CAROLINE: Hello... [Applause] Well, firstly, good morning. For those of you who are vision impaired, you can see #Diversish on YouTube with audio describe. Also, the statistic at the end of that film, which is really important, it is that 90% of the companies in the world claim to be passionate about inclusion ... yet only 4% consider disability. So that is why I'm here. I do not believe in a la carte inclusion, or a pick and mix or a categorising humanity into the silos that we compete with each other. That's not inclusion. That's insane! It's crazy.

The reason that my legs are shaking, they are shaking, I am going to stand on the stage. I am shaking desperately as, Mark is right, I didn't want to come and speak here today. I really am a Luddite. I am terrified of technology, which is why I am wearing my superpower dress. If you can see, it has Batwoman on it. I am nothing like Batwoman but it makes me feel better. But I'm here to tell you my story, to talk about Valuable 500. The film really explains why we are here. But the other reason is because actually, like you, whether I am a Luddite or not, I believe in a world where we are all unique and valuable and where we can eradicate exclusion with design. Where I can see the intersection with heads on hearts, where technology can enable so much but to use our hearts that the change can happen.

I am here as I am really looking forward to the fact that Google may join Valuable 500. I'm here as my team told me to get over myself. I'm here because actually, I totally believe in collaboration. Where I have skills, I know that if we bring each other together, we can genuinely make a change but I am also so excited that something feels like it is changing! You know, what, they say you can't control time, you can't, for those, I have been in the space of diversity and inclusion for 20 years.

I met the extraordinary Larry Goldberg. We were talking, I have been doing this for 29 or more years, it is like, it is here! It's here! I don't know why it is here but it is so important now that we use all of our intelligence, hearts, collaboration to break through the ceiling. This is not about disability inclusion, not just about the 1.3 billion people in the world with a lived disability experience, it is about all of us. We know that because every one of us will have experienced disability at some point. We know that 80% of disability is invisible, we know so many people are hiding and covering and hiding themselves away. We know that 80% is acquired between the ages of 18 and 64. We know that workplace inequality exists.

We know in the room that business is the most powerful force on the planet. If business includes, society includes. If business values, society values. We know that, we are the choir. Now we need to be a contagion. But this is not, and we know this as well, this is not about it is the good thing to do, the worthy thing to do. We know that for sure but I also believe, like you do, that this is the most extraordinary opportunity and when a human need meets a business opportunity, as I say, that is the potency, that is the time we are in now. That is where technology and inclusive design is so important.

Because as we travel around the world with the Valuable 500, not only is this timing but when Sinead Burke, a woman of small stature, was on the cover of Vogue magazine, you know that fashion and technology is here but the technology and the push of inclusive design is helped with the world's best CEOs. It gives us visibility, hear the voice, with the 1.3 billion, each of with us a mum and a dad, that is 54% of consumers, you don't want to talk with us?

Netflix put disability content into the programming, they did that because they're consumers. Listen, this is our voices; we're here. The technology has given us visibility.

Twenty years ago, I finally came out of the closet about being legally blind or registered blind for lots of ridiculous reasons. Now there's so much visibility, I'm not sure why I would have hidden away. By the way, I heard Jennison and Adi were amazing yesterday, a big round of applause for them! I heard they knocked it out of the park! [Applause]

It is not just visibility, technology will help us operationalise, operationalise what we are talking about.

I'm going to talk about why Valuable 500 is so important. It is going to scale it and operationalise this intention and desire for inclusion. Most importantly, it is about growth and innovation. It is about growth and innovation. We know that our different lived experiences can provide innovation all over the place and the one we know all over the place is that the remote control was designed for visually impaired people. And Cliptomatic ‑‑ yeah, I finally now use it ‑‑ is for people who are hearing impaired, but it means you can watch or listen to a video on a Tube or whatever it is.

I was just even thinking this morning when I was coming in here, terrified in my Batwoman suit, wouldn't it be amazing if airports were operated like Google was this morning, where everybody came in to say, "Hello, can I help?" Wouldn't our lives be so much easier? There would be so less stress. How much easier we were able to have a conversation.

I follow another visually impaired friend of mine ‑‑ now friend ‑‑ Darren Pascal, as he came in with his white stick with the LED on it. It is very cool, I want one. It has a charger in it. Here we are with all of this energy.

So, technology and timing, a zeitgeist moment in our hearts, this is our time and we will not let this go away. Partly, the reason I'm also here despite my fear of making a fool of myself is because actually fear is a lot of the reasons why these CEOs have not got this far yet.

I've been campaigning and speaking around the world for nearly a year, but I felt like I'd be the stupidest person in the room, the one that doesn't know about the technology or is too stubborn enough to try. And then I'm just, like, well, actually that fear is a lot of the fear that I know that exists with the CEOs.

So, let me tell you what The Valuable 500 is. The Valuable 500 is a revolution. Very simply. It is because I don't want any more for disability to be on the side-lines. It is not okay in 2019 to see inequality exist particularly when there is a solution. Not only do I believe business is the most powerful force on the planet but I absolutely know and have lived the experience in the 20 years and I know what will trigger that change. Aside from things like technology and the voices from within our organisations, we need the leadership. We need them. In the shadow and the light of a leader. Leaders make choices; choices create the culture.

Inclusion is not a D&I issue. It shouldn't be. I'm sorry for all of those D&I people. Frankly, I think D&I should not exist. It should be about inclusion and accessibility. But leaders make the choices. When the leaders choose, they give us permission and it releases the tension in the business to operationalise with all of the solutions that you have. But we need their permission or their intention, or their heads and their hearts. Without that, what happens, it gets jammed and stuck. There have been great innovators for years in this space. We need to scale this change now. We need to accelerate it so we need the leaders.

I did a TED talk in 2010, this TED talk has defined me. Margo, where are you? We were just talking about this. Sometimes when you tell a story, it nearly defines you and it becomes separate to you. In a way, I'm nearly embarrassed about that story now but I needed to use it to get this far. But in 2010, I did my TED talk and Sheryl Sandberg was on the stage before me. I watched her, it was 2010 and she was talking about leaning in. Guys, it wasn't the first time we talked about gender equality, right? But when a woman with a brand like that, with her name and stood on a platform like she did, it accelerated and amplified the conversation. That is what The Valuable 500 exists to do; essentially to try to find 500 of them so that we can create a critical mass to catalyse this change, to operationalise all of your solutions, to release this potential of all of us.

The Valuable 500 was launched at the World Economic Forum in Davos earlier this year, in January. Not on a special stage or an inspiring stage, on the main stage. And at a press conference when five of the most influential CEOs said, "I need to be more accountable. We may have done some things well, but we need to do better." When the Peter Grauer, the Chair of Bloomberg said, "I'm not doing enough and I want to," it gave permission to the other CEOs. The Valuable 500 is asking 500 brands and their CEOs to elevate the conversation of disability to their executive or board level and extend their definition of inclusion beyond the small categories and make a commitment to action but, most importantly, share it and be part of a leadership collective that we announce at Davos next year and we talk about how we will move forward together.

So, you see some of these brands. For those of you who can't visually see them ‑‑ I have a shake in my voice because we signed our 170th last Friday. That's 170 companies with their CEOs and their brands...

[Applause and cheering]

CAROLINE: We have another 100‑something conversations, one of which is Google's. I don't care at this point if I go back with 500 to Davos, because the 500 is what we aim for in The Valuable 500. We have reached a tipping point. We did a collaboration with 85 friends around the world and it is global from Japan to America, from Russia to Israel. Access Israel our great friends are here too. The Business Disability Forum, Neil Milliken and AXS Chat. It is a revolution so we can evolve this conversation, so that I cannot exist actually. None of this needs to exist, that we normalise this, we normalise disability is integrated into business and it is exciting! Yes, I'm tired. Actually, I've got to tell you, I've got a cold, if anyone can come up with the technology to get rid of a head cold, it would be phenomenal! [Laughter]

There is no way I could have got around this world. By the way, everybody seems to think that Valuable 500 is fully funded. Believe me, this has been shoe‑string situation!

With my sight loss, it has been an extraordinary adventure to go around the world when I don't see very well, in economy class. Thank the Lord for Google Maps! Thank you! I could never get anywhere. Thank God for apps that help me get taxis and, most importantly, thank God that people know I need help and I'm now willing to ask for that help.

I watched a conversation; I want you to look this out on LinkedIn with Ricardo Wagner. He so beautifully articulates everything we are at, and this conversation of how they were able to have a conversation through technology. For me, accessibility and inclusion for all is about everybody feeling welcome and turning up as who they are. I don't want people to fit in why should we? I want us all to belong just as we are. I may not be a technologist, but I have a big heart. I think that combination is everything we are looking for. The technology is the equaliser, it stops the categorisation, it democratises. What I say to business is this is not about anything that you think is charity. This is about brand differentiation, this is about innovation and growth, this is about talent, the next generation insisting upon, this is a market worth a trillion at least. Go and look at the wonderful IKEA campaign called Disabled that was done with McCann, once again coming out of Israel, about democratising furniture. That campaign delivered 60 million to the bottom line in three months. It is such an exciting time! What I love about that campaign is that it came from somebody with a lived experience of disability who was able to influence their CEO.

I want to finish by just the heart of what we are all here for because technology is phenomenal. But without that heart, remember our connection, let's use the power of both.

Maya Angelou, who I'm a big fan of... [Cheering] ... yes, she is amazing. There are two quotes she had. One is: "There's no greater agony than an untold story inside you." The other one that she would say is: "People will forget what you say or how you looked but they will never forget how you made them feel."

The reason that I will end with my story because I want to keep it short is that I really am hopeful that any young child in their 20s or who are 17 now, who was to discover what I discovered at 17, will handle their lives so differently because of all of you and all of us. I have ocular albinism. Robin Spinks, who I share a passion with ‑‑ we share a wild passion for fast cars. Mind you, I don't know who did more damage when they were younger, but at 17 years old I really wanted to race cars and motorcycles, that's why I wear leather a lot! I wanted to be Mowgli from Jungle Book, and that's all about freedom. My father gave me a driving licence for my 17th birthday. He gave me a driving lesson even though he knew I was legally blind or registered blind. I didn't know I was because when I was three years old, they sent me to a normal school and made a conscious decision to bring me up as a sighted child. They did not want me to find my sight loss or my disability. They wanted me to have a life full of expectations. I'm 47 years old. I want to explain to you, from my hand a few feet away from me, it is just a blur. I look more visually capable than I am. I really am not. My father gave me that driving lesson at 17 because he still wanted to fill those dreams. I hope I will drive a car. I did drive a driverless car! When I discovered this label at 17, in 1989, I chose to hide it. I am sorry. I hid it for 11 years and went into Accenture as a visually impaired person and got away with it. What does that say about management consultancy? They never knew they had a blind person! My husband Gar is 62 and I often say he's the best-looking man in the world, although he is bald with a pink face! He's delighted. I'm sorry I hid it. I think since 1999 which is 20 years ago, I've been trying to make that right. By not owning my own difference, my beautiful extraordinary difference, I also was part of discrimination.

So, I want to end by saying thank you to all of the other people ahead of me, who actually owned their difference. For all of the people who I wish I had probably seen sooner than later. But I hope with your help and the other last reason I'm here is please give me some help, please help us get to that Valuable 500. Please use your voices. Please shout loud. Please make sure that we don't compete with each other. There's enough love and room for all of us. If I give to you, I don't take away from myself. Hector Minto, who I'm another big fan of, put this thing on LinkedIn by [inaudible]: "I'm hard wired to be confident so I can let other people shine."

Lizzo ‑‑ I love music and dancing ‑‑ she says, "If I shine, we can all shine." Technology gives us that to have the confidence and to shine. Let's get those leaders. Thank you so much.

MARK: Thank you, Caroline. I have a question for you, if you are prepared to answer one. I have a couple here. The first one, an easy one: How far off do you think inclusion is?

CAROLINE: Well, when we mean full human inclusion?

MARK: I guess so.

CAROLINE: We can get where we are going quicker, better, faster, I think we can lean in. I can't believe I'm saying that but we can learn from all of the other pieces but we will not get to inclusion if there is a scarcity approach. Meaning if I take from you, I take away from myself. We need to accept the truth, if we don't accept truth -- I am an ex-archaeology -- hilarious for a blind person but we have to accept that different is difficult. If we own ourselves, we help to keep that in check.

MARK: You talked about going to Davos in January, what are you planning to do, say, or announce?

CAROLINE: Watch this space. Those leaders, if you get 500 leaders, right, what could you do with them? What could you do with them? So, you tell me what we can do. We have an idea, a three-year programme, always at leadership level there. It is great work happening but we are trying to open the heads, hearts and pockets of leader to drive systemic change to normal disability. If you have ideas, we are certainly open to them.