:05

Um, I have my partner who is my caregiver. So I'm fortunate, I don't really have to use a caregiving service. And he doesn't have to do you know, just he has to do a couple of things and stuff like that. So yeah, we kind of have our schedule, you know, our bed or whatever. I don't know what you call it, our system, whatever worked out, and he lives with me. So it's not like, I'm not worried about a person not knowing where they were and stuff like that. And like, other people are. I know friends that are.

Hannah Soyer 32:41

Yeah. Okay, um, do you feel like your relationships with different institutions has changed during this time? So for example, health care, government, the media? And if so how?

Priya Ray 32:58

Well, health care, like I've had to go see my primary care physician a couple of times. That's definitely you know, it's changed, like the way you know, we don't can't go in the waiting room, I have to go in the parking lot, call them, let them know I'm there. And then they'll call me when they're ready for me to come in. You know, I have to wear a mask. They're wearing a mask. And then some, sometimes, you know, like, sometimes when the doctor feels like she could do a video conference appointment. I've had to do that a couple of times. So. So that that's how with health care. With other institutions, hmm. I don't know. What were the other institutions you mentioned, besides health care? I forgot.

Hannah Soyer 33:49

Yeah, you're fine. Um, government or the media?

Priya Ray 33:55

Okay. The government. I mean, you know, my relationship was like, I want them to give me more money. But they're like saying no, but that's like, my relationship with the government. But I don't know if that's changed. I think that's probably similar to what it was like before the pandemic. And the other. Gosh, I'm so sorry, I forgot the other

Hannah Soyer 34:22

institutions you're fine media,

Priya Ray 34:25

And media oh media. I feel like I'm more disconnected from media now. Because I, I just don't, I think the media like the 24 media cycle, and then social media, and all this stuff. You know, being in a pandemic during the election. I just tried to make, I think people kind of let the media control them. Whereas I feel like I want to control how I take in the media. And I think I've even done that more since the pandemic because I don't know I just feel like things have just gotten way crazy. And, and I don't know, like, as far as the watching the news, you know, they're just saying all kinds of I mean, I feel like even during when the pandemic was happening, they would be like, you know, be, you know, they'd be like, we, you know, they would be like, we probably think, you know, they, like always use these words, so they don't get sued for putting out misinformation. But I think, you know, they're always like, we think we, you know, like, they always use a word probably, maybe, perhaps. So and but then they deliver this information that may not may or may not be true, and then everyone gets in a panic, and then literally

the next day, it's like, oh, no, nevermind, don't worry about that. Now worry about this, you know, so I'm very, very, like, aware of how the media is presented to me. So I feel like I've kind of controlled it even more, since the pandemic has happened.

Hannah Soyer 36:03

Yeah, that makes sense. Okay, so what has been the hardest thing about living during the pandemic. And this can be more than one thing as well.

Priya Ray 36:17

Um, I would say the top of my list is not being able to go see my friends. And, you know, like, being able to, you know, like, I have one of my best friends, she has a house, but you know, I'm not going to go into her house right now. And like, during the summer, we like would have these yard hangouts like where we would just be in her front yard. And you know, be a distance away wearing masks and hang out. But so I would say that's like, the top thing is not being able to, like hang out with the little I did with, like, not being able to do that, because I do miss that a lot. And not being able to go to the shows that had obstacles were like, even though there were obstacles, I figured out how to deal with them. And I went there and hung out with people. So that would be the worst. I hate going grocery shopping. I hate it because I don't like to wait in lines. And now that it's cold, I really hate that. And I, I just hate it because a lot of other people aren't thinking. Like I'm, I'm constantly thinking like, I gotta, you know, because I'm in a wheelchair. So it's like staying six feet away from a person in a wheelchair. So it's like a little difficult, like figuring out like, I can park my wheelchair here and I'll be, it seems like six feet away from me. So I just feel like because I'm in a wheelchair, I'm really trying to pay attention how close I'm getting to people. And I don't feel like other people are paying that close attention about it. So that that's really, you know, bothers me. And then you know, just being out in the world, like, I just think people, you know, like, if I'm going somewhere going to the doctor's or going and you know, a person's just walking down the street, I'm just kind of like, and I really hate this, like, you know, I just feel the human connection is changing a little bit. And that bothers me. But hopefully, I don't know, when the pandemic's over, we can balance the online with the in person stuff. So we'll see what happens like I don't know.

Hannah Soyer 38:31

Yeah, so you've already spoken some to this already. But have there been any silver linings to all of this

Priya Ray 38:44

Silver linings? Um, yeah, I mean, you know, like I said, I'm so much more busier, I've met, I've actually made, you know, I've been disabled for 21 years, this is the first time in 21 years, I actually have friends that are disabled. And I can, you know, I can talk to them. Because you know, when you go through pain that's caused by your disability, people that aren't disabled, they don't really get it. And it's not their fault. I'm not angry for them. Because I really am a strong believer and when you don't experience something, it's hard to understand. It's hard to understand what another person's going through. And, you know, that's why I'm really into people sharing their stories, because I think that helps people understand. So that's one of the silver linings. I think it's like, like a lot of my old friends that when we were all busy, and they were working 40 to 50 hours a week, they didn't have time to talk and catch up

and so I've done a lot more of that. That's actually really been fun catching up with old friends and you know, and so I would say that one thing is like the technology I feel like We're all learning how this technology can finally be used in a more productive way. And I think, as a society, we've been forced into that because of the pandemic. Because before the pandemic, I don't think we were using technology very smart in a smart way. I think it was, like, we were just like, you know, it was like, more destructive than it was productive. So, I feel like the pandemic is really helping us learn how to use technology in a very productive way.

Hannah Soyer 40:34

Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. Um, so that is all I have. Do you have anything that you would like to add?

Priya Ray 40:45

No, I mean, I can't think of anything I just, you know, want the pandemic to be over. I

Priya Ray 40:51

don't want people to get sick and, or die. And, you know, that's really my main concern about you know, even though there's Silver Linings for me, of course, I'm not happy about it. I, I want us to get through it. And I hope we can. And my hope is on the other side of the pandemic, that we have a society that's like, yeah, you can work from home that will accommodate disabled people because, you know, I know so many disabled people that are so smart, and they don't have jobs because the world did not want to accommodate them. So I'm hoping through the pandemic, we can learn how to include disabled people more in the work front, and you know, just like things like that, that are actually very important to the disabled community to make money and have a full life.

Hannah Soyer 41:42

Yeah, absolutely. Okay, um, I'm gonna go ahead and stop recording if that's alright with you.