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SPEAKERS

Susan Lacke, Shaunna Payne Gold, Lisa Ingarfield

Shaunna Payne Gold

So Lisa, I hear that we have some really outstanding news coming up about the outspoken women in triathlon awards. I know what's coming up soon to tell me all about it.

Lisa Ingarfield

Yeah, we do, we are going to host a live ceremony for our award winners on November 15, at 4pm Pacific. So it'll be a virtual event so everyone can participate. And we're gonna do it Oscar style. So the each category, there's nine categories, and there will be five finalists in each of those categories. And we'll be announcing the finalists on social media over the coming weeks. But we'll have those finalists on screen and they won't know if they've won. And then Sarah is going to be announcing the winner. And then that person will be spotlighted just like at the Oscars. Although you know, they won't be walking up to a stage, they will get to say a few words, but I don't think we'll manage to play loud music if they go over right to kind of encourage them to exit stage left. But yes, November 15 4pm. Eastern. We're hosting that ceremony. We want as many people to be there to celebrate all these amazing women who have done fantastic work in 2020. And you can sign up to join the event on our website, which is outspoken.summit.com/slash-awards.

Shaunna Payne Gold

Well, I feel like I should like dress up to listen to the awards, right? Like just dress up to log in, you know, put on something fancy kind of, you know, black tie or something, or at least put on my best kit, right my favorite kit and wear it while I'm listening to these awards. So tell me a little bit more though, about how you got there. So who thought of this idea of these awards, and even the category sounded pretty amazing. So tell me a little bit about how that came to be?

Lisa Ingarfield

Yeah, this is the second year we've done the awards. So we hosted a real time in person event in 2019. If you can believe that there was ever a time if we were able to meet in person. And actually it was Sara grosses idea as part of the summit, we had talked about for some time that there wasn't really an opportunity to recognize women in triathlon, who were doing important work for gender equity, and then more broadly diversity, equity and inclusion in the sport. And so we felt it was really necessary to create this awards program where we could celebrate women from across the country. And the work they're doing because one of the things we've noticed through putting on outspoken is that there are amazing women and groups of women and allies doing work all across the United States, but they're not talking to each other. So they're unaware that the folks are doing similar things or working on the same kind of trajectory. So outspoken intention, or one of its intentions is to bring those women together. And so then with the awards, we wanted to highlight and celebrate that work. What's so fab about the awards, I think, is that the nominations come from the community, right. So it's not the outspoken planning team

that develops the nominations. We put out the request, which we did this year. And we've got over 250 nominations of women Oh Wow, amazing things across the country. And so we pulled together a selection committee. So we had Gabriella Diego's who's the race director, and owner of race El Paso and she puts on the mighty new hair triathlon that some of you might be familiar with. And then Courtney Jacobson, who is a coach, and also owns Britt link, and then Trinny, willetton, who is the brain behind, it could be me campaign, and she was also the 2019, outspoken Woman of the Year winner. And then Jameelah Gail Hagen's, who is a coach and also a kind of very active in the push for inclusion in the sport and also recently started working for lift feisty media. And then Lindsey Glassford, who is our fabulous editor, but also the coordinator of the outspoken women and triathlons summit. So those five folks pulled in all those 250 nominations and developed finalists in each category. So we, you know, we thought about what do we do this year in 2020? Because it's kind of an odd year. But we realized that women are still doing the work, right. So in the pandemic, there's still a need, particularly this year, how everything unfolded to really push gender equity, racial justice and connected issues. So we felt that it was really important that we didn't skip a year for the awards. Perhaps more importantly, because we haven't been able to come together at races we haven't made to come together at the summit, to really find a space and celebrate the women who are doing all this work often in the background, because we know that women do a lot of work and don't get a lot of recognition for it. So that's kind of a little bit more about our thought process. Well, you know, this year is especially a great year to find something to celebrate. And so I'm really excited about celebrating these amazing folks that have been nominated have been selected. I'm really excited about each and every award. I'm excited just about the meaning of each and every award.

Shaunna Payne Gold

I'm looking over here on the website Coach of the Year race director of the year Athlete of the Year, outstanding media, but Bethany Rutledge Memorial Award, outspoken Woman of the Year pandemic Community Service Award, social media Impact Award and the Lifetime Achievement Award. That's a big mouthful, but a lot to say that there's so many different avenues for women to be celebrated. So I'm really thrilled that we have the opportunity to sit back and put on our best digs and watch and wait for the surprised faces online. So I'm really excited about that in particular. So that's great work. Listen, I'm excited about that. But I know that we have someone on the line with us right now who fits into that category that you're talking about when it comes to people who are doing great work, while also in triathlon doing their thing is as athletes themselves so tell us a little bit about who our guest is today.

Lisa Ingarfield

Well, we are super excited to have Susan Lacke with us. She is an author, journalist and triathlete. Susan is deaf and has written extensively on inclusion in triathlon and today we are going to be talking about ableism and triathlon. So we're very excited to have Susan with us because she's been such a strong voice in this area. And we are going to learn a lot.

Shaunna Payne Gold

Fantastic. Welcome. Welcome, Susan, how are you?

Susan Lacke

It's great to be here. Thanks for having me on today.

Shaunna Payne Gold

Well, I am so excited that you're here. I'm so excited that Lisa was able to make the connection with you. I've been telling Lisa for Gosh, a while now for months now that this is my growing edge when it comes to talking about ableism. And especially when it comes to endurance sport, but ableism in general is one of my growing edges that I hope to be more of a generalist when it comes to particular populations. But this is an area that I'm really, really working hard to pay attention to. So I have my notes out I have my pin right here, I'm going to be taking notes. Especially look at this may be one of the few podcasts that I go back to, to listen again to take notes on things that I might have missed as

we were talking together. But I'm so thrilled to have you here and just tell us a little bit more about yourself and what you do, and specifically, how you've had a such a profound impact on shedding some light on these conversations that we might not have regularly when it comes to ableism and the sport.

Susan Lacke

So I'd be happy to do that. Like you said I'm Susan Lacke. I am a writer and endurance athlete. And for the last 10 years, I've been a contributor to triathlete magazine, podium runner, women's running magazine, outside magazine. Really, I focus a lot of my work and the outdoors and endurance sports. And it's something that I'm passionate about, triathlon and endurance sports are something that I really love to do. And in my day job, I guess you could say, I also work as a college professor, I have a doctorate in health education and work as an adjunct professor on three campuses, and teaching is also something that I really love to do. And in both worlds without really realizing that I become kind of a touch point, I guess, for talking about disability and ability. And so when you say that this is the growing edge for you I'm used to hearing that. For a lot of people I'm the first deaf person that they've ever talked to. I may even be the first disabled person they've ever gotten to talk to and so I have the honor and the burden of being a standard bearer I guess for people with disabilities and with that comes fighting a lot of stereotypes, it comes with answering a lot of questions. Sometimes they're wonderful, thought provoking question and sometimes they're very ignorant rude questions. And and so I have that really interesting experience as a person and the world, I'm in that I am technically a person with a disability but I don't fit in that world. I don't identify as part of the deaf community, I don't sign, for example. I don't know any other people who are deaf or use sign language. I'm not really part of deaf culture. so I walk this very strange purgatory of being between the hearing world and the deaf world. And sometimes it's really fun because I get to create my own box, why I can I can really state my own terms. But sometimes, it's really isolating. And I find that talking to other people about what I experience really helps me what feelings are so alone in the world. I don't necessarily go out with my sash and my crown as Miss Deaf America, that's not how we do it. But instead, I'm really open about my experience as a person, I don't shy away from talking about it. And this is a really new thing for me, because when I first started out as a writer, I never write about being deaf. And that's because it just never came up. I was writing about triathlon, I was telling people how to find chamois cream, it wasn't anything that ever really needed to be talked about. Then I got invited to do a podcast and I realized that nobody knew I was deaf. And that was terrifying. Because at that time, really the only place to go to get a gauge on what others triathlon community members were thinking and saying was slow twitch, and slow twitch forums are, I'll be very blunt here, they're a cesspool. There's a lot of sexism, ableism, deragory talk on slow twitch. They were making fun of people with disabilities on slow twitch. And so I thought, well, if I talk about being a deaf person in any way, shape, or form in this career, I'm going to be kicked on of the spot, no one's going to welcome me they're all gonna think that I'm stupid, that I don't know what I'm talking about, that will get work as a triathlon writer again. And that was terrifying to me. Around that time, I had met and established a rapport with Jordan Rapp, who was a pro triathlete and also a big fixture on slow twitch. Despite slow twitch being what it is, Jordan is an extremely nice guy, probably one of the nicest people I've met in the sport. And so I emailed him very awkwardly, and I said, hey, let's in the situation that I'm in. Should I talk about being deaf? Because I see what people say about people with disabilities online, especially in the endurance sports world and on slow twitch. And I'm really scared to do that. And so Jordan basically said, you know, what, fuck em. And I really appreciate that he said that You need to be you need to be authentic. I don't think that anybody's gonna give you grief, because you've already established yourself as a respected voice in the sport. I don't think that you being deaf is going to change that that. But what really meant a lot to me was that he said, and if anybody does say anything, send them my way. And to have somebody in my corner, like that tunes, everything. And so since then, I've really become a lot more comfortable with talking about my experiences as a person with a disability in this sport.

Lisa Ingarfield

Thank you so much for sharing that context in history. We really appreciate that. And I think you'll the loneliness that you identified or the fear that the triathlon community will treat you differently, I think is

very powerful and important for people to hear. Because for many individuals who identify as able bodied or temporarily able bodied, they're not necessarily thinking about the experience of disabled people, whatever the disability is, in the context of triathlon, right? It's similar to what Shawn and I have talked about with gender and with race, is that if it's not part of your experience, you tend not to understand it or take the time and perhaps minimize it. And fail to notice that that doing so has a really painful and isolating effect on who belong to communities of which there are? There are lesson number right in the sport of triathlon.

Susan Lacke

Absolutely. And you know, when we talk about disability, you know a lot of people assume in the context of triathlon that means maybe an athlete who uses a wheelchair, like they go to the most obvious multiple disabilities that are out there. But in actuality, there's so many different disabilities, and so many different people with disabilities in this sport. I also know there are more people who have disabilities and want to be a part of the sport, but they see as not being accessible for a particular disability, or, in general as not being welcoming or accepting of people who are different. really, if you think about triathlon, for most people, they assume all to our planet, Iron Man fight, and Iron Man, of course, the people who are at the peak of the pinnacle of sport, you have to be not only extremely fit, but you have to be able bodied in every which way. And so triathlon is not for people who have any type of defect or disability.

Shaunna Payne Gold

Well, and that, I think, is one of the bigger challenges with the perception of it. When it comes to. look, Susan, you hit the nail on the head with describing triathlon is equaling Iron Man, if you will, because that literally was my first exposure to try fine. I'm sitting on my couch, you know, eating chips, not fit in any way. And flipping channels. And the first thing I see is, oh, what are these people? First of all, they're in Hawaii. So obviously, I want to watch. But after I see that they're in Hawaii somewhere beautiful. Oh, my gosh, look at these people. And they just swam in that and they just rode their bike, how far and now they're gonna do a marathon on the end of that. My brain can't wrap around that. Even as a, what I would consider an able bodied person. I couldn't wrap around that. And so for me thinking about how ability changes even the perception of who, who's in and who's out, basically. And whether it's the smallest thing or the largest thing, whether it's I am either deaf or hard of hearing or whether I just literally have an ingrown toenail. It could be something as small as that, that may preclude people from thinking that they can be a part of this world. How do we make sure that we that perception is not reality when it comes to ableism?

Susan Lacke

Well, really, it's about making spot accessible, right? And you know, you mentioned earlier about, you know, when people are talking about their experiences in the world, they just view it through their own lens, right, they assume that their experience is everybody's, right? And so if it's not something that's a problem for me, it can't possibly be a problem for anybody.

Shaunna Payne Gold

Right now, I understand that, that sense of a proximity, the proximity of if, if I don't feel it personally, or if someone connected to me doesn't feel the inconvenience of it personally, that I can't get it. I don't want to understand it, I don't want to do anything to correct it. Because it's not my problem. It's someone else's problem, or someone else's concern and trying to that proximity make it a little bit closer for people to have a reason to care, even if it doesn't affect them personally, you know, I care when I see a cyclist roll up beside me that has, they may have deaf on their kid or something on their kit letting us know, this is what you can do to be welcoming. Pay attention to what's going on or give a hand signal or anything that I can do as someone who's not part of that community to make those individuals feel comfortable so that we all can do what we love to do in the sport.

Susan Lacke

I think it really starts with redefining what your perception of an athlete is. And really, when we talk about a triathlete, you know that you describe that I was in the same situation too sitting on a couch eating chips, wondering who the hell these skinny people were. And you know that the picture that we paint of athletes, in reality, if we were to show triathlon for what it really was, we would show people of different sizes, and we would show people who have different ethnic backgrounds, we would show people who have different sexual orientations, we would show people who have different abilities and all of that exists in triathlon, and yet we keep putting forth the template of the skinny super-fit ripped athlete. And so when we see that we think well, I could never be that, that's not who I am. And so we have to really redefine what it means to be a triathlete, what it means to be an endurance athlete. Because when we do that, then we don't get so alarmed when somebody who doesn't fit the mold comes into the sport, we're not looking at them as someone who is different, we're not looking at them as someone who must obviously have a harder time in the sport because they're different, that we need to go out of our way to accommodate them. Accessibility and to our fan really needs to be the default, and not the exception. So often what we see are races, events, groups and clubs, they don't make accommodations until somebody with a disability comes down and asks for them. And as I shared with you, with my experience that can be terrifying to come in knowing you're an outsider and saying, oh, by the way, could you also help me? That that's really something that can scare a lot of people off from the sport. But if I am a person who has a disability, and I need an accommodation, I'm not the only one. So why not just make that part of your entire identity? Why not make everything possible for every body? We've created a world in which some things are easy for people and some things are harder for people. Why not just make things easy for everybody to do if they wish to?

Lisa Ingarfield

Yeah, I really love the way that you framed that. And Shauna and I have talked about the concept of universal design, in the educational context, right? And we talked about it upon a podcast or two ago, when it comes to races. And how that that archetype? Well, that template that you identified of who is the triathlete is always a able bodied individual. And so then races are designed around that template, right, the kind of assumption of the, the general or the average person when they're not, perhaps, so average. And and so the piece that you're articulating there, around groups, clubs, races, organizations, not thinking about embedding accessibility into everything they do, all the time, and only addressing it if someone comes to them is part of the problem, right? So when we think about ableism, which I guess we haven't defined, but I would define as the assumption of that everyone is able bodied, and then building systems policies and practices around that assumption. We see then that folks are often left out which then, as you identified, Susan can be terrifying. Because not only do you not see people who perhaps look like you, which is true for a lot of groups. But the system itself, the racing system, is not built with you in mind. And then that prejudice is even translated into the way other athletes treat you. Or referees assume danger when there is not danger, or the lack of provision for different changing facilities or different tools or support in transition, those kinds of things. And then that also gets equated with fairness, right? Well, you don't get to have someone in transition to help you with a, b and c because that wouldn't be fair, right? Like this assumption of an equal playing field. It's not actually there to begin with. And I think that that's where we see ableism I'm just embedded throughout right? I don't know if you have any thoughts about that?

Susan Lacke

Absolutely. I have a lot of various experiences as an athlete but also as a reporter. What you just described I've been in. At one race, after finding out that I was deaf, I was asked to get a partner to complete the swim portion for me. They said instead of you doing the swim, bike, and run, it would be unsafe for you to swim. And so the compromise they offered was that I would have my then boyfriend, now husband, complete the swim for me, and we could do the event as a relay. It was a race I had been wanting to do for a really long time, so to not be able to do the full race, myself, even though I had completed many triathlon events prior to that, many open water swims, and I felt safe and competent money, open water swim, and I felt safe and confident in completing that swim. But they thought that particular swim, it had a very strong current. And they thought that if the current took me away and I got

off course, I wouldn't be able to hear a volunteer or a lifeguard in a kayak telling me that I was getting off course. And my, my husband said to be fair, nobody will, we're all splashing around out there, we've all got earplugs in, none of us are hearing the volunteers. But it didn't convince them. On the bright side, I got to do a relay event with a really wonderful relay partner, and we ended up taking third place which was also kind of cool. But it still bothers me to this day that I didn't have that opportunity to do the race on my own. I've also encountered other athletes just about a tune who had faced other issues with races. So I've had a wheelchair athlete, for example, tell me about a race that he wanted to. The race director said here's where the disabled parking is, so you have accessible parking. So he pulled up on race morning early, and he got out of the car and into his wheelchair, and he starts rolling to the race start. But because of the way that they had set the barricades up, he could not get to the race start without taking his wheelchair through deep mud. And so he had to ask people to carry him to the start, there was no way for him to wheel himself to the race start under his own power. And he said that was one of the most dehumanizing experiences during one of the things that's supposed to make me feel like the strongest person on earth. And I felt that I felt that in every single cell in my body. Um, you know, there are other cases as well where we have seen athletes who have visual impairments or who are deaf and blind, how I wanted to base but they can't find a qualified guide who is the same sex as them. There are rules in place that say if you are a visually impaired athlete, you have to race with a guide that has to be the same sex as you. So a woman has to race with a woman, a man has to race with a man. There was some very fast women who could not find other women fast enough to keep up with them, so they asked if they could have a male guide. And they were told no. There was one, four years ago, where there was an athlete who was both deaf and blind. And so she does a form of communication where the guide would sign in to her hand, and she would feel the signs. And she couldn't find a woman who was qualified to not only complete the race at her speed, but also knew how to communicate. She did find a male, and had to sue the race in order to participate and to be able to have that person hold poses, and the fact that she had to go through that, you know, that was complete disregard for her the person and an athlete, but instead, it was, like you said about fairness, it wouldn't be fair, that person would be cheating. And so would you really want to cheat in order to do the race? And we don't think it's cheating to ask for help, we don't think it's cheating to find a solution that will let us race. We just want to go out there and do the damn thing just like everybody else on that course.

Lisa Ingarfield

Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Sorry. I shoulda like, I feel like before. No, no, I feel like that little emoji. You know, like, that's got the red face with the with the little black line across the mouth with the question mark and stuff. That is what I feel like what do I tell like that? Absolutely. Absolutely. Well, and you know what, I think it's so interesting about it is that, you know, for me the the frustration is the having to be humiliated. Having to reframe the conversation because the reframe on the conversation is no, we're not necessarily asking for help or asking for anything to be unfair. What we are saying or what it sounds like we're saying is that we're asking to be able to complete something on our own.

Susan Lacke

And that's why so often why I tell people that we need to stop saying it's really hard for people with disabilities to race, and instead start saying races don't create accessible events for athletes with disabilities. We need to place the responsibility on the system, not the people who are marginalized by it. And if we can keep doing that, then we can stop making the responsibility of accessibility solely that of the athletes with disabilities, because it's really not our job to make you create a race that is really fair. And, and honestly, when Lisa said you know, she had that face and brain exploding and all of that, I don't do that. Because I experience that every single day in every single way. Even right now, you know, throw my whole life I've been taught, if you were to be more normal, you would fit in and people would make fun of you or people wouldn't treat you differently. Like my whole life. I'm very deaf. In one ear completely deaf and the other ear, it is called severe to profoundly deaf. Without my hearing aid, I have no hearing which my husband really like to have some fun with what I'm sleeping, but but with my hearing aid, I can hear about half of what the normal person can hear. And so technically, I qualify for a very severe designation of hearing loss. I should technically be signing. I should technically not be

speaking. I should technically have gone to school for the deaf and not a mainstream school. I should have done all of these things. But from the time I lost my hearing when I was two and a half years old, it was all about fixing that, but it was about making me normal, and making me not deaf. And so my whole life has been about being not deaf. Learning how to lipread, learning how to talk, I was in speech therapy until I was 20 years old. Um, when people would pick on me at school, when I was a child, I had a guidance counselor who told me if I would just try harder to be normal, then people wouldn't make fun of me. And so my whole life, I've had to deal with that. And I kept, I kept telling myself that promise, you need to try harder, and people will like you, need to try harder, you'll fit in. And you know, for the most part, I'm able to pass I can read lips, I can get by with various accommodations. But when the pandemic occurred, everything back to square one. Now all of a sudden, everybody's wearing masks, right. And so the faces are covered, and I have no idea what's going on. And when I try to find workarounds for that, when I asked people, for example, to buy masks that had clear windows, and so I can lipread, only one of my friends so far has done that. I'm not really surrounded by a world that says you know what, some people have it harder. I'm not the only person out there, there are a lot of us, a lot of us. And yet, we don't really have the world that has adapted or even considered than the people with disabilities. In this pandemic, I am basically holed up in my house because I'm scared to go out and talk to other people. Because the faces are all covered. I don't feel rage anymore. I just feel like okay, well, I tried really hard, and I'm still never gonna fit, and I'm still never going to be normal. And nobody really cared enough to want to try to make it normal for me. Um, and so it goes back to that feeling of isolation. And I'm not saying that because I want you to pity me. I'm not saying that because I'm, you know, I'm crying myself to sleep at night. That's the reality of the world we live in. And after a while, you just get tired, you stop trying, you stop trying to fight that. And every now and then you get that opportunity to be honest about what you're going through. And so when you invited me on the podcast, I thought that at that opportunity, and so I'm not trying to change the world overnight, but I do need to be upfront and honest about what I'm experiencing, so that maybe other people have that lightbulb raised emoji moment.

Lisa Ingarfield

And they concern themselves and their behavior. Yeah, and I everything you've identified is really underscoring what ableism is right and it's this, this focus on quote unquote normality and who gets to decide who is quote unquote normal, right? I mean, and that is applicable for disability, for race for agenda for sexual orientation, many identity categories for sure. And it's really, really troubling because all of our systems policies and practices are predicated on this kind of somewhat arbitrary determination of what is normal, without much of a thought to the consequences, the lifelong consequences to folks who fit outside that arbitrary category. And I want to highlight a piece that you said about it not being the responsibility of disabled people to constantly have to request accommodations and changes, and rather it should be the system that changes. And this is a new concept for me in thinking about disability and an academic colleague of mine introduced me to the concept of the social model of disability, which argues that it's actually the environment that disabled people, not that not a person's different way of being in the world, right. And so I think about triathlon and I think about the social model of disability and I think triathlon does not embrace that philosophy, right, it's still places the burden on the individual. And it still approaches disability in particular, as something that needs to be fixed or adapted, so that you can fit into us. Not that we can create a space from the ground up, that is available and accessible to every single person, no matter their ability, background identity. And I think that's a really important distinction for triathlon to think about. I mean, it's, it's just, it's very powerful and a whole different, it's a mind shift right about how we think about it.

Susan Lacke

Yeah, so when we talk about what triathlon is, as far as disability goes, and and about how athletes with disabilities fit into it, more often than not the model that we see all we celebrate people with disabilities as inspiration, right. And it really drives me crazy, because races don't want to do the work of being assessable for all athletes, but I do want to put the spotlight on those who are willing to overcome the so called obstacles that the race had created by not being accessible. And really inspiration is good,

I'm not saying that a bad thing to celebrate diversity of athletes, but right now, um, you know, media, advertising, promotion tends to use inspiration the wrong way. We promote the minority for the benefit of the majority. In the case of disability, we say things like "that person has one leg and still does triathlon. What's your excuse?" And so the premise of that and this whole genre, if you are familiar with the term inspiration porn, is really based on the premise that someone else someone else's life must really suck because he or she is different in some way. We should pity this person, and you should be grateful if you are not defective in the same way. And that's really messed up. Because speaking from experience, I can tell you that I'm not defective. I don't consider my disability to be a defect. I don't um, I can tell you my life doesn't suck even though I have a disability. I'm happily married. I have a really wonderful career as a journalist, I've written two books, I have a doctorate, I do teach in the classroom to students who are really wonderful, and they make me believe in the goodness of the world. I have great friends. I have a hobby that I love. All of these things are really wonderful and life affirming. But if you think that despite my disability, I'm overcoming all the suckiness in my life to push my ass through 140 point six miles of swim bike run, That's not why I'm doing that. I'm not doing that to overcome an obstacle. And I'm not doing that for you. I don't need your permission to exist in the world. And fairly often, I'm asked if I can play a role in various inspiration porn categories, and I always say no. Because I'm offended, that you think that you can exploit my life and my disability, to say, to all these other athletes, look how good you have it? That will be very frustrating. And so we need to really step away from this concept of inspiration porn and instead just seamlessly integrate all athletes into our promotion, all athletes into our races, all athletes into everything. When you make accessibility, the default. People say, Oh, wait, that's right. For example, and I'm going to call you guys out on something here. But why don't you have transcript for your podcast on the website? You know, I can't listen to a podcast. I'm deaf. And the way that we're doing this recording right now, we're using video conferencing with live captions, so you guys have been great about accommodations for my disability to record the podcast. But if I want to listen to the podcast, I can't because there's no video, and no captions, and there's no transcript. But if you want to add a transcript of your podcast to the recording on your website, not only would that help me, but it will help other people. Maybe they're deaf and they need the transcript for that reason. Maybe they can't listen to a podcast at work, but they can read the transcript. Maybe they just don't really like listening to podcasts, but they love reading. There's so many facets to accessibility beyond people with disabilities. And if we can all kind of take out where we make up the norm instead of the exception, then people remember, Oh, yeah, that's right. I'm not the template for for the sport. There's all sorts of athletes in the sport, and isn't it great that we can all enjoy that wonderful sport together?

Shaunna Payne Gold

Absolutely. And as soon as you reminding me of my son, so he is, he was recently diagnosed over the summer with ADHD in particular. But prior to his diagnosis, we always knew that he really struggled with reading. And so one of the strategies that we've used with him is both the many of the apps have the readings where he can actually read the screen of his favorite book, but also the book is being read to him. So he can both hear it and see it at the same time. As far as reinforcement, and the universal design that Lisa's has mentioned is that it benefits all kids, whether it's my kid that has ADHD or a child that does not it still benefits everyone. And so I love that call out that you bring up around the transcription piece of truly being inclusive, because then most times if you do have a transcription, then it's able to be transcribed into other languages, which would be lovely as well. I know I'm creating work for someone. And but, but that's something to consider. But one of the things I want to circle back to something that we were talking about before, and I struggle with this, and I need a little bit of help kind of thinking out loud about it, because there is kind of this fine line between inspiration porn, but also representing a group of athletes as well. Because I'm thinking about a, you know, let's say there is a deafblind future triathletes out there that's like, Yeah, I'd love to do it. But I I counted myself out, or I didn't think that the environment would even wrap around me in a way that I could possibly be part of that group. You know, they're watching Kona, like, we were on the couch with the chips. And so, you know, what's, how do you navigate that fine line between not being inspiration porn to be used by people, by the majority, but also to being very proud of who you are, and the totality of who you are? At

the same time, because I think it's a very, I mean, the thinnest of lines between the two, how do you navigate that?

Susan Lacke

I think really, you just have to be authentic in your storytelling. Rather than rooting for the story, rather than trying to say, okay, we need to find somebody who has a disability, so that we can illustrate how they overcame all these obstacles. Um, you know, naturally build people with disabilities into your marketing campaign, for example, um, Hoka actually got a really good job with that. Lately, they've been putting together some really great advertisements and marketing campaigns that naturally include all types of athletes in the campaign. It's really really well done. And I actually I met some of the people who worked on that campaign at an event, back when we still had events, and I thanked them for that. Because I said I'm so tired of inspiration porn and so tired of well if they can do it, you can do it. What they did was they simply put people with different skin color, people with different body types, people with different abilities and disabilities into the campaign. And that's what we need to do overall. Instead of only showing athletes from underrepresented groups, stories about their differences, just putting them into everything. We need to display them as coaches, display them as experts, display them as athletes in general content. And that helps us to see this is truly an inclusive sport instead of only celebrating the athlete for being different in some way.

Lisa Ingarfield

So yeah, it's if representation matters, right? So if you start to broaden the net of who you are representing as a triathlete, then a person with a disability or a person of color ceases to be an exception, right or exceptional. And then we have, we start to shift the narrative about what is quote unquote, normal in triathlon. Part of the problem is that there's such a monolithic image right now. primarily a white male, tall muscley sculpted, right or at least lean that you don't that there's not there's not really much beyond that. And so it's good that you're bringing up hoka as an example that folks can turn to. I had an interesting conversation about inspiration poem with a group of people, I was giving a diversity training, and I was doing it providing some definitions. And I included inspiration pulling in my definitions, and I got a lot of pushback from people. So the folks that I was training, no one had a visible disability. No, that's not true. There was at least one person with a visible disability. So I don't know if some folks in the room had invisible disabilities. But the primary pushback was that I guess I would categorize it as perhaps self interested, like, I need the inspiration because it helps motivate me. And you're being mean, by saying the inspiration is bad, right, which is not what I was saying. And so it's that's very, it was a very interesting dynamic to me. I didn't anticipate getting so much resistance around. Folks understanding that inspiration porn is exploitative. Right, like, it's really it's really problematic. Much like tokenism for folks of color or members of the LGBT community. It's it's similar. It's a similar vein, but I was I was taken aback by that. And that wasn't that was like last year that I had that conversation. So I think there's clearly some work to do in that area.

Susan Lacke

Absolutely. But the thing that that adds another layer of pressure, right, to the person who's been exploited. So when I show up at a race and I've been marketed at the race as the person who overcame all obstacles, that puts pressure on me when I'm at the race. Because now not only do I have to finish the thing, but I have to overcome and I have to serve as an example and an inspiration for the other people out there. And I did an interesting experiment a couple years ago, because I was curious about this. But I've been told multiple times that when I race I should wear a singlet or a sign that says deaf on the back so everyone knows in the race that I'm deaf. Even though I've never had a problem in the race that I'm aware of where an athlete has not been able to pass me because I'm deaf. Because races tend to be, you know, especially triathlon, when you pass somebody it's pretty clear where you can go. I've never had a problem with people passing me. Nobody's really yelled at me. Nobody's really gotten frustrated with me that I'm aware of. But for one race, I said, You know what? I'll put a sign on my back that says deaf, I just want to see what happens. People were so nice to me! Like they went out of their way to pat me on the shoulder and give me a thumbs up and sign to me. They would say

good job and all these things. I don't know sign language. I don't know a single word of sign language. And also, what I noticed, but that the way that people talked to me, like I've seen seen so many times in my life, they talk to me like I had a cognitive disability. Like I was mentally retarded. Um, I'm not and yet people treated me like I was. And so even though they were nice to me, you could tell it was their own self interest, they wanted to feel good about the fact that while they were on the course, they talked to some "retarded" athlete, and told them that they were doing a good job. And over the miles, I could feel my self confidence shrinking, you know, and everything in my body and that kind of slouched, and, you know, caved in, I didn't enjoy that race, I felt different, that whole thing. So it's something I'll never do again, I'm glad I did it, because I learned a lot. And at the time, when I pitched that story to, um, to an outlet, I was told nobody want to read about that experience. And so the fact that my experiences as an endurance athlete were not valid because it doesn't fit the narrative of what the sport is supposed to be about was really crushing. I mean, it was like a punch to the gut. And, again, I wish I could say I'm mad about it, but I'm so used to it, and so many people with disabilities are so used to it, we just say okay, well, that's just the way it is.

Shaunna Payne Gold

You're just reminding me of a story of a triathlete here in my area. And I'm going to make the story even more complex, Susan, and Lisa, this particular athlete, this particular athlete is deaf. And this particular athlete is also a black male. And what was so interesting is that, you know, going back to what you were saying, Susan, about, you know, being a very accomplished triathlete, well, human being number one, but triathlete as well, the very same thing was going on with him where he was riding along in a particular area of our state. And someone got a little bit too close and treated him a certain way while he was on his bike. And then he later posted on the, the city Facebook Page of endurance athletes that, hey, I was out in this space at this time, and whoever was, you know, the stupid person that did what they did to me, I know exactly who you are, I have your license, plate number, all these other things. The moment that that person found out that he was deaf, all of a sudden, it was different treatment. It was, you know, now I have to apologize. Now I have to do all these other things. This person was going going to do a 140 point six and so did all these special things to you know, it was a performative apology after apology after apology after this person found out that the gentleman was deaf. And so in my brain that is constantly played out around, here we go with oppression Olympics, right? You know, which oppression do we want to haggle with right now, because this person didn't think too much of the gentleman who, you know, as he was perceived as a black male, but once this other invisible identity came forward, then all of a sudden, there was this change in perspective, and, oh, it's not right to treat this person a certain way, because they are deaf, but it was okay for you to treat this person a certain way when he was only black, or only black male, but when this person was black, male and death, now we have a different scenario. And so it just constantly gives me this level of skepticism, Susan, where I'm like, what's your motives there? And why are you doing that? Because, you know, with the invisible identities of folks, that's when you get to really see who people are. versus when I show up black, I can't unzip my black suit. I get whatever you give me in that moment. And it is what it is, versus and I'm not trying to make the identities to compete. But I am saying that there's this overlay that Venn diagram of complexity of what happens when you add this additional layer. And, you know, I'm imagining, but please, you know, share with us if you've also had some type of prism or different view, as a woman who is also deaf, or is there any interplay with other identities that go along with the deafness.

Susan Lacke

I'd be happy to, you know, so, about a year ago, I moved away from the state where I was living prior to my current home, and I had been living in Utah for about four years. Utah is a really unique environment for a lot of reasons. But a big one is the fact that the Mormon faith is the predominant population there. They have some interesting views about gender and sex and, well a lot of things. Disability as well. So existing in that space as not only a female, but a female who had a doctorate. I also teach human sexuality, which in Utah is a very interesting topic to teach. And I am a person who is deaf. So I am an educated woman who teaches the controversial topic. And I also have a disability. There were layers upon layers upon layers as to why people would treat me differently. And there would

be times where people would be talking to me, and like you said the oppression Olympics, why are they judging me today? Like what's the thing that they're picking on? Is it the fact that I'm a doctor? The fact that, you know, I teach this topic? That I'm deaf? And sometimes even mid-conversation, you would see the shift. Someone might start talking to me, for example, and maybe be mansplaining something to me. And then, um, when I began talking in response, they would get my accent, and they would say oh wait and then they would start talking to me differently. Not normally, but they would treat me differently because I was deaf. And so you could see that weird, like, carousel of how people would treat me based on what your perceptions were of me and the information that they had collected about me during the conversation. And so it was fascinating. I'll say that, and I loved my time in Utah, it's not like I'm saying it was a horrible place to live and they're going to attack you if you're different. But it was a tough place to live. horrible place to love and woman, they're gonna attack you to that point. And that was the first time really, in my whole life. Well, I felt that simply by existing I was a burden on society. It was really hard for me to get accommodations in Utah. And there was one time I did a radio interview there, because I was promoting a book. And they asked me if I would be willing to do a panel interview on being deaf in Utah. And I said, Yeah, so I guess you know, that's kind of random, but sure I'm down. And they said great, can you invite some of your deaf friends to be on the panel? And then I was like, I have no deaf friends! Yeah. And so to make that assumption that I was surrounded by deaf people. The panel ended up not happening because they couldn't find enough people willing to share their experiences. But they did locate another person who was deaf. And he had this story about how when he was a child he lost to hearing and being raised in the Mormon church, they placed perfection at a premium and put that on there, that it was really challenging for him. And he told a story about how one time when he was in Sunday school, he was misbehaving and the teacher in Sunday school said that that's why God made you deaf, because you're naughty boy. And so you know, it's really shocking to hear and yet not at all shocking that people just attribute certain things to you based on your condition. Maybe it's because you're black, maybe it's because you're deaf, maybe it's because, you know, maybe your leg is amputated and you use a prosthetic leg. Whatever it is, you're just conveying your opinion on their worth to that person. And it just's so shocking to me when you describe the the friend of yours who had that close call on the bike, all I can think is why not just be nice to everybody on bikes? Why can't we just make that the default? Is it possible that we could just not be a dick, regardless of who we're interacting with. That's what I don't get about this world. It just seems like the easiest thing to do is to be kind to other people, to be, you know, helpful and, and assume the best about people. But instead, we only default to the case where we think we've only done something wrong when we learn that he's deaf. Oh, now I'm the asshole. No, you were the asshole when you ran that person off the road. And so typically interesting to me to see how people change based on the information they get.

Lisa Ingarfield

Yeah, I think that's the quote of the day Don't be a dick.

Shaunna Payne Gold

Exactly. Well, you know, it reminds me of that book I'm telling you about all the time Lisa, the the book I'm judging you the do better manual by lovey Jai. She is a Nigerian American woman that wrote this book about just how to be a better human being period, you know, just be better. And it sounds like we might need some of that similar language in endurance, sport and the world of A lot, it's just how to be better to each other how to be kind, not in the, in the calm civility way, but kind in the I'm proactively being kind to you, I wasn't going to run you off the road no matter what I was. And it sounds so simple that Oh, how can we embrace people just just by being better human beings to each other would be a great start. You know, when was it ever okay to run any cyclist off the road, you know, if you saw, you know, a five year old kid on their tricycle, you wouldn't run them off the road. So what makes you think it's okay to run anybody off the road, it just, I'm just really interested in how everyone can be more human, and more embracing of everyone without having this knee jerk response of, Okay, I'm reading that you're this type of person, let me put you in these categories. And if it's a category that I don't really care for, then I'm going to perform in a less humane way. But if it's a category that oh my goodness, I'm going to care about that category, then all of a sudden, I'm just this wonderful person to you. And it's, it's

almost like a Jekyll and Hyde type situation, I'm a completely different person, to that individual. That's incredible. It's a bit patronizing, right, it's, I find out that you have a disability. And then I'm now sickly, sweet, apologetic, and nice to you that's very patronizing.

Lisa Ingarfield

And it kind of circles back a little bit to your comment, Susan, around people making the assumption that because you're deaf, you will also have an intellectual developmental disability. And then so then, so breaking that off, and then thinking about how we treat individuals who have intellectual and developmental disabilities, right, again, we assume that they are less capable, that they're not able to do the same things as folks who are, do not experience those disabilities. And so it you know, so we've got, I think this conversation is really hopefully highlighted for listeners that prism that intersection, and the ways in which identities are interacting and the assumptions that we're making about people and how damaging that can be. And I do just want to add, again, thinking about this systems piece, because Susan's brought it up, Shawn has brought it up, that we are a product of systems, right. And Robyn D'Angelo has said, in relation to whiteness, it's not whether you've been affected by the system of white supremacy, it's how you've been affected. And so I think that that's a good starting place. Especially when we're thinking about ability to write, we live in enable a society that assumes able bodied ness is normal, and everything is constructed around that. And then So how have you been affected by it know whether you've been affected by it? What assumptions are you making? And how are you folding those assumptions into your daily life? And language? Right. And before we got on the interview today, Susan had corrected my language because I'd use said something like a person who identifies as deaf. And that is not necessarily the most appropriate way to articulate deaf, because it's as though it's a an add on. And I think Susan uses the example of you don't say I identify as having cancer, right? So kind of a similar reframing, I'm wondering if you would elaborate a little bit more, because I do think language is very important. And I've definitely evolved in my language choices around this, I tend to say, disabled people now versus people with disabilities based on some readings that I have done, written by disabled people about why that is preferable. So I'm not sure if you have any thoughts, we could maybe wrap up with some comments on the power of language in this area.

Shaunna Payne Gold

And Lisa, could I also add on to your question, too, that's one thing that I've been wrestling with as well. It's kind of wrapping together the correction on language, but also the correction on highlighting the system and not the individual. Susan, we talked before in a previous podcast or a couple of podcasts ago that I'm one of my graduate students many years ago, corrected my language on No, that person was not a slave. That was a human being who was enslaved. And so how do I correct that? And so I'm just working very hard to highlight that there's an entire system that needs attention. And so I'm wondering how we can kind of fold Lisa and I are questions into one, you know, how do we acknowledge people the way in which they would like to be acknowledged, but also acknowledge the system that keeps us where we are, which may not be the best of places to be?

Susan Lacke

Language is one of those minefield where you know, you have to be really careful when you enter. You don't want to say the wrong thing. You don't want to do the wrong thing. But I can speak from experience and think that if someone uses the wrong terminology, I'll be quick to correct them. But if they use offensive terminology, then I get scared. For example, there are still people who use the phrase deaf and dumb. And when they use that terminology, automatically I just shut down because how do you respond to that? You know, even if you say no, I prefer just deaf, or no I'm not dumb, you're opening this box where you have to explain yourself and you existence as a human being. And I think with disability, too, it exists on a spectrum, right? I'm deaf, but I still have some hearing. And that people think I'm faking it, when, when I'm speaking or when I'm able to do things like podcasts. And in actuality, I'm just relying on luck and lipreading, mostly. But there are people who have the same amount of hearing loss at me, but they don't speak and they just use sign language. And so we're both deaf individuals and yet we're not the same. We have different experiences moving through this world. Um,

you know, we see that most blind people have some vision. Most people who are wheelchair users are physically capable of standing or maybe even walking. Do we really have to do this thing, though, where we say you are not really disabled because you sit in your wheelchair though you can walk to your car. Or, you know, you say you're blind, but you do have some vision. You know, so we try to catch people in the act, try, we try to say No, you're not really disabled because a real person with a disability is this... So you know, when when we talk about me beng deaf I say I'm deaf, but sometimes when people ask for clarification, so they say, Oh, do you mean hearing impaired because you can talk or say no, my ears do not work. I am lipreading you right now. There's really no way around that. I'm deaf. I'm not hearing impaired. But I also sometimes educate people on the distinction between big D and little d deaf. Within the deaf community, for example, there are people who are part of the deaf culture, they may go to school for the deaf, they may have parents who are also deaf, or they have families who sign with them. They really have their deaf identity as a point of pride. And I'm not part of that community, I have been told I'm not welcome in that community because I have a hearing aid, because I talk and I lipread. And so that is viewed as being ashamed of being deaf and trying too hard to be normal. And so I have the hearing impairment, I am deaf medically. But I'm not deaf as a cultural identity. And so I'm little d deaf. And so when we talk about language and identifiers, you know just using the right words is more complicated than it would seem on the surface. But in general it's always a good idea if you ask people, you know. And to use that example from before this podcast started, you said would you like me to say identifies as deaf? And I said no, and that I am I don't identify as I am. But someone else might have a different answer. You know, someone else might say, you know, I prefer hearing impaired, or they might have a different way of being referred, as a descriptor I should say and that's okay. You have the right to set your tone about who you are, and how people talk about you. And so, it is a minefield, and it's complicated, but a lot can be calmed and a lot can be really made clear, if you ask instead of assuming because when people assume they fill in the blanks, and they've already constructed their viewpoint of the opinion. They pass on that viewpoint, and everybody else takes on that viewpoint. So, no, I don't identify as deaf, please don't refer to me as that. I am deaf. Um, and so we have to be really careful about being clear about the way we talk about people. And the best way to do that is to just ask that person.

Lisa Ingarfield

Hmm. I think that's really important because I do think that for folks with privileged identities, so abled white male, right? I think there can sometimes be a fear of even asking the question. Because if I ask the question, perhaps you will perceive me as rude or offensive or ignorant. And so then I don't ask the question and then I just kind of stumble along, and invariably, perhaps make a bigger error that's more harmful. Because I, that could have been resolved. If I just asked the question in the first place.

Susan Lacke

Absolutely, I'm more likely to think you're ignorant when you assume. I don't think you're rude if you're asking, I appreciate you asking. That shows that you want to see me as the person, that you want to see me as an individual. Thank you. That means a lot. But when you go and make assumption, or in some cases, I have people they meet me, they realize thay I'm deaf and they start signing to me. And then I had to explain to them I don't know sign language was and then I have to answer questions like, well, how do you communicate then? And then I have to say things like, what do you think we're doing right now? we're communicating. And by the time I get to that point, I think you're a complete idiot, please get away from me. Um, and so we can avoid all of that frustration, if you were just talk to me the way I'm talking to you. And then if you know sign language, not making up sign language, but if you know sign language, you can offer that. You can say I'm fluent in sign language, would it be helpful if we converse in sign language? Then I could say, No, thank you. I'm good. I don't have to explain myself to you. I don't have to explain why I don't know sign, I don't have to explain how I learned to lipread. I don't have to go through that whole thing. It's exhausting. And by the time that conversation is over, you stop looking at me as a person and started looking at me as some weird fascination that you can't wait to tell your spouse about when you get home. And that's shitty. That's a really shitty feeling.

Lisa Ingarfield

Yeah, that actually connects really nicely to Shawn's question about the system, right, I think in that the assumptions that were making, and having asking people with disabilities to explain themselves, right, like in the context of a race, explain why you need this, justify to me why we have to, quote unquote, bend the rules for you. Right? Like, again, coming back to that fairness piece. There's the system that's like snapping back to kind of reinforce who's normal and who's not, and who belongs and who doesn't belong. And as you just identified, Susan, it's exhausting. And that's certainly not just an experience of disabled folks, right. That's an experience for folks with any identity that is marginalized in some way in our culture. And I think there's the interplay, right, between the system and the individual, and how that harms people who are constantly having to justify their existence. And I don't, that's not hyperbole, right? Because you've articulated that a couple of times, that so often, people with privilege asked folks who are marginalized in some way to justify their existence. And I think that that is a place that we really need to move away from.

Susan Lacke

Yeah, absolutely. And, you know, if we can get to a place where the default setting is that people are different, as opposed to trying to figure out what's different about them? Why are they different? How can we fix them? Um, you know, then we can...I think we could get a lot more free time. We could operate from that place of knowing that people are just different. One of the things that I noticed when I moved away from Utah back to Arizona, is that nobody really noticed that I have an accent here. And they pay to play, don't say anything about it. People don't ask me stupid questions. And now that I'm in Arizona, because as one of my friends like to say, in Arizona, we're all a little off. We all have something different about us. And I love that. And that really made a difference for me because I no longer feel self-conscious about walking up to a person and starting a conversation with them. Um, at least I didn't before the pandemic and everybody has masks on. But even now, I don't feel unsafe. And Arizona, I don't feel like I'm being singled out and people are gonna ask me dumb questions. I think that one of the last straws for me in Utah was when I was at the grocery store one time. I was checking out and that woman who checked me out, started talking to me and realized that I was deaf. She asked me if my husband was embarrassed that I was deaf. And I was like, No, I give him plenty of things to be embarrassed about. I just ran a naked 5K, maybe we could talk about that, but no, no, he's not embarrassed by the fact that I'm deaf. That people would even ask me that just a lot about them and the culture in which they're raised. If you're different, that's embarrassing and you should lock everybody that's different in the basement. That was really hard for me. And now that I'm back in a circumstance where more or less I'm treated as normal, or nobody treats me less than because I have the accent and the hearing aid, I'm unable to breathe a little bit more, and that's really nice. I just wish that was the case all the time. I wish that was the case for anybody with a disability that they not have to answer stupid questions, that they not have to deal with ignorant people, that they can go about their day and exist in the world without having to do extra work in order to do the things that everybody else gets to do.

Shaunna Payne Gold

Well, I'm, I think what's so profound about this entire conversation, number one, lots of things that I didn't know that I'm discovering, because I hope to be a forever student. But the other piece too, is that, you know, you've created this way to live out your shirt. For those that are listening to this podcast right now, her shirt says nevertheless, she persisted. And I'm so appreciative of that, because I think that's also an entire system of folks, if you will, who are pushing against the status quo system. So it's kind of like to con two controversial systems going on here, one that's maintaining and the other one that say, No, let's tear all this mess up. And I think that's what's so profound is that we need more people wearing your shirt, your shirt doing exactly what you're doing around. Yes, I know, there's resistance all around, I'm either going to address it head on and be confrontational about it. But but I'm not going to ignore it, I'm not going to ignore the challenges that are in place. Because obviously, again, there's an entire system that needs to be what we've been saying, Lisa, and I've been talking about this dismantling of systems. So don't just, you know, run a Mack truck through it, if you will, but dismantle it

to examine it. So we know how not to duplicate it and rebuild it again. Despite all this work, I feel like if we don't look at these systems, then we're going to persist for no reason, because they'll come back in a different way. For whatever reason, it will come back in a different way. So how do we keep that from happening?

Susan Lacke

Absolutely. And it kind of goes back to what I was saying earlier about how I'm usually the first deaf person that people have ever talked to. And so it is an honor to be able to take some of those stereotypes and throw them out the window. And, and I don't have to do that deliberately. But I can do that just by existing. And um, you know, one of the things that really helped me through my time in Utah, when I was feeling really out of place for a long time, was that every day I could go into my classroom, and I could teach the 30 students that were in there the topic of the day, but also, as a deaf woman, I have knowledge, I have authority. I have a personality, I have humanity. And every day, for 30 students at a time, I could be a model for existing in this world and not be questioned about it. Because my students knew if they asked me dumb questions that probably wouldn't go well for them. So they were forced every day to sit in their chairs and listen to me talk. And you could see from the first day of class, where they all looked at each other like Oh, my god, what do we say, what do we do? Is she retarded? What's happening? And then over time, that shifts to she's really cool, I'm learning a lot from her, I'm going to take another class with her. And that's what I knew I was doing it right. And so every day, thirty students at a time I could chip away and hopefully they would go into the world and they would treat people with disabilities or people who would have differences in some way with respect with kindness, where a lot of the the positive attributes that I hope I instilled in them. And I never once had to say please don't treat me differently because I'm deaf. I never had to say don't be a dick. I never had to do anything so blatant other than exist. That's the thing that got me out of bed every morning, and even today, with my writing, I don't write often about being deaf or having a disability. Sometimes I do and sometimes I get pushback on it. I recently wrote about a piece for NBC about what it's like to be a deaf person in this world where everybody's wearing masks. I got some pushback on well why should we accommodate you? There's hardly any deaf people. And I also got some people who took it to the extreme and said that people with disabilities are a drain on society, that my mother should have aborted me. And that was really hurtful. And yet, there were more people out there who said, I had never even considered that. Thank you. And that's the thing that gets me up in the morning, that's the thing that keeps me going. Like you said, I don't have to drive a Mack truck through the world in order to force change, but I do need to get up every single day. And I need to just I need to own my place in the world in whatever way that is. And today, I'm probably not going to leave my house because everybody's wearing a mask and I hate that. But I can still change the world by being on this podcast, I can still change the world by writing stories about people who have various differences and are, you know, existing in this world in a wonderful way. And I don't have to make a big thing. I'm just doing my job, I'm just living my life, and I'm just persisting.

Lisa Ingarfield

well, that's fantastic. And I think that's a perfect place for us to wrap up this wonderful conversation that has just been enlightening, educational, thought provoking, really learned a lot today, and I really appreciate you taking the time. Dr. Susan Leakey for being here with Shauna and I and sharing your experiences and your perspectives with us and our audience. Um, if you have comments, questions, please don't hesitate to email us at info at unfazed podcast.com we will drop some links for further reading into the show notes for this podcast. So that if you're interested in learning more about ableism ableism and triathlon or endurance sport or just kind of thinking about this more deeply, we hope that this podcast has nudged you in that direction.