Unseen, but felt: The art of allyship

# Season 3 Episode 1

**Speakers:** Belle Owen, Dr Ellen Fraser-Barbour

00:02 **Belle Owen**

I'm Belle Owen, and this is the Purple Orange podcast. I'm here today with my colleague, Dr. Ellen Fraser-Barbour, and we're going to talk about allyship.

Ellen, what does allyship mean to you?

00:15 **Ellen Fraser-Barbour**

Allyship means that we show curiosity and have a degree of willingness to learn about people’s experiences that are different from our own, and that we want to make change in a way that benefits all of us. That we realise that if we are able to, you know, interact with people in a way that feels meaningful and respectful, then it means that we're more likely to build a sense of connection and well-being that sort of feels like both ways, in a way.

What does it mean to you, though?

00:58 **Belle Owen**

Yeah, I think similar, and really what it boils down to for me is someone who is making the effort in multiple ways to remove barriers, to show solidarity, to make life easier for the community that they're an ally to.

01:15 **Ellen Fraser-Barbour**

I guess I wonder, though, cause when you talk about like solidarity and making an effort, sometimes it can feel transactional. It feels like people are doing the action for a purpose that feels like it's for their own benefit and not for the benefit of community somehow. It feels ingenuine. It doesn't feel authentic or respectful somehow, even though they're trying to do allyship, it doesn’t always feel like it’s benefitting.

I don't know, have you ever had that kind of experience?

01:49 **Belle Owen**

Yeah, I think for some people, in particularly when they’re new on a disability allyship journey, in might feel clumsy. It might feel clumsy to that person because they're not sure what they're doing. It might feel clumsy to me because I'm on the receiving end, or I'm experiencing someone who's sort of, with the best intentions, trying to help, but not always with the best impact. And I also think that, yeah, sometimes people's motivations are different, people’s understanding of what's helpful is different. And so, I think true allyship actually comes from a place of listening and learning before acting.

02:32 **Ellen Fraser-Barbour**

Yeah. That’s a good way of thinking about it.

02:37 **Belle Owen**

I feel like for both of us as women with lifelong experiences of disability, we have probably had experiences of allyship in so many facets of our life in, you know, from our education, maybe health settings, employment, in our personal lives, romantic lives. Is there any instances that stand out to you in a positive way that have made a really good impact on you?

03:07 **Ellen Fraser-Barbour**

Yeah, I think for me,the times when I felt mostsupported and respected and genuinely understoodhas been around people where they don'tladen their projected ideas of disabilityonto me.

So for example, they don't go, ‘Oh, you've got a hearing impairment. ‘I'm so sorry to hear that. That must be so hard for you.’ And they are trying to show empathy in that moment.

They're trying to sort of, you know, empathise, but it has the opposite effect. But then the people who I have felt really drawn to, who are really respectful, who are really supportive, don't do that. They just go, ‘Oh, so tell me more about what your experience is?’ Or, ‘That's really interesting. I’d really like to know more about this and this and this...’

And they open up the conversation in a way that doesn't then steer me into this thing of having to either reject pity and their reaction, and it’s sort of that opposite of that, it's like open space for me to be able to name whatever matters to me and what my experience is, and vice versa. I can do the same for them.

And I'm very conscious of doing that with people. Sort of being like, ‘So what is your experience?’ ‘Tell me more about what it means to you? Like, what’s your- what are the things that help you? What are the things that, you know, that make it tricky?

What are the things that open up space? And what are the things that close down conversations?’

And it is those sorts of open conversations without projecting my emotions into it. I feel like that really helps me. I'm not sure though, everyone is different. Some people really value that kind of emotional response, but I find it really challenging to manage those.

What about you?

05:06 **Belle Owen**

It's such a- It's also sucha nuanced discussion because I think thatthere is room to talk about the ways inwhich the experience of disability is hardand there's room to talk about barriers,and our experience of them.But when somebody says,you know, ‘That must be,’ or they're making that assumptionabout how it is, that's not from a listening place.

So, it does, you're right, it closes down the conversation. That isn't to say that we want people to be like, ‘Oh well, you mustn't have any problems. See ya.’ You know what I mean?-

05:38 **Ellen** **Fraser-Barbour**

Yeah, exactly, we don’t want you to be like ‘disability positive experiences! Allyship!’

05:42 **Belle Owen**

Yeah, it is not toxic positivity. Yeah. We don't want, you know, it is about acknowledging the barriers, the ways that’s hard. That's what allyship is. But it’s in a way where you are really aware of how you are empowering that other person. How you making that person feel.

And so when people, you know as you mentioned, like some people might be seeking that emotional response, but if you have more of a conversation about how does it- You know, how does it make you feel?

Or how is it? Or what is that experience like? Then you can gauge is that person

looking for that emotional response, Are they looking for a problem to be solved? Are they looking for curiosity? So, I think, yeah, I think-

**06:18 Ellen Fraser-Barbour**

And that all starts with curiosity right?

If you are able to lean into that person’s internal world and experience and find out what matters to them, what’s meaningful to them, then that opens up the conversation and you can sort of follow their lead. And I guess that to me is what allyship is. It is sort of based on that thing of you are a safe person. You're not projecting your assumptions into it, you’re holding back your ideas, your preconceived ideas, and you're just sort of finding out what is this person’s world?

And then from there you can move the conversation forward. You can find what are the

things that are meaningful to you? What are the things that derail you? What are the things that really matter? What are the things that we can do to change in a way that's going to be beneficial so that it is an equal world. It feels like a world where we are respected, where we have meaning, where we have a sense of place and a sense of belonging, Right? Yeah, anyway.

What are your... [laughs] Sorry, I am on my tangent.

07:23 **Belle Owen**

No, please, that is the whole point. You should tangent. Tangent away.

07:27 **Ellen Fraser-Barbour**

What are your thoughts on like allyship in terms of your experiences and what’s been positive for you? Like what are some positive examples that you have?

07:41 **Belle Owen**

Yeah, I think, I think in terms of people who are, you know, maybe listening to this or watching a video or whatever and wanting to learn about allyship, as people, our expectation when we're learning is that we're going to be given a set of black and white rules. So like, in school it’s like one plus one equals two. There's not another, you know, way that can work out. It's not about, ‘how does one feel about being plussed with one?’ It is very black and white.

So, people have expectations when they're learning that they're going to be told what to do. And unfortunately, if you’re like thinking about allyship it's not necessarily the case because, you know, every disabled person is different. Every disabled person’s responses are different, their experiences are different. And so, there’s not like a black and white set of rules that exist about allyship.

I mean, we do know there‘s some foundational ways that you can start, if this is something that people want to do. And it means the things that are really basic, like if you have a favourite local coffee shop and you go there and you notice that they have a step, you can always sort of say, “Hey, if you had a ramp, it would be so much easier for everyone to access this,” or you know, if there's a hearing loop somewhere, asking “Is it working? Who knows how to use it?”

Like those little things where people can engage in sort of disability allyship on a foundational level for the broader community. Like that’s not an individual instance

of allyship. And so I think, yes, there's ways that we can sort of talk about that- ways that people who haven't engaged in disability allyship can start to. But I think in terms of the really individual experience, it does become more nuanced and it does rely on responding to the person and listening.

So, like for me, this one example that kind of comes to mind is when I lived overseas in Toronto, I was using dating apps and I was meeting up with someone to go on a date. We had met before. He knew I used a wheelchair. He knew that I could walk a little bit. So he was going to drive us on this date, and he'd ask me a few questions about going to see this show, and sort of talked me through a bit about what would happen.

But then it wasn't until he showed up to pick me up that I realised, well, he told me he had gone out to buy a little steppy stool so that I could get- he had a tall car, so that I could get into the car and then as soon as he got it out, he was like, “Okay, do you need a hand? What’s helpful?” And then when we were in the car, he was like, “So I rang ahead to the venue. I made sure we could park somewhere. I made sure they had access. I made sure to find that out they had an accessible toilet.”

Like, all of these things that I would have had to consider, but he had taken care of that stuff. He offered me the information. It made me feel so comfortable in myself, in the experience.

But he still did that all with the knowledge that he had- that I used a wheelchair, that I couldn’t walk far, all these things. But still didn’t make the assumptions, because he wasn't like “Here is the step stool, now I’m going to hold your hand,” or “lift you,” or you know whatever.

He was like, okay, here's this tool that I’ve brought into the situation because I know there’s a barrier. But like how, then how is he asking the questions about how he can help in the meantime and then what I might need once we get to the place we were going and coming home, and all that kind of stuff. And I had experienced allyship in other ways before, in friendships and things, but that really struck me, I think, because, I mean in particular, the dating world is particularly tricky . Yeah, it is challenging.

So you know that actually changed the standards for what I would expect from another person. That person and I remained friends. It wasn't like a... you know, it didn't go on to be a thing.

But it really did shift my idea of what interacting with other people could be like. What people were capable of. What, you know, what burdens they can take on themselves in terms of finding information about access and all of that kind of stuff.

12:00 **Ellen Fraser-Barbour**

Do you mind if I ask you a follow up question?

12:02 **Belle Owen**

Yeah, no go ahead.

12:03 **Ellen Fraser-Barbour**

It’s probably going a bit off script though. Okay, so with that experience- That’s a really, really beautiful experience of allyship. Because like I know from my experience in dating or even just meeting new friends. Sometimes there’s a level of insecurity for me about access needs, and negotiating access needs, and having to sort of communicate what my needs are.

I am just wondering, with that experience it sounds like he made you feel really comfortable. What was it about that experience where like it didn’t trigger that level of insecurity in the same way that it might with other people when they’re coming up to you and they’re like offering you all these solutions and they’re like trying their best to sort of fix everything but it can also feel really uncomfortable, right?

12:53 **Belle Owen**

Yeah, I know what you mean. I think there was no sense of urgency. So it's not like we’ve got to fix this now, or pretend this problem doesn’t exist, or this barrier doesn’t exist. So it's the acknowledging of the barrier, whatever it happens to be, whether it's, you know, can I get into the club we’re going to, or whatever.

It’s acknowledging that stuff, without it feeling fussy, or the way that it’s communicated is like this is the information I’ve got about it, you know, like, it was very casual. Like, it was casually communicated, it was casually responded to, but in a way that wasn't dismissive, like, not casual like, eh- who cares. He obviously cared because he made the phone calls.

He did, you know, put that effort in place, so, yeah, I think like the difference

between that kind of situation and where someone might be like “I didn't know if you could use a bathroom”, “I'm not sure what you know...”

13:48 **Ellen Fraser-Barbour**

Cause then you are responding to their emotional reaction, right?

13:52 **Belle Owen**

Yeah, you need to be like, it’s ok, don’t worry, you know-

13:54 **Ellen Fraser-Barbour**

Yeah, you end up reassuring them-

13:56 **Belle Owen**

But when someone feels comfortable in the conversation of figuring things out with you, then you don't feel like if something goes wrong, or right, you're responsible for the way they feel because they're not feeling any kind of way.

14:10 **Ellen Fraser-Barbour**

Yeah, yeah. Because I have often felt sometimes like people are so keen to help, to fix things, to make things accessible, to you know, try and step in with solutions. And they want to be the best advocate possible, and they want to be the best ally they can possibly be.

But sometimes I can often- I mean not often, but Sometimes I can feel like I then end up having to sort of reassure them like I feel like part of my job is then to be like, “Oh yeah, really good job for going to the café and talking to them about the fact that their menus are too small,” or, you know, “Well done for doing that,” and I almost feel like I have to reassure them. And I put my energy into that because I can see they are anxious, I can see they’re nervous. And I can see that for them it’s a new journey that they are just coming into.

But then I also really struggle with that because I kind of sometimes think you know it is harder to honest and open and to say what my needs are if I feel like I am triggering their anxiety and their stress levels and they’re getting anxious, like you said that sense of urgency. It’s urgency, but then from my experience, there’s also this thing of sometimes people feel like it’s their identity and if they are being criticised in any way, then it makes them really anxious.

And so I am constantly feeling like okay, I don’t want to criticise, but I also need to communicate what my needs are and I need to be able to talk about what’s honest in our community what is it- like what are some of our experiences? And sometimes that will trigger people, right? And, so, I sometimes get this thing of trying to balance communication and good communication and also reassuring people and being safe and not making people uncomfortable in some way, you know.

16:17 **Belle Owen**

I can relate to that, and I think like part of it is that, so my experience of being an ally to a community that I'm not part of, I can relate to a feeling of really wanting to get it right. Like being really passionate about getting it right and being nervous to get it wrong, like- And, yeah. And so, I think it's natural that, that might happen, but it's about realising that you're not the main character in that story. Like you have to de-center yourself. So, like the way that I feel if I get it wrong, isn’t how everyone else feels. You know, and so I can't wallow in that. I can't make that somebody else's problem that I'm feeling. And it is kind of realising that it is not criticism.

Everybody makes mistakes- everybody. Like inside disability community, outside, other communities, inside, outside the community, people are learning, and we give them the grace to learn.

You know, you are not the kind of person- I mean, I know you, we know each other pretty well, and I know you are not the kind of person who would scold someone for getting something wrong.

So, in the instance that someone needs to trust you to tell them when something might need changing, without holding a grudge. And I would think that would kind of be how it would work for most people. You know, again, I'm not the kind of person who would do that either.

If something is happening- If someone is trying to support me in a way that I am taking on the stress, or I am taking on extra stuff from it, you know, and I want to say to them, “Hey like, can we go about it a different way?”, “Can we bring the energy down?” You know, whatever, I would never want that to be taken as criticism.

So, I think it's really about learning how to receive feedback in a not negative way. And it's a natural thing to respond when you have really good intentions and you put all this energy into it and someone says, “It didn’t work. No. Bad.” That you feel like, “ooh” and you want to recoil from that, and you want to apologise profusely and whatever, but like, you just need to remind yourself like, I'm not the main character here. It’s a learning thing for me. I'm not going to do it again. I am going to course correct.

18:31 **Ellen Fraser-Barbour**

That is such a beautiful thing when you see that in people.

18:36 **Belle Owen**

Yes. That makes it so much easier for everybody who's around you. When you're not starting to go into a spiral about how you feel about the whole situation. So, it's not, it's not the easiest thing to do, but something that we need to practice.

18:49 **Ellen Fraser-Barbour**

Definitely. It takes a lot of practice to be certain of the fact that you will make mistakes, right. You will often do things wrong or say things in a way that other people misunderstand, or whatever it is. Like, there is always going to be things we don’t get right, and I feel like part of what makes it work is when people just say, “Yep, okay. That is something that I’ll learn from. And moving forward, I’ll do differently next time.” Without them feeling like it means they are a bad person, or that they’ve done something really terrible, that everyone is judging them. There is a lot of that fear, I think, of being judged, of feeling that people are criticising them, that they won’t like them anymore because of the fact that they've made a mistake. Whereas it is not that black and white. Often it is much more beneficial if we just think about it as a learning journey.

19:52 **Belle Owen**

Yes. And a conversation. Like it goes both ways.

19:56 **Ellen Fraser-Barbour**

Multiple conversations.

19:56 **Belle Owen**

An ongoing forever conversation, yeah.

I think, as well, something that is maybe different about sort of demonstrating allyship and the results of allyship, is that often the results or the outcome of successful allyship can be invisible. So, you might put all this work in and this effort in to remove a barrier, change an attitude, but there's not necessarily something that you see at the end of it.

So, for example, like, just to put this into context, a job that I had been in when I go into the office, there was like not an accessible set-up at a desk for me to go into. And it was hot desking situation, so you know, I didn’t have my own individual desk, it’s like, you book a desk, you go in there. And so, when I would go in there, I would have to stack things on the desk to get things to the right height, you know, and look for a plug I can actually reach, because I can’t get down on the floor to plug things in.

There’s all these little barriers for me being able to just go in and do my job. And then somebody who was in the position of influence noticed all these things. And so they made sure that I had a raise/lower desk, that I could just press a button and it went to the right height. So that I'm not spending all this time finding bits and pieces and cobbling together an accessible workstation, and they made sure that the power was reachable easily on the desk and all these little things that that person did and that took effort on their behalf and it took organising and action.

But there's nothing really to see because I just come into work and I start my job like everybody else. So, it's not that there's something there it’s the things that aren't there that is the result of their allyship. Does that make sense?

21:46 **Ellen Fraser-Barbour**

Yeah definitely. It definitely makes sense.

21:52 **Belle Owen**

So, I guess like we’re talkingabout good examples of allyship,do you have any examplesthat you want to share of maybe when it's gone wrong or maybe where it could have gone better?

22:08 **Ellen Fraser-Barbour**

For me, it’s lot of little interactions, where I find that there’s- I guess there’s an emotional labour, right? When you are on the inner circle- Like, when you are in that community like part of the disability community, or, for me, it might be queer community, or other communities as well. When you're part of that ‘in community’, and there’s this sense of responsibility of educating, of needing to communicate and share what your information is that you know is beneficial, that helps, all of those sorts of things, because we want people to be on this journey with us. We can't do it on our own, and it’s the same for First Nations community, they can't do it on their own. They need all of us there. It’s true of all kinds of marginalised communities.

But one of the things that I find most challenging is I feel this sense of responsibility, and it is kind of a taxing emotional responsibility where I sometimes feel exhausted, and I feel worn out. And so, I know when that happens that I need to be able to take a step back. But often it doesn’t feel that easy to do that, cause there is this thing of like, you lose if you step back ‘cause you lose that opportunity for allyship. But if you keep going, you’re also burning out, so you are losing out. It’s like you lose either way. So I kind of feel like I have to keep pushing forward and communicating as much as I can and trying to bring people into the fold.

But I guess for me some of the challenging aspects of working with the idea of allyship, and building up community and a sense of like camaraderie and solidarity and action pro-action, rather than reacting to like, you know, if something is inaccessible and you have to get all of the campaigns going and you’ve got to write all of the letters, you know, sure that is important to, but it would be great if it was more pro-active. Like if we were able to forward plan, and think about how we actually do things in a way that’s calm, and also has that sense of like we’re in this together. We want to make change, let’s works through this, and try to find a way forward.

But one of the things I find quite challenging is that I often feel that I have to respond to other people’s emotional needs, and if they are people that don’t identify as having a disability, and they’re really anxious or they’re really stressed about how they’re doing it or whether they are doing it right, or whether they are being a good ally. I really struggle with that because for me, they have done that thing of, you know like, I feel like I need to say, “You're doing a good job. You are doing really well. You’re doing an awesome job.”

And, like, I’ll try and find all of the good parts of what they’ve done and I’ll try to make sure that they’re being encouraged, but then it can also make it really challenging for me. I find it a lot harder to then sort of say, like, I really appreciate it if next time we went to the cafe, can we find a quieter cafe, cause I found that really hard. It was really difficult to hear. Or, you know like to be able to then say what I need, or what’s beneficial for me. I find that really hard in places where I’ve already felt that emotional response from someone, and I kind of feel like I have to...

Or the other- They do sort of flip side of it, like I’ve had people come up to me and sort of say, “Oh Ellen, I went down to the shops, and I noticed that they didn’t have ramps, so I went along and I wrote a letter to so and so and I told them about this, and, you know, I got on my high horse, and I told them that they were doing it wrong. And, like, I got really angry, and I was like campaigning and, you know, they go into this whole story of how they tried to make it accessible, or what they were trying to change or how they were trying to educate, And I feel like that's important for them to do it. But I am not sure why they are telling me that, specifically.

There’s a little bit that’s like- I mean this is just my personal experience, not saying this is the way it is for them. But there's a part of me that’s sort of like they’re telling me this because they want a disabled person to pat them on the back, to reassure them, to be like, “Well done. I'm really glad you did that. I'm so grateful that you did that.” And I am grateful. I am grateful. But it's sort of that thing of, okay, now I am having to switch into allyship mode, or switching into, okay, you’ve got to reassure them, you've got to encourage, you’ve got to find a way to, you know, build people up so that they keep going with this journey.

And part of me just wants to withdraw and be like “you know what, I am really glad you did that. But, do you have to tell me? Like do I need to actually know that? Or can you just do the good thing without needing me to pat you on the back?” I don’t know. It sounds so bad to say that though.

27:33 **Belle Owen**

No, I think, you know, from a person's perspective, it is really natural to want validation and to want confirmation that you're on the right track.

27:45 **Ellen Fraser-Barbour**

Validation- that’s a good word.

27:46 **Belle Owen**

It’s being mindful of where you seek the validation from. When, even, talking about things that you've done in terms of using the example that you used of campaigning to get ramps or something put in.

27:59 **Ellen Fraser-Barbour**

Is that something that you’ve had an experience of with validation?

28:02 **Belle Owen**

Oh yeah, like a lot. And I think like, I mean I have come to a place where I find it, maybe, less taxing cause I am like, let people toot their own horns. They can do that over there.

28:13 **Ellen Fraser-Barbour**

I am working on it. I am getting to that point.

28:15 **Belle Owen**

Yeah, you know, I don't necessarilyhave to give them something.

28:18 **Ellen Fraser-Barbour**

Yeah, exactly.

28:19 **Belle Owen**

But I think that, yeah, I can see as well how it can create this idea or feeling of responsibility to applaud or to thank people and things like that.So, I think that, you know, it's not necessarily, like- are they telling their non-disabledfriends who are outside of the community about this work that they are doing?

28:44 **Ellen Fraser-Barbour**

-Exactly!

28:44 **Belle Owen**

Like, build the momentum and recruit other people, and then maybe people will notice, and I’ll say, “Hey that rules. That’s great. Thank you.” So I think, you know, there's a context for, you know, how we seek validation for things, and yeah.

I think there’s something else that I wanted to touch on, which is, I think we- like allyship is talked about more and more, and in regards to many communities, so not just the disability community, like we’re talking today about disability, but, sometimes there's this idea of, you know, this allyship as a title that you achieve. So, it's either, oh I'm supportive of disability rights, I’m an ally, or like, I did that one campaign about ramps, I'm an ally. And I think that in order to continue to call ourselves an ally, to any community, we have to constantly be engaged with issues and responding to them as they arise in appropriate ways.

But, you know, you can't really say, “Like I did that one thing,” and it's not like a Phd, where you do the thing, you get the title, you have earned the title forever. You know, I think it's always in motion. It’s fluid. It’s something that can wax and wane. You might not have the time, or the resources to be engaged in active allyship in a really powerful way all of the time. But it also just doesn't- It’s not a passive thing were you go, oh yeah, I did it, and so I am that thing.

30:23 **Ellen Fraser-Barbour**

Yeah. Do you think there's a difference between allyship in terms of campaigning, being out on the streets with all of the signs, and, you know, that sort of pro-active kind of action where it is quite visible, but there must be a lot of invisible kind of allyship where you don’t necessarily see people acting, but it is still allyship. Can you think of any examples?

30:52 **Belle Owen**

Yeah, I think so, I think in any situation where we're looking to create change, the best option is to have people show up in their skills, and not so far out of their comfort zone. Like, obviously we need to be a little bit uncomfortable, because we're learning and all of that, but what we- but everybody has something different to bring to the table.

So, there is going to be people who are out making signs and being really visible, and you know, that that sort of loud advocacy, activist type of change making. But there is room for, and need for, people to do every kind. And so, there's not a checklist of every- you know, you need to do every single kind of action, or you know, you need to demonstrate this type of allyship.

I think you need to work within the spheres that you have. You can consider where you have influence, like, you know, you might not feel influential in your workplace, but you might be influential in your local sports club. You might be influential in your community, in your cultural group, whatever it happens to be. And you can have conversations. Like that is very powerful.

32:04 **Ellen Fraser-Barbour**

I think so.

32:05 **Belle Owen**

You know, challenging negative narratives around disability, particularly those that are really prevalent in mainstream media, just saying, like “actually, why do you think that?” You know, that's powerful allyship, you don't have to be yelling in the street to be changing minds, changing attitudes, changing physical spaces.

32:23 **Ellen Fraser-Barbour**

-Agreed.

32:23 **Belle Owen**

So, I think, yeah, we don't needto consider that to be an allyyou need to follow some kind of prescriptive, you know, X Y Z.

32:33 **Ellen Fraser-Barbour**

Yeah, agreed. Like I was just thinking from what you were just saying before about it being conversations, like, I was thinking about all of my friends that have young children and how one of the most powerful things I have seen is when a child might say something like-

I have this example where one of my friends, this was a couple of years ago, but one of my friend’s kids, he was about 6 at the time. He went and got his teddy, and he brought his teddy up, and goes, “Look! Teddy has one eye, just like you.” And then he goes, “Oh, poor teddy, I am going to put him in hospital now.”

And then I was like, “Teddy doesn’t have to go to hospital. Teddy’s okay with one eye.” And then his mum joined in, and she’s like, “Yeah Teddy’s okay. Teddy is fine with just one eye. That’s okay. Ellen’s fine, you know, some people have one eye, some people have two eyes. Some people are tall, some people are short. It’s okay.” And it was like that little shift that then created a different way of thinking.

You know, I feel like that to me was allyship in that moment. Even though it’s just a little conversation.

33:44 **Belle Owen**

-Yes

32:45  **Ellen Fraser-Barbour**

But that changed the way that he thought about it.

33:49 **Belle Owen**

And there was no sense of urgency about, “Oh my gosh, I need to stop this conversation so Ellen doesn't get upset or it's like allowing you to respond, responding to the situation as it unfolds in a really calm and measured way that reinforces a positive narrative around disability.

34:09  **Ellen Fraser-Barbour**

Yeah.

34:10 **Belle Owen**

Ellen, do you have any key takeawaysfrom today’s conversation?

34:12 **Ellen Fraser-Barbour**

Yeah, I think for me, the main word is curiosity. It’s about showing curiosity for other people’s experiences, as separate from your own, and just leaning into that, finding out more about that. What about you? What would your key takeaway be?

34:28 **Belle Owen**

I think my key takeaway is for people to findconfidence in their allyship,so that they're feeling like they canget the validation that they want and be making the impact that they want to have,without it negatively impacting other people.So, I think confidence for me is what I would hope people to sort of takeaway, and start building on their confidence to be an ally.

34:51 **Ellen Fraser-Barbour**

I like it. I like it a lot.

34:53 **Belle Owen**

Thank you. Ellen, I always love talking with you, on camera, off camera, about anything and everything.

I'm joined today by my brilliant colleague, Dr. Ellen Fraser-Barbour on The Purple Orange Podcast, and I am Belle Owen.

**Titles:**

The Purple Orange Podcast

Get in touch:

(08) 8373 8388

[stories@purpleorange.org.au](mailto:stories@purpleorange.org.au)

[www.purpleorange.org.au](http://www.purpleorange.org.au)