

Kelly Bron Johnson ([00:00](#)):

Welcome to episode number four of intersections on the spectrum. The intersections on the spectrum podcast is the brain child of Blecher and Kelly Bron Johnson created to discuss intersectional issues within the autistic community and to give visibility to commonly marginalized, repressed, underrepresented, or erased identities and issues, we aim to introduce you to the people and stories you didn't know about, but needed to hear and hope that by seeing yourself represented in the community, allows you to feel seen.

Doug Blecher ([00:32](#)):

Today our guest is a choice Troy Sawyer. Troy is a actor costumer, singer, playwright, and Baker. He is he's autistic and a member of the LGBTQ community. Welcome Troy.

Troy Sawyer ([00:48](#)):

Thank you so wonderful to be here.

Doug Blecher ([00:50](#)):

I wanted to start off, um, with, um, talking about how, um, you, you were an autism consultant for Portland center stages, production of the curious incident of the dog in the, in the nighttime. Um, I read the book, I haven't seen the play. Uh, what was, uh, the input you, you gave to them about portraying an autistic character in that production?

Troy Sawyer ([01:18](#)):

Well, in regards to portraying that particular character, a lot of it is, is in the script and this is not the original production, you know, it was done in London and then New York. And then this production itself was previously done in Kansas city and then was transferred to Portland. Um, the new artistic director at Portland center stage previously worked in Kansas city. So she carried the production over when she came. Um, so there's not a ton that I can really do because so much of the show is set in stone. Um, as far as content wise. So most of what I was able to contribute was visual cues, visual cues to the audience about, you know, what this character is doing at different times prior to working on it. I had never seen the show live. So I looked up any production of it that I could find on YouTube that had been uploaded.

Troy Sawyer ([02:25](#)):

And one of the things I found really disturbing is about 90% of the actors playing this main autistic character were staring at the floor the entire time. And that I was like, I want to make sure that if nothing else, I make sure that the lead actor is not looking at the floor the whole time. Cause I think that there's, there's a common misconception that autistic people never look you in the eye. And that is absolutely not true if they're uncomfortable or they're just getting tired from staring at one thing for too long, then they make their eyes may drift off of your face. But drifting off of your face is not the same thing as staring at your feet. Also, we visually, we are always taking in information. So one of the reasons that an autistic person may disengage with your face is because their brain has taken in all the possible information that they can get about your face.

Troy Sawyer ([03:27](#)):

So they're going to look elsewhere, still paying attention, but they're going to look elsewhere to take in more information. It doesn't make any sense for an autistic person to be staring at their feet because

chances are good. They have long since memorized their feet by now, I don't ever stare at my feet. I know what my shoes look like. I may find a spot on the floor, 50 feet away and look there, but I'm not going to be staring at my feet. So like the very first thing that I said was he cannot stare at his feet the whole time he needs to. There needs to be times where he's looking people in the eye there, and there needs to be times where he's looking off or out, but not down. Also when you're on stage, if you're looking at the floor, it cuts off the audience's viewpoint of looking at your face and you never want to cut off your face in the audience because if they can't see you emote, then they can't connect with you.

Troy Sawyer ([04:34](#)):

So the audience has to be able to see your face. And if you're, if you're looking directly down that that completely cuts it off and it makes your character on sympathetic and you always, it doesn't matter what the main character of a show does. You always need to sympathize with them in some capacity. I mean, even Sweeney Todd, who was a serial killer sells who gives dead bodies to the pie maker downstairs, even he, you sympathize with to a certain extent. So you need, um, I want to make sure that, um, that his face was visible to the audience.

Kelly Bron Johnson ([05:15](#)):

No, that that's amazing insight that you're able to, to, to bring. I mean, I, when I'm thinking, I often see just now, like, can't see, I'm closing. I close my eyes or I, sometimes I divert my gaze. I look kind of sideways or, and then people think that, um, I'm not trustworthy or that I'm blind if I'm not looking at them with the eyes, but I've also kind of trained myself to that I'll look like at the spot in between people's eyes and it's right in your forehead And that gives the impression that I'm staring at and looking at your eyes, but I'm not.

Troy Sawyer ([05:45](#)):

Yeah. Sometimes if, if I'm having trouble focusing on their face. Exactly. Because honestly it can give, it can give you a little bit of anxiety to look someone directly in the eye because it's like you know, they say the eyes, the window to the soul. And unless you have a really strong connection with somebody staring into someone's soul can be anxiety inducing. So also when I'm staring at people's hair and, and I'm always grateful when someone has a very elaborate hairstyle, because it gives me something to look at for a long period of time.

Kelly Bron Johnson ([06:18](#)):

I look at mouths too, because I also, I look at lips cause I'm reading lips sometimes. So, um, yeah, that's amazing though. It's, it's, it's the fact that they are that stereotypical looking at the floor like this, the idea that people get from us, which is really interesting also to note what people are thinking about us or what they think that we're doing, which I think is really fascinating.

Troy Sawyer ([06:42](#)):

Yeah. And, um, and also is, um, a lot of times, you know, looking at the floor or looking off into nowhere, like too far off into nowhere is often how actors in the past have portrayed being blind on stage. So I'm like, you don't want to make an autistic person blind. And also that if you're, if you're autistic person looks blind, I mean one insulting to autistic people, but also insulting to the blind and you do not want to insult the blind.

Kelly Bron Johnson ([07:18](#)):

So if there's other autistic folks that would like to become an actor, what kind of advice would you be able to give them?

Troy Sawyer ([07:26](#)):

I would recommend if you're looking at universities, like really see if any of the faculty have ever worked with autistic people. If they know the language, if, because there are certain, you do have to come in an acting setting, you often do have to communicate slightly different with them an autistic person. We tend to be hyper literal. We tend to use an awful lot of visualization in our acting. I, for one really struggle with a hands-off director. And I had a couple of directors where their philosophy is that you put actors on stage and just make them act. I tend to think of everything as the big picture. I want to know like, okay, what is all of this supposed to connect to? What is this all supposed to look like? And if I have absolutely no idea what the director is, is envisioning, then that then I just get stuck.

Troy Sawyer ([08:30](#)):

I get absolutely stuck. Um, and I can't speak for other autistic actors if they have the same struggle with that. But I do say, you know, really see does the, is the, does the fact one, does the faculty support diversity period because not all, not all theater departments do it's, it's not, it's not their prerogative. They are teaching theater the way they've been teaching it for decades and they could care less about it. Any diversity let alone neuro-diversity so one seat are they supportive of diversity period. And then second, are they willing to explain things to you if you're not getting it? Which I feel that that's just be, uh, that's just be the standard in education period. But sadly, once you get to the collegiate level, it really isn't. So I'd say, you know, you know, really check and see if there's a supportive environment at your particular college.

Troy Sawyer ([09:33](#)):

If you're going in that direction, if not, what I then suggest is get private instruction. There are acting teachers everywhere that give private lessons and they, um, and if you find a really good one, they can break it down for you and explain things. And also, and this is something that you need that they need to, um, that I've, I say, needs to be said all actors, but I think autistic actors especially, um, go on as many auditions as possible and be humble for as long as possible because you, especially, if you are of any kind of disability, you are definitely going to start at the bottom. I mean, most people started at the bottom, not all actors do. Some actors go into a Broadway audition, their first audition ever, and get it that's rare, but it does happen, um, be willing to start the bottom, be willing to take in.

Troy Sawyer ([10:38](#)):

And when you, when you're in an environment where you can ask questions, ask as many questions, as you can ask about the lighting, ask about the history of the piece, ask directors, what here's something that I have found that directors love. They love it when you ask what their philosophy on theater is. And if you ask the director their philosophy on theater, you could get them talking for hours. They will tell you their experiences will tell their stories. People will share wisdom with you if you just ask. And so I feel like, you know, in my community, in particular, we need to ask those questions. We really need to ask those questions. It's, it's tough out there for anybody. So you've got, I'd say in particular, we need to ask more questions probably than the average actor, because tools work, tools work. So collect as many tools as as many tools as you can. I'm losing my train of thought here. Sorry.

Kelly Bron Johnson ([11:47](#)):

So many nuggets of wisdom that you're sharing right now. I think, uh, for listeners, I they're gonna really appreciate this, especially if they were trying to, uh, to get into acting themselves,

Doug Blecher ([11:59](#)):

Something that we've focused on on this podcast already and probably will continue quite a bit, is focusing on the intersection of autistic and LGBT Q identities. I've heard from many autistic folks that sometimes LGBTQ spaces are not always the most accommodating for their needs. What's been your experience in these situations?

Troy Sawyer ([12:26](#)):

LGBT spaces in my experience don't accommodate anything. They really don't. And I think that part of that is that as, as LGBT people in general have been through the ringer they've, they've faced bigotry. They face bullying. They have faced, uh, exile for jobs, exile from family. They they've been through the ringer on so many things that when they get into their own space, they finally are just like, okay, I'm in my own space. I want everything to focus on me. And, and, you know, as a, as a gay white man, I have definitely done that at times where it's like, I walk in the room and I'm like, I want all the focus on me. I don't want to care about you and your problems. It's like, I, I was, I was rejected by my extended family. I was rejected by my high school.

Troy Sawyer ([13:27](#)):

I was rejected by this rejected by that. And sometimes when you have been rejected for so long, you, you get a taste of that. And you're like, Ooh, I want to be in a position where I can reject somebody for a change. And it's, it's horrible. And if you do reject someone who has been through worse than you, you come to regret it later on, you do come to regret it later on, and you think, why was I so horrible? And you realize you're, you're compensating for pain. But also when you have been through so much pain, you don't want to listen to somebody else's you want to vent about your pain. You want to walk in and have someone sit next to you and ask you your life story. I mean, there are so many gay people that write one man, and one woman shows because it's like, we just want someone to hear us.

Troy Sawyer ([14:23](#)):

So what would I say that LGBT spaces are often not accommodated to autistic people? Not really. Because again, most people in those spaces, they're wanting to be heard so much that they don't want to listen to somebody else. A lot of LGBT spaces they're not the best spaces for people of color. They're not the best spaces for trans people. Um, now there, that is getting better and this does vary from space to space. But I do think one of the main reasons that why LGBT spaces are not the best for autistic people is just, most people don't even understand autism. I mean, I try and explain it to a lot of people. They've got no idea what I'm talking about. They've either heard snippets here and there, or they watched Forrest Gump, rain man, or the big bang theory. And that's it. They've got, they've got no idea.

Troy Sawyer ([15:23](#)):

And they they're like, what will, what will, how, how does that really hurt your life? How's that really hurt your life. It's like, there are people in Ford F-150 is going out and trying to kill autistic people? And I'm like, well, no, but there are people that treat you like you don't exist. There are people that take what you say out of context. There are people that think you're saying one thing, and you're really saying another, there are people that are out to take advantage of other people and they use you as a target because they know you're not gonna pick up on their abuse right away. And in my experience, I

feel like, you know, the LGBT community has a long way to go. But I do think a big, a big chunk of that is ignorance. A big chunk of it is they don't, they don't know what an autistic person has been through.

Troy Sawyer ([16:17](#)):

They don't, they don't know what it's like to wake up every morning, not knowing how your conversations are going to go. They don't know what it's like to, to say something that you thought meant something. And only to realize that that's not what it means at all. And it gets around and suddenly a bunch of people are hurt by something that you said that you thought was totally innocence. Right? I got into so many situations as a kid where I was just trying to be, you know, kind and funny and engaging and turned out. I said, horrible, horrible things had no idea, but no one would take the time to explain, Oh, what you said actually meant this. Because especially like, for me, like, I would mimic things that I heard on television, but out of context, nobody knows what you're talking about.

Troy Sawyer ([17:22](#)):

So they think you're saying something super inappropriate.

Kelly Bron Johnson ([17:25](#)):

Right.

Troy Sawyer ([17:26](#)):

And that, that I remember, I was, I was six years old and I had watched an Arnold Schwarzenegger movie the night before, what does a six year old doing, watching Arnold Schwarzenegger, i don't know. Um, and there was some line in the movie about, I take orders from no one. And so I was just having a, with another student about this movie, I'd seen the night before. And I was like, Oh yeah. And he goes around saying, I take orders from no one. And my teacher walks by and she overhears our conversation. And she's like, what did you just say? And then I said, I take orders from no one. She didn't ask what was the conversation about? Or what was that line from? She thought I was saying to her, I take orders from no one, which was not the case at all.

Troy Sawyer ([18:20](#)):

And before she could even give me a chance to explain, sends me to the principal's office, the principal then asks, what did you say? And I'm like I said, I take orders for no one, the principal has a fit. Calls my parents, my parents come to the school and get me. They have a fit. This thing went on for a week. Just people going on and on and on. And all it was was me just talking about a movie I'd seen.

Kelly Bron Johnson ([18:47](#)):

Wow. Yeah.

Troy Sawyer ([18:48](#)):

And that happened all the time to the point where by the time I was nine years old, I stopped talking. I went through a point of months where I was not talking because I was just so sick of everybody having a fit every time I opened my mouth, I was like, Nope, not doing it, not doing it.

Kelly Bron Johnson ([19:12](#)):

That makes sense logically. Right. We're going to have a trauma response and be like, if nobody understands me, why should I even bother talking?

Kelly Bron Johnson ([19:24](#)):

On the other end, if we go, you know, we're looking at community, you're trying to try to make places better. What do you think? Or how do you think straight autistic people can be better allies to the autistic people within the LGBTQ plus community?

Troy Sawyer ([19:44](#)):

In my, in my experience, I've never felt judgment from straight autistic people, like never. Um, so I don't even know what I could say that they could do better. Cause I think they're absolutely being pretty awesome. I mean, once I, if I started traveling around the world, maybe I would meet autistic people that are awful. Um, but as of right now, pretty much every other autistic person I've come in contact with just, they're just like, Oh your you, and then, and that's kind of the end of it. It's like your, you, like, I can talk about boyfriends or I can talk about musical theater or I could talk about golden girls. And it's like, there's never been any question. Um, my, uh, in fact though, um, like I, so I don't know if I, I put this in my bio, but I wasn't diagnosed as autistic.

Troy Sawyer ([20:53](#)):

until I was 19. No, nobody knew what, what was going on. As I got into college and started meeting other autistic people, there was this strange synergy where it's like, I get this person. And, um, my sophomore year, um, I was studying music at the time and I met this, uh, music major who was studying to be a composer. And just like within minutes of meeting each other, we just, our minds just synced with each other. There was like, no question. It's like, I see you. You see me. And that was, that was kind of eyeopening. And I was, and I talked this over with my therapist that I was seeing at the time. And then he was like, I'm looking at this questionnaire. And we, we put together all these different things and it's like, but like within meeting him, it was like just instant acceptance. So I'd say, I'd say the, again, I don't know what this, the entirety of the autistic community is like, but my experiences it's always been instant acceptance because they're like, we get you, we get that. You've got to go shit to go through. Cause we've all got our shit to go through. We ain't judging you for your shit.

Kelly Bron Johnson ([22:29](#)):

I agree. A hundred percent

Doug Blecher ([22:32](#)):

Being, uh, openly autistic and openly gay. Um, it sounds like two coming out experiences. How were those similar? How are they, how are those different?

Troy Sawyer ([22:45](#)):

I'd say the, they were kind of the opposite experience coming out as gay was liberating for me, but it was devastating for everybody else. Um, it was devastating for my family. It was devastating for my school, everybody around me, very few people were happy for me. When I came out, I'd say I had a, I had an English teacher. Um, and I was going to Catholic school at the time. And of all people, the priest was supportive, which that I'll never get, but I was like, I'll take it. I mean, there's enough horror stories with not being accepted by Catholic priests. So wonderful. And I guess like the friends within my inner

circle were, were good. But again, the people that really, really, I I'd say the people that had power in my life were not supportive. I on the inside felt liberated. And that is what mattered coming out as autistic.

Troy Sawyer ([23:53](#)):

It was the exact opposite because I felt most people around me more supportive, I felt people were supportive. They were understanding because it was a light bulb for them. Like, Oh, now we get why, why he talks weird, why he walks funny? Why he has an uneven speech pattern? Why his metaphors never made sense. It was a light bulb for everybody else. But for me it was devastating. It was absolutely devastating. And the reason it was devastating is because I spend most of my childhood thinking. I was some kind of monster. I thought I was some kind of psychopath. Who was I going to become a serial killer or something? Cause everybody was afraid of me. Everybody was afraid of me. And I realized that most people, I grew up in a pretty homophobic environment. So people were afraid of me because I was gay, but, and they allowed that to inform how they perceived my autism traits.

Troy Sawyer ([25:01](#)):

So they, when I talked funny or when I said something that didn't make sense or when I acted weird, everybody chalked that up to my homosexuality. Nobody connected that to me being autistic. What was, so what was devastating for me was realizing there had been an explanation for all of the pain that I had been feeling, but it felt like too little too late. It really felt like too little too late. I'm getting to the point now where I am getting excited about like, Oh, here's this whole chapter of my life, but the formative years are gone. You don't get those back. I mean, if you grow up thinking you're some kind of monster, it's probably gonna take most of your life having to unlearn that if you grow up, hating yourself, it's gonna take a long time to unlearn that. If you think you're some kind of crazy serial killer, but no, you just like to practice conversations before you have them.

Troy Sawyer ([26:09](#)):

You're not talking to voices in your head. You don't, you don't get that back. And also it's at the time it was a great unknown because you feel like you're, you suddenly feel like you're going to go walk around with a big red A on your chest. That that's the label that's going to. Cause I only had the gay label attached to me and wanting to be a performer. I knew, you know, being a gay actor is much better now than it used to be. And I mostly wanted to be in theater. So you're pretty much safe in theater. Um, but I knew like for film and television, but that was going to be tricky. And as much as that's gotten better, it's still not where it needs to be. And I did not, I did not know of any autistic actors in the theater and film and television didn't have any. So when I found, when I finally got that autistic diagnosis, I was like, well, that's the death nail? That's the death nail. This is not going to happen. And I didn't do any acting for like seven years.

Kelly Bron Johnson ([27:23](#)):

Oh wow.

Troy Sawyer ([27:25](#)):

I did not do any acting for like seven years because I was just, I was convinced it wasn't going to happen.

Kelly Bron Johnson ([27:35](#)):

You know, that's why we're looking at, you know, people doing more acting or trying to hire more autistic actors and have that kind of representation in the media and how important that is because it,

uh, you know, we don't want that to make it or break the next generation. We want people to kind of feel that they can do anything that they want to do.

Troy Sawyer ([27:55](#)):

Exactly. Especially. Um, and also it's like the autistic characters that I did see, most of them not played by autistic actors. Of course. Right. Most of them didn't connect with my experience. I mean, they were like, a lot of them were like hyper geniuses, which didn't get, or some of them were completely helpless, which I also didn't get. A lot of them were kind of sexless or sexually confused. And I'm like, I was a horny slut from day one. Like what, what what's with all these sexless drones with autism that does not make any sense. You think someone who has a body that's hyper-sensitive is going to have no sex drive, give me a fuckin point.

Kelly Bron Johnson ([28:52](#)):

But that's, again, it comes with that ableism right. Comes with these ideas. People don't want to think about autistic people having sex. Right. It's very like scary for them. They don't want that. There was a, um, there was a woman, a woman who wrote a b long of an autistic man. And she had him castrated. No, she not castrated. Sorry. She had his tubes tied, a vasectomy, there we go. Sorry. She had him have a vasectomy before he turned 18 because she didn't want him to have kids that she didn't think he should, you know, breed. And she didn't, she didn't know how she could control his sexuality. And uh, I mean, it was a horrible, horrible case. I'm not trying to like traumatize anybody with this, but it just goes to show you like.

Troy Sawyer ([29:40](#)):

Barberic

Kelly Bron Johnson ([29:42](#)):

The opinions out there, the stigma out there, the kind of idea that, that we are these weird sexless creatures, or they don't want to think of us having relationships. They don't think we can have relationships. Um, anyway, it's a mess.

Troy Sawyer ([29:57](#)):

Um, and I think the media in general, have you ever noticed that throughout history, any time the media has tried to suppress a particular group, the first thing they do is desexualize them.

Kelly Bron Johnson ([30:13](#)):

Well that's how you dehumanize us in the end, right? Let's start there.

Troy Sawyer ([30:18](#)):

Yeah. It's like what group hasn't been desexualized in the media at some point.

Kelly Bron Johnson ([30:24](#)):

or the opposite, you know, we see the hypersexuality, right. You know, black people.

Troy Sawyer ([30:29](#)):

I mean, I, I mean, we'll take black actors for instance, for a long time in Hollywood, they were desexualized and then the pendulum swung completely the other way into blaxploitation. Right. Although I do love shafts.

Troy Sawyer ([30:46](#)):

I it's a guilty pleasure, but I love them. And for me, Jackie Brown, man, that's in Jackie Brown were just awesome. I'm like, I get that. This there's a lot of toxic stereotypes here, but you guys are just so damn good.

Kelly Bron Johnson ([31:04](#)):

But, um, yeah. So, you know, going back to relationships, there was somebody else too that said, uh, you know, the sex is the greatest stim, right? What are we talking about? We have the hyper sensual kind of, or sensory experiences. So sex can be a major stim for some people. And even if they're not, they might be a romantic. It's still, it's still something that autistic people do. Not all, but like anybody else?

Troy Sawyer ([31:30](#)):

Yeah. I mean, yeah. I do notice now I will be calmer. It's amazing if I have sex. And then afterwards, like my kitchen will not be as cleaner than any other time during the week because it's not like, Oh, there's some anxiety. Let's do the dishes.

Kelly Bron Johnson ([31:48](#)):

Oh, okay. Oh, that's interesting.

Troy Sawyer ([31:52](#)):

Oh my, I hate doing the dishes. I drag my feet, but if I have energy, I'll just rip right through them.

Kelly Bron Johnson ([32:02](#)):

So yeah. We're talking about, uh, going back to relationships, I guess, do you find that, um, you find it it's more challenging to find a romantic partner than it is for straight autistic people. Do you think there's any comparison there?

Troy Sawyer ([32:18](#)):

Yeah, I guess it's I, well, I think one being a gay person, I think gay men struggle with relationships because I kind of feel like for us in particular, our, our relationships I think are really demonized and gay men I think are in particular are, are just seen as hookup creatures. So I don't think we're given quite that guidance think like lesbians it's, it's a little bit the opposite. It's there, there's the stereotype that lesbians meet and get married. Right.

Troy Sawyer ([32:59](#)):

Um, I feel like for, for gay autistic people, at least gay autistic men, I can't really speak for a gay autistic women. Um, but I think for gay autistic men, we have no tools going into relationships as gay men. And we have really no tools for relationships going in as autistic people. And I think like for me, I've, I've definitely gotten very, very confused going into like gay bars or stuff like that because I try and mirror the behavior of guys that I see getting together, problem is, you know, if no one's teaching you what the

quote unquote rules are, then you may misconstrue something like you may be wanting to hook up with somebody, but you're giving off the impression that you're there for a date. Or if you're wanting to meet up with someone for a dayr, you may be giving off the impression that you just want to have sex.

Troy Sawyer ([33:57](#)):

And I am just horrible with polite conversation. Yeah. I'm horrible at it. Um, because I really have no filter. I talk about anything and everything. Apparently random strangers that I met in a bar don't want to hear my views on the Catholic church or stuff like that. So I, uh, it's, it's, it's messy. Um, I, I, so I tend to try and find people with common interests first, if so, I, I tend to avoid a lot of gay spaces these days because it's like, it's so awkward for me. I think I was last time I was in a gay bar was probably almost two years ago. I mean, obviously one, one of those years was for a completely different reason. But, um, but uh, for me, I tend to like, you know, see, I do theater groups or I do, um, groups, uh, to talk about religious stuff.

Troy Sawyer ([35:01](#)):

Cause you know, again, having the religious upbringing, um, there's, there's stuff to talk about there. It is so funny to two different guys in the religious group that I am part of. I introduced them to each other and turned COVID they got married. Oh guess who madetheir wedding cake? Me. I made their wedding cake. I was their ring bearer. I walked up the aisle and I was the witness on their wedding certificate. And anytime I introduced them to people. I'm like, I am the reason these two are together. Don't let them forget it.

Kelly Bron Johnson ([35:46](#)):

So maybe you should do another career as a matchmaker because, uh, I would say that was very successful.

Troy Sawyer ([35:53](#)):

Oh my Lord. I tend to, maybe this is horrible, but whenever I bring, whenever I bring people together, it's usually to talk about painful stuff. Just a few nights. Um, uh, there was a, there was a death in my family, um, recently and I got together with a couple of friends just to talk about death. We, we got together, um, in a, in a distant space, um, just sitting in a corner, drinking and talking about death and it got really funny, real fast. I find, I like starting at the bottom. Let's, let's start with our pain and then work our way up. So finally we started happy. You can only start happy for so long and then it just starts to wave around. But if you start with the painful topics you can build from there.

Kelly Bron Johnson ([36:53](#)):

That's true. You can only go up from there. Yeah.

Doug Blecher ([36:55](#)):

Humor is cathartic.

Troy Sawyer ([36:58](#)):

And the two guys that brought together, they had both lost their moms, but one of them had lost his mother like a few days prior and the other guy had lost his mother like 10 years ago or so. So I was like,

why don't you, why don't you two get together and talk about this. And they did. And then they talked about everything. Now they're sharing an apartment with a cat.

Kelly Bron Johnson ([37:26](#)):

You know, it kind of shows you too, that, that kind of brings a deeper connection, this whole concept of having small talk and then working up into something else. You know, a lot of us feel it's a waste of time, whereas just go straight for the deep connection.

Troy Sawyer ([37:41](#)):

Just that that's the only thing is like, I hate small talk. I hate when people talk around things, I cut right to it because to me and I like to cut right to the chase because cause for me, I can't, I usually can't understand small talk because have you ever noticed some small talk that people are talking about one thing, but there's like five layers and then underneath is what they're really talking about that it's like, Oh Johnny, how are you? Oh, crystal. I'm so fine. How was your weekend? And I'm like, Jenny, just tell crystal, you're found out about the affair. Come on, we're sitting here wondering when you're going to come out with things, you figured it out. We all figured it out. Just cut to the chase.

Doug Blecher ([38:38](#)):

So Troy, we always try to, um, and uh, each of these episodes by learning, uh, from our guests, like what type of intersectional stories that they would like to hear about. So what do you, what types of stories do you think it would be important for us to highlight as we move forward with intersections on the spectrum?

Troy Sawyer ([39:00](#)):

Um, I don't know if you've done this already, but I definitely think there's a lot of advancement right now for trans issues and trans rights, especially trans people of color. I would love to, um, learn from trans people, trans people of color and trans people of color on the spectrum, what their experiences are like and, and how I could be a better ally. Cause that that's a new frontier for me. And I know that's a new frontier for a lot of people and I can only imagine being from any of those communities and being on the spectrum is got to be really hard to me. It's hard enough for me. It's like, but on the street, I'm just a, I look like a CIS white guy, which I am, but most people look at me and just walk the other way. I'm not, I don't draw that kind of attention.

Troy Sawyer ([39:53](#)):

So the people that, you know, maybe it's not necessarily safe for them to walk down the street who are also autistic. I want to hear their stories. I want to know like what can I do? What, what can all of us do? Uh, Def definitely, you know, more, I want to hear like from all, all the different communities in America of, of people on the spectrum, like what's it like being native American and on the spectrum, what's it like being Latina and on the spectrum? I mean, cause that's in my, in my life, I have not gone to meet as many people on the spectrum as I would like. I mean, again, you know, I wasn't diagnosed, I was 19, so I didn't spend my life seeking out other people on the spectrum. So I, I just ended up getting to meet people as they come. And I would love to hear from all the other people from all different communities, it's like, this was my experience. What was your experience? Like? I would love to hear some more stories like that.

Doug Blecher ([40:55](#)):

Absolutely. I think those are stories that we are definitely going to be telling as we move forward. So I hope you're listening. Troy.

Troy Sawyer ([41:03](#)):

Absolutely.

Doug Blecher ([41:05](#)):

Well, well, thanks for so much for joining us today. It was a great conversation. Thanks so much to everyone for listening. If you're enjoying the stories we're sharing with you and you'd like to share your important story about the intersections, um, on the spectrum for you, please email us@intersectionsonthespectrumatgmail.com. We'd love to hear from you. Join us on the next episode of intersections on the spectrum. As we will talk about the intersections of being autistic Latina and having LGBTQ plus identities, talk to you then.