- My name is Caroline Casey. One of the things is I'm the founder of The Valuable 500 which was launched in Davos of this year, and it is a global year-long campaign to get 500 the world's biggest brands and their CEOs to put disability on their leadership agenda.

- [Interviewer] Great.

- Um, I'm here as um, sorry I have to say, is it Tech Pro or Tech Share? I can't get --

- [Interviewer] TechShare Pro

- It's TechShare Pro, yep. It's really important for me to be here at TechShare Pro 2019. Well, actually there is lots of reasons it's really important. Um, is because I actually think design for all or inclusive design or accessibility validates everything that we're trying to talk to these global CEOs about. Is that um, people with disabilities are valuable to business. We're an opportunity for growth and for innovation and for brand differentiation. And actually, that, we should not be categorizing our humanity. LGBTQ and race against disability, and actually, technology is the democratizer, it's the leveler. It's the most inclusive way that we can move forward looking at global human inclusion. It's also really important for me to be here to learn. Because I am a Luddite. I am, I myself I'm visually impaired and registered legally blind and I'm terrified of technology. And I'm so scared of looking stupid and so scared of getting it wrong. Um that I, and I've stubbornly avoid it. And actually coming to speak today on the stage I realized that's actually a lot why people don't deal with disability 'cause they're so frightened of getting it wrong, right? And so it gave me real insight into that and yet technology is so empowering. In doing the Valuable 500 campaign, I couldn't have done it without it. There's no way I could've. And so it's, for me it's, we're all on a journey together but I'm absolutely passionate about as we technically develop, as we technologically develop, we have to make sure connection and heart is in there. And I really believe that's important and that we need to combine our heart and the advancement in technology because that's the potency. We can never forget the human need to belong, to be seen as equal, unique, and valuable. Somebody asked me a few weeks ago what does success look like and I turned it on them and I said, "What do you think success looks like?" Now I can't quote who it was because it's a very well known person and they said, "Oh, well we could eradicate disability." And I was like, "What?" No, that is, for me, success looks like that disability is normalized into business. It's integrated into business. That we can turn up knowing our otherness and accepting difference and that we're all equally unique and valuable. Not that we eradicate difference, but that we leverage it. That's what makes me excited.

- [Interviewer] And one of the things I think you've touched on is that today it's very much about bringing lots of different communities together and there's such a buzz in the room today. You mentioned in your talk earlier that it feels like a, almost like a tipping point. I wonder if you can say more about that.

- Yeah.

- [Interviewer] Do you have a feeling as to why, what is it, what is that feeling about?

- So I, when I started to talk today, we were talking about the film called "#Diversish" and it was saying 90% of our companies say they're passionate about inclusion, and yet only 4% include disability. I mean like, in 2019 that is bonkers and that is not inclusion. The second statistic that is terrifying to me is 56% of our boards, like our company boards, have never had a disability conversation. 7% of our C-suite have a lived experience of disability and four out of five of them are hiding it, like I hid my disability 20 years ago. Like, I came out of the closet 20 years ago but it's still happening. So why the tipping point? Well, I think there is this extraordinary tipping point now that when I see the Valuable 500 going and we've reached that tipping point of 170 companies, when I meet a CEO, they go, "Well, why wouldn't I?" Because why? Actually the digital revolution, the technology advances make it exciting. And also to social media, the voice of the 1.3 billion people who are consumers and talent and who are suppliers and members of community, that voice is being heard. I also think a huge tipping point is the younger generation because they are insisting upon full human inclusion and they're allowed, to be allowed be unique. And why should they fit into a box? They want to belong. So if you think about the technology, you're thinking about how we communicate that the raise, the amplifying of the voice, the younger generation coming and I also think we're starting to have real conversations about being human. But I often talk about when Sinéad Burke who's a friend of mine who's small statured and she's Irish on the cover of Vogue magazine. So when fashion gets on board you're starting to think, "Oh my gosh." And you know what? Forget what I've just said. You can feel it. And so what I often say is when you see something and when you hear something, when you're seeing and hearing, that changes the way behave. Look at the Ikea campaign called ThisAbles. Look at Netflix now putting disability programming into their content. They ain't doing that just to be nice. They're doing that because there's consumers. It's happening and you can feel it. And I kind of think, "Is it 18 months away "or is it now?" And you can't control time but when time comes we gotta be ready and we are.

- [Interviewer] One of the other things that seems to be coming for you for me personally today is I guess it's a crossover between tech and disability is when you get a shared language.

- Yep.

- [Interviewer] When everybody's talking in the same way and I'm hearing people using the same words today, like inclusive design.

- Yes

- [Interviewer] So you say it's not about tailoring things for people with disabilities. It's about being inclusive. How, I mean I just wonder what your take is--

- Yeah, no.

- [Interviewer] on that shared lexicon and whether that is a driver.

- Listen, my obsession has always been, so I, um, Apple is one of the most preferred brands of people with disabilities and their families, right? It was the first brand in the world to trigger a trillion. I mean look at how successful it is. Actually if you look at Interbrand's top five brands in the world, all of them have an inclusion strategy, which equally includes disability by the way. So that's amazing. So what I am... I'm just fascinating that business doesn't see this opportunity. Like they don't, they're not woken to it just yet but it is here, and it is coming. Um, and I've forgotten the question.

- [Interviewer] It's about, I think, so, I've worked in tech with website design--

- Oh yes, design fall, yes, yes. So one of the things that I'm really um, because Apple is that example, right? So it was inclusive design for all, making beautiful products for everyone. Like I remember somebody telling me years ago, which is hilarious, that the remote control was designed for visually-impaired people and we all use it. And then you look at things like, you know, text messaging for people who are hearing impaired. Clipomatic, which I now use, is not just great for people who are hearing impaired, but for everybody to be able to look at a video and not have earphones. I often think if you designed airports with people who are visually impaired, different lived experiences, it would be extraordinary. Coming into Google today for this event has been amazing. It's not just for people with disabilities, for everyone. The energy in this room, because the obstacles are being taken out of the way. If we take the obstacles and barriers out of the way for people with disabilities, we take them out of the way for everyone. We all know the well-known quote, is if we make buildings accessible for people using wheelchairs, for buggies as well, people having suitcases. Do you know what I mean? This is not rocket science. Like, you know, universal design, design for all, for all customers. Who wants to keep the customers closed out? Why would you do that?

- [Interviewer] Right, thank you. Um and just finally 'cause I know Alex has been waiting awhile . Is there anything you haven't had an opportunity to say yet now that we've got you on camera, that, a key message or something that you really want to drive home?

- Well there's two things I really want to drive home. Um, I, I want us to stop this identity politics and I want us to stop competing with each other to have our voices heard. Not only within the disability community but outside it. There is enough for everyone. You know what, if I give to you, I don't take away from myself. We're trying to create a world where everyone belongs. So we don't need to compete humanity against each other. And the second thing is I absolutely believe inclusion is a leadership issue. It's a sustainability issue. It is a culture issue. It is not a D and I issue.