Nerissa and Josh

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**SPEAKERS**

Nerissa, Josh Kim

**Josh Kim** 00:00

Okay, so I'm gonna hop off here, you should be able to hear me through the recording. Okay, I'm gonna hop off here, you should be able to hear me this recording.

**Nerissa** 00:09

Okay, I need it as well. Can you hear me?

**Josh Kim** 00:12

Can you hear me now? Alright, sweet. So we have this working. Do you want to keep the video on so we still have like

**Nerissa** 00:20

keep the video once a lot and just leave your your microphone off on Google meet. Okay, now it looks more organic.

**Josh Kim** 00:31

Okay, it doesn't feel like those fake corporate calls.

**Nerissa** 00:34

No, there's no lag or anything so that's good.

**Josh Kim** 00:38

Okay, that's really yeah, whenever I think about joining zoom calls, like at work, And I have my video off. Like, it's just so much are there to like, communicate with folks? A lot, that you lose out. All right. All right. So welcome to Nerissa and Josh's podcasts. This is gonna be a complete experiment, we have no idea how it's gonna go. But to hell with that. We're just gonna kind of wing it. Welcome there Nerissa. I guess it would only be appropriate if we introduced ourselves. Um, so to do that, how would you introduce yourself to a friend of a friend,

**Nerissa** 01:26

a friend of a friend. My name is Nerissa Monton, and I am a creative... by day, I am a product designer. And currently I live in Baltimore. Okay. And by night, I am a dog mom and a youtube content creator.

**Josh Kim** 01:45

Oh, hell yeah. I'm so glad that you have like them by part because I'm so used to hearing like DC introductions and they go straight into the job title.

**Nerissa** 01:56

Oh, definitely. When I moved to Baltimore, and I've been living here for about two years plus, the vibe is just completely different in the in the tech scene, in comparison to DC culture, I suppose.

**Josh Kim** 02:10

In what way?

**Nerissa** 02:11

It's a lot less formal. I think people are a lot more personable. People don't immediately ask what your job title is, and judge you based on that kind of criteria. I think people really value really organic relationships.

**Josh Kim** 02:32

I feel that. I feel that. As someone's still in DC, I think I'm still like adjusting. Especially like, as you know, I've recently kind of changed work to a full online like remote kind of environment. And going into that environment... outside of like having a DC office is made the way introductions be like, really, really different. Where instead of like, name, job title, it's usually like, Where are you? Where are you from? Where are you working from? There's something a lot more human about that right?

**Nerissa** 03:10

Definitely.

**Josh Kim** 03:11

Yeah. Well, thank you for hopping in. We have a list of questions here that I quickly wrote up, as you're aware of. But we're just gonna jump into random ones I'll kind of take out of here. Yeah, sure, why not? And I guess even before I do that, I think it's worth reiterating and saying what the point of this podcast is to begin with. So Nerissa is a design, lifelong career mentor of mine, she's really helped steer my motivations in the workplace, made me be more human over the years as well, in the way that I see work life balance, and I invited her to join me on this podcast, just so we can reflect, reflect on life, reflect on design, our journeys in our design careers, and whatever else will end up popping up through this combo. That sound cool? Let's do it. Alright, sweet. So I'm gonna pick a random question here. Let's see. All right, so the most basic one, your interview. As a designer, what is something new you learned this year or last?

**Nerissa** 04:34

So this past year, I entered a new job and I started mid pandemic. It started at June. This is my very first fully remote opportunity. And not only just adapting to working completely remote, never having met any of my co workers, but also having a lot of faith that the company that I chose to work for really nailed maintaining company culture and establishing over communication is so valuable. And using slack as a very safe space to talk about really relevant topics in society in the news today. So you know, my company is completely empathetic of everything that has been happening all throughout this past year. So something as a designer that I had learned is working for this company, I am not just an employee that works for this company, I have these designer creative skills, but I'm also a human being that is valued, that is appreciated. And that is something that I had never really received before in previous jobs. I felt like when I was at work, I was just a designer, and really nothing more. And that was what I was paid to do. That's what I was used for. But now I get to be my most complete, vulnerable, honest self. And it's, it's been a really incredible experience.

**Josh Kim** 06:24

Oh, my God. I mean, that's, I feel like we can end the podcast there. I'm really curious actually. Has that changed any of your career goals by any chance since joining this company?.

**Nerissa** 06:39

Of course. So this company has set the bar for any future jobs I will ever have. I now know my worth, not only in my skills, but what I'm capable of doing. You know, I'm not going to accept anything less than being a part of a very inclusive community, in people who value your time as a human and who value work life balance. And you know, this past year with the Coronavirus that has put everybody to the test that has put a lot of companies to the test. Yeah,

**Josh Kim** 07:23

yeah. Yeah. What was it like before that goal? So now you have a goal that's very much like, human centered, like, I know, we say humans all the time in the industry, but like, I'm really, it gives me so much joy, you're finally hearing it used and like a context that's actually genuine. Not just like kind of money? Yeah. What were your goals? Like, before you joined this company? I'm kind of curious to see like the the difference, like what what changed, essentially,

**Nerissa** 07:57

I guess, before working at this job, I really struggled with impostor syndrome. I am a second generation Filipino American. And where I currently live, there's nobody that really looks like me, around me, you know, and if you kind of narrow that down into the design industry, I'm pretty solo, and you know, if I ever come across anybody else, that's Filipino or even Asian at the very least, then, you know, it's an instant connection. Yeah, but at the same time, um, yeah. I'm sorry. I don't remember the questions.

**Josh Kim** 08:38

Oh, yeah. I kind of forgot the question too, because like, I was reminiscing on like, that moment. So the reason I talked about it, like right before we started this podcast, but like, literally Nerissa was that person who saw me lost in like a kitchen, at Deloitte and I had no idea what I was doing. And she helped kind of welcomed me into the world of design. And that's why I'm here today. So I just kind of went into this huge, nostalgic flashback for a secondary, so I kind of forgot the

**Nerissa** 09:09

critical goals before this job. My goal primarily was to seek opportunities that allowed me to grow, because I knew that I had been practicing a lot of visual design. I know, I'm very strong in my skills in visual and UI design. But I wanted to work with a lot of people who were a lot smarter than me and who had a lot more experience to learn from in an environment that it was okay to ask these kinds of questions, and that I wasn't going to be looked down upon if I had gaps in my knowledge. Because in this industry, you know, you see job listing say, we're looking for a UX UI designer, product designer, all the above, you know, code to that. Cool. Yeah, unicorns, you know, it's just not super realistic. I mean, you're that you're a generalist at that point, you're not specifically great at one thing. But I wanted to specialize, primarily, you know, in what I was already doing, but also just have the knowledge to be able to communicate with people who do this for an entire career, enhancing like communication skills and being able to feel confident that I know what I'm talking about.

**Josh Kim** 10:39

Do you feel confident in what you're talking about? Today? If someone were to ask you, or I'm asking you right now, do you feel confident in yourself, and your work?

**Nerissa** 10:49

I feel more confident than I did a year ago and any other opportunities? And in my career thus far, but I have also really humble enough to say that there's so much more to learn in this industry, technology, all of it is consistently constantly changing. So I'm not afraid to say that I don't know everything. And I don't carry that same shame that I once had.

**Josh Kim** 11:18

Yeah, yeah. Oh, geez. Yeah. When I when I think about it, I know that you mentioned imposter syndrome. Not too earlier just now. When I think about imposter syndrome. I like, how should I put it in the past I saw I was like, really bad thing. I was like, really scared. I think similar to what you were mentioning earlier, like trying to be in a workplace where it's okay not to know things. I don't really have that we, I guess we both don't really have that at a certain point. It really spooked me. But the more that I've kind of grown in my career, more than I've like, read and studied and studied and studied and studied, all I really gotten out of it is that like, I don't know anything at the end, this is a giant kind of field to be in, there's always something need to learn, contexts are constantly changing. And I've grown to kind of respect people who have a outlook, you know, similar to yours as something that I want to be able to have, you know, at some point in my career, in the future to have having confidence, but then also having that humility, knowing that like, hey , I still don't know a lot. I can take a loss, right? I can say, I don't know something when I don't know something. And yeah, when I when I see you, and like the way that your careers grow. Like, it's definitely been really inspiring for me. And I've been trying to do that more at work as well. Do you have any examples of how you might handle a conversation like that, where you don't know something? And you just gotta like, say, like, Hey, I don't know. How's that work? Like in an inclusive workplace, like where you are currently?

**Nerissa** 13:01

I feel like I'm in a really safe environment to just straight up, say, like, I don't know what you're talking about, can you help me learn and understand this better? And it took a really long time for me to really be comfortable in saying that kind of thing without feeling like somebody else might judge me for not having this knowledge. But it should never be any, any more complicated than saying like, no, I could use some help in understanding this kind of concept a little bit deeper. Like, if you have any insight, I would like to learn or if you know, any resources that I could learn from, I would be happy to take the time to do so.

**Josh Kim** 13:49

Yeah. Did you feel any pressure having like the senior title kind of added to your name to like have to be more of an expert or have to be you know, someone who has all the answers?

**Nerissa** 14:01

Initially, I did. And that's that imposter syndrome coming up. Do I even deserve this title? Am I knowledgeable enough to really be doing this? Do you my clients take me seriously. And those who, those who have never met me in person, I am 4 11 and a half. And I am a very petite 100 some pound. Um, I often get mistaken for somebody who is much younger than my age. I think remote work has actually taken a lot of that pressure off of being that senior title. I don't always have to have my video on no one knows what might look so that that kind of eases my nerves.

**Josh Kim** 15:03

Yes, the new workplace kind of environment changes a lot of things. This idea of like, the mediums that we use, like kind of affecting our contacts, how we see ourselves, how we, how we work, how others see us. It's all really, really, really interesting. And I like the point that you made on like, people thinking that you're younger than you really are. Even though Yeah, yeah. I think at Deloitte when I, you know, work back, and I had the title of like, an analyst, essentially, or not like a full fledge kind of senior designer, and folks knew me like, since the day I was like, really awkward in the kitchen, and no idea what the hell I was doing. Walking into rooms, I had no idea were like actual rooms, compared to like, now, I think really, the big difference is like the perception kind of gap. So back then people would, you know, based on my title of analyst, I looked like a high schooler, all those things combined together, I think the expectations, and the way that people perceive me was a lot different than when I switched to my new job, I got to see new title, I can turn my video off now. And it did give like, you know, kind of to your point, it does change like that. The communication aspects a little bit. And honestly, I think the title helped too and people not knowing that like, history, well, hey, that's Josh in the kitchen, right? It's definitely changed a lot. That's really, really interesting, has anything else, I guess, shifted with this new kind of work environment for you?

**Nerissa** 16:40

Um... this new work environment brought on a lot of challenges that I did not anticipate, that I was going to experience. And I reveal in my youtube channel that I am challenged with ADHD, and I only found out in 2019. So it's been very recent that I have really taken the time to really understand what I've actually been experiencing, and how this has been manifesting in both my professional and my personal life, and working remotely, and having ADHD and starting a new job. Initially, I was really hesitant to kind of open up about that kind of thing. Some of my challenges include, when I'm on video calls, I'm staring at myself the entire time, really cognizant of my mannerisms, because I often struggle with maintaining eye contact in person, but it's even more challenging when you're staring in front of a screen sometimes. Exactly. And, you know, adapting to doing more accessible things for me, like using text to speech, when I'm reading articles and reading books.

**Josh Kim** 18:05

Yeah. Love to hear Yeah, uses of assistive technology, like,

**Nerissa** 18:12

it's something that I had never really practiced before this year. But I'm finding a lot of new ways to help me be more productive, and a more effective communicator, and really just confident in myself and I don't have to hide when I have shaking legs or I didn't. comes off if you know, if you've never met me, I'm a very bubbly, animated, very outgoing person. And I realize that some of these things that are perceived as personality traits, is actually part of my ADHD. It's not a negative connotation or anything. It's just like, it's just part of me.

**Josh Kim** 19:00

Yes, I'm so glad that you know, you're talking about this... Nerissa has a YouTube channel, it's fantastic. You should check it out. I'll definitely provide the link to that. You know, with all these positives, you know, a question asked the both of us, for us to talk about over the past year or since the last time we talked, what are you most personally proud of? When it comes to your design career?

**Nerissa** 19:25

When it comes to my design career, I now that I, I keep talking about my company. I love my company. This company man fearless, fearless. me if you work and live in Baltimore, in Maryland, come move to Maryland. It's great. Yes. I have a budget to use on education. And it's like, you know a pretty hefty budget that I can spend on attending conferences, I can purchase online courses, I can travel to different places post COVID, I can purchase as many books, you know, that really helped me learn how to do my job to the best of my ability. And, you know, it really, then becomes my responsibility to take advantage of these resources in these opportunities. But because I know that my company supports this, it's not mandatory or anything, but highly encouraged to do so. And, you know, in our slack channels, we're constantly sharing, you know, everybody's ways of learning new things and different concepts and, and whatnot. Yeah, I'm able to feel like, with my ADHD challenges, I'm able to pick and choose which ways work very effectively for me.

**Josh Kim** 21:07

Mm hmm. That's fantastic. That's, you know, once again, shout out to fearless right? Inclusive workplaces are awesome. I'm super happy to hear that, you know, sounds like y'all are like almost crowdsourcing ways to learn. Like, super, super cool. And, you know, if I were to answer that question, I find that almost like, the flip side of the coin... Nerissa you know this about me, like, I read a lot. Like I used to hold myself accountable to like, read a certain amount of books every year. And I would like blow through textbooks and like, tried to memorize everything and annotate everything. If I had to pick one thing I'm personally most proud of, in 2020 and into 2021. I think it kind of rings back to feedback... I'm not sure if you remember, like Rica, and Chris Wilson, and like some others, they would always tell me like, Josh, you read so much. You study so much, but like, what are you gonna do with it?

**Nerissa** 22:07

Like, yeah, what do you with this wealth of information that you absorbed

**Josh Kim** 22:11

Exactly... it is like this giant pit of books that I was just throwing into you. And I never really had the opportunity to put it to work in any kind of like, relative productive way outside of my portfolio. And in 2020, I spent the most part volunteering with the US digital response, and a couple of other nonprofits as well. And that I think, putting into action, being okay, over being sloppy here and there, was probably the most rewarding experience I've had, and I really shifted my concept of learning from simply like digesting information all the time and more of like making a balance of you have to read stuff, but you have to use at some point otherwise, like, how are you ever going to really learn it? So that's definitely one of the things I'm more proud of. In 2020, I'm hoping I can continue it into the future and maybe read not as much. But on that note, did you have a favorite book, because I'm always looking for new stuff to read.

**Nerissa** 23:20

I don't know if I have a favorite book right now I can tell you the things that I have been half free. How to learn how to read more effectively. Writing for the designers mind is one that I'm looking through. I've always struggled with with writing and I didn't know it until recently. Since I'm such a visual learner and a kinesthetic learner, being able to kind of blog out how to structure writing articles writing paragraphs and blood really, really anything that requires or can associate with words. When you can break it down into the same way that I'm thinking visually has changed the game on how I think about things I need to write.

**Josh Kim** 24:22

Yes. Can you give me a sample? Um, me like a nugget of information?

**Nerissa** 24:30

So nugget of wisdom from that book. Um, I kind of just started it's

**Josh Kim** 24:38

no worries, yo, you can literally pull it up later and like, shoot me over a quote and

**Nerissa** 24:44

I'll shoot you a quote.

**Josh Kim** 24:47

Sounds good. Awesome. I guess I'll keep pulling into our list of questions. All right. Um, did you have any regrets from last year with any chance?

**Nerissa** 24:58

regrets? Um, maybe not quitting my old job sooner?

**Josh Kim** 25:05

Hahaha... So we have all the praise for fearless... now we're going to shade or,

**Nerissa** 25:12

I mean, I'm not gonna name the company or anything but you know, I, I really had a hard time working there. Although I was excelling so greatly in my job pre COVID I found myself in an open office setting and I constantly needed to separate myself away from my desk and sit elsewhere where it's just quieter, a lot less overstimulating, anywhere that I could focus and do my job to the best of my ability, and what was perceived as goofing off and not doing my job. Even though my clients love my work consistently, then, you know, what I was doing was affecting anything. Yeah, it was like added pressure, that I had to fit to this certain standard, I had to sit at my desk all the time, like all the other employees, even after disclosing very privately that I, you know, I have this neurological disorder, and I really need accommodations, to just be my best self to help this company. And, you know, it just wasn't received well, I just felt like such a burden. And I stayed, thinking that, you know, I could really be helping this company, and I will simultaneously just going through my own internal growth and whatnot, and maturing, both in my professional life and my personal life. But once COVID head, and sure everyone had to work remotely, even though we were pushing to, you know, as like, you know, we can everyone can already do their jobs from home, like could do that maybe like, one day a week or something wasn't received well, um, once COVID hit how I was having to do my job the same way and experience... the world crumbling, at the same time and not receiving the support, I really felt that I needed. So, you know, I hope I left on good terms. And, you know, I just, I just wasn't the right fit for me, and maybe for some others. Yeah, I needed to spread my wings and fly.

**Josh Kim** 28:06

You did. You know, shout out to fearless creating that kind of inclusive culture. I think I'm completely with you on the, the regret being not leaving earlier. I think it's kind of scary, like trying to find the new job, I guess, again, I mean, it's such a long and inhumane kind of process of like, trying to interview also doing work at the same time. And yeah, I think I experienced kind of similar frustrations, not nearly to the extent that you had to go through but just the frustration of having a company not kind of look out after their employees, I guess, in a way and like that kind of humane kind of manner. That is a common way that that is accommodating, that is inclusive, actually, like, listens to people, here's what they have to say. And I think if you're able to create that kind of inclusive environment, that mutual kind of support, it just benefits enormously, so much, right. I mean, like fearless is getting some shout outs right now. That's incredible. And, you know, that kind of brings me to something else I really wanted to talk about. It's like, perfect timing. We both found new jobs. We both had to create portfolios. In that process. I'm kinda curious to hear. What do you think about your portfolio right now?

**Nerissa** 29:40

I do not think it reflects my true capabilities as a visual designer or just a UI designer. Maybe Okay, I'm not gonna say at all, but, you know, there's only but so much you could publicly post you I've been doing a lot of government contracting. And so I need those NDAs I can't show things. And you know, this is not public facing commercial work that is glamorous or anything, I have to go out and really just make up projects, which I hate doing. I don't like doing that. Because then it feels really inauthentic.

**Josh Kim** 30:28

How much time do you have to like put in extra to like, create those random artifacts, like prove that you're a senior designer.

**Nerissa** 30:37

I was just working with what I got, and maybe just polishing up what I had posted, and everything that I could post on dribble as a secondary source of being able to show off my skills. But I don't have my actual, like, official portfolio is kind of haphazard. And I spend too long of a time just trying to figure out how to brand myself how I want others to perceive me. You know, what's okay to post? What's not? Yeah, just going through simultaneous identity crisis.

**Josh Kim** 31:20

I feel like portfolios are like every designer's identity crisis, because you're like, you go back all in all the time. You have to like, change the copy all the time.

**Nerissa** 31:28

Yeah

**Josh Kim** 31:28

It was like, Oh, my God, I can't believe I put this up here. I guess, what's your vision for your portfolio right now, if any,

**Nerissa** 31:36

I mean, I recommend any designer really just keep it up to date. I mean, at the very least keep your LinkedIn up to date, shoot up a dribble shot, every now and then. Sure. You know, a lot of people that I've interviewed with, don't always just rely on your portfolio alone. You know, during my interview process with fearless, I went through several different rounds of different types of interviews, one for like a cultural fit, you know, technical things. So I was able to, to show off kind of like the full spectrum of my knowledge and my capabilities in different aspects, as well as make sure that this company was a good fit for me, too, is a mutual and...

**Josh Kim** 32:34

yes, talk to me more about the mutual interview. I love how you phrase that, what does that mean to you? Yeah,

**Nerissa** 32:41

um, earlier, we were talking about things that you've learned from last year and valuing yourself, doing a mutual interview is like, you have to make sure it's like a relationship, like it goes two ways. They want to make sure that they're choosing the best employee for their company, and you want to make sure that the company that you're interviewing with aligns with your own personal values, because it's not worth setting yourself up for failure. So it's not, you know, the salary is not worth your mental health, it's not worth your time. And I think, all this time in this past year. You know, it's been enough time for to give people control for reflection, internal reflection to think about those kinds of things.

**Josh Kim** 33:42

Mhmm, yeah. 100% with you, I think, when I was interviewing as well, so I currently work at Ad Hoc. Ad Hoc... the reason why I think I chose that company, I think the reason why I've worked out is (a) with my portfolio, you know, the biggest change that I made to it, and in 2020, and moving into 2021, is I went from being like, very fluffy and generalist, and like my values and the statements I have on there to being a lot more specific and say, This is what I care about. I'm drawing a line in the sand. I'm not going to work at these types of companies. And I think, by doing so, by making it more specific by saying like, Hey, I don't want to work at a place that is willing to skimp on like the ethics kind of side of things. I'm not willing to work at a company that's gonna skimp on inclusion. I'm not gonna work at a company that's gonna have like, terrible, you know, diversity of representation, because I think all of those things combined make a healthy workplace and that creates like better, healthier products for everyone. Um, I think by changing the way that I wrote my portfolio, the way that I like, presented myself and like the language I chose, just like the semantics, it's not only changed like where I work right now... I got the job of ad hoc, but I think moving forwards into the future, it's kind of shaping how I'm becoming like growing as a designer. And a lot of that, you know, getting that courage, I guess, in the way I got so bold, like, you know, despite everything Nerissa said earlier in the podcast saying, like about her height, and like, how people perceive her, when you talk to Nerissa, they're intense. I remember, like, we were talking about, like, work one time, and then you switch modes, and you got, like, right into it. But where was that? Where is it going with this? Essentially, I got a lot of that inspiration from you a lot of the confidence as well like seeing you do it, you switch into new companies, you go into fearless, and finding a workplace that like respects you, where you can thrive. All of that was just like, fantastic. Yeah.

**Nerissa** 35:58

And who know, you know, just being a minority in being in this industry, it's painfully obvious, we stick out like sore thumbs are both Asian, I'm a double minority, Asian and woman. Um, yeah. It then becomes almost your responsibility to kind of set the table for the next generation of designers. So I, along with my now more senior title, have taken it upon myself to really value that kind of thing, you know, people are really attentive to what I put out there, whether it's on social media, there is just in conversation. You know, people may have never met another Filipino person before. So their perception of whatever Filipino is, might just be from me. So I carry you know, that kind of almost response, I want to say responsibility. It's an honor.

**Josh Kim** 37:08

Right? Because Yeah, I mean we're designers. We're really familiar about, like, what pattern recognition is how those biases explains things, that's why you shouldn't have pictures on your personas, among many other things, so I mean, just hearing that you've taking up that kind of, you're conscious about it. You're setting a precedent for it, and it is having impacts. So I mean, I definitely look up to you. There's so many more people I know that definitely look up to you as well. I think that's really inspiring. And I think all we could really ask from a senior designer. Paving the way for us.

**Nerissa** 37:48

Outside of just being in this design industry. You know, in Asian culture, we're having to relearn how to be fitting in this American workplace.

**Josh Kim** 38:05

Oh my gosh

**Nerissa** 38:06

I mentioned that I'm a second generation. So my, my parents, my entire family are all from a whole nother country, or a whole different style of living, you know, there's a big generation gap, there's this language gap. So having to navigate how to be a professional at my age at the same time has been challenging, but a really rewarding process to learn.

**Josh Kim** 38:36

Yes, yes. And I think it's something that I'm always curious about maybe this will be better for another future conversation is how we can kind of reimagine the workplace not to be so how should I put that like dominance centric personality types making it you know more inclusive to other folks to have like,

**Nerissa** 38:58

Wait when you say that dominant personalities what kind of comes to mind when your... driver?

**Josh Kim** 39:04

Yes. Like, yo, I don't want to go into like a stereotypical kind of rant of like a certain personality that wins out but like kind of like the Steve Jobs designer in a way or you know, the people have the loudest kind of voice and personality in the room winning out on alot of the design conversations like you know how people like deeds and then if you have one person it's not if it's not moderated. You have one really strong voice is like dominating the entire conversation like you're losing everyone else's like all information... all that possible. Yeah,

**Nerissa** 39:44

I completely understand where you're coming from too... you know granted. In the professional world, I maybe not be as vocal as a lot of other of my other co workers. I tend to be more shy when it comes to doing presentations, you know, maybe I'm still slowly building up my competence in doing so. But if I had the option to not have to present out loud, I will not. Um, but your strengths that I bring to the table, especially being a double minority, I'm able to pinpoint when we have biases, I'm able to say like, hey, this name sounds kind of American, like, Can we like switch it up? Like, can we throw a Li or a Nguyen? Or a Muhammad in there? Like, just change it up? During our mock ups, it's really perceived? Well, it's like, Sure, why not?

**Josh Kim** 40:43

Yes, diversity is such a strength. And I think, as you said, like, you have the immediate benefit of folks being able to point out like, That's racist. You know, maybe we should change that it's not gonna be good for the optics, who might have like a newspaper, front page kind of scandal, but you know, just makes better products for everyone. It's like, better products that represent America, right? If you have a representative population and their workplace products are probably gonna be more representative and usable by everyone kind of out there. And it reminds me the other day, on the Veterans Affairs website, va.gov, we're working on the release for translations. And Filipino came up as one of the requirements for a translated page. But the language that they're using on it is Tagalog. So they've written a blog,

**Nerissa** 41:37

Tagalog. There we go. Okay,

**Josh Kim** 41:39

There we go. Exactly right. The entire time, I was saying that was like, I wish we had a Filipino person on our team, because I know this is not reading well like, it looked like like, the tag they were using for the language was off. So they weren't using the appropriate language tag. So when the screen reader was going through it, it was like reading it out and like in an English accent. And like, I'm not sure if you can imagine that. Like, yeah, it was, it was kind of butchered. And I was like, Oh, geez, like, these are like the really small things that can be caught, that have like a big impact on people out there in the world. Strength and diversity, if you're working on products that anyone might use. So wish we had you on our team... anywho I'm definitely extended that so I kind of want to wrap up with something not design related. How do you want to grow as a human being in 2021, and then to 2023,

**Nerissa** 42:42

I want to continue to feel more confident in myself to really set the stage for other people that look like me, going into this industry to build confidence in themselves. Because it can look like a doggy dog kind of kind of world and you got to fight your way to the top kind of thing. But I want others to feel like they have a place at the table. And no two designers look alike, think alike, share the same experiences, share the entire set of skills. So don't be afraid to to really be yourself. But I just want to really, I want to really learn more about my challenges with neuro diversity, incorporate that into creating a very healthy environment for myself as a designer, and to not show that my challenges are weaknesses. They are just different ways of thinking. And I just need adapt different ways. That doesn't make me any less of a designer than anybody else.

**Josh Kim** 44:21

100% No, preach. Alright. I think you know, riffing off you something that I'm going to grow in 2021 and 2022, as well is creating that access for others empowering others to speak on behalf of themselves, empowering others to represent themselves and design for themselves. So that, you know, I don't want to call myself an expert anymore. I think I've set that as a goal in 2021 moving into 2022 and the rest of my career. I don't want to refer to myself as an expert or anything similar to that. Because I think humans are so diverse. I mean, we all have like such deep, rich histories. And you know, both professionally and in my own personal life, making less assumptions about people, taking the time to listen to people, more thoughtfully, right clearing out my calendar. So I'm not like super busy anymore, making time for my family. I want to listen more, I think by listening to people you understand, it's such a simple concept, right? But like, actively listening to people, understanding them, and then, you know, paving the way, like finding ways to give everyone equal access, to be able to, you know, do what they want to do. Because that's how it really should be. We live in like the 21st century, we have like, electric cars, and I don't know... the internet, and so many other things, I feel like there shouldn't be those stigmas or barriers to access anymore. And I think that can be a design problem that we all can really fix in our own lives. So... yeah.

**Nerissa** 46:01

I like it. Yeah.

**Josh Kim** 46:05

All right. Well, thank you so much for joining me Nerissa. So I know this went longer than our planned 30 minutes, we kind of riffed around a little bit, but hopefully we can check in again. And yeah, any last parting words?

**Nerissa** 46:29

Josh... keep doing your thing. you've, you've grown so much since we first met. And I think it's very interesting that you kind of look to me as a mentor, when you know, we're just equals, you're extremely talented in, in what you do. And, you know, you need to give yourself a lot more credit for everything that you've learned, both in your professional and your personal life. And, you know, I would like to see you share your knowledge with your audience. Because these kinds of things are still valuable. You know, a lot of the things that we discussed, should just be really normal things that people talk about... like accessibility, diversity and inclusion, growing as a designer, breaking away from different stigmas, and breaking away from maybe toxic cultures, behaviors, you know, the... the future is open gates for new opportunities. So it's, it's our responsibility to figure out what that next kind of social standard is for this industry. We're designing it!

**Josh Kim** 47:52

We're designing it. Yay. I mean, that's high praise. If anything, I'm just paying it forwards how I can. Once again, you helped me so much in my career, I'm eternally grateful. I see what you do day in, day out. Once again, YouTube channel!

**Nerissa** 48:13

Oh, glow up.

**Josh Kim** 48:16

Oh, glow up. You've heard that from the mastermind yourself. But thank you so much for joining me. I will stop this recording button right now and on our ways, sounds good.