

## Telling It Our Way

### Episode 11 Resolutions

Air Date 12/26/23

Description: In this episode, Ally and Becca chat with Associate Producer Conor Smenner about the behind-the-scenes process of getting Telling It Our Way on air, from story brainstorms to final transcripts. In between, we hear New Year's Resolutions from all the episode contributors and look forward to Season 2!

Ally 0:00

Hey, Becca, it's almost the new year. It's almost 2024.

Becca 0:21

Oh, yes, I'm so excited, and here on Telling it Our Way, today, we're doing something a little bit different. So we wanted to look back at this season and hear from all of our season contributors, who are each going to share their New Year's resolution. We also will have a special guest with us today, someone whose name you have heard on every single episode, but who we've never gotten to talk to yet. And this is our associate producer Conor Smenner.

Conor 0:46

Hi, how are you guys?

Becca 0:47

We're excited. You're here.

Conor 0:48

I'm excited to be here.

Ally 0:51

We invited Conor because we thought before we close out the season with our seasons, contributors sharing their resolutions, we would chat a little bit about Telling it Our Way behind the scenes. And Conor has been an important part of making things work here.

Becca 1:04

Yeah, so we'll come back to you, Conor. But first, we wanted to backtrack a little and talk about how we got here, how the show's origins, where our storytellers are coming from all that stuff. So I'll let you take that away, Ally

Ally 1:17

So it's really funny, because I was just driving in my car. And I had one of those, I believe, you call them your driveway moments, right? Where you're listening, and you stop and you hear an announcement, and I heard the call for the voices around us podcast initiative. And I immediately thought, oh, we need to do that. And when I, when I said, we need to do that I thought of my wonderful colleague, Becca, you. And in particular, because I've been watching you put on these amazing storytelling workshops all year, and maybe even for the year previous to that. And so I thought there's all these wonderful stories that I've been getting to hear and witness in the making. And it seems like we get to share them with audiences that are great audiences for an in person event, but that these storytellers deserved a much bigger platform.

Becca 2:15

Yeah. And so you gave me a call. And I was like, of course, I definitely want to do that. How much work could this possibly be? It turned out it was a lot.

Ally 2:23

It doesn't help that Becca and I are both professors. And we work on an academic schedule. And this was finals week. And so I was coming off of a research sabbatical. So I had a lot of energy. And I called back and I said, I know that you're about to grade about 100 final exams. But here's this really great idea. Do you want me to submit the application for it

Becca 2:44

again I was like anything to avoid these exams

Ally 2:46

Yeah, exactly.

Ally 2:47

All good projects come out of procrastination from doing something else.

Becca 2:51

Right, so We'll share more about our behind the scenes activities, as we kind of move through the episode. But before we get to that, I think I'd like to share our first set of resolutions.

Ally 3:02

Yeah, so we're going to start off this set with Phyllis. Phyllis is one of our first contributors from our very first episode about romance.

Becca 3:11

Yeah. And then you'll also hear from Zoe Jordan and Courtney Taylor, Tyler, Sophie, and the other Jordan.

Phyllis 3:25

I'm working on cleaning my place. And hopefully we'll start planning our wedding

Zoe 3:30

When I'm done with school, like Anthony Wayne I'm going to be going to another school, which is Penta Career Center. I'm going for job training.

Jordan 3:43

My resolution is I'm going to drink less coffee, and I'm going to work on sign language with Teddy more.

Conor 3:54

I would like to partake in new activities and get to know the people around me.

Taylor 4:01

My New Year's resolution was that I want to propose to my girlfriend in the future.

Tyler 4:09

I do love business. I would like to start my own company one day like a science company like advanced science

Sophie 4:18

Yeah, working out more because I'm working out and I want to keep working out more. And I want to think positive things about myself because I always say negative things. I want to keep working out consistently and think positive thoughts about myself.

Jordan 4:35

I just want to make sure we just live equilibrium balance, or Libra is my zodiac sign to make sure us humans and animals live coexistence.

Becca 4:55

All right, that was a great first set. I'm feeling really inspired for what I want to do in the next year.

Ally 5:00

I know it's always so great to have people share their resolutions and feel hopeful that if other people are going to work towards all of these great things, whether it's romance or celebrating in their community, that there surely must be something that I can work towards too.

Becca 5:17

Yeah, right. So, before we get into our next set of resolutions, we want to talk a little bit more about the show. So here, I want to tell you all about some other people whose names you hear a lot. That's our advisory board, Gavin Daley, JoRita Fox, and Quinn Thomas, who we invited to review our proposals for the show, review our topics for the season, our approach to inviting storytellers, these are all people with disabilities in our community who serve as self advocates, and really kind of community leaders. And we wanted to make sure that we were approaching the show the right way. And that's actually how we met Conor too. So Conor, and I met because

he is currently serving on the Board of Developmental Disabilities for Lucas County. And we had initially thought that maybe he would be a member of our advisory board too. But instead, you are meant to have a much larger role. So Conor, why don't you introduce yourself and tell us a little bit about what you do here?

Conor 6:15

Well, hi, everybody, my name is Conor Smenner. And I as Becca said, I am the Associate Producer for Telling it Our Way. And basically, some of my duties, behind the scenes are editing all of the transcripts that you guys can read through with each episode, and then doing some light editing work as well. And then being able to hear and listen to all of the stories that have been on throughout the season, has really been eye opening for me, I've really gotten to hear a lot of different perspectives from a lot of different people. And I've really enjoyed it. So

Ally 6:58

Conor, what appealed to you about the podcast project in the first place?

Conor 7:02

First and foremost, it was just another platform for individuals with disabilities, their voices to be heard. And I'm, you know, all for individuals with disabilities sharing their story, and sharing, you know, how they got to where they are today. And, you know, sharing how they get through life on a day to day basis. And I think it's important for individuals to learn through others and learn from experiences that all of these people have gotten to share throughout the season. And I hope that, as listeners, you guys have gotten, you know, valuable information out of it, and it's inspired you. And I hope that you guys will, hopefully, continue to do another season. And we get to hear more stories from more people in the community and hear more about how they get through their day to day life.

Becca 8:10

Conor, you are a community leader in your own right, in terms of promoting inclusion and the rights of people with disabilities. And so I wondered if you might share a little bit about your own background.

Conor 8:21

Yep. So I'm currently serving as a board member on the Lucas County Developmental Board of Disabilities, where I help with duties like budgeting, the board's dollars for what they go to. And then I also help individuals who might need vocational services or different things like that within the Lucas County community, whether that's, you know, counseling services or things like that, through the board, and the board has really helped me to be able to connect with these individuals and get them the services that they need, so that they can improve their overall quality of life,

Ally 9:09

How do you find yourself in a position to serve on a board like that?

Conor 9:13

I like to say things happen for a reason. And you know, some things are just put in front of me, and you know, opportunities are there, and I should take them because me myself, I, I also have a physical disability. And my whole life, I've kind of known what it's like to live with one and I want to help others live their best life possible. And if that means me helping to provide services for them so that they can do that. I'm all for that. Because If I didn't have, you know, services, through county providers and state providers and things like that, I wouldn't be where I am today. So it's also part of me kind of, quote unquote, giving back to the community in the way that I see fit,

Becca 10:18

Conor, will you tell us just a little bit about your own podcast aspiration?

Conor 10:22

So I actually have edited quite a few different podcasts in my repertoire. And I also have aspirations to kind of do my own podcast one day, you know, I just want to talk about, you know, my story, and kind of, you know, how I came to be, you know, and how I've made it, as far as I have in the community, and in the, you know, Greater Toledo area, I think. And also, you know, interviewing people who have had similar experiences, or interviewing, you know, individuals who provide services for other individuals with disabilities, whether that be you know, technology, housing, vocational services, or a whole host of things, just to let people know and educate people that these services are out there for help if they need it

Becca 11:25

Well, Ally, and I would love to be a guest on your podcast,

Conor 11:28

I would love to have you

Ally 11:30

We're gonna come back and talk a little bit more with Connor but I want to hear some more resolutions .

Becca 11:35

Oh, yes, please

Ally 11:37

Up next we have Diana starting us out. We heard from Diana a couple of weeks ago, when she shared her favorite sandwich that she ate as a kid. And we're going to hear from her first regarding some of her resolutions for 2024.

Becca 11:51

Then after that, we'll hear from Darius Christopher Cass and Brad, Paul and Jen.

Cassandra 12:01

Probably go to Florida, have my friend come see my new apartment visit my brother in West Virginia.

Darius 12:13

I want to learn how to play the guitar.

Christopher 12:18

I want a sweetheart.

Brad 12:22

Well, we're hoping hopefully, we continue this relationship and hopefully, whatever our futures holds, we will be ready and hopefully start a new life together.

Cassandra 12:46

I do want to like move out and then have my own place.

Paul 12:50

The biggest new year's resolution that I have for the coming year is to show what I have become and be something greater to everyone I know. But to be something greater in the company I cherish

Jen 13:08

I would say lose some weight

Becca 13:20

Another great set of resolutions that's again making me feel like I'm slacking off a little bit.

Ally 13:25

Well, so Conor and Becca, do you guys have any resolutions? Are you resolution makers? Or are you very much opposed to resolutions? Because I feel like there's two kinds of people in the world the ones who make resolutions and the ones who refuse to do so

Becca 13:37

I like to be just pleasantly surprised by my successes.

Ally 13:41

That's one way to look at it.

Conor 13:42

I mean, I'm kind of the same way I would say I wouldn't say I'm opposed to resolutions, I don't generally set them just because I feel like a lot of people are like they set resolutions. And then it gets to February. And they're like, Oh, I forgot. So I just kind of let As Becca said, Let my successes kind of pleasantly surprise me. And kind of take each day as it comes.

Becca 14:11

So I do have a resolution for next year. And maybe it's a little bit of a cop out. But I'm really excited to make more Telling it Our Way. I mean, I think this podcast has been such a joy to create and both to kind of bring on folks that I've already known and have friendships with as well as to meet a whole bunch of new people across Ohio and across the country who have such rich stories to share. And there are so many more out there and I just want to know them all.

Ally 14:40

You know you stole my resolution. I'm very much a resolution maker. I like to make long lists of resolutions. So I at least am guaranteed to hit one of them if I have like 30 resolutions, right? Certainly one of my top resolutions was to continue Telling it Our Way and to continue hearing new stories. And so I thought that was a really good opportunity to tell our listeners a little bit about the storytelling workshops that you have been doing for years with folks with IDD and DD, and how you came about doing those storytelling workshops and what that process is like in terms of putting those stories together,

Becca 15:16

we alluded to the fact that we'd share a little bit about this earlier in the season, about how we develop these stories, how we work with our storytellers, to share their stories on the podcast, I have been doing storytelling workshops with with artists and with self advocates with intellectual and developmental disabilities for about five years now. And usually, that involves, you know, a six to eight week workshop where we come together every week for an hour or two hours to create these monologues. Essentially, that's what you've heard here on the podcast, too. And many of our storytellers, this season have participated in those workshops with me and the stories that they shared, were the stories they developed in those in those workshops. So these are things that, you know, you're not telling the story off the cuff, but you're drawing deep into your memory, you're creating a first draft, you're getting feedback from a big group, you're editing that draft, and then you're you're learning how to present that story as a performance, right. And so it takes some practice, it takes some development. But these are all stories that are coming from, from people's real memories. It's just a matter of kind of refining them through editing, and facilitating, and so forth. And so that's how we kind of, that's the root of this podcast, too. And then we had a number of people who had never done storytelling before, or certainly we'd never met before, who we would schedule some meetings with before we, we had invited them on the show, and we'd learn a little bit about the stories that they wanted to tell, we'd offer some feedback on to how they might tell that story. Sometimes we wrote together, sometimes they wrote their own story and brought it in. And so you get a whole bunch of variants on how these stories came together. But ultimately, yeah, like I said, they're all coming directly from all of our storytellers, their ideas that they're coming up with themselves, we organize some of our topics, our episode topics based on the kinds of stories people wanted to tell. That's how we developed each episode of the series

Ally 17:15

So as we imagine, season two of Telling it Our Way, we're going to work with our advisory board to come up with a collection of themes of things that will probably extend some of the conversations that we've started. So we already know that the Advisory Board wants to do an episode on sex, not just romance, but sex. So we will let our listeners know when that's coming. So we know that the Advisory Board has ideas about the kinds of themes that they want to tackle for season two. And so we'll start recruiting storytellers, either through local storytelling workshops here. Or if you are a listener who has a story that you want to tell or a theme that you want to hear about, we would love to hear from you. And you can get in contact with us on the WGTE website.

Becca 17:18

and I think that I'm really excited to hear from storytellers from across Toledo, from across Ohio, from across the country about the kinds of things that you want to share. What I think is so special about storytelling, is that you get to decide what's important to you, you get to decide which piece of yourself that you want to share with the world. And so we want to know, which pieces do you want to share with the world. So please get in touch with us.

Ally 18:30

I think sometimes we think, Okay, we have our one shot to tell a story. And we try to fit our entire life story into that. And we want to let our listeners know, you don't have one shot, you have a lot of shots. And we might hear from some of the folks from season one, we might hear from them again for season two, because we all have more than one story to tell. So I want to encourage listeners to think about their life stories in installments. Because I think that's what makes it really interesting when you can kind of zero zoom in on a theme in your life and sort of talk about that.

Becca 19:04

Yeah definitely, So that's enough from us. We have one more set of resolutions that we want to share with you. This one we're kicking it off with Davina and then Matthew who both participated in our community episode. Then we have JoRita, Becca and Darick Brandon, Leah and then we'll close out with Molly.

Davina 19:29

For the future I want to be like to be independent, like education, having a job,

Matthew 19:38

I guess to see a peaceful world I know a few people are going through a few things right now. outside of work and inside of work hopefully they find a way to fix what's wrong and they get better from it

JoRita 19:57

Well, my New Year's resolution is something that I have been doing for the last month or so but I would just like to stay on two feet. When I came back from orthopedic rehab the first time I fell



four times and wound up in the hospital and rehab a second time. So now I'm doing really well. And I haven't fallen yet. But my resolution is not to fall. I want to stay on those two feet.

Becca Dickerson 20:35

I do want to see anybody nobody on the streets. I don't like it. I don't want to see people struggling like we did.

Derrick 20:46

I just don't want anybody to be in our shoes. Don't want to have them just find help. you know, do what you gotta do, fight for your rights. to try and get everything back to normal. Not throw it under the bus . But just try to fight until you find a place.

Brandon 21:12

to become the best music man in all of Ohio and whenever they need me for music gigs, I can go out there and help them out.

Leah 21:22

I have a lot but my favorite two. The first is that I want to finish getting my book published online. I'm working on writing a fanfiction story. So I want to get that published next year. And secondly, I want to reach my goal weight of 140 pounds.

Molly 21:38

My year's resolution would be continue on the Ohio DD console. It is made with people I have a disability or people that have somebody with a disability

Ally 21:58

It's so awesome to have all of our contributors back from the season and to hear what they're planning and looking forward to in 2024.

Becca 22:04

Yeah and before we end we just want to offer a special thanks to our associate producer Conor Smenner, who's here with us.

Ally 22:12

in the studio in the flesh.

Becca 22:13

We want to thank you for joining us and for sharing that behind the scenes work here at Telling it Our Way. And as always, we want to offer a special thanks to our telling it our way advisory board members Jo Rita Fox, Quinn Thomas and Gavin Dailey

Ally 22:13

special thanks to our WGTE producer Chris Peiffer,

Becca 22:31

Chris Peiffer, who's always in the studio with us. Thank you so much for everything Chris.

Ally 22:36

And to access transcripts for the show and any other show notes please visit [wgte.org/our way](http://wgte.org/our-way) I'm Ally Day.

Becca 22:43

and I'm Becca Monteleone and This is Conor Smenner.

Conor 22:46

Yes.

Becca 22:47

And you've been listening to Telling it Our Way.

Speaker 1 23:00

WGTE voices around us. WGTE is supported in part by American Rescue Plan Act funds allocated by the City of Toledo and the Lucas County Commissioners and administered by the Arts Commission