

S2E11-DAN WATT

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SPEAKERS

Elle Billing, Dan Watt

D Dan Watt 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 and 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.

E Elle Billing 00:21

My guest for this episode is Dan Watt. After five years in development at Columbia Pictures and five years working at SYCO -- Simon Cowell's production company--Dan Watt decided to focus on stories exploring the human experience, humanity, spirituality, and social issues. He is the producer and director of the award winning documentary Everybody Dance, currently on iTunes, Apple TV, and Amazon Prime. He was a producer on the award winning film The Center: Gibbons and Guardians featuring Jane Goodall. He also was the Associate Producer of the online dog series Wild Ride, following the Wildlife Generation Pro Cycling Team across America and to China for 10 months. He is currently in production on an untitled documentary, with Tony and Pulitzer Prize winning producer, Daryl Roth. Welcome to the podcast, Dan. Welcome to Hoorf. Dan, it's great to have you here. You might be the first guest I've had that reached out to me, as opposed to me reaching out first. And that was really exciting for me as a podcaster to have somebody be like, hey, I want to be on your podcast. I'm like, Yeah, I want you on my podcast. So I'm glad you're here today.

D Dan Watt 01:59

Yeah, and I'm so glad this worked out. Because I had listened to some of your podcast, I had felt I had seen you pop up on Threads. And I'm always fascinated about conversation there were and there was just something about you and your posts that drew me towards you. So I thought I'm gonna listen and see. And so I did. And I'm excited that it worked out. And I'm here because I really, really like what you're putting out there.

E

Elle Billing 02:26

Gosh, that was so nice. Thank you. I'm, I'm one of those people that's had to learn to accept compliments. So sometimes it just takes me a second to process. But I appreciate having you here today. So we've done quite a bit of emailing back and forth leading up to today. Usually, I send, we send a couple emails, and then we just go with the questions that I've that I've prepped. And you and I have actually emailed back and forth quite a bit getting ready for this, partly because as we discussed in the emails, I'm disabled, and most of the, a lot of the people that I interview are disabled as well, or they're chronically ill, or they are, I guess I would say sort of like in-group members who are talking about their own experiences. And this is a case where you, ever, you were very upfront about the fact that you're an able bodied person who made a documentary that featured people who were disabled. And so we were talking quite a bit about the lens and the framing of both your documentary and like the language that we use when talking about certain issues and about people. And the way that you, that you mentioned it in one of your emails was, you know, we both come from the LGBTQ community. And our language for ourselves is always evolving too, and sometimes when we talk about ourselves within community, it's different than when other people talk about us. And it's always a learning experience. And so there can be some gentleness and grace when people use words that they that they're trying to use correctly, but may not be the right ones anymore.

D

Dan Watt 04:00

Yeah. And it's and it is, it's ever changing. And like you said, in different communities, different people accept different words, different people, you know, a word might rub them the wrong way or, you know, doesn't work for them. So I wanted to be-- make sure that you and I discussed that because am I an abled person? Am I an able bodied person, you know what, you know, it's-- everybody refers to it differently. And I just wanted to make sure we presented the best we could.

E

Elle Billing 04:34

Right and I really appreciated that you know, and as far as I'm concerned, I've used all of those terms. I've used abled, able bodied, non disabled. My friend Andrew who was on an episode that came out in February, he uses the word pre disabled, because the way he frames it is, you know, if we're lucky, everyone lives long enough to become disabled. Because with age, we begin to lose some of our abilities and faculties. So, I mean, I think about my mom who wasn't disabled. But now she has a progressive illness and it has disabled her. So she actually the other day, she was like, "you know, it's so, just so bad when you have to have your daughter do these things for you," because I'm her caregiver. And I said, "it's not bad mom. It's just, it's just a, it's just the way it is." And I even said, I said, "you know, my friend Andrew says, my friend, Andrew says that we're, if we're lucky, we all live long enough to become disabled." Statistically, 20 to 25% of the population is disabled at any given time. As we age, it's a natural, it's a natural part of life. I think part of our, our work as disabled people or people with disability, or however we choose to identify as, like, we spend a lot of time working on the stigma of that, both in ourselves the internalized ableism, but also like addressing the ableism that other people have towards us. Because this disabled isn't a dirty word. I think someone in the documentary even said that.

D Dan Watt 06:07
Yeah,

E Elle Billing 06:08
I think, like, it doesn't have to be scary. It can be.

D Dan Watt 06:13
correct. And it is, being at the at the moment being abled, able bodied it. I wanted to make sure in the movie that I presented, everybody, well, I didn't want to present them. I don't even like saying that. Now that I said it. I ,what I did is I wanted to give them a platform. And I wanted them to tell their stories, because I wanted it to educate me and the audience. So I'm hoping that that came across, but it is like you said having the parents talk about it, what their lives were, or are, raising these kids and what the kids go through. It's interesting. It's exactly what you're you know, you're explaining with with your life and what your, your circumstances are and how they changed because now your mom can't do everything on her own. Like she used to be able to. I went through the same thing with my parents when they got older. And then, you know, my mom ended up going to an assisted living facility. So it's -- we are all we were, we are constantly changing and constantly being exposed to different circumstances. And it's just how we accept that and adjust to it.

E Elle Billing 07:33
Right. So we've mentioned the documentary a couple times, your documentary is called Everybody Dance. And through the end of March, it is available streaming for free on Amazon Prime, correct? Well, it's will it still be on Prime after that?

D Dan Watt 07:49
Yeah, it still will. And I'm hoping because they put it up last week. So it actually went up earlier, you know, like 10 days before they said they were going to do it. So I've told a lot of people, and they emailed me and said how excited they were with the response because March is known as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. So we connected the two, and they offered it for free. So it's, I'm excited. And they made it sound that because of the response, just through word of mouth like this, it they might extend it. And I just think that that's a great thing. And it's also on, you know, iTunes, and YouTube. You can buy it in Apple TV, but

E Elle Billing 08:40
Oh, great.

D

Dan Watt 08:41

Yeah. get it on Prime Video for free. Why not?

E

Elle Billing 08:44

Right? Yeah. So the film is called Everybody Dance. And I normally ask a different question first, but I'm gonna save it to the end and just flip the order of the questions. Because people who have listened to my podcast before, they're gonna say, Hey, you missed the first question. I'll get to it. So what was your initial idea for the documentary? And how did you, why did you decide and how did you decide to make this? You've made other documentaries before, but how did you decide to make this particular film, which is about a ballet studio Ballet For All Kids, which is an inclusive Ballet Studio, provides ballet lessons for individuals with disabilities.

D

Dan Watt 09:25

My first idea was that I wanted to do a documentary about the arts and how people who have studied the arts when they were younger -- because your parents made you take piano lessons or tap or singing in the choir, and you didn't make a career out of it -- Did you learn anything from that? And how did you apply that in your everyday life? That was my initial goal going in. Because I was a dancer when I was younger, but I was able to make a career out of it. So I wasn't sure how I was going to get into the movie, but I knew that big broad base. And then I had a dream. And I usually don't remember my dreams. But this was so vivid. And it was of two girls that I taught. and I were talking like 18, 20 years ago. And both of the girls had autism. And I had a dream about them and their mother Fran, and I was like, well, that's weird. Why am I dreaming about Fran and her two daughters. And I didn't give it much thought. And then, two weeks later, I had a dream about them again. And I thought, I need to pay attention to this. This is God poking me saying, "this is your movie, asshole. I am giving you the weigh in. You don't have to think anymore. Here it is.

E

Elle Billing 10:45

Stop making it so difficult. Like,

D

Dan Watt 10:46

Right. And I and I thought you know what, I need to trust this because, honest, I don't remember my dreams, or they're never that vivid. And I thought this, this is a message coming to me. And I'm open, investigate it and see where it goes. So I did research online and checked all across the country, all across America, trying to find a conservatory because it didn't have to be dance. I just wanted it to be something with the arts. But I would lean toward dance because I grew up in that world. And I found that so many studios and colleges and conservatories-- which was disheartening--a lot of them taught dance, but they taught 15 minutes. And then the rest of the hour was like a freestyle jungle gym, or it looked more like a babysitting service. So the parents could just put their kids in it and go do their shopping. And I thought that's not the story, that there's got to be a place. And then I found Ballet For All Kids, which was in California,

and I avoided California because I thought California is going to be so Hollywood there. There's not going to be a school like this out here. Because it's Hollywood who would do that, you know, they're going to train for, you know, the backup dancers for Jennifer Lopez. And there, there I found her in the valley. And I emailed her a few times. And I talked to her, we talked many times, because I wanted to make sure she was comfortable. And the families were comfortable. But she teaches a full 50 minute dance class. And it is it is the exact same format of the ballet classes that I took you do all the barre work, you do the stuff in the center of the floor, and then you learn a combination. So these kids are getting the benefits of a full class. And I thought yeah, this is the place

E

Elle Billing 11:34

and it was and it was evident through the documentary as I was watching it that the way she teaches is it's, I mean, it's dance, like it's the the like you said, the full I mean, I don't I don't know ballet, like, and so I didn't understand the ballet parts that she was doing. It was like, Oh, this is like real dance stuff. But she also she, it's adapted and the pace is different. And she's meeting each kid, each dancer at the level that they need to access the curriculum. So, you know, were the ones there was. I can't remember the names of the kids now and I didn't write them down. There was the one student who said, you know, at school, I don't really feel like I fit in. But at dance, that's where I belong.

D

Dan Watt 12:49

Liam, Yeah,

E

Elle Billing 12:52

yeah, where he, it wasn't just an access point for him to learn to dance. It was an access point for him to find other people he could belong with. And the way that she explained the dance instructions, and the way she broke things down for the students was always in a digestible level. But it wasn't-- what's like infantilizing. And it wasn't, it wasn't in a way that talked down to them. Like she matched, like she met them at their level.

D

Dan Watt 14:05

Right. And that's what that's the gift that that Bonnie has she doesn't she never dumbed it down and talked down to them. And I don't want your audience I want to make sure your audience and all the audiences audiences know Yes, dance is in the title. But it is exactly what you just said where Liam got to find people like minded people. It is about community. It is about friendship. It is about self identity. It is about self love, awareness. It's about all those things. They just all these kids just happened to take at the same dance studio. So that's the common thread and we just follow them towards their recital. But the reason that I fell in love with Bonnie and I'm still friends with her and a lot of the parents is exactly what you said, is she gives visual aids is so that you don't need you know, you don't need to know all the ballet terms. You don't need to know what an *chappé* is, that's when she showed the scissors and she opened the scissors and closed them. So the, the, the nonverbal boy that she was

talking to, he then could use his, his vision to know what to do. And he just then what he did is he mimicked what she did with those four-foot wood scissors that she had made. So then she opened the scissors and closed the scissors. And that's what he did with his legs. So she puts so much time and effort into thinking of the curriculum. And her goal is to meet you at your level or, and your access point, and that that's what's so great about the school. And the one thing about the school is all the volunteers that you saw there, each child in the class has a volunteer who has studied dance, and is a dancer, you know, a danced students somewhere, and they volunteered their time to work with with each one of these children to help Bonnie and assist on what that child needs at that moment, you know, to physically move their arms to, to mimic and match. And you just think, look at how all this love is in this room. And all these people this community came together and these kids that do the, the volunteerism, you know, they might have to do 10 weeks to get, you know, credit at school, but they stay for four years, you know, some of them went to college and then came back. So it's, it's, you know, the movie is so much bigger than dance. I just, I just found her curriculum and the way she did it amazing. And I'm hoping it came across to you.

E

Elle Billing 16:46

You know, I usually just interview disabled folks directly. And this is one of the exceptions. At least this episode is, you know, I'm disabled now. But I wasn't when I first started working in the, in the field of deaf education and special education. And then I acquired a disability during my career. And I found like, while I was working in the field, and especially when I got on, you know, before Twitter became X, and while it was still like a functional ecosystem, I learned a lot from Disability Twitter, that talking about disability, you know, the the in-group/out-group, people being subjects of a film versus objects, just things like that. There's, it's there's a lot of complexity involved there. My question is, you mentioned too, is that, you know, you really wanted, you didn't want to present the kids in the film, you wanted to provide the platform for them to tell their own story. And I'm just wondering, like, how you were able to work with Bonnie, and the dancers and their parents to be able to balance the storytelling among all of those voices so that the kids were really still the ones telling, telling the story about their their experience with dancing.

D

Dan Watt 18:16

Right, I gave it a lot of thought, and so did Bonnie. And her and I talked many, many times about this, because I wanted to deliver the film that I saw in my head. And I just wanted to make sure like, like you just talked about, I didn't want them to, to be the subject that I'm showing. And it was like, How do I capture that? And that's when we I started talking to the parents. And I said, I think the best way to make this happen is also is there a way, will you open up your home life to me? Will you open up your lives, and so many of them like Li- Liam's parents said, "of course," because they wanted to tell the story, because they felt that it isn't done enough. That enough people, you know, I told them that I wanted to learn and just having conversations with Bonnie and going to the studio twice, before we even filmed, I learned so much just by being there. And I said, I want to make sure that I get that message across. What is it that you want to say you tell me what you want me to know, and the world to know. And we went about it that way because I wanted-- again, but also I wanted to know, why is Liam still taking ballet for four years? And it was not just because of the camaraderie and the friends he had there. And he felt part of but he did take stuff, and the family took stuff from class and

applied it in their everyday lives, which actually reflects back to what my original concept was. Was that keeping him on a routine at home as well as as dance the dance studio and putting signs up around the house. To remind him in the mom would say, "like in dance, this is the first part you do. This is the second part." So when he would come home from school it was, "Okay, hang up your backpack here, put your dirty dishes for your dirty containers for your school lunch in the sink, put this back in the refrigerator." And they made it like a routine in the dance at home. So when he walked in, it was boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom.

E Elle Billing 20:33

Right. And so that impact of being involved in the arts trans-, like, generalized and transferred into his everyday life, which is what your original idea was? Yeah.

D Dan Watt 20:43

Right. So it was it was great that too, and for them to share that with me and Aly, who I love is the one who had that little afro,

E Elle Billing 20:53

Oh, yeah. The girl with perfect pitch.

D Dan Watt 20:56

Is she Yes. Is she not? And I'm still friends with her and her mom, I just fell in love with that girl. And just to to see that she has, you know, the autism spectrum. Bonnie says this, if you know someone with autism, you know one person with autism because the spectrum is so vast.

E Elle Billing 21:18

It really is. Yep.

D Dan Watt 21:20

And that's that is a huge learning curve that I had to learn while filming. So a lot of it. I had to adjust every day to what was going on. Oh, here's a perfect example. I can't believe I forgot about this. The first day we showed up to film. You know, before I took this adventure on, I worked for Columbia Pictures where, you know, I had access to anything I wanted, you know, it was a phone call away. So, but now I had to put my crew together and go there. And I'm like, Oh, I have three cameras. We're going to film from every angle, and it's just going to be brilliant and fabulous. And then you go into that room and those kids went crazy.

E Elle Billing 22:05

E Elle Billing 22:05
As a teacher I'm like, Yeah, you put a camera in a room of kids.

D Dan Watt 22:11
You-- right?

E Elle Billing 22:12
what do you think is gonna happen??

D Dan Watt 22:15
????? and a microphone and you know, the boom mic and lighting. And I was like, whoa. And within five and five minutes, I told them all to leave the studio. I was like, what were you thinking Dan?? what did you think?

E Elle Billing 22:28
I actually thought about that. While I was watching. While I was watching. I was like, I wonder. I wonder how Dan made this work? Because I know how kids act around cameras.

D Dan Watt 22:36
Yeah, exactly. And there I was, with my Columbia Pictures mind hat on, going this is going to be spectacular. And I'll get it from the ceiling and every angle, and it ended up--

E Elle Billing 22:49
and then there's like this disembodied narrator: it was not spectacular. No, it turned out. it did. It looks great. But I was, I was actually curious how that worked out. Because I'm like that, that one studio doesn't look very big. And those kids are moving around a lot.

D Dan Watt 23:06
It took about five minutes. And I just I told everybody I said go outside in the parking lot. I told my entire crew, I said get out. And I went out there. And I said, we got to figure out how to do this. And the one cameraman then said, Well, let me just carry the camera on my shoulder. And Ben had gone up there, one of the times with me before we filmed so him and I could talk and figure out our landscape and what we were going to do. And then what we did is Ben and I didn't film that day, we sat in the studio. And I said these kids need to get used to us being here.

E

Elle Billing 23:41

Yeah.

D

Dan Watt 23:42

Right. Were you able to ask the daughter how she felt about, or the student how she felt about having it in the, in the film? And then we went back the following week, and just sat there. So then they would come in and say hi. Or give us a hug, or just walk by like, I don't care who you are, you know, like any class, it has nothing to do with ability or disability. That's just kids. So once once they got used to our physical being being in there, and we couldn't use the boom mic, because they all thought it was caterpillars and wanted to pet it. So we had to take the fuzzy boom mic out of it. We just miked Bonnie with a lavalier mic and we put some around the studio and on the camera. And then we just had to then switch our-- or I had to switch my entire idea of filming it and then it just turned it into a rogue style run-and-gun, they call it in the business type of shooting where Ben just had it on his shoulder and walked wherever the kids weren't. If the kids were coming to the left, he would just step back and go to the right. And we just had to adjust to whatever they were doing. And there's one or two parts where there's that one part where a girl gets overwhelmed in class and and starts to laugh and leaves the studio. You know and she runs out of the studio and she you know she hits him. Well, I wanted that story in there. Cuz the classroom and learning the choreography, again, like any dance studio, because I've learned it and you become overwhelmed when you're like, oh my gosh, this is my sixth number. She got overwhelmed, and had to leave. And her coping mechanism mechanism is to laugh while the laugh disrupted the class. So she left. But I talked to her mom and dad first, this goes back to your question, too. I said, I think this is an important for the audience to see that this is a coping mechanism of someone on the autism spectrum. And can I use it? And the parents agreed, so I was very conscience about things like that, where I thought it might be great to expose this, this coping mechanism, you know, in attached to stimming and all that kind of stuff that this could, could help. But I wanted to make sure the parents were okay with it. Because I didn't want it to turn into an embarrassing moment for the daughter. The we pulled it back up on the camera at the studio. After everybody had left in Bonnie was there with us. And we showed it to her and she clapped. She thought she she was the star of the movie. She felt

E

Elle Billing 26:30

Oh, okay,

D

Dan Watt 26:31

because she had a close up. You know, so it didn't it didn't bother her. And the parents agreed that they felt it could be a learning tool that they thought the world should see. Well, you know, it's like the shy kid that, you know, hides under your arm or hides. You know, the everybody has different coping mech-.

E Elle Billing 26:51
Oh, absolutely. Yeah.

D Dan Watt 26:53
Hers is just to laugh.

E Elle Billing 26:55
Yeah. You know, going back to when you said how Barney said, you've met one person with autism, or one autistic person, you know, exactly one person who has autism, and how some of the parents really wanted to tell their story. I think it was Liam's parents who, when he was diagnosed, it was his, his dad was like, "Oh, this is this is what autism can look like too" like he had a different idea of what autism and or what an autistic child looked like. And so when they, when Liam got his diagnosis-- was that Liam's dad?

D Dan Watt 27:30
Yeah, yeah,

E Elle Billing 27:31
yeah. Okay. And so when he was diagnosed, they, his dad, just, for him, there was that steep learning curve too, of, oh, it can look like this too

D Dan Watt 27:41
correct

E Elle Billing 27:41
and trying to and trying and figuring out what it was going to look like for their family too. And I thought that was really interesting to include, because, again, there was several autistic students are in the video in the movie. And each of them was a very diverse representation of the spectrum. And each of them access the dance class differently. And their families all had a different story. But each of them were involved, like very fully involved in in the program. And I think it really provided, provided a great arts opportunity for them. But it also in like, the way that you presented it in the film, it really did show that like, there's this whole spectrum that people don't necessarily realize, is autism. And all of it is valid. And all of it needs support. And all of it needs inclusion. But it didn't-- but you also didn't limit your film just to kids with autism. Like there were other there were other students interspersed in there. And I really appreciated that you included all of them.

 Dan Watt 28:51

Well, and I actually, in the first two months, we filmed broader big shots of the classes and the routines and all that, because then I was taking notes of what personalities were popping out.

 Elle Billing 29:03

Oh, there are some great personalities. I love kids.

 Dan Watt 29:08

And there are there are just so many are amazing. But the reality is, I'm making a movie. So we also needed to then decide whose story arc works. So we went from everybody. Then I narrowed it down to I think 13. And then I narrowed it down to like 11. Because then sometimes when you interview the parents, they'll say sure, not a problem. Come on over. And then you ask them a question. Their answer is yes. And you're like, Okay, so can you tell me a little bit more about Ella? She's nice. Okay, you know it, their intentions were good, but they just don't know how to tell us a story or be open enough, you know, they felt uncomfortable, even though they wanted to be.

 Elle Billing 30:04

And that's totally valid too. some people just aren't comfortable on camera. Yeah,

 Dan Watt 30:09

well, yeah. And that's, that's again, like anything my sister hates to walk in front of people in her voice goes up five octaves, you know, and she talks really, really fast like a munchkin. Not too much of a chipmunk.

 Elle Billing 30:22

That's funny. My sister's autistic, I actually interviewed her last season about both of us grew up undiagnosed. And were diagnosed neurodivergent in our late 30s. And so we were talking about what it's like to get a diagnosis in adulthood. And like, all of a sudden, our childhood make sense. And one of her coping mechanisms is to be a storyteller. So she has like the opposite of your of your sister where like she her coping mechanism is stage presence. Like, that's how she has, that's how she has coped with life.

 30:54

Oh, that's great. I'll have to look that interview up. I watched some from I watched your last or listened to your last five, so I'll have to go and track her. Yeah,

E Elle Billing 31:02
it was at the end of the first towards the end of the first season we talked about. It's called it's not a quirk. It's a symptom.

D Dan Watt 31:09
Okay. That's great. Yeah,

E Elle Billing 31:13
yeah, her big coping thing is like to perf-- She performs life, basically. It's, and so the last couple years have been really interesting to deconstruct that.

D Dan Watt 31:23
I'm excited to listen to it. To get back to where we were in.

E Elle Billing 31:27
I'm sorry.

D Dan Watt 31:28
That's okay. No, no, because I love that

E Elle Billing 31:30
that's my ADHD

D Dan Watt 31:32
it also shows that there's even again, if you know, one person with autism, you know, one person with autism because you just expose a completely different personality trait in someone else. But I fell in love with these kids. Because I was up there every weekend. And I I, there's no way I could decide. And I knew I wanted Liam in it. But did I want Liam in it because I fell in love with Liam, because here's a boy who's studying dance. And being one of the only boys who danced in Cleveland. Am I? Is there a story there? Or am I just Oh, good, another boy who takes dance. So I gave all the footage to my editor. And I said, and I had to trust him. I said, "You know what? I'd used them all. But I know that's not possible. So will you please watch the stories and tell me," and then he narrowed it down to seven. And from that seven, we narrowed

it down from there. But then again, you have to be open to what's going on and be present. Because there's the girl in the film called Breezy. She's older, and I didn't think I was going to focus on her and her family, in the beginning. And then I saw her at the rehearsal, the night before the show, and she was centerstage tap dancing. And her smile, and the excitement that oozed out of her was overwhelming. And I thought, this girl is having the time of her life. And she just didn't give a hoot. And she did the dance. And she was so good that they put her front and center so everybody could follow her if they weren't sure what to do. And I thought that radiant personality on stage, she didn't have it in the classroom, but she had it on stage. So then I went back and watched footage of her in the classroom and thought I think I need to tell this story because look at her. After 10 months, look what she accomplished, and how much fun she was having. And the the joy of being there. Like any performer, you know that she wanted to be up there. Again, there were the ones that lay down on the on the floor and cried because they didn't want to be in front of an audience. But again, my nephew does the same thing.

E

Elle Billing 34:00

Kids. Yeah, yeah, I used to get such terrible stage fright. When I was a kid that I would, I'd get like gastrointestinal distress the day of like piano recitals or plays or whatever. And like it was really bad. Every single time I had, and the thing is I love performing. But it was just like the anticipation of it would make me physically ill like the date the day of a performance. Yep. And my dad and I both have this thing where like our hands get freezing cold, but like right before we have to go on stage. Just like we lose circulation in our fingers. Yeah, our hands get cold.

D

Dan Watt 34:35

Yeah, my feet get cold. I never thought about that. But I always have on like two pair of socks before I before I used to perform. And then I'd have to take them off to go on stage. Because they don't fit your jazz shoes. But I always that's interesting. I need to look into that.

E

Elle Billing 34:47

Yeah, that's just people. Life.

D

Dan Watt 34:49

Right? Yeah.

E

Elle Billing 34:51

different responses to fear. Right. It's the terror of being seen. So we're getting close to the end. And so I did say that I would flip my questions. So the question I usually ask at the beginning, but I saved for the end, because we jumped right into the documentary was: how have you received care this week?

D Dan Watt 35:26

This? Well, I will say that the most recent care I received, was getting that question from you three days ago?

E Elle Billing 35:36

Oh!

D Dan Watt 35:39

Because it made me reflect it. First of all, it's a question that I think everyone needs to ask themselves. And they need to do it on a regular basis. Because there's so many different types of care. And what we need to do is be able to recognize it. And because to me, there's physical care, there's mental, and there's emotional care, and we need to be open to see it in ourselves, and be willing to see it, and then what do we do about it? So when you asked that, when you sent me that question, I thought, well, how does this relate to me? The first thing that popped into my head was when my mom went to, you know, her assisted living? And I'm like, Well, no, that was me helping her. So how does it you know, but it connected to that was our there were times that I had to step back and take care of myself, so that I could take care of her. But it also goes back to the self care part, in regards to realizing and recognizing and the thoughts that pop into your head and make you feel guilty that you decide to take a day off. And because of the profession that I grew up in, or chose to do, we never took a day off. Because you book a job and your job, say I'm choreographing the show Oklahoma. So I'm past my dance career, and I'm now choreographer, okay, that's January through April. Well, in February, you have to look for the job that starts in May, or maybe in April, because you know, so you're always ahead ahead ahead. And you're always looking and going and chasing, and doing the next thing and the next thing and the next thing. But your body can't keep up, your brain can't keep up and you need to be able to shut down and I read in a book somewhere to look at your brain as if it's a computer. And you have all those files and set-- you need to shut sometimes you need to shut down a file or a program to open up another one. And if you think of it that way, that just resonated with me visually that I can go oh, you need to shut these down, your computer needs to be turned off, needs to power down today. That's what he said, needs to power down so that it will be ready for you tomorrow, or the next day. And your question made me dig out all those books I used to read when I was going through trying to figure out what to do with my life. Why am I running so much? Why am I always chasing, chasing, chasing, chasing, chasing, chasing? And then you're not enjoying the moment you're in because you're chasing the next one. And I spent a lot of time on that and trying to change that thought process? And I think 85% of the time I can do it. But you asking that question made me dig out books and reread some of the passages that helped me get more clear and more focused. So I have to thank you for giving me the care I needed this week. Because it-- it brought me back to a place that I haven't been to in a couple of months. And I really needed to get back here. So that goes back to I don't know, I don't think I don't think we talked about it here. I think we talked about it in an email. You meet the people you need to meet when you need to meet them.



E Elle Billing 35:40

E Elle Billing 39:18

Yep. And if you're paying attention the right, people cross your path.

D Dan Watt 39:22

Right.

E Elle Billing 39:22

And that wasn't the that wasn't our email last night.

D Dan Watt 39:24

Yeah. And here we are, you know, so I reached out to you because there was something about you and what you were posting and what you did, and I thought Yeah, no, I, I want to talk to her. And if it goes somewhere fine. If it doesn't, it doesn't. But, you know, if I wouldn't have reached out to you, I wouldn't have gotten-- and that's another thing when you're doing self care, you need to reach out for help and be able to accept it. And I did not know that I was going to get the self help I needed by reaching out to you, And I appreciate you. So thank you.

E Elle Billing 40:00

thank you for sharing that. There's something you said towards the beginning of that answer that reminded me of the thing that I tell my friends when they're feeling guilty about taking time off, or taking a break, is that you have to put on your own oxygen mask before you help others. And I say that all the time, and still sometimes forget to do that myself. So, because and so I really appreciate your answer, and specifically that you mentioned your mother, because I have been in my feelings this week about some of my own caregiving duties. And so thank you. I just I really appreciate having you here today. Thank you for sharing your documentary with us. I will put the links to it in the show notes. So everybody can watch Everybody Dance, a Danin' Dan Production. Yeah, thank you so much for being here. I really appreciate the time. Yeah, thank you. 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://hoorfpodcast.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 a review in Apple podcasts. Reviews are one of the major ways that Apple ranks their podcasts. So even though it only takes you a few seconds, it really does make a difference for us. Become a patron for \$3 a month you can support the creation of this podcast, pay my editor and join a community of fellow caregivers out here just doing our best. Thank you again for joining me Elle billing in this episode of Hoorf. Until next time, be excellent to each other. Hoorf is hosted by Elle Billing @elleandwink audio editing by Ricki Cummings @rickiep00h . Music composed by Ricki Cummings Hoorf is a production of Elle & Wink Art Studio, all rights reserved. Hoorf podcast can be found on social media channels @hoorfpodcast at H O O R F podcast



Dan Watt 42:37

this is your movie, asshole. I am giving you the way in