

# Adulthood on the spectrum: From nonverbal to public speaker

## **Andrew Komarow**

Welcome to "Adulthood on the Spectrum," episode five. I am Andrew Komarow, an autistic Certified Financial Planner. I co-run "Adulthood on the Spectrum," with Eileen Lamb.

## **Eileen Lamb**

Hey everyone, I'm Eileen Lamb. I'm an autistic author and photographer from France. Now I live in Austin, Texas with my two boys who are also on the spectrum. In this podcast, we want to highlight real voices of autistic adults, not just inspirational story, but today, I gotta say that our guests has a pretty inspirational story, you probably know him, his name is Dr. Kerry Magro and Andrew is going to introduce him.

## **Andrew Komarow**

So Dr. Kerry Magro is an award-winning autistic professional speaker, best-selling author and autism consultant to the HBO series, "Mrs. Fletcher," that aired in Fall 2019. He started professionally speaking 10 years ago via the National Speakers Association, after he fell in love with theater as a child to help with the social and communication skills. Today, he has spoken at over 1000 events during that time, you know, include two TED talks and a Talks at Google presentation. In addition, Kerry is CEO and president of KFM Making a Difference, a non-profit organization that holds inclusive events and has provided 86 scholarships for students with autism for college and housing since 2011. Not that I really care about this glimmers. But one of our employees at Play Across Spectrum. Andrew Arbo has been a previous recipient of Kerry's award. So we thank you in advance for that. Hi Kerry!

## **Kerry Magro**

Yeah, awesome. What was his name again, when we're talking,

## **Andrew Komarow**

Andrew Arbo.

## **Kerry Magro**

Okay, I remember Andrew.

## **Andrew Komarow**

Pretty unforgettable. Yeah. So (chuckles)

## **Kerry Magro**

Yeah. Well, thanks so much for having me. This is really great to have the adult perspective, because we don't hear enough about adults in our community. So glad to be here.

**Eileen Lamb**

Hey, Kerry, thanks for being here. We always start by asking our guests how they like to identify themselves? Because we know some autistic adults like person with autism more than autistic person and vice versa? So how do you like to identify?

**Kerry Magro**

Uhm Kerry and autistic? I yeah, I actually used to be called. I used to prefer a person with autism. And then I moved on to autistic.

**Eileen Lamb**

How about pronounss? Do you have any preferences?

**Kerry Magro**

Oh, he.

**Andrew Komarow**

Perfect. So can you tell us a bit more about your autism journey when you were diagnosed? What was it like although I feel like a lot of the you know, iterate, you're one of the people who've shared some of their stories before. So also to with some of the questions we ask, feel free to share things that have not been shared before. And as pointed out earlier, this is an "Adulting on the Spectrum," podcast, so we are allowed to curse and if you don't like it, you can fuck off.

**Kerry Magro**

My question is who has the expletives? Like the little beeps? You hear later? That's, that's all. It's something I'm interested in. But no,

**Andrew Komarow**

Wait, who said we're bleeping anything out. Okay, continue.

**Kerry Magro**

Fair enough. So, my diagnosis came in '92. I was four. I was diagnosed with PDD-NOS before the DSM-5 made it that umbrella diagnosis And I didn't speak until I was 2 1/2 since I started speaking in complete sentences till I was seven, I had 15 years of occupational physical speech therapy, got started on music and theater therapy a little bit later on. Because I was a big theater nerd. I was a big music nerd. I wanted to be the sixth member of the Backstreet Boys growing up and the next Larry Bird. So my two laser focus key interests, autism key interests, were theater and basketball. And I turned it into a career and public speaking. And that's kind of what I've been doing today. I received my Master's in Strategic Communication so I could pursue a full-time career in public speaking, got my professional certification, maybe a year after I started my master's, and I've been doing that for the

past 10 years now. And it's been a dream and never expected you could get paid to speak. And it was really cool. Just getting the various opportunities and then 1000 events later again, right through working on a nonprofit and getting to work in the film and TV industry. It's, it's a dream come true. And I'm blessed every single day.

### **Eileen Lamb**

You really have like such a I mean an inspirational story. You know, it's it's pretty amazing to hear everything you've done. And I know I always said the beginning of each of our episode, you know, we try to highlight all devices. But I feel like even though your story is so inspirational, it's so unique. And you're doing so much for the autism and autistic community that really wanted to, you know, talk to you today. And speaking of in April, you did a lot of talks. Right? And that was about autism and employment. Can you tell us a bit more about your talks?

### **Kerry Magro**

Yeah, sure. So, um, most of my talks are in schools, but it was really amazing. The past few years, we've gotten a lot and a craze from businesses. A lot of businesses as part of their diversity practices have really been trying to do more, actually, it was just announced that over 500, companies are taking part in disability inclusion, including the Apples and Googles of the world, making it really a big part of their mission statement, which I found really, really important because when we talk about diversity, it feels like a lot of the time, disability falls through the cracks, especially when we're talking to human resource departments. So I started blogging about my own personal perspectives of finding employment on the autism spectrum. And then later down the line really getting into the nuts and bolts from the human resource perspective, how to go about the onboarding process, and it really interested me. So now I get the opportunity to speak in businesses as part of lunch and learns, and then further conversations as part of internal just work with human resource departments on how we could go about hiring talented autistic people within the workplace today. So got it last April, we got to work with Lowe's. We got to work with Wyndham Worldwide Resorts, and many more businesses that it's the end of the day. So I'm not remembering off the top my head, but it's been it's it's been a treat, to say the least.

### **Andrew M. Komarow**

Yeah, that's I didn't know that about you. And that's interesting, because I that's a large part of what I talk about from a different angle completely. But so No, that's, that's pretty awesome. So yeah, I find that businesses are just surprisingly receptive. On one hand, it's like, well, of course, 500 businesses are saying they're inclusive, because what business is going to be like, No, I don't want to support people with disabilities. So it's also, you know, but then there's ones that are doing more than just saying, Yes, right. There's the making your mission statement, and then there's making it like the true part of your core DNA as a company. And, you know, I mean, obviously, any, well, maybe not obviously, at all, but any steps in forward momentum moving direction, I consider a very positive thing. And what I've found is if you're involved in a company, and they're not, you know, yelling and screaming at them really usually doesn't work, although it can be fun at the time. But you know, just asking, like I Financial Planning Association, they were talking about diversity inclusion, and I said,

Well, what about neurodiversity? And they said, Oh, okay, what about it? Let's talk. And so now they have neurodiversity inclusion initiative, led by me. So, also be careful of what you say, otherwise, they people may be a little more open than you might anticipate. Yeah, I agree with you.

**Kerry Magro**

And that's it just so important, because there are some groups I know, who say that they donate to an autism charity, once a year, they host a world Autism Awareness Day event. And then all of a sudden, they are this autism friendly business. And I just think to myself, it's like, that's great and all but that's, that's like the whole like autism awareness versus autism acceptance, may you have the little bit of awareness now, what are you doing to accept, embrace and understand so that's why the onboarding, do one day job, training versus interview process, for example.

**Andrew M. Komarow**

Good, every step in the right direction. Like there's plenty of people talking about the interview process. So to take the step that you can know about in that first day, I talked about the employee benefit, like if we could all make a little bit of a difference, but I'm gonna pick on you because you brought it up. So but should we attack those businesses that are giving some money to autism? And should we, you know, attack them for who they're donating to? So then they turn around to give money to nobody anymore? Or what are your thoughts on that? And again, speak freely.

**Kerry Magro**

It's never a attack. It's honestly it's the first step of a conversation. I mean,

**Andrew Komarow**

I'm not saying you, I'm saying...

**Kerry Magro**

Oh, yeah, no, no, I, I know what you mean. But I definitely feel from the perspective of these businesses. I mean, obviously, most of the time, it comes from my personal connection, and one of the employees has a son or daughter who's on the spectrum. That's what I've seen, like 95% of the time. But at the end of the day, I mean, that that's great and all, but if you have senior leaders involved in your company who are on board with this, you should be really able to do much more than just writing a tax deductible donation to a nonprofit and just calling that, you know, your your group is autism friendly. Yeah.

**Eileen Lamb**

I think you know, even though it's true that some companies, you know, they use the autism awareness as they do that, and then it's all over. But I also think that a lot of them, it comes from a place of like wanting to do something good. And then they see their reactions, like we saw that a lot in April this year. Like they post about it, like, they want to raise money, and then they use the wrong, wrong symbol for autism. And they have so many angry people coming at them telling them they're like a eugenic. I can't even say that word. As always, all of that I can write them very well, though. And

then it makes it that all the other companies are kind of like afraid to even like, take a stance on autism and talk about it if you know, because there's so much controversy in the in the autism world, and when they try and do something good, because I love the expression, progress. Progress, not perfection. I think we should encourage companies, even if it's just a one of just assume that they have good intention. And it's not just for a tax write off, you know, but yeah, I can see both perspectives. It's interesting.

### **Kerry Magro**

Yeah. I love what you said about the whole puzzle, the symbol, because I saw that a time during April during the month. I feel like and I think you posted it on your Facebook page at The Autism Cafe. Shameless plug for you. [all speakers chuckle] You mentioned, I think it was like, regardless, if you want to lay in a blue or lay in a bread, it's like why are we having these conversations when our goal universally should be progress for for our community, and the decorating kind of deters from us being able to do that?

### **Eileen Lamb**

Yeah. And we had a guest, Tara Cunningham, former CEO, a specialist of Autism at Work Initiatives. But all the you know, major companies do. And you know, what she said is when we got to the, you know, the executives and the key departments, they were all in, but they were just afraid to getting the message wrong. And they said, No, so speaking of, you know, the employment piece that you're working on, right, being kind everywhere, it affects everything. So why do you think that you deserve to replace Ellen?

### **Andrew Komarow**

I did see that just recently. And so now and also, would you want to replace Ellen? Were you joking, and a very serious question to follow up. So it's a two-parter. And it's as a professional, um, I always want to be known for being a financial planner who happens to have autism, right. So I'll use Temple Grandin as an example. You know, she had said, you know, that she wants to be, you know, her researcher first, right? The autism second, the autism is makes her good at what she does. But similarly, I would never want somebody to work with me and do business with me. I'm going to call it pity that's probably over an exaggeration because of the autism. So, but in general, do you think why do you think you should be the next Ellen? So your haircut is pretty similar, but other than that, I don't see a lot of similarities.

### **Kerry Magro**

Ellen is more like down mine is more like mine is more slicked up, though. Ah, no, I, I, I was working on a talk show in my local area, which aired just on local TV on Comcast for several years. And each individual we highlighted had a disability. And that was kind of the premise of our show was called. It was called "The Different Is Beautiful Show," because we see so many people a differences and we really believe that, you know, we should be celebrating differences and that many differences are indeed beautiful. So when we started that we We're kind of like on the perspective after the show ended and we just decided to close it down. I started a video series where we started highlighting self

advocates everywhere I went to go speak, and posting them on our Facebook page so, "Kerry's Autism Journey," where we had the opportunity to highlight so many different self advocacy stories. And by following Ellen's career, I have seen her give back to so many individuals and do similar things in terms of celebrating differences. I remember years ago when Tyler Clementi, a 18 year old boy who is gay, committed suicide, and Ellen did this whole big thing, because she is also gay. She mentioned a little bit about how it's important we talk about lessons, actual actual lesson plans in compassion for others. And that's where I see, I think I see a few similarities between me and Ellen. I am not a good dancer like Ellen I, sometimes someone tell the best jokes compared to hers I sometimes get a lot of crickets. But from the, from the perspective of just celebrating differences, I think that's why NBC Universal should consider me but also at the same time. I know it's probably for our best, they won't happen. But I figured you don't lose out by trying.

**Andrew Komarow**

I love that you absolutely don't lose out by trying. So yeah.

**Eileen Lamb**

I think that's so great. That's you're just putting it out there because you know what, who knows and having an autistic person we replace Ellen, I mean, how amazing would that be? And you know, I like you so even better, that we don't take any random autistic. Anyway, on to our next question about another show, actually TV. Let's talk about Elon Musk, what what do you think about coming out if we can call it a coming out? And second part of the question like did you see all the controversy around him saying that he has Asperger's syndrome, instead of saying he is autistic? And what do you think about that?

**Kerry Magro**

I think it's an interesting because it reminded me of Dan Ackroyd, because Dan Aykroyd came out about having Asperger's like five years ago, and it was kind of in the same realm of the DSM-5, which is coming out and it was kind of like, well, Asperger's is not a diagnosis anymore. So what what is..

**Andrew Komarow**

In the United States? It's not anymore.

**Kerry Magro**

In the United States. True, true. Bu you know, I was kind of thinking about that. And I was thinking, I mean, these individuals may have gone and received a diagnosis and just have never disclosed, that they have a diagnosis. So I was kind of thinking on that line. It was fine. If he identified himself as Asperger's. If he received that diagnosis at the time and just came out about it. It would have just been nice. From a clarification standpoint to say like I received this diagnosis, then I know it could have opened more like, Well, why haven't you talked about since SNL, Saturday Night Live. But I did appreciate from the standpoint of him just saying he's the first openly autistic and again, Dan Aykroyd hosted the show, he has autism. I appreciate it. I'm not necessarily in the biggest fan of Elon Musk in the world and some of him decision making. However, I think from the perspective of hopefully

opening doors for more people in our autism community, this will lead to better opportunities to understand the talented people who if you give them a chance within your company, you just don't know you might have the next Elon Musk within your organization. Granted, we have to say that autism is spectrum. However, some of my mentees right now are just some of the most brilliant kids I've ever met. So.

**Andrew Komarow**

Thank you for that. That's a good perspective.

**Eileen Lamb**

So do you share that perspective? Or is it new to you?

**Andrew M. Komarow**

I don't know. It was it was a generic bullshit comment that I was just kind of like moving the conversation along. No doubt at all. In all seriousness, I think so yeah. When Dan Aykroyd did it, he wasn't at the time. I think Elon Musk was just trying to be funny. Right. And I think he had no idea what he was doing. Like it's funny, because like, there's, there's, you know, if you do 2% of the population has autism, if you do that about 50% have an intellectual disability. And we're not saying that excludes anyone from success or anything, but there's separate there, there it is separate, right? And so then if you do some quick math, that means there's 3 million people in the United States with autism and without ID to write the quick math. And then you realize, Oh, wait, maybe there's 100 people on the internet who hate it, what about the other, you know, um, you know, millions, literally millions of adults out there who in you know, around it, that's, that's why we're having this, you know, podcast to is to highlight some of the, you know, other voices, and, you know, differences of opinion should be celebrated, right? Or at least understand where somebody is coming from. Or just even listen, that doesn't mean you have to agree. So, that was a little bit of a rant. So any way,

**Kerry Magro**

No, I appreciate that. It's like we all identify in the way that we identify. I mean, I, Eileen had another great quote. On the Autism Cafe, it was like, every single person is that every autistic person is the expert in their own autism. I think that's why I was and I thought that was great. It's like, well, we're all individuals. And that's kind of, you know, don't just read a book to learn about autism learn by getting to know people who have autism, but you have to know it's that every single individual is going to be unique.

**Andrew M. Komarow**

What would you like to share that you wish people would ask you or that you wish you could get to talk about but you kind of have to, you know, walk that fine line of, you know, not testing off the autism community, which is almost impossible at this point. Also trying to advocate and do good things? How is your perception changed over time? And how do you feel about it? Now?

**Kerry Magro**

Some really excellent question. It's, you know, it's funny, because it's like, sometimes I post things online, and then I just get so many trolls and I just think to myself, it's like, am I gonna keep this up? It's like, can I stand that my allies in the community are getting bullied by trolls as well. It's not only my voice, but it's also the voices of others trying to stand up for me. And it's like, what, what should I do in these situations? It's very, Facebook and other social media platforms can be very toxic. I mean, everyone knows that by now. But I honestly just try to keep to my journey as much as possible and come in with that first hand perspective versus try to say I'm like an expert in ABA. I never received any ABA. And even though I know people have ABA, they would be much better equipped to have these conversations and I would, so I really just try to keep it like close to the heart. When I'm doing posts when I'm doing speeches when doesn't doesn't mean that I'm like, a one character it's like I do a lot of research on things such as picky eating, because I used to picky eat when I was a kid. And now it's like, I want to write a book on picky eating because I know it's a big topic within the autism community. So often I just try to stay away from topics that our focus on things such as the ABA, so the world the vaccines in the world, because I know I can't win. It's like my...

### **Andrew M. Komarow**

But even more importantly, you just admitted that you didn't understand it. That's not just not winning. So like I saw a reshare where somebody was coming after ABA and I'm in a similar boat with you, Kerry. I don't have a child who's received ABA. I've never received ABA. I don't feel that confident enough about it. But I saw someone share that, you know, any treatment for people with autism should be individualized and therefore, that, you know, ABA should never be included. And I think the one thing I know about ABA is it's probably the most individualized treatment there is. So this was a popular social media personality. And to me that just validated, you don't know what you're talking about. You should probably not hate it. At least I know that. I don't know what I'm talking about.

### **Kerry Magro**

Yeah. No, no, I agree. And it's like, it is one on one too. And it's like, there's so many people who are like, ABA causes PTSD, when I know for a fact that some of those individuals have never had ABA, and I'm like, so. So yes, you're listening to a perspective, which you may believe is true. However, I mean, I feel like that's like the popular thing people like to say about ABA right now. It's not a great perspective, in my opinion, because it is one on one and reformed ABA is much different compared to what the and I, I don't want to save this up online, because I'm not an expert and an adult, but based on the history of ABA versus ABA. Now, there have been a lot of positive advancements. So

### **Andrew Komarow**

I mean, just because something shares the same name doesn't mean it's the same, right? Like the Republican Party freed the slaves and gave women the right to vote. I don't think anyone can say that. That sounds like the Republican Party that exists today. But their name remains the same. So

### **Eileen Lamb**

I have no idea. That's really cool. Cool fact. Thanks.

**Andrew Komarow**

Isn't it? Yeah.

**Eileen Lamb**

But seriously, yeah, but you know, it's so good. Are both of you can say that more. You know what, I don't know much about ABA. And that's okay. I'm not gonna take a stance. Because so many people are speaking as if they've seen ABA or experienced it when all they know that yeah, is what they see. He can hear online. I posted a video about ABA showing what it's actually like, right now in 2021. Which, you know, was basically the therapy is like, letting Charlie my eldest son just like stim in front of a video, you know, hand flapping, so happy while he was learning about number learning to communicate with an iPad, and then then preventing him from running in the streets. That was the video very short. And people in the comments were like, Yeah, but that's not ABA though. Like, oh, yeah, it is. It's just ABA is not abusive. So just because it doesn't fit your definition of like ABA being abused, being abusive, doesn't mean it's not ABA. And that's why it's so important. I think that people predict. I mean, it's never gonna happen. But put a disclaimer, I've never experienced ABA, this is my opinion, because of things I've read online, or just don't talk about it like you do, Kerry, you know, you, you can't really, you know, you don't know, so you don't talk about it. And that's great. And I think that's how it should be. Or if you want to talk about it, just make sure you said that you've never experienced it or seen it and that you're not an expert.

**Kerry Magro**

I feel like that's a huge caveat that people need to say it's like I, I can talk about it. But I've never had that first person

**Andrew Komarow**

So a question just on the bullies that you mentioned. And this one is a little bit different from an advocacy point of view. So you work a lot with students right in again, you have the great scholarship, I thank you for that in advance. I think when one of my good friends and you know, employees got it. He wasn't really working for me, full time. But I never been through the education process myself knowing I had autism, but also working more with adults, not as much parents. Have you noticed that? It seems everyone's a little defensive lately. What I mean by that is there's the nothing of you know about us without us. But I feel it may be this is me, I'm just asking my silo giving you ever such a good reputation for being kind and work with a lot of parents that they're almost getting afraid of when I say I'm an autistic adult and here's my opinion, and no matter how kind it is, there's this. It seems to be recently over the past month or so. Where there's this wall up. And this defensiveness because they're so afraid of being attacked. Me and a woman got into a disagreement on Facebook. And I went to message her about it. And I realized she had stood up for me a couple months ago, with something I had said, I was very short, autistic answers something and somebody took it the wrong way. And she stood up for me and I had thanked her and she's listened to me talk and knows me. But even us, we were just so I'm like, what, what, what are we doing here? You we, we like each other, we know each other have good intentions, like why, you know, why are we so on edge? Have you experienced that?

**Kerry Magro**

I experienced that or years, but it it's also from working at Autism Speaks, I was often considered the quote unquote, token, so anytime, will like one of the only people and they there will be actually autistic people who would come to my Facebook page, and they would bully they would say I was a sellout they would say that I was a Nazi supremacist believing in eugenics or everyone with autism and that autism need to be cured. And people would stand up for me, most of the time it was parents. And there would just be parents who after a while, we just be scared to ever post or comment on my Facebook page, because they would be worried about getting not only commented on but also private message. I mean, that's really scary, having people who you don't even know private messaging you and, and calling you hateful words and even threatening people at sometimes. I mean, it's so not what this communities should be about. We all have different opinions on different things. But once we get to the point where bullying is simple, that's when it needs to stop. There's nothing wrong with being constructive. And honestly, that's why many anti-bullying activists today it's because we see a lot of this not only in the schools where I do most of my speaking engagements, but also in the autism community as well.

**Eileen Lamb**

Yeah, I, I've had that happen to where my followers, you know, comments, something in support of me. And then some people will private message them and insult them. And a lot of the time, it's people who are not very familiar with this, you know, I feel like the three of us, we know this word we know that can happen. But when it's just a parent on Facebook looking for support, it's just, it's hard for them and then they get scared. They don't have this thick skin and experience to handle it. And I just really don't like that. But what what do you think makes a good autism advocate? How can we do better despite our differences?

**Kerry Magro**

It really is time to for more people to just have that opening ear and just to listen to other perspectives. And if they don't agree, say why they don't agree, but it's have facts to back it up. Don't be, don't be a bully, don't name call just be constructive. I think that's at the heart of autism advocacy. I think the other perspective is, if you're calling yourself an autism advocate, it it starts at awareness. And we talked about this all the time, but at the end of the day, it's like Steve, Steven Shore. I say in like quotes in speaking engagements, it's like it's all about the four A's. It's it's all about that acceptance. It's all about action. It's It's It's more than guys post saying going to graduate. I was an eight year Autism Speaks Walker, it's it's more than just going to a walk. It's really about trying to do the best for the community and the whole acceptance and inclusion perspective.

**Andrew Komarow**

And I think I posted about this yesterday, real advocacy is so boring, and so slow. I mean, you run a nonprofit, right? And you do good work. So and it's a little but being even involved with larger ones or I spent a lot of today on a State Committee for the you know, autism waiver for Medicaid in Connecticut and trying to move the ball you know, in any direction and make any progress, and it's

have to celebrate some real progress. And it's, I mean, ABA is real torture right? Advocating with the federal government. I mean, that feels like torture sometimes, right, you know, just how slow they move and just trying to, you know, yelling and screaming doesn't work there. Well, you know, well

**Kerry Magro**

Ya know, it's, it's true, but also from that perspective. I mean, we got autism insurance reform in all 50 states, and then I realize that

**Andrew Komarow**

Oh, you mean ABA torture, endorsement insurance and all 50 states for the record? [all speakers laugh]

**Kerry Magro**

Well, the thing is, a lot of states don't have the ABA waiver. But that was a good way of playing from the actually artistic community most of the time. But it's it is thought the patient therapy is a speech therapy, which is often covered, and most states like, are divided about whether or not they should put ABA in and then you get a lot of actually autistic people who say isn't, and then it kind of hurts a lot of families receiving that one on one treatment. So it depends where you live too.

**Eileen Lamb**

And they're trying to make that medic, Medicaid doesn't cover it in Texas. And that's going to affect so many families. And this is where I'm really annoyed. Because once these people and yeah, when I said they, I mean, actually autistic, try to get services taken away from kids who really need it and benefit from it. It's, it's sad, you know, it's one thing if you didn't work out for them. But it's worked out for so many people, you know, you know how people leave bad reviews on a Wednesday, I mean, not only but most often, when you have a bad experience a bad experience at a restaurant. It's kind of like the same with ABA, like the people who had a great experience. I mean, they talk about it online, but they're not like so vocal about it, that they go and attack everyone. We talks about ABA. And I feel like this is something people need to realize people are going to talk about ABA if they're against it, but not as much as they're in favor of ABA, and most people who received ABA are in favor of it. Anyway, I feel like it doesn't hurt anyone. If Medicaid covers ABA, it can still be a parent choice, the actual autistic can still do their advocacy on their side against the ABA if they want, but at least for the people who choose ABA, it will be covered for them. Like that's where I stand, it can still be a choice. But if they get it, you know, not covered, then it's not a choice for certain families, they won't be able to afford it. So, yeah,

**Kerry Magro**

Why think some of that it's also just comes down to money at the end of the day. I mean, I the ABA from the and I see Andrew's nodding head and he obviously knows it's from a financial perspective, but even private insurers, it's so hard at times to even get them to cover even the typical physical occupational speech therapy, let alone ABA, and then when we actually try to get reformed pass to

actually cover ABA, it's really, really difficult because then they could throw in the actually autistic perspective when they really do stretch and save a couple of dollars.

**Andrew M. Komarow**

So an analogy that may only make sense to me, is Do you guys know the Sierra Club? Like I'm gonna, okay, tree huggers are okay. Does anyone know the Sierra Club? Like the environmental almost radical group. And one of the very interesting things that's happened is they're very much against nuclear power, which Eileen is from France, so they actually have a surplus, right? They're probably the cleanest country there is as far as carbon emissions. So they're advocating to shut down nuclear power more of a myth, and we're replacing emission free energy with natural gas. And I can see everyone's bored, but okay, but in fairness, they're, they're working with the the allies or they don't understand that they're, like, you know, that the natural gas isn't cleaner. It's kind of using the advocates and their power to advocate you know, against them. Oh, the Sierra Club. That's the environmentally, you know, clean. You know, it wants to do this. It must be a good thing. And it's funded by the natural gas industry to me. I saw an analogy there, but

**Eileen Lamb**

Yeah, maybe

**Andrew Komarow**

It's only me so we can delete that. Okay. Oh, no,

**Kerry Magro**

No, I understand. I understand tree huggers. I I do my my my parents were tree huggers. So that's, oh, yeah, yeah, we could go into a whole long conversation about that.

**Eileen Lamb**

Do you have any trauma from that? [all speakers chuckle]

**Kerry Magro**

I have trauma from so many things. [all speakers chuckle]

**Eileen Lamb**

Next podcast.

**Kerry Magro**

Yes. The sequel slash remix for this. I'd be down.

**Andrew M. Komarow**

So yeah, well, I was gonna say nothing could be as good as the original. But when it comes to music, the version Cake did the cover of "I Will Survive" is 10 times better than the original. I will take that to my grave that Cake did "I Will Survive," better than the

**Eileen Lamb**

No, you can never say that. That's the music that played when France won the Soccer World,

**Andrew Komarow**

Have you heard the Cake version? Have you heard the Cake version?

**Eileen Lamb**

I don't care. It will never be as good.

**Kerry Magro**

I need to go check it out. Now. I cuz I love that. Like, I love the old like 1970s like that was probably even before 1970s. No, that was 1970s 1980s.

**Eileen Lamb**

Exactly to crime.

**Kerry Magro**

I mean, man.

**Andrew Komarow**

We will we will we will play that song at the end of the episode. So everyone, just stay tuned until the end. Okay.

**Eileen Lamb**

Let me edit that in. Anyway, it's time to wrap up our podcast with some quickfire questions. So it's very easy. We give you a quick question. And you answer the first answer that comes to your mind. Ready?

**Kerry Magro**

Yep.

**Eileen Lamb**

What is the best piece of advice you've ever been given?

**Kerry Magro**

This is so funny. You said that the first thing that came to my mind, the first thing that came to my mind is put down the phone and be present.

**Eileen Lamb**

Oh, that is such great advice. Actually. What do you like to do to relax?

**Kerry Magro**

A music, beach?

**Eileen Lamb**

What's your favorite food? Oh, I love dumplings. I can't go wrong with pizza. Can't go wrong with chicken. Honestly, pizza.

**Kerry Magro**

Italian is my way to go. Like anything Italian. So pasta, pizza, anything carbs.

**Eileen Lamb**

What is your favorite film?

**Kerry Magro**

Ah I the first thing that came to my head was "Joyful Noise." Because it was the first film I worked on. And that's just a shameless plug. But that was the first thing that came to my mind. It's not the best movie in the world, though. And the director of the movie would kill me if he sees this podcast. My favorite film,

**Andrew Komarow**

Wait, for saying it's not the best or for saying it's your favorite film? Which one would he be upset with?

**Kerry Magro**

No, for saying it was saying it was not the best. "The Matrix" definitely has a special place in my heart.

**Andrew Komarow**

Why "The Matrix"? Like what about it?

**Kerry Magro**

I think it was, it was also the same time I was learning about my autism diagnosis. And I felt like it was pretty cool that there was a unique world that was outside of the current world that we were living in, because I felt very quirky as a kid. And I when I was learning about my diagnosis, it's like my parents took me to a movie just a few months after they told me about my autism diagnosis. I like 10 and a half. And I was like, wow, there's there's a lot of similarities here. It's like, I wish I could go to like The Matrix and like see the whole, like new like world outside The Matrix as well.

**Eileen Lamb**

That's cool. I think you're autistic. You're autistic, and therefore like Rain Man. Thanks, Andrew. Andrew likes to add a little bit of information to the question I'm supposed to ask you. Since you're autistic, and therefore like Rain Man and how much have you won playing blackjack?

**Kerry Magro**

This honestly I mentioned it almost in every talk that there's like a Rain Man stereo typical. And then it's a good boundary now. I am great at blackjack. I'm like, very. I have won. Overall, it's like every other like slots. It's like I've lost money. Roulette. I've lost money. I don't have a problem. I'm just starting out there. Just before I go into this soliloquy. I've won a little bit over \$4,000 on blackjack. Over my life.

**Andrew Komarow**

As well blackjack is a game of skill and slots are not. How about poker? Did you know Eileen was a professional poker player.

**Kerry Magro**

Really?

**Eileen Lamb**

Yeah.

**Kerry Magro**

Oh my god. No way. That's so cool. I'm good at Texas Hold'em. I'm terrible at every other,

**Eileen Lamb**

Me too.

**Andrew Komarow**

Well there's no other type of poker. I mean, I'll take that one to my grave too. Right there. There's only one one of our favorites at the casino is the Bonus Texas Hold'em. It's like poker meets blackjack against the dealer. And it's really fun. We should go. Eileen, you should we should meet in New Jersey or Connecticut and...

**Eileen Lamb**

I'm in.

**Kerry Magro**

I'm down, new normal, lets do it.

**Eileen Lamb**

Autistics playing poker and blackjack, that is so cliché

**Kerry Magro**

It is, but no, we don't look autistic right.

**Eileen Lamb**

Did we I think Andrew, this was this background like dropped. Well, what is it? No you do that's like dropped you know?

**Andrew Komarow**

Yeah, yeah.

**Eileen Lamb**

We're borderline cliché there but anyway. Well, thanks for coming today that was yeah. Yeah, is there anything else you want to say anywhere people can find you online anything you want to advertise? This is your your moment. Tell everyone.

**Kerry Magro**

Yeah, no, I definitely check out my Facebook page Kerry's Autism Journey. If you're interested in having me speak at your next event to your group or school, you can find my website KerryMagro.com and shoot me just the contact form. My books are "Defining Autism from the Heart," "Autism, I'm Falling in Love." And "I Will Light It Up Blue" they're all available to purchase on Amazon and on my website, KerryMagro.com. Definitely check out the films that I've worked on, which is also available on my website and I'm on Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, TikTok, all social media channels. So give me a follow up if you can. I'm excited to see

**Andrew Komarow**

I think your TikTok has taken off from what I saw, right?

**Kerry Magro**

Yeah, we blew it. It was so crazy. It's like I went off TikTok because nobody was like really liking any of my videos and I was feel defeated. And then I came back on like, the last week of January 2021. And I posted one video like a week later and it got 1.3 million views. And that that got me 30,000 followers right away and now we're up to 48.5. So slowly tiptoeing to the Addison Rae TikTok legend. He went 5 million. So maybe one day.

**Eileen Lamb**

Getting there, and that was it. Awesome. Well, thank you.