

S1E11 - Karl Dulitz

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SPEAKERS

Elle Billing, Karl Dulitz

- E** Elle Billing 00:00
Hi, my name is Elle Billing. I am a chronically ill queer femme, and I'm tired. I'm here this episode and every episode to dig at the roots of our collective fatigue, explore ways to direct our care in compassionate and sustainable ways and harness creative expression to heal ourselves and our world. And welcome to Hoorf: Radical care in a late capitalist heckscape. My guest this week is Karl Dulitz. Karl Dulitz is a 37 and a half year old gay man who works retail by day and explores creative endeavors in his spare time. His hobbies include astronomy, fiber arts, like knitting, crocheting, sewing, and embroidery, and visual arts of all forms. Karl and I have known each other for almost 20 years, and I'm excited to have him on the podcast today. Welcome, Karl. Hi, Karl. Welcome to Hoorf.
- K** Karl Dulitz 01:18
Hey,
- E** Elle Billing 01:18
- K** Karl Dulitz 01:18
Oh my god. Today has been nothing but self care morning.
- E** Elle Billing 01:23
Oh, wonderful. That that's a great lead into, you know, how have you received care this week? Today Even what kind of self care did you do?

K Karl Dulitz 01:32

I slept in, which doesn't normally happen. I woke up early and I was like, Nah, we're just gonna we're just gonna pop up melatonin and see where this goes. And then

E Elle Billing 01:45

you're like, popping melatonin is like yeah, we're gonna see where this goes. When did we get so old? Our drug of choice is melatonin.

K Karl Dulitz 01:59

Melatonin it is the hard stuff. I theanine is the one that helps to keep you asleep. But yeah, like you when you've got a cocktail of different like sleep options that you know you've reached that age.

E Elle Billing 02:11

Yeah. Before we turn before I hit record, I was talking about some statistics and stuff I found that we'll talk about later. But I had mentioned we are no longer young adults like and we haven't been for like a decade. Yeah, it's like when you have like your cocktail of drugs is all like sleep aids and joint support and migraine medications and stuff. It's like, oh, our party days are over.

K Karl Dulitz 02:36

Like you know where all the supplements are in the supplement aisle and what they all do you know, you've reached an age.

E Elle Billing 02:41


Oh, no kidding when they I went to the pharmacy. And so this, I hope this isn't TMI, but it might be when I have PMS, my ADHD is worse. So it's like the worst week of the month. Like I can't do anything, my brain just isn't functioning. And it's like, I'm not even driving my own body. And I had to go to the pharmacy and buy some supplements. And I said, the pharmacist says I'm really sorry. My ability to scan the shelves is really impaired today. Can you help me find some magnesium, and it was like right in front of my fingers. But I just couldn't see. Like, I usually know where these things are because I buy them all the time. I take as many supplements as I do prescriptions, and I just know where they are. But you know, I switched pharmacies, and I moved and the bottles all look different, and I can't read.

K Karl Dulitz 03:30

I just can't do this right now. Help me.

 Elle Billing 03:33

I'm the youngest person in the pharmacy. Please help me find my meds.

 Karl Dulitz 03:37

I've been working retail for as long as I've known you almost as long as I've known you, which is almost 20 years process that

 Elle Billing 03:45

my dad mentioned the other night he goes, Oh, your 20 year reunion is this year. I was like yep it sure is.

 03:51

You know, the the crazy part is, I still see some of the ladies from the Commons like that some of the lunch ladies from the commons shopping at Walmart.

 Elle Billing 04:00

Oh yeah, cuz you're still in Sioux Falls.

 Karl Dulitz 04:02

The ones from our generation have finally retired, but I still don't see them. And they're completely mind boggling that like I graduated 20 years ago, or whatever, 16 years ago.

 Elle Billing 04:14

Time is, time is wild. And now that I'm one of those people who, you know, sees people who were little kids, you know, when I left town, and now they're all adults doing adult things. I finally understand why all the little old ladies at church were flabbergasted when I'd come home from college and they're like, Oh, you have grown so much. Tell me what you're doing now. And I always thought it was strange. And now I'm one of those people. I'm not even that old. I judged a speech meet last weekend and I was talking to one of the students and I was like, Hey, your mom was my volleyball coach when she was pregnant with your older sisters. Just one of those like oh wow time is wild. So you mentioned working retail you work at The Walmart that you work there in college too. So you've been at that specific one for 20 years.



K

Karl Dulitz 05:05

Yeah, I started fresh the end of freshman year of college. And when we graduated, it was in the middle of the recession. So I just didn't see any point in leaving and then I picked up a second degree in the process.

E

Elle Billing 05:16

Okay, so what degrees did you end up getting at? At college,

K

Karl Dulitz 05:20

I got a computer science degree. And then a week before graduation, I realized I was only nine credits short of an art degree. So I stayed an extra year and picked up a second degree.

E

Elle Billing 05:31

Oh, fantastic. So that really feeds like your creative practice, then which you share a bit on on Instagram. It's just kind of how we reconnected even though we've known each other a long time. So how does creative practice fit into like your self care routine,

K

Karl Dulitz 05:45

I discovered through a fun little adventure in hospital land that I have anxiety and thinking back, I guess I've been self-treating it in different ways for a number of years. But I learned when I thought that I'd be single for the rest of my life. I finally just like I was like, I am not going to learn how to knit. I'm going to find a man who learns how to knit who's going to make the all the stuff. I taught myself how to knit and I was married within a year and a half.

E

Elle Billing 06:14

So you taught yourself to knit and then within a year and a half you were married?

K

Karl Dulitz 06:18

Yes.

E

Elle Billing 06:19

Wild.

K

Karl Dulitz 06:20

Yeah. Six months after I made my first hat. I met my now husband. Within another four months after marry him, I told him, yeah, I'm gonna marry you. And he freaked out because he's Hispanic. And Hispanic parents, like Hispanic dads are not okay with gay people.

E Elle Billing 06:41

Yeah, I've I've met several other people who've experienced that. Yep.

K Karl Dulitz 06:45

Within three, three months of that. He was like, I want to marry you. And I was like, Okay, let's do this. And we got married. Oh boy we've been married five and a half years now.

E Elle Billing 06:54

Congratulations.

K Karl Dulitz 06:55

His family still doesn't know.

E Elle Billing 06:56

Oh, so it's kind of a secret thing. Okay. Yeah. So you you know, your creative practice. You talked about knitting? Crochet too, right?

K Karl Dulitz 07:05

Yep. I taught myself how to crochet last year through sheer luck.

E Elle Billing 07:10

Oh, okay. What other kinds of creative exploits do you do pursue?

K Karl Dulitz 07:17

The list is pretty infinite. In college, my primary areas of study were drawing primarily, ink was my favorite medium, as well as watercolor. I spent a lot of time in the ceramics room. And then I also trained as a printmaker. And then I taught myself how to paint in oil and acrylic in my spare time, because my mom taught high school art when I was a kid, so I have always just

been around art supplies. And then my dad had a preference for photography that I accidentally picked up. And astronomy has kind of just always been a thing because I grew up in the middle of nowhere. So you could always look up and just see all the stars.

E

Elle Billing 07:59

Yeah, I mean, growing up on the farm here, too. We had a pretty clear view of this guy most of the time. So I get that.

K

Karl Dulitz 08:05

Yeah. And then I did I crochet. I can so I can I do a little embroidery just, you know, nothing complicated. I taught myself makeup for a while just for the heck of it, because I just wanted to know how people could like, literally transform everything about their appearance.

E

Elle Billing 08:24

Yeah, it's really fascinating. I think makeup is really cool. And I did you know, I got a minor in theater at college. But I did not take the makeup class, because it just didn't fit into my schedule. So makeup is not something that I ever really mastered. And I have so many like skin sensitivities that it would have been really complicated for me anyway. Especially with all of the latex they use in certain like makeup prosthetics and like adhesives and stuff. There are alternatives but one time in high school I had an allergic reaction to an eyeliner during during play competition, and it was just it was brutal. My sister is super into makeup. And that's like her art. So the amount of money I spend on art supplies I think my sister spends on makeup. It's just we have different canvases. Hers is her face. Mine is actual canvas.

K

Karl Dulitz 09:09

Yeah. So the sucky thing about makeup is like ounce per ounce. That's like cocaine versus like coffee.

E

Elle Billing 09:17

Yeah, that's actually it. That's a really interesting comparison, because I am also super into coffee.

K

Karl Dulitz 09:24

So that was part of my self care routine this morning was actually going out for coffee and not paying for it because I had enough points built up.

E

Elle Billing 09:33

E Elle Billing 09:33

Oh, that's glorious. Yeah. I when I moved in with my parents, my dad, you know, he's a farmer, he you know, brings a giant thermos of coffee out to the fields when he works and during off peak season, you know, like right now, it's winter, but they're still doing other work. They take two coffee breaks during the day at 10am and 3pm in the shop. And so they just drink a lot of like Folgers right because you can make a whole bunch of time.

K Karl Dulitz 09:59

I knew it was going to be Folgers!

E Elle Billing 10:01

Well, yeah, you, you know where we live. So we have my dad has his 12 cup coffeemaker. And then next to that is my, my espresso machine, which takes up twice as much space and makes a double shot at a time. And my dad was talking about maybe getting like an instant pot or an air fryer for Christmas. And he's like, but we don't have anywhere to put it because he's like, looks across the room. He goes, because your coffee machine takes up too much space. And I was like, you can pry it from my cold dead hands. That is a medical device.

K Karl Dulitz 10:37

Just add another table. That's what I did.

E Elle Billing 10:40

Or counterspace is all taken up by coffee makers and my mom's candy bowl. Which I think she feels strongly about as I feel about my espresso machine.

K Karl Dulitz 10:50

Right from my cold dead hands. Yeah, exactly. It's like

E Elle Billing 10:53

speaking of self medicating. Coffee is great.

K Karl Dulitz 10:59

Absolutely fantastic.



E Elle Billing 11:02

I lost what I like I was going somewhere with that. And it totally fell out of my brain. Yeah, you had a great morning of self care. You had your coffee? Do you have any current creative projects that like you're working on consistently right now? Or is it just like whatever you feel like doing on any given day,

K Karl Dulitz 11:20

my current process is two projects and an experiment. Okay, so what I'll do is I'll have ideas in my head of future projects that I don't necessarily have the technical skill for yet, or I don't think that I have the technical skill for yet. So I will take time to research them or just make like practice swatches. So like right now I'm working on making two blankets. One of them is an IT blanket, that's just a blanket, you know, like plastic knit, because I don't think I've ever done that before. And then I'm making a half circle crocheted blanket, which I first attempt didn't work. Second attempt is going great. It's longer than my arm span. But now I want to make a hood for it. And I don't have the technical skill for that yet. So I have to research that. That's, that's my thought the second half of my day.

E Elle Billing 12:13

Yeah, that's I have a similar approach to things that I do. I have this never ending list of ideas of art I want to make. And the project I'm working on right now is something that's been tickling my brain since 2018, at least, but I think if I had done it, then it would have been a bit anemic. I don't think it would have like my aesthetic preference, you know, surpassed my technical skill at that point. And I think a lot of times, it still does. And that's the frustrating thing about being an art person is like our preferences are always going to be like the bar for those is higher

K Karl Dulitz 12:48

richer than what you're capable of. Yeah.

E Elle Billing 12:52

But I finally am at the point where I'm like, I have to make this thing it's going to annoy me until I don't. And so now I'm working on it. But I've also added like a million further influences and inspirations to it. So it's going to be very, like conceptually multi layered, but also like tactilly multi layered as well. So we'll see what happens, you know, maybe it'll be a big flop and I'll go, Yeah, I should have waited or it'll be great. I'd be like, Oh, I'm glad I picked the perfect time to do this. But at least it's like cathartic to like finally process it out of my brain and onto paper.

 13:25

I think our art professors would tell you that that's how you make series pieces.

E

Elle Billing 13:31

Oh, yeah, yeah, I did that last year, too.

K

Karl Dulitz 13:34

So the first thing that you do in a serious project will pretty much always suck. But it's it's what you learn from that and build on that and keep going that gets you your master's degree, I'm guessing.

E

Elle Billing 13:44

Yeah. self taught master's degree maybe? Yeah. You know, we have a few things in common. And we both mentioned self medicating a little bit. And you briefly touched on hospital land, and I don't I don't want to dig too far into like sensitive questions. But I know we have a few things in common. We grew up in small towns, we both came out in college, although that process was quite different, I think for both of us, for each of us. And we both struggled a bit more or more than a bit. We both had different struggles with substance use. I'm wondering if you are willing to share a little bit more about that since you did touch on it just a little bit? And how and how like art and like knitting and these processes have helped you with your sobriety?

K

Karl Dulitz 14:42

Yeah, I'm not afraid to talk about it. I'll give short abbreviated backstory. So I came out of the closet, actually at 15 years old in the year 2000 When the world was a different place. Yeah, I went I went ballistic in college because I could but I was,

E

Elle Billing 14:58

yeah, you get out of the small town you get to the booming metropolis of Sioux Falls and it's like, oh, I can be gay.

K

Karl Dulitz 15:04

People are nice here. Yeah, no one's ashamed of me. No one's no one's shying away from me. And in college, freshman, sophomore year, I didn't drink or freshman year I didn't drink. Sophomore year I started drinking. But then senior year of college was when I started to drink in earnest because my capstone class was genial-- no, not genealogy, genocide and the 20th and 21st century, and the reading material was brutal.

E

Elle Billing 15:35

Yeah, that's heavy.

K

Karl Dulitz 15:36

Yeah, it was during j term where there wasn't much else to do, but read your reading material for your one class and drinking all along, then I, you know, kind of waxed and waned. And over the years, and I usually kept a steady amount of consumption, more or less, over the years, but then, just before the pandemic happened, I found myself in a job that had a different level of stress that, thinking back it was a very social job, I went part time at Walmart, and then I went full time at this job. And my drinking got out of control. And then the pandemic happened. So everybody else was like, whoo, we're home by ourselves, we can drink at five o'clock in the afternoon, I was like, I'm in the I'm in the thick of this because by that point, I went back to working full time at Walmart. So the stress of everything there just made it that much worse. And my hands started to shake when I was working, and I didn't like I knew something was up. But I was literally in a headspace where I was like, well, let's just hope I die before this becomes too much of a problem. And I ended up discovering my alcohol dependency, because I ran out. I ran out of liquor one day, and I didn't have enough money because it was between paychecks, and I ended up having a seizure. And I was hospitalized. And through a myriad of different things that happened, I experienced for the first time delirium and hallucinations, both auditory and visual, and trauma that I still haven't fully been able to confirm what parts are real and what parts my brain just made up is like a spackle shorthand to fill in all the cracks. So right, my, my journey did, through a number of failures and a number of hospitalizations. Take me to a 28 day program of my insurance company, basically said that I was doing so well, after 14 days, they stopped paying for it. And I've been learning coping mechanisms on my own ever since.

E

Elle Billing 17:44

I just, I'm in shock. But I shouldn't be surprised, having battled insurance companies to get my medication paid for, you know, the one that keeps my brain working, that they would kick you out of rehab. Yeah, halfway through your program.

K

Karl Dulitz 18:01

Well, obviously, I was doing great.

E

Elle Billing 18:03

You're you were an overachiever. And they kicked you out?

K

Karl Dulitz 18:07

Heck, yeah, that's my brand. I ended up in an outpatient program with the same Avera for people who who know this area, an outpatient program there. And I stayed in that for six weeks. And I had counseling until the end of that year. And I discovered that my insurance company was only willing to pay 10% of my counseling.

E Elle Billing 18:33

Oh my gosh,

K Karl Dulitz 18:35

every session is \$250 an hour.

E Elle Billing 18:40


That's horrifying.


K Karl Dulitz 18:43


So that's what brought me to knitting and crocheting during the times when all I want to do is drink. If you watch movies, where people are like going crazy, like in their house, just like mentally trying to handle everything, a lot of the time they rock back and forth or like through like shake or whatever, I just I learned that knitting is basically like a more productive version of that where you can get all the like anxious energy out, and then you get a blanket or a hat.


E Elle Billing 19:12


It's like productive pacing. They've done studies on using knitting in the treatment of PTSD. And I don't have those studies in front of me, I just remember hearing about them on NPR a number of years ago. And it's something about like, it's a bilateral, like repetitive movement. Something about the way it crosses the two sides of the brain and you're using both sides, your body and and repetitive movement and it can help heal some of those pathways. But I'm not the expert and I don't have it in front of me. So I should have looked that up before we started. I'll probably find it and put it in the show notes. I'm just still like aghast at the way insurance doesn't support sobriety and recovery, or really any part of our medicals system like, this wasn't the direction I had thought about going. I had a cousin who passed away when he was 40. from complications of trying to get clean and sober, because the place he tried to check into wouldn't take him until he was detox. There wasn't a detox facility nearby. And, like, we're 37; forty isn't that far away. it was, catastrophically, I can't even like just horrible to lose him for our family. And like the weeks leading up to it, like it was like a long drawn out process and of like, hoping things would go better. And then him getting on a transplant list. And then that not working out. And I mean, it's not just him, like it was very much focused on him for my family. And it's very personal. But he's not the only one that this happens to. I mean, you got booted from rehab, and then they stopped paying for your counseling. It's like, how are people supposed to address this? And wouldn't this country or culture really has such a stigmatizing perspective on substance use? It's hard, like, it's hard enough to get people to reach out for help. And then when they do, lay Yeah, we make it so hard for the help to continue. Like it's so it's so inaccessible. And


 Karl Dulitz 21:19
it's beyond inaccessible.

 Elle Billing 21:21
prohibitive. I'm so glad you're still here

 Karl Dulitz 21:24
that through sheer luck. I mean, when I had my seizure, I had it in when I was at work, but I had, I was shaking so bad that I was like, I need to go home. And if I would have been on the road when I had my seizure, I would have been gone. I literally was in the front, like the front entrance of the store. When I came when I came to from my seizure and I was being loaded onto the stretcher. So yeah.

 Elle Billing 21:52
Wow, I I wasn't thinking it was gonna go dark, but it did. And that's okay. I laugh when I'm uncomfortable, and not because it's funny,

 22:02
but it's okay. Trust me. I've I've had time to I've had more time to process this than you though.

 Elle Billing 22:07
Yeah, I mean, and I've known other people who've experienced complications and who have lost loved ones due to addiction as well, or who have lost quality of life due to substance use. And the one thing we were talking about before we hit record was how the LGB population and I say I don't say LGBT because the statistics I was looking up were specific to the LGB youth and young adult population are at significantly higher risk of substance use disorders and substance abuse. They're talking like youth high school students and those ages 18 to 25, which is not us anymore, but that's the ages we were when we started drinking. And I've been sober since 2018. And my experience was different, but I definitely had a problem. Which is not something that's easy to say, right? Like it gets easier, I think the most talked about it. But the first few times we actually say I had a problem. So yeah, rates of alcohol use were 25% higher among LGB high school students and 18% higher among those 18 to 25 compared to straight peers. And then high school students and LGB high school students and young adults reported two to three times greater rates of using hard drugs, including cocaine, ecstasy, meth and heroin.

 Karl Dulitz 23:29

Oh, yeah. I also, I also found myself at at least one house party where people around me were emptying out their cigarettes, filling up filling them up with cocaine and then smoking them. So

E Elle Billing 23:41

yeah, I don't think I was ever around that. But that's because I was kind of oblivious. So I might have been

K Karl Dulitz 23:47

I had no idea until after.

E Elle Billing 23:49

Yeah, yeah, I was really I was really naive. I think I was fortunate to only have gotten into some trouble with alcohol. But I think what a lot of people don't understand or choose not to look at is that we don't wake up one day and just decide. I'm going to drink myself silly. I mean, you mentioned self medicating. I mentioned self medicating there. Were trying to medicate something that hurts, you know, coming out at 15 in the year 2000, in a small town in the Dakotas, or, you know, feeling like for me, because I didn't know what bisexuality was the until I got to university or college and thinking that something was very wrong with me and being surrounded by a purity culture and a lot of the pray away the gay rhetoric and feeling very broken and scared. Those are those are traumas those I mean, those things can harm us. Those are one of like many reasons why. Along with like if there's rejecting adults or people who actively bully or do those things, the first time I was called a dyke was in eighth grade. And I don't think the people around for that situation, probably even remember it happening. But I do. you know those things they stick?

K Karl Dulitz 25:10

Oh, yeah, a good example I ran into fairly recently was, there's this man who's been a regular customer at Walmart for years. And he was he was seeking validation. He was like, I'm nice, right? I was like, you haven't been in the past because one time he called me a faggot. And I didn't think I remembered that. And boy was

E Elle Billing 25:35

we remember, like, we have to, we have to know who our safe people are.

K Karl Dulitz 25:40

There's no way to not or to just like write that off. Once it happens. It's like, okay, you are forever branded in my brain as somebody that I need to be careful around.

E

Elle Billing 25:50

Yeah. And it's hard when it happens, like at your place of work. It's not like you can't go there anymore,

K

Karl Dulitz 25:54

especially with like regular customers. Some of these customers I've watched grow up. But I can say about bullying is as much as time and distance has taken it away, there's still that part of me that remembers how traumatic it was 15 years old, actually, before I came out of the closet, because once I came out of the closet, I had my mother behind me, and the entire state education system, because they were required by law to provide safe schools. But before that, before anybody before I knew that it was safe to even talk about what these kids were doing to me, I still remember all of that. And that still informed so much of my life and how I relate to people even as an adult.

E

Elle Billing 26:42

It's absolutely formative. I knew my parents were accepting of gay people. When I was growing up, my mom had a job, a summer job, sewing costumes for performing art school, and she would bring my sister and I with her. And that was my first really immersion and exposure to a large population of gay and queer people from many of whom were in high school, but a lot of them were like the staff at the performing arts school. Yep. And my mom, they talked about it openly in a very positive way. My cousin came out when I was in seventh grade, and my parents were supportive of him. So I knew like that was okay, in my family, but like there was still like, the culture in the climate of being in the Dakotas in the 90s.

K

Karl Dulitz 27:29

I know when I was a kid going to church, I grew up in Methodists, they were they were preaching how big of a sin was from the pulpit, like they're taking time out of their, their sermon to remind me that there's, I'm not compatible with the teachings of the time,

E

Elle Billing 27:45

right? Things, you know, for a while, seem to be getting quite a bit better socially. But I really feel like the climate right now is very hostile, and very frightening for a lot of queer people, especially trans kids, trans adults who are in some of the more hostile states, or really anywhere, because it bleeds over. And we already live in a culture that sort of generates trauma for people. And then, you know, create stigma for our maladaptive coping mechanisms. Were just trying to get through. And then you know, we have to, then we have to battle our insurance to try and get better. It's kind of a downer, but you know, at the end of the day, we we, we connect with the people who love and support us and we help each other get through. I know what made a big difference for me, it was the 12 step group. I joined during my divorce and then finding friends and people who had my back and who cared about my well being. And

yeah, a lot of angry painting. Yeah, and now knitting before bed because I have terrible I have terrible insomnia, and knitting before bed. It does have that calming effect on my brain because I like it's repetitive, I count count, I count count stitches, you know, keeps my hands busy. So I'm not on my phone before bed, which was kind of an issue for like, because it stimulates my brain and then I'm reading terrible news before bed, and then I perseverate on it. And so like knitting before bed has been really helpful for me too. And then yeah, you get the make things and you get stuff at the end.

K

Karl Dulitz 29:18

Literally, the blankets I sleep under

E

Elle Billing 29:30

things can be terrible, but there are ways for us to connect and support each other and get through it.

K

Karl Dulitz 29:35

Yeah. For me, I took I take a two pronged approach to being the lights. So I I've been out of the closet for 23 years now. Which means that I've watched the world change in so many ways, and I've watched the world get better and worse. But as As the pressure has been taken off of the culture of gay males, or at least in my little bubble, I've done my best to ensure that groups that don't have a statistically large enough voice to fight, the laws that are being written have an extra ally on their sides. So anytime a new law is introduced into state legislature, I start writing a letter.

E

Elle Billing 30:30

That is fabulous.

K

Karl Dulitz 30:31

Yeah. Currently, South Dakota, is trying to ban gender affirming care for minors, which is terribly not fair. Because if your body is changing into a shape, that you have no control over, or that that, like you are actively rejecting that's not going to turn you into a productive member of society, society like you, Hey, you can't receive the care just to either figure it out by taking puberty blockers until your brain knows for sure as far as the government is concerned, or to actively lean into what you need, just to get where you need to go. I mean, I have a co worker who has a transgender child. And when her child was starting to show signs that they don't didn't feel like they match their gender, their mother literally just sprung into action. They're like, what do you need? Do you need like binding tape? Do you need medication? counseling? What? How can I help? Because I can't imagine how terrifying it must

be for a mother to see their child acting out knowing that something's different, but not even knowing where to begin. And then having the government step in and say, No, you can't do that, when it might be the only thing keeping the child alive.

E

Elle Billing 31:52

Yeah, yep. I worked with a few students who were transgender and gender non conforming during my time at the school. And, you know, kids know, they know who they are, even if they don't have the language or the cognitive. they can't out logic and adult, right. But kids know who they are. And as a teacher, I was like, Well, why don't we just believe kids, like, kids aren't as manipulative or they don't lie as nearly as much as adults think they do. Like, at the end of the day, kids want to be loved and accepted. And if we provide an environment for that, you know what, amazing things happen. So, yeah, I appreciate I appreciate that you very specifically mentioned that, like, you know, a lot of the pressure has been taken off, you know, gay males, gay men, because that was really one of the first groups of our community at large to sort of make some of those steps up the ladder. And so for you to recognize that and say, Okay, now how can I help someone else up? That is lovely, it is refreshing it is. It gives it gives me some hope, or bolsters the hope that I have,

K

Karl Dulitz 33:12

it's only fair because there were so many angels that in my life that that reached out. Professors at Augie, people in my hometown, family members that I didn't even fathom would be okay with me being an openly gay man. Hell, even my grandmother is like 95 years old. And one of the things that she said, the last time we visited or my older brother and I she was like, why don't you bring your husband around?

E

Elle Billing 33:41

Oh, that's so great. My grandma was really amazing, too.

K

Karl Dulitz 33:44

Yeah, and for my part, my other contribution to the world of living in South Dakota, working in retail where I see hundreds of people a day is I do not shy away from saying my husband. Or just being an openly gay man. Because for me, one of the one of the scariest things is the unknown. So if I am known to somebody even for five minutes, and I seem like a perfectly human human being, then that's one mind one mind that I can potentially change.

E

Elle Billing 34:19

Yep. Well, that is an excellent place to say thank you for being

K

Karl Dulitz 34:26

Karl Dulitz 34:20
no problem.

Elle Billing 34:27
I really appreciate you taking the time to have a conversation with me. I look forward to seeing your crochet projects and more of your moon photography on Instagram. I love your moon pictures. They're just so gorgeous.

Karl Dulitz 34:40
Trust me the next generation as soon as the weather clears up is going to be I got some new, some new equipment. So

Elle Billing 34:47
yeah, how to use it. Like a telescope camera or like I don't even know what people use. I just appreciate it when it's other people's

Karl Dulitz 34:57
Now that's cool. So I went from a telephoto lens, and then just software editing. And now I have a telescope that I got some adapters to adapt to my DSLR essentially turning my telephoto lens into like, triple the length.

Elle Billing 35:14
Oh my gosh, that's incredible. I'm so excited to see your next set of photos. Yay.

Karl Dulitz 35:20
I just have to figure out how to use it all. And then oh, yeah, it's like

Elle Billing 35:23
that. But that's the thing that's like stimulating to like your brain and your passion for art and stuff. And that's also one of those things that helps keep us out of trouble. If we're not if we're like stimulated and activated in a positive way, like thank you for joining us on this episode of Hoorf. To view the complete show notes, and all the links mentioned in today's episode, or to get a full transcript of the episode, visit [Hoorf podcast.com](https://hoorf.com). That's H O O R F podcast.com. Before you go, make sure you subscribe to the podcast so you can receive new episodes right when they're released. And if you're enjoying our podcast, I'd love to have you leave us a review in Apple podcasts. Reviews are one of the major ways that Apple ranks their podcasts.

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