

**[Start Intro Music]**

**Mark:** Hello my name is Mark Frocklage.

**Kelsey:** And I'm Kelsey Hofstetter.

**Mark:** And we're talking about the issue of addressing accommodations for disabled persons in the workplace and the societal views put on these disabled people. I will be taking the ableist point of view.

**[Intro music fades out]**

**Kelsey:** And I will be defending the side of individuals with disabilities.

**Mark:** And we will be debating the different points of view of each side. Our first issue will be addressing the concept of reasonable accommodation for disabled people in the workplace. Just as background for this the Canadian law requires that companies provide reasonable accommodation to disabled persons in order to hire them and have them work around the workplace. Something I want to start off with is now that there are several new technologies that allow disabled people to have access to different areas. One of the newest things I have heard of was a harness which allows people to lift things that are much too heavy for a normal human to lift and also to walk around with bionic legs. So the first issue we will be talking about will be the depth that the company is required to accommodate these people and give them assistance and technology that will allow them to complete their tasks. So what is your view of how much these companies should actually give their employees?

**Kelsey:** I believe that companies should fully support these individuals with any assistance that they require because they have the right to do these jobs. By not providing these individuals with disabilities the equipment they require to complete the job they are confining them and essentially saying that they are not allowed to work in certain areas or do certain jobs.

**Mark:** There is a certain issue of justice in this issue [of disability] where you can spend thousands and thousands of dollars on one employee that requires a whole bunch of assistance whereas the rest of your employees that might not get the same treatment.

**Kelsey:** I understand what you're saying, I understand your point, but we also have to think outside of the company itself. There's also funding opportunities from the provincial, municipal, and federal government that will offset those costs. So those individuals with disabilities can be funded while the rest of the workers can still maintain their funding that they receive as well.

**Mark:** Still, if we look even further we can see that all those people are paying taxes that then go into the government to create those subsidies. In the same vein that people with disabilities deserve the same rights of a person who is able-bodied, the people who are able-bodied should receive the same amount of government funding and assistance from the company as those who are disabled.

**Kelsey:** True, but by helping the individuals with disabilities fulfill the job requirements by giving them those funding we are then creating- we have more people working which then the company and in turn the country will gain more profit with those individuals working which then could come back to all of the workers and they could all benefit because there is more money to hand out.

**Mark:** Let's move on to our second topic. The second issue we will be addressing will be how disability is viewed in society. In the past we have made the mistake of discriminating against people based on race or sex, even though there is no scientific validity to this behavior. How do we know we are not also making a mistake distinguishing disabled people from able-bodied people? If we view disabled being equal to being able-bodied, should we not allow disabled parents to who are creating a child to disable their child by surgical means if they want to?

**Kelsey:** Then they should be allowed to because abled bodied people do screenings all the time to ensure that their child is going to grow up healthy and not be disabled. If there is a family of dwarves and they want their child to be a dwarf as well then they should be allowed to because to them it just runs in the family and it shouldn't be seen as them limiting the child's life because having a disability is not inferior to being an abled-bodied individual. So if society adopted this social model, then the individual who was born with dwarfism definitely wouldn't be

hindered within society because we would accommodate them and ensure they have equal opportunities as everyone else even those who are abled-bodies.

**Mark:** So would you argue that the only obstacle that disabled people have is society's view of their disability?

**Kelsey:** Yes.

**Mark:** We have to understand that this is not just a social issue or a medical issue. It can be both. So in order to prove my point I first need an agreement from you. Would you agree that that a societal issue cannot exist in a scenario where society itself does not exist?

**Kelsey:** Yes.

**Mark:** The scenario I offer would be if you essentially drop someone in the wilderness completely naked with no education, no training from society itself and in the same vain all technology would be taken from them. So abled bodied people would not have clothes and extension disabled people would not have clothes and all the technology that helps them get around. In that circumstance where, the person is completely devoid of society, an abled-bodied person would be able to go climb a tree, find an apple. Whereas a disabled person would not fare so well. Now you can move this analogy to people of different sexes. People of different sexes would be able to perform all these duties completely devoid of society. Therefore any issues between them would be considered a societal issue only because they are not within a society. So the long-winded point i'm trying to make in opposition of what you suggested that a disability is just a societal issue. In a scenario where society does not exist, it is also a issue that hinders their ability to survive which makes it a medical issue and is not the same as discrimination based off of race or sex.

**Kelsey:** I believe that there is a difference between an impairment and a disability. Having an impairment would be what you mentioned, and that an individual who is in a wheelchair, their impairment is that they cannot walk but the disability is that they can't overcome it because they are not given the resources they need. For example, my impairment is that I cannot see far

distances, but it isn't a disability to me unless I don't have my glasses. So in response to your scenario that you posed to me I would say that you proved the point that individuals who have impairment have a harder time doing tasks. But it is the disability aspect that stems to the society, it goes back to the society. It is up to members of society to overcome the barriers that they face therefore taking away the disability that they encounter.

**Mark:** Another issue arises when doctors test embryos in order to find, impairments as you call them. Doctors give parents the ability to abort their children if they see they have an impairment of some kind. This is seen as an insult to many in the disabled community as if you're denying life based off of what they have, it make it seem that their life is not worth living. Is there a solution to this problem that would allow abled-bodied people or any parents that wants their child to have or doesn't want their child to have this impairment to ensure this and also not insult the people who live with this impairment.

**Kelsey:** Truthfully I don't know if there is a solution that will leave both parties satisfied and I think that is where a lot of the drama lies in this abstraction that we're talking about because if you force the parents to keep the child who has an impairment even though they don't want the child, then they are restricting the parents freedom. But at the same time, terminating the life of the soon to be child, the individuals who have that disability will be offended. I don't see a way that both parties could be satisfied.