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The awesome circus of life

My dear readers, listeners, and watchers, do your heads spin as mine does in this awesome circus of life? So much to take in, process, and react to - or not. I don't even pretend to keep up. My curiosity and fascination with life, people, stories, motivation, and connections continue unabated. I'm grateful to discover gobs of inspiring work almost every day. However, every few days, I need to integrate the shiny objects I discover and re-prioritize my activities.



Unknown photographer

Before I tell you about some of my ongoing and upcoming projects, my activism focus has shifted. Not off patients and caregivers but realizing that I'm old. If I could have changed the world, it would have happened already. I don't have the keys. I don't have the energy to change the 'system.' I do have some experience, wisdom, and power - underline the some. Rather, I'm delighted to work with younger people who have different ideas, methods, and more energy than me. My priorities of self-care, family, music, podcasting and PCORI will go nowhere. Everything needs to fit into one or more of those buckets. Each bucket serves my activism. This episode fills you in on my status, doings, and musings. Every time I do one of these episodes about myself, I think, uh, who cares? But it seems like they get the most downloads and people tell me they really like 'em. So here's another episode like that.

Podcast intro 02:11

Welcome to health hats, the podcast. I'm Danny van Leeuwen a two-legged cisgender old white man of privilege who knows a little bit about a lot of healthcare and a lot of our very little. We will listen and learn about what it takes to adjust to life's realities in the awesome circus of healthcare. Let's make some sense of all of this.



<https://www.health-hats.com/pod183>

Young adults with mental illness 02:46



Photo by Elijah Hiett on Unsplash

I've started interviewing for a series on Young Adults with Mental Illness. We need our young adults to be best positioned for the challenges and messes we leave behind. Our many cultures perfectly make life insanely tricky for young adults' mental health (pun intended). The upside of a slight reduction in stigma about mental illness over the past decade is that it appears way more prevalent – wait, it is way more prevalent. What's going on? What are young adults experiencing? How can we, how do we support those in need? I know enough to be dangerous. Since I root most of my podcasts in lived experience, I'm already speaking with inspirational young adults and parents. I'm also interviewing teachers, licensed

professionals, community service providers, payers, policymakers, and researchers to better understand their pieces of the puzzle. I'm using social media (now adding Mastodon @healthhats) to lurk, listen, pose questions, and find resources outside my bubble. I haven't figured out how to package this series, but it'll come soon enough. So far, I know the challenge feels right. We can learn more, create new connections, and build integrated collaborations. Jan Oldenburg suggested I ask everyone *what one thing would have made your journey to best health more manageable and more sustainable?*

Health communication 04:24

As you know, I eagerly explore different media, channels, and messages in health communication. I'm testing communication with our common and uncommon neurodiversity and diverse sensory abilities (of fancy way of saying vision and hearing). Lately I think about how and when to describe skin tone on [alt-text](#) when I'm color palate illiterate. Alt-text is a tool used describe images in print and video for people with limited vision. Black, brown, and white don't seem adequate descriptors when a gallery of faces is described. I'm asking these questions personally and on social media. I'll share the results.

A word from our sponsor, Abridge 05:34

Record your healthcare conversations with doctors and other clinicians with ABridge. Push the big pink button and record. Read the transcript or listen to clips when you get home. Check out the app at [ABridge.com](https://www.abridge.com). Or download it on the Apple app store or Google play store. Let me know how it went.

Video skills 06:18

I learn as I go in video production. If you're watching, you can see I'm learning as I go. I receive varied feedback about my *on-mic* video portion of video. This episode is all *on-mic*, me talking to you, not an interview or chat. I haven't yet mastered the skill of simply talking to the camera without writing it out in advance. Some people say it looks like I'm reading (which I am) so I should use images, animation for the visual part so it's not apparent that I'm reading. Others say, don't worry, we'd rather see you than images and animation. At this point images and animation are more work. Perhaps I could work on 30-seconds at a time of on-mic without reading and build that skill. Let me know what you think.



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My health 07:21

On a personal level, my double vision has grown increasingly problematic – getting worse weekly over the past six months. I need a new prescription almost monthly. Reading music grows more arduous. Fortunately, I've found a comprehensive ophthalmology practice and hope to have corrective [strabismus surgery](#) early next year. It can't come too soon. Otherwise, I'm great.

Nuggets from the mine 08:03

In my neurodiversity, I forget everything I read or watch immediately when done. I immediately forget a discovered nugget of brilliance. Podcast editing allows me to process and shift stuff to a different part of my brain I can access. Perhaps I could start a podcast feature – *Nuggets from the Mine?*

Here's a nugget: I follow **Those Nerdy Girls** [on Substack](#), [Facebook](#), and [website](#). Those Nerdy Girls are a collective of epidemiologists and epidemiologist lovers (people who investigate the presence and absence of disease and related causes). Those Nerdy Girls began early COVID. I found their style of answering questions of non-scientists with evidence-based, referenced answers comforting and consumable. They update the material, have a sense of humor and humility, and appear to learn continually. I have had at least half the questions they answer. I spoke with a few Nerdy Girls about a Social Media Squad they're setting up. A nugget, check them out in the show notes. I'll try to do these regularly.



Photo by Nick Fewings on Unsplash

Remembering Michael Funk 09:55



Mike, Danny, Simon. Photo by Ann Boland

Today that I'm writing and recording is May 18th, the anniversary of the death of my son, Michael Funk. It's been a long time since he passed. He was 26. You know, people say, uh, that's awful. And you know, there were parts of it that were awful and there were parts of it that just were wonderful. We were close as a family and we experienced it together, and we supported each other. And we learned a lot. We met Mike when he was 15 and he died when he was 26. So, we had 11 years together and it was a beautiful, tumultuous, painful, ecstatic period. I want to take a minute and recognize a wonderful guy, Michael Funk. I miss you, Mike.

Podcast Outro 11:20

I host, write, edit, engineer, and produce Health Hats, the Podcast. Kayla Nelson provides website and social media consultation and creates video trailers. Joey van Leeuwen supplies musical support, especially for the podcast intro and out. I play bari sax on some episodes alone or with the Lechuga Fresca Latin Band. I'm grateful to you, who have the most critical roles as listeners, readers, and watchers. See the show notes, previous podcasts, and other resources through my website, www.health-hats.com, and my [YouTube channel](#). Please subscribe and contribute. If you like it, share it. See around the block.



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