

Phil Dallmann:

Hello, inclusion believers and welcome to the Access Champions Podcast. I am your host, Phil Dallmann for another weekly journey into the galaxies of accessibility, diversity and inclusion. First and foremost, I want to start off by saying thank you to associate producer, Allie B Gorrie for all the work that she's done over the last few months, making those ACP rewind episodes happen in the midst of this pandemic. I also want to thank Jay Reed and Julia [Zubrovich] for the work they've done and continue to do on our soon to be launched website and resource center. Just very appreciative for all of their work during this time.

Phil Dallmann:

This is not going to be a traditional episode, but it's one that needs to happen if we're going to move forward doing interviews potentially in the future and if I'm going to try and continue to spread and facilitate the spreading of this knowledge of tremendous work that is happening right now. And has happened before and continues to be launched and happen right now, this is an episode that needs to happen.

Phil Dallmann:

A few months ago, we released our last traditional episode, I believe, episode 95, titled A Step Back to Move Forward. And on that episode, I let it be known that I was stepping away to navigate my own mental health and to deal with some personal issues, that was true. And at the time, it was the extent that I was able to speak on it from an emotional perspective. Months have since passed and it is well pastime that I speak on it a little bit more.

Phil Dallmann:

I have multiple mental illnesses, some of which I was aware of, some I wasn't until recently, or rather had them defined recently. All of which I have not dealt with in a healthy manner or with any true level of accountability for 20 plus years. I've taken meds, but lied to myself and others about what they were really for, I've self-medicated anxiety issues with booze and compulsive spending. I've lied to people I love and redirected them to avoid having to look at these issues with any level of accountability. I've caused a tremendous amount of pain by not acknowledging in any true way that I was not and I am not all right. That I had and have these problems that cannot be navigated by avoidance, self-medication, or other destructive behavior.

Phil Dallmann:

I have been truly terrible in my actions and I am so very sorry to so many people, friends and family. Why share this openly and broadly in this forum? I wish I could say it was an on-mission attempt to spread awareness of mental illness, but it's not. I wanted to give everyone who listens to this show, everyone who supports the show as board members, producers, interns, guests, and anyone who utilizes Access Champions in any way, the opportunity to decide whether they want to be connected in any way moving forward with me. My lack of action in my own backyard, as it were, and my dishonesty around that lack of action is information that everyone should have when they are working on Access Champions or looking to this thing that I helped create as a resource.

Phil Dallmann:

What I know to be true is that the work happening in accessibility, diversity and inclusion is so incredibly important. And I am incredibly passionate about getting the knowledge of that work out to as many

people as possible. I don't know if I'm the one to do that anymore, I don't know. It may be that I need to hand this thing off or shut it down and give the space that it takes up to others that have been accountable, responsible and honest. I don't know. I'm still working on that, I'm still working through that.

Phil Dallmann:

What I do know is that you all deserve to hear this, to hear this from me, and to have a better picture of who I've been. While I am passionate about this work and I hope that I have done a good job in this work. I have not held up any of those standards in so many other aspects of my life. I have created my own brick wall, I've created my own brick wall piece by piece. And now moving forward, I am slowly going to break through it, and I'm going to break through it, not with statements like this, and not even with promises or pledges. But with my actions and choosing every day to be a human who operates solely from a place of integrity. That is what I will do and that I promise you all.

Phil Dallmann:

Thank you for giving me this space. Thank you for embracing this project that I was so lucky enough to start with so many wonderful humans. I hope that it will continue, I don't know. But I am truly grateful. So thank you.