



Title: Creating Accessible Places and Spaces with Marco Pasqua
Nerdin' About Podcast Transcript, Season 2 Episode 10

Michael

Hey everyone, welcome to Nerdin' About, I'm Space Michael, and with me as always is someone who loves a good hammock, and that's Dr. Kaylee Byers. How's it going Kaylee?

Kaylee

Thank you so much. It's going pretty well. I do love a good hammock. You know, I got a hammock as a PhD defense present last year, and I'm finally able to go out and use it. So, I've been really enjoying it. You're quite a tall fellow. Do you ever struggle with hammocks?

Michael

Yeah, well, you know, sometimes when I try to get my banana hammock on it doesn't quite fit properly.

Marco

That's a different kind of hammock, I think. (laughs)

Kaylee

Yeah, that's for sure not the hammock I met. You know what this podcast is inclusive of all hammocks including banana hammocks. So, speaking of being inclusive of all kinds of hammocks, today, we are going to be talking about inclusivity, and accessibility. Today we are joined by Marco Pasqua. Marco is an award-winning entrepreneur, accessibility consultant and inspirational speaker working to ensure that all Canadians have universal access to programs, services, and places where they live, work, and play. Hi, Marco, how are you?

Marco

I'm doing awesome. I thought you were going to introduce me as like some Grand Poobah Hammock so that was even better than the introduction that I was expecting. So, thank you so much for having me.

Kaylee

Well, we're absolutely delighted for you to be here. To start off, you've been an advocate for people with disabilities, almost your entire working life, why don't we start there? Can we talk a little bit about how you got started with this work?

Marco

Yeah, actually, it's not just my working life, it's my living life. Something you wouldn't be able to tell over podcast, but I'm person with lived experience. I'm a person with a disability myself, I was born with cerebral palsy, and in my case, it affects my two legs and my right arm. So, the dexterity of my two legs, my right arm. So as a result, I'm a wheelchair user, I use a manual wheelchair. When it comes to the work of accessibility and inclusion, Michael, I think you know



this from some of the conversation that we might have had on another podcast (Let's Innovate!), but I actually kind of avoided that work for the longest time because I didn't want to be seen as a guy with a disability talking about disability-related things, because I wanted to be respected first as an individual and as an entrepreneur, but I wasn't always an entrepreneur, I went to school in video game design, got a degree as a game designer, worked in the game industry for between five and seven years, on and off. In the recession of 2010, I lost my job very similar to what's going on with COVID. You know, it was not as widespread as a global pandemic, but definitely the recession hit a lot of organizations across the globe, and the game industry was definitely one of them. That was the greatest thing that could ever happen to me, because it was my opportunity to shift gears, and to take a chance on myself. If it wasn't for my girlfriend at the time, my now wife, encouraging me to follow what she thought was always my true calling, which was to light a fire in people and use my voice as a speaker. I don't know if I would have ever taken that plunge, you know, I'm not really a quitter. I never would have quit the path that I was on, because I always was chasing that carrot of something bigger and something bigger, but the idea of chasing that carrot for myself, and really being inspired to use my own lived experience as somebody with a disability. By happenstance I actually worked with one of the biggest change makers in the world when it comes to accessibility, especially here locally in Canada, Rick Hansen. He's been a huge mentor of mine over the years, and it was actually Rick years ago, who encouraged me to stop being silly about feeling as though it was a bad thing to talk about my disability, or to become an authoritative figure in that regard, because people needed a strong voice in that space. One time I was at an event with Rick and he was basically up on stage, he said to me out on stage "I have confidence, knowing that there's guys like Marco Pasqua out there that I can pass the baton to when I'm ready to retire to know that this work, and this space is going to continue on far beyond me. That's really what blew the doors open for me in accessibility. When your mentor, somebody that you had as a poster on your wall when you're a little kid, says that you're the person that he trusts to bring forward that message, you say "Where do I sign up?" So, it's been a wild ride.

Michael

Yeah, I love that moment because we did talk about that. How Rick Hansen basically called you out on stage. I love that, it's a very movie like moment where you get the call, and you answered it, and you've been living this life inspired by this idol you had on your wall. I think it's really beautiful.

Marco

Thanks, man.

Michael

Speaking of that work, I'm curious about what it actually entails. Let's nerd out for a minute on what you actually do when you are advocating for people with disabilities? I imagine, it's more than getting companies and corporations to raise money.



Marco

It's way more than just sitting on a soapbox, and saying that this is the right thing to do. Because you could say that for any number of minorities, especially in today's climate, right? I think it's actually about becoming an authority figure, not just with having the knowledge of something, but having the wisdom of lived experience. If you feel willing enough to be vulnerable and authentic with people, I find that in my work, that has been the best policy. I did become a certified [Rick Hansen Foundation](#) Accessibility professional, and that's just a fancy way of saying, I work with architects and building operators, reading blueprints, and being able to look at a built environment space, whether it's inside of a building, or even a park, playground, municipality, and knowing the best ways to approach things from an accessible and universally designed perspective, with not only just my perspectives as somebody using a wheelchair in mind, but individuals with potentially vision loss, hearing loss, cognitive challenges, and being able to understand that whole picture, from the moment that you need to travel to a destination to the moment that you're actually experiencing the site itself, and the ways in which it's meant to be utilized by the people who are involved, for everybody. So, we call that meaningful access. So, the work that I do can any be anything from working with architects, operators to review those spaces in a blueprint stage, going on site, actually delving into the space giving them reports on what it could look like to do better, to everything from actually inclusive hiring strategies. How do you hire somebody with a disability? How do you make sure that your job applications are accessible for people with disabilities? There's a one-on-one mentorship component of that, basically teaching, educating people so that you can break down not just environmental barriers, but attitudinal barriers as well. In fact, if you ask me, attitudinal barriers are the very first set of barriers you need to tackle before you can even look at a physical space. Because if the people who experience the space aren't open to the ideas of change, then you're not really at a starting point that you can work with.

Kaylee

Well, if we start with that first level of barriers, the attitudinal barriers. How do you address those? How do we start breaking those down?

Marco

Yeah, well, first and foremost, I think just the openness of an organization saying, you know, what, I'm open to looking at diverse schools of thought, in that, you know, we've done things a certain way our entire life, or our building is of a certain age, and we're just not seeing diverse talent, walk through the door, or roll through the door, or whatever the case may be. First and foremost, not just saying, "Well, people with disabilities don't apply to work here, or they don't even use our space." Well, of course, because they can't get inside of your building. Those aha moments are some of my favorite things to address. A lot of organizations, the first touch point is, "you know, what, Marco? We need a guy like you to come in and give us a diversity and inclusion training workshop, from the aspect of something as simple as interacting with people with disabilities. What's the kind of language that I'm supposed to use? How is it that I can accommodate in ways I wasn't even realizing that I was subconsciously not accommodating to?" The coolest thing is that I'm the kind of guy that I don't want to create an environment of uncomfortableness, where people feel like they're on edge, and they're going to say or do the



wrong things, and that they're going to be slapped on the wrist with litigation. My approach is more about "Listen, I'm going to be so authentic with you that I'm a person with a disability that you can legitimately ask me any question you absolutely want to ask, and I will answer you honestly, as long as I know, your intention is not a malicious one, that you're actually out there to learn to gain." The number of organizations that I've seen open up, literally cry. I've had business leaders say, "Now that you have been vulnerable enough to come to my space and tell people that you've been going through these struggles and sharing your personal stories. I want to open up and tell people that I've struggled with mental health and depression", and that's an invisible disability that you wouldn't even see on the surface. All of a sudden, you're creating this space where this rigid tech company, turns into this open family that's always really been there, and once you open that door, you can't really close it. That's where you're creating a sense of real belonging for workplaces. That's the most exciting part of my job.

Kaylee

You mentioned universal design. We're talking a little bit about the hiring practice. Of course, this extends to so many different areas. For me, I've been thinking a lot about how it's scientific conference season right now, and its virtual conferences. I'm in one starting tomorrow, and virtual conferences are interesting, there's opportunities to change how things have always been done to include more people, but they also present new challenges for inclusion and accessibility. So, thinking about designing these sorts of online events, conferences, could you give us some examples that listeners could maybe relate to when thinking about how to use universal design to design those sorts of community spaces?

Marco

So, there's seven principles of universal design. Essentially, I'll boil it down to this, any time that you're going to use a space that it actually works for somebody, whether they're 9, or they're 90, regardless to them having bend themselves to the space but rather the space is actually working with them. So, they don't have to think about them being the person with the disability, it's actually the environmental, and virtual barriers that actually create the disability on the person because it's not meeting them where they're at. So, a lot of the times when it comes to creating virtual spaces, things that people often forget to think about, which now they're opening their eyes more to, is things like, "do you have automatic closed captioning available?" Is there transcription available for people? Maybe, for example, someone hasn't opened up to the fact that they are hard of hearing or that they are going deaf, and they don't want to talk about that in the workplace, but they want the peace of mind of knowing that there's going to be a transcript available later that they can review. Maybe somebody has anxiety or depression or anxiety in general, or autism or ADHD, and they want to be able to review those notes so that they feel like they can articulate their thoughts if it's to do with a meeting, or so that they can still be a thought leader in the space and not feel like there's a disadvantage there. Then of course, the more obvious things are like ASL interpreters, your sign language interpreters that are available that you're able to now with many technologies like Zoom, and like Microsoft Teams, you can pin more than just the active speaker speaking but also pin a secondary window. So that if you have an ASL interpreter, that person can be pinned in real time, all the time, so that if somebody



needs that interpreter, that service is available, or having a secondary channel of open captioning, where you actually have someone typing out word for word. I don't envy those people at all, because my typing is good, but not that good. So, the fact that they're able to type a mile a minute, and keep up with these very energetic speakers like myself, who can talk very quickly. It's no easy feat, right? So just thinking of it that way. Then opening yourself up to the idea of "you don't know what you don't know", and that's okay. So, in your forum for inviting people to your events, something as simple as you can ask is, "are there any things that we could provide as a combination or support that would make sure that you could be an active participant in this meeting, or at this event?" It's a real open invitation without using the word disability for somebody to type in that open text box, "Actually, yes." Is it possible to have an interpreter? Is it possible to email me some of these questions in advance so that I can prepare myself in advance for what's going to be coming at me as a participant? All of a sudden, you melt away any feelings of fear or anxiety about being exposed, because like anything, somebody needs to be comfortable, whether or not they disclose their disability or not, and there may be people listening today who have some form of disability, that for one reason or another related to stigma or attitude, as we're talking about at the top of the show, they decided not to open up about it, because they fear that they may lose their job as a result. That's an honest fear, because you just never know what your environment is, but if you build an environment of authenticity and trust, then you're in a good place.

Michael

Yeah, I'd like to dig into that a bit more about the disabilities that aren't immediately apparent that aren't visible, and people that may be reticent to open up about those disabilities. I'm thinking of people with depression, with brain injuries that could really affect someone's work life and how employers may treat them, also if they're not understanding what they're going through. What are the kinds of conversations you're having around those kinds of disabilities?

Marco

Well, I think that they are definitely some of the most honest conversations you can have if you can get somebody feeling comfortable enough to be open about cross-sectionality of potential challenges that they may be facing. I know for myself, I'm going to be completely vulnerable with you both right now, it was only up until maybe like three years ago that I started to open up to people as an inspirational speaker that I've actually suffered from anxiety and depression for 20 plus years myself, because I didn't want to be exposed as a fraud in my own eyes, because they're like, "well, how can you be an inspirational speaker if you're suffering from depression?" I realized that's just the honest truth of it all, and in fact, not only does it not make me an imposter, it actually makes me more credible, to be honest, and to talk about more of the human side of things. I learned that in the spaces of being able to be honest and open to people and tell them, "Hey, by the way, not only am I a person with a disability with cerebral palsy using a wheelchair, but I also struggled in this environment as well." That's where people are like, "you know, what, okay, maybe this is a safe space, and maybe we can talk about mental health in more than just Bell Let's Talk Day." The number one thing I tell the organizations is, don't placate the issue by saying you're going to be part of this, because it's a hashtag, that's never the authentic approach to any of this work. If you believe in this, and if you believe in truly



accepting the people that are part of your staff, then you're going to be about it 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and you're going to create that environment where somebody can come to work and be 100 every single day because you respect who they are, and what they bring to the table and the talent they bring to the job site. So, the second that we get away from our egos, and we hang up our hats at the end of the day, whether you're the CEO of a company, or you're somebody in the janitorial staff, at the end of the day, we're all just human beings, and we all have something to contribute. I think that the second that we shed away those titles, and we realize that we're actually trying to contribute to something meaningful, and whatever it is that we're doing, then people go, "you know, what? I think we can talk about these things, whether they're visible or not."

Michael

You know, Marco, in our previous conversation on Let's Innovate, we primarily focused on your other life, your life as an entrepreneur. I remember at the time, we talked about how you didn't want to be pigeonholed, as someone with a disability in your work as an entrepreneur. So, because this is a safe place, and because you're probably feeling comfortable with us, I'd like to check-in on how you're feeling right now, in this moment of 2021. Balancing that work of your life as an entrepreneur, and your work as an inclusion and diversity speaker and advocate.

Marco

I'll tell you one thing, it's definitely reminded me that as an entrepreneur, it's so important to plant so many different types of revenue streams, and seeds of opportunity. Because if I had just put all of my eggs in the basket of being a conference speaker, and had no other aspects of knowledge or education to land on, I don't know where I would be today. It's actually kind of weird when I think about it, considering my actual traditional training, educationally is actually in the video game industry, and I'm not doing any of that now. So, it's about being honest and open to change. Before we went live, you know, I talked to you about how I'm only two months into being a brand-new dad, and you know, that's another set of things that will challenge you. So, this is the perfect timing to be a dad, because now with my wife being on mat leave, and me working from home, primarily due to the pandemic, not only am I going to be a better entrepreneur that's more well-rounded, and being able to show not only sides of myself to other people, but sides of myself to myself. I can be a present dad that when the workday is done, I don't have to worry about commuting home so I can spend 20 minutes with my daughter before she falls asleep. I can be there instantaneously, and I think that there's a lot of people and families that can relate to the fact that whether you have children, whether you have pets, whether you have your significant other that you can just turn off, and just reflect. And inner reflection is sometimes the best work that we can do. So, learning how we can learn, grow and adapt and be better day in and day out, is also a great exercise that you can do at the end of these work days in a way that you couldn't if you had to worry about traffic. So, it's great.

Kaylee

Let's talk a little bit about the CUBE principle, which stands for Creatively Using your Best Energy. What is this method all about?



Marco

Yeah, creatively utilizing your best energy. It's all about recognizing in situations whether you have a goal you want to accomplish, or a struggle that you're having in your life, and looking to your network, to find people that have strengths that you can mutually benefit from, using each other's strengths and ideas. I think it's really great because this is not fish oil that I'm trying to sell people or anything like this. It's just literally the method in which I use to connect with people and to network with people that is done in an authentic way that is mutually beneficial. I love the opportunity of being able to share it with people and understanding that not everyone is good at everything, but everybody is good at something. Honestly, it's something I've been doing my entire life, people asked me if I could teach them how to do that. After I got enough requests, I said, "Really? You want to remember how to authentically connect with people? I mean, sure, I can teach you how to do that." And it just kind of spun from there. I couldn't be more blessed in the fact that people truly look to me as a trustworthy person, an authentic person that can teach them, or at least remind them of a world before we were lost in our egos that is social media, and things of this regard. Social media, let me let me be clear, can be a good thing, and you can use it for good just like how we're doing this podcast today. There's nothing wrong with mutually beneficial promotion it's something that is good when you're sharing information, but if you can do it in such a way where you're creating an even bigger impact, and even if it's the most minute of things you want it to get accomplished in your life, and you can get somebody from your circle to help you with it. It is super rewarding to get that done. And then say, "Man, this is addictive. I wonder what else I can accomplish." It kind of grows from there.

Kaylee

I love that. Actually, today I got asked a question for a podcast panel that I had to answer, what resiliency meant to me. My response was resiliency is community, and it's working with the people who inspire you. It's building them up, and celebrating their successes, and the challenges, and doing that all alongside, and that's what I'm hearing a lot in this CUBE principle. So, I'm into it.

Marco

I love it. Thank you.

Michael

You know, it's all about growing our community, the people in our network, and you know who else is on our network, Kaylee?

Kaylee

Oh my gosh, who?

Michael

The nerd herd. If you want to get in on the nerd herd questions, we post them on our social media @NerdNiteYVR, Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. Our first one comes in from Sarah,



who asks, "I'm curious about inclusion and diversity as it relates to HR hiring practices and board recruitment." You had briefly mentioned that earlier Marco, but what are some of the conversations you're having around hiring?

Marco

Yeah, you know, I think actually, it's one of the most predominant conversations that I'm having, because now is no greater time than ever to look at untapped talent pools, for hiring people with disabilities. There's a lot of great organizations that are out there doing good work. One of the ones that I used to be a lead consultant with is a group called the President's Group or accessibleemployers.ca. Now, this is a group of 25 change-driven BC business leaders here in British Columbia, that are everything from Fortune 500 companies, to small mom and pop pie shops that are actually trying to actively say, "we are looking to set the bar when it comes to hiring people with disabilities." It was such a pleasure to work with this group of 25 companies for two years as one of the consultants, because we basically took resources from conversations with their CEOs and leaders, and boiled them down into one-to-five-page PDFs that anybody can access for free, because the province of BC says that this is a priority. How that ties back into the question around boards is that anybody can get started in this, no matter where you're at in your journey. I think that you just have to be open to where it is you're looking for these talent pools. If there's anything that I learned, in the two years that I was with the President's Group, it's that you can't just make this an HR initiative that's a checkbox, that you're just checking a box and saying, "Look at us, we're diverse now because we have a diversity statement." You have to be about it, and it has to come down from the CEO or business leader level, even if you're a smaller business, and you're the founder of a company. You have to believe that you need to look in other untapped sources to find these talents, or find ways in which to utilize something that somebody would consider a disability as an advantage for your board or for your company. So, for example, some of the companies on the President's Group found ways to utilize people on the autism spectrum because some of these individuals are really good at recognizing patterns or numbers or things of this nature. So, this worked out really well for one of our organizations, SAP Labs Canada, which is a tech company, because they do a lot of bug tracking and checking. The interesting thing is that you know, certain individuals, this not to paint a broad brush, on the spectrum, love to find these numbers, and they see things in ways that you or I, who may be typical, don't see it the exact same way. The cool thing about that is that there's this level of focus and intensity, where you could find the most bugs out of all staff members as a result of having your brain wired a little bit differently, and that's not a bad thing. So being able to highlight and utilize people's god given talents in a way that isn't seen as a disadvantage is a way for you to unlock the talent that's potentially missing on your board.

Kaylee

Well, you're hiring people for their skills.

Marco

Which is 100%, what you should be doing. Exactly.



Kaylee

Well, we also have one other question. Lorenda asks, "I often see really cool inclusive infrastructure initiatives like wheelchair access mats for beaches or inclusive playgrounds, how can I advocate for more of them?"

Marco

Wow. Well, you know, I kind of blasted on social media earlier, but one of the really cool things if you're able to wherever you are in the planet, right now, if you aren't able to get out even a little bit, and take photos of the things that you are looking at as "accessibility wins". If you think that, then share that, you know, there's nothing wrong with having #AccessibilityWin talking about the location at which you're standing, saying why it's a win, and why it was inclusive, and why you saw more people with a variety of abilities, being able to use that space as a result of that environmental change. You wouldn't believe the number of companies that definitely hear those echoes and go, "Wait a minute. So, this is something that you want more of?" Especially with social media if it's done right, and it's done well, you can make changes, you can really stir things up, you can use social media and social things for good. It just comes again, back down to your intention. I think that the more that we spread the good word, as opposed to just using these platforms to basically hate on people or to cancel people, you know, we can actually use these things to actually spread good words. That's what I've tried to do and advocate for my entire life, even before social media was a thing because at my age, I'm 35, but I literally feel blessed. I'm in the blessed generation, because I'm in that middle generation that remembers what life was like in the analog generation. Right? So, remembering that even then we would use the traditional news and media for good, and there are ways to still let a good message get out there.

Kaylee

We are the same age and I will always remember the sound of the dial up tone.

Marco

100% I had that as a ringtone for a while.

Kaylee

Yeah. Oh my gosh, I'm doing that. That is great.

Michael

Yeah, well, I am older than both of you, and I remember you know, we even didn't have phones. When I was when I was young. We just had to yell across the street. (laughs)

Kaylee

Just the abacus. (laughs)

Michael

Should we nerd out?



Kaylee

Yeah, let's nerd out.

Michael

All right, if you want to get in on the nerd outs, you can write into us on our socials @NerdNiteYVR. You can also call in to us, or just email us Vancouver@nerdnite.com. Marco, what are you nerding out about?

Marco

The thing I want to talk about is I'm nerding out about the Seth MacFarlane show [The Orville](#). It's been a while since a new season has been on but it's on Fox, Season 1 and 2. It's basically Seth MacFarlane's, believe it or not, answer to Star Trek. The reason why I love the Orville over any version of Star Trek that's out there, is that it brings this kind of New Age approach to that sci-fi being-the-captain-of-a-ship aspect of things, but does it in such a way that is comical but not in a Seth MacFarlane kind of comedy way but it brings light to some real-world issues. So, it's kind of like Star Trek meets Black Mirror, and I love that aspect of it, because there's an episode called Majority Rule, and I think it's like episode five or six the first season, and the reason I love that is it ties back into what I was just saying about social media, they stumble upon a planet where the legal system is based on these little things that they wear on their shirts that has an up button or a down button. Anywhere you go on this planet, if you do something wrong, spill coffee on somebody, they can down vote you. Well in this society, literally if you get up to 10 million down votes then you have to go and be lobotomized essentially because you've done so wrong in society that they have to course correct you to get back on course. At one point, they didn't know this about the planet, and one of the crew members gets on the planet does something inappropriate, and all of a sudden gets a bunch of down votes. He has to go on an apology tour, to kind of plead his case as to why he didn't mean to do what he did. I just thought it was fascinating to think about the parallels of today's society, in that social media, we're not that far off from up voting and down voting people, and basically canceling them or ruining their lives. We're not quite lobotomizing people yet, but we're definitely in a space where it definitely makes you pause and think, what kind of world do you want to live in? What kind of people do you want to be around? And is it too late for us to step away from the precipice of the dangers that some forms of social media can be? To end on a brighter note, the series is funny, articulate, deals with real world issues, it talks about how diversity is actually a benefit for the crew. You know, and many of these shows like Star Trek are being credited for the innovations such as the cell phone, like the communicator in Star Trek is actually being sort of credited as the inspirational point of the cellphone. So, it's never too late to be inspired. Nor is it ever too novel to stumble upon a novel or a TV series and be inspired to create that into reality.

Kaylee

Totally. Michael, I mean, you're somebody who loves Star Trek so much, and we just learned that you have been alive longer than there have been telephones, so I'm surprised that you didn't come up with that.



Michael

Well, I do like The Orville. You know, there is an episode I think not too many episodes after the one you just mentioned Marco, where all of the males are birthers in the society, and how they become sort of obsolete, it ends up being a really dark episode. Because the premise of Star Trek and this show is that they're going to these new societies, and in these new societies, they develop these traditions that are kind of like Earth's, but just like a little different. They don't really have a solution because they're not going to get involved in the society. They're just going to learn something and move on. I remember that episode, they had to move on thinking, "Oh, man, this is a dark reflection on our society."

Marco

100%

Kaylee

What have you been nerding out about there, Michael? Any dark reflections on society or anything?

Michael

Oh, well, no, actually a lot of really positive reflections, but in some surprising places. So, I probably hinted before, about my pandemic hobby of baseball cards.

Kaylee

Once or twice.

Michael

I probably haven't shared, though, that I have a secret, not a secret, but a separate social media account on Twitter and Instagram, where I post one card at a time from a set of baseball cards from [1990 Upper Deck](#).

Kaylee

Are you Upper Deck cards?

Michael

I am Upper Deck cards. Yes.

Kaylee

I'm like, who is this person who likes all our stuff? It's you. That's funny.

Marco

I love it.



Michael

I've now been using that predominantly as my social media. I started doing this back in January 2020, mostly because I needed a new project to focus on that was completely different from the work that I was doing. Over the year what has happened is those two social media platforms totally broke me out of the algorithms that I was in, the echo chambers that I had developed in all of my other social media accounts. All the work I do is related like Nerd Nite, Space Centre, and science communication. What started to happen is I started make friends in the most unlikely of places, like total strangers who I've never met, most I don't even know what they look like. We interact every day, we send cards to each other in the mail. It's really fun. I realized that our past guest Ruwanmali talked about in her nerd out, and her inclusion and diversity class, she was taking at Yale, and really starting to look at issues where you're trying to take somebody else's point of view. That's hard to do, you know, unless you're really seeing the whole picture of their lives and not just the one aspect of it.

Marco

Totally,

Michael

So, I've really been enjoying inserting myself into a different part of life, and interacting with different people and just living with them and sharing this hobby with each other. I find it really beneficial. The other thing this project does that helps me learn about something new that wouldn't normally come my way. I'm not seeking it out, it's totally random because I'm just taking a card and I'm just doing research and seeing where that research leads me. So, for example, today's post was this player called Kirk Gibson, who was the hero of the 1988 World Series for the LA Dodgers, which is sort of random because there's 800 cards in this set, so not everyone is a great player. But I also found out that a few years ago, he was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. So, I wrote a little post about it and you know, I ended up finding that he has a foundation called the [Kirk Gibson Foundation](#) which is raising money for families. I talked about what Parkinson's disease is, I linked to the [Michael J. Fox Foundation](#), which I know Marco you're a big fan of.

Marco

Huge fan!

Michael

I ended up donating money to them.

Marco

Oh, that's cool.

Michael

We're always prompted by an event or an incident, when we go to certain causes. I thought that something like this really helps me break out of those habits. Doing this project has really



helped me breakout of those algorithms and, find new places to congregate and hang out. So that's what I've been nerding out about.

Marco

And you found some pen pals, too, this is crazy, in 2021 man.

Michael

Especially during the election, it was really interesting to see where I'm mailing to, because most of them are in the States, and most of them are like in very small towns in the States. So, I would look up their specific counties and wonder what side they're leaning on. Not all the things that I would see in these feeds were things that I would agree with. But you know, I just read it all in, and just see where these people are coming from. I found that really interesting. Kaylee what new friends and people have you been finding this past little while? What are you nerding about?

Kaylee

I am attending a conference this week. So, I hope to make many new friends. I want to nerd out a bit about season two and all the new friends we've made through podcasting. So, this is going to be our last episode of season two.

Marco

Wow, season closer, guys. Thank you so much.

Kaylee

Yeah, thank you so much for closing out the season with us, we've got a couple of bonus episodes to come out over the summer. But otherwise, this is a wrap until September 2021, and the past year has been a steep learning curve for how to pivot from live events to podcasting. With that came learning how to record and edit podcasts and distribute episodes, and all those sorts of things that as a rat doctor is not something that I did a lot of before. But in looking back, I think I've personally been able to learn so much more from our guests than via live events, because I actually get to sit and listen and really follow up with questions instead of being so consumed with what's going on, how's everybody doing, and I've really valued that. At the close of season two, I'm also nerding about a new transition for us. So, we're very excited to share that will now be working with an audio producer, essentially, for upcoming episodes. Up until now it's been me doing everything manually, and probably very poorly. Thank you everybody, for putting up with me. We are going to be working with Elise Hall-Meyer, who has some experience in this area and has very generously given her time to help us with some audio editing. So, I'm really excited to see what that's going to look like for season three, what season three is going to hold for nerd night generally. So, to close out this nerd out, I'd really love to share a review we received on Apple podcasts. We don't have many. But thank you so much.

Michael

We got a review?



Kaylee

Yeah, we have a review. So, I'd like to shout out Elizabeth who shared "As an actor I loved, loved, loved, three times cubed, heading to the Fox Cabaret for Nerd Nite. It was seriously the best character study. It's so lovely to watch people talk passionately about what they know so much about. I'm loving the podcast, the banter, the subjects, the guests. It's great." At Nerd Nite we used to be able to read the audience, we got to interact with people, we got to see how everybody was doing. Now all we get is a dashboard that tells us how many downloads there are and a little bit of social media engagement, and messages like this mean so much for us and for this community. So, I'm just really grateful to you Elizabeth for leaving it, and really grateful to everybody who has been on this journey with us. So, thank you so much for being here with us for season two. We're grateful to you.

Michael

Yeah, this is this has been wonderful. The podcast has grown and we've grown along with it. I'm really excited to start working with Elise. I mean Elise is going to be the third member of this show, and I think it's really going to help us out. So, I'm super excited for that.

Marco

Congratulations to you both for not only the success of your Nerd Nites before going virtual, but obviously if you're expanding your team then that means that obviously something is working. So, congratulations on that, and congratulations on the meaningful conversations up to this point. As I said earlier, I feel super blessed and humbled that I could be one of those voices among the halls of people who've come through the show.

Michael

Thank you so much Marco for coming on our final episode of season two, where can people learn more about you and all of your work?

Marco

Yeah, absolutely. Well probably the easiest way you can find me is going to my website, which is super easy marcopasqua.com. You can learn more about the cube principle. You can learn more about my accessibility and inclusion work my one-on-one mentorship stuff, speaking, all of that stuff, there's videos on there, photos all that stuff. And all my social channels are also connected at the bottom of the page as well.

Kaylee

Well, thank you so much for linking those resources. We'll be sure to put them in the show notes as well. Thank you for taking the time to chat with us, and thank you to everybody again, for listening. It is been a joy to be on these couple seasons with you. If you want to hear more from us. You can follow us on our socials @NerdNiteYVR on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. We won't be back in a couple of weeks. We'll be back for season three in September. But until we meet again, creatively use your best energy, and we'll be doing that alongside you.

Transcribed in part by Otter.ai