We talk about raising kids in Japan even though we’ve only raised one, about schooling even though we didn’t attend here below the university level, and about various digressions.

**Transcript**

K: So, lately I’ve been thinking a lot about having babies and raising babies in Japan. And educating them and just all things babies.

C: Okay, but you know that we’re beyond that right? Rasta’s 25, and I am not going to participate in any having babies project.

K: So, but if I did have a baby, we’d be super rich because

C: We would be because both of us have been surgically sterilized, so

K: Yes. Well, I don’t think of mine as surgical sterilization. I had a hysterectomy.

C: It is litera- yes.

K: I don’t think of it as surgical sterilization.

C: Okay.

K: Like, I didn’t have the hysterectomy to be sterilized.

C: Right.

K: So, you did get surgically sterilized. You had the vasectomy for the purpose of sterilization.

C: Yes.

K: And I had cancer, so that’s (laughs) completely different motives for having those bits removed.

C: Yes.

K: You didn’t have really- you had really tiny bits removed because I did watch your vasectomy.

C: Right.

K: And that made him so nervous. I don’t know why he offered to let me be in the room if it was going to make him nervous.

C: Yeah. “Hey do you want to watch? What, you’re saying yes? Now I’m nervous.”

K: Yeah because I was like “yes, please, I want to watch surgery.”

C: Okay. And that was only under local anesthesia, so I was awake.

K: Mmm. Not really.

C: I wasn’t lucid, but I was awake.

K: You think you were awake. I don’t think you were awake.

C: I think I was awake.

K: I don’t think you were.

C: Okay.

K: So, just bam, right out the gate with a digression. So, just straight up, I blame all our digressions on you. I feel like I am laser focused always.

C: You are laser focused, and today you are laser focused on having babies.

K: (laughs) No. I’m laser focused on when Rasta has babies. The decision to do like… public local school in Japan or international schools in Japan.

C: Mmm.

K: And here’s the quandary with the international schools: because of my position as a therapist in Nagoya, I have worked with heads of a lot of the international schools, and I’ve worked with a lot of teachers. And here’s the thing, all of the teachers say, “I don’t recommend my school.”

C: Mm. That’s tough.

K: And that’s like- yeah, so, and even like some people in head positions are like “I don’t recommend my school.”

C: Uh-huh.

K: So that’s like “whaaat?” And the international schools here cost bank.

C: Yes they do.

K: They cost grip.

C: Yes.

K: So I think that’s so weird. So, I don’t personally have any… a couple of the schools, I’ve gone and sat in the classes and stuff, but I don’t have a high… a high view of schools in general.

C: Right.

K: So we did a hybrid- if you’re a regular listener you already know this- we did a hybrid of public school and homeschooling, and it worked out great for us.

C: Public, private, and home, yeah.

K: Yeah.

C: But Rasta was out of elementary and secondary education by 12, so.

K: Yeah because he graduated high school and went into college.

C: Right.

K: So, for his kids, like… raising a bilingual kid, everybody feels like I’m an expert on that because Rasta is bilingual and bicultural, and I think it looks- he makes it look effortless. It was a lot of blood sweat and tears.

C: It was.

K: Mostly tears on my part.

C: Yeah.

K: Mostly sweat on my part. And blood on his.

C: But he can’t prove it. That is not an admission of guilt.

K: (laughs) So we have a running joke, it’s a really dark joke, but okay. I feel like if you’ve hung tough with us and you like- you know, you’ve been with us for a while, you know that we have dark sense of humors. So, Rasta’s entire life, and our entire marriage, we’ve had a joke about abuse journals.

C: Yes.

K: And it was because one day- I think it was on Oprah Winfrey- someone had an abuse journal. And then of course, me with my black soul, my black heart, I was like “that’s funny.” I told Rasta “don’t put that in your abuse journal” jokingly.

C: And it resonates with Nixon’s enemies lists, and there’s a long history behind it.

K: Yeah, and so in our family, I tell “ooo, I want to smack you in the mouth” and then he comes over and we give each other a kiss. “I want to smack your face” because we call kisses smacks. And so it’d be “ooo, I’m going to smack your face” and then I’d give him a kiss. And that’s a smack.

C: Yup.

K: I give him a kiss on his face, I give him a smack on the mouth. I give him a smack on the face.

C: Well because if smacking your lips is doing that thing, then when you do it against somebody else, you’re smacking them.

K: Exactly. That’s what I think. So, for years, I’ve been like “oo get over here, I’m going to smack you and you better not put that in your abuse journal.” And he’s like “oh, I am.” And then I tell you- and then our joke for us is we always say, “I don’t make the rules” whenever we’re saying something (laughs) whenever we’re making a rule, we’re like “I don’t make the rules.” Like “I didn’t just make that rule.” So it’s a whole thing. I don’t even know- what was I talking about?

C: You were talking about whether to put kids in public or private school.

K: So how did I get to abuse journal from there?

C: Because we were talking about how Rasta was out of public and private schools by 12, on to university.

K: Okay, yeah. So he’s thinking that he’s probably going to have kids in a few years. And thinking about like… how to educate them and where to educate them, and I don’t know because I work with a lot of Japanese nationals and everybody just bags on schools. Like, nobody has anything positive to say about any school.

C: I mean, for me, because I tutored a lot of kids – I taught briefly but I’ve tutored for a lot longer – I’ve probably tutored at least a hundred kids and adults through various things, schools are just not very well designed structurally for teaching.

K: What do you mean?

C: I mean that if you really want people to learn stuff, there are much better ways than schools with large classrooms. Or even smallish classrooms. Even let’s say, you know, fifteen to twenty kids to one teacher, the one to one really works a lot better. But to get a homogeneous knowledge base where everybody knows the same thing, that’s what schools were designed for originally – was, you know, to train people basically to be factory workers.

K: Mhmm.

C: And so they’re not really good at catering to original thinking and that kind of thing. There are teachers who make up for that deficit, but I’m saying schools as a structure are not good at teaching.

K: Well, and classroom size to me, I’ve always felt like there’s no way you can meet the need of every student when you have twenty-five kids in a classroom. It’s just not possible. So, I’ve always felt like the things I’ve wanted Rasta to learn, that it was imperative that I teach it. Like, I taught him to read. I taught him how to do math, I taught him how to write.

C: Right.

K: And so, I didn’t- I always viewed school as a place to go and reinforce all of the things that I taught him, but now I realize what a privileged life I had to be able to do that. That that’s a complete privilege and Rasta’s working really hard so he can create that privilege for- that privileged state for his child.

C: Right.

K: Because to not- to be able to have the time away from work to do that, you know.

C: Right. I mean, just to do the math - because you know I love to do the math – if you have a kid who is taking six classes a day, an hour long each class, fifteen kids per class. They’re only getting four minutes of attention each class.

K: Not even that because that’s not giving any teaching time.

C: Right, but I’m saying at maximum, the average kid could get four minutes of attention in each class, so twenty-four minutes in a day.

K: Mmm.

C: So, if you could as a parent sit down and work with your kid for a half hour, you could accomplish more as far as individualized learning than in six hours of school.

K: And so like, I recently had a client that was like “what- how do I help my child prepare for a test?” And the teachers sent home a sheet that was everything that was going to be tested on this big test that the kids had. And the teacher gave no instructions to the parents on what to do.

C: Mmm.

K: So I was like “make a photocopy of it, use it as a pre-test, post-test.”

C: Right. Right.

K: So, as a pre-test, have them take the test and then go and- then whatever they’re low on, because there’s something- the grading system in Japanese elementary school is interesting because I don’t know how to say triangle in Japanese, but I know how to say maru, double maru, hana maru, so like… circle, double circle, flower circle.

C: Triangle is sankaku, which just means three corners.

K: Okay. And so, that’s the grading system because- so they have like… red triangle with an exclamation point in it, triangle, circle, and double circle. And so you try not to get the red- the red triangle is like “holy moly man, you have Failed, capital F.”

C: Right.

K: And then the single triangle without the exclamation point in it is kind of- is like “you really need to study this.” So it’s like a D. And then the system doesn’t have a C.

C: Right.

K: The American system is A B C D and F.

C: Right.

K: Which I don’t- F is for failed.

C: And some places use E instead of F.

K: Right. So, they don’t have a C, like C is average, C is just barely meeting expectations for some schools, and so they have B and A, so the circle and the double circle. And they were like “well, my kid doesn’t have any triangles, but I’m concerned because they have a single circle in these two subjects, and they keep giving us kanji lists” but then I didn’t know that they were going to be studying compounds, so I was really- so kanji, there are four writing systems in Japan, there’s romaji which is like the regular American alphabet, and then there’s katakana which is used for foreign words

C: And also emphasis and animal words, too.

K: Animal words?

C: Yup.

K: Like what animal word?

C: Like elephant, like “zou” is often written in katakana.

K: It is. Trip on that. Mind blown.

C: Yeah. Plants, too, I should say. Plants and animals.

K: Plants? What plants?

C: Like the trees

K: I think chrysanthemum is written

C: Chrysanthemum is usually written as the kanji, kiku, just because it’s so long in katakana.

K: I’ve only seen chrysanthemum in katakana.

C: Interesting.

K: Right?

C: But there’s a place nearby us that has a lot of different trees, and they have each tree labeled with a sign in katakana of what that tree is.

K: Huh. Yeah, I don’t interact with the written world very much in Japan.

C: Yeah.

K: Like, I see writing all around me, but my kanji level is so bad- I’m like in second grade, and I’m not ashamed of that. I am who I am. I embrace- I stand in my truth and embrace it.

C: Yes. Okay, so you were saying there’s romaji, there’s katakana…

K: Yeah, and hiragana.

C: Right.

K: And that’s like the standard, um, the standard writing the most common way things are written for kids is hiragana, and then kanji which are the characters. And so that’s how like Chinese and Japanese are written. That’s the one most adults see.

C: Yeah, so katakana and hiragana are syllabaries. So they are literally just the way to pronounce a word.

K: So did you really rush me to get to hiragana so you could say it’s syllabaries?

C: Yes, I did.

K: You guys, if you could see like his eyes are so bright, he is bright eyed and bushy tailed to say that.

C: I am very pleased because a lot of people don’t know the difference between an alphabet and a syllabary.

K: Oo, you taught me the difference between an acronym and initialism.

C: I did, yes.

K: So, spin it, don’t leave out- everyone’s into spins now.

C: An acronym is a specialist type of initialism, so initialisms are made from the first letters of the various words.

K: Yes.

C: And if you can pronounce it as a word, then it’s an acronym.

K: Yes.

C: Like “scuba” – self contained underwater breathing apparatus.

K: Yeah. Or fornication under consent of the king.

C: You know, you keep saying that one, but there’s no historical evidence that that’s accurate.

K: Yes, there is. It is accurate. That’s what it stands for.

C: Okay.

K: F-U-C-K stands for fornication under consent of the king.

C: Really?

K: Yes it does.

C: See, and I feel like F-U-C-K stands for fucking up Chad and Kisstopher’s podcast.

K: (laughs) No it does not. No it does not. Our podcast is lovely. Our digressions are gorgeous and beautiful.

C: They are.

K: Because all of this is relevant.

C: But then something like FBI is just an initialism because you’re just saying the letters.

K: Yeah.

C: You’re not trying to pronounce the letters FBI as a word.

K: Try and pronounce it.

C: Try and pronounce it?

K: Feebi.

C: Fish.

K: Fibi.

C: I’d pronounce it fish.

K: Fibi.

C: Yeah, except you put an extra vowel in there.

K: Feebi.

C: Yeah but you need to

K: Feebi.

C: Fbuh or Fbi

K: Fbi

C: Yeah, there’s no vowel in between so

K: (laughs) This is the high-quality stuff they tune in for.

C: Yes.

K: (laughs)

C: This will be fun to transcribe.

K: (laughs) Yes it will be. And we truly- we have to give a shout out, I know I give a shout out all the time to our patrons, but seriously guys we so appreciate you because Chad’s AS is just lit these days so we really, really appreciate all the contributions that are helping us pay for transcription and helping us pay for, like, the website costs money- everything costs money. Nobody talks abut how expensive podcasts are, but this is expensive.

C: I feel like I talk about capitalism a lot.

K: You do, you do. And so if you haven’t hit up our Patreon, please do.

C: Okay, and so, and then kanji is the Chinese characters. “Kanji” literally means “Chinese characters.” “Kan” is China and “ji” is character.

K: Yeah.

C: And so those are the pictographs or ideographs or whatever you want to call them.

K: Yes. So, they didn’t- so I didn’t know- I thought, since I’m studying Kanji, and I’m studying radicals

C: Uh-huh.

K: And I didn’t know that that’s not how they teach them in school.

C: Right.

K: They just give them kanji lists, because I’m also studying grade one and grade two kanji, and I’m almost through grade two kanji because I found this really awesome YouTube channel that does kanji by the grades, and I was like “hey, I want to learn, I might as well learn it the way the kids do.”

C: Yeah.

K: And that means the kids when they’re tested on how to do compound kanji, that they don’t really know how to combine them, and so the parents didn’t know that they should be teaching them the kanji list plus compounds of the kanji, and their child failed the kanji test, and they were really upset and they were like “how should I know this?” And I was shocked that the answer wasn’t “ask the teacher.”

C: Right.

K: When I said that, they were like “I can’t ask the teacher, no.”

C: So, for people who are unfamiliar with Japanese writing, radicals are the small components of the individual kanji. So, some radicals are- have meaning all on their own. Like “tree” is its own radical. So, tree can appear on its own and has the meaning of tree and can also appear smaller inside of other kanji.

K: Yeah.

C: And radicals are how Japanese dictionaries are organized. In case you’ve ever wondered “how do you look up a picture?”

K: Oh, everybody’s wondering that babe.

C: Yeah.

K: Thank you for solving the mystery.

C: So you look up a picture by only looking at a small piece. And there’s only about a hundred different radicals. And looking that up, and then you count how many strokes are in the kanji and find it in the list. So- and online now you can select multiple radicals, so you just pick out the different pieces of the thing, and it figures out the word you mean.

K: Well and now they have those- because I love, um, “imiwa” and “Japan goggles”

C: Oh yeah.

K: Where you can just take a picture of it and it will tell you what it means.

C: Yeah.

K: So, I love that.

C: So, but… as happens in Latin, that we just think about in English, in Japanese, like, “Thursday” is “Mokuyoubi” which literally means “tree day.”

K: Yeah.

C: So, if you only teach your kid “tree” by itself, it’s pronounced “ki.” So they’ll learn “ki” but they won’t have any idea when they see it with the kanji that mean the day of the week that it’s not “kiyoubi” is “moku”

K: Yeah.

C: It’s “mokuyoubi”

K: So that has me wondering, like… how- so, I feel like parents have to be so smart these days. So much smarter than I had to be when I was a parent because in addition to this, in addition to- for in Japan- in addition to knowing how to teach kanji, you also need t know how to teach your kid math, you need to know how to teach your kid science, like you have to know how to teach your kid everything, including technology.

C: Yeah you do.

K: And I find that that’s true in the Japanese public system just like in the international school system.

C: Yeah it is. I know that when I went through school, taking calculus meant that I was in the advanced class, the AP class.

K: Yeah.

C: I didn’t learn any linear algebra, any statistics, and every kid I meet now learns some basic statistics and some basic linear algebra, like how to multiply matrices, in high school. So, when I went to Berkeley, everybody else had already encountered matrices, but I hadn’t, so I had to learn that on my own because they had done it in high school.

K: So what do you think about Kumon?

C: I think Kumon, which is structured lessons to get things through it, it’s mostly drilling.

K: So Kumon is the - from the country of India, Kumon is from the country of India- it is a style of learning math. And so it’s sort of like a math cram school, but here in Japan they also do English lessons.

C: Yeah, now it’s a company that does it. So, yeah, I think drilling has its place. I think that drilling on fundamentals can be helpful, but that there’s the assumption that I see, especially in math, that if you just drill on the fundamentals for long enough, people will kind of come to understand the higher level concepts all on their own.

K: Yeah, and all of the schools, international and public, expect instant recall for, like, addition and subtraction from zero to thirteen. Multiplication and division from zero to thirteen, so saying “what’s seven plus five? Twelve.” You have to be able to say it that smooth.

C: Right.

K: And have like instant recall.

C: Well, I think what the United States with No Child Left Behind where everything depends on the testing-

K: What?

C: The United States, the No Child Left Behind Act, which established that schools have to test kids and see how much they’ve learned.

K: Yeah.

C: That, a lot of teacher in the United States has worked education until it’s really test-focused.

K: Yeah.

C: But Japan has always been that way.

K: Yes it has been.

C: Because your grades don’t actually matter. Like, if you just get terrible marks all through elementary school and then score really highly on the jr. high entrance exam, you can go to a great jr. high.

K: Yeah.

C: If you do terribly all through high school and then score really well on the university entrance exam, you can go to Tokyo University, the top university in Japan.

K: Yeah.

C: So… it’s all focused toward getting high scores on these tests.

K: Yes.

C: And any time you focus on getting high scores on standardized testing, it’s not efficient to teach understanding. It’s only efficient to teach how to score highly on these tests.

K: And so for me, I feel really torn about school because another issue with the schools in Japan is that if you go to some of these private schools, not all Japanese universities recognize their diplomas, so there are several in Nagoya that are like- I think currently two or three IB schools, which I forget what IB stands for.

C: The International Baccalaureate Organization.

K: Yeah, and so one of the IB schools, they do a standard Japanese high school track, and they do a standard in-conjunction with the IB track. So you can get a standard Japanese diploma in addition to an IB diploma, and another school I think is just IB, and a third school I think is just IB.

C: No, those schools also do the U.S. based ones, so they’re certified through the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

K: Okay. But, some Japanese- I know a couple of the schools in particular, Japanese schools, do not recognize their diplomas.

C: Well, what they don’t do is they don’t recognize them as being Japanese diplomas.

K: No, they don’t recognize them as being- there are several schools that will not take students from their schools. Colleges.

C: Interesting, interesting.

K: Yeah, which I didn’t know. I learned because a parent reported that to me, and they were like “no, there’s a list of colleges that you can apply to if you graduate from this high school.”

C: Huh. And I know that timing is an issue too because a lot of the international schools line up with the American and British school year, where they start in September and finish sometime in early Summer.

K: Yeah.

C: and the Japanese school year is April to March.

K: Yup.

C: So, admissions- you have that gap after graduation of about nine months if you’ve graduated from the international schools that’s on the American or British system and want to enter a school that’s on the Japanese system.

K: And so, to me, it’s about… so, what worries me is like nowadays it feels like you have to know in elementary school what universities you’re hoping your child will go to.

C: Absolutely, yes.

K: and that just feels so overwhelming to me because I was not thinking- well I was thinking about college in third grade,

C: Yeah, you were.

K: But I wasn’t thinking about college in kindergarten.

C: But I think the extent to which you have to think about it is different here in Japan. So, here what you have to think about is like where might your kid want to work. Because most of the big companies only hire from a few universities. So, if you want to work at, let’s say, Toyota, there’s about ten or fifteen universities they hire from. You have to go to one of those universities if you want to work at Toyota straight out of university.

K: Yes.

C: To get to one of those universities, you have to score high enough on the test, and it’s easier if you come from certain schools, they’re known to get more students into these things, and the cram school industry- the private afterschool tutoring industry is huge in Japan. The Juku system.

K: And now it’s mostly Saturday school. That they do cram school on Saturdays because you have your “bus”- most kids have their musical instrument that they do, their physical activity whether that be a sport or dance, which dance is a sport, so they have like a club that is interest-based.

C: Right.

K: So like girl scouts, or calligraphy, or, uh, comic book manga drawing, that kind of thing.

C: Yeah.

K: That’s one day, and then they have another day for their sports activity, then another day for their band activity, like their musical activity, and then another day for their language activity, whatever they want their second language to be.

C: Yeah because we live by a cultural center, we see a lot of kids coming by with like drumsticks for taiko drums.

K: Yeah.

C: Like one day there’ll just be hundreds of kids with taiko drumsticks. I see a lot of bows for archery.

K: Yeah.

C: I know Nagoya University had a big archery club.

K: Yeah.

C: And then there are like the bags for the kids who are going to play tennis all on the same day. It’s a thing.

K: Yeah.

C: A lot of Japanese kids spend almost as much time in supplemental education as they do in public education.

K: Well that’s because there’s not neighborhoods, like to hang out.

C: Right.

K: And I don’t know, just culturally it’s so different. But Rasta was that busy, too, after school.

C: Yeah he was.

K: Rasta was busy five days a week after school, so we’re like- I’m pro-that. I know for some people like “when do the kids get to play? When do they get to have fun?”

C: Well if they’re not playing and having fun if it’s activities, then they should pick different activities.

K: Yeah. So, for me, I remember when Rasta was in kindergarten, and I remember when he got the list of a hundred words that he’s going to learn, and a hundred numbers that he’d learn – which is just one to one hundred.

C: Weird that.

K: (laughs) And then there was no, like, these lists came home with no instruction or anything. But I knew that “okay we need to figure out how to read these words.”

C: Yes.

K: And they were from the Dolch words

C: Yeah they were the Dolch sight words.

K: Yeah, they were the Dolch sight words. And I taught him how to read, but kindergarten did not teach him how to read.

C: Right.

K: And I was really disappointed with that. That was my first big disappointment in conventional education in the United States.

C: Well and now the pedagogical wisdom is to try and do flipped classes, where the kids are supposed to learn at home, and then they come to school and practice. Where the teacher can watch them practice and help them correct it.

K: Is that in the United States now?

C: Yeah, that’s the United States.

K: Because that’s not in Japan.

C: Some of the international schools are trying it.

K: Really?

C: Yeah. Our teacher friend in Tokyo, he’s trying it for his English students.

K: Mmm. But that’s like at the jr. high school level.

C: He’s at the high school level.

K: Okay. I couldn’t remember if it was high school or jr high school.

C: Yeah.

K: Huh. Interesting. So, yeah, so I’m stressed out man. Like, Rasta hasn’t even had kids yet, but I want his kids to have all of the advantages that he had.

C: Yeah.

K: And so

C: There’s no pregnancy.

K: Yeah, no pregnancy. Like, oh my god, no. I’m just barely out from under, come on, what are you saying? I don’t want to do that again. One was a struggle. I couldn’t imagine. Okay-

C: I’m not saying you being pregnant, I’m saying his girlfriend’s not pregnant.

K: Oh okay. So, no hate on like 50-year-old new moms, no hate on that, I’m just saying me, Kisstopher, who I am, I’m too weak for that. I’m weak sauce.

C: Okay, so yeah, lots of respect but yeah.

K: Yeah. And then, too, I have like this belief that I’m going to be dead at 60. Morbid thought. Don’t know why that’s in my head, but I believe it. I think because I’m so sickly right now.

C: So if you’re listening to this ten years from now and Kisstopher’s still alive

K: (laughs) She made it!

C: Send her an email saying “congrats!”

K: (laughs) That would be awesome. So, yeah, it’s just part of my neurosis, I just randomly think I’m going to die sometimes because I get so sick. And like, I have an illness called hereditary coproporphryia, HCP, and I think because it makes my blood feel corrosive because it has to do with the heme synthesis pathways, so it’s how my blood makes or doesn’t make something. And how it processes or doesn’t process heme, basically. So, that makes my blood feel corrosive, and so my blood starts to feel poisonous, which makes me feel like my insides are dissolving. It makes me feel like I’m going to be liquified.

C: Well you add in the lupus, which causes inflammation of your insides, and that does not help.

K: Right, so I’m inflamed but dissolving is how I feel. Plus, the lupus, man, makes me so exhausted. Like, I feel like I just can’t get out of bed, like I’m just dead on my feet.

C: Yeah.

K: Which I’m so grateful that we can record the podcast in bed because I am completely like mimi-level reclined.

C: Mm, yeah.

K: So mimi-leveled for all of you out there who are Mariah Carey fans, we’ve got to talk about it, so Mariah Carey has this thing where she likes to recline rather than sit up. So, yeah. I’m very Mariah Carey right now.

C: Okay, I didn’t know where they came from.

K: Yeah.

C: For, what, twenty something years you said, “are you going to go mimis?”

K: Yeah, no, mimis are actually a Mexican-Spanish term, so Spanish from Mexico, not Mexico-Spanish. Mexico-Spanish, I don’t know maybe it’s Castilian as well. So, anyways, when I was in that- I was in a foster family because I’m a foster kid, who they would call it mimis.

C: Okay.

K: So, because, I would have to often babysit her granddaughter. Which I’m like nine, ten years old, babysitting a four-year-old.

C: That makes sense.

K: Right, like what are they thinking? I was not keeping that kid safe at all.

C: Yeah. Yeah, no, you were not there. Like I remember I have lifetime certification in CPR from the American Red Cross.

K: Mhmm. Good for you.

C: Yup. That I got at eight years old.

K: (laughs)

C: So come on. I mean, really.

K: Yeah, I don’t know how to do CPR, but I know how to do infant CPR.

C: Mhmm.

K: Because I got certified when I was pregnant.

C: Yeah.

K: I was taking just a bunch of classes.

C: CPR, you just like… look around and holler “does anybody know CPR?”

K: So, I don’t know what to… what to do, like how to advise him. Like, what school. Because I want them to be bilingual, but I’m studying Japanese. So I don’t think that they should have to come over here and be forced to speak English because I think that they won’t want to hang out with us.

C: I think that English is so much more pervasive now, especially on the Internet, that there’s going to be a lot of enticements to learn English on the internet. Because a lot of the younger Japanese people that I’ve met- like younger meaning in their early twenties- who came from households where they were kind of allowed free-range on the Internet are much better at English than the ones where their parents structured their entire day around activities and testing for university and such. So it’s interesting because they find these things that are only available in English and then they learn it. And this is how we taught Rasta to read, was we did drilling with sight words and stuff, but also we handed him a Gameboy with Pokémon and said, “if you want to play, you’ve got to learn to read.”

K: Yeah. So yeah, I was thinking about that like books and stuff, but I really feel like they should do Saturday English school.

C: Mhmm.

K: And then have Saturday be English day.

C: Yeah, that could work. I know families who do that. Who do every other day

K: And you know I have this fantasy that they’re going to live near us and they’re going to go to- because we have like the cutest little preschool near our house and the kids look so cute, and I think it’d be so fun for you to pick them up from preschool twice a week.

C: Yeah?

K: Yeah. Because, you know I don’t pick anybody up from anywhere ever.

C: Yeah, no.

K: That’s not my thing. Like, you’ve got to make it to me.

C: Yes. And you’ve always been that way.

K: Yes, I have been. Like you’ve got to find your way, I’ll give you directions. I’ll give you directions with pictures even.

C: There was one day though that I remember you came, and you picked me up.

K: When?

C: Yeah. It was when we were at De Anza, you came and picked me up for lunch. Now, to clarify, you were driving my car.

K: Yeah, I thought no, returning your car is different from picking you up. Because I thought “I didn’t pick you up, I returned your car.”

(laughter)

K: Because I don’t pick people up. That’s not my thing. I don’t know why. It’s like… it’s completely neurotic at this point. I feel like it’s a neurosis or some kind of thing. It’s a tic because I just seriously, ooo, the thought of picking someone up, ooo, that stirs me up so bad.

C: Yeah.

K: And so this might make me a bad wife, but even when you travel internationally, I do not take you to the airport, and I do not pick you up from the airport.

C: No, that doesn’t make you bad wife at all. There’s no reason for you to take me to the airport or pick me up. It’s a train ride away. It’s like eight dollars for the train, and it’s much less stressful for everybody if you don’t go.

K: Yeah. (laughs) Everybody, emphasis on you. It’s much less stressful for you.

C: Yes.

K: So I think this is one of the areas where we have compatibility.

C: I think so. So, I think that ultimately it’s not really going to matter what kind of school the kids go to so much as what happens outside of school time. Because school is there to… teach conformity. And you can

K: Yes, in Japan it really is.

C: And you can see that as a negative or you can see it as a positive. You can say it develops social skills or whatever, so your views on whether that’s good or bad…

K: But if they- so for me, here’s the thing that kind of chaps my hide and roasts my weenies.

C: Okay.

K: I don’t like it when they say that Japanese schools teach conformity and American schools don’t because that’s such B.S. Any kid that knows how to line up was taught conformity.

C: That’s why I said schools, right.

K: Any kid that knows how to say the pledge of allegiance was taught conformity. Or knows to raise their hand, was taught conformity.

C: And that’s why I say schools rather than Japanese schools.

K: Yeah.

C: American schools absolutely teach conformity and compliance. Japanese schools teach conformity and compliance.

K: Yes. All institutions do.

C: Yes.

K: And all schools are an institution.

C: Yes.

K: Even Montessori, they have rules.

C: Yes, they do.

K: So any place that has rules teaches conformity.

C: Because in Montessori, if your choice is to sit and do nothing, that’s not an allowable option.

K: I think at some Montessori schools it is.

C: Maybe the most liberal.

K: Yes.

C: But you’re still not allowed to leave.

K: Correct. So you’re like “I will find a way that they’re teaching conformity.” (laughs)

C: Exactly. You’re not allowed to leave you’re not allowed to take off your clothes.

K: No, I think at some Montessori preschools if they want to take off their clothes, they’re allowed to take off their clothes.

C: Interesting.

K: Yeah. So, I don’t know if the school still exists, but I had, when Rasta was three or four, I went to a Montessori preschool, and I was checking it out. And they were like “we are Montessori, do you know what that means?” And I said “yes.” “Oh then you are educated because only the most educated people know what Montessori means” and they had the Montessori mats and all of that. And one of the kids was running around in just their underwear. So I guess they aren’t allowed to be fully nude, but they are allowed to strip down to their underwear.

C: Wow. Only the truly educated know.

K: Yes. (laughs)

C: So they’re like the militant vegans of schooling.

K: Yes. Yes. Completely. And so I was completely offput by the condescension.

C: Because we have several vegan friends who it’s not a thing, and then we have vegans that we know who aren’t friends because it is a thing.

K: Because they’re level 5 vegans.

C: Yeah, it’s just... whatever, you know?

K: Yes. And so, what’s hard for me is when vegans can’t understand that I have to eat meat because I have a blood disorder, and I will die.

C: Because you will go into organ failure and die, yes.

K: Because without animal protein, and no, not everything can be synthesized or found in plants. Some things are only found by eating the flesh of other animals.

C: Yes.

K: And so I do try to have, like, humane-killed and cage-free chicken and all that stuff so that they’re happy before I consume them.

C: Yes, but we’re also limited by market economics.

K: Oh my god, and capitalism right?

C: No, not just that. I’m saying that you do more harm by eating, let’s say, range-free eggs if you have to have them privately flown in than by just eating the factory ones.

K: Yeah, but we’re pretty lucky in Nagoya.

C: We’re pretty lucky in having good choices.

K: Yeah.

C: There’s a lot of local farmers and things. The Japanese government subsidizes farming around the area and such.

K: Yeah, so I feel like we’re really lucky that we get to choose to live in Japan. That we get to choose to be here. So, I always feel like that’s one of the more fortunate things about being born in the United States. Is the freedom of movement that I have, and all the things that an American passport affords me. So I’m really proud of being American, and I’m really happy that I’m American.

C: Yeah. And if you want to write to us and tell us all about the best schooling methods or whatever and be like “well, in Finland” if you look at it, like, it’s called the law of regression, but basically smaller countries – some smaller countries – do much better educationally because they have a smaller population. So it’s just a statistical thing that they’re going to do better than the average more often than a larger country because the larger countries can’t…

K: We passed through Finland. I’d like to spend more time in Finland.

C: Yeah.

K: I really liked Finland. And I don’t think we’ve been to Switzerland yet.

C: We have not been to Switzerland.

K: And I’d like to go back to Spain.

C: Yeah?

K: Yeah. But, international travel is not in the works for us because we have too many projects that we’re working on and money’s tight because podcasts are expensive.

C: Yeah, it’s a few years out.

K: What?

C: It’s a few years out. International travel. We don’t currently have anybody who’s decided to do Patreon at the thousand dollar plus level. We don’t have that as a tier, but you can enter an amount in Patreon.

K: Really?

C: Yeah.

K: You can just say “I don’t want to be a tier; I don’t want to do monthly.”

C: You pick a tier, but the amount for the tier is the lower limit. So somebody could pick the 25-dollar level and then put in a thousand dollars a month.

K: Yeah, I’d love that, but I don’t see who’s giving us a thousand dollars a month.

(laughter)

K: Hey if you’ve got it, I’m not trying to discourage. Please give. I’d love that. That’d be awesome.

C: Okay, thank you. Don’t be so skeptical.

K: Yeah. But, I’m not pining for international travel right now because I’m too busy.

C: Yeah.

K: And so… and plus, there’s so much of Japan that we haven’t seen yet.

C: There really is.

K: And I really want to get to know Japan as well as I knew California. Because in my mind Honshu is about the size of the state of California. Is that accurate?

C: It’s smaller than California.

K: Is it really?

C: Yeah, it really is.

K: So, then how did I get to know California so well?

C: Driving. And you didn’t really know California all that well because you didn’t know Northern California all that well when we met.

K: I did know Northern California really well.

C: Northern California does not stop at Sonoma.

K: I know all the way up to Sacramento.

C: It doesn’t stop at Sacramento either, there’s like

K: I know all the way up to Oregon.

C: See the fact you go Sacramento – Oregon, that leaves out a lot.

K: Where did I not take you in Northern California? Where did we never go?

C: We never went to Yreka.

K: That’s your fault.

C: (laughs)

K: And that’s not part of Northern California.

C: No?

K: No.

C: Did we ever to go Redding?

K: Yeah, I think we went to Redding.

C: I think we knew people from Redding. I don’t think we went.

K: I think we went to Redding. What part of Northern California- we drove all of Northern California.

C: Yeah, but you didn’t know it. You just traveled through it.

K: What do you mean?

C: I mean we’ve traveled through most of Honshu. Because we’ve gone all the way down to Hiroshima, which is all the way down on the western, southwestern tip.

K: Yeah.

C: And we’ve gone all the way up to Niko, which is near the northeastern tip. We didn’t take the train to Hokkaido, we flew to Hokkaido

K: Yeah, but I’m thinking of Western Honshu. I don’t think I know Western Honshu.

C: Mmm. Yeah.

K: I feel like I know, like… the East coast of Honshu fairly well.

C: Yeah.

K: To where I’m comfortable and feel like I know it, but I don’t know Western Honshu at all. And, too, I’ve never been to Nagano.

C: Yeah, which is just north of us.

K: Yeah, so I feel like there’s some ski resorts and things – I don’t want to go to a ski resort, but I’d like to visit the snow. Because we visited the snow on a different island, we went to Hokkaido, but we haven’t done local snow.

C: That’s true. And it snows a couple days a year here. School does not get out when it snows.

K: (laughs) It’s just like a dusting of snow.

C: I was in Texas for two years as a kid, and school shut both years because it snowed because it was like freak snow.

K: I remember it snowing in California once or twice when I was a kid, and they shut school for the snow day.

C: Yeah, there were like multiple accidents and everything. And then moving from Texas to Fairbanks, Alaska

K: And I think the schools here shut for snow days in Nagoya. To let the kids enjoy it.

C: No they do not.

K: I thought they did.

C: No.

K: Mmm. I’m thinking they do.

C: Yeah, I know you’re thinking that.

K: Yeah, I’m going to think those thoughts. Because I get to think my thoughts. Whatever I think is my thoughts, and I get to think them.

C: You keep thinking those thoughts.

K: (laughs)

C: And we will look into that more fully before we decide whether to force our son to send his kids.

K: (laughs) Like we have no say in these decisions, but I don’t know, him being in a serious relationship has me really thinking about grandbabies and what’s the best way to give them their best life.

C: Yeah.

K: Because he’s so focused on how did we create his life, and what were the choices we made. So he and I are having these conversations a lot. I know you and him don’t talk about his hypothetical kids as much because you’re not into the hypothetical.

C: I am not.

K: And you started to get really worried like “when are these babies coming?”

C: Okay, if I’m going to hypothesize about things, I am doing math.

K: Yes, you are. So, what do you guys think about the Japanese school system? Do you know anything about it? Like, what do you think about the school system where you live? Hit us up on Twitter, or Facebook, or Instagram, on any of our social media. Keep the conversation going and leave a comment on the website, or just.. I don’t know. Hit us up about anything.

C: Call us on the phone.

K: (laughs)

C: You don’t have our phone number probably but if you do, call us on the phone if you want to.

K: Or feel free to tweet at us that Kisstopher does know Northern California.

C: Yup. That’ll make me believe it. If I see it on twitter, it must be true.

K: (laughs) Yeah, just type in “Team Kisstopher all day every day.”

(laughter)

K: That’s it for today. That’s our ramble. Hope you guys are having a great week. Hope you come back and listen to us again.

C: Talk to you soon.

K: Bye.

C: Bye-bye.