

Andrew M. Komarow 07:40:16

Welcome to "Adulthood on the Spectrum," I'm Andrew and autistic certified financial planner I co-run "Adulthood on the Spectrum," with Eileen Lamb. Hey, Eileen.

Eileen Lamb 07:40:24

Hey everyone. In this podcast, we want to highlight the real voices of autistic adults, not just inspirational stories, but people like us talking about their day to day life. Basically, we want to give a voice to a variety of autistic people.

Andrew M. Komarow 07:40:38

Today, our guest is Dani Bowman. Dani who is on the autism spectrum, founded her company to DaniMation Entertainment at age 14 in 2009. And launched DaniMation UK in 2019. She graduated with a Bachelor in Fine Arts and Animation in 2018, and an MBA in Global Strategy and Leadership in 2020. Dani was also featured on the Netflix show, "Love on the Spectrum".

Eileen Lamb 07:41:03

Hi Dani! Thank you so much for joining us today.

Dani Bowman 07:41:05

And thank you so much, Eileen and Andrew Komarow for letting me be part of the show. Andrew and I we've known each other since um, I guess two years ago, I guess. Is that right?

Andrew M. Komarow 07:41:15

Yeah. Yeah.

Eileen Lamb 07:41:16

So Dani, we want to ask you how you like to identify yourself like person with autism? Autistic? On the spectrum? What do you like?

Dani Bowman 07:41:25

I like preferably being called the person on the autism spectrum, because, um, I well, I am on the spectrum. Well, it doesn't matter if anyone calls me person with autism or an autistic person. I can, I'm open to that definition.

Andrew M. Komarow 07:41:39

So can you tell us about when you were diagnosed with autism? What was that experience like?

Dani Bowman 07:41:46

So, before my before I was diagnosed with autism, my parents knew there was something different about me, by age five, that's when my mom diagnosed me. But she never spoke, she never told me that I have autism. I wasn't speaking other than saying some echolalia. And I would do some repetitive movements, like lining things up, climbing on everything I could climb, and I would just run every chance I got. And yes, I would cry and holler every time I would not get my way. But I however, I do not

know that I have autism until age 11. When I moved into live with my aunt and uncle. Aunt Sandy told me all the autistic traits that I have, that I've been doing, like, all the repetitive movements, she knows, she told me that I have autism. I was shocked when she told me, I thought it was a disease. But she told me it's just the way that I'm born with. So being a person on the autism spectrum, feels like you have the power, I have the power to like, be able to focus and concentrate and hyper-focus, but also learn how to control my daydreaming and all that. And all that autistic stuff, like talking to myself, just just to fit to societal norms.

Eileen Lamb 07:42:54

So what was it like for you growing up on the spectrum? What was your biggest struggle? And is it the same now? Or has it changed over the years?

Dani Bowman 07:43:02

Well, it definitely has changed over the years. In the beginning, I was just into my own little world as a person on the autism spectrum. But then as I got older, I must realize I must unlearn the importance about growth. As growing up, I must learn how to fit into societal norms and learn how to like be able to stay motivated, because what's going to happen, because what's going to happen to adults on the autism spectrum, if they don't act now. For me, I've definitely have to learn how to prioritize deadlines. Like for example, if it doesn't have any deadlines, whether it's just homework, whether it's school assignments, or a project deadline, those are the stuff that definitely motivated me to be. And also, most importantly, I've taken lots of social skills class to help me stay, to socialize and learn how to have a proper conversation. Yeah, my autism has improved over the years.

Andrew M. Komarow 07:43:56

Seems, so you had, you know, a special interest in animation since at least 14. Right. And in school, you were you were autistic? I assume you had an IEP. Right?

Dani Bowman 07:44:08

That's right. I had IEPs in the past. But however, I just had to take some general ed classes because I wasn't Special Ed until the 11th grade. And, and because I have to pass the California had to pass the California high school exit exam because I was struggling with my English part. In order to get some in order to graduate with a high school diploma, I had to take some gen ed classes. So that way, not only to improve my English skill, English skills, but also pass the English part of the California high school exit exam, which is very, very important for the person on the autism spectrum. And during college. In addition to that, in addition to go in college college has lots of wonderful combinations. When I was at college, I was able to get special accommodations, like getting getting extra time and using the recorder to just listen to two lectures again, and also have taken a special course called a special course I forgot the name but it's about special. It's called an "Effective Study". I've taken the "Effective Studies", "Effective Notes, Taking Notes Studies," to help me learn how to take notes better while tending while taking college classes,

Eileen Lamb 07:45:19

That sounds really difficult. I mean, I feel like even for neurotypical people taking notes is like really hard when you're like listening and then writing it down. What tips did you have?

Dani Bowman 07:45:29

The biggest tips I have while you're at college or university is definitely write down the bullet points or the notes that are the most important thing. It's not just about what the teacher wrote in the PowerPoint, don't just copy down the PowerPoint presentation, put in the most important points of what needs to be do and, and it's okay to record the presentation. So that way you can listen back to what the what the teacher saying. So then you can write those notes down. Sometimes I type in my notes right after I write them down to correct them. So it can get in top so that way it can get into my head.

Andrew M. Komarow 07:46:04

And so a question I know, and everyone learns like differently. So like, I like listening to like audio, right to like, I studied a lot of tests, listening to audio CDs in the car. But as far as the IEP process goes, I know there's a part where there's transition, where they're supposed to be able to prepare you for you know, the future. And given that you had such a an interest that you knew you wanted. My question is, how did the IEP process help you with DaniMation and help you prepare for being an adult? And what could you recommend to others who may have a 14 year old with an interest? You know, and again, I'm making an assumption that you did this?

Dani Bowman 07:46:49

Well, this is a bit of a mouthful, but I could just let you know that during my IEP is my teachers have already let me know in advance that what is college like they've already I, they already told me in advance that, that there's not going to be any school bells or going to another class, you just have to like follow the schedule. But the positive side about transitioning from high school to college. While while high school for high school, you have a solid schedule from from six periods. For college, on the other hand, you customize and change, choose a class you want to help you with your credits. With your especially that's what I've learned from taking Glendale Community when I was attending Glendale Community College before transitioning to Woodbury University. In addition to that, if you have like a for me with since animation is a passion. I've also have taken art classes outside of high school. Like for example, I've taken Art Center College of Design. And I've taken several classes like at Woodbury University, because that way it helps me elevate my art skills to help me get go to the university that I want, which is Woodbury University. That's the that's the University where I got the degrees, where I got my BFA in Animation 2018 and an MBA in Global Strategy Leadership in 2020. But I would not go through Woodbury University without the accomadations, I still had accomadations back then, like, for example, for writing essays, I did have a tutor who can help me with my writing essays. It's okay to get accommodations while you're at university. They always do whatever university always provides that.

Eileen Lamb 07:48:22

That's, that's great. Yeah, I think it's a good message for people like to to be okay asking for accommodation even at university. So when did you know you had a gift for art? Cuz you know, you. You mentioned like, starting at 14, then you mentioned but like, when you were a kid, like were you like the type of child who like just doodle all the time, like Did you know from early, early on?

Dani Bowman 07:48:47

I knew that, well, for me, I think I was born an animator. I think I was been animating ever since I could remember. Because I've autism, I didn't speak until I was six. But I was doing stop motion by five. I would take my plush toys and a camera, take a picture, move them take another picture. And I have my family to develop the film. When I get the pictures, I would flip them. I didn't realize at the time I was doing stop motion. The way I figured out how to do this was because I used to have a lot of VHS is of many different animated movies. I would just play stop, rewind, play stop, rewind at the same spot all day long. And when I would rewind, I would stop at the same spot with just microsecond board. I think my family was confused as the way I kept rewinding the same film over and over. But all I was doing was stopping at the same spot and forward that and doing and figured out that they were just pictures moving a little bit so I tried to replicate with that idea with my plush toys and a camera. And as I grew older, I started watching behind the scene videos that showed innovation process like Disney's "Dinosaur," "Pokemon", "Finding Nemo," and "The Lion King 1 1/2 " which actually inspired me to create my own animation projects. That's how I discovered my passion in drawing and animation.

Andrew M. Komarow 07:50:00

Oh, can you tell us more about Danny motion?

Dani Bowman 07:50:04

DaniMation.

Andrew M. Komarow 07:50:08

I don't know what I was thinking,

Dani Bowman 07:50:09

It's okay to everybody makes mistakes. So anyways, DaniMation Entertainment is an animation social enterprise that I started in 2009. DaniMation's mission is to help educate, elevate and empower youth on the autism spectrum by turning their passion and animation into a career. So what, what made why do I start DaniMation Entertainment? Well, I when I moved in with my aunt and uncle at around 10, or 11, when I decided to try to create my own company, because, well, Sandy had her own company, and my uncle had his own company, so I thought everyone had their own company. Then I learned about the creator of Pokemon, Satoshi Tajiri, that he created his video game company Gamefreak, at age 17. So I set out to beat his record, and my company was officially launched in 2009. When I was 14, I had to admit that I did not do it alone. My uncle is an entrepreneur himself. So he helped me with the website and all the logistics of registering a company. And my aunt has always been there to support me whenever I need help to be successful, because nobody does it alone. It takes a team. So what we do at DaniMation is not only we do original animation projects, we've helped created and created by people on the autism spectrum, other different abilities, but we're here to help teach. We also provide animation programs that help our students. We help educate, elevate and empower students by turning their passion, whether it's animation or film into a career.

Eileen Lamb 07:51:44

That's amazing. Do you have any advice for someone who wants to start their own company and maybe beat your record? (all laugh)

Dani Bowman 07:51:51

Well, one most important advice for anyone that wants to start their company, you just have to get nobody does it alone, because I had help from my aunt and uncle to start their companies going. If you want to be entrepreneur, it's it's like new. You just need to everybody needs help one point or another. And everybody, it all takes a team.

Eileen Lamb 07:52:12

No, that's not such great advice. Yeah. Okay, I'm gonna switch gears a little bit here. But I'm sure everyone is dying to know where you're at in your dating life. Do you have any anything exciting to share?

Dani Bowman 07:52:24

Well, I don't think I have dated anybody lately. Since it's anybody, have you seen "Love on the Spectrum US"?

Eileen Lamb 07:52:31

Oh, yeah.

Andrew M. Komarow 07:52:32

Yes.

Dani Bowman 07:52:34

My dating life is like, crickets crickets crickets sound because I don't think I have any updates on my dating life. But, but it looks like I'm just it's about time for me to go and go dating again. This leads to another question. You're asking me, Andrew. That am I going to be on, on the next season of "Love in the Spectrum"? Well, you just have to wait and see Andrew.

Eileen Lamb 07:52:57

Do you know anything about the next season of "Love on the Spectrum"? Like can people apply? Are they, looking for anybody?

Dani Bowman 07:53:08

Yes. Especially for we are looking for females right now for in the in the Atlanta Georgia area. In the Boston, Massachusetts area. If you're interested in applying to be part of "Love on the Spectrum," especially those who live in the Boston, Massachusetts, or the Atlanta, Georgia area, you just have to go ahead and apply. Send an email with a brief description of yourself and photo to production@Northern Pictures.com.au?

Eileen Lamb 07:53:37

What was it like for you like to apply as whom you are to apply to be on on the show? And do you have any advice for anyone who's going to apply for the next season?

Dani Bowman 07:53:48

Oh, what is it like for me being applying for the show? Well, I guess I don't necessarily apply for "Love on the Spectrum." It actually just happened because it's because Northern Pictures just asked, because, well, well, it's because you could imagine my excitement when Love on the Spectrum's production company, Northern Pictures contacted me about this incredible opportunity. I didn't just go ahead and apply for "Love on the Spectrum". They just asked me if I could be on "Love on the Spectrum". I said yes to this amazing opportunity. For those of you who want to be on "Love on the Spectrum". I know, if you get accepted that is great. Just but the most important thing I have for everyone that wants to be on "Love the Spectrum," just be your true, authentic self.

Eileen Lamb 07:54:34

I think that's good advice for anybody whether they're applying for "Love on the Spectrum," or not.

Andrew M. Komarow 07:54:39

I completely agree. It's always good to be your true authentic self. We've had two guests, Jennifer Cook. And who was the other one, Eileen?

Eileen Lamb 07:54:48

We have Kaelyn.

Dani Bowman 07:54:49

Kaelynn, Kaelynn. Yes. Yeah.

Eileen Lamb 07:54:53

So yeah, yeah, we love "Love on the Spectrum". And I mean, I feel like everybody who's on that show is so great to talk to and yeah, definitely a great cast. You guys. You guys have,

Dani Bowman 07:55:06

Thank you so much.

Eileen Lamb 07:55:08

Of course.

Andrew M. Komarow 07:55:09

Can you share your favorite moment from filming?

Dani Bowman 07:55:12

Well, my well what are my favorite moments? Well my favorite experiences from the show, I would say my three favorites are number one, I love to I just love the speed dating experience experience. Let me try this again. I tried that the speed dating experience for the first time it was very interesting because I get to I get to ask many questions to the person that I speed date with and get to know their personalities. This wants me to get to choose the right person. And to go on a date with which I thought was like really interesting. And two, is going to different new places like a castle. I love the Castle Park where they show the koi pond they show the coin in the fountain which like incredibly majestic place. And I like going to new restaurants like the the French place where Devin and I we chatted and had our

cheers and the Yamashiro Hollywood with Adon. That's right. I love trying out new things. Well, speaking of Yamashiro I'd like to go there again, especially for the Drunken Dragon's Milk, which is my favorite cocktail from this restaurant.

Andrew M. Komarow 07:56:14

What what is it? What what what's in the drink?

Dani Bowman 07:56:18

Well, the Drunken Dragon's Milk? Well, it's coconut milk with with different I think it's just mixture of green tea or something I forget. It's pretty good.

Andrew M. Komarow 07:56:30

What was your least favorite or, you know, embarrassing moment or something from from the show, if you want to share?

Dani Bowman 07:56:37

Oh my goodness, I just can't wait to tell you the most embarrassing moment on "Love on the Spectrum," what I should have have done. When I was I'm dating when I was on my first date on "Love on the Spectrum," as if you've seen episode one or two of "Love on the Spectrum", what happened was is that even though I thought the guy was very attractive and hot looking, but then I just expressed it out loud. I shouldn't have said that too soon, I shouldn't have expressed my love and feelings too soon. The biggest lesson I've learned is do not express your it's okay to have feelings. But don't express it out loud during the third during the fourth until the fourth or the fifth date, and then set your boundaries. And I had to learn how to set my boundaries from the very, very beginning. Because when I set my boundaries from the beginning, that's when the guy that's when the person I date learns how to be respectful to who's dating.

Eileen Lamb 07:57:30

Boundaries are important. But you know, I think it's great when people express their feelings so openly like you do because at least you don't have to, like guess you know, there's a lot of guessing games in dating. So when you have someone in front of you is just telling you just how they feel at least you know, you know, so it's not necessarily a bad thing, even though socially, maybe it's not the best, but you know, then again, three autistic people talking right now. So we might not be the best at giving advice.

Andrew M. Komarow 07:57:58

Yeah, definitely said it way too early with my wife. So I think you know, she's like, I don't know if I like this person yet. vSo you know,

Eileen Lamb 07:58:09

What, what was your, your best and worst date, not necessarily on the show, but like in your life?

Dani Bowman 07:58:16

Well, I don't think I had the worst worst date in my life. But I don't think any of the dates are that I think the worst date would happen to my life was actually happened. After "Love on the Spectrum," with the first guy. He wasn't being respectful. I don't really have a particular best moment from dates. But usually the best moments come when I go to different types of when I go to a favorite place that I love. And that's when that's when I had the best dates, usually to the favorite places, I've wanted to go and making both both my date and I happy but I don't have a particular particular favorite.

Eileen Lamb 07:58:53

So the where you're at is also important, not just the person you're with, but where you are, like experience.

Dani Bowman 07:59:01

Yeah.

Andrew M. Komarow 07:59:02

What was it like being you know, having cameras on you at all times? Did you enjoy it? Was it difficult?

Dani Bowman 07:59:09

So what is it like being on TV and having cameras on me so I never get bothered by cameras at all. These all the camera people. It's such a because it was a small group. There were people that follow me around and I told him and that definitely did not bother me at all. I don't mind being filmed and I enjoy and I enjoy that. They're like my friends. They're like my wing people.

Eileen Lamb 07:59:31

I'm gonna ask you some quickfire questions. It's basically we're gonna ask about your likes and dislikes. And you can just tell me the first answer that comes to your mind like very easy and first. Okay.

Dani Bowman 07:59:42

Okay, so what are some my likes and hobbies and interests? I would like to tell you some of the things I like well, obviously animation is my favorite focus, but also I really love geology. I especially love studying rocks and minerals. I love science, mostly, mostly science and I love to travel. Traveling is also one of my favorite places, and different than trying out different cuisines like going to different new restaurants.

Eileen Lamb 08:00:07

Do you like French?

Dani Bowman 08:00:08

Oh, yes, I do like French foods and I've always wanted to go to France, especially Paris, France. So I remembered last year that Sandy and I were originally going to have going to go to Paris, France, but we went we went to Ireland instead. But that's okay.

Eileen Lamb 08:00:24

Not really the same. France is great when you're visiting, obviously.

Dani Bowman 08:00:29

Oh, yes.

Eileen Lamb 08:00:30

Yeah, I'm from France. You can probably tell.

Dani Bowman 08:00:32

I can tell. Yes. Especially with your dialect. It's so nice.

Eileen Lamb 08:00:36

Oh, thank you. It's funny because I don't like my accent and people like it. You know how people are always harder on themselves and the people around them. So yeah, thank you.. Do you have a favorite artist?

Dani Bowman 08:00:47

It's really cute. Like a particular favorite artists like any animation artist or music artist?

Eileen Lamb 08:00:54

Anything like your inspiration what, you can say several artists,

Dani Bowman 08:00:58

I can say some several inspirations I really like like, for example, Sylvain Chalmette is a French animator who does "The Old Lady and the Pigeons", "The Triplets of Belleville," and "The Illusionist". I also get inspirations from the famous animator Craig McCracken, who did "The Powerpuff Girls," "Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends," "Wander over Yonder," and "Kid Cosmic". And Lauren Faust ,who is his wife who did "My Little Pony," "Friendship is Magic", and I was also inspired by Jamie Hewitt, who does "Gorillas". Awesome. Do you have a favorite Netflix show? "Kid Cosmic," is my favorite Netflix animated show. And I also really liked the feature animated movie called "Mitchells Versus The Machines". Have you seen those shows? Have you seen the animated series "Kid Cosmic," or "Mitchells versus The Machines"?

Eileen Lamb 08:01:42

I havn't. Andrew have you?

Andrew M. Komarow 08:01:43

I have not. Eileen hasn't even seen "Star Wars". So she's a lost cause. (all laugh)

Eileen Lamb 08:01:52

What's your favorite drink? Is it that drink from that restaurants you were telling us about?

Dani Bowman 08:01:55

Well, I Well, for me, it's not the fate. It's my favorite from this restaurant. But it's but I have varieties of different types of cocktails. I explore different cocktails. I don't have a particular favorite favorite. But I really love drinks that are made with blue curacao in it. Any drinks with blue curacao.

Eileen Lamb 08:02:12

What's your favorite color?

Dani Bowman 08:02:13

And favorite color? Well, I really like lavender. Lavender is one of my I've got several favorite colors. I like lavender, which is the color. It's such a pretty color. I also like pink and I also like blue. And I also like that type of green called a Chartreuse.

Eileen Lamb 08:02:27

Chartreuse.

Dani Bowman 08:02:28

Yeah. Yes, it means Charterhouse in French.

Eileen Lamb 08:02:32

Awesome. Okay, there is a question that we ask all our guests. It's kind of a silly question, but we want to know what you think. You know, glow in the dark. Is that a color or property?

Dani Bowman 08:02:44

Glow in the dark? Well, it's, it's it's an effect.

Andrew M. Komarow 08:02:48

So I'm holding up. Oh, it's blurry.

Eileen Lamb 08:02:53

Very.

Andrew M. Komarow 08:02:53

So like the green like the

Dani Bowman 08:02:57

Neon green? Yes.

Andrew M. Komarow 08:02:59

During the day there what do you see this color? What color is it is a glow in the dark?

Dani Bowman 08:03:03

Well, Chartreuse is more like a yellowish green or like lime.

Andrew M. Komarow 08:03:07

Okay, so let's know the dark is not a color according to you.

Dani Bowman 08:03:14

Well, it is. It can be a color too. It can be a shade, but I've got I think I've got a neon green example. But I've got one. This green is very close, but this is not a real Chartreuse. But if I put yellow and green in it, it will be more like a limey color, like a lime.

Andrew M. Komarow 08:03:31

Mmm, Okay.

Eileen Lamb 08:03:35

She cannot agree with you, Andrew. I mean,

Dani Bowman 08:03:42

That's a Chartreuse. That's a Chartreuse.

Eileen Lamb 08:03:45

Nice. Yeah.

Dani Bowman 08:03:47

Talking about this color, like green.

Eileen Lamb 08:03:51

And is that like glow in the dark?

Dani Bowman 08:03:53

Almost

Andrew M. Komarow 08:03:55

It's not really glow in the dark.

Dani Bowman 08:03:56

It's not glow in the dark. It's a color. Like a lime neon green

Andrew M. Komarow 08:04:01

Glow in the dark can be a color we've established that glow in the dark can be a color.

Dani Bowman 08:04:05

Glow in the Dark is not a color though.

Andrew M. Komarow 08:04:07

Oh dang it.

Eileen Lamb 08:04:10

Andrew, thinks it is a color. So we're asking our guests to settle this

Andrew M. Komarow 08:04:15

Debate that will never end.

Eileen Lamb 08:04:20

So then do you want to tell our listener where they can find you on social media and all of that?

Dani Bowman 08:04:25

Sure. So you could find me on Instagram under the name DaniBowman1 on Instagram and on TikTok. You can find me under Dani Bowman on Facebook, or by DaniMation. And my company DaniMation on Facebook as well. You can also find me on LinkedIn, Dani Bowman and DaniMation Entertainment on LinkedIn. You can also find my YouTube page, DaniMation Entertainment and my Twitter account, DaniMationENT. Or you could just Google me.

Eileen Lamb 08:04:53

That's that's a good one. Yeah, that works. We'll put the links in the description on the website when your episode goes live so people can just click and find you. Well, thank you so much, then you for for coming. Today. I love how you're just exactly the same as we saw you on TV. You're your true, authentic self like you were telling people to be and it's, it's really nice. So thank you.

Dani Bowman 08:05:16

No problem anytime thank you so much for having me on the show again.

Eileen Lamb 08:05:20

Of course,of course.

Andrew M. Komarow 08:05:22

Yeah.