**Summary**

We talk about when we first “met” ourselves, how we evolved as people, and being happy with who we are. There’s a fair amount of politics talk, some talk about differences between Japan and California and between California and Alaska.

**Transcript**

K: Lately, I've been thinking about how happy we are, and mostly that's because I had a client the other day in the middle of the session stop and look at me and say, "You seem really happy." I was like, "Thank you. I am." It was surprising to me because I had been sitting there with my... I have what I think of as a therapist scowl, where I furrow my brows and pay attention. So for them to read that as happiness was a little bit shocking to me. We started getting into a conversation about happiness, and they wanted to drill down into mine, and I was like, "Right on." because I don't do that tabula rasa thing, I do like, "Hey, you can ask me anything. I'm an open book." I think all therapists should be, and I also think if your therapist doesn't have a therapist, run, because your therapist needs a therapist.

C: I think that blank slate is intended to keep boundaries and that you've learned to keep boundaries in other ways.

K: Yeah, and I think it's not appropriate in the day and age of social media because I'm on Twitter, we're doing this podcast. Anybody can find out anything they want to know about me. I have a website. And so I think when that was kind of the ethos, it was well and way before social media. And I know because I've practiced therapy before social media and after social media, and I've had clients say, "How do I know you're real if you're not on Facebook?" So feeling like they couldn't trust me if my life wasn't out there for them to see. And I think with YouTube and Snapchat and Twitter and everything else that's out there, we're so used to being able to look into people's lives and Google someone and by their social media, their Instagram or what have you, get a sense of at least what they want the world to think their life is.

C: Right. We're careful not to put anything on there that would facilitate stalking. So I think that's part of why therapists are advised don't share your life with your clients is because you're not really sharing your life, you're just sharing information about yourself.

K: Yeah. And we have certain security measures in place for that. And so anything a client wants to know about me I'll always tell them, because I view the hour as theirs and if they want to spend their hour talking about me, I ask them, "Are you sure you want to spend your time talking about me?" And sometimes they're like, "Yes, because I want to know about you." And I welcome that and I honor and respect their process. Because it could be part of their trust and bonding process.

C: That was my thinking when you said that, is that I would want to know more about somebody to trust some, just because I so often encounter things that surprise me from people if I haven't asked those questions.

K: Yes, and my judgment is something that people are really relying on. And so knowing what opinions my judgment is based on. For me, something that I find most shocking is when I have very devout Christian clients who are okay with me being an atheist. And I'm just so humbled and honored by that leap of faith and their expansion of what somebody who has good judgment is their definition of that. Because to include me, it really does for some clients challenge their belief systems, but that's not what this podcast is about. That's not what this episode about. This episode is about knowing yourself and living your best life, and living your truth, which we kind of talked about before…. Something I tell all of my clients is that the first person I met when I got off the plane in Japan was Kisstopher. I feel like for me, I didn't know myself as deeply as I do in Japan. And that's a function I think primarily of me not being able to speak Japanese fluently, and not being able to understand it fluently. So even when I'm riding the subway, and I'm going out in the world every day, there's a level of isolation that I didn't have in the United States.

C: That's interesting. Because when you said that, I was thinking it's like taking you as like a puffy sticker and separating you from the background of San Jose and Santa Clara where you lived for most of your life, and putting you in Japan and where it's clear where your edges are. Because there's not that integration with the background that you had from living someplace most of your life.

K: Yeah. And everything's new and so I found myself reacting to things I had never encountered before. And those reactions really taught me a lot about myself. Through living in Japan, I've really been able to embrace anti-biasm and I've really been able to embrace breaking down my own walls, breaking down my own stereotypes, and really getting to know people on a level that I didn't before. I feel like in California I was surrounded by like-minded people.

C: Yeah. And I think something that we haven't mentioned is that you came to Japan alone-

K: Yeah I did.

C: Before Rasta and I came over, so I was still finishing school so that we could get a working visa for over here. So you came ahead to kind of prepare the waters.

K: Yeah. And that was miserable. I cried myself to sleep every night missing you, every single night. I missed you so terribly. It was horrible. That part was horrible.

C: Yes. That's when we discovered VoIP services. Skype hadn't become a thing yet, but-

K: Yeah, there was no Skype. And so we were talking on a phone and I had a prepaid cellphone and every day I would have to make sure it was charged so that I could talk to you. It was really horrible. When I was living in... Sorry Okazaki. When I was living in Okazaki because it doesn't have the same... Okazaki's public transportation is not as good as Nagoya's public transportation. I lived on the top of a hill and the nearest grocery store was 30 minutes away from my house. And so there was no way for me to get groceries, so I was living off of convenience food and the hot things that the convenience store... Thank goodness that Japan has like great convenience food now.

C: Yeah. It's not taquito roll level, but it's got things.

K: Yeah. I was living off of, and then the electricity was so bad that I had to turn off all the lights if I wanted to cook rice. Okazaki was rough for me. I don't think that's everybody's Okazaki experience but that was mine.

C: Yeah. And you were in a dormitory where you had your own room, but it was still-

K: No I had my own apartment.

C: You had your own apartment?

K: And the apartment building was owned by the Japanese language school I was going to.

C: Right. So yeah, that was rough. And I think I ended up flying over about two weeks later, just for the weekend, just because things were so rough.

K: So hard. So, so rough.

C: So you met yourself.

K: Yeah. So I met myself, but I found that when it wasn't until I moved from Okazaki to Nagoya that I really started to confront my own ideas and my own understandings of who people are. What was really interesting to me is that there are girls that if they were in California dressed the way that they were dressed, who they are, I would understand it so differently than how I understand what that's supposed to mean in Japan. And that made me start thinking about, well who am I to really judge someone based on how they're dressed or think that that actually tells me anything about other than what they purchased to wear? Not even saying what they like to wear because that's a budget issue. And so I really started breaking down like how I classify people, how I think about people and nuance. Because at first glance, at first blush, Japan seems like an island of the same. Everybody feels like they're wearing a variation of a uniform. And it really isn't that much fashion diversity as compared to the United States. I can't remember the last time I saw somebody in person with dreadlocks.

C: Gosh, I don't remember either. I don't know if I ever have in Japan.

K: I saw one hippy chick. I've seen one hippy chick in the 12 years we've been in Japan, I've seen one.

C: I mean in podcasting things I've seen people who live in Japan and have dreadlocks, but I don't know that I've ever met anybody in person that has them.

K: Right. And I think when I go to the Black Women in Japan events, sometimes I'll see dreadlocks. There's a few girls that have dreadlocks. But the hippy chick of California with the Soho look with the peasant skirts-

C: Oh yeah, I know what you mean.

K: I can't remember the last time I saw a peasant skirt.

C: Yeah, I don't remember either. I know I've seen it, but I don't remember when.

K: I can't remember the last time I saw somebody wearing a pair of flip flops. I've never seen anybody wearing a pair of flojos, which were like my favorite shoe when you first met me. Those are flip flops with a platform on them. So things like that, like just having every day be unfamiliar for a really long time, made me drill down into what is it I think I know about people and why do I think I know it? And for me, I wear basically the same thing every day. I wear a tank top with a buttoned down shirt and jeans.

C: Well, I think you have a greater color variation than most Japanese workers.

K: Yeah, I have. I wear vivid colors. When I taught English for a while, there was a client that used to love to say vivid to me every time he saw me.

C: Well, if you do the opposite of romanization rather than putting a Japanese word into English, you put English word into Japanese, vivid becomes bibido.

K: Yeah. And so that's one of my favorite words. For me, also confronting my political views because being outside of the United States, I'm really, really shocked by understanding global power. And the United States is a super power. Absolutely. Definitely. But it is not the most powerful nation in the world. And growing up, I truly honestly believed that the United States and Russia were the two most powerful nations in the world. And in being in Asia, North Korea impacts my day life, way more than the United States does and way more than Russia or China does.

C: Yes. I think that's just some more nuanced understanding of power. Because I think militarily the United States is still the most powerful country in the world. Its budget for the military exceeds the budget for the next 15 countries all put together. And when we were growing up, the USSR and the US definitely were. I don't know if you did them, but I know that I remember distinctly doing drills for when the nuclear bombs drop, hide under your desk.

K: That makes no good sense.

C: It makes some sense.

K: Okay. This digression is totally distracting me. I want you to know, did you meet yourself when you came to Japan? What was the experience like for you?

C: No, I didn't. I met myself when I moved to California. Because I moved from Alaska when I was 18 or 19, I'd have to do math to figure that out, to California. And I think that's when I met a much wider variety of people in a context where I didn't already know them. Because in high school I knew people who were gay, for example, and some of them were out at the time and some of them didn't come out for another decade or so. I was in show choir and our instructor was flamboyantly gay. But I was so sheltered that I didn't realize that he was. And I remember one time when I was at the University of Alaska where I was for a semester until I figured out I didn't belong there, I tried out for a play, not knowing the content of the play and it was about two gay men. I didn't get the part, but when the play was produced, the director said, "I should have cast you. You had more feeling in your audition than either of the actors did in the performance, but I was worried that because you're only 16 that your parents would interfere." So moving to California and moving specifically to San Francisco, going to work for a company where half of the staff was LGBT was an eyeopener. Just seeing kind of the people I had always assumed things about, those things weren't necessarily true.

K: So for both of us it seems like confronting our biases really helped us get to know ourselves better.

C: Yeah. Because I think that at core people are the same. It's when you hit their boundaries where they intersect with other people that they're different.

K: Yeah. For me, the group of people that I have changed my opinions about the most are white Americans. And I think that's because in my therapy practice in the United States, I really didn't have a lot of white American clients. But here in Japan I do. And really getting to know them and seeing the diversity, I didn't realize how much I was stereotyping that group of people, specifically white, straight, white, cisgender or heterosexual males. I had no idea how much I had stereotyped that group of people. I didn't realize that I had biased my understanding, and for me, I'm really humbled and honored by all the white cishet men that kind of see me and open up and share their lives with me and let me in, and we do lots of great work together, and it has made me grow so much as a person. I don't have that stereotype anymore. I don't have that bias. When I think of toxic masculinity now, I don't think of it as a person. I think of it as a construct. To me, that's a very important shift. Toxic masculinity isn't any one person. It is a construct and women are just as guilty as holding up toxic masculinity and the patriarchy as men are. There are tons and tons of YouTube channels that are talking about the myth of toxic masculinity. It's not a myth. There is also toxic femininity. That's not a myth. Those are just facts Jack. So for me really getting out of my own head, getting out of my comfort zone and challenging myself to be a better Kisstopher and saying, "Girl, you need to be the best version of yourself." And for me the best version of anybody is the anti-biased version. … The reason I say anti-biased rather than person-first, which is a wholly different cast, but person-first and anti-biasm are two separate things. Person-first is saying like, "He is a man with autism." Rather than saying, "He's autistic." And I think for you specifically that type of person-first language, you hate the “with”.

C: I don't hate the “with” if people are using it to apply it to themselves. I hate the with if I say for example, "I am an autistic person." And somebody comes along and corrects me and says, "No, no, no, you're a person with autism." And then my thought is, "Well you're a person with assholism." It would be like telling somebody that they're pronouncing their own name wrong. If somebody else says that, "I'm a person with a disability", I have no issues with that. If somebody wants to come and tell a disabled person, "You have to say you're a person with a disability", that's what I have an issue with. And I think it's interesting that you mentioned white cishet men, because I think that in Japan they are removed from the context of their power as a group. … As a math person I think about emergent properties of groups, that you can take individuals, and each individual will not have a particular characteristic but when you put them all together, they do. And so I think that people can be the same way that like most people don't think that they're racists. I think there are a few people who are like, "Yeah, I'm a racist. Of course I am, because my race is the best." But even people who don't think they’re racist, even people who try not to be racist can-

K: Can be biased.

C: Can be biased.

K: And biasm is different than racism.

C: And can participate in racist acts. Can participate in acts that uphold the whole system of things without any intent to do so. And that was one thing that I realized when I moved to California about myself is that a lot of what I had been doing, not even so much with my actions as with my inaction and my silence on things, was upholding systems that were oppressing people.

K: And I think too, once we got married, you were surprised how racist our world is.

C: Yes.

K: It's like a lot of people in your life were okay with you dating me, or kind of okay with you dating me?

C: They were not okay with it. No.

K: Yeah. They were okay with us being friends. They're like, "It's charitable of you to be my friend, but completely inappropriate for us to couple."

C: They had assumed that I was gay because of the lisp that I have from the dental work that I have done. And because of the way that I walk because of my autism, and they were disappointed that I married a black woman rather than being gay. And they think gay people are doomed, so it was not a strong endorsement of you. That was a shock.

K: Yeah. And then I think to this when we were out in the world times that you would see people treat me in obviously racist ways. I'm very pale skinned so I know that I have light-skin privilege and I know that I have a little bit of passing privilege in that people don't always know what I am. And I do air quotes with “what” because I'm a human being. That's all you should be worried about. But people are always wondering what I am. And so in California, they didn't know if I was from India or if I was from the Middle East, if I was from Latin America. They were completely clueless if I was mixed. They had no clue.

C: "So Kisstopher, how do you get your tan so even?"

K: Yeah. "Where are your parents from? Where are your grandparents from?" I always prefer just straight up ask me, "What is your ethnic background?" Because I feel like I understand what racism is, but I feel that race other than human race is a social construct and that's a topic for a different cast. For you, doing that sort of education really happened for you in California and for me that kind of education really happened for me in Japan.

C: Right. And I don't think it's a California versus Japan thing, that there's a qualitative difference between them, it's just that neither one of us was in a comfortable usual space.

K: Right. That's what I think it is. I think it's both of us getting out of our comfort zone, literally getting out of what we know, getting out of what we grew up with, getting away from that structure that supported our development through youth, and going into a structure that we have to relearn everything. Coming to Japan, I literally had to really learn how to do everything including use the bathroom, because there are squat toilets where there's no toilet seat and you're just supposed to squat down. And in public bathrooms they don't always have toilet paper in the stalls. "What's going on in Japan. Like really!" Was my first impression. Like, "Are you kidding me?" Thank goodness I obsessively collect tissue so I always had tissues with me. But the first time I encountered a squat toilet, it was like so traumatic. Just so, so traumatic.

C: I have an admission to make and we've already had the mark that says it is not safe for work on Patreon so I don't feel too bad about this. I'm not sure if I'm lucky or just a good planner, I have never used a squat toilet.

K: But I think for men, you don't have to... Would you know the difference, peeing in a squat toilet versus peeing in a truck?

C: I've peed in squat toilets.

K: So you have had to use a squat toilet. I'm so good I can do anything in a squat toilet. Thank you Okazaki. Because-

C: …so going to a squat toilet and coming out with the taxes done?

K: Okazaki, a lot of the public toilets are squat, there is no other option, even inside the train station. I don't know if that's the case anymore, but like 15 years ago it was the case where it was a squat toilet even in the train station.

C: I still encounter that on a pretty regular basis.

K: Yeah. And in Yokaichi, at the toilet, there is a squat toilet with no toilet paper and they don't even have a dispenser to sell toilet paper. So I obsessively collect tissues because I'm obsessed with toilet paper and I don't trust that any bathroom will ever have it.

C: Getting to know yourself.

K: Yeah, getting to know myself, embracing who I am. And so for me, the fact that I had to relearn how to do everything, how to do grocery shopping, how to use the bathroom, how to pay my bills, going to the convenience store to pay my bills, not be able to write a check. All of those things were completely different. It broke me completely down when I first arrived. And I just started rebuilding myself and for me it gave me a chance to, as an adult, build the Kisstopher I wanted to be, and build the habits that I wanted to have. And I feel like that is the essential part of living my best life because now I am authentically who I want to be, everything about me is a choice.

C: Do you feel like you got to have a midlife crisis without going through a midlife crisis?

K: No.

C: Okay. I'm just thinking the popular characterization of midlife crisis is that people go find themselves.

K: Let's say like those people who do like “the let's go to India and meditate” kind of thing?

C: Yeah.

K: Okay, I don't think of that as a midlife crisis.

C: I think of that as them like partway have to pay through their adult life or part way through going, "I don't know who I am and I don't know who I want to be, and I need to figure that out."

K: But I knew who I was and I knew who I wanted to be. I wanted it to be somebody who was not paying for a war I didn't support. So for me, being in Japan as a political choice, it wasn't a go-find-myself choice.

C: No, I wasn't saying it was.

K: Okay.

C: Just that the kind of rebuilding that you were doing is what-

K: Was a complete shock.

C: Yeah.

K: Was horrific and I didn't account for everything that would happen. I was really, really naive.

C: People are not legos.

K: No. They are not. I was really shocked by how much I had to grow and change, and deciding to be in Japan, it's not an easy country. Japan does not make it easy to immigrate and Japan does not make it easy to be here because Japan does not care about you the individual.

C: It was recently voted number one on worst places to move to in Asia. So, shout out.

K: Shout out to our country of choice. Yeah, it's official. So how did you feel? Do you feel like moving to Japan broke you down in any way?

C: No, I don't. And I think that's because of The Autism and because I knew-

K: The autism?

C: Yeah. The Autism, capital letters on both of those. My autism, I own it. And because I saw what you went through when you came here, I think that I was much more prepared and I think that things here make much more sense in a structural way for me than they did in the United States because most things, not all things, but most things are set up to be structured for the good of society as a whole rather than for the convenience of the individual. And so I can accept being inconvenienced because I know that overall the system is more efficient.

K: But a couple summers ago when there was no butter, that jacked you up a little bit. When it was so hot-

C: Well that was unexpected.

K: When it was so hot, they stopped making butter.

C: There was a couple of summers ago there was no butter. There was a long interesting article about it, but I will not go into it here about dairy production in Japan. So I will resist the urge to go into that. And then after the Great East Japan earthquake and tsunami, which was eight years ago now, so it was March 11th, 2011, so it's been more than eight years. There were shortages after that because they were being diverted to the affected areas.

K: And that was hard. Most people don't know that it was a month of earthquakes. It was the big earthquake but then we had earthquakes of about that size. We were having several earthquakes a week and sometimes several earthquakes a day. And many countries were ordering people to return back. Like Australia sent out an order requesting that all Australians return and leave Japan. There was a mass exodus and it was really a trying, difficult time. And what made it more difficult for me, I had to stop paying attention to any foreign news, was the way it was being misreported. I was so offended but that's for a different cast. We're talking about knowing ourselves and living our best life and the time after the earthquake was not that.

C: I knew that I needed to get better about having the staples that I like to eat, like canned tuna fish for example, stocked up. Which is why we have a pantry in what should be a bedding closet, which we've talked about before.

K: Yes. The earthquake did cause the creation of our pantry because I was like, "Man, if something hits, we have no food."

C: I don't want to mischaracterize it. There were no food shortages. What there was is that nonperishable staples were diverted from other areas to the disaster area so that they could be distributed.

K: Yes. And they asked us to please ration yourselves and please conserve. So for me, part of knowing myself is standing in my truth, and part of standing in my truth, a big part of that was changing the way I did therapy. Because I will admit that when I first started doing therapy in Japan, I didn't want certain things to be known about me in the public. Like I didn't want anybody to know my religious or political views. And then I found that people were okay with that until Trump came into office. And then when Trump came into office, I had people coming and asking me, "Did you vote for Trump?" And saying, "I can't say anything else to you. I can't talk to you until I know who you voted for." And I was very honest in that I didn't vote for Trump, but I was also very honest and this makes me rare. I understand this makes me real and it upsets and offends a lot of people. I do not think that Trump being voted into office destroyed the world. I just don't. … I think that Trump being voted into office is bringing to highlight the focus that America hadn't gone as far as they thought they did, and I think a lot of people did not understand, just still to this day do not get why Obama was voted into office. It wasn't this big vote of brotherly love. It was the majority of the people that voted Obama into office voted Trump into office as well. And those are the people who are dissatisfied with the political structure the way it is and want things to change. They want jobs brought back to the United States. They want a renaissance of manufacturing and all of those types of things. … Whether or not I think that Trump can do that is neither here nor there. What I think is that the majority of Trump's supporters are not racist. I do think a great many of his supporters are, I do think he absolutely has the white supremacist vote and all of those kinds of things. But it was really nice for some Trump supporters to sit across from a woman of color saying, "Dude, I get that you're not racist. I get that when you think of Make America Great Again, you're not thinking about racial equality, you're thinking about financial, having America be a financial superpower again and a manufacturing superpower again." And I get that they weren't necessarily thinking about race when they cast their vote.

C: Well, I think too being outside of the US, it's easier to take a more distant view and say Hillary Clinton, I don't have any reason to think is personally racist. She's never been.

K: I think her position on Israel absolutely reflects racism to me.

C: That's why I say I don't have any reason to think that on a personal level she is. But if she's on the evangelical, like that whole thing about Israel should exist so that it can bring about the apocalypse, then yes, that is a racist viewpoint. But I think that she would have continued the racist policies that Obama had, that Bush had, that Clinton had, that Bush had, that Reagan had. Have intervention in primarily non-white countries in ways that destabilized the region. So I think on the day-to-day level, being white it was hard for me to see before sharing my life with you, how personal it would feel to other people around me to pick one racist over another racist in terms of the effect.

K: And I think a lot of people fell into that where they're like, "Hey, I don't get why you're calling me a racist because I voted for this guy." And so I think it was very healing for them for to sit across from somebody who had a different political view and say, "Hey, I'm not branding you as a racist." And I think we need to talk to people who don't agree with us. We need to stop being so angry or so afraid to talk to someone who doesn't agree with us and say, "Hey, I want to get with you. I want to understand your thinking." And for me that's part of living my best life, it's standing in my truth and knowing there are some things I won't change my opinions on. Like for me, I'll always think racism is bad. I'll always think any support of racism is bad. And when I talk to my other siblings in the world, people that do want to make the world a better place but disagree on how to do that, I feel like more positivity comes out of us figuring out where we meet. Meeting in the middle and not just surrounding ourselves with like-minded individuals. Which this comes into play with how we got to know ourselves. When we stopped surrounding ourselves with like-minded individuals is when we really got to know ourselves, as to how I feel ... Because coming to Japan, Japan's a very conservative country in some ways and very liberal in other ways and completely socialist in a lot of ways, but also completely capitalist in a lot of ways. There's a lot of dichotomy and things that you think wouldn't go together that just worked really well in Japan. But coming here I was forced to talk to people who didn't think like me and forced to work with people who don't think like me. And that made me challenge my own thinking and many of my views have evolved, and many of my opinions have evolved. And I'm happy for that evolution, I'm grateful for the ability to evolve and I find that for me I have the most dynamic growth and the most exciting growth when I'm confronting my own beliefs.

C: Well, I think anybody who follows us on Twitter knows that I am not middle of the road in politics.

K: At all.

C: At all. But I don't think that you are either. I know that when I met you, you were very much into Black Pride and-

K: And still am.

C: Still am. Yes.

K: That hasn't changed. I'm Black and I'm proud. Say it loud.

C: Doing things like shopping Black and different things to try.

K: I love all my Black-owned products. I love Black-owned, it's a beautiful thing.

C: I think when you say you've come to understand people more, I think it's an understanding for me that the system is broken and that people respond to a broken system in different ways. And so just because somebody responds to the broken system in a different way doesn't make them a bad person. I think there are certain political positions that if you take them, you're a bad person. But you can't elect political positions, you have to elect politicians.

K: True. For me, I feel like everyone can live their best life by getting to know themselves. And I think the best way to get to know yourself is to step out of your comfort zone, go someplace you've never been before and talk to people you wouldn't normally talk to. Don't isolate yourself, challenge yourself, challenge your thinking and ask people. And I'm saying like don't ... For me, I have spent time with Nazis and Neo-Nazis and I have spent time in white supremacists groups when I was younger. I actually went to a white supremacist camp and hung out with the white supremacists and talked to them and got to know their thinking, which is dangerous. Please do not do that if you are a person of color. They knew I was a person of color. I wasn't passing. I think doing that is extremely dangerous. … I had always had this notion of trying to understand other people's ideals, but to me that was still very safe because at the end of the day I could go back into the bosom of, for me, where I lived at the time. And that was very much in an enclave of the LGBTQ+ community. And I had a lot of support and a lot of love. Whereas in Japan, I come home and it's just me. I don't have an extended support system. I have you, I have Rasta, and that's it. I don't have a big group of friends who are like-minded that I can go and vent and get all these things out to. It's just our nuclear family and that's it for my home base and what I think of as like-minded. And I don't think of you as being as like-minded as some of my peers were at the time.

C: No, I'm not. You and I disagree on a lot of things.

K: Yes. Quite a few. Especially when it comes to politics.

C: Yeah.

K: I don't know, I guess just the differentness of it, and the fact that even our home is different. The fact that our pantry is a futon closet, and our kitchen has zero counter space. All of those things, everything, I just know that I'm someplace different and I'm someplace new and I feel like that invites me being something different, something new.

C: I think so. I would caution that what you should not do in my opinion, is go into another community and demand that they educate you. Because this should be a process of self discovery, not being taught by others. I know that a lot of marginalized communities are constantly educating other people in an effort to have their humanity and their rights respected.

K: Yeah. And it's exhausting.

C: Yeah. It's emotional labor, is the technical term for it.

K: So I think go with an observing eye, a listening ear, and a closed mouth. Not a questioning mouth: a closed mouth.

C: Good point.

K: Because that's what I do.

C: You know I'm a fan of a closed mouth.

K: Yes, you are. You belong to two marginalized communities, you belong to the disabled community and you belong to the autism community. How would you want people curious about autism to enter into a community of autistic individuals?

C: No, I think Twitter is a great resource for it. If you go to the #ActuallyAutistic hashtag, you can hear us, autistic people, talking about our lives, typically with each other. And then there's also an #AskingAutistics hashtag if you specifically want to ask your friendly random autistic passer-by to answer your questions. I think that asking questions on Twitter in a general sense is always appropriate because people can choose to answer or not answer. It's when you corner somebody who's marginalized-

K: Marginalized people.

C: Right. And say, "You, answer my questions."

K: And I think too, don't argue about the answer.

C: Yes. If what you're looking for is validation or an ally cookie or something like that, then that's a different thing. And in my writing I've paid for sensitivity reads, and I've done sensitivity reads. And for those who aren't familiar, what it is, is you read a book and point out issues where the representation of a marginalized group is not correct or not good or is harmful. And some people hire a sensitivity reader to provide them cover. And I think about my own life. If I say something that is anti-Black, I don't have any right to say, “but I can't possibly be saying something that's anti-Black: my wife is black.”

K: Why did you choose the least likely thing?

C: Well, because then that makes it easier, because people can't just point it out.

K: No, you say anti-abled stuff. That's where I have an eye on you. What you do sometimes, you over empathize and you go into your own Black-girl head space and so you get in your feels and you really like to channel your inner Black girl. So don't put out there that you might say something anti-Black that is so just not okay for you to even put it out into the universe, because you don't. Sometimes you react. Because sometimes people are like, "Girl, is this you? Who is this?" Because you borrow my voice sometimes, not intentionally.

C: Not intentionally. I do my best.

K: You don't, I can have a go down, but you do sometimes say anti-abled stuff. And so I want to differentiate between #AbledsAreWeird. That's a hashtag that's started by this really lovely, lovely Twitter friend of ours. And that to me is anti-abled stuff. But sometimes you go in hard on ableism, and you go in really hard on abled people.

C: Yes. And I will probably continue to do that. So I think that I will continue to go in hard against the majority-

K: So going against people who are abled versus ableism are two different things and a topic for a different cast. But for me when you say something, and I'm like, "Yo dude, that's not okay. That crosses my boundary." We have a conversation about it.

C: Yes, we do.

K: And I think that's the point that you're making, is have a conversation rather than get in your ego and get in your defensive place and just be like, "Wow, this wasn't my intention." Explain what your intention was and then be open to the feedback if you're going to be on social media. We do have a cast coming up in a couple of weeks where we will be talking about ableism and racism, isms and all of that, but I don't know, probably... Because we have like a year of the cast planned out because I'm a planner, but I don't know when that is. But it's coming up. I don't know when, it's coming up. Stay tuned. Check it out. It's coming.

C: Plannerism ensures it'll happen.

K: Yes. So I think it's important and knowing that we do have a year of the cast, I think over a year of the cast planned because we really do love doing this and we really are just humbled and honored by the community that we're creating. And you guys are just so beautiful and so open and so accepting of us. We really do appreciate every single listener. We really do appreciate everyone who participates on the website, who subscribes to the newsletter, who is part of the Patreon and Kofi and all of those things and communicates with us on social media. We love and appreciate all of you. Thank you so much.

C: Yes, thank you. Thank you for letting us be us.

K: Yeah. Thank you for tuning in next week, man. It's a good feeling. We're all in our feels about it. Hey, that's me for today. You got anything you want to add?

C: Yeah, I feel like now people genuinely know who we are because we stayed on topic this time.

K: I feel like we kind of did though, because this is about knowing ourselves and that is about breaking down barriers and boundaries. Standing in our personal truth so that we can live our best anti-bias selves.

C: Yeah. So ,come back next week for more digression.

K: Yup. Bye.

C: Bye. Bye.