**Down to the Struts**

Season 4 BONUS: Just Human

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Guest: Arielle Silverman

Transcript by Qudsiya Naqui

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**Introduction**

[jazzy piano chords, bass strumming with smooth R&B]

Qudsiya Naqui:

Hi, this is Qudsiya Naqui, and welcome to this very special bonus episode of Down to the Struts, the podcast about disability design and intersectionality. Today I'm delighted that our very first guest on this podcast, Dr. Arielle Silverman will be joining us to talk about her new memoir, Just Human: The Quest for Disability Wisdom, Respect, and Inclusion. For new listeners. And those of you who might want to refresh your memories. You can listen back to Episode One of this podcast where Arielle and I talked about what disability wisdom is and how it can shape disability inclusion in the future. Arielle currently serves as a Research Specialist with the American Foundation for the Blind. While she was writing her memoir, Arielle was an independent researcher and training consultant. Arielle and I talked about what led her to write Just Human her own journey as a blind person, and how she's translated her rigorous research and personal experiences into a framework for disability inclusion. Okay, let's get down to it.

[jazzy piano chords, bass strumming with smooth R&B]

Qudsiya Naqui:

Thanks, Arielle, for joining me on the podcast once again, you were our first and inaugural guest. So I'm so honored to have you back.

Arielle Silverman:

Thank you for the opportunity to be here.

Qudsiya Naqui:

And we are here for a very exciting reason. You've just published your first book. It's a memoir called Just Human. And I'm delighted to have you on to dig in and talk more about the book, I've read it. And I'm looking forward to rereading some parts of it, it was so chock full of really useful information and insights. And I really encourage listeners to take a look at the book. And if you haven't had a chance to read it yet, this will be a really great preview. And so with that, I want to go ahead and dive right in to talk about the book and your impetus for writing it and all that you've learned in the process. So in the last chapter of the book, you you mentioned this concept called chai, which is a Jewish concept that's related to life and providing people with blessing. So I was reading a little bit more about it. And I didn't know that the term l’chaim derives from the word chai. And it means a few different things. It spans an 18 year period of your life, and you chose to write this book, sort of at the end of your second chai your second 18 year lifespan. So over the course of your 36 years, so what in particular made you decide to write the book at this time.

Arielle Silverman:

So I had started writing the book as a series of essays or short stories, and actually, the Dropbox folder that I have on my computer dedicated to the book is still called essays. Because it started out as individual essays where each one was based around either reflection on a period of my life or a specific, memorable event in my life. And I started writing these about five years ago, although actually one of them I wrote part of when I was in high school, so the memories would still be fresh. But I started writing these individual essays about five years ago, thinking that maybe I would eventually put them into a book or I would publish them separately. I wasn't really sure what what I would do with them. But it's funny because the COVID 19 pandemic really started. Well, it started in March of 2020. And so I it was about nine months before my 36th birthday, or you would say maybe about 36 years after I was conceived. And when the pandemic started, it really, I think, got all of us reflecting on how temporary our lives really are. And of course, nobody knew what was going to happen. Nobody knew if they were going to lose loved ones or if life as we know it was going to change. Nothing was permanent at that point in time, but I knew that there were certain messages that I wanted to be sure to get down on paper, so to speak, and to communicate to the world. So I really became driven to finish compiling these stories into a book. And it just so happened that I was wrapping things up right around the time of my 36th birthday in December of 2020. And you'll read about it more in the book, but there is a kind of way of looking at Hebrew letters in Judaism, where each letter corresponds to a number. In the word chai, the first letter of chai corresponds to the number 10, and the second letter corresponds to the number eight. So the word chai is the Hebrew word for life. And it's also it's a numeric value is 18. So I write about how 18 years is a chunk of time that we can think of as approximately the length of one generation or the length, that the amount of time that it takes for somebody to go from birth to being an adult. And in this memoir, it's divided up so that the first chai the first nine chapters, represent approximately the first 18 years of my life, the period of going from being a newborn to being an adult. And then the second half, or the second chai, corresponds to my process of getting established as an adult, and bringing a lot of my dreams to fruition. And of course, hopefully, there are several more chais ahead of me. But I really felt like this point in time, was the right time to get this book out there.

Qudsiya Naqui:

That's really interesting. And I love the interplay of of these sort of religious and cultural concepts. That's really interesting that you really thought that through in the structure of the book itself. One thing that marked your first chai is, unlike many folks, you were exposed to the blindness community early on in your life, which is not often or always the case, for those of us who are blind or lose vision over time. Could you talk a little bit about how those early introductions to blind peers and blind adults, you know, shaped your childhood and then your your growth into adulthood.

Arielle Silverman:

So I've first started meaning other blind children, of course, I've been blind since birth. And I actually started meeting other blind children when I was a toddler. Because I went to a program called the Foundation for Blind Children that served children birth through High School in Phoenix, Arizona, and now they've expanded and they actually serve blind people across the entire lifespan now. But I started interacting with other blind children even when I was in my toddler and preschool years. But of course, at that time, I didn't really know or care that that the other kids were blind like I was, and I started attending. So I went to a mainstream public school. But I started attending these programs on weekends and during the summer, between the ages of nine and 16, where I started interacting with my blind peers more intentionally. And of course, by then, by the time I was nine or 10 years old, which I also write about, in a lot of detail in this book, that was around the time that I really started to recognize that people with disabilities and blind people in particular are sometimes stereotyped in certain ways and sometimes discriminated against by the larger society. I definitely had a sense of exclusion or marginalization when I was in situations with sighted people in school, or even among family or in Hebrew school and those kinds of settings. And those feelings went away or were minimized when I was with other blind people. So I started to recognize that when I went to these camps with other blind people, I was able to blend in and I didn't stand out in the way that I did with sighted people. And I also started to build friendships with people that were equal status kinds of friendships, I learned about all of those important things that go into being a good friend, how to build trust, how to have a give and take reciprocal kind of friendship with another person. And I was in a situation where I was accepted and where I also, I couldn't feel bad about blindness or feel sorry for myself as a blind person because I was around peers who were also blind who I liked and respected. And I didn't get to the point of really interacting with blind adults extensively until At the end of high school, when I joined the National Federation of the Blind, I knew of a few blind adults on and off in my childhood, but it was when I started meeting blind adults, as a young adult myself when I really started to recognize what was possible for me. And as I emphasized in the book, I never really believed that blindness was a bad thing. It was all I ever knew it just to me felt natural. But it's really hard not to internalize the messages that you're constantly surrounded by, from people. And then and most of these are well meaning individuals who nevertheless kind of transmit the idea that to be blind is not as good as to be sighted or as a blind person, you can't achieve as much or you can't enjoy as much as someone who's fully sighted. And so being around blind peers and blind adults, I guess neutralized or nullified those kinds of messages and helped me to understand that I could be all that I wanted to be as a blind person.

Qudsiya Naqui:

That is such a gift. Many of us, myself included, who, in particular, those of us who lost vision over time, or did not, were not blind from birth, don't often have that experience and were not exposed to blindness as a culture or as a community. How do you think we can change that for those of us who who don't have the privilege of being surrounded by blind peers at a young age?

Arielle Silverman:

Well, I think it's always going to be a challenge, because blind people are such a small minority within the broader society. But I think it starts with normalizing disability and normalizing blindness by educating people. When they're young, I would like to see some sort of mandatory Disability Studies requirement in high schools, where students take a semester, they take a few weeks to get immersed in disability culture, not just blindness, but disability as a whole. And where all of the instructors have lived experience of disability. And they do different kinds of assignments where they're interacting in equal status ways with disabled people. One of the points that I emphasized in chapter one of my book is, how many parents describe feelings of grief when they find out that their child has a disability. And I try to unpack that a little bit and I asked, Why do parents expect that their child will not have a disability, the statistics tell us that about 20% of people at some point in life will either be born with a disability or develop a disability. So the odds are one in five that your child will have a disability. So why are parents so shocked and devastated when they find out this is true? And that we can unpack the reasons for it. But I wonder if educating people about disability, and disability culture, when they're young will help them to accept that it could be a possibility when they have children, their children might be disabled, and that it'll be okay. They'll figure it out. And yes, there's going to be challenges. And some of those challenges might be more malleable than others. But it's not going it doesn't need to be this big shock. I mean, I think it's natural when people are losing vision that they will feel grief because they are losing something that they've gotten used to having. And I'm not sure there's necessarily any way to prevent that completely. But I think by having blind people and people with other disabilities in visible places, in the media, and not just in typecast ways in the media, but just being ordinary characters in the media or being around and being your teachers or your doctors or your city workers, it will seem more ordinary to have a disability and then there won't be so much internalized stigma and shame about developing a disability later in life.

Qudsiya Naqui:

I think there's a lot of truth to that. I know in my own experience, I did experience those feelings of grief upon losing much of my vision in my 20s. But I think that when I look back at the sources of that grief, I think the source of the grief was more so the feeling of isolation, the feeling of being alone, the feeling that there was no one around me in my community who experienced the world in which I experienced as opposed to the actual grief about oh, I can't see anymore. Of course, there were things that I would do differently. or would be harder to do. But I again, because I didn't see anyone else doing those things in in a different or adaptive or new way, I thought there was only one way to do everything. And if I couldn't do it that way, then I have experienced a loss. And then when I started to connect with blind folks, particularly folks like yourself who have been blind since birth, and I realized that there was a completely different way of being, and that I did not have to be in the world, like a sighted person, in fact, that was simply impossible, and not a goal that was even worth aspiring to because it just wasn't realistic or didn't make sense for me, when I started to realize that and reshape the way I did things and rethink the limitations or reframe them. And most importantly, when I was just constantly surrounded by other blind people doing things the way I was doing them, and not feeling shame about them, and just, it just was, that's when that grief just is gone. I don't I don't feel grief about the loss of my vision anymore. I can't. It's been you know, some years since I experienced that transition. And I, I don't even remember what that grief feels like. Interestingly, it doesn't, it's not a pain that I have anymore. And so I think what you're saying is really true. If I had seen that, you know, 10 years earlier than I did, perhaps I wouldn't have gone through that process of grief because I would have been sort of normalized into who I was because I was surrounded by others who were there to support me and to be part of my community. So I think there's a lot of truth to what you're saying.

Arielle Silverman:

Absolutely.

Qudsiya Naqui:

So another aspect of your book that I found really poignant was just the vulnerability with which you talked about, you're coming into consciousness about issues of race as a blind person. So you talked earlier about the fact that, you know, as a young child, you just were neutral about your blindness. But you weren't conscious about these other aspects of difference. And you describe, you know, a really interesting story that I'll let you share about the first time you understood the concept of race, and how initially, you sort of thought about being blind as a way to escape kind of being affected by race, racism, racial inequity, but your position on that has really evolved in your consciousness about that has really evolved over time. And so I was wondering if you could talk a little bit about that, and how you think you can bring a race conscious, racially equitable framing into the disability inclusion work that you do now?

Arielle Silverman:

Yeah, so when I was in second grade, and it was the Friday before Martin Luther King Day holiday, and we had a presentation in our class about Martin Luther King and who he was and what he did. And I remember that there was a video that was being shown, and somebody was talking about the 1950s, and people in the south. And they were talking about these two groups of people that I'd never heard of before, at all. And those groups were white people and black people. And this guy was talking about how black and white people weren't allowed to go to the same schools or sit next to each other on the bus, or even use the same drinking fountains. And how Martin Luther King kind of helped mobilize black people to fight against the injustice that they were facing. And I remember being really interested in that story. But I was also really curious to find out more about who these groups of people were, and what it meant to be a white person or to be a black person, because I just had no idea that that was even a thing. And of course, I really wanted to know who I was. Because I knew that of course, I wasn't alive back when all this was happening. But my parents were and I probably fit into one of those two categories, but I didn't know which one. And so I went home and I asked my parents if I was a white person or a black person. And I remember thinking that this was a really simple question. That had a simple answer, and then being surprised when my mom hesitated before she answered me. And I had this thought of like, oh, no, what have I done? Have I asked a bad question? Am I gonna get in trouble? Did I do something wrong? And I honestly don't remember the details of what I was told. I was told that I was a white person. But there was something also about how my mom was very moved by the fact that I didn't know which group I belong to, or which group anybody belong to. And many times over the years I would hear my family members telling other people about how beautiful it was that because I couldn't see I didn't know the difference between white people and black people. And you know, isn't that wonderful? Shouldn't we all strive toward that ideal of just not knowing difference, not and not knowing, or not caring about race. And I think in many ways, as I was growing up, I tried to compensate for the negative beliefs about blindness, but trying to look for advantages of blindness. And so I would actually start telling people that, because I was blind, I couldn't be racist. And in the meantime, I was growing up in a suburb, in a city that I looked up in the population is 92%, white. And I had really very, very little interaction with minorities until I was in high school. And I went, I started participating in this diversity program, because I really prided myself on being unprejudiced and trying to fight against prejudice. And that, of course, by that I was also interested in ableism, even though I didn't know what it was called. And so I joined this diversity program, that's when I really did start meeting people who identified as different racial identities from my own. And I started learning more about some of the cultural factors and cultural differences as well as the stereotypes and prejudices that non white individuals dealt with. And eventually, I got into conversations with people who started including other blind people who started challenging me and saying, no, just because you can't see it doesn't mean that you can't be racist. And, you know, maybe you can't see by looking if somebody is black or white, but you probably stereotype them based on how they talk, or based on where they say they're from, or any other any of a number of factors. And then, of course, when I got to grad school, because I ended up getting my doctorate in social psychology, and I was in a stereotyping and prejudice lab. So we would talk about all different kinds of racial biases and implicit or unconscious bias, and the fact that you can have limited awareness of what biases you have or limited awareness of how they impact your behavior. And actually, when I wrote the book, and I was conflicted on whether or not to even share the story in the book, because I didn't want people to misinterpret. I didn't want people to think that I was being ignorant about racial issues or trivializing them. But I was working on the book during the summer of 2020, when George Floyd was killed, and people were talking a lot about race, who hadn't necessarily been talking about race before. And people were talking about the problems with colorblindness both literally and figuratively, in my case, colorblindness being this idea of just not paying attention to race. And I was reading on social media and I was hearing black people talking about, we don't want you to be colorblind, we want you to acknowledge race as a thing. And we want you to listen to us and let us lead the conversation. And so that's where I went, in that chapter of my book in terms of describing how colorblindness is, seems like, it should be the answer, but it's really not and how my colorblind ideology was based on growing up around in this homogeneous city, where nearly everyone was white and just kind of ignoring the presence of race and the systematic impact that interracial dynamics have had on on people over hundreds of years. So I'm advocating a position of not being colorblind, but instead recognizing that we all have biases, and letting people who have been harmed by those biases kind of lead the conversation about where we go from here.

Qudsiya Naqui:

Yeah, I, I really appreciated your your honesty, your vulnerability. I think, oftentimes, people are uncomfortable, looking back at how they thought about things when they were younger and kind of want to erase them and you really lifted them up and examine them for what they were and describe how your thinking evolved and, in many ways, ableism and racism function, they walk hand in hand And they they are very much interrelated in a lot of ways, and they can work on someone and have different effects in terms of their experiences of privilege and oppression at different times. And so I appreciated that you did, in fact, include that story in the book. And I think it really was illuminating to see how you evolved and how that played a role in the way in which you, you think about disability inclusion, as well. So I am grateful for that honesty, you know, another area in which you were very, very honest and vulnerable was your lack of consciousness early on about, you know, cross disability movement building and the experiences of people with disabilities other than your own disability, which is blindness. And the book, the second half of it really serves its but the book is both a memoir, it also serves as an instruction manual. So I was wondering if you could describe the framework that you articulate in the book about how we should interact with people, because I think it's not just a really apt way to think about engaging with a disabled person, but it's a way that we should think about engaging with each other. In general, it's a it's a practice that we should all aspire to do in our lives. And when we're interacting with others, which is stop, ask and listen. So could you could you talk a little bit about those concepts? And and how, how you develop them and how they might apply, as we try to combat and dismantle ableism? And racism as well?

Arielle Silverman:

Yeah, of course. So first of all, as I said, I think part of my journey of dealing with being a target of ableism was trying to build myself up and think about how blindness was positive for me, and also comparing myself to others. And so I went through a lot of my life thinking, well, maybe I'm blind, and maybe that has certain that gives me certain disadvantages, but at least I'm smart, at least I don't have a learning disability, or at least I don't have an intellectual disability. And I really distanced myself from people who had those types of disabilities, because I felt like they, I felt threatened by them. But at the same time, I was attending this blindness program, and a lot of people who are blind, a lot of kids, well, now it's people of all ages, but especially the younger generations are being born with blindness, that's that coexists with other types of disabilities. And so I had peers and friends who had intellectual and developmental disabilities. And I observed how they were treated. And I noticed that there were times when adults, authority figures would get into conflict with us as kids, and that some of the students with those types of disabilities would react in ways that the adults didn't necessarily respond to in a positive way. And so I noticed sometimes there would be this dynamic where perhaps a student didn't comply with instructions from an adult, like the adult told them to get in line line up by the door, or give them a certain type of food, and they wanted to eat a different type of food. And there was some kind of conflict over the instructions that were given. And sometimes, people with developmental disabilities, or really any type of disability might respond in ways that are unexpected, and that the adults perceived as negative and I noticed, sometimes there would be this like, push and pull, where the adult would tell the child to do something, the child would resist in some way, in some kind of fight or flight way, either by just freezing or by running away or by shouting or by bursting into tears. And then the adult would double down and say, you know, you have to do this. And if you don't, if you don't follow directions, I'm going to call your parents and they would just double down and it would just keep building and building and building. And as I got older, and I was observing these things happening, and I was thinking like, this is unnecessary, it doesn't need to be like this. And eventually when I started working in blindness programs for blind youth, I started observing from the other side. And I started observing how things could be done in a better way. And first by watching my co workers and then when I was myself in a position of working with some of these students. I noticed that when I took the time or my colleagues took the time to listen to the student who was resisting instructions and find out what was going on. From their point of view, things didn't have to escalate. In fact, they would often remarkably quickly de escalate. So I noticed if I was working with a student, and they maybe got scared, or they got anxious, and they would run away. If I started, if I got scared and anxious, and I started yelling at them, things would escalate. But if I, you know, caught up to them and quietly asked them, what was bothering them and kind of figured out what what was bothering them and then negotiated with them to get rid of whatever was bothering them, things got better. And so this became an issue that I became quite passionate about. And again, I was writing the book at the same time that we were talking a lot about in the media about police brutality. And in many ways, the altercations between police and suspects paralleled some of these patterns that I had observed with people with intellectual developmental disabilities where police officer would be suspicious of someone or the person was acting in an unusual way or the police officer would make a demand and the suspect would resist the demand, counteract the demand and things would just keep escalating and escalating. And of course, we were all talking in the media about how there's a better way. So I wrote the chapter 15 of the book, kind of breaking down some of the reasons why these escalations occur. And some of it has to do with, in fact, the the core of it has to do with stress, and fight or flight reactions on both sides, both from the authority figure and the the subordinate, whether it be a child or a student or a civilian against an officer. And the stress that both people experience, but also that can be magnified by different certain types of ideologies like parenting ideologies, where parents might believe that they need to punish a child in order to get them to comply. Or they're certain disabilities specific ideologies, where the belief is that if kids with certain types of disabilities are treated in these reward and punishment kinds of ways that it will change their behavior, but those ideologies end up backfiring and making things worse. And then, of course, there are also prejudices about racial prejudices about people of certain races being dangerous or being non compliant, and prejudices against people with disabilities that suggests that if somebody maybe can't speak, that they're a threat, or if they're flapping their hands, because they're stressed, and they're stimming, that they're a threat. And so those kinds of ideologies all contribute to these patterns. And the suggestion that I propose, which is linked to some other research in psychology that I talked about, with Ross Greene and his collaborative problem solving model is this three part formula that is really remarkably simple. And I refer to it as stop the stop ask Listen, formula, where the first part of it is stop. And I compare an escalation to a fire because in many ways, it has the same properties of the building and building and building and spreading aspect. And the first step in putting out a fire is just stop. So that means the person in authority, the person in charge, instead of just immediately reacting to what they perceive as defiance, or whatever, you need to take a step back, and pause. And let that flame die down a little bit. And then the second step, which I call ask is opening a dialogue with the person and finding out why they're resisting or why they're behaving in a way that that is unexpected. And then the third step is to listen. And that means modifying your own behavior or providing support that the person might need, so that the person is able to de escalate and thus, the authority figure is also able to de escalate. So I think these concepts are really important and they're remarkably simple. But I think there's a lot of patterns that are ingrained into us, both in terms of kind of instinctive, reactive patterns that we have reacting to somebody we perceive as a threat, and also ideologies that we hold about how people should behave. and how people should treat authority figures that we really need to put aside if we want to interact peacefully with one another.

Qudsiya Naqui:

Absolutely. As I said, I think these strategies are relevant in the context of disability in the context of racial prejudice in the context of simply our relationships, our friendships, our relationships with our loved ones, our parents, our children, I was reading that portion of your book at a time when I actually had a similar situation I was walking and this is very much a blindness related thing. I was walking to the grocery store with my partner in DC IN THE it had just you know, that snow had happened at the beginning of the year. And you know, it's DC and no one plowed, it's just a mess. It's nighttime, so I have night blindness, but I have some more usable vision in the daytime, I really don't at night. So night is a particularly stressful time for me in terms of navigation. And we're walking and I'm very unhappy. And I'm escalating in my level of stress. And my partner is, you know, he's very sweet. And he wants me to be happy, and I'm not happy. And he is, you know, trying to problem solve, but I, you know, I didn't really, you know, later on when we were kind of debriefing the whole situation, you know, I explained I said, I just needed to be asked, Are you okay? Or just to be acknowledged that, hey, it's dark, there's ice and snow and slush, everywhere. I know, this is stressful, I'm here with you, we're going to make it home. So I think that would have de escalated me pretty fast, because I felt that someone was listening. So even in in our little domestic squabbles, I think this strategy can be really effective. And, and sometimes when we go through that process, we as the person who is not in the authority, the person who's the subordinate, often have an opportunity also to unpack our stress. And maybe in the future, if that stressful situation comes up again, we might be able to reframe and behave differently, because we we've had an opportunity to be heard, and we've found a solution that is more workable in the future.

Arielle Silverman:

And I talked about how, like, it really doesn't make any sense. Rationally, it makes no sense. But just being right, just being heard, or just being validated, like being told, you know, it's okay to feel sad. Or, you know, you must be really angry, because you didn't, you know, we're not serving french fries today, or what, you know, whatever it is, like, it doesn't make any sense that that would actually help. But it really does. And there must be something in our evolution or, or something like that, that it's like accused us that like, you're going to be safe because the other person's listening. Absolutely. Like if somebody is upset, sometimes you can't fix it. Sometimes they really are. Sometimes they were justified in being upset about something or sometimes they're struggling in an irrational way, and you can't fix it. But just to say, like I'm here, and I understand or I'm going to try to understand what's bothering you like it really does make a difference.

Qudsiya Naqui:

Absolutely. And you know, I do work around access to justice. And we often do surveys, which are called procedural justice surveys to help understand what processes make people feel like they have been treated fairly, whether that's in an interaction with a law enforcement officer or in a hearing before a judge. And in reading some of these survey responses and studies that I've done over and over again, the thing that the people who are surveyed find so important is I was heard, I felt like I was heard, I feel like I was able to say my piece and and have someone listen. So it's interesting that that concept also really permeates into our justice system as well. So I think there's a lot of a lot of interesting application for, for the framework that you set forth in various aspects of our lives. So we've talked about a lot of things and there's there's so much in the book, and I really again, I hope listeners will will, you know, read the book, and we'll talk more in a minute about where you can find it. But so Arielle, I'd love to ask you, what do you most want people to take away from your story?

Arielle Silverman:

So I think there's a few things. I guess the most rudimentary thing I want people to take away is that it's okay to be blind. It's okay to be disabled. Things are going to work out and they're going to be times where it might feel like things will never get better, but you'll find your way whatever that way ends up being. There's one part where I talk about, there's as many ways to be human as there are human beings in the world. So I really want people to think about how everyone is everyone is important. And everyone everyone's uniqueness should fit into this world, there's not just one way to or a few ways to be respectable and acceptable in the world, I want people to think about how everyone can improve in there, everyone can move toward the final stage of inclusion, everyone can, can work on themselves and examine prejudices that that that they carry, that affect their behavior, and everyone can become a better person. And everyone can find ways to interact peacefully with one another. I think those are the main points that I want to get across. And I also hope people will be able to relate to the stories and enjoy and laugh at some of the stories that I share.

Qudsiya Naqui:

Like when you licked the dog.

Arielle Silverman

Yeah.

Qudsiya Naqui:

To prove a point to your grandpa, I think that's so true. And we're all in it together, right? We all, every single one of us have prejudices we, we have experienced racism or felt racism in somewhere or the other from wonder, or multiple sides of that issue. And we can only be better if we work together, I think, and have a sense of community, which I think is something that comes across in your book as well.

Arielle Silverman:

So I think also just the idea that you can make a difference. Even if you only if you only help one person, or you only make a huge difference in one person's life, it's still important.

Qudsiya Naqui:

Absolutely. And now, most importantly, where can folks find your book and your your other work?

Arielle Silverman:

My book is available on Amazon, it's available in print, or in Kindle. And if you search for my name, in the Amazon search bar, it should come up, it should be the first thing that comes up. So my name is Arielle Silverman, A-r-i-e-l-l-e. Last name is, S-i-l-v-e-r-m-a-n. Or you can search for Just Human with a colon after “Human.” And I think that will also take you directly to it. You can also look on my website. And the book is available in a few alternate formats like synthesized audio and PDF, and even a Braille a couple of Braille formats. So if you want to purchase any of those alternate formats, or you just want to read more about my book or read about other work that I've done, I have a blog that I've developed, that I was writing at the same time that I was writing the book. So some of the blog posts are a little bit redundant with a book. But there's also a lot of unique content in there. You simply go to disabilitywisdom.com, and there will be a link from that main homepage to the book page. And that's where you'll see information about the book and how to order. And then you can also look at the rest of the stuff on my website and my blog from there.

Qudsiya Naqui:

Thanks, Arielle. And if you want to learn more about what disability wisdom is, you can also listen back in the archives to the very first episode of this podcast. Arielle was our very first guest. So the episode is called Getting Wise About Disability. So definitely check that out. And again, the book is Just Human: The Quest for Disability Wisdom, Respect, and Inclusion by Arielle Silverman. So definitely go check it out at Disabilitywisdom.com Or on amazon.com. Arielle, thank you so much for coming back, and joining me, you're my first repeat guest. So that was a really fun moment for me. So thank you so much.

Arielle Silverman:

Thank you. Thanks, everyone, for listening.

[jazzy piano chords, bass strumming with smooth R&B]

Qudsiya Naqui:

Thank you for joining us once again for this bonus episode. This podcast would not be possible without the energy and creativity of our audio producer Elana Nevins and our social media manager Avery Anapol. If you enjoy and value what you hear on this podcast, consider becoming a patron by visiting patreon.com/downtothestruts, where you can have access to bonus content, and a quarterly newsletter featuring exclusive podcast updates, curated reading To build your disability knowledge and actions you can take to contribute to the movement for Disability Justice. While we take a break between seasons, you can find us on Twitter and Instagram at down to the struts and join our Facebook group down to the struts podcast to become part of our growing community. If you like what you hear, you can also subscribe rate and review the podcast on Apple podcasts, Spotify, Stitcher, or wherever you love to listen or you can do none of that and simply enjoy the conversations that you find here. Thanks for being with us once more, and see you soon so we can get back down to it.