

Article 19 - Mini-podcast Episode – Spotlight: Be My Eyes

Voiceover:

Expression is one of the most powerful tools we have. A voice. A pen. A keyboard. The real change which must give to people throughout the world, their human rights, must come about in the hearts of people. We must want our fellow human beings to have rights and freedoms, which give them dignity. Article 19 is the voice in the room.

Marty:

Hello and welcome to Article 19. This is a bonus episode, before we start our full second season of Article 19 later this year. My name is Marty Molloy, president, and catalyst at Tamman. I'm also the host for our conversation today. I am joined by two fabulous people, some of my favorite people in the world who I get to work with every day. They've both been on the podcast before, Kristen Witucki and Liza Grant. Hello, hello, how are you both?

Liza:

Doing well.

Kristen:

Doing great. Thanks for having me.

Marty:

Yeah, we're so excited. Today, we are going to be bringing to light the conversation that we've been having at Tamman, exploring life issues impacting people who are blind or have a visual disability. We are going to cover everything from shopping to business cards and we hope everybody really enjoys it. Very quickly though, I just want to set the context for Article 19. This is a call for others to join in a bigger conversation around the Americans with Disabilities Act, digital accessibility, and access to information. At Tamman, we're working to build the inclusive web every day, but to do that we need all of us working together and learning together. We are so grateful for the listeners of Article 19, but let's go ahead and get this conversation started now. Kristen, I want to start with you, because when we first met, I felt like our conversations were incredibly wide ranging. We just mind melded right away talking about politics and religion and all the things you're not supposed to talk about at work, but there was one piece of that conversation that was new for me or at least something that I hadn't really thought about. It was when you were describing your experiences shopping in both the physical retail world and the challenges that you've also experienced shopping online. Can you share a little bit about that with our listeners?

Kristen:

Yes, so first of all, I love the breaking the taboos on work conversations. I think that's very important, but as far as shopping goes, I think probably the most striking example is clothing, but probably applies to other items too where when you're in a physical store you really can't

just walk around the store and grab things and touch them. There's honestly a danger of breaking things or knocking them over or just putting your hands all over everything is considered unsanitary. In a store, you can ask to have things handed to you or touch under supervision, but it's still not really a completely unfiltered experience the way people who can see have when they go into a store. I will say that sometimes I think when you have that unfiltered experience, it's got to be overwhelming, so maybe in some ways there's an advantage there, but with clothing in particular, it's really hard to know even from feeling it necessarily, how it would be on me or my child or anything that I'm getting it for. There's that aspect. I also should add a huge disclaimer that there are wonderful organizations and individuals out there who are blind, or organizations are run by blind people who are really changing some of those stereotypes. One quick example I can think of is Bold, Blind, Beauty. There are probably people who are much better at the whole clothing navigation situation than I am. That being said, I think in many areas, shopping really opened up for me when it moved online. I don't have to worry about necessarily not finding what I'm looking for. I can browse a little more freely, but I'm really dependent on descriptions. If the site has a good description, I'm set. If it has a terrible description or if the description really doesn't incorporate other senses, then I'm pretty much back where I started in the physical realm. I can understand the descriptions for sculptures, which is probably why I've spent too much money on those things, but clothing, in particular, has these wonderfully vague color words that I never learned when I was learning colors and really simple one is mauve. I guess, that's a really simple example, because my kids were just asking me what mauve is the other day. I'm like, it's like a pinky color, I think, but I don't really know, because we heard it in a song, but there are really bizarre color words now or like just terms that not everyone would necessarily know when they're reading a description. Those can be very alienating and confusing. I think really what it comes down to is the web and many stores are first and foremost visual. We have software to make some of that audible to understand descriptions, but we really don't have the equivalents for the other senses in the same way.

Marty:

I think your description of mauve, by the way, is spot on. I would say the exact same thing. It's kind of a pinky color, I think. Yes, you're good there. It's really interesting to me, as you described that – I can't help, but look at you Liza and someone who holds everyone at Tamman accountable on a regular basis, even for our informal communications to use proper or at least just use alternative text or alt text. Can you describe a little bit about why that's so important from our perspective, at least from a Tamman and a digital accessibility perspective?

Liza:

Sure, there are a lot of elements to that, that you talked about, which were great. Holding each other accountable is great, wherever you're already comfortable with people and you talk to them a lot is a great space to introduce the new things you're learning about accessibility from the internet or from this podcast, hopefully. Fostering, just an inclusive atmosphere wherever you are is a great thing to do to set a large example for all of the large companies who want to sell us products and clothing. I work mainly with PDF remediation and one of the errors that comes up very frequently missing alt text. That's true on the web as well, especially in some

instances it's not as important, because you might be missing a little icon. It will say image. You don't know what image it is, but you say oh well, hopefully that wasn't anything too important, but if it's important and especially in a chat environment or if you're on Instagram, if you're somewhere where your content is mostly a photo, you don't want to say a few words about the photo and that's it. If you don't have anything else, you want to make sure you're giving it its proper due based on how important it is in your content. Especially, in our Slack where it's just like look at this photo of these Cheetos that are green or something with no context. You want to describe a bit about that, otherwise it's just image and nothing else. It's a great habit to get into. It's a feature that's available in a lot, not all, but a lot of your social media and other content authoring spaces if you look for an accessibility menu or a little description or, dare I say it, an actual alt text place to put in alt text, named branded alt text. A lot of times it's there. You have the opportunity to add it. If you don't find it, feel free to send a little feedback to whatever website or app you're using.

Marty:

Kristen brings up a really interesting point when we're thinking about on the web using alt text and putting the context around it. I mean, as you're talking about it, it's wonderful to be creative. It's wonderful to try and create in words the same sort of visual sense that you might want to be trying to convey to other folks who might be looking at it, but there's a line. If you try to get too cheeky, or too funny, or too creative and it doesn't make any sense or you're using words that are just unclear I think that can be, like – your intention was good. Can we get this to be just a little bit clearer and simpler? Sometimes clearer and simple is the best way to go.

Liza:

Plain language, another accessible thing to keep in mind, but also right, what are you trying to get across with this image? Is it a color of a shirt? Right, and have you name it like winter spice berry because that is not super clear? That's a good name, maybe put parenthesis after it that will say like red or something a little more in a color family that people can put into their mind's eye, at the very least, but another thing that I noticed, a lot of times it's the same language that you would normally be using for your text. A client that I work with on occasion does financial documentation. We are usually pretty clear and concise. We're talking about data. We're not getting too much artistic licenses being used in those cases, so a lot of times we're just describing an infographic or a very short description of a photo of a lovely family, their couch, or whatever, but there are spaces where if you're from – I'm forgetting exactly which account this was, but I think it's the Instagram of pop UK, some magazine. Their image descriptions were just exactly like a teen magazine where people are looking fierce in their padus [ph], whatever. It's their same language it's just as if you're reading one of their tweets, some of their text-based content. It's still the same so at least you have consistency there where it's your same voice. People are expecting that language from you. You don't have to all of a sudden be like, like Marty said, where it's just like two people hugging. One has blonde hair. You can be like it's Jennifer Lopez and her stylist and they're looking fabulous together just because that's how you would normally present that information to your readers. You can, in some of my alt text in Slack, you can tell that I wrote it, because it will be a little bit self-

deprecating in nature, but you're basically just saying here's this information. I'm going to present it visually for those folks and then some folks aren't experience that way, so let me describe it and mimic that.

Marty:

Kristen, do you find yourself, like most folks I would say these days especially since the pandemic, shopping more online or would you say that you shop more in the physical world?

Kristen:

I have physical shopping. I am definitely an online shopper. If I go to a store, it's because I'm crazy that day or my kids want to go to a store, but I am everyone's favorite virtual fan.

Marty:

I don't want to put you too much on the spot. I certainly don't want you putting anybody on the spot in terms of bad, but is there a website where you feel like consistently, they give you the information that you need, or do you mostly shop?

Kristen:

With clothing, I have somewhat lost faith in the whole process. I always just double check with somebody, a friend. My mom is helpful a lot of the time with it. That's a fraught experience for me. I think, believe it or not, I'm a pretty good Amazon shopper, because usually, unless the person has forgotten there is some kind of description in there. Novica, I went through a Novica phase. Now I'm trying to really not buy too many things that I don't need, but that was a phase I went through for a while. Their descriptions are usually pretty good. I think with a lot of the smaller stores that are online, I can reach out to customer service and usually get somebody who can help fill in the gaps.

Marty:

That's really interesting.

Kristen:

For me, about descriptions. I don't feel that same way with Amazon because you know, Amazon has a gazillion items. It's not like those reps necessarily know what the thing is.

Marty:

Sure, I don't think I've ever reached out to any human there. That's super interesting. Liza, for me, I am struck so many times, whenever I talk to Kristen, but specifically as I hear Kristen talking about online shopping for clothes being fraught, that it demonstrates what we already know to be true, both in what you do every single day, but what our whole QA team at Tamman does and that even as things are moving more digitally online there's no replacement for human intervention, human interaction. Taking the best of what we can automate and having a human work with that to make it exactly where we need it to be. Just curious what your thoughts and takeaways are there.

Liza:

I actually had a specific example from Be My Eyes. It's not time for that yet.

Marty:

No, it's always time to talk about, we talk about – you and I especially talk about it all the time, because we're both volunteers. We can go there. Segue us there to Be My Eyes.

Liza:

This is actually a new Be My Eyes experience. It's my most recent one that I haven't been able to post in our Slack yet, as a little ad for be my eyes, but it was pretty short. It was someone who I think they were getting ready for an event. They just wanted to know how their makeup looked. They had put their face on. They were sitting in front of a sunny window. They just wanted to know. I was using that as an example where you're thinking at a certain point you might be able to design some app that will like beep when your heads in the right spot and you can tell where your lips are supposed to be. I'm not sure how that technology works, but it does seem like that would be just something that's very difficult to sort of have a sense of what different ways there are to look acceptable in public for different makeup for different types of people and how some things you can get very close, and you can still be a little bit far away and it ends up being a giant gap when you put the technology into use. It does seem like that's my one example for Being My Eyes. There's also something that comes up in my line of work every day where I do a lot of QA. There are automated tests and there are manual tests. For manual tests, humanal [ph] tests and the automated test is good, and it covers a lot of stuff, but you can get so many pristine automated tests and have a document and have a piece of content that just isn't readable at all. It's extremely confusing. You might be able to perceive it, but you can't understand it. You might not be able to operate it fully or when you operate it it's even less understandable. So, yes it does seem like even with mounds of fast, very accurate technology there's a dimension where you need at least one person, preferably two – the human touch is, you can really feel it in the user experience side, at least from my [crosstalk 00:14:11].

Marty:

Yes, absolutely. I would add that there is, with the work that we do, when we are doing even just the digital document stuff, the pre-work that a human can come in and setup to make it easier for the AI to work with and then go back and double check. We find that with very simple things, it moves rather seamlessly, but the more complex, the more variables, the more you need a person to help navigate that. These challenges may be overcome in time. As you were talking with your example about Be My Eyes, I was thinking about Warbly Parker and how you can purchase glasses using their virtual glasses check. We're moving clearly in this direction where things can get easier. I hope that we continue to do that, but the gap between what AI is and can do and the need for human intervention and human interaction to make those experiences possible is still really, really great. I'm struck by the fact that a team in the UK, team Alpha, it's part of the government there. We'll post this link in the podcast for other people to see their study. They looked at all of the best performing automated tools for digital accessibility, and they set up a site with, I think it's off the top of my head around 139 mistakes,

on purpose that they built up. They ran all of these different automated tools through it. The best performing AI tool found 40% of problems. The worst performing one – and these are all tools that we use at Tamman and that many other accessibility professionals are using, and the worst performing tool only picked up about 13% of the barriers in this study. It's really striking to say, great even the best right now that we have can get you 40% of the way there. You still need a human so let's hear it for team human. Still in charge. Large and in charge, but Liza and Kristen, let's turn to Be My Eyes for a minute, because you just mentioned it Liza in terms of working through a call with someone. Can you give us just a very brief little background on what is Be My Eyes and if someone is hearing about this for the very first time, how does it work?

Liza:

For me, who is a volunteer on the app, go to my local app store, be it Google or Apple. You just search Be My Eyes, as it sounds. It should be the first app that comes up. It's free to download. It's very simple to setup and use, which I like. There's only one button where there needs to be one button. It's very nice from a UX standpoint, but you basically accept it. If you look at the odds on their app, there's several times more volunteers than there are people using the app to receive the volunteer and request it. That's great. It means that basically there is always a volunteer waiting, if not several. About once a month, it turns out to be, for me my phone will ring a special vibration pattern. I know it's coming from Be My Eyes. It brings their interface up. I can either accept it, if I'm in a good place to accept a call right now or I can dismiss it and someone else will pick it up, if I'm in the middle of a podcast or if I'm outside and there's too much glare on my phone that I'm not really going to see it. It's pretty easy to answer when you can and let it go if you're busy. It basically starts a video call with the person on the other end. They use their phones camera to show you what they have a question about. It can be anything. Sometimes it how your makeup looks or what a certain food product is or certain clothing item. You just look through their phone camera, see what they're trying to figure out and let them know. When they're done, they hung up. I think it asks you for feedback on how the call went. I think a little survey shows up that asks if it's product identification or certain other categories. They get a little data from you there. That's it.

Marty:

Kristen, I know from talking to you previously that you've had some positive and some negative experiences being on the other side of the Be My Eyes app. Would you share a couple of those?

Kristen:

Yes, I think it comes down to – the positive and the negative come down to who you get on the other end, because you're talking to a volunteer. The person may or may not actually be trained in helping or have picked up a few tricks just from living. Some people may not have ever met a blind person. They might just want to help them but might not actually know how to do it. The negative experience, really, I think just came down to me not really understanding camera angle, which is really tough for me, even after years of having a phone that has a camera. I constantly when calling on Facetime to my relatives, I know that my kids are not in the camera. First of all, they're running, but secondly, it's just really hard to know how to line

up the camera. It doesn't seem as intuitive as maybe it should, for me at least as a semi-camera abled blind person. I think it really just came down to one volunteer got flustered and worried when I couldn't figure out how to move the camera in the right way and got upset about the whole thing. Another one was like, why don't you try moving a little to the right, OK, no back to the left. OK, move it forward a little bit, backward a little bit. I think it just really came down to not knowing how to direct the camera, because I didn't know how to direct it either.

Marty:

I think you're spot on that, for me, the first 10 years of my professional career, maybe even more and really even to this day the foundation of everything I do is customer service. I always took the volunteering as customer service and that it was my role in that moment to provide great service, whatever is being asked of me. The calls that I've taken on Be My Eyes have been some of the most ridiculously positive experiences, from the volunteer side, from my side, because even though I don't think I've had a call that lasted longer than 30 seconds, I really feel like I made a difference in a moment. I hang up feeling like wow, yay me as a volunteer, because it was very, very meaningful to be able to be interacting with someone on the other end. What strikes me about what you said Kristen is the fact that, and Liza you did a wonderful job explaining Be My Eyes and how easy and simple it is to start taking calls, there is no real training. They have some resources that folks who aren't sure can go and look into and try to become better at being volunteers, but there's nothing mandatory. I think the assumption is if you're downloading this app, you're a good person. So, just be a good person, but there may be some additional -.

Kristen:

But that may not be an accurate assumption.

Marty:

Exactly, I mean I found it to be incredibly rewarding from the volunteer side as that's the only experience I've had from it. In fact, as you said Liza, sometimes it's - I won't get a call for a number of weeks. I'm always like when am I getting another call? I guess it's something I did, but it's not performance related. There's nothing - eventually another one comes through, I think, but maybe the folks from Be My Eyes can tell us a little bit more about what happens behind the scenes.

Liza:

I can say, it always comes when I'm never expecting it. A lot of times, I'll think about it, like you're saying where it's like oh man. I'm like, be nice to connect with a human right now and that's usually the feeling I'm having when that happens. My first Be My Eyes calls was actually not a success. It was, maybe a student and they were in a dorm room. They were trying to figure out which way was northwest. I could not figure it out. I asked them several questions because I was trying to brainstorm where the windows were. Could we try to see the sun? Time stuff and just eventually realized, I was like I don't actually think I can help you. I'm really sorry, but I hope you have good luck where it's sort of like once you realize you're not defending a company. You're just trying to help somebody. I do understand from Kristen's story where you

might feel a little bit defensive or something where it's like, first and foremost, it is – go back to your customer service knowledge and it's like sorry, I can't figure it out, but have a nice day. Thank you. Hopefully they can find someone with more geographical knowledge than I had, but yes, sometimes it's more successful than other. I think the person was like thanks so much, have a nice day. I was like wow, I completely – so far, I'm zero for one on this app. That was a lot happier person than I was. You just do your best and realize that everyone's on there for free, but yes, it would be nice at some point maybe, we'll have a little intro that when you first download the app, they'll be like some cards you can swipe through to say here's what to do if this happens. That could definitely increase the experience on [crosstalk 00:22:21].

Marty:

Absolutely, I think that's a great idea. That's one we should share with them. I'm sitting in my room right now where we're recording and trying to figure out where northwest is, and I don't think that I can do it. That's a particularly difficult science experiment.

Liza:

It would be interesting if Be My Eyes could come up with some where – instead of showing the video it will show you a little compass and maybe [crosstalk 00:22:45].

Kristen:

Well yes, or it could tap into the compass app on your phone and try to -.

Liza:

There you go.

Kristen:

Help figure it out or maybe if the person on the other end was like OK, this question a complete newbie could answer or maybe this person needs a little bit of experience showing camera. I don't know, but that – the whole point of the app is to connect people with people. I don't think there's enough of a demand for that, but it would be interesting if people could explain a little bit about what type of a call they're going to be making. I also am just really excited about – there are the calls you would just send to whoever out in the ether is able to answer you. Then there are also the specialized help sections. One of those, I'm sure, I haven't checked it recently, which I should have for this episode, but one of those is helping with a pregnancy test. Pregnancy tests are supposed to be private, anonymous pieces of data that nobody in the US has figured out is not anonymous, non-private for people who can't see them. There's no accessible equivalent in the gazillion years that pregnancy tests have been around. That is very, very important. I'm guessing there's also now COVID test help in there somewhere. Again, you're supposed to be able to read your own tests and then divulge the information and not have it divulged to you by family or friends, like you're supposed to be in charge of that information first. Be My Eyes is the next best thing there where you can get somebody who has no idea who you are and that can be really important in information where you need to be safe and make your own decisions.

Marty:

Yes, both Liza and I are sitting here shaking our heads, thinking about how there isn't an accessible pregnancy test.

Liza:

If you had to tell someone you were pregnant, and it was either someone you trusted enough to tell them you're pregnant and hold out a stick with your stuff on it to them or you have to go completely anonymously to someone who you hope is going to tell you the truth.

Kristen:

Oh god, I didn't even think about that.

Liza:

Yes, just like – I mean, of course you're hoping it's some nice person on the other end, but it's really like this is some of the most important information I need to hear.

Kristen:

In that case, you can go through the volunteer – I can't imagine a poor volunteer who has never been pregnant or wanted to be and suddenly getting a pregnancy test call, but there is actually a specific section on there that say click here to ask about your pregnancy test. That connects with a company that can read those tests. I think it's the Clear Blue tests. It's really funny because it's on UK time. So, they have to connect you with someone in the UK. Those people are trained to read their tests.

Marty:

This is what happens, dear listeners, when you talk with Kristen. There is something like this that absolutely blows your mind that you hadn't thought of before. She illuminates an issue or something like that because the whole time you're talking I'm then thinking well, of course, maybe there's a HIPAA thing or this. No, they're connected to the UK. There's no HIPAA in the UK. That's a whole other -. Just the emotions attached to that. Now I'm starting to think about all the different ways, beyond just pregnancy. There could be other things that one might have to read or engage with that would have emotional triggers on either end.

Kristen:

Right, I was trying to write a story about what would it be like if there was a talking pregnancy test, because yes, you could be really excited to be pregnant, or not. You know? Maybe it's not the right time to be pregnant, or you never wanted to be pregnant, or whatever. It's pretty ironically amusing to imagine what a talking pregnancy test could say. I mean, if there was such a thing, but there's not. How do those agents maintain neutrality? Do they assume that it's great news and they're like great and you're like I didn't want to be pregnant? Thanks a lot, or you know. How is that handled? I don't know.

Liza:

I'm imagining a 40 years in the future scenario where marketing is hipper, and you can pay \$40 extra dollars for a pregnancy test where you can tell it first. You can pick between three voices like neutral, excited, reverent there for you. That is – the user experience on that does seem extreme. And to think that the first person who's going to tell you you're pregnant is someone that you don't know and maybe you don't feel like you can – yes, it's just very – thinking about a lot of things now.

Marty:

Absolutely wild. Wow, I'm excited about Be My Eyes though. Even as we have this conversation, it has been a valuable experience. I think it touches on the human technology interface where you have an app, one person on the phone, someone else in another part of the world with their phone. You're connecting. You're providing valuable service. I hope I'm never in the situation where I'm reading a pregnancy test. I'm not going to volunteer for that particular role.

Kristen:

Well, if you get it, what are you going to do? You know, what if someone -?

Marty:

But, yes, but I have to be good customer service. You've got to be prepared for anything, but Liza I mean, if folks want to learn more about Be My Eyes or just even how to get going you said just pop in to one of the online app marketplaces and download it and go. Is there any other information that folks might need to check this out?

Liza:

That's all the information that you need. If you want to look at their website, before you go, they'll have a little more info there for you, but it is pretty straightforward. They have some extra background there, but get the app. It's a great way to connect.

Kristen:

[inaudible 00:27:59] they have really cool stories about ways that it has been used successfully. One of my favorites, I don't remember all the details in the story, but it was basically a scholar who was studying an obscure language. Because of the nature of what they needed help with, they connected them with a volunteer who actually knew the language in question and could help them translate this esoteric, obscure, ancient scholarly text into something that that person could read easily. That's one of my favorite moments, but I think just really connecting people around a shared experience and bringing people together who otherwise might not have been connected.

Marty:

So awesome. I also do not speak Amharic or any other weird, old language like Latin. I'm limited in what I can do, apparently, but I do love it. It's been something that I make sure is up to date on my phone that I keep open so I can take calls whenever I'm available. Kristen, I love learning about these sorts of assisted tech. I'm curious about other tools or software, assisted tech that

you commonly use, things that maybe it's like Be My Eyes where you're connecting to another person or could just be an interesting hack for someone who's blind.

Kristen:

Kind of a paid equivalent of Be My Eyes is Aira, A-I-R-A. The advantage of paying is that you know the person on the other end has been trained in helping with everything, with camera angle, with this that and the other thing. During the COVID pandemic they, or at the height of the pandemic, they really tried to make it free for as many people as possible. They would give people a free five-minute call every day. That was pretty amazing advertising. I think they've scaled that back a little bit now. It's like we give priority people who pay for this. If we have space, we'll take your call. That's a really cool app as well. I don't know what it takes to become an agent on that app, but it could be someone's next great career. That's a pretty good one. I don't pay for it. I use the free ones. Free Aira when I can get it or free Be My Eyes. I think there's something to be said for that privilege being open to everybody, especially when so many people with disabilities are unemployed or underemployed. That's a really important aspect there. I will say that I think Aira has certain categories of calls where it's related to employment, it's free. There's a few other categories that you can bypass the regular line and be like, I need help with this. If they consider it an important enough cause to make it free. That's one app. I think they're doing the best their can. They're good. There's another one called Microsoft Soundscape. I sometimes use it when walking. It's pretty interesting. It will tell you what street you're approaching, what streets are to the right or left or straight ahead of you. I feel a little ambivalent about it, using any app while moving. Sometimes I think it's pretty cool, especially if a driveway and a curb cut seem similar enough and I've messed them up, differentiating them, but other times I think that the app sort of takes me away from my environment a little bit, even while it's trying to help put me into it. I want to use the skills that I have or develop the skills even more, just by moving through space. It depends on the day, whether I enjoy that one. Other than that, voice over – I have an iPhone and voice over is a part of every iPhone. Any time you want to experience your iPhone, if you have one, from the vantage point of someone who can't see, you can actually turn on voice over and kind of hear what that experience might be like. It might be good, if you're interested in volunteering to put yourself on the other side of that experience from an – and imagine how it is to aim the camera when you can't see what you're aiming the camera at, how the camera is actually aiming, things like that.

Marty:

We're going to put links to everything that you managed, including boldblindandbeauty.com up on our show notes. These are all great. Liza, only because you're in the know. I don't want to exclude you. Was there any particular piece of software or hack that you've seen or heard of or used in your work or in the advocacy community?

Liza:

I'll say not specifically that haven't already been mentioned here. When I was starting out in this job, there was some new app Google had put out. I think it's similar to what Kristen was talking about where as you're navigating, it will announce where you are in that way. I think

there was another app that wasn't Google, but it was similar to where you would. I was just holding it out in front of myself in the office with the camera and it would be like desk, window, wall, chair, window.

Kristen:

Yes, See My Eye.

Liza:

Yes.

Kristen:

Is one that's getting better and better all the time. Then also another one called Blind Square. I don't have Blind Square, but I've heard it's really good.

Liza:

There were some like that where I was like I could see the use for this if you had something in front of you and it felt like something, certain things, but then also it's like I'm trying to focus on a person maybe or a whiteboard and I don't care that I'm in front of a bunch of windows. Again, it's like you're trusting a computer to figure out your priority, things like that, but I did remember Aira, just because our coworker Nimet posted about that a couple weeks ago, because I think if she refers people, she is a subscription explorer, I think, as they call it on the website. I think you can earn some minutes if you refer people. It is another, kind of in the vein that Kristen was talking about where you're everything has a paid version these days. They're always trying to find ways to make it marketable, but same with Be My Eyes where you pay for it or also mainly it's not actually a free service, but that's all my tech I think, besides what I use for work.

Marty:

Awesome, yes, I was searching for the link in our Slack that I remember talking to Nimet about that. I think that's fantastic. I love talking to you all about this stuff. I'm always learning from the two of you. I so appreciate that. Thank you so much for sharing everything. We haven't done one of these in a while, our three question segments. I'm curious if anything has changed. The two of you can feel free to answer the question that I ask, but since you've both been on the podcast many times, you can also answer a question that is in the adjacent possible of that question that I ask. Feel free to go in any direction you want. Liza, can I start with you?

Liza:

Yes, I'm shaking my head with such a sour look on my face.

Marty:

Quite confident. The first question for you is, which living person do you most admire?

Liza:

I'm going to say, I'm a big fan of my cousin. She shall remain nameless, but she's a very kind, very conscientious, very thoughtful, very funny lady. I, in this time sort of, when sometimes you don't want to meet your heroes, because you really don't know that they're like, it's always good to look around you and you might see some real standup folks right there. I'm smiling right now and there's a little shine on one of my teeth.

Marty:

The answer was right in front of you all along Liza, all along.

Liza:

Right.

Marty:

How about you Kristen? Which living person do you most admire or is someone that you do admire?

Kristen:

I think last time I was on the podcast I stuck with my favorite author. I still admire her immensely. I'm going to be inspired by Liza's lead and talk about people that I know. I have many friends and acquaintances and I'm fortunate to have several good friends and acquaintances. The one whom I talk to when I can, and we catch up and hang out and I think the ones that I've talked to the most over the past couple years are Damian and Yocasta. I talk to them a lot since the pandemic started. We've gotten very close over the past couple of years. I don't know what I would do without them. Yocasta is, actually has recently been featured on Bold, Blind Beauty so you may be able to find her. She's great to talk about all things disability, parenting, and relationships and friendships and everything else with. My friend Damian really got me started learning Italian. He is miles and miles ahead of me, because he's put a lot more time into it, but and has worked a lot harder. I have not studied the way I need to to catch up, but he's always patient and optimistic with me and doesn't even sigh when I don't remember something, which I really appreciate. I can't see people's expressions so I'm happy there. No, seriously they've both been my lifeline through the pandemic, their kindness, and their intelligence.

Marty:

That's wonderful, from both of you. Second question, we'll start with you Ms. Kristen. Do you have a favorite heroine or hero from fiction?

Kristen:

I have so many. I don't remember who I said last time. I don't want to repeat myself. I'm going to say someone I didn't say previously, I'm pretty sure. There is a story in Langston Hughes's wonderful short story collection that was edited posthumously. There's one story in that collection called One Friday Morning. It's about a high school student who is about to get an art scholarship and that scholarship is removed at the last moment because of her race, but just

how she decides to handle it. Her feelings show in that story, but she's also inspired to keep going, to keep making art and not to be trampled.

Marty:

I love reading recommendations and I will also be posting that link in the show notes. Wonderful. How about you, Ms. Liza? Do you have a favorite heroine or hero from fiction?

Liza:

I didn't really and so I just did some quick Googling, and it switched a lot in the last three minutes, but I've settled on Piggy from Lord of the Flies. I had to read that book several different times for various grades of school. Get it together Delaware school system. Why are we reading it in more than once grade, but I got familiar with that whole gang and the different character within it. I relate to Piggy a lot. He was trying to be rationale. He was trying to talk some sense to his quote unquote friends, his peers. It stuck with me. I try to find the Piggies around me so that we can get together and have our own, better island. Seems a little bit naïve and idealistic and so I do have a certain level of acceptance for my eventual brutal death from the people around me and those I consider to be my equals.

Marty:

Awesome. Well, sticking with you Liza. What's one recommendation you have for us? It could be a book, a game, a card show, whatever you've got.

Liza:

A card show.

Marty:

I meant like card game, but I already said game. Then show and then anyway, it got turned into card show.

Liza:

I'll scratch card show right off my list. I may have definitely suggested this last time. I can't recall, but I am having a little renaissance, getting a little bit back into geocaching, which G-E-O-C-A-C-H-I-N-G, if any of you are like my family and like to have stuff spelled out. It is an app you can get on your phone. It is basically a little scavenger hunt game, like a crowd sourced scavenger hunt that you can play in your very own city or town with your family or just your lonely little self. It's just a great way to enjoy better weather and see some places around you you may not have explored that are kind of cool and might have some significance, historically or culturally.

Marty:

That is so cool. Yes, good for the renaissance of geocaching. I think that's fantastic. Kristen, any recommendations for us from any part of the entertainment or non-fiction world?

Kristen:

OK, so there is a song that my son, my 11-year-old introduced me to. In the past, he has introduced me to some songs that once I analyzed the lyrics I was like, OMG why are we listening to this? It is not what I want to hear, because he is a child and does not always think about it that way, at first, but this time he introduced me to a song that I love, even after having heard the lyrics several times. It's called Counting Stars by One Republic. I guess it's a crossover between folk and rock, maybe a little bit more toward the rock side. It is about how you can earn money, but not necessarily be happy. The most important thing in your working life is to work from a sense of purpose and happiness and wonder. That's what I get from the song anyway.

Marty:

Love it. Love it. Love it. I know that song. I love that song too. Liza was also shaking her head. That is fantastic.

Kristen:

I was also singing it the other day and he was like go mom. I was like OK. Sorry.

Marty:

It's good. You're not cringy yet. I've definitely hit some parental cringiness myself recently.

Kristen:

Well, I couldn't tell if that was a double meaning like if it was go mom and go mom. I think it might have been no the border there.

Marty:

I appreciate you coming on the podcast, sharing your thoughts and your resources and your ideas. Again, we'll have all sorts of links in our show notes so if you missed something that either Liza or Kristen brought up today, you can check those show notes and you can check out all of the great resources that were brought up. I know we'll be continuing conversations off the air, but I hope to be able to have both of you back very, very soon. If you like what you heard or want to disagree with us or engage with us, we love hearing feedback. Reach out. Let us know what you think. We'd love to hear from you. You can find us on our website, at tammaninc.com or on any of your social media platforms, [@tammaninc](https://www.instagram.com/tammaninc). We will get right back to you. We'd love to hear from you. Sign up for our newsletter as well. On our website you can go to our learn section where we have all sorts of articles from Kristen, Liza, myself, the whole Tamman team. Again, you can find us at www.tammaninc.com. Thanks so much. We will talk with you next time.