

Boysen Hodgson (00:02.191)

Hey everybody, it's Boysen Hodgson. Welcome back to the mankind podcast, the show where we are breaking the molds of modern manhood to prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that there is indeed more than one way to be a man today. I get the honor and the pleasure and the fun. And there's going to be laughter to hang out with a bunch of guys from the barrier free movement in the mankind project. USA. We've had some engagement with this topic in the past, but the barrier free movement is about engaging men with all kinds of different abilities, and visible and invisible to do the kind of work that we do in the ManKind Project. They've been going for a number of years. There's going to be another training this fall, but I thought we would bring together some of the men from this group.

And I'm going to say names and then ask everybody to say hello as we go around the horn. And then I'll tell you a little bit about some of the guys that are here. So Mike Merino, say hello.

Mike (01:01.875)

Hello.

Boysen Hodgson (01:03.905)

And you're going to have to learn to track voices as we go. Dee Spitler, say hello.

Dewey (Dee) Spitler (01:09.71)

Good morning, hello.

Boysen Hodgson (01:12.379)

Craig Tennant, say hello.

Craig Tennant (01:14.989)

Hello.

Boysen Hodgson (01:16.705)

And now Art Patterson, say hello.

Art Patterson (01:19.374)

Hello!

Boysen Hodgson (01:23.019)

and Paul Jerde.

Paul Jerde (01:26.945)

Great to see ya!

Boysen Hodgson (01:29.029)

Great to see you too. Mark Sage, say hello.

Marc Sage (01:33.206)

Hello everybody.

Boysen Hodgson (01:35.129)

Those are the guys that we've got in the room. Let me tell you a little bit more about each of them just briefly. Mark Sage, who you just heard from at the end is a veteran of high stakes enterprise consulting. He's spent decades navigating the professional IT landscape and finance while operating behind a complex dual mask of physical mass and psychiatric suppression after 14 years of personal growth work. Major acceleration occurred in 2014 when he attended the New Warrior Training Adventure. He then embarked on a 12 year journey of radical self discovery, shedding over 200 pounds and dismantling the survival mechanisms he used to hide behind his bipolar ADHD, CPTSD and autistic identity. Today, he combines his analytic background with a profound commitment to emotional work. He has completed 42 staffings of the New Warrior Training Adventure. Partly to advocate for the neurodivergent community and explore the delicate balance between keeping oneself safe and living authentically in a neuro-typical world.

Art Patterson, who's been on the podcast before, is a gay, black, differently abled man who had a vision to create a New Warrior Training Adventure Gateway Training, designed to include men of varying physical abilities and challenges, including those involving mobility, vision and hearing. In 2017 art with the help of Greg Gondron, full leader from the Texas community, South Central offered the first Challenged Warrior weekend. Later, they reached out to Jim Mulenos and Dee Spitler, who's with us today. In 2019 at Sleeping Dog Ranch, which is Dee Spitler's family's ranch in Arizona, the first Barrier Free NWTA was held. Since then they have expanded the vision beyond an NWTA to what is now called the Barrier Free Movement, with the intention of raising awareness within the Mankind Project and outside of it, to serve men of all abilities with leadership training, site and facilities, accessibility, support groups and mobile trainings. Thank you for being here Art. Paul Jerde began doing men's work because the guy he worked for had an I group that he attended weekly. He is a graduate of the Land of My Grandfather.

Boysen Hodgson (03:54.735)

There's a lot of South Central dudes in the room here today. Mike Merino just shook his head and said, Greater Carolina's. The things that stand out are twofold. The heat was intense and the man in the bunk above me had severe gas and farted all night. Welcome Paul Jerde, that's the energy Paul's going to bring to the space today. Introducing me to the idea that men's work can be messy. Two years later on June 14th, his life,

changed forever. He was riding his bike and was run over by a car. There was so much blood the ambulance driver thought he was dead. He had suffered a traumatic brain injury. He now uses a wheelchair and can walk slowly with someone help. His speech is affected and sometimes is very difficult for him to talk. Luckily, he can still say the F word. And every Wednesday night, he hosts an I-Group. He's working on growing his postcard design business.

Boysen Hodgson (04:52.699)

And when you see the video of this, you'll have Paul share his F bomb that he brought with him. And Mike Merino, Mike Merino is a facilitator for open men's groups in the Mankind Project, including groups for men who identify as LGBTQ, and disabled. He has been part of MKP since 2016. He lives in Hendersonville, North Carolina with his service dog, Cody, and Mike is a formerly visually impaired athlete.

Boysen Hodgson (05:20.783)

Mike's done some pretty amazing stuff. And my favorite story of Mike is running through airports with Mike. People just clear the path. So guys, welcome. Thank you for being here. Craig Tennant is here as well. Craig, you know, I don't have a good bio for you. I know that you're the former finance coordinator for South Central area and you've been involved in MKP for how long?

Craig Tennant (05:43.097)

Since December of 2010 when I initiated in South Central and Met Paul Jerde shortly afterwards in my I group. Paul and I have been dear friends for the last 15 or 16 years and so Paul and I kind of band together on the Barrier-Free movement. He supports me and I support him.

Boysen Hodgson (06:11.035)

Thank you. I am grateful for all you guys being here. How I'd like to kind of frame our conversation here is to have each of you tell a short story or an indicator of what it is like to have belonging in the Barrier Free space. I've heard each of you speak to this in some way, and I think I'll go to Art first. So Art, what's it like? What's it like to be in the space of the Barrier Free movement?

Art Patterson (06:47.861)

What it means for me is I can be my true authentic self. And I can tell them that sometimes I wish I wasn't handicapped, or sometimes I say, "I'm not a leader, because I have a speech impediment."

And they let me get that out of my system, and put a mirror up to say, "Here's what I see in you. A leader. And every time I say, "okay, I'll open the door for you guys, and I'll go the other way, but they won't let me go the other way. And it's just a space where I can be real and not be the inspirational person, but just be among guys.

Boysen Hodgson (08:17.423)

Yes. Space where you just get to be among the guys and be a man among men with your brothers. Thank you so much. right. Mike, how about you? Tell us a story about belonging to Barrier-Free.

Mike (08:30.9)

Yeah, so this was my first leadership experience. I remember Dee Spitler came to me and said, we made a mistake, "you're going to be on the accountability team." I was a pretty young staffer and that's for senior guys. And yeah, just being out front was really cool. I nailed it. And so that's

just kind of sparked my leadership growth. The other piece I like too is there's a collective effort by the men to remove the barriers, to cross over the bridge, because I find that I always have to figure out ways to accommodate myself in a particular environment. And I love it that there's just, it's more of a collective effort. And so that's what's good for me.

Boysen Hodgson (09:16.827)

Thank you very much. Mark, let's go over to you.

What's it like to be in the Barrier Free space?

Marc Sage (09:28.598)

So I have a similar dream that Dewey has, that every weekend is safe for Barrier Free. And that's though every weekend. And my story on why about a year ago, one of the processes I shared about my autism and four days later at the homecoming, man looks at me, comes over to the other side of the room and practically breaks my ribs with a huge hug and said that that made his weekend and that made it safe when I owned that. So yeah, for the men coming.

Boysen Hodgson (10:14.299)

Thank you. And Paul, what? Tell us a story about being in a Barrier Free container.

Paul Jerde (10:23.67)

Hi everyone, every time, every day, I feel like I'm out of place, because I rely on a wheelchair. I really wish I could work. The Movement makes me feel like I belong far to something.

Boysen Hodgson (11:12.315)

Thank you. The movement makes you feel like you belong to something. Thank you so much. And Craig or Dewey. Well, let's go to, let's, let's go to Dee first. So you, you tackled some pretty monumental stuff to help create the physical space for this to happen. What has the transformation been like in your life as you've been a builder for this movement? Quite literally.

Dewey (Dee) Spitler (11:43.287)

Well, my history is...

We call ourselves get shit done guys. I love building stuff and I've got this funky ranch. Somebody said it's funky and spiritual at the same time. And somebody reached out to me, Greg Gondron and Jim Melunos and said, hey, we've got this thing going on. And I said, well, great. Let me meet this Art Patterson guy. And as soon as I met him, I fell in love with him. And I said, you know,

Dewey (Dee) Spitler (12:16.46)

My mission in life is, "I create a community in harmony by living and encouraging lives of passion and purpose." One of the great things that happens on a men's weekend on the New Warrior Training Adventure is helping men discover their mission, or what I also call their

purpose of being on the planet. And so when I heard Art's vision about what he wanted to create for men with different abilities, I just...

I said, absolutely, no doubt about it. Let me see what I can do to figure this out. So at my ranch, we got a group of guys, other Warriors that just all stepped in, showed up and we started building some ramps and adding grab bars and building things to accommodate men with different abilities. I've been around it with my dad who has neuropathy and has been using a wheelchair for the last five or six years. So I learned a lot about what needed to be done to make an adaptable space. But what I've learned from getting involved with these men is that I recently experienced some real death and some loss in my immediate family. And these men were the ones that were there with me constantly because they taught me about loss

Is something to be loved and they had no problem whatsoever staying connected with me because they understand loss, I think more than anybody. So it's been a great experience and I just enjoy being with these men. They make me laugh all the time.

Boysen Hodgson (13:58.587)

Thank you. And Craig, you've been very close and engaged, especially with Paul through the i Group. So in an ongoing way, what does it mean for you to be with the Movement?

Craig Tennant (14:15.888)

It's a great question. You know, I spent a lot of my life running, running from running to, but always running. And as I got involved in the ManKind Project, I began to slow down. And then I met Paul and Paul in particular has helped me to be more present, to slow down, to pay attention, to be okay in space where something's not happening. And

That's how I got involved in the Barrier Free Movement was really to support Paul. But it's been about eight years since that started. And I've been involved with these other men and every time we're together two things happen. I learn about my privilege and I learn about another man's perspective that's very different than mine. And in the last eight years, my own ableness has decreased physically.

As I've gone from my mid-50s into my 60s and I've had issues with my body. So I'm now more able to identify with being differently abled. So there's a lot of blessing that I receive being first with Paul, but really with all of these great men that I've been involved with.

Boysen Hodgson (15:37.283)

I heard Dee say and I've heard a couple other men say in these circles in these kinds of spaces that we're all temporarily abled and in the way that we move through the world. Thank you so much. So what are some of the things that makes it different? So what are some of the things that make the Barrier Free movement different? And I think that I'll go back to Art to start this out. Because you've recognized you and I have had a lot of conversations about accessible space. So talk about what does it mean to create this work accessibly?

Art Patterson (16:27.889)

It means that ... . We say that every man is welcome.

And we mean what we say, every man is welcome.

What makes us different is we can laugh and cry about our disabilities. At the same time, we learn about each other and we are able to grieve the loss that we feel.

We feel that, you know, when we use my speech impediment, I keep thinking you can't understand me, but it's that warrior listening that we teach about and we have to put in practice. So I think...

Boysen Hodgson (17:44.485)

Yes.

Boysen Hodgson (17:48.581)

Yes.

Art Patterson (17:50.346)

I think it's just being able to work through our differences.

And I don't want the work about my speech. And once I got it out of my system. It was theory. That was healing. So yeah.

Boysen Hodgson (18:23.035)

Thanks Art. Thank you. And I'll open it to see who else has a thought about what are some of the things that we might take for granted. So one I just heard from Art is when we say we're listening, now we really mean it.

And I kind of heard that in what you said, Craig, as well as like this, this, this work invites us all to slow down, in profound ways.

Paul Jerde (18:54.792)

I thought one thing in my mind men need to slow down and be patient because I was told to use your willpower.

The world awaits for us and that is very healing.

Boysen Hodgson (19:39.045)

Yes. Yeah, everything's in a hurry. Slow down. Be more patient. Yes. Thank you.

Paul Jerde (19:44.074)

Yes.

Mike (19:47.966)

Yeah, for me, there's just a lot of little things like, for example, chairs, when we all sit around in a circle and then everybody gets up and there's just a minefield of chairs and men just being aware that, we need to leave paths for people in wheelchairs or people like myself to actually be able to get around.

And there are just little things like that that I witnessed that I can bring back to the other New Worried Training Adventures that I'm on. So just things like chairs, something small. There's a lot of little tiny things that I just noticed that, and I'm able to better speak up about it in other arenas. So that's what is for me.

Boysen Hodgson (20:30.907)

Thank you. Yeah, thanks Mike.

Dewey (Dee) Spitler (20:35.804)

Yeah, and I'll add just. Yeah, the, the New Warrior Training Adventure really, we don't change anything. It's, it's, it's the same type of weekend, the same outline that we do for all the other ones that happen across the country, around the world. The only real difference on the, what we call the Barrier Free New Warrior Training Adventure is that we do slow it down a little bit. We do create a little bit more time

Craig Tennant (20:36.44)

Yeah, to piggyback on that one. Go ahead. Go ahead, Dee.

Boysen Hodgson (20:38.907)

Yeah.

Dewey (Dee) Spitler (21:05.072)

to for breaks and getting in and out of bed and all of that. And we watch for the chair movement and leave openings there. And we also bring in men, what we call participant men of service. So we will interview a man that wants to participate in the weekend. We'll do a pre-weekend interview, find out what their needs are, and negotiate, based on what they tell us what their needs are, instead of us assuming we have.

Paul Jerde (21:14.447)

Yeah

Boysen Hodgson (21:19.397)

Yeah.

Dewey (Dee) Spitler (21:34.3)

And we had that conversation and then we provide a man if need be to just kind of pay attention to that man throughout the weekend and be available. It's a beautiful experience and what

we've learned is those men that make that connection really, really have a deep, deep connection with each other. So those are just subtle changes we make on the weekend. Otherwise, it's similar to the thousands of other weekends that we do. So I wanted to add that.

Boysen Hodgson (22:03.631)

Thank you. Yeah, Craig.

Craig Tennant (22:06.454)

Yeah, thank you. Really along the same lines, is although the weekends are the same on a non Barrier Free weekend, we may say, OK, men stand up and the Barrier Free work has me pay attention to the language that I use and to say, here's men who may be using a wheelchair and they're not in a position to stand up or men walk over there. But if men have limited vision, they may not just be able to walk over in that direction.

I've been on a Barrier Free weekend where we had a man whose physical difference had to do with hearing loss. And so we had a sign language interpreter all the way through the process to support that man. And that required all of us as the staff to really slow down, pay attention, keep in mind the interpreter was part of the process so the man could understand what we were telling him and what we were doing.

Boysen Hodgson (23:04.315)

Thank you. How about it, Mark? How about in the kind of neurodivergent space? I could tell stories, but I want to hear what is it like for you now that this, as you said, you've outed something in the project and I judge that there are more and more men who are coming forward to say, yeah, here's the difference. You may not see it, but here's the difference. What's it like for you?

Marc Sage (23:37.035)

So wearing different masks and having an opportunity to take it off, I'm not going to say feels good or it's a noticeable difference in my body, in my mind. And there aren't many places I feel safe doing that.

Marc Sage (24:06.793)

And from a leadership place, and just recently, like last year, a leader was going through a piece with the staff and specifically shifted and said, and here's for the people who think differently about this, who are just introverts. Introvert is a neurotypical word. Doesn't cover the way an autistic man shows up quietly or other differences

Boysen Hodgson (24:42.747)

Thank you.

I believe that the work that we do in the mankind project, like writ large, right, is about awareness, about growing our awareness, about understanding differences between us. And every conversation that I have around Barrier Free, we're instantly in cross-cultural



conversation. We're instantly in, how can I be aware of all the things that I take for granted? How can I invite men into a relationship where they have the opportunity, as you said, Dee, to actually say,

Boysen Hodgson (25:15.237)

here's what I need. Here are the kind of things that are different.

Boysen Hodgson (25:46.981)

So where to now? There is a Barrier-Free or a hybrid event coming this year. I think one of the things that Art and I have talked about is how can we expand the Movement? So what are some of the things that you men are interested in doing to see this Movement expand?

Dewey (Dee) Spitler (26:17.752)

We definitely want to invite men. We've got our next weekend, we call them "weekends," but New Warrior Training Adventure is scheduled for December the 11th through the 13th in a facility North of Houston called Land Of My Grandfather's. And that facility, they have actually been raising money and they've done a lot of accessibility improvements to the site, putting in new paved sidewalks,

bathroom accommodations and bunks and so forth. So we're really excited to go and use that site. We've got a great website that's got FAQs, pictures of the site, all of that. That website is [barrierfree.mkpusa.org](http://barrierfree.mkpusa.org). I don't know, maybe Boysen you can put that on the screen somewhere sooner or later. But that's, and it's open to all men,

Dewey (Dee) Spitler (27:14.332)

whether you're disabled at this point or what we call temporarily able, like Craig talked about that we're all going to get to that point, whether it comes with age, that getting up and down stairs is going to be difficult. Hearing for me, my hearing is going. I've got a little bit of a speech impediment too that I used to shy away from, kept me small, kept me away from stepping into leadership roles until I finally said,

you know, it is what it is. I'm going to breathe through it. And these men have been teaching me and mentoring me with all that. we definitely, the weekend, what we call a hybrid, it's open for men with various disabilities, but also open to all men. We want a good mixture. We've done that twice before, and it's been very, very successful in the relationships that are ongoing that develop after that. It's a beautiful relationship. So we just want to create space for all men.

We also have some open circles that are Zoom and Mike Marino can talk about that. Mike runs those and Art supports them. So Mike, maybe if you want to mention the data and the open circles and all men are invited, whether you've been through the weekend or you're part of an MKP or not, it's open to all men.

Mike (28:34.042)

Yeah, thank you, Dewey. Yeah, we meet on Zoom twice a month on Mondays. What's not being talked about right now that I'm hearing is there's a much higher bar of trust that needs to happen. And that's the big challenge. I mean, just trying to get from my place to an actual weekend, whether I have to fly or plane or

Mike (29:02.536)

whatever, find a ride, and then making sure that my needs are going to be accommodated throughout the weekend, and then I get home. I mean, it's a big task, and I got to trust these men to make sure those accommodations are there and that I'm going to be taken care of throughout the weekend. And then the other thing too is most people that I find have struggled to reach out to people that now look disabled,

that there's some type of fear response that people have that prevents them actually from getting into that close relationship with somebody that has a disability. And so I see those two things getting in the way of really opening up the space for men like me.

Boysen Hodgson (29:49.243)

Thank you.

Marc Sage (29:55.041)

My tribe here is one of my tribes and another one that I did the New Warrior Training Adventure as a 32 year and it cracked me open in a way that my story is the Mankind Project has always been for 50 year olds and has a general idea how to handle the cracking open and what happens to a man as they do some of the deeper work that's possible in the Mankind Project. It's different for a young warrior, a young neurodivergent.

And it's something we have gotten better with and we're going to get better and better with.

meeting men where they are, younger men especially.

Art Patterson (30:58.559)

I think also, I think also, once they do a weekend, can they get into a local I group.

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Art Patterson (31:14.686)

In the facilities accessible if you would like to be in an I group. Are you able to provide transportation and all that? So, like all about accessibility, you want to be in a real I group.

Art Patterson (31:44.775)

You can be in a local I Group, or be in our Barrier Free zoom I-group. So there are two choices

Boysen Hodgson (32:04.613)

Thank you. Thank you for that. Yeah. So after the weekend, as, as all of us have experienced who are in the work, there are groups. And for me, this has been an awareness that's been growing in me for a lot of things that I take for granted in addition to physical. So I know that the space that we hold I Group in now is accessible. And in order for that to be true, it's a school, right?

There are a whole lot of men's houses out there where we host I groups and whole lot of spaces where we host men's groups that really aren't don't have the awareness. Don't don't take into account the kinds of differences that men may be showing up with. A question that I wanted to bring forward is, and it kind of came up in what Mike was saying is that, men might have hesitation about reaching out and having a connection or making, making

Boysen Hodgson (33:02.543)

deeper connections to men who have some differences in abilities. So is there is there advice in the room that you men would want to put forward to say, Okay, here's, here's what would be great. And here's what would be not so great.

Mike (33:18.727)

Where do we start? So for me, it's about being mindful because a lot of men have dysfunctional rescuers inside them and they figure out, I think this man needs this kind of support and then they just do it. And then the other piece is is being aware of man's agency. Like I might do something might take longer. Don't just jump in and.

Boysen Hodgson (33:22.243)

Yeah.

Mike (33:48.763)

do it for me. There's this agency that I want to hold on to. I get the caretaker shadows that run amok and they just cling onto me. And so I have to be really firm and say, this is the support I want and not just have them think, okay, this is what he needs. And so just ask him what they want. It's pretty easy.

Boysen Hodgson (34:16.987)

Thank you.

Paul Jerde (34:19.871)

I want to say...

I'm glad that we made a mistake.

Paul Jerde (34:42.692)

It is, it is, it is all over the place.

Craig Tennant (34:42.936)  
that you make mistakes, Paul.

Art Patterson (34:54.584)  
Uh-uh.

Boysen Hodgson (34:54.971)  
So learning. Yes. And go ahead, Art. Yes.

Art Patterson (34:58.937)  
I see a lot of people with this, they know us in one thing. If I have a disability, I must be on the autism's there because...

Art Patterson (35:24.026)  
when you with that group. So a lot of people say, well, you're not intelligent because you're disabled. And that's a lie. I'm sorry. So I think you guys stop putting us in one basket

We are different types of disability and different level of intelligence. So, you know, I mean, I'm have a disabled body and not a disabled mind, you know.

Boysen Hodgson (36:18.715)  
Thank you.

again, it's the cross, cross cultural, right? It's like we are in cross cultural dialogue here and how can we get way more sensitive to ask what's needed rather than assuming to not rescue and also not make broad assumptions based on unknowns, based on unknowns. I think there's something big in that. Yeah.

The one thing I love, kids will come up to me and ask me, why do you talk funny? Kids would be honest right to my eyes and the adults are too scared to say it, but kids are so honest.

Art Patterson (37:13.465)  
I mean, the kid asked me why I talked so funny, I told him I had a disability in my brain and it affects my body. He said, well listen, my Dad is a doctor, maybe you can fix that. I mean, the kids are so honest.

You know?

Boysen Hodgson (37:47.131)

Yes. And maybe there's an invitation to be more like kids in these, in these kinds of conversations and let it get a little bit more messy. Let it be a little, a little bit more inquiry. Yes.

Dewey (Dee) Spitler (38:01.628)

That's what I've learned is just be curious like a little kid and don't hold back. Just have the conversation because I tell men that there's always a fear that maybe I'm going to say the wrong thing. I'm going use the wrong word. Do I say disabled? What's the terminology for it?

And what these men teach me is, screw it.

It doesn't matter what the word is. The real connection is just the heart to heart connection. Period. If I'm sincere with my relationship, it doesn't matter what the words are. And be curious in any, if there's fear, I can, I hate to use a hundred percent guarantee, but I can pretty damn near close to guarantee that there's a wonderful piece of gold on the other side. It's the same thing like,

Dewey (Dee) Spitler (38:56.986)

something that you put off doing for years. When you finally do it, you go, shit, why didn't I do that a long time ago? And that's how it is with pushing through that fear to have a conversation with somebody that is different from me. It doesn't matter if it's disability or color or race or anything else, just have the conversation, make the connection. It's always a blessing on the other side once it's done. So I encourage everybody to push through that fear and build a relationship with someone that's different.

I sure learned and gained a lot from it.

Boysen Hodgson (39:32.667)

Thanks, Dee. Paul, were you gonna say something?

Paul Jerde (39:36.157)

I want to say thank you to Dee. You don't use the word, "screw."

Boysen Hodgson (40:06.339)

I did not get the last part of that, Paul.

Craig Tennant (40:08.984)

You wanted to tell Dee not to use the word screw, Paul, is that right?

Paul Jerde (40:12.165)

Yes.

Dewey (Dee) Spitler (40:15.458)

no, we're going down that way, are we? Have you been listening then on some of Arts and my conversations?

Paul Jerde (40:17.307)

Hmm

Art Patterson (40:18.388)

We always do. We always do.

Craig Tennant (40:21.152)

Leave it to Paul. Thank you, Paul.

Paul Jerde (40:26.313)

I, I appreciate you being clean.

Craig Tennant (40:36.374)

Hahaha!

Art Patterson (40:37.044)

Okay

Boysen Hodgson (40:37.851)

And the other thing, the other thing that's true in the Barrier Free space is it's humorless. It's absolutely humorless. These men are serious all the time.

Art Patterson (40:53.204)

Are we talking about ass or what?

Dewey (Dee) Spitler (40:56.39)

And that's the biggest piece I learned from Art. He just wants us to be regular and have regular conversations like any other dude. We will talk about, every subject available. So we won't go down there and expose anything, but Art and I have had some very, very unique and serious discussions about all sorts of subjects.

Craig Tennant (41:22.71)

You know, I would add one thing about, you know, what, what, what I think is a good thing to do, particularly if communication is not so much of a challenge for somebody. And you're talking to someone who may not communicate in the same way is I, for awhile had a tendency just to say, okay. But I didn't really understand what was being said to me. And these brothers here and others,

I don't understand everything that they say when they communicate. And what I've learned, what I've had to get okay with is just to say, just to say, I didn't understand what you said. Will you say it again? Because you're important to me and what you say is important. And I want to understand it. And I'll tell you one quick story, which is when I met Paul and we sat in I Group. He was using a text to speech device in our I Group.

Craig Tennant (42:18.582)

And we'd get to his check-in and he would press the button because he had been typing. And then the computer voice would speak what he said. And shortly after, maybe a year in or so, I said, Paul, my want is for you to put that down and speak no matter how much time it takes for us to understand you. I want to understand what you have to say. And he stopped using the device shortly thereafter. And sometimes it takes a little bit longer.

Craig Tennant (42:45.9)

But I hear his heart when he speaks that.

Paul Jerde (42:51.644)

Thank you.

Boysen Hodgson (42:56.251)

I had to take a breath after that one. Thank you, Craig. Thank you for that.

Marc Sage (43:00.257)

I have to step away, but thank you, Boyson. Thank you, Dee. Thank you, Craig.

Art Patterson (43:10.929)

See you soon. you

Marc Sage (43:12.011)

I wouldn't be out as far as I am without men like you.

Boysen Hodgson (43:12.091)

Thanks, Mark.

Marc Sage (43:22.443)

Take care, everybody.

Boysen Hodgson (43:22.779)

Thank you.

Boysen Hodgson (43:27.767)

Authenticity. Yes. We're inviting men to come out and in the Barrier Free Movement. I think it really is about the invitation, right? It's about how do we invite all kinds of different men into space where they can experience the transformations that we all have to get as men going

through an intentional rite of passage where it's all going to be welcome. And every part of you is going to

Boysen Hodgson (43:57.231)

be able to show up. So as we get to the end of our time together, what's what are what's our what's our final inquiry here for our conversation?

Dewey (Dee) Spitler (44:12.186)

Historically, men showing up and getting involved with the Mankind Project has really been one man inviting another man. So that's the number one thing to do. I believe that all of us, pretty much everybody knows someone in their sphere that has a different ability, whether neurodivergent, invisible, non-invisible, or non-visible, and just to push through the fear and have the invitation.

Dewey (Dee) Spitler (44:41.916)

We've got the weekend coming up in December. We've got a website that's full of FAQs. We've got the open circles. We're reaching out to different organizations in Phoenix, Arizona. There's a group called Ability360 that supports a lot of sports activities, accessible sports. We've had men come through that play basketball, wheelchair basketball. I said, we can support

just about any man we've even got. We're not experts, but we've got some experience with PTS. So we don't want it like they will do a pre-weekend interview and make sure that we can serve anybody that comes. And even if you don't do the weekend, if it's if not your time, the open circle that Mike runs and Art runs is a great place to build connections. We're not trying to sell the weekend. We're really trying to invite them into the community.

and be in a place that you can have honest conversations, real conversations, and not be judged at whatever you want to say or do or how you show up. That's the bigger piece, just come join us. Find a place in the room that you need to express whatever you need to express some deep feelings, anger, sadness, fear, joy, all of it is all welcome.

Boysen Hodgson (46:06.363)

Thanks, Dee.

Mike (46:07.714)

Yeah, something I'd like to end with. You know, my world is pretty small. You know, I don't drive. And so, I mean, basically, I have like two square miles that I'm out and about. And a lot of these men, especially with physical disabilities, you know, their world is small. They basically stay in their homes, stay in and it's going to take more of an effort to invite the man out, invite them out and feel like they belong. so it's just yeah, it's just my world is small and you're not going to see these men. You might actually have to make some more effort and actually draw them out.



Boysen Hodgson (46:44.325)

Thank you. Thank you, Mike. Art, please, Paul, go ahead.

Paul Jerde (46:44.924)

I don't have any questions. I want to say you men rock

Boysen Hodgson (47:06.127)

You rock too, Paul. Thank you.

Art, final words?

Art Patterson (47:12.204)

Okay, when I first came into my weekend, if you would have told me I'd be doing this. I would have laughed in your face. Hell no.

Art Patterson (47:33.972)

But, like the years, doing my work

Art Patterson (47:42.218)

I grew up where everybody put me in the corner and put me in the corner and put me in the corner. It is like... The ManKind said we are not putting Art in the corner.

And I am being blessed by these men. I think I need to bless others but I got the reward. And these are my brothers. I even myself when I'm judging. I even...

Anything I bring to it, they can handle it. They can hold space for anything. So I want to encourage the guys who are isolating alone, come join us. We have fun. And we love to party. But we gotta doing our work.

So, yeah, I'm good.

Boysen Hodgson (49:14.267)

Thank you. Yes, thank you. And Craig, any last thoughts?

Craig Tennant (49:20.92)

I can't top that. I think Art said exactly what I would say. Thank you, Art.

Dewey (Dee) Spitler (49:28.283)

Yeah.

Boysen Hodgson (49:30.587)

So all the information about the Barrier Free Movement, the website, the upcoming training event this winter, early winter, will be in the show notes. Thank you, Mike, Dee, Craig, Paul, Art,

and Mark for showing up and representing. And Paul's gonna have the last word because he needs to drop an F-bomb in the space before we stop the recording.

Art Patterson (50:02.439)

Yes! Hey!

Boysen Hodgson (50:02.967)

And there it is an F bomb in the space. Blessings you brothers. Thank you for being here.

Dewey (Dee) Spitler (50:03.557)

Art Patterson (50:12.038)

Blessings.

Craig Tennant (50:13.656)

Thank you, Boysen. Appreciate you.

Art Patterson (50:16.123)

Thanks, Boysen

Boysen Hodgson (50:16.827)

Bye guys.

You're welcome. Talk soon.

Dewey (Dee) Spitler (50:20.177)

Thanks, Boysen. That was fun.

Mike (50:21.875)

Thanks, Boysen.