

[Philip Dallmann](#): Hello inclusion believers, and welcome to the Access Champions podcast. I'm your host, Phil Dallmann, for this week's journey into the galaxies of accessibility, diversity, and inclusion. Uh, we have a uh, slightly overdue episode, uh, with our associate producer, Miss Kelsey Rose Brown. Um, we actually did an interview ... couple weeks ago, and then, um ... I was terrible, and accidentally deleted it, uh, when I thought I was deleting some bad intro/outro, uh, takes. Uh, so we had to do it all over again. Um, and uh ... I am grateful that Kelsey, uh, was able to carve out some time amongst grad school, and the other things that she does, uh, with this book, uh, that she's soon to be published. Um ... and obviously, all the things she does for the podcast. Um, so apologies, again, to Kelsey, and thank you again, for taking the time to ... to chat with us about, uh, this fantastic, and inclusive book, uh, Come On, Calm!

[Philip Dallmann](#): Before we dive in, uh, to that interview, I just wanna quickly, uh, remind everyone of the giveaway that we are ... we have going on. Um, if you give us a review and a star rating, wherever ... or any type of rating, um, wherever you listen to the podcast, uh, take a little screenshot of that bad boy, send it to us. You can send it to us via email. You can share it with us on social media. Just tag us in it, um, and we have some swag to give away. I got a couple tote bags that are pretty great. Uh, we still have some T-shirts, plenty of pins, um ... and you could really have your choice. Um, but uh, just go ahead and- and ... and give us that rating, give us a quick little review, screen shot that bad boy, and uh, we'll get you some fun Access Champion stuff.

[Philip Dallmann](#): In that same vein, if you don't already follow up on social media, uh, we are at Access Champion on Twitter and Instagram, and the Access Champion Podcast and Facebook. Uh, there's a lot of great content that Kelsey puts out for us there. A lot of really thoughtful memes, um ... uh, and quotes, um, as well as clips from each episode, quotes from each episode, as well. Um, and um, really staying in tune with current events. So, um ... give us a follow. Uh, I think I said on the previous episode, uh, we don't blow up your feed. Uh, I know when you follow certain organizations, or things like ... you're like, "All right, I get it already." Like, "I don't need to scroll every ... every third picture and it be you, or every third Tweet, and it be you." That's not us. We are quality over quantity, um, in a lot of ways. So, go ahead and give us a follow. Um, we always appreciate staying in touch with all of you.

[Philip Dallmann](#): And in that same vein, um, if you guys have, um ... any feedback, anything you'd like to hear about on the podcast, any guests you'd like to have us reach out to, or you'd like to connect us with, um, shoot us an email, uh, accesschampion@gmail.com. Uh, we're very responsive, uh, very excited to always have new guests. Um, and learn about new folks. Um, we're constantly sending out press requests, and- and trying to connect with people. Um, but there are so many people out there doing great work, um, and if you know somebody, or ... or there's someone that's across your mind, uh, just shoot us a quick email. Uh, we always love to hear from you guys, and I think that's ... that.



So, without further ado, inclusive author, and Access Champion, Miss Kelsey Rose Brown.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) All right, and we are here with our associate producer, Miss Kelsey Rose Brown, and now, uh ... published author, Miss Kelsey Rose Brown. Thanks for, uh, taking the time outside of your usual duties with the podcast, to- to chat.

[Kelsey Brown:](#) Of course. I'm excited.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Uh, so ... uh, I- I- it's been exciting for me to kind of ... uh, track your journey with this project, um, since uh, we first talked about it last summer. Um-

[Kelsey Brown:](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[Philip Dallmann:](#) But I'd- I'd love to hear a little bit about how, uh, this book, and I guess I should say this book titled, Come On, Calm!, um ... how- how it came to be, and- and what that journey has been?

[Kelsey Brown:](#) Sure. Uh, so last year I was working as the Access and Inclusion apprentice and Imagination Stage, and uh, for those of you who don't know, Imagination Stage, um ... is an amazing organization, and ... inclusion is first and foremost in all of their programming, so I saw first hand, um, the difference that a break can make in a lot of students lives. Um, and what I was noticing was that, a lot of times when I would ask, you know, "How does your student take a break?" Their parents would say, "Oh, well, I'm not really sure what they do at school. I know they take breaks. Um, I think, sometimes they ... sit in a bean bag, or ... sometimes they get to watch a YouTube video," something like that. And something my boss always said, Katie Keddell, was that, "Our brains at our best after a moment of pure joy."

[Kelsey Brown:](#) So, after I've taken my favorite barre class, or after, um, your favorite sports team has won, you feel like you can conquer the world. And we strive to give that to our students, so that when they need to take a break, they ... were able to remove themselves from the situation, find that moment of pure joy, and reengage with the class, which was why they were there.

[Kelsey Brown:](#) And, so I started looking at ... some of the resources that were out there on, "What does it mean to shape your energy? What does it mean to take a break? What does it mean to, um, kind of self-regulate?" And I found that there wasn't a lot out there. There's, um ... you know, the best teachers, after years of experience, learned how to pick up on their classroom's energy, and they learned how to mold that energy-

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[Kelsey Brown:](#) And then, there are people like child psychologists, and therapists, and people in the medical community who research, uh, these sorts of techniques, and

they, um, are taught it in school. Um, but there's not a lot out there for everyone. Uh, there's not, the information isn't accessible to everyone.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Hm.

[Kelsey Brown:](#) And ... so I was thinking a lot about it, and I was like, "You know, this should be a book."

[Philip Dallmann:](#) (laughs)

[Kelsey Brown:](#) "This would be a great book." (laughs) Um, and so I ... I looked. I tried to find a book that, uh, looked at these kinds of, uh ... that supported these kinds of needs that I was trying to meet, and I ... didn't really find what I was looking for. So, that's when I decided ... "Why not me? I'll ... I'll try my hand at this." Um, and it's been an awesome adventure ever since.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Uh, that's amazing. Uh, and um ... so indicative of- of, as you know, so many of our guests. You- you- you saw a need. You said, "Why look for someone else to fix this. I ... I will fix this."

[Kelsey Brown:](#) (laughs)

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Uh, that ... that, uh ... is wonderful and fantastic. So, you have this idea, and you decide you're gonna do it, um ... what was the process like of- of beginning to- to write this thing?

[Kelsey Brown:](#) So, one of the things I did originally was, kind of ... pulled my resources, and I looked at some ... some research journals-

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[Kelsey Brown:](#) And I pulled from my own experience, and the experience of my mentors, and other people in the field, and ... I ... kind of collected this core group of strategies. So, the strategies introduced in the book are kind of a mix of things.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Hm.

[Kelsey Brown:](#) There are some ... more sensory type experiences, um like wiggling your toes, or squeezing your hands.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[Kelsey Brown:](#) And then there are some other kind of, like breathing techniques like, um ... breathing in when you zip a zipper, and breathing out when you zip the zipper.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).



[Kelsey Brown:](#) And ... so, I started kind of coming up with some sort of poem to go along with it, um ... I reached out to one of my very best friends, who's a really talented artist. Uh, he's actually a music, art, and drama elementary teacher-

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Oh, fun.

[Kelsey Brown:](#) And I said-

[Philip Dallmann:](#) I love that.

[Kelsey Brown:](#) Uh, I-

[Philip Dallmann:](#) I love that they ask elementary school teachers to do all of those things.

[Kelsey Brown:](#) Oh, of course.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) (laughs)

[Kelsey Brown:](#) Um ... it is actually pretty neat, 'cause he gets to see his students several times a week, and they get to incorporate all the disciplines together.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) That's awesome.

[Kelsey Brown:](#) Which comes out to some really cool projects. Um, but I said, "You know, I know you're a full time teacher, and also teach voice and piano lessons, but would you like to try a thing with me?"

[Philip Dallmann:](#) (laughs)

[Kelsey Brown:](#) And ...

[Philip Dallmann:](#) As you, yourself, are in grad school, and uh-

[Kelsey Brown:](#) Oh, of course. (laughs)

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Or doing the- yeah. Uh, so you know, it's not like you aren't busy.

[Kelsey Brown:](#) Oh, of course. Uh, and ... as ... we are apt to do, uh, Joseph said, "Yeah. Of course." And we jumped in on the adventure. It was, um ... the process took a little longer than we were anticipating.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[Kelsey Brown:](#) We had ... some rose colored glasses on when we first started, I think, um-

[Philip Dallmann:](#) As- as is at the beginning of every great adventure, yeah.

[Kelsey Brown:](#) Oh, of course.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) (laughs)

[Kelsey Brown:](#) Um ... so, we went really fast paced for a couple of months, and then really slowed down to reevaluate, look at what we wanted the project to look like, and take the time to get it there.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) That's great. That kinda self-evaluation in a ... in a passion project is so important. Um, it's so easy-

[Kelsey Brown:](#) For sure. We-

[Philip Dallmann:](#) To get caught up with the ... the final product instead of looking at making sure that you're on the track of ... of serving the community.

[Kelsey Brown:](#) Exactly. We didn't want this to be something that we rushed through just to get it finished.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[Kelsey Brown:](#) We wanted it to be right.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) That ... yeah, uh ... and that's the ... I- I would agree that, that's the- the best philosophy to have when ... uh, launching these passion projects, but it's not easy. Uh, because it's- it's so easy to get caught up with ... with wanting that finished product, wanting to share, uh, this idea with the rest of the world, but that's ... that's so great.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) You, so y- you finished the book. A- and then, now ... you're headed towards a release, correct?

[Kelsey Brown:](#) Yes. So, the book is officially released on May 7-

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Okay, great.

[Kelsey Brown:](#) It'll be, um, on our publisher's website, Mascot Books, as well as Amazon, online in Barnes & Noble, and then it's available on the general catalogs that bookstores and schools use to order books.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Oh, great.

[Kelsey Brown:](#) Uh, so ... sh- it should be, um, available, if you're looking for it.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) (laughs)

[Kelsey Brown:](#) Um, (laughs) additionally, we ask that, uh, if you have a favorite bookstore, and you wanna pop in and ask them if they'd buy a couple of copies, it never hurts to, um ... put our name out there.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Of course. Uh ... so, uh, that's fantastic. Now, I know ... you- you hit on it a little bit when you were talking about, sort of, what the initial goal was. Um, where, a- and who do you hope will be able to take advantage of- of this book?

[Kelsey Brown:](#) Sure. So, that's ... uh, huge question.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[Kelsey Brown:](#) Originally, I had this very small audience in mind. I was thinking in the here and now of my students in an inclusive theater setting.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Okay.

[Kelsey Brown:](#) Um ...

[Philip Dallmann:](#) (laughs)

[Kelsey Brown:](#) Which is hilarious, um, because it is such a small group of people. Uh, however, when I started sharing the project, and asking for feedback, um ... I'm also, I'm in school to be a speech therapist, so I asked a lot of my other friends who are in different healthcare professions-

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[Kelsey Brown:](#) And, as well as educators, and other people in the arts, and everyone ... has said, "Oh my gosh. We need this in my field. I could use it this way." Um ... and so, the ... the more the process went on, um ... the more apparent it was that this book is something that's needed for everyone.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[Kelsey Brown:](#) This book is something for everyone. Uh, we were very intentional when we were, um ... working on the character development, and looking at, um ... who was going to be included the- in the book, that we wanted our children to be inclusive. We have children with disabilities. We have children who are diverse by race, or diverse by accommodation-

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[Kelsey Brown:](#) And we want this to be the kind of book that you can use in an early education classroom. We want it to be able to ... be the kind of book that is in the waiting

room of a doctor's office. We want it to be the kind of book where a grandmother can read it with their grandchild. Uh, it's for everyone.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) That's so great. And there's so few things out there ... that, uh ... and- and I know this, only because recently, I ... um ... with- with my fiance, uh, were seeking out children's books for, uh, my best friend's daughter, um and, uh ... you know, given my field, and my background, uh, looking for something that was incredibly inclusive. Now, there are some tremendous books out there, um, but ... you know, it still felt like a limited selection. Um, so that- that's wonderful, that- that ... uh ... you guys were so careful in making sure you created something that anyone could pick up and feel like, uh, they could relate to, and connect with.

[Kelsey Brown:](#) For sure. We all have-

[Philip Dallmann:](#) It's very on brain for the podcast. (laughs)

[Kelsey Brown:](#) Oh, yeah. We all have those days where ... we're ... what I call "sprivaly." When your energy is just in a funk. It's coming out of you, it's how angry, and excited, or nervous, or anxious, or frustrated you are. And I want this to be a book where children can look at it, and see themselves, see their classmates, see their friends. Um, and another thing that ... I wanted to be very intentional about, is that ... our characters are not defined by their accommodation, or by their race.

[Kelsey Brown:](#) So, when I was working at an early childhood center, um, for a lot of children who used cochlear implants, and hearing aids, we would have to draw on cochlear implants and hearing aids, into our books, in order to have them see representation. Otherwise, the books where they saw themselves were about their hearing processors. I don't want this book to be about the accommodation. I want it to be about a story about being calm, uh, an aven- about adventures, about pirates, and about astronauts, and they just happen to have a guide dog. They just happen to use a wheelchair.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Astronauts and pirates, uh, I'm sold. Uh-

[Kelsey Brown:](#) Yeah. (laughs)

[Philip Dallmann:](#) That's a tagline that I need on just about everything, and I'm like, "Great. Take my money." Uh ... (laughs) uh, that's really wonderful. Um, so ... um ... once again, for everyone, May 7th. Uh, but, can they pre-order already?

[Kelsey Brown:](#) They can. So, Come On, Calm! Is available on Mascot Books to pre-order. Um, it's also available for pre-order on Amazon, and right now, they are running a special-

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Oh!

[Kelsey Brown:](#) So we'll hope that continues.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) That seems great. (laughs) uh, well, thank you so much Kelsey. Uh, one, for writing this book. Um, and, and having ... the ... the thought, and, and ... the ... intention, uh, to- to fill this gap, when, um, you know, not that it would be easier, uh, if you had less going on, but uh, to decide to do this in the middle of grad school, uh, obviously, um, you do amazing things for this podcast, and I'm always forever grateful for that. Um, but I ... to take on an additional project that's, again, not like a little side thing, but you know, writing a book, um, a- and being so careful in the process, uh ... is just amazing. Um, so, so thank you for all that. I know, uh, there are so many parents and grandparents, and teachers, and therapists out there, that are gonna be so grateful to get this book. I can't wait to get this book, uh, and share it with ... uh, all the kids in my family, and um ... uh ... and my friend. So, uh ... thank you. (laughs)

[Kelsey Brown:](#) Thanks. I appreciate the chance to, uh, share a little bit about it.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Absolutely. Uh, and as always ... you are an Access Champion.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Thanks again to Kelsey, and apologies again, to Kelsey, uh, for deleting her original interview. Um, appreciate the time, uh, that you took to- to ... to hop back on the show. Um, really, really appreciate it. Um, and all of our listeners can look forward to a few episodes, uh, either hosted or- or introed and outroed by Kelsey in the coming months. Uh, as I am getting married. So, uh, there will be some times where I'm, uh, not around for this. Look forward to that, and look forward to next week, we'll be jumping back on, um, a little bit of our Chicago, uh, content from- from our trip in February. Um, and really excited to share all of that with you.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Um, as always, thanks you to our executive producer, Matt Kerstetter, for making us sound great each and every single week. Thank you to Kelsey, again (laughs) for all the things that she does for the podcast as our associate producer. And uh, thank you to Eric Walton for that dope theme song.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Uh, we'll be back again next week. And remember, inclusion believers, never stop running through that brick wall.