

[music playing]

[Narelle] Hi,

and welcome to another episode
of The Digital Access Show.

Oh my gosh, I've got
to find something else.

I don't know how many times
I've sang, "Welcome to another."

Anyway, welcome.

We've been talking a
lot about communication,

digital accessibility,

different barriers
to communications.

So, last week we

had Bianca Saez,

and I hope you learnt

as much as I did it.

It, it still stuns me the...

problems or barriers that Bianca

has in using digital communication.

And it's not

definnitely something I...

...would've thought of

in this day and age.

Anyway,

that week, I taped the

podcast with Bianca.

I was at a networking event,

and I got to talking
to our guest today

And again, our guest has...

...another barrier
that I'm not familiar with.

Well, he's got
two, one I do know

and one I'm definitely
not familiar with.

And again, it must provide...

issues, trying to
read information,

trying to access information on...

the internet,

but it's even
managing daily life.

Now Joseph is a team lead

at a disability support
service here in Brisbane,

North Brisbane,

and he will be...

experiencing this barrier
every part of his day.

Everyone, please meet
Joseph Lee. Joseph, thank you.

[Joseph] Thanks for
having me, Narelle.

[Narelle] Joseph, can you

tell us a bit about yourself?

[Joseph] Yeah. So as
you touched on myself,

I am someone with a
couple of disabilities,

in terms of learning
disorders myself.

So I have dyslexia,

and part of that
leading on is dysgraphia,

which I'm very happy to discuss

and kind of look at the barriers
that I come past through daily life.

But I try not to linger on that,
and I do forget it at times,

because I'm very, very fortunate
with the opportunities I have.

I'm a regional officer
with Heart-Led Support,

providing community
supports as an NDIS provider.

I'm also very blessed being involved
within the football community.

I'm also a professional
match official,

so referee with the A Leagues.

So yeah, very, very lucky.

And yeah, a father to a
beautiful one year old daughter,

and very, very happily
married to my wife, Lara.

So, yeah.

Very, very blessed in my opportunities
and the life I'm able to live.

[Narelle] You've
definitely got a full life.

And you know, that's where
I found it so interesting.

I know a bit about dyslexia,

because one of the directors
of DASAT has dyslexia.

What's dysgraphia?

[Joseph] So dysgraphia,

and how I found

out about it myself,

when I was 16, turning 17,

as we have in Queensland,

where I'm based,

you have your grade

12 assessments

that work towards your ranking

leading out of high school.

And something that we found,

I finished high school

in the early 2000s,

I had to get retested

around my dyslexia

to clarify that I did have it,

in part of that to help
with my schooling.

But from I guess I don't
want to say neglect,

because it's a very strong word,

but the lack of understanding
and my own self-regulation

to understand how to work with
my dyslexia led on to dysgraphia,

which is an inability to express
myself through written texts.

So I'm very fortunate, I guess.

I can talk underwater,
but there's things,

in a general sense to how

I've always understood it,

is between my ability

to read and write.

Is there's something

as it passes through?

So I can talk about it.

I can tell you all

day about a situation,

but there's a barrier,

and there's, as in itself,

a learning disability...

that restricts my capacity to

be able to put it down on paper.

[Narelle] So how does
that work in with dyslexia?

From my understanding,
dyslexia is a visual disability,

a visual processing
problem in reading.

[Joseph] Yeah, so I think from,

and this is hard, because
many, many years ago,

going through,
and the comparison,

I think, from
it, it just really,

my reservation
to read and write,

and actually,

the difficulties and

barriers that I had from it,

kind of developed

through there, I think.

A bit of my own unintentional

negligence towards my own education

and engaging in, I guess,

your traditional schooling,

when it comes to

reading and writing,

and the access to

different information.

Like it's a very set way in

the standards of education

that's shown within
Western society, particularly,

how we previously accessed
it within Queensland schooling.

[Narelle] Yeah, I know
as a mum of a son with,

he's on the autistic spectrum,

and I've got an ADHD son,

that the schooling was
a big difficulty for them,

because it wasn't really set up...

to cater for their
particular issues.

I mean, we're
talking back in the 90s

and early 2000s

for them as well.

So, you had the same problem.

What type of barriers did
you experience at school?

[Joseph] Yeah, so to share,

and well, I've never
been ashamed of it,

but just more something
that I don't part to,

like the level of my indication
with say things like basic English,

and math as a subject at school,

in my senior grades,

I required to actually attend,
and I only speak English.

I've tried to learn languages,

I know little bits and pieces.

But I was very fortunate to
go to Indooroopilly State High,

which is an
international school.

And the school to help me was
able to allow me to access ESL,

because that was kind
of a progressive level.

So English is second
language classes.

Their faculty to help support me
with passing my grade 12 English.

So yeah, that was something
that I was very fortunate to.

I don't know, having only
attended that high school,

if that resource would have
been available to me elsewhere.

But that was one of the barriers
that I had to come through,

and I was very fortunate to
have that resource to help me,

and have that alternative
approach to the English language

and education at my disposal.

[Narelle] When

you think about it,

from the time you start school,

really, it's about learning

letters and numbers,

and recognizing words

and everything else,

and that would've been a barrier

all the way through for you.

[Joseph] Yeah, correct.

Even to this day,

it's something, and I've

never known any other way.

But yeah, to share a bit,

I get pretty anxious if I

know I have to sit through

and I'm very blessed with what
I can do to serve my community.

Part of that is understanding
reports within the NDIS,

being able to provide them,

and, yeah, being able to
take the information out of it.

And then, as mentioned, being
able to pass on my own expertise

and insight into how we can
support those that we serve.

[Narelle] That would
be a huge barrier.

Obviously, you're

doing it successfully,

because you are

a regional leader.

In your everyday life,

how does it affect you

with your daughter?

You know you're an A league ref.

How does it affect you there?

[Joseph] I think, it's knowing

myself and knowing how it affects me.

And thankfully, like football

is a very visual game.

We do the non-appealing side in

terms of understanding the laws.

The laws are, obviously, all written out,

and for myself in that

and a little timid and

nerdy fact around it,

is that the laws, at times,

essentially are written in French,

and translated to English.

-[Joseph] So...

-[Narelle] Really?

[Joseph] Yeah. So FIFA,

who's the governing body,

the name comes from French,

but thankfully, now

the preferred language...

...to it is English
across the world.

So myself,

I won't be blessed to be an
international match official,

but my wife, she is one of
the top ones in the world.

And it's a prerequisite to be
an international match official,

is have a certain level of
understanding of English.

[Narelle] Oh my gosh.

So it's translated from
French into English,

so there would be even

translation issues there.

That's a heck of a barrier,

in doing what you're
doing as an A-League ref.

And then add to
that, as you've said,

managing NDIS reports
and everything else,

and some of them will
be very, very convoluted.

What, how do you get around it?

I mean, even paying bills.

You know, going and
doing your shopping,

food shopping, things like this,

cause there'd be an amount of
travel that you'd undertake

as an A-League ref as well.

And in your work,
there'd be a lot of travel.

How do you manage?

[Joseph] Yeah, I think, and
I'm very lucky in my generation.

I, look, and I believe my father,
he has dyslexia as well.

And you know, it's a bit
different when you come,

when I was young,

we were coming out of having
chalkboards and getting white boards.

And I look, and
I'm very thankful...

...that my daughter
comes up into a world,

and we'll see how she develops.

But with the family history
and traits that we have,

you know, I think myself
and being able to rely on tools.

I'll give a good example,
the access of things like AI.

I'm not wholly reliant on it,

because I think information

is something key to ourselves,

and that's what sets us up for
our own ability to demonstrate,

and freely think,

But having access to things
like that that can structure

and do a lot of the...

grunt work, I guess, if you put it to...

...report writing and do that,

and then I'm able to
actually tailor and take it out,

It puts a lot less stress
and emotional toll on myself,

to be able to go

through and rely on that.

In that access, the struggles
that I have with reading,

having dictation devices,

having things that allow me
to process it through my mind,

yeah, it's very, very fortunate.

These were things that I didn't
have when I entered into schooling.

But being able to go through
and going back to education,

and accessing tertiary,

to complete certificates
in disability support.

I was very fortunate, the Tafe
Institute that I went through.

The educators there were
willing to adapt to me,

and instead of giving
written feedback,

and they didn't need to do this,

but they made the effort,

particularly Michelle,
who helped me.

She'd give me feedback
from assessments verbally.

-[Joseph] So, she...

-[Narelle] Okay.

[Joseph] I think we all know

how time poor we can be,

for an educator to give

someone like myself...

half an hour of time for feedback

on multiple assessments each week.

I'm grateful for those educators

that were willing to adapt

and think about

my own progression,

to be able to help me

develop as a person.

[Narelle] So, when

you're talking about tools,

are you talking

screen readers as well?

Or do you just rely on
the tools on your phone?

What are you talking about?

[Joseph] For me, I think
I'm very surface level.

So where, luckily these days,

a lot of, a lot of programs...

...allow those kind of
dictation machines,

or dictation accessibility,

as well as reading devices.

So as mentioned, like ChatGPT,

that's always the hot
topic at the moment.

I'm very fortunate with that,

when generating general
senses of different information,

it's able to read it to me.

[Narelle] Yes.

[Joseph] You know, I've
mentioned I struggle a bit...

...with the angst around it. I
wouldn't say outright anxiety,

cause I think the comparison there is not
fair to people going through...

actual anxiety.

But for myself, that reservation
to sit down and read,

you know, a thousand word
reports and things like that.

And also when going through,

you know, the NDIS having
those reading programs,

to be able to sit
down, digest it,

go into that information is very
important to helping myself.

[Narelle] You'd also be reliant on
having a very good memory as well.

[Joseph] You'd hope so.

That's one of the interesting
things. I do my best.

And I feel there's other
things that I may have

that I haven't taken
the time to pursue,

whether I do or
don't, in terms of the...

say, the autism or the
ADHD components.

But I think it was
one of those interesting things,

when I was tested coming
into adult age around my dyslexia,

that they recognized I
didn't have the ideal...

the ideal memory,
a bit below average.

But, yeah, I think

it's still something,

when you're passionate about it,

you will, you will

take it on, and that...

...that's very big to what I do.

I'm very fortunate.

Everything that I kind

of do within my life...

serves me very well,

in terms of the joys and

what I'm passionate about,

being able to engage

with others around me.

So for myself, it's
not something...

too hard to motivate to
make the effort to memorize

and understand around
how I approach what I do.

[Narelle] One of the things that
we were very curious about is,

obviously, for me, having
a severe vision impairment,

maps, you know,

I use voice over all the time.

To get myself anywhere,
I link a tool with Google Maps,

it speaks out
where I've got to go,

when I've got to
turn, everything.

Because obviously,
you've got a driver's license.

[Joseph] Yeah.

[Narelle] How do you
manage that area?

Because, again, you're
looking at being able to...

understand where
you've got to go.

The signs, obviously for me...

...it's knowing which

buildings the right building.

You've got the vision
to be able to do that.

But how do you manage?

[Joseph] I think, once
again, that accessibility.

There's so many different tools
that you get with navigation,

internally for myself, we circle
back to that memory point.

I'm quite the nerd and very
passionate about football or soccer.

So geographically, the way I
navigate in the best example is,

if I don't understand

where a suburb,

or a street or

whatever it may be,

I link it to the closest

local soccer club,

and then work back from there,

which is not, not a traditional

method of navigation.

But, yeah, having

access, and I think...

sometimes with the way

I think and the imagery,

you know, we all

approach things differently.

[Narelle] Yes.

[Joseph] I think having, having
in-car displays is so helpful.

And I think you know, for
talking about the generational,

in terms of how we approach and...

you know, map navigation,

trying to target and do that
while moving is very difficult

when you think for someone with
a reading orientated disability.

Yeah.

Thankfully, I guess, the
way of the refidex has gone,

and having, having that

voice over navigation,

or having that visual movement,

where it's not necessarily...

honing in on the

specifics of words,

and things like that is a

bit more helpful these days.

So, it's a lot, a lot smoother.

You know, I love my parents,

but there was definitely a few

arguments growing up over refidexes.

And the implementation

of our dyslexia with that.

[Narelle] Yeah, there must

have been. And it's interesting,

So, we're both using the
same tool to get around.

I'm like you. Very reliant.
You've got the visual as well.

I use the voice over.

And so the same tool, and
obviously, I'm in an iPhone,

works for both of us.

It doesn't...

I don't think people
realize just how...

one tool can be used by
so many different people,

to access things.

[Joseph] Absolutely. I think
that's an amazing observation.

Because, you
know, I think there's...

As we progress as a society,

and we're very fortunate
that we're very accepting,

especially within Australia,

that people, people
will have different...

...obstacles when it
comes to disabilities,

or even their own lives
with what they have.

And I think ,maybe it's a bit of our
ignorance within the country that we have

that a lot of these
accessibility tools...

that are just kind
of given to us,

and I don't want to
say taken for granted,

because the quality of life it
provides for us is incredible.

But yeah, the fact that
both you and I, with different...

different challenges within
our lives can use the same tool

to be able to help us navigate through

life is pretty, pretty incredible.

[Narelle] Yeah, it is.

Yeah.

I think one of the things
that's really come out,

and just talking
to you today is...

you're, you're inquisitive,

you're curious,

and you've got that, you
appear to have a very calm...

personality, which is going
to let you, with your curiosity

approach a problem in ways to

what other people would do it.

Do you think that's helped you?

[Joseph] Absolutely.

Socially, it's

always interesting,

because you get,

you get labelled,

in good ways as quirky

or a different thinker.

And I particularly get

that at my workplace,

like I'm always

ticking behind it.

You know, I think

there's so much,

yeah, and I'm a hyper
competitive person as well,

so I may seem calm at times

but I definitely take
losses very hard.

And yeah, I think having
that different thinking

and, you know, I feel
because of my disability,

I'll react differently
to some other people

when it comes
to other scenarios.

You know, as we mentioned, the
struggles I need to overcome,

I'll get pretty stressed
when it comes to writing,

writing and reading big reports,

and trying to put down what
my thoughts are on paper.

But that also, in turn,

I look at how much it benefits
me as well in different aspects.

I'm very fortunate that, I guess,
I have the gift of the gab,

and I'm a very social being.

I'm very lucky.

My nature is very loving.

I'm very keen to help others.

And that helps drive
my success a lot as well,

which is really good.

[Narelle] So Joseph,

when we're looking at digital
accessibility and communication,

you're using tools
that are out there

that everyone has
access to to do your work.

You're not using
any specialized tools.

[Joseph] Not particularly,

And I find they work

for myself at the moment,

but myself, being

a curious person,

I think there's always

room for improvement.

You know? I think

that's the biggest thing,

and being able to live your

own life to the fullest extent.

Some things may seem boring,

especially when it comes

down to my disability.

Reading and Writing is

a pretty academic thing,

but obviously things that we use

probably within every hour of our day,

in one capacity or another,
through the medium that it is.

But yeah, having that ability,
and having that technology,

having that continued
improvement,

it's definitely something...

...for myself, it's something
I need to look into,

and be able to help me
further what I want to do,

whether it's personally,
professionally,

with the relationships

around me.

Having that,

it's lucky that there's so
many things on a surface level,

in terms of accessibility
that's available.

But then also, it
opens up that door to...

...what else is out
there for the world.

[Narelle] When you're
listening to a document,

say a letter or...

a PDF document, do you
ever have problems with...

your reading order, things,
you know, jumping things?

Are you aware of those
things with dyslexia?

[Joseph] Yeah, I think at my age
now, it's a bit more prominent.

There's definitely things.

I always take it back,

I remember, and we talked to...

when I was younger.

I'm very lucky in the
football community.

I've been involved for 20 plus
years, since I was a young boy.

And I still think

it's hilarious.

My father luckily pulling me up

when I couldn't get the

point to try and understand,

and I misread the

word shorts for skirts.

So in my head, I had, why are

the laws talking about skirts?

We're not allowed to

have skirts in the game.

And, you know, I'm 13, 14,

My father having to pull me

up and be like, no, it's shorts.

But yeah, you know the S, H,

and the T aligned between
the two words in the lettering.

[Narelle] Yeah.

[Joseph] That's something
that I look back now,

and I have a chuckle to that
anecdote between me and my father.

And these days, you know,
there's so many little things.

If I don't have
access to technology,

you know, I read
things out loud.

I reread things, especially

with documents, PDFs,

because I'm susceptible

to those mistakes,

as part of a disability.

you know, having that dictation

helps, but for my own sense.

You know, technology

is a beautiful tool,

but it's not always

there for us.

And recognizing it helps me...

be more aware about challenges

and how I can overcome them.

[Narelle] Yeah.

Is there any formatting tips
that can make it better for you?

Like having one and a half
line spacing or types of fonts.

Is there anything that makes
it better or makes it worse?

[Joseph] I think this
is a really cool thing,

and to anyone that may have
any difficulties with learning,

or reading or anything
for that matter, in life,

is check it out and research it.

There's a couple of things,
and I forget the name.

There's actually a type font...

that helps in terms
of the way my mind

and other people
with dyslexia think.

So, there's a
specific type font.

There's also, and I
believe it was in Japan,

they came through yellow paper.

There was research around that.

And continuously, you'll
even find some schools allow,

and it's a transparent
yellow strip,

to help with following
and being able to process,

in terms of how the
use of our eyes work

for the actual reading process.

There's a couple of different things.

Even what you've mentioned,
spacing it out a bit more.

Like, it's one of those things,

and I'll try to describe
it the best I can.

What I experience when I look
at a page full of 500 words,

is I don't know where to start.

We all know how,

as a lot of us, especially
within the Western world think,

you know, it's a tangent

linear line that
we kind of follow,

regardless of
what the activity is.

For myself, that becomes
overwhelming when I look at it.

Whereas, you know,
not to break it down,

and not to kind of poke
fun at myself too much,

but I'm very
fortunate sitting down

and reading books
with my young daughter.

The bigger words, the open
space is far more appealing.

And if you gave me a book
that was 10,000 pages long

with the same word count as
something that's 200 pages long,

I'd probably find it a lot more
appealing and approachable task.

[Narelle] So really, what
you're saying is wider spacing,

smaller paragraphs,
three or four sentences,

don't have big,
chunky paragraphs.

What about bullet lists
and that type of formatting?

Does that make a difference?

[Joseph] Yeah, absolutely.

I think, and that's
someone for myself.

I work on that very commonly,

So, and my work colleagues
can probably share.

I love a good one, two, three,
or the bullet points.

Or summarizing points.

It's very helpful to myself
when I'm taking information.

And for someone that over talks,

I think a very good line in
any sense of communication.

You know, sometimes
it's tell me what the time is,

not how the watch is made.

I think those bullet points

and those short little
summaries definitely...

...definitely help someone like myself.

And, you know, as
an over communicator,

sometimes efficient,

saying less is so much more.

[Narelle] Yeah. It's

interesting, isn't it?,

how changes and formatting can

make the world of difference.

And even, like for me, I know,

because sometimes

I will peer and read,

Stick the nose

up to my face and read,

but I find now it's very tiring.

Becomes very, very tiring.

And for me, I rely
on audible books,

and I rely on
audible everything.

Because it is, it's an
overwhelming feeling.

It's an exhausting feeling,

especially when you've got
to read something really long.

So formatting
makes a difference.

Consideration of words.

Keep it to plain English, maybe?

[Joseph] Yeah.

[Narelle] Yeah.

It's amazing, isn't it?

Just the little things.

Yeah.

What advice can you give
people that are listening?

What are things that you can
say with what you know so far,

and what you've learned in life
so far that could help others?

[Joseph] I think understanding
that we're all our own person.

I think recognizing that,

and having the

humility to understand,

you know, what
your situation is,

and what you may have within it
is essentially the first step.

Obviously, being
kind to yourself,

because we're always going
to be hardest on ourselves,

and we're all going
to have challenges.

And that's the same thing.

We don't know what other
challenges people have.

That's the first
step to being able to...

...understand how you
can then approach,

and circling back,
metaphorically,

being able to approach that
journey or path we need to take

and how to navigate where we want
to go and what we wanna achieve.

If you can understand yourself
and be kind to yourself,

I think that's that's...

essentially halfway to the majority
of the way of where you want to be

within the world that
you have around you.

[Narelle] Yeah. Actually,
that's good advice.

-[Joseph] Thanks.

-[Narelle] That's really good advice.

[Narelle] Joseph, how can
people keep in contact with you?

Contact you to keep
talking about this?

Because, there might be people out
there that want to be an A-League ref,

but are saying, well, hang
on, I've got a disability.

And you're sitting there saying,
actually, nothing stops you.

It's only yourself.

What can they do?

How can they contact you?

[Joseph] Yeah, personally if you
want to reach out to myself,

as mentioned, I'm very fortunate
within my work professionally,

day-to-day, Monday to Friday.

I'm with Heart-Led Support.

So, we're on Facebook.

Or you can reach out
for general inquiries.

But I'm also based on LinkedIn.

So, if you check out
or my search my name,

I'll be under there and
have a bit more about myself.

Feel free to reach out.

Yeah, they're probably
the two major methods.

And I'm very welcome
to talk my journey,

and talk through my situations.

You know, we all have a
battle, and, you know, like we...

hopefully can lean on one
another to live fuller better lives.

[Narelle] Thanks, Joseph.

Look, thanks for your time.

I've learned a bit. Dysgraphia
makes a lot more sense now.

Because I could never get my
mind around the issues you had.

That's it. If you want
to talk to Joseph,

Find him on LinkedIn.
That's Joseph Lee.

And we'll have the contact at
the end of the podcast for you.

If you like what we do,

please like, share,
subscribe, review.

I love feedback,
good, bad, ugly.

I really love it.

And we'll see you next week
on The Digital Access Show.

Have a good week.

[music playing]