

[Music] [Narelle] Hello and welcome to another show, The Digital Access Show. This is where we talk everything about disability, communication and, in particular, digital accessibility and the challenges. This week's guest has a slightly different perspective. He's actually just come back from Nepal. And he's going to talk about his experience's where English is the second language for him and some other things. And what I want you to do while you think about it, is think about those people here in Australia. Where for them, English is the second language, obviously for Bernie, I'm not sure what the Nepalese language is. However, English is his primary language, so he would have had communication issues. So think about, as we talk about this, how people coming to Australia, where they've got no English or very limited English, manage and how we can help them. Bernie Kelly, thank you for being here. [Bernie] Namaste, Narelle Gatti. Namaste, Mero Nam Bernie Ho. [Narelle] And what does that mean? [Bernie] my name is Bernie. [Narelle] Wonderful, so Bernie also has a podcast called, and I've been on it. It's a Journey with Bernie. [Bernie] That's correct. [Narelle] And, it is a wonderful podcast. Bernie, can you tell us a bit about yourself? [Bernie] Yeah, sure. [Narelle] And I've got into doing what you're doing. [Bernie] Yeah, if you're talking about the podcast, so we'll talk about myself. The podcast is a reasonable place to start at 65 years of age. Everyone's been on a journey in their lives. So the place that I've arrived at is really love exploring how I and how people around me and people that I interact with can become more joyful, more happier, more loving human beings. And I want to make that a bit hard edged. So, what I do is, I interview wonderful people like Narelle Gatti. And many, many others, I think we're up to episode nearly 80 now. And through their life story, what have they discovered in order to become a more joyful, happier human being? What strategies, what actions, what routines, what disciplines, what ways of seeing the world? And interesting enough, as they offer those suggestions, many of them are talking about eliminating things that they do in their life, which take up busyness and don't create space for, you know, reflection and awareness on how we can be a bit more sensitive, bit more empathetic, more connectable to our fellow human beings. So if you wanted to quick summary of where I'm at in my life right now, the podcast reflects that. [Narelle] Yeah. And Bernie, you also take people to Mount Everest. [Bernie] Yeah. Now, what's interesting is that's not unrelated to the podcast. In the sense that I think we all have an innate understanding that nature, and time with nature, is in itself a contribution to peace, quiet and calm. There is something about being in nature that can create a, a sense of one's more beautiful self. And so I love taking people to Nepal because I'm taking them to the most powerful forces of nature upon the planet. I'm talking about the Himalayas. So to trek in those mountains, like, wow, it's going to invade your soul. It's going to invade your spirit. [Narelle] One of the things that I find interesting about going over there, can you speak the language? [Bernie] I, I, you know, I think I'm poor. If I had to rate myself on how much effort I've actually made to learn the language, it is, I would give it a 3 out of 10. Now, I tell you what, as I say that, I think what's interesting is because I haven't had too much problem despite not knowing Nepali. I mean, I have some basic Nepali, like I just demonstrated in the opening. But I've never had too much problem still connecting and communicating with people. And I'm not going to say, through English, but it's through an understanding of what communicates, which is far more than our language. It's also what people see. It's also the tones at which we express how much of our real self is actually being communicated in whatever language we are utilizing. That too is a connectability with people. [Narelle] And that's a really good point because, as you said,

communication and digital content and the spoken word. Yeah, it's definitely related, but there is that facial expression, body language, tones, make up part of the word. So digital content and digital words, wording, by itself, actually loses a layer of communication, doesn't it? [Bernie] I'm going to just say it bluntly, I just can't believe the amount of value people place on processes like texting, where it's just words only. I mean, it is just crazy. If you want to communicate effectively, then you, you've got to be pick the phone. Or you've got to be contacting them, not just through phone, of course. You can do that through little audio that are on our WhatsApps and our messengers, etc. Use the audio far more than you use the techs. At least let people hear the expressions in your voice, because the interpretation of just words written in a text versus when they hear you say those words, that can be two different things. [Narelle] Yeah, I agree. I agree. So when you're in Nepal and you take out the wording, how much harder is it to communicate, to get your cup of tea or whatever you need, like if there's an issue comes up, and you have what 10, 12 people that you're guiding? How much harder is it by taking out the word you're only relying on facial expression, body language and tone? I'm gap for me. I think this needs to be referenced, because of what I just said there for me. It's not too hard iNarelle, but if I try to explain why it is that I still can teach, I can teach a classroom of Nepali kids. And the interesting part about it is I'm not saying all that many words. It's, it's my whole presence persona, my body language, walk into a classroom, stand there, put my, you know, put my finger to my mouth, and ask for silence, and, and get it. But this is not trying to me, to be egotistical, but what I'm really going to allude to is your presence, your branding, your persona needs to come across with plenty of heart and authenticity. Why? Because that is going to demand from the audience, I want to listen to you. It demands a respect. And then the body language, and I'm even going to say there are times where I know I haven't quite hit the mark with what I wanted to communicate. So I enact it. If I'm, if I'm talk, I'm making it up now Narelle. But if I talk a cup of tea, then let my left hand be shaped like a cup, and let my right hand be like tipping the teapot. And then let my left hand actually go to my mouth to drink the tea. Let my, let my mouth just have a sip, and then take the cup away because it's hot. Now, it, it it, why do I do that is because I am trying to work out a way, given the, the difference in the language understanding, the understanding of the words, I am trying to work out a way to connect, to communicate. And here's the difference. I will do whatever I can and must to do that. Now, I know that sounds funny, but a lot of people won't go to that n'th degree to even enact what they're, they're communicating about. Therefore, how much are you committed to connecting with the person? If you're committed, you'll go to the n;th degree. [Narelle] So then if we look at that, and we look at obviously in Australia, there's a huge migrant population where they do have English as a second language. And I think I saw one stat that says, 800, 900,000 people say not having English as their primary language, is a huge barrier for them. How do we, as a community, help them? So if we flip it on the head, what can we do? [Bernie] Well, the first thing that comes to mind is, if, if we, as a community, in that communication with such people, and not understanding their struggle before we even communicate. If we are not understanding that their English is, even though it's a second language, but it's limited in their ability to describe what they, what they want. I'll give you an example. Recently, I podcasted a, a young lady from Slovakia. Well, her, her English has some limitations, and, and I would say something to her, give her some feedback on what she said in a positive sense. And she would always come back and say, of course. Now, the way

that she said, of course, one could be insulted because, you, one could interpret it as saying, oh, don't you know that? That, that's not what she meant. There had to be a level of, of understanding that in her limitations, she's going to say things which cannot be interpreted as the literal English translation, as if you were speaking to someone who was gifted in English. So right from the start, the question is, how much are we understanding that their communication skill in English has limitation, and are you giving leeway to that? Are you wanting to wish to understand what they're really saying? And of course, that means coming back to them with maybe a follow-up question just to make sure that can I just understand what you're really saying there? And, and that follow-up question, and that degree of leeway that you give up front is very, they're very vital what appear to be on the surface minor skills, but they're not. They're really important places to be there. [Narelle] Yeah. I actually think you make a really good point there because it's even the same with digital content, isn't it? So for you, when you went to Nepal, you would have had your tickets, everything would have been in English. [Bernie] Yeah. [Narelle] So if you went into a menu in Nepal, you would hope that they would give you the same leeway in understanding because the menu might not necessarily be in English. [Bernie] Yeah, I'm going I say something with what I think is interesting because you're making me think here, and I'm going to say this with the word, started, with the word, unfortunately, because as the tourist and as a Caucasian Western tourist, they tend to give us a respect, and therefore they have a want to connect with us, and so they make the work to communicate and connect. And I say that's unfortunate in the, in the sense because we don't give them the same equity. The same, you you know, I just notice people will continue to talk as if they were talking to an Australian, back here in Brisbane. And here they are in the middle of Kathmandu at a restaurant. And there is no desire to reflect in equity and equalness. Just because, one, their Nepalese, just because they're serving us a meal. Just because they're the waiter, does not mean that we need to approach it with a better than or a higher than state. Because that too affects the communication, the connectedness. Does that make sense. [Narelle] It does. It also comes into, when I think about it. And, like, you and I've had a few conversations about digital accessibility. It's when people interact with people with disability. [Bernie] Absolutely. You're spot on. Because let's draw the metaphor. Are, are some people actually seeing the disability and therefore elevating themselves as more able, more of this higher, higher value on themselves than the one with disability. You know, I just want to come back to, unless you've got, unless you start to see everyone in equity, how the heck can you connect with, with people. And here furthermore, how can you actually have a loving presence for yourself? If you're always living higher or less than. [Narelle] Yeah, that is so true. And the, the other experience I wanted to talk to you about that I find really interesting is when you do these tours as a guide. You actually take the tourists into a Nepalese orphanage, where there's a lot of people with disability. [Bernie] Yeah. Yeah. And, and and, but that's fun. I go in there, not to be the teacher or the coach, but I am. But I, in me helping the authority, the administrators to create the program. I make sure the kids are also our teacher and our coach. So there is never a day in which it's only working one way. We're not in there to be higher than thou. You know, we're in there to let the experience of service to them be one in which we are learning from them. Again, you know what I'm learning from this discussion because you're making me think, is communication, is more than the words we say. It's more than the tones. It's even more than the body language. Communication actually starts with intent. [Narelle] Yes. [Bernie] It's, it's, it's the

state at which you are in. And if you want to see everyone as a human being that's got something to offer you, then you're going to start with an intent to connect. [Narelle] Yeah. The interesting thing with that as well is I think people often forget that. So when they take, say they've got the intent and they don't see the whole package that's words. It's the intent. It's the body language. If you're doing a speaking engagement, it's the body language. It's understanding of tone. And it's also looking at your audience and understanding where they're coming from. You take out even one or two of them. The communication's gone, isn't it? [Bernie] Well, the communication certainly diluted. Yeah, it is certainly, it is not as effective. Because the, you haven't, you haven't created in your own mind and spirit an environment for the communication to be effective. You're not in that right spirit for effective communication. [Narelle] Yeah. It's just, look, this is why I love talking about this. Because all it is and all digital accessibility is the written word communicated and the use of colour and images and everything that goes with it, the typeface, the, your font, your size, all the elements together make up really good digital communication. And that includes the accessibility considerations. And if we liken that to what we've talked about, because again, the spoken word and communication and the intent has to be there to make really good communication. And one of the ones, as much as in some ways I get really frustrated, politicians are very good at speaking what they want. [Bernie] Absolutely, yeah. [Narelle] They really have that and they're also very good at not answering what they don't want to answer. So taking, the moment they do that, the communication is diluted, isn't it? [Bernie] Yeah, absolutely it is. I mean, this is why I feel confident when I'm about to say. But how many people are just over the political process? Yeah. We're just over it because what is truth? What is integrity? What is trust? None of it seems to be able to be communicated in the process and the system of politics. I can't even believe. Now we go to elections and we're not voting for someone. We're actually voting the other people off by osmosis as the other persons win it. [Narelle] That's it. And this is it. It's the same with anything. So if you don't have, and I love the words you use. Trust, integrity. And I can't think of the third one. Because again, if the communication isn't trustworthy, it hasn't got integrity, you can't rely on it. Honesty? Whatever form it is, it's not good enough. And I suppose that's where I come back to digital accessibility. And I know for me, I had to fill in some forms the other day and I couldn't. And I had to rely on other people. So there is that trust factor. I had to trust the form, I had to trust the person to fill in the form the way I wanted it. And I had to trust that it was filled in correctly. So the moment you take out a couple of elements of communication, whether it's speaking events, anything, you haven't got good communication. [Bernie] Listening to this, and I thank you for the opportunity because I had no idea what I was going to say or talk about. But it makes me dig into myself and say, why, why is that effective? Why is that not effective? But it occurs to me and I'm going to say something which I think is really obvious, but a lot of people haven't considered. Why would we be on a WhatsApp or a messenger or just plain texting? And not use the audio? Yeah. You know, I mean, it is crazy that we'll spend more time texting and creating just words only when we could just press the audio button. And in perhaps less time, deliver an audio message so that the receiver can actually hear the tones of your voice, the tones which actually give meaning to the words you're saying. [Narelle] Yes, That's it. Listen, Bernie. I always ask for two or three takeaways at the end. What messages would you like to leave people with? What are three things? [Bernie] Well, one, let me just start with the one that I just said

there. Where you can use audio and where appropriate you can use the video button in these communication platforms, use them. Stop being afraid to present yourself. Stop conforming to what everybody else does. And be committed to communicating. And if you are committed, like der, the audio is going to communicate more, then you're written words. So there's your first take home. [Narelle] I love that one. [Bernie] Use the tools that are available. Secondly, this is going to sound a little bit woo-wooish, but here we go, you ready? Oh My god, get to love people. Get to love people so much that not to communicate effectively feels odd. And then you'll be in the right place. You'll have the right intent to do whatever you have to do to communicate. And I find in Nepal, my word, I even leave out verbs when I'm talking to the kids. I use basic, the most basic of sentence structure, but back and supported with enormous body language. Because as we learn growing up, body language is something like 55% meaning to what we're trying to communicate. So the vocal tones are 38%, 55% and 38% leaves 17% to the words. Well, you know, you use the body language the most powerful tool to communicate. My point there is get in the right state, have the right intent in the very, very first place. [Narelle] Excellent point. [Bernie] Is there a third one? [Narelle] Oh, if, only if you've got a third one, you don't have to. [Bernie] Well, you know what, those two alone, using have the right intent in the first place, using the tools so that they can actually hear your intent. You can't hear it through a text message. [Narelle] Bernie, I think you're spot on and thank you. Thanks for your words of wisdom and your knowledge today. It's been great to have you on. So Bernie is, "A Journey with Bernie and Chip". How can people contact you? Bernie? Where they can hear more about the podcast or what you're doing. [Bernie] We'll go on the Spotify and in the Spotify search button just write in a journey with Bernie, BERNIE. And they'll find the podcast here. But if they use Apple podcast or Amazon music, same thing, just go to the search button. Is it okay if I gave a mobile number? [Narelle] You can give a mobile number? [Bernie] Okay, well, my mobile number is, and I only give this + 61, the Australian country code. Just in case we've got an overseas listener or viewer + 61 412 And you know that if it wasn't the +61, there'd be a zero there. + 61 412 982 And 444. And someone told me recently that the 4-4-4 is somebody's spiritual meaning between the 4-4 or around angels. I've got no idea what that is. [Narelle] Well, excellent. Look, thanks again Bernie for your time today. And that is another episode of The Digital Access Show. So this week we're looking at communication and we're looking at eliminating one thing or two things, changes the whole intent and the meaning. And that's why it's so important and don't forget digital accessibility. If it's not there, the intent's not getting through to a lot of people. Now, if you really want to hear more of us, it, like, subscribe, review, feedback. We love it, good, bad and ugly. And we'll look forward to seeing you next time on the next episode of The Digital Access Show. See you around. [Music] Bye!