

Interviewee/Narrator: Quinn Gormley

Interviewers: Katherine Sucey and Liam Dunn

Date of Interview: 29 November 2021

Location of Interview: 3rd Floor Glickman Library

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Liam: Alright we're recording. Quinn I just want to say thank you so much for doing this project with us. We really appreciate your time and dedication, so basically to start, me and Katherine will introduce ourselves then you will introduce yourself then we will get going. My name is Liam Dunn, L-I-A-M D-U-N-N, my pronouns are he/him/his, and right now we are located in the third story of the Portland Campus Library, and it is November 29th, 2021.</p> <p>Katherine: And I am Katherine Sucey, K-A-T-H-E-R-I-N-E S-U-C-Y, and my preferred pronouns are she/her/hers. Quinn, if you could just say and spell your name.</p> <p>Quinn: Of course. Quinn Gormley, Q-U-I-N-N G-O-R-M-L-E-Y, she or they.</p> <p>Katherine: And this is just a quick reminder that you can refuse to answer any questions, and you can end the interview at any point, and also if after 90 minutes or so you feel like you have more to say, you can decide to conclude or you can ask for a follow up interview to be scheduled in the next spring or next fall. How old are you?</p> <p>Quinn: I am 27.</p> <p>Katherine: And if you want to start.</p> <p>Liam: Sure, so just to kind of get to know you a little bit better, and know some background info, what was your life like growing up?</p> | <p>Name and Pronouns Location</p> <p>Time</p> <p>Name Pronouns</p> <p>Name and Pronouns</p> <p>End Interview</p> <p>Follow Up Interview</p> <p>Age</p> <p>Background Information</p> <p>Damariscotta</p> |
|---|--|

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Quinn: Life like growing up. Well, I grew up in Damariscotta, in the mid coast, which is a rapidly gentrifying tourist town, but when I was growing up it was not that. It was mostly, well, a village in between Boothbay and Camden that people would stop at in the summer and mostly had fishermen in it. My mom was the director of our local library, my dad was an artist and a school bus driver, and I have an older sibling. Not quite sure what we're looking for here. I don't know, I liked a lot growing up in rural Maine. It was beautiful.</p> | <p>Gentrification</p> <p>Fishermen Library/ Artist/ School Bus Driver Sibling</p> <p>Rural Maine</p> |
| <p>Liam: That's awesome. We also noticed that you checked off that you wanted to talk about religion, do you consider yourself to be religious in any way now, and if so how is that expressed?</p> | <p>Religion</p> <p>Religious expression</p> |
| <p>Quinn: Sure, yes, I did grow up quite religious. Super, super christian but like, lefty Christian, so within the United Church of Christ which is a progressive denomination. That was a really big part of my identity growing up, we were in the church 3 or 4 times a week mostly doing suppers and that kind of thing. I originally had intended to go to seminary before I got into this work. I think Christianity is a big part of my life right now but I don't quite know how it fits in at the moment. I had some sizable disagreements with the denomination a couple years ago that I haven't resolved yet, but the motivation of faith is still pretty central in my life.</p> | <p>Lefty Christian Progressive Denomination</p> <p>Seminary</p> <p>Conflict</p> |
| <p>Katherine: Can you talk a little bit more about what your faith has meant to you?</p> | <p>Faith</p> |
| <p>Quinn: Yeah, it's funny because I don't think we get a lot of positive queer narratives of religion, which I've considered in the queer churches I go into them it's like 'oh my god the trauma' and I'm like well yeah, that's real and I have respect for that, but also like not at all my experience. Church was one of the few safe spaces in my childhood. I went through an open and affirming process when I was in high school that my mother really drove home and we're incredibly welcoming both times I had to come out to the congregation. Actually when I first transitioned, I asked to be rebaptized, and I insisted on doing it via immersion, so they dip you</p> | <p>Trauma</p> <p>Lived experience</p> <p>Coming out Baptization</p> <p>Cold</p> |

in a lake as opposed to dribbling water on your head. Which I thought would be a good idea to do that in November in Maine. When I got there, the entire church had shown up on Biscay Pond in Damariscotta, and there's this huge kayaking group that a lot of them were part of and they arranged a rainbow of kayaks around me, it was really beautiful. So yeah, it was a place of acceptance, a place of faith. There has been an expectation of work in my family, not that we, well we are consistently Protestant. You don't have to do anything to be worthy of grace but you damn well better act like you've got grace and that means you have to be of service to others. Kind of the message I got growing up and I got it through church camp and everything and all that would be happening and then I was surrounded by a queer clergy members, and no one ever had an issue with me going off to bible camp with painted nails. In fact, I usually came home with a different color. I don't know, it was safe and accepting, and driving. It gave me that identity. I saw the wholeness of gender and queerness also gave me an identity that was bigger than that, which I find a lot of comfort in.

Katherine: Were there any other places that were significant to you growing up? Aside from Damariscotta? Or more specifically in Damariscotta?

Quinn: I spent most of my childhood in the library because my mom worked there. And now I guess I'm pretty loud about the importance of libraries now because they are one of the few places people can exist for free and where your access to information is protected and respected. And that's important. I don't know, the library, church, and my neighbors backyard is what my childhood was, so.

Liam: Do you have particularly fond memories of growing up in the library or just being around libraries in general?

Quinn: Well, my mom was the director and she had a tendency to hire cookey, old women, a lot of retired art and english teachers. Old women get into a lot of trouble in the world and that was always nice to have this. We didn't have any connection to my

Kayaking
 Beautiful
 Acceptance
 Protestant work ethic
 Service
 Church camp
 Identity
 Gender and Queerness
 Library
 Exist for free
 Neighbors backyard
 Memories
 Director
 Old Women/ Art and English Teachers
 Extended family

extended family growing up so the library staff were really the people who looked after me when I wasn't in school. They were really quite lovely. Usually the most strong opinions, and not very quiet, despite librarians reputations, which I think is very ill earned. I don't know if I have any super specific memories. It's just kind of a backdrop of everything.

Strong opinions

Katherine: Can you talk about the significance of your neighbors backyard?

Neighbors backyard

Quinn: Sure. That was formative. They were fundamentalist Christians who my parents and I have a lovely relationship with. We get along now, but maybe during the decade that I needed them to be parents were not the most present. My mom was working 70 or 80 hours a week and my dad was really, really sick. So if I wasn't at school or the library, I would usually go home from school then go to my neighbors since they were homeschooled. Very different worldview that they had. Incredibly welcoming, kind people, until there is a reason for them not to be. Which that was unpleasant, coming out to them which was in the middle of a fight about one of the gay marriage referendums. Sort of put an end to that relationship really suddenly unfortunately. It's funny they still send my parents christmas cards every year and I'm left off, which clearly means they don't know my family because everyone is a little fruity. Yeah, I don't know. I learned a lot from those relationships about what I didn't want to be, and how easy it is to mistake living well and kindly by others and then thinking you live well and kindly by others. But not really, there are a lot of conditions put on it.

Fundamentalist christians

Work

Homeschooling

Different worldview

Welcoming and kind, but homophobic

Fruity

Relationships

Perception

Katherine: Can you talk a little bit more about that?

Homophobic

Quinn: Well, just that they're wonderful and kind so long as you're not gay. That was another sin, and then there was being queer. That was a whole level beyond, which never made any sense to me, because it's not written anywhere biblically. Well, sin isn't really presented anywhere biblically. That's not really relevant. But yeah, they could forgive a lot of things except that. I went from being

Sin

Threat

somebody who disagreed with them about their beliefs to someone who is a threat to their children and family despite having been in their house almost every day for a decade at that point. Not a lot of resolution to that unfortunately, but I guess I'm lucky that if I had to get rejected by a family, it's better my neighbors than my own home.

Sorrow

Katherine: I'm really sorry to hear that.

Time

Quinn: It was a decade ago, it's fine.

Feeling

Katherine: Could you talk a little bit more, if you don't mind, about what that felt like?

Subtlety

Quinn: I guess a lot of crappy things going on in my life at that point. I honestly don't know why I wasn't used to them. I wasn't particularly subtle about not being a cisgendered straight man. That was causing a lot of problems at school, and attempting to transition with weird support from my parents. I was mostly just pissed because it was easy to be pissed at them. Because there was a big political fight over gay marriage going on and it's like you're right you're wrong. I was mostly just angry the day that it happened and it took a while to realize that my best friend was in that family and I would walk their dogs every day and I learned how to argue with that person and that has ended up being a really important skill in my life. Being able to argue for what I believe in and I learned that with him. So that I have lost that, which I didn't think I realized in the moment how much of a loss that was. I think it was a bigger loss for them than it was for me though, because they lost the ability to talk to someone who thought differently than they did. But it's sad.

Transitioning

Gay marriage

Best friend

Personal growth

Loss

Liam: That's a really good point that it's more of a loss for them than it is for you. Would you say that your gender identity when you came out to them, it was a shock to them because they were so blinded by their religion that they couldn't see that I guess? Do you think it was a shock to them or not?

Gender identity

Trans community

Quinn: Alright, so you have to think back more than 7 years ago, almost no one outside of the trans community had ever even heard the word transgender. So we didn't even get to a conversation about gender identity. I made some comment about my boyfriend at the time, and they interpreted that as being gay, which was I don't know, I had originally, I didn't really come out at any point. It was just assumed I didn't disagree with people. But I was okay with that being gay was [inaudible] but there were a lot of gay kids in school growing up, and it didn't make effeminacy okay, but at least eliminated the expectation that I'd behave differently and that was a little bit better. So no we didn't really get to the gender identity part of the discussion. I have no idea if they ever learned about that or not. I assumed they talked to my mother occasionally from time to time. We've all since moved, but they pop in and check in on her. I can't imagine it would have gone better.

Gay

Liam: So I guess that's enough for the background info section. Is there anything else you feel you want to talk about right now, anything else you didn't get to mention?

Quinn: I don't think so.

Liam: Okay.

Friendship and Chosen Family/ Definition

Katherine: Okay, so we can move into friendship and chosen family. So as an adult, how do you define family?

Chosen family

Quinn: Hmm, that's a good one. I don't know, I feel like I only have a chosen family. Because I feel like I've been able to rekindle family relationships with my family of origin as an adult, in a way that is a much more even and healthy playing field between all parties. Everyone went to therapy, it was great. I think family is all of the people I choose to make important. I guess in practical terms if you open up my phone to make a phone call, it's the people it's the people who show up in the safe contacts. If I'm in an accident or something they're who I call. That's been really important, and I think it's a beautiful part of queer community is found family. Certainly a lot of my adulthood when things have not been great.

Therapy

Safe

Found family

That's why I rely on mutuality in that. I don't know if I have a nice pretty definition of who it is and who it isn't.

Katherine: That is perfect.

Liam: No I think that's a really good definition. Like when you said that your family is your chosen family because you choose to have them in your life. I think that's really important to mention too.

Quinn: Yeah, it's bigger than just that too. I mean I've collected some people along the way.

Katherine: Can you talk a little bit about the process of finding your chosen family, what that's been like for you?

Quinn: Sure. So I owe a lot of that to Maine TransNet. I went to my first support group when I was 17 and it was completely life changing. Never knowing a trans person until that night. There was this immediate sense of belonging and community. And I think that found family comes from that community. And there are a couple of people that I kind of attached myself to early on, and they've been really core relationships at this point. Particularly once I ended up back in Maine, we lived close to each other, and they have been people who we have keys to each other's apartments. In and out without calling and spending lots of our free time together but also I have a really good friend who, a couple of friends who on more than one occasion have taken me to the hospital for things I shouldn't have been doing. I guess it has been, looking at a decade or more ago, the community felt a lot smaller back then and a lot less visible and a lot more interdependent than it does nowadays. Not that the interdependence doesn't exist but it's different than it was.

Liam: There's less of it now.

Quinn: It is possible to rely on cis people that it wasn't 10 years ago. And it's possible to know 100 trans people that aren't the same 100 people 10 years ago. Which was not the case back then. I don't

Maine TransNet
Support group

Sense of belonging

Apartments

Calling

Hospital

Community growth

Interdependence

Relying on cis people

Better times

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>know, I think we needed each other, and it worked out that we liked each other when we no longer needed that. Not that we don't need it, but it's not as desperate as it was.</p> | <p>Moving back to Maine</p> |
| <p>Liam: You mentioned at one part that you said when you came back to Maine, was there anywhere outside of Maine that you lived at any point in your life?</p> | <p>Chicago Conservatory Music School Hormones Gender Clinic</p> |
| <p>Quinn: Yeah, I attempted to go to another college originally, in the Chicago area for a conservatory affiliated ... Okay, so I was supposed to go to music school, had a bit of a disagreement with my parents over hormones and not wanting me to have those as a teenager. This was before the gender clinic or anything existed. They didn't think that it was necessary, and I decided to give them some evidence that I needed it. And it resulted in suicide attempts, and I pretty severely injured me hands in the process, so I ended up going to the only school that took me without an audition. It was associated with UCC which is very progressive but very progressive 10 years ago doesn't necessarily include trans people. They were very welcoming on paper than less enthusiastic when I showed up to a concert in a dress so that didn't last. So I came back. Then I ended up back in Portland. There was a brief stint living on a commune and building boats, and experimenting with lesbianism and polyamory, like you do, but I ended up in Portland eventually with no idea where my life was going. The only thing I had at the time was MTN.</p> | <p>Suicide Audition UCC / Progressive Enthusiasm Portland Commune Lesbianism MTN Suicide attempts</p> |
| <p>Liam: Really sorry to hear about your suicide attempts. But it sounds like you are doing a lot better. I obviously don't know because I don't know your whole story, but it sounds like coming back to Maine, back to Portland, was the right call. Glad you're doing better.</p> | <p>Right decision Expectations Leaving Maine</p> |
| <p>Quinn: It's funny, the expectation that was set on the trans community is this kind of narrative that you have to leave everyone that you knew in order to be yourself, because who would ever accept you. I assumed that would be the only path that I could follow. It's been weird to carve out a different one. Yeah, I don't</p> | <p>Stealth</p> |

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>know, I also think going stealth was the only viable option for safety and economic prospects back then. It's funny to say back then because I'm not that old and it's not that long ago, but really the world has changed very quickly. Yeah, moving back to Maine has mostly been a good thing. Rather attached here.</p> | <p>Age / Time</p> |
| <p>Katherine: So what did you study at music school?</p> | <p>Music School</p> |
| <p>Quinn: Percussion performance. I like to hit things.</p> | <p>Percussion Performance</p> |
| <p>Katherine: Did you always want to be a musician growing up?</p> | <p>Household Church organists Art</p> |
| <p>Quinn: It was a very musical household. A couple generations of church organists, and my dad was very artistic, so I kind of knew what an artistic life looked at. And I was very good at music, and when things weren't good, music didn't have the opinion about those things. There was a bit of a refuge in that, that I got really lucky in having a couple of out queer teachers who all happened to be band teachers in middle school and high school. That was why gotta be safe. It was comforting, nice, I have this thing called synesthesia. Which is when you get two sensory inputs across. You get sound and color perception crossed. So sound, it's kind of like when you close your eyes and see stars, it's kind of like that, but it's when your eyes are open. So music makes that really fun.</p> | <p>Queer teachers</p> <p>Synesthesia</p> <p>Seeing stars</p> <p>Example of synesthesia Beethoven</p> |
| <p>Katherine: Can you give an example?</p> | |
| <p>Quinn: You would think that would be easy. I don't know, it's hard because I can't draw it. Fourth movement of Beethoven's 9th symphony is purple and gold. That's usually a good one. The Ode To Joy.</p> | <p>Seeing sound</p> |
| <p>Liam: So is it kind of like you can see sound? If I'm understanding you?</p> | |
| <p>Quinn: Kind of, it's not quite seeing. It depends.</p> | <p>Picturing sound</p> |
| <p>Liam: Or more like being able to picture it I guess.</p> | |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Quinn: Yeah, but it's voluntary. It happens no matter what, which is mostly a cool thing. It's a little overwhelming in a crowded restaurant. I guess it's kind of like strobe lights. Fireworks are annoying, because they're the wrong color.</p> | <p>Restaurant / Fireworks</p> |
| <p>Liam: When you were growing up did you always kind of play percussion instruments, or did you ever experiment with any other instruments?</p> | <p>Experimentation</p> |
| <p>Quinn: Percussion, my dad was really into Celtic music. I started on the [inaudible] and my mom taught me piano and organ. I've branched out to others, but I like tactile instruments. I have crappy lungs.</p> | <p>Celtic music</p> |
| <p>Liam: Clarinet would be hard for that one I think.</p> | |
| <p>Katherine: I would like to circle back to friendships. Did you have any other early childhood friendships? I know we talked about your neighbor already, that you would like to discuss that was significant to you?</p> | <p>Friendship</p> |
| <p>Quinn: I guess one of the nice things about growing up in a small town is you see the same people all the time, so I have this core group of guy friends who I've had since preschool. They are the longest non-blood relationships in my life. We're still pretty close at this point, and there's been an unusually high number of trans people out of that group which is always fun. They were really good. They've been a constant in my life when things were good or bad. They mostly have not given a damn about it. I got in a big fight with them when I tried to come out as gay originally. His name was Sal, and he kind of tried to tell me "you're not gay Quinn, this is not what this is". And I was like "this is unbelievably homophobic and terrible and we're never talking again." I came out as trans a couple months after that and he was like "that's what I was waiting for". And I was like "that's really sweet". He perhaps could have been a bit more direct about it. They're great. A good measure for what good men can be like.</p> | <p>Core group</p> <p>Coming out</p> <p>Constant</p> <p>Supportive</p> <p>Fight</p> <p>Perception of friendship</p> |

Liam: That's really good. How do you see yourself as a friend to other people? Whether it's like your core friend group you talked about, your neighbor, your family, how do you define yourself as a friend?

Quinn: I guess I would look at what people use me for in friendship. I'm not very fun, I'm told. I possibly have a complex about that. I don't know, my friends usually call me for problem solving because that seems to be what I bring to the relationships. I'm not quite sure how to answer that question.

Katherine: Can you elaborate on what problem solving looks like?

Quinn I'm not afraid of money, or numbers, or phone calls. Which is an unusual combination in 20-somethings.

Liam: That's definitely a good quality to have in a friend for most millennials and gen-Z.

Katherine: Can you give a specific example of a time you solved a problem for a friend of yours?

Quinn: I have personally sat with most of my friends and signed them up for health insurance since I actually understand what the questions mean. Friendship is more than, it's not transactional. But it's helpful when people bring things to it.

Liam: Do you think that being trans has had any impact, you've already kind of talked and answered this question, but do you think it's had any impact on your friendships? Anything else that you wanted to mention?

Quinn: I haven't exactly made a lot of cis friends since kindergarten, since I had the same friends since growing up. As an adult, I've just been surrounded by trans people all the time. Which is at least partly because of my job, but I don't know, it's easier. I think with mostly trans people around, so I guess mostly in terms of

Problem solving

Unusual

Health insurance

Not transactional

Making friends

Adulthood

shared life experience, determining who your friends are. Easier in that way.

Liam: That's a really good point. Alright, so we're kind of wrapping up friendship and chosen family. Within that, is there anything else that you want to mention that you think would be relevant?

Quinn: I don't think so.

Katherine: Actually, would you be able to describe a friend as an adult that has had a really big impact on your life?

Quinn: Sure, my best friend in the world, their name is Chai Johnson, we met each other through MTN about 10 years ago, and we [inaudible] beyond MTN but MTN has been a lot of it because we came up as volunteers and then board members. As I got hired at my job I became the board member so we've worked together for a long time, and that has been a lot of walking to and from meetings to get to know each other. Our lives are very blended, and their roommate is my sibling. We talk daily. They work at an organization that we work closely with, so we talk to each other all the time but then outside of our work lives, we share most of our big events. I performed at their wedding, they were at my wedding. Went to the hospital together a lot. And for other people, a lot of our people end up in the hospital. I don't know, it's hard to describe something that's so every day. I don't have a lot of everyday people and they're one of my few everyday people.

Katherine: Would you say that you have a good close knit circle of friends as an adult?

Quinn: Yeah, for sure. Most of which is shared amongst each other.

Katherine: Can you talk a little about what that means to you?

Quinn: Yeah, I've been asked once who I would call my family and for the most part, it's probably 5 or 6 people who would drop anything for each other. Sorry, I don't have a great descriptor for

Big impact

Chai Johnson

Daily support

Very routine

Close knit circle

Huge part of life

them. It's not for lack of affection. They're incredibly important to me. I don't know, I would not have my life without them. Figuratively and literally.

Katherine: I think that's a great description.

Liam: No, I think that's really good. And like you said it's hard to describe something. Like with some person that you're with every day, it just becomes routine. Like someone asks "what's this like?" I don't know, it's just my bestie. So kind of going on to political activism and organizing, we want to learn more from you about your work at Maine Transnet. We know that you're the executive director. Can you talk a little bit about the organization, and how you came into your role there?

Quinn: Yeah, so I think I touched on this a little bit earlier but I went to a support group. That would have been around 2011. Maine Transnet was just a couple of support groups. There weren't really, there was not a lot else going on, and Maine Transnet has been around 17 years now. We operate on a peer support model for our programming. We were founded, pretty unusual, still to this day it's not a given. Historically support groups for trans people have been clinically directed, like a social worker, group therapy with clients, focused on people actively transitioning, talking about transitioning. Right before MTN got founded the last one of those in Maine got shut down. They tend to cycle pretty quickly. Our founder Alex Roan, basically said we need this. Which is basically how a lot of MTN happens is if someone needs something. This kind of started this idea that trans people are probably better equipped than cisgender clinicians to support each other. We needed support beyond just how a clinician would define transition. We did support groups for a while. We almost got shut down in 2013. That's when Chai and I joined the board. We'd been facilitating for a couple months at that point. Our big support group was about to shut down, because there was this while post marriage equality. "Why would we bother to have an LGBT support organization?" for a couple of years. We had a mostly cisgender board. At the time, they were like "well we won marriage equality. We don't need MTN anymore."

Maine Transnet

Support group

Peer support model

Clinicians

Shutting down MTN

Laverne Cox

But there were a couple of people who got China on board, and we said that's bullshit. It was a bit of a hostile takeover. A couple of months after that, Laverne Cox was on the cover of TIME Magazine. It was a tipping point in transgender history. That's the thing I point to if I have to point to a marker in time which delineates the reality we have now versus what it was like before. Suddenly there is this deluge of people making support, who are finally adding language for who they are. All over the state. We started expanding, we had a whole discussion about wanting to refocus on rural communities across Maine as we added more volunteers as we grew our board. We grew really quickly for a couple of years. In 2015 we started tracking suicide data in the community. It was to see who is actually dying and were there patterns about that that we could learn from. And then in fall of 2016, there were 7 of them in the space of 3 months so there was this huge uptick at the end of which Donald Trump got elected president. MTN was a board of a couple volunteers at that point. We didn't have staff, we had a couple grand in the bank. I had been doing various other organizing work. It was horrible the first couple of months, the administration was terrible and we had more suicides. The level of desperation was just really big. I was working a full time job and I happened to pull MTN together at the same time. I got fed up with it, so I showed up at a board meeting and said I just quit my job today. Let me have this executive director job, here is the job description and I will do it for free for 3 months. If I can figure out at the end of 3 months how to pay for myself then you will let me keep it. And that was 5 years ago, worked out well for me I think. We've grown since then, quite a bit. Our work is changing, the community's needs are changing rapidly day to day. And that's exciting to keep up with, because they're frankly, not that they're terrible but they're so less hopeless than they were 5 years ago. I look at like the drastic shift in what we do all day when we got Mainecare coverage for trans health. Our public inbox through the questions we got were about Mainecare coverage. And it was like "nope, here's how to run a GoFundMe, good luck." Over and over and over again. To now it's a "how are we navigating an imperfect system." The systems aren't perfect and we beat the crap out of them. But they're way preferable for me to fight with an

Tipping point

Organization growth

Suicide data

Donald Trump

Funds

Desperation

Executive Director

Community needs

MaineCare

GoFundMe

Imperfect system

imperfect system than to just not have an option. I don't know, I think it went off on a tangent there. That was how I kinda got involved. I needed MTN, and I needed MTN to be around, and I didn't have anything to do with my time, so.

Katherine: Can you talk a little bit about what the peer support groups have meant to you personally?

Quinn: I am alive because of them, multiple times over. They gave me community, they gave me family. They helped me understand a lot of myself. Ultimately I think they gave me a sense of belonging. I think that's what most people still find in them. Other than that, the shifting, as it's possible to know other trans people outside of the community. They were a lifeline when I needed it most.

Liam: You kind of already mentioned this before, but how did you come to find the organization? Is there any other, like how did you come to find the executive director position aside from the support groups?

Quinn: Well, I invented the executive director position. So yeah, the organization just got too big to be run by volunteers. I think I was in the position I was in the organization at the time, because I knew how nonprofits work. Because I grew up around a nonprofit, working family. And I was really fed up with my previous job, so taking a giant stupid risk seemed like a great idea when I was 23. Much too young to have the job, and no one else on the board at the time knew any better.

Liam: Sounds like it worked out pretty well. Maybe taking that risk, probably it was definitely scary at the time, but it sounds like it paid off.

Quinn: We have 4 employees now, and we do a lot because of that. Now at least a good chunk of that I can take credit for which is nice.

Liam: That's pretty cool.

Support

Lifeline

Executive Director position

Too young

Challenge

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Katherine: What’s the most challenging part about your work?</p> <p>Quinn: Um, especially over the last couple of years, there have been more and more trans people who don’t need us, we’ve served the trans people who do need us. What that translates to on a day to day basis, almost every single person I talk to is suicidal, and a survivor of sexual assault. That is part of every single conversation we have every single day. And overwhelmingly low income. And that has a toll, I think, on anyone. I think it’s difficult for staff involved here, because it’s not someone else’s trauma when we’re talking to when we have those conversations. It’s our own as well. It’s part of what makes us effective, but also there is a lot of grief. We have a responsibility to hold. A part of my job I really do not like is that I track the suicide data. That usually means I’m the one who receives notice and I’m usually the one who tells the rest of the organization, and we figure out how to tell the rest of the community. That usually involves talking to the survivors of that suicide, the partners, parents, and friends. And that’s unpleasant. Yeah.</p> | <p>Suicide Sexual Assault</p> <p>Low income</p> <p>Trauma Grief</p> <p>Suicide data</p> <p>Talking to suicide survivors and loved ones</p> |
|--|--|

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Katherine: What are some ways that you cope with holding other people’s grief?</p> <p>Quinn: Not well. I talk about it. It’s helpful that it’s not a foreign idea to most of the people I work with ‘cause they have to hold it too. We’ve been able to develop a workplace that is quite accessible in terms of mental health needs. I don’t know. I’m not sure what healthy is supposed to look like, I think people define healthy responses to grief and trauma as being able to reach some level of well adjusted happiness. That wasn’t my life before this work anyway. I live with pretty significant mental illness, which honestly I think has made me well suited for the position because it’s not “am I sad because of grief? Or am I sad because that’s how my brain is wired?” It doesn’t really matter, it’s normal. And I know how to live with it.</p> <p>Liam: Would you say that your community at MaineTransNet has been the biggest factor in keeping yourself afloat in terms of coping with everything?</p> | <p>Grief Trauma</p> <p>Mental illness</p> <p>Community</p> |
|--|--|

Quinn: Yeah, that's certainly part of it. I do what I can to protect whatever I can from being put into the community. I really do think that that grief really has a huge weight. You know, we've had some people that we don't know who wouldn't be known otherwise. Sometimes they leave us notes and that kind of thing. Or we just get one cryptic voicemail from a friend or a family member. And I usually try not to share those, or share all the names with people because I don't think it helps. I don't know if that's a healthy answer or not, but it's what I've been doing. My husband helps a lot. He's the other person who gets woken up by the middle of the night phone calls. As employers, as community friends, as a community, I feel like it's okay for me to not be okay with stuff.

Katherine: On the flip side, what would you say is the most meaningful part of your work?

Quinn: I probably should have a faster answer to that, it's a good fundraising line. I am witness to a lot of talk in our work about breathing. We talk a lot publicly to our supporters about our focus to keep trans people breathing in Maine. We mean that literally. There's a lot of different kinds of breath. Grief is something beautiful to witness. Grief is just love without another place to go. It's beautiful to see that. It's painful, there's a lot of gasping that goes on with that. It's beautiful to see how much someone was loved when they're lost, whatever way they're lost. There's joyful breath we get to see. We have this huge collection of binders in our office, people just come in to get them sometimes. Getting to watch a 16 year old look in the mirror and see themselves for the first time and just absolutely melt down is breathtakingly beautiful. I've been around long enough to get to see those people grow up. To get to see people who 5 years ago were being rejected by their families, and I've been able to be with them long enough to see them reconcile in some meaningful way.

Liam: That's pretty powerful.

Quinn: Yeah, it's unparalleled access to people's lives. We talk a lot about the painful parts of that, but the joy exists within that pain, frequently. It's really wonderful to see that and share that, and to see others take joy in it.

Grief

Suicide

Mental health

Breathing

Suicide
Prevention

Love

Death & Loss

Transitioning

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Katherine: So, I also read that you used to work with Health Equity Alliance.</p> | |
| <p>Quinn: Yeah.</p> | |
| <p>Katherine: Can you describe that organization briefly?</p> | |
| <p>Quinn: The Health Equity Alliance (HEA) is one of Maine's two historic AIDS service organizations. They're the result of a merger from Eastern Maine AIDS network and DownEast AIDS alliance. They do HIV case management, they've really expanded their services and harm reduction. They run most of the syringe exchanges in Maine. I was hired out of USM, I was originally a social work major, and I applied for a field placement with them. In the interview, they offered me a different job. I previously had campaign experience, and one of the more insidious things that the LePage administration did was when he couldn't get laws passed to defund organizations he didn't like, he just tore the Department of Health and Human Services to shreds. When they couldn't meet their contract obligations, and when their contractees couldn't meet their contract obligations he would investigate them and put them under corrective action. HEA had just been put under collective action agreement about their field testing program for HIV, and covered 14 of the 16 counties of Maine, all of the rural ones. Most of the positive cases are new positives. They were being threatened basically of losing all of their state and federal funds because of this. So instead of hiring a public health worker to come and administer the program, they hired me and a colleague of mine who had also done campaign work, because campaign work is incredibly metrics based. We had to get 100 tests in two months, upon arrival which is a very difficult thing to do. They brought us in basically to save the contract and we ended up sticking around for a couple of years. And that was wonderful because I fell in love with public health work. But they do good stuff, I do consulting with them every now and then. When I worked at HEA, after the initial thing I managed the testing program. We got to do a lot of community organizing and through that I got to seed pride festivals around Maine. I set up Pride festivals in Lewiston Waterville, Belfast, and I planned the one in Bangor for a couple of years. I actually kind of hate pride with a passion. But I like teaching organizing skills and pride is a good way to do that.</p> | <p>HIV/AIDS services</p> <p>Governor LePage</p> <p>Public Health</p> <p>HIV Testing</p> <p>Community Organizing</p> <p>Pride</p> |
| <p>Katherine: Why do you hate pride?</p> | <p>Organizing</p> |
| <p>Quinn: I hate people. I hate crowds. I'm not a fan of crowds or loud noises. I don't have a problem with them, but I don't particularly enjoy drag.</p> | <p>Queerness in</p> |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Everything in rural Maine that is queer related is drag, and I just get a little fed up with it. It's the same Queens everywhere you go, and I can only sit through their performances so many times before I just want to pull my hair out. So I don't love pride, but it is important and it's a good way to seed organizing, and there are a lot of local groups that got started because of that and it's really nice to see them succeed.</p> | <p>Rural Maine</p> |
| <p>Katherine: So what was experience like managing the HIV testing program for the Health Equity Alliance?</p> | |
| <p>Quinn: So, 90% of our testing clients had to be MSM (men who have sex with men), which is more than just queer men it's basically anyone, I apologize for this, who was born with a penis who has sex with anyone who currently has a penis or was born with a penis. It's a very broad group of people. In the rest of the country, it's mostly queer men who get tested. But in Maine, most of our testing clients were so called straight MSMs and it was mostly widowers in Section 8 housing who had sexual bromances with widower friends. There was a lot of that, and they were all passionate Trump voters. And I would go into their homes, alone, and ask them incredibly invasive questions about their life, while offering them a test. And it was really fascinating the conclusions that they arrived at about their position in the world. I don't know, it was fun to watch, it was interesting to figure out how to talk to them. A lot of that job was literally cold messaging anyone I could find on Grindr. I would drive to Farmington or something and open up Grindr and I would just message anyone within a 20 mile radius and be like, 'Do you want an HIV test? Sitting in the blue Subaru in the Hannaford. Come on over.' That worked. We were setting up Craig's List advertisements and when Craig's List had the hookup function, which I guess they don't anymore. Yeah, weirdly specific things to think about but I found them mostly amusing. And then, finding a positive case was a really big deal when it happened. It's maybe 1% of who you test, and it's a really life changing diagnosis to get and it was never the people I expected it to be. But you go from a sort of health promotion interview to a 'we have to get this person into services really quickly while also managing a passive emotional response.' Again, I like having that kind of access to people's lives. It's nice to be a part of.</p> | <p>HIV Testing</p> <p>Public Health</p> <p>Sexual Health</p> |
| <p>Katherine: Are there any issues that are specific to the trans community when it comes to HIV testing?</p> | |
| <p>Quinn: I mean, nothing in the HIV world is set up for trans people in mind. So there's this new drug that came out earlier this year called _____. It's birth control for HIV basically. This huge efficacy study done in France was I guess part of a clinical trial and they had I want to say like 3,000</p> | <p>Trans Health</p> |

participants in this study. Fewer than 50 of them were trans. And they acknowledged this in their big report that basically shows that this thing is just shy of 100% effective, it is as close to 100% as you can say statistically. Everyone in transmission. And they said ‘yeah we couldn’t find any trans people to study.’ And it’s like what the hell do you mean you couldn’t find any trans people in Paris, which has a huge trans population. It’s like, you did not talk to the right person at any point. They had no trans men in the study at all. And it’s this whole huge problem because we think that trans men who have sex with men are at a higher risk of HIV. For similar reasons as cisgender men but specifically because testosterone can cause vaginal tearing which puts you at a significantly higher risk. We have no data anywhere and they’re testing doesn’t count towards any federal contract with the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) because the CDC doesn’t define them as high risk because there’s no data on that. But the data that they target for research is based on surveillance data which is based on contracts that have requirements that you serve only high risk populations as defined by the CDC. So the only way to get people tests frequently is to not count their trans status. Which I did frequently when I did testing. So it’s a mess. And then trans people have much lower adherence to both prevention and treatment for HIV, which is closely tied up with poverty and historical issues with medical treatment and pathologization of trans people. So it’s just like a bunch of additional hurdles that become more complicated as soon as you factor in poverty and race. It’s unfortunate; it’s an illness that is incredibly treatable and livable and in a chronic sense is still pretty much a pandemic for certain portions of our community.

HIV treatment

Poverty

Health Disparities

Liam: So we want to talk now about Maine Queer Health. Can you describe what they’ve done for the LGBT community?

Quinn: Yeah, so to clarify Maine Queer Health is a program of Maine TransNet. Basically, me and a couple of other people got fed up with everyone asking the same three questions in Queer Exchange Maine and decided there was a community level of knowledge of what the good providers are. Wouldn’t it be great if you could get access to the full community’s knowledge without having to ask in a Facebook group, and hoping you get a good recommendation? So we programmed a database based off of that and published it and we’ve been building it. We’re actually about to launch a new phase of it at the end of the year, we’ve just built a much smarter relational database and added a whole huge health resource section to it. It’s community or provider based so we’re not screening the providers; they either choose to list themselves or patients of

Maine Queer Health

Accessing Queer Healthcare

Primary Care

theirs who liked them submit their information. I hope that that's enough information for people to have a chance of making a good choice through healthcare. I know that not all of the good providers are good for everybody, but it's an easier starting point, I think. It's particular with primary care providers that there's a huge need in this state.

Liam: What was your role at Maine Queer Health?

Quinn: I built the initial database. I wasn't supposed to. There was a committee that was supposed to do that, but they were dragging their feet. So I just built it and published it, and said they could clean up the mess if they didn't like it. That's frequently how we get things done, one of us gets pissed off at everyone else. So yeah, I did that, as we were working on building the new one I got to be part of a team that sort of thought through how we want the relational database to think. So at the moment, it's really hosted through a Weebly store site that we just managed to take the price tags off of. It really is not very smart, and it's not very searchable. But the new one will be searchable. I'm trying to think of an example of what it will look like, well it just looks a lot more like a library database does I suppose, which makes more sense since we had librarians build it for us.

Liam: Are there any other issues or organizations related to Maine Queer Health, Maine TransNet, or Health Equity Alliance, in specific that you were hoping to talk about?

Quinn: With Maine Queer Health specifically I have to give credit to the Mabel Wadsworth Center, in Bangor, which is a feminist health center, a mother board for full disclosure who I think are the best providers of trans healthcare in Maine. I think I'm allowed to have a pretty strong opinion about that. They're great, they about 5 years ago realized they were having more and more requests for trans care and I'm like most of the clinics who have this, they decided to embrace that. So they started off [unintelligible]. And then they noticed really early on 'oh none of these people have primary care providers.' And instead of saying 'well that's someone else's problem,' they said 'let's open up a primary care office.' And then they discovered that everyone has these health navigation issues with insurance. Instead of saying 'that's our patients' problem,' they hired someone whose only job is to navigate trans people through health insurance. That person is part of the reauthoring of Maine Queer Health and has been a huge help and knows more about trans health insurance than I do and that is not something I say lightly, because I helped write the insurance law in Maine. Yeah, they're really helpful and they offer great care. So I give credit to them on that.

Health Database Building

Mabel Wadsworth Center

Trans Healthcare

Trans Health Insurance

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Liam: That’s awesome. I’m from Bangor so I’ve also heard of that organization before.</p> | |
| <p>Katherine: Could you talk a little about your involvement with the Mindful Queer Collective?</p> | <p>Mindful Queer Collective</p> |
| <p>Quinn: Yeah, it was originally Mid Coast Queer Collective. I started that with a couple of friends when I was 18. Mostly because none of the LGBT orgs in Maine cared about rural Maine at that time, and that included Maine TransNet. Basically we got told by MTN that they wouldn’t open programming in Mid Coast so we said ‘let’s start something new.’ So that went on for a couple of years and as I got pulled into MTN I stepped away from Mindful Queer Collective but we did some cool projects. We had support groups, we had drop ins all over Central Maine for a couple of years. We did this whole backpack program where we would basically make go-bags for queer youth that they could have on hand before that came out so that if they got kicked out they had supplies, which was unfortunately well utilized. I don’t really know if they’re still around or not, they have a website, but the people they say are involved on the website, half of them don’t live in Maine anymore, so I don’t really know what’s going on with them at this point. I mean, they may have been a casualty of the pandemic.</p> | <p>Rural Maine</p> <p>Coming out support</p> <p>Queer Youth</p> |
| <p>Liam: So is there anything else about political activism or organizing as a whole that you were hoping to touch on? Any other organizations?</p> | |
| <p>Quinn: I don’t think so.</p> | |
| <p>Liam: Okay. Moving on, we’re gonna go to the gender identity section.</p> | |
| <p>Quinn: Oh fun.</p> | |
| <p>Liam: When did you first become aware of not being cisgender? Quinn: Okay. So I’m gonna split this question. There was the ‘when did I understand I was a girl?’ and there was the ‘when did I understand I was trans?’ and those are two very separate moments in my life. I think I understood my gender, I don’t remember not understanding it, which is pretty standard for the majority of the population. I think I knew that from a young age. I think pre-school-ish. I learned the word transgender when I was 7, there was a Discovery Channel documentary that meant a lot to me then, I’m sure I would tear it to shreds now for being horrible. There was the ‘I am a girl,’ and then there was the ‘people don’t think I’m a girl,’ and then there was the ‘there’s a word for that, and a way to deal with that.’ It kinda happened over the course of a few years. All early childhood.</p> | <p>Gender Identity</p> <p>Early childhood</p> |

Liam: Can you talk a little bit more about the process of how you came to identify as trans?

Quinn: I didn't really have like a coming out moment, with any of this. I remember really distinctly, I wanted to join the boy scouts when I was 7, cause all of my friends were joining the boy scouts and I wanted to spend time with my friends. And my Dad took me to the cub scout introductory meeting, and this was way before the boy scouts actually kinda got cool. And my Dad just asked toward the end of the meeting, if one of the kids ended up being gay, would they be kicked out? And the guy was like, 'unfortunately yes,' and my Dad was like 'well we're not gonna waste his time.' And just took me out of the room at the time. Which that's mostly a good memory for me 'cause like I think my parents knew me on some level. I don't think they necessarily understood me, but I think they knew me. There was never a point in my life where I wasn't insistent with the people close to me about my gender identity, and sort of the language that we used to talk about that evolved as I learned how to talk about it better and as language shifted. By the time I was like 12 or 13, trans was the word that everyone in the family was using. Queer or gay was what most of the people outside of my immediate circle were using. They didn't have the other language. So there wasn't like a moment of this is it, this is how I talk about it. I was just kind of like 'okay'. I know who I am, let's talk about the words that I need to get there. That's not accurate. I know who I am, let's talk about the words I need for everyone else to get there. So yeah, that evolved over time, and continues to evolve.

Liam: How do you think your gender identity has influenced your activism?

Quinn: It's certainly focused it. I don't know, I didn't actually intend to get into politics at all. My first campaign job was at the Maine People's Alliance. It was a gubernatorial campaign. My Mother has had 3 sayings that have defined a lot of my life that I think ultimately led me to this position. First of all, she has always told my sibling and I to always be queen. Which I think she meant that you should always be in charge, but I possibly took it more literally than she intended. Everybody wants to be a useful engine, which is her way of saying that everyone wants to feel like they're part of something, which has certainly influenced my love of organizing and how I think about volunteer management and that kind of thing. People want to feel useful. And, "find the needs and fill it," I swear to god she said that every day of my childhood. Whether it was about volunteering at a soup kitchen or whether it was about cleaning the house on a Saturday morning. I think sort of how I ended up doing this work was

Coming out

Gender identity language

Maine People's Alliance

Family

Volunteering/
Organizing

that no one else was doing this work. There wasn't a trans organization serving the full needs of the community and I needed those services and I think my friends needed those services so we ended up building them. We're fairly unique in the country, there's not another organization in the United States that does the breadth of services that we do. Maybe we'll go national someday I don't know. So, my gender identity helped me to know what some of those needs were, there's certainly more than what I specifically have needed and there's been a learning process around that. I've been engaged in identity politics for better or worse, the identity gave me the career.

Identity politics

Liam: What do you think the most urgent issues are facing the trans community as a whole?

Quinn: Probably not the obvious ones. Poverty. It's been a difficult lesson. It is not possible to outwork poverty. I just mean that in terms of poor people getting out of poverty and as in people engaged in advocacy and direct service work. We can not work harder than poverty is big. Most of the people I work with on a day to day basis are poor. Most of the people I work with on a day to day basis are disabled. About 60% of trans people in Maine have a disability. I don't think that's anywhere in the picture of how people conceive of the trans community. And like, I could give a long explanation for why that's the case, but honestly I think the one thing we're really interested in is, I think a lot of the organizations that exist in our community are looking at sort of end of the river outcomes. So we can look at suicide, we can look at trauma and our approach historically has been let's respond to suicide and people in crisis and let's provide support to survivors. And those are both essential things to do. They don't fix any problem though, there's no solution to trans liberation that does not involve living trans people. So we have to keep trans people alive. We did this huge community survey earlier this year, and we haven't even put the data out yet. I'm sure when we do we'll submit a copy to the archive upstairs. Basically, we looked at a ton of different experiences and what we found overwhelmingly is that most of the bad things that we deal with start much younger than we thought they did. And they start at different points in relationship to people's journey with gender than we thought they did. So for example, the median age for suicide attempts among Trans Mainers is 13 years old. And the median age of first sexual assault is 11 years old. And it's the median, so it's literally half of the respondents it's below that. 80% of our respondents it all happened before they were 18. 70% of respondents it happened before they told anyone else in their life they were trans. We asked a whole bunch of questions in relation to common markers of transition that people have and coming out that people have and found that the more of those they had done, the less likely they had had any of

Poverty

Suicide

Trans liberation

Trauma

these negative experiences in the last year or so of their life. I think that's really exciting data. First of all, it's fairly strong evidence that transition is a protective factor. That's really powerful. Particularly because I talk to a lot of scared parents. They're convinced that coming out and transitioning is going to put their kid in harm's way. We have evidence that the opposite is true. Being closeted is going to leave them vulnerable to horrible outcomes, and transitioning might protect them from those. Not universally, for sure. I think the fact that it happens young, and it happens before people come out, for us means we're looking at if we want to imagine a trans community 3 or 4 generations from now where these aren't the defining experiences in the majority of the community's lives, we have to get in a lot younger than we have been. So we're doing a lot of work around what a childhood level intervention looks like when we don't know who in the room is the one who needs them. So that gets us into conversations around gender expectations and gendered violence. The fact that we can never set up an organization big enough to screen for all of that so we have to work with other service networks to do that, and train teachers and sexual assault advocates, to sort of parents and culturally shift our expectations on children, and that's work that will probably take longer than I have life to lead. That's a solid century's worth of work ahead of us. So that's part of it. How do we do primary prevention to prevent trauma on our community because trauma determines every other negative outcome. And then also the question we're asking a lot right now is we serve mostly adults or adolescents and the adolescents have had a lot of the experiences the adults have had in terms of crappy things happening to them. We argue that we're serving a community of trauma survivors but there's a difference between serving adult survivors of adult trauma vs serving adult survivors of childhood trauma. So we're thinking about what that looks like, and what that means for our work. Because the healing involved in that, I mean you're getting to experience what people had 4 or 5-6 years old, potentially. Those are formative to everything about them, and in need of community and healing, and acceptance. And that's just very different than how we or I think any LGBT org has defined the issue until now. That's where I think the future of our work is going.

Liam: That's really cool. Are there any other things you wanted to touch on in terms of gender identity?

Quinn: I don't think so. It is really weird to watch how we talk about it change. I was on Tik Tok a couple of nights ago, and this huge comments argument around are non-binary people trans or not, and that's not a new debate. That's been around for as long as I've been in this community. And it's, I want to pull my hair out anytime I hear that. And I'm like, did no one

Transition

Trauma prevention

Healing

Gender discourse

ever bother to look up the history of the term transgender? Cause when it was invented, it was specifically not for binary trans people, it was for everybody else. People need to understand descriptive and prescriptive labels. I'm just really interested to see, Western white societies are obsessed with categorization, and adolescents are obsessed with categorization, which is natural and healthy, because categories and labels are how we figure out who we are. And that's what that stage of life is about. Our language for this is so young. It was not until the advent of the internet that we were able to start having a community level dialogue about how we talk about gender and our experiences of gender and gender diversity. We only have a couple of decades on that. Comparing that to non-western cultures who have greater gender diversity than we do, and they have thousands of years of discourse and understanding that we don't have. It's like, I simultaneously just want to punch anyone who says this is absolutely the right answer cause I'm like, no it's not. I have lived through enough absolutely right answers being wrong to know that there is no right answer yet. We are not in our lifetimes going to have a set in stone answer. I'm just really curious to see where it goes, and how we talk about these experiences. 50 years from now, transgender might be a really dated term. It's weird to think about that. It's weird to think about living through that, most likely, hopefully. Yeah, weird. Frustrating to see the same couple of debates happening over and over again. I can't go out to dinner after support groups with our folks anymore. Cause it's mostly folks who are earlier in transition and I'm like, I understand you need to sit amongst these people and form friendships with them and argue these same things, but I've had 10 years of these arguments and I'm just done. Like nothing you are saying is new. Shut up. But don't. It's important to have these discussions. I just am a little bit tired of trans people. That's not true. I just am really bored of trans people's problems. I probably need a break at some point. Whatever

Katherine: So if you could imagine 3 or 4 generations down the line of trans people, what would be some ideal changes that you would like to see?

Quinn: I'm terrified that this isn't the way we're going. And I think it'll be interesting as we have more and more people transitioning as kids, who are having their transitions guided slowly by cisgendered people. And they're not accessing community increasingly. I talk to parents who are like 'I don't want my kid to be part of this community.' And I'm like 'uh why?' and they're like 'I want my kid to be normal.' So they can transition but I'm gonna help them be like a normal boy or a normal girl. That's gonna fuck them up for life probably. I'm worried about us going in that

Gender language

Future generations of trans people

Childhood transition

direction because I think we're teaching a generation of trans kids that being trans is a bad thing. While simultaneously accepting them on the condition that acceptance is conditional on their visibility. I hope a few generations down the line, gender is incredibly beautiful, and fun, and I hope that we, and I hope the same thing for how we talk about love, I hope that we can recognize the diversity of it as being beautiful and worthy of celebration and that we find some way of ritualizing that. No idea what that will look like. Not just for queer or trans people, I feel like telling your parents who you love should be a coming of age thing. I think that's a really beautiful thing, you should get a pie for that or something. So yeah. I get a lot of people who are like 'can't we just let everyone be human?' And I'm like, well yeah, at a certain level yes, everyone is human. But you're talking at a 101, can we just erase everyone's differences. And no, we're supposed to let everyone's differences exist. And celebrate them. Because they make humanity better. And yet not have those differences be determinative of the course of your life. But it's hard. Because our discourse around gender or even our feminist discourse around gender is all about constructing harmful systems that we've built with gender as an identifier for what part of that system you're in. And I think it's hard for people to pull the good parts of gender away from the oppressive parts of sexism. Hopefully we figure out how to do that.

Liam: I hope so too.

Katherine: So I think we are starting to run out of time, do you have any new thoughts or insights on your life that you feel like you've gained from doing this interview? Or any concluding thoughts?

Quinn: Not particularly. Other than that I'm really glad people are recording some history. There's not enough of it. Thank you for your involvement in this.

Katherine: Thank you so much for sharing your story

Liam: Yes, thank you so much. We really appreciate it.

Love

Coming of age

Differences