

# Adulting on the Spectrum: Neurodiverse hiring and a passion for carnivorous plants

## **Andrew M. Komarow**

Welcome to "Adulting on the Spectrum," I'm Andrew, an autistic certified financial planner. I co-run "Adulting on the Spectrum," with Eileen Lam. Hey, Eileen!

## **Eileen Lamb**

Hey, Andrew. Hey everyone, I'm Eileen Lamb. And in this podcast, we want to highlight the real voices of autistic adults, not just inspirational stories, but real people talking about their boring life. Basically, we want to give a voice to people like us. And today, our guest is Rebecca Alley. Becca graduated college in 2016. With her lifelong dream degree of Marine Biology, nine months and two internships later she realized the path wasn't for her. Lost, she joined a prominent fast-food chain as a delivery driver and began working her way up through the ranks of the store. She found she couldn't get a high paying job in corporate America due to stigma against fast food workers and behavioral quirks she exhibits. Finally at 23, she received her diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder and was able to join a large financial institution through their neurodiversity program as a project management officer. Hi, Becca.

## **Becca Alley**

Hi.

## **Andrew M. Komarow**

Thanks for joining us. And one of the questions that we always like to start with are pronouns and identity questions. So whether that's person first, or identity, first person with autism and autistic person, what is your preference?

## **Becca Alley**

So I prefer identity first, so autistic person. And then pronouns she/her for now may change in the future, but for now it is I'm still going by she her.

## **Andrew M. Komarow**

So our first guest ever was Tara Cunningham, who was the CEO of Specialisterne, USA. And I believe you're the first person we have interviewed who's disclosed getting a job through a Neurodiversity at Work program. Can you tell me what that process was like, and how it was different from other interviews?

## **Becca Alley**

So it was a bit of a weird situation, because I actually didn't even apply to this program at all. I applied to a different company altogether and through to their neurodiversity program, and I got an interview. And they loved me, but I didn't have the qualifications that they needed, like the actual coding

qualifications, which is I have them now, but I didn't have the time. Um, but they so they, instead of just dropping me from the process, referred me to the Linkage Program, which is in North Carolina base Internship Program, run out of North Carolina Business Committee for Education. And they referred me their like, they work with companies in The Triangle North Carolina area. So the Raleigh Durham, Chapel Hill Research Triangle Park area, to place autistic individuals in meaningful employment starting out as in an internship, and the internship is initially, oh, how long is it initially, I think it's six, I would have to look it up. I don't even remember. So I was an intern from May until October. So whatever, in 2019, the amount of time between May and October is the length of the internship. Um, I think it the initial internship is 12 weeks, and then you can be extended to 24 weeks. And so when I first went in, I didn't actually know what the company did or was I showed up because I was told to, but I kind of thought to be perfectly honest, that it was a scam, because I worked for now, the company that I work for is a large international corporation, and I was a fast food worker. So I didn't I'd never heard of them. And the website looks legit, which of course, now I know, they're a Fortune 500 company. So of course, their website is legit. But as a minimum wage worker, I had no idea what anything they were talking about was so I showed up. And the questions were very experienced based, which I liked a lot, there wasn't any like, what we first off, they, they knew my background, going into it, that I didn't have the background in these positions because they were made aware of that to begin with. The person who pulled my resume from after I was recommended to the company was actually a fast food worker himself. And he saw that I was in fast food management. And so he knew this skills are transferable. But he did tell everybody ahead of time that I was not going to have any practical knowledge. So they interviewed me off of like, what work experience do you have? What do you like about your current job? What do you not like about your current job, stuff like that. And it was is just, I didn't have to make what, Well from first off, one of my favorite stories coming into it as I was walking in the door, my shoes actually fell apart. And I didn't have spare shoes. So I did all of the interviews that day in socks. And nobody judged me. They nobody actually even mentioned it. I'm I, my boss did tell me later that she knew she just wasn't mentioning it, because she had been warned ahead of time that my shoes have fallen apart. And they I had five interviews that day. And I got four out of the five positions with the fifth position. I didn't have the qualifications once again. But I they emailed me later and was like, which position do you actually want? And I chose my current position. So

### **Eileen Lamb**

That's good for you. What do you think that this, these opportunities would be available to you if you didn't have a professional diagnosis of autism? And in which other way do you think the professional diagnosis has helped you?

### **Becca Alley**

So the professional diagnosis helped me mainly because I was able to explain some of the behaviors that I have, like I struggle with eye contact, and a lot of people dismiss that as a lack of self-esteem. And there was a period of time where I had a lack of self-esteem, but I've struggled with eye contact my whole life. And I've also struggle with maintaining one subject, I do bounce a while round a lot. And I think a lot of interviews require a personality aspect for you to go in and really get along with the people in order to move to the next round. And I'm not always the most, especially in high pressure

situations, I'm not always the most outgoing. And I don't have the most relatable sense of humor, and I don't always get jokes. And that has always worked against me. Whereas now, with an autism diagnosis, people expect all of that from me. And they don't judge me on that. And they instead they focus on my experiences, quality and the qualifications I now have, and the benefits that I can bring without so much stress on me fitting in, culturally.

**Andrew M. Komarow**

So when people ask me for career advice, which is actually not uncommon, I always say it's not just what you like to do, but also why you love to do it. And what was it about marine biology that made you no longer want to pursue that as a career?

**Becca Alley**

So I had a very bad experience in my second internship in the summer of 2016. So the first internship was fine. The second internship was horrible. I was treated terribly. And at the time, I didn't have an autism diagnosis. So I wasn't able to give them a reason for some of the things that they were really, really judging me on, like the tone of my voice, and it became very, very toxic. I was living and working with the same people, I didn't get along with them at all. And I didn't really have any friends because it was outside of them, because it was Costa Rica. And we were in a small village where I barely spoke Spanish, and they didn't speak English. So I had nowhere to go. And it ultimately destroyed my passion for a very long time. It was that so toxic that I didn't, it destroyed my self esteem, it destroyed my passion, I decided it was not something I could do. And I didn't know where to go from there. So I ended up turning to fast food because I had originally worked in this company before for a summer job while I was in a different internship. And in 2015, and I really liked the environment that I had worked in in that store. So I decided to go back to that franchise. While not it was a different franchise, but the same umbrella company. And I ended up staying there for three years. And then after a while, I just sort of got to know more about the income threshold and really understanding money to be perfectly honest, because I grew up very privileged. And I never really had to worry about money. That was always the worry of my parents and I just got money when I needed it. But as I moved into paying my own bills and seeing the limitations that not having money can bring and I got more of an idea of what marine science actually pays it is hard. So if I didn't want a life where I had to go back to school and get a PhD to make a living, and even then it would be a would be a tough living unless I got involved in university and was a tenure track professor. But to do just the type of research, I wanted to do very grant based, very low pay.

**Andrew M. Komarow**

Do you think that your experience would have been different and right now, you'd be a low paid grant based marine biologist, if you had your autism diagnosis earlier in life? What would have been different if you had gone into the second internship with your diagnosis?

**Becca Alley**

That's an interesting question, because the people on that second internship are so cruel. I don't know it would have been any different. I don't know the answer that because it's actually the second

internship that led to my diagnosis, because I was fired from that internship, and the list of the termination letter just read as a list of autism symptoms. It was almost like they went into the DSM, whatever number we're on copy and pasted. Which, of course, that was not the case. But it was it, it ended up triggering my therapists to recommend for me to get the diagnosis that I got. So they recommended the assessment based on that.

**Eileen Lamb**

What was the assessment like for you?

**Becca Alley**

It was, it was something considering that I was 23. At the time. I mean, they handed me a picture book was one of the tests and they were like, tell us a picture, tell us a story with these pictures. And I was like looking at these pictures. And when it featured a child, it featured a young boy, a very young boy, and I was like, at 23. And another time, they were like

**Andrew M. Komarow**

Is it the one where he had a dream?

**Becca Alley**

I don't know what I don't know what it was like, I know I that would be very fitting. But at the time, I was like, these pictures make no sense. They have no cohesion. And there's also a child in it and I'm 23. So it's very possible that it was a dream, although I did not make the connection that it was a dream at the time. At the time, I had no idea what was going on in those pictures. Um, another time, they were like, another test was they handed me like a ball and a string and a feather and told me to tell a story with the toys and like, I'm 23. And I asked for an example. And they were like, well, this ball is person riding on this feather, which is actually a plane I'm like, but it's not though. It's a feather, and it's a ball. And they were like, and they use like the string as like the seat belt. And I was just like, no, that's not a thing. And that was I do agree that I am autistic. I do fully agree that the assessment was correct. But I don't agree with the assessment being realistic, because all those things counted against me towards autism, because they were like, you're a very literal thinker. And like, no, I'm an adult. Like, I'm not a child. So while I fit the experiences and symptoms, I feel like the assessment definitely needs to mature with the age group they are assessing. And yes, that was a cat.

**Eileen Lamb**

Did they have you take The Ink Test, The Rorschach Test, is that what's it called?

**Becca Alley**

No, they didn't.

**Eileen Lamb**

You know, they did it for me. She said, You know, it's there's no like, real studies of it. But she was just curious. Yeah. And it's interesting, because she said at the end that, you know, the few studies

have done about it my read my answers to that The Ink Test actually matched the other autistic people. It was like that I didn't see as many face faces as they actually were in those things like I would see like animals or objects instead of people in the ink. Anyway, it was interesting. But again, I feel like it's like the ball and the feather doesn't seem very,

**Becca Alley**

Yeah, it's just not for our age range. If you're going to be assessing people like you need to assess them at their level.

**Andrew M. Komarow**

If you're 10 years old, and you had been asked the same question, would you have answered them differently? Or would you have answered it the same?

**Becca Alley**

Well, I'd probably answer it the same at 10. As I did as an adult, it would feel more fitting to me as a 10 year old then like as an adult, I felt really talked kind of down to and like, my maturity didn't fit what I was being asked to do. If that makes sense.

**Eileen Lamb**

Yeah. It makes sense. When you mentioned you know, the thing about the child I thought you meant it because, well, you're an adult. So how are you supposed to like relate to like the child in the story. I saw that scene in sense that, that you meant it's not as if, you know, they were asking you to do something that was like above, above your age just as it would have been easier for you to relate to someone who's like a 23 year old girl like you.

**Becca Alley**

Yeah. Yeah, I mean, I don't like expect to have a picture book written for me specific or like this particular for every age group, I should say. But like the activity itself was a little, I don't want to go as far as saying degrading, but I can't think of a different word right now. I'm just not fitting to my age, and maturity.

**Eileen Lamb**

So you're passionate about talking about why hiring neurodiverse candidates is not charity for business, yet, at the same time, you admit that you have struggle, and autism is not a superpower? Can you tell us more about that?

**Becca Alley**

Well, so like, everybody has their own struggles, right. So like, just like hiring a parent of small children isn't, is something that sometimes needs to be worked around. I mean, there's events after at where you have to like, I don't have any children, but there's events that you have to go to during working hours to support your children, you have to leave at a certain time just to go pick up your children. I think every, almost every demographic has their own needs. And autism should be treated just like a

different demographic with its own needs. Those needs aren't special. They're just a different demographic that needs the same care and accommodation as demographics that we consider and accommodate without any second thoughts today.

**Eileen Lamb**

How about people who are on the more severe end of the spectrum? You know, like, no, actually, like, no amount of accommodations will like, although someone who has severe autism was like no way of communicating whether that's verbal or not, you know, issues, cognitive issues, like, no amount of accommodation is gonna help these autistic people get a job. What, what can we do about that?

**Becca Alley**

Well, there needs to be social supports in place, like my younger brother will most likely never live alone. And I and my friend is in a very similar situation where her brother will never have a job and will never live alone. He's he hasn't spoken since he was very, very young. Um, and there, there isn't supports in place that for situations like that, and while I hate to think about it, because my parents are involved in this as my parents grow old, and they die, and then what happens, and I am in Judaism, I am Jewish, every life has intrinsic value. And just because somebody can't have a job, doesn't mean they shouldn't be supported or taken care of, or they should be cast aside, just because they can't have a job or even if they don't want to, for whatever reason. And I do think there needs to be systems in place to help support adults, when their parents can no longer advocate for them. And they are not in a place where they can advocate for themselves or understand what is going on around them.

**Andrew M. Komarow**

So speaking of Judaism, you just had something very exciting happen this weekend. Can you tell us more about that?

**Becca Alley**

So I had my adult Bat Mitzvah at 28 years old. So it Bat Mitzvah is typically held for girls as they turned 12. And boys as they turn 13. And they I have been studying for two years to learn to read Hebrew. And I stood up in front of the whole synagogue and all my friends and part of my family and read from my from the Torah, and I led a prayer for the congregation. And then I had a small speech that I had to give but it's like a really monumental time in a Jewish adults life. It marks the transition from Jewish childhood to Jewish adulthood, but also when a person can become responsible for their own Judaism. And that's kind of how I wrote it. Today is now I am responsible for continuing well first off the fact that I was reading from 1000s of years the same portion that people have read for 1000s and 1000s of years by 1000 years and reading the same prayer that's that have been spoken by Jews for 1000s of years. It was just so meaningful to me. I just get really touched by knowing and part of this such an old culture and system of beliefs.

**Eileen Lamb**

What did you miss as an adult instead of a as a child?

**Becca Alley**

So my mom is Jewish, but my dad is Christian, and my mom just sort of didn't care. So my dad raised me in the Methodist Church, and I didn't have a Bat Mitzvah, when I was a child. I'm Jewish, Judaism is passed down through the mother. So I am Jewish by biology, because my mother is Jewish, and her mother is Jewish, and so on, and so forth forever. Um, so I didn't have to convert. But I wanted to do something to mark my transition to Judaism. And I thought this would be very fitting when I found it. It was it's a program of system of classes that last two years for my temple. And when I found it, I was like, this is this is what I want to do to mark the fact that I am Jewish, and not Methodist.

**Eileen Lamb**

Thank you. Same. So there is but and good was everything. Yes. And I want to know, what makes you great at what you do, you know, at work, and give us an example. And also tell us a time when your autism and ended up making it harder at work? And did your employer do anything to support you?  
Or,

**Becca Alley**

Yeah, so I'll start with good. So because I'm good is easier. Um, so I am, I don't want to say that, like, I'm more creative, but there's definitely something in my mind that works a little bit differently than other people, I don't really and this goes both ways, and will be the emphasis between both the good and the bad, I don't really believe in any amount of status quo. So I have on more than one occasion, I'm created solutions to pain points that have persisted for years before I have joined before I joined. And that was because they were also my pain points, and I didn't want to deal with them. So I soaked them. Whereas like, I don't know, I don't know how the neurotypical mind works. But I just know that people had been annoyed, but still doing it. Whereas I was annoyed until I made it go away. Um, and some of the systems that I introduced is we were having to do a lot of formatting and data analysis in Excel by hand where we would have to insert certain equations and drag and drop and all and copy and paste and all this stuff. And I introduced a macro that did all of that. And then I even went beyond that. And I have introduced a macro that will draft emails based on the data analysis and formatting. So it pulls data from the data analysis and creates personalized emails and addresses it to the correct person, if they fit certain criteria. And the messaging changes based on five different criteria that they could make they could meet. And that amounted to over a with all my solutions put together I sent out to all my users a time saved time saves estimate. So that I could include it in my performance review. And I have cut over 1000 hours of repetitious work in 2021 alone, and I'm about to do the same thing for 2022. And I'll see how that has grown. For my mid-year review, so we'll see how that goes. So, I'm not saying that people, neurotypical people are not creative or lazy by any means. I just, I feel like they tolerate more BS. Um, can I say that on this show? Okay, cool. Bullshit, they tolerate more bullshit, and I just have very little patience for bullshit. So I eliminated the bullshit. Um, and then, but at the same time, like the same thing has gotten me into trouble where I haven't followed the chain of command before. And some people are just sort of okay with that, and some people are not. It really just depends on the person and situations have arisen where people haven't really liked that. I have asked them certain things or brought up certain things in certain contexts. Like, sometimes bring up

like, I'll get a message from my boss is really trying to prevent me from talking about like, pain points for the team in front of clients is a big is a big one for me. That I have trouble with because,

**Andrew M. Komarow**

I also, I also work for a big financial institution, and I've worked for other big ones before. And I've also been told that even if somebody is grossly incompetent, you should not tell them that, right? That that does not they don't appreciate that. No, no, but, I yes, the big financial institutions In particular, are very much well, it was always done this way. Right? It it was I, I can relate to that a lot because it was, but why why is it done this way? Right. And that can be hard, especially for like such, you know, a regulatory type organization where it's very complicated. Sometimes there's a good reason and just nobody knows, minded about 50/50 With there actually being a good reason or not. So but, ya know, I completely, you know, understand the both sides with that.

**Becca Alley**

Yeah, I once noticed I was on a big meeting. And there was they noticed a logic error in some report, they were showing, and I could see the issue with the code, because the code was in the Excel bar above, it was just query. And so I came online, and I told them, like, here's where the typo is. And it was a client call. And they were my boss wasn't most thrilled with that, but and he was just like, yeah, so in the future, just just take that kind of thing offline. Like, I'm really glad you can see the typo, but like, you should definitely just not mention them for the clients and just let it go.

**Andrew M. Komarow**

Like, your boss is pretty supportive, though.

**Becca Alley**

Well, he has a, he has a close family member on the spectrum. So it would make sense. But yeah, he's great. I like him a lot.

**Eileen Lamb**

It's so weird that they don't want you to say something during the meeting, like

**Becca Alley**

It's the audience. That's important. Um,

**Andrew M. Komarow**

For the client, you don't want to look bad, in front of

**Becca Alley**

You don't want to look bad in front the clients,

**Eileen Lamb**

You wouldn't look good, because you found a typo.



**Andrew M. Komarow**

But they might not have known there was a typo.

**Becca Alley**

Yeah. And I'm also not, and I'm also not the one who built the report. So the person who was building the report didn't look the best.

**Eileen Lamb**

Yeah, but you're helping.

**Becca Alley**

I know that see. See, thank you. This is my, this is how I was thinking. That is my train of thought in a nutshell. I was helping.

**Andrew M. Komarow**

Eileen agrees with you, go figure.

**Eileen Lamb**

Like I'm trying to be nosy I always say put yourself in the other person's shoes. And like, if I do that, it's I wouldn't be thankful that someone told me about it.

**Becca Alley**

See, that's how I live my life. And it doesn't always apparently work like that. Like, in high school, I told a friend that her hair cut her new hair cut look terrible. And I thought my train of thought was then she can go get her hair cut fixed. She never spoke to me again. She did not take it in those terms. But oh well.

**Andrew M. Komarow**

Did she get the haircut fixed?

**Becca Alley**

I have no idea. She never spoke to me again.

**Andrew M. Komarow**

Well, I mean, you have to speak to somebody to see their haircut. You didn't see her again?

**Becca Alley**

I'm also we were in class, but I actually don't remember. I don't know if I just didn't pay attention after that point. Or it was just like too traumatic. And I blocked it out, but I don't remember.

**Eileen Lamb**

So speaking of cool things, well, it's not really cool. But it was funny. I heard that. So you got invited to the Governor's Mansion?

**Becca Alley**

Yes.

**Eileen Lamb**

Can you tell us about that? And that's super cool.

**Becca Alley**

So, um, it's part of the LiNC-IT Initiative. So um the governor. It's a meeting for the North Carolina. Oh, my gosh, this is such a mouthful. North Carolina Committee NCB, North Carolina Business Committee for Education and NCBC. I can't ever remember the order of the words. Um, and different people who came out of their different programs are going to talk about the programs. And me and another person who came out of the LiNC-IT Program are going to talk about LiNC-IT. But yes, it's really cool. So I know what I'm going to say. And I'm just going to read it and then try to make a beeline to not be the center of attention for very long. Because it's stressful.

**Andrew M. Komarow**

You can read the Torah, which has like no vowels, is like you got this right?

**Becca Alley**

Yeah. Well, I mean, technically that won't. Yeah, that's good point. That's valid, that's valid is in a different language, and they took away my vowels I had, I had to memorize it with just consonants which the idea that people can just do that is crazy to me. Granted, it's their language, but

**Andrew M. Komarow**

The vowels are helpful.

**Becca Alley**

Vowels are very helpful. You should definitely include vowels in just everything.

**Andrew M. Komarow**

Yes, so a last, last question for you. Well, or last well I main question. I've heard through the grapevine pun intended that you like plants what do you what can you tell me about carnivorous plants?

**Becca Alley**

Oh, my goodness. Okay, so carnivorous plants are native to about a 300 mile radius of Wilmington, North Carolina. And do you want to No, it's kind of within a 300 mile radius. My balcony because I have some I raise carnivorous plants on my balcony. I have right now I have eight and a big tank and then my tank is had been converted into sort of like a swamp environment. But I love carnivorous plants in particular, because they, I mean, they could have just died, right they the reason they

developed this evolutionary ability to eat, like small animals and bugs is because their soil is so like nutrient nutrient less that it can't really support life. So rather than just migrating out, like a lot of plants did in that area, they chose violence and they decided we're gonna stay right here and just hold this ground and they created this whole evolutionary ability so they can stay put. And then that's in North Carolina. How cool is that? That like North Carolina has such a cool, because like North Carolina is just so boring. Like no offense, all the North Carolinians I've been born, I was born. Well, I was born in Finland, but I was raised in North Carolina, I've been in North Carolina my whole life, we have nothing, nothing entertaining, except for maybe a couple of deer a lot of deer, but, and then like, pitcher plants, and it's also really funny, because they'll have like piles and piles and piles and piles of bugs on them. And it's just like, they just, they just kind of stockpile. Um, but anyways, and it's really another thing that I find really kind of cool about carnivorous plants is that they will die back in winter, and they will go into hibernation. And that is very important to their survival, they have to rest to survive. And so like I, I see your face, I can see that you're like, you're like, oh gosh, this is a tangent, well, but like they have to, they have to rest to survive. And if they don't have that rest period, after a few years, they'll just break down and die. And I love that. And I kind of live by that now. Where like rest is important to life, and to sustaining life. Um, and also winter, if there was no winter, which winter I know some people love winter. I personally hate winter. But I use it now to encourage myself to get through winter because I have seasonal affective seasonal affective disorder. Where that like winter is essential to the lives of what I love.

**Eileen Lamb**

Yeah, I love that. But as soon as you said I was like well, I mean kind of like us human nature is to to survive and feel better. But I have a question. Okay, but do they bite? Like do they bite like humans like?

**Becca Alley**

Yeah, like if you stick your if you stick your finger in a Venus Flytraps mouth, it'll close but you just pull the finger from back out.

**Eileen Lamb**

You won't feel it?

**Becca Alley**

Yeah, no you won't feel it. And the vein of the fly trap has been in the wild, most fly traps can close or open like a couple of times. In an environment like I have, they're not in their natural environment, although it's pretty close. So they're not the healthiest, especially right now because they're all root bound and they need to be repotted but they can't until next winter. Um so that a lot of times traps will die after you aggravate them like that. So it's not the best to trigger them because it's a huge it's a huge amount takes a huge amount of energy to move like that. But yeah, so and then Pitcher Plants don't close. They just are open and then bugs fall and I so you can just stick your finger in and just pull it back out but either way they can't hurt they can't hurt anybody. And Pitcher Plants are pitcher plants so the venus flytrap is native to North Carolina Pitcher Plants can be found in various forms all

over the world. I'm I'm actually not sure about the Sundew, although I do have a Sundew. But I have I have a singular Sundew and I have three or four fly traps and then four Pitcher Plants so how many is that nine? I don't know. But either and one thing to always be cognizant of is when you're buying um fly traps and it were any carnivorous plants is where they come from because poaching is a huge issue. And it's a huge threat to their survival like you can raise the you can raise fly traps I got my fly traps are from a guy who just breeds them in his backyard. Yeah, I had to drive 45 minutes to Hillsborough.

**Andrew M. Komarow**

Eileen, don't you think that Jessica our eighth wedding anniversary is coming up. And I mean who needs like silk and lace? I can get her a Venus Fly trap right?

**Eileen Lamb**

She would love it! That is such a cool present. That is such a cool present.

**Andrew M. Komarow**

For the garden?

**Eileen Lamb**

I would like it, but maybe

**Andrew M. Komarow**

We'll talk after you'll help me source some.

**Becca Alley**

Yeah, I mean, I can definitely, definitely like hook you up.

**Andrew M. Komarow**

There we go.

**Eileen Lamb**

It's funny that you call that a breeder like it's their sort of like animal or you know?

**Becca Alley**

Yeah, I don't know, I don't know if like we would be horticulturalists is not the correct word when it comes to plants? Sure. I don't. Yeah, I'm not I'm not even sure what the correct word is. But it's just a guy who, is just a hobbyist. Essentially, he's not in any way. A professional he just happens to have grow Venus fly traps very well. And so he sells them.

**Eileen Lamb**

Well, where can people find you on social media if they want to learn more about carnivorous plants and stuff?

**Becca Alley**

So I'm on LinkedIn under the name Rebecca Alley. And that's pretty much it. So I have other podcasts that are linked to my LinkedIn through various platforms. But on social media, I pretty much just have LinkedIn. I have Facebook, but it's like under a different name. Because I've had it since I was 12. It's not the most, I wasn't the most professionally oriented when I was 12. You're gonna hear a lot you'll there's a lot on there about how much I hated my mom at the time. I was that kind of child.

**Eileen Lamb**

Okay, I'm gonna ask you some quickfire questions. So I'm gonna tell you ask you a question. And you tell me that first thing that comes to mind. Okay. What is your favorite food or drink?

**Becca Alley**

Can you see? Yeah.

**Andrew M. Komarow**

A two liter of Diet Pepsi.

**Becca Alley**

Yeah, this is my two liter Diet Pepsi that I keep on board with him me, um, if I drank out of little bottles, I would go through to them too quickly. So I just drink out of two liters. And I actually had to go see a cardiologist because my heart rate was too high. And he diagnosed me with cat with just my heart rate was too high because of the amount of caffeine I drink. Which is why this is caffeine free.

**Eileen Lamb**

That's a good step in the right direction.

**Becca Alley**

Yes, it is the correct step in the right direction though apparently four liters of Diet Pepsi a day is dangerous. You shouldn't do that. According to my doctor. So now I'm down to two liters of Diet Pepsi a day.

**Andrew M. Komarow**

My record was six of Diet Coke in a day.

**Becca Alley**

I feel so much better. Nobody, everybody is like shocked whenever I'm like yeah, I drink four liters of Pepsi, or I drank,

**Andrew M. Komarow**

I can drink two liters a day no problem.

**Becca Alley**

Yeah, like I'm just at a desk and I just keep going it's so delicious and wonderful and

**Andrew M. Komarow**

Diet Coke though, not Diet Pepsi sorry.

**Becca Alley**

Oh gosh no, no. So I used to be a Diet Coke fan but then I ended up so when I was working in fast food we had Diet Coke in a cooler and we could just take it for 50% off. And so I was drinking it obsessively. And then one day I just didn't like it anymore.

**Eileen Lamb**

You could be any animal fictional or not? What will you choose and why?

**Becca Alley**

Cat? A cat because all they do is like well okay, so it depends on the situation right? Because like cats can actually have really hard lives like they if they are not in a home they are they have to face weather and everything but like they all my cats do is sleep and eat and other things and then get to play and they have no cares in the world. They know their food is gonna go off two times a day and then little bit wet food at night. And they get all their all their care taken care of. And I want somebody to do that for me to just give me food when give me my meals. Take me the doctor whether I like it or not not have to pay for it. I mean,

**Eileen Lamb**

Dream life right?

**Becca Alley**

Yeah. So no responsibility, except to occasionally catch a cockroach.

**Eileen Lamb**

I hate those. Do the plants eat them?

**Becca Alley**

No, the cockroaches are bigger than most of the plants. But also the plants are outside so they can get their correct humidity levels and the correct temperature just stimulate their growth versus hibernation periods.

**Eileen Lamb**

What's your favorite, what's your special interest?

**Becca Alley**

Carnivorous plants.

**Eileen Lamb**

Like you answer that, without answering that. What's your favorite autistic, autistic representation in the media, whether that's fictional or not?

**Becca Alley**

I like "Love on the Spectrum." Like it definitely has its issues, but I feel like its issues are more along the lines of like, public reaction to it. Like for instance, Michael, who is on 'Love on the Spectrum," a lot of I saw a lot of articles and I actually wrote a post about this being like, Oh, he's like a little teddy bear and like, no, he's an adult man, and you need to talk to him like an adult man. He is an adult man who has dreams of getting married and treating his wife, well, like, this is not this is that's not how you he wants to be treated and you should not be treating him that way. At least that is from the depiction of him on the show, which of course, it is a show. That is a feeling I got. So that the infantilization of by the media of the individuals in the show I didn't particularly like but I thought the show itself was relatively strong. I think they did a better job in Season Two, and I haven't seen Season Three yet.

**Eileen Lamb**

Do you have a favorite quote or saying and if so, who said it?

**Becca Alley**

I don't think so. I'm sure I'll think of it. We're like the second that. Yeah, I mean, I like books, but I don't tend to remember specific quotes. I mean, there's the Torah, of course, where it's there's, there's all sorts of sorts of quotable portions in the Torah. My Torah portion was spectacular. It more it's in Leviticus and Leviticus is just it's just Leviticus is the party.

**Eileen Lamb**

I'm sure Andrew knows about it.

**Becca Alley**

Yes.

**Eileen Lamb**

Yeah. All right. Well, thank you so much for joining us today. It was so great. Talking to you. And I learned so much about plants carnivorous plants, and I'm actually really interested in it now. And I think I'm gonna get one too.

**Andrew M. Komarow**

Yeah. Okay, well enjoy with your Diet Pepsi.

**Becca Alley**

I know it's gonna be disgusting, but it's fine.

**Eileen Lamb**

Bye-bye guy, you have a good one.