

Cade (00:00)

Welcome back to More Like Than You Think and thanks for joining us today. And today I'm joined with Sami Peterson and Will Peterson. maybe we could just Sami you could introduce yourself and the work that you do, and then Will, you can also introduce yourself and let us know a little bit about you. and let's just start start there.

Sami and Will Peterson (00:20)

Great.

Okay.

Yeah, my name is Sami Peterson and I actually work at Peak Parent Center, which is Colorado's Parent Training and Information Center. I head up a project called Personal Networks for a Good Life. and that is a series of online courses that walk young adults and parents and other people who value a person with a disability through the process of identifying

who they are, what they like to do, the places that they can go in their community to find other people who like those things, and then how that naturally leads to meaningful relationships, potential career paths, or pathways to higher education, or just what you want your day-to-day life to be about and what you're and you how you want to live intentionally.

Cade (01:12)

Right.

Sami and Will Peterson (01:12)

And that's what I do.

So and this is Will. And I'm Will I some things I like to do are movies hanging out with friends and I just started working at Clean Eatx and I also

also like playing video Games and watching T V And the Broncos too, right? And the Broncos. Yeah. Yeah. Right.

Cade (01:37)

Hm, big sports fan, yeah, for sure.

Cool. Well, I think a good place to start would just be what does finding community actually mean beyond just like having places to go because, you know, you could just go a bunch of places but

Maybe it doesn't actually mean anything, you know, you can just show up places and just do that and still feel like you don't have community, so

Sami and Will Peterson (02:03)
Right.

Cade (02:03)
you know, what what do you think finding community means more than just that?

Sami and Will Peterson (02:08)
to start.

You start. I'll start. Okay.

So

I think there's a real difference between being busy and living a good life. And when you're busy with a lot of activities and going and doing things just to have places to go, life can seem really hollow and empty and hard sometimes. And I know when I have my schedule like that, I kind of start to develop an attitude or become a behavior problem sometimes.

And so I like to find places that I participate in that are meaningful to me and have people there that value and are interested in the same things that I'm interested in and can help me grow and develop as a human being. How about you?

Friends also like we help me. Stuff like that. They really help you, yeah. You also like to have fun 'cause you're really good at having fun. And I also like to have fun and stuff. You're kinda teaching me how to have fun, aren't you? Yes.

Cade (03:04)
Mm-hmm. Yeah. Mm-hmm.

Sami and Will Peterson (03:09)
Yeah.

Cade (03:10)
Will, how did you find f or figure out the places that you could go to find community?

Sami and Will Peterson (03:18)
I have two meets who like live next door and so then like I we Me and they are part of my community. And then like I'm also like part like and like I also have a job at so then like

my

job at Clean EatZ is starting to like become part of my community as well and stuff like that and so

like just being able to like hang out with friends and like do stuff and

And one thing that we use is like things that I like and stuff like that. Can you tell us some of the things

Cade (03:55)
Okay.

Sami and Will Peterson (03:56)
you like like like video games and like movies and T V shows and stuff.

Those are some of the things that you do each day 'cause you don't have to have other people with you, but what about some of the things that we do with other people? Like I'm a big foodie and stuff like that and

Cade (04:16)
Hm.

Sami and Will Peterson (04:16)
I I we like I we like going to movies and stuff like that with other people and like and

hang out with certain people and stuff like that. Right. Like what do we do on Monday nights? We do we have one of my roommates over for dinner and a show and stuff. Right. So we have a show that we're watching with Caleb, right? Yes. And we watch that together as a way of building community. Yes. Mm-hmm. Right.

Cade (04:46)
Right. So you're kinda inviting people into the things that you enjoy and

Sami and Will Peterson (04:51)
Yes.

Cade (04:52)
Okay. Yeah, that's awesome.

Sami and Will Peterson (04:54)
how about the

f the your love of food, how has that led to you having community? Because they do in Fort Collins the monthly foodie walk on the third Friday of every month, that's put on by the city of Fort Collins

and and downtown old town and stuff like that. So then I so then like

that has led me to like being with people and having food and like and like and like having fun with people and sharing my love of food with people and stuff like that.

Cade (05:32)
Mm.

Sami and Will Peterson (05:33)
This month

Cade (05:33)
Right.

Sami and Will Peterson (05:33)
we actually have two friends that are well, a friend that's coming up from Denver and other and other two other friends that are coming up from Colorado Springs to do foodie walk with us. Yeah.

Cade (05:42)
Okay. Yeah.

Nice.

when you go to

those things the first time, like, does it feel overwhelming and

Sami and Will Peterson (05:52)
No no it really does not. It really does not

Cade (05:54)
It doesn't for you?

Sami and Will Peterson (05:55)
no.

Cade (05:56)
Okay. Why do you think that is?

Sami and Will Peterson (05:58)
Because like I have other people or like in there already and stuff like that so then it really doesn't like feel like overwhelming to me and stuff. Yeah, I guess that is something we

Cade (06:10)
Okay. So yeah.

Sami and Will Peterson (06:12)
do is we try to make sure he has a couple of people to go with him. so

Cade (06:15)

Mm.

Sami and Will Peterson (06:16)

he's not going by himself completely. So

Cade (06:19)

Yeah. Yeah, I feel like that's a good way to do it. So like just have a few people that you trust or you're close with to go with you the first time. Hmm. Mm hmm.

Sami and Will Peterson (06:28)

Yeah. Kinda like a wing man, huh? Yeah.

Cade (06:32)

Nice. Cool. Sami I'd love it if you could talk more about just the difference between just showing up somewhere and like

Being there versus truly belonging somewhere and what

Sami and Will Peterson (06:45)

Mm.

Cade (06:45)

the difference is.

Sami and Will Peterson (06:46)

Yeah.

So I think that for me it was a real aha for me to understand the difference between inclusion and integration. integration is you're kind of woven into a place and they may not want you there and you may not want to go there. but you have to go because mom and dad are having to work or

it's part of a requirement for something that you want to do later on. It's not that integration is bad, it's just that shouldn't be where relationships stop. You need to go further to a place of belonging, and that is where I think true inclusion happens. And in in a in a place of belonging where full inclusion is happening, people want you there and they miss it when you're not there.

There.

Cade (07:32)

Mm.

Sami and Will Peterson (07:32)

They value you and the unique gifts the of both your gifts of presence and your gifts of what you do are valued. you change the dynamics of

relationships and and the ways that things unfold. And so belonging is a place where you're fully accepted and valued for who you are and the way that you show up and what your embodiment is, whatever it is, you know, regardless.

Cade (07:59)

Mm-hmm.

Sami and Will Peterson (07:59)

It doesn't have to be specifically around.

disability

it could just be around who you are as a person and and the things that you contribute are valued and and they're sought out and listened to and I think you have an opportunity to make contributions in your own unique ways that aren't always

limited to what you can do or bring or pay for, just

Cade (08:23)

Mm-hmm.

Sami and Will Peterson (08:24)

your presence can be valuable.

Cade (08:25)

Right. Gotcha.

Cool.

Let's see

Another point that I wanted to touch on was talking about what you can bring to a community and like you know, thinking about the things that you bring and so will maybe have you thought about kind of the things that like what are the things that you feel like you bring to the places you go? Like what are

What are the gifts or traits that you bring to like your job with CleanEats or like the other places you go in the community?

Sami and Will Peterson (08:59)

I'm very funny, I'm very nice, and nice I most

And I

about in your volunteer things that you do? how do you think you show up in those places? And what kind of gifts do you bring to those places? Like I'm really nice and like I'm really funny and I'm also

able to like do what I must do in my volunteer places like really well also like and stuff.

You really like to follow the rules. Yes. Right? Yeah. You're you're very good at knowing what the rules are and and have a deep desire to follow the rules. Yes. And I think you're really loyal too, because when you you make a commitment you make sure that you you finish out that commitment. That's what I've seen. Yes. You're a very loyal person. Yes. Mhm.

Cade (09:49)

It sounds like you bring like loyalty and a lightness to the places you go with your humor and things like that.

Sami and Will Peterson (09:54)

Yes. Mm-hmm. What do other people say

about you that you what do you do? Do you bring people?

I bring like I bring people to together. Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Cade (10:06)

Mm. Mm-hmm.

Sami and Will Peterson (10:09)

You're a connector and a networker. Yes. Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Cade (10:13)

Yes.

Sami and Will Peterson (10:14)

Like you'll pay attention

Cade (10:14)

Yeah.

Sami and Will Peterson (10:15)

to some aspect of some person like

if they like mangoes then you and you run across that information in somebody else and you you wanna make sure and let this other person know that the first person likes mango and the second person likes mangoes and you try to bring them together. Yes. Mhm. You're

Cade (10:36)

Mm, okay, yeah. So you're able to see

what's in other people and connect them together. Yeah. Mm, that's cool. Mm

Sami and Will Peterson (10:44)

What they have that's similar, yeah. And you kinda connect that way.
Mm-hmm.

Cade (10:49)

hmm. Gotcha. That's awesome. Yeah.

So another question that I wanted to ask was, you know, for people who are feeling lonely or isolated or disconnected right now, like what's thing what's one thing you would encourage them to do this week to get started in finding community?

Sami and Will Peterson (11:08)

Mm-hmm.

what do you say What would I say? Yeah. I'm gonna think about that for a minute while you think about it too.

if you had somebody new here in town that was having a hard time finding a place of belonging, what what would you how would you connect them?

Okay. That's kind of an abstract question, yeah.

So one of the things that the Personal Networks project does is it really helps people figure out what they like to do

Cade (11:35)

Mm.

Sami and Will Peterson (11:36)

and what they and we look at four areas of their life. So we've all been in those situations where maybe you're in a job interview or you're meeting with a new counselor that you're working with for your employment, and they say, Well, what do you like to do? What are you good at? And you kind of feel like a deer in the headlights, where

you're like, I don't know.

Cade (11:57)

Mm. Mm.

Sami and Will Peterson (11:58)

What to say and it kind of panics you a little bit, right? And so

What the Personal Networks project does is we we break that down into four areas. your head, your heart, your hands, and your history. So it's kind of fun that they all start with age. But we look at what do you know a lot about and what do you like to ask questions about. So that could be anything from, you know, baseball statistics for players

or football player winning with a win-loss record.

Of a team all the way to the different kinds of pickles or Legos or trains. It could also be that you have a fascination with maps or you have a lot of information about a certain band or musical instrument. It

Cade (12:47)

Mm-hmm.

Sami and Will Peterson (12:48)

just kind of you get to put down what you know a lot about and what you like to talk about.

Cade (12:54)

Mm-hmm.

Sami and Will Peterson (12:55)

It could be video games. Will's really good at talking about video games and also movies and when those movies are coming out and who's in them, what the release dates are, that kind of stuff. and then the next one is your heart. So what are you passionate about? What moves you? What invokes emotion inside your heart that you feel for someone? we had a person in the project last year a few years ago who

was always sensitive to people who are left out or who

Cade (13:24)

Hm.

Sami and Will Peterson (13:24)

are who don't have friends or a young lady that was in foster care was sensitive to people who don't have two parents and are they're adopted. She was very sensitive to that. So then the next area is what do you like to do with your hands? So that could be playing video games, it could be building forts, it could be cooking,

Cade (13:45)

Mm-hmm.

Sami and Will Peterson (13:46)

it could be gardening, it could

be building model trains or

You know, there's just a whole bunch of playing music. there's a whole bunch of things that you can think about when you think about what are you good at doing with your hands. And then the last

Cade (14:00)

Mm-hmm.

Sami and Will Peterson (14:01)

one is your history. what is your culture, your family, your traditions, your values? What's important to you in your history, in your story

Cade (14:09)

Mm.

Sami and Will Peterson (14:09)

of your life? for that one young lady, it was the fact that she was in foster care. That was an important piece of her history. for

Cade (14:16)

Mm-hmm.

Sami and Will Peterson (14:17)

other people, it could be a cultural thing.

That you know they come from a Latino family that has a large extended family, or it could be that you've had a 25 surgeries in your lifetime, and so

Cade (14:30)

Mm-hmm.

Sami and Will Peterson (14:30)

that impacts how you see things and the way that you move through life. And by going through and identifying at least two things in each one of those areas, you start to get an idea of who you are as a person. And so if you really like coloring.

Maybe you're an artist. Will really loves food and so he's a foodie.

Cade (14:51)

Mm-hmm.

Sami and Will Peterson (14:51)

he's explored being a chef and that wasn't a good match. but being a person who appreciates and values food and likes to talk about how food is made. I do welcome bookshoppers now. That's right, you do. It's led to employment for him and it also led to a course

Cade (15:04)

Mm. Yeah.

Sami and Will Peterson (15:07)

of education for him as well.

Cade (15:09)

Hm. That's awesome. Yeah. It feels like though that kind of really starting with what what you are already doing can be a big thing in

Sami and Will Peterson (15:18)

Mm-hmm. Right.

Cade (15:20)

not trying to think about like 'cause I feel like it it can become really abstract if

Sami and Will Peterson (15:26)

Mm-hmm.

Cade (15:26)

you'd like try to just figure it out and instead of just being like, Okay, well I like this and I already do this, so what if I just continue that and

How can I find people who are also doing that?

Sami and Will Peterson (15:38)

Mm-hmm.

Cade (15:39)

You know?

Sami and Will Peterson (15:39)

Right. Asking

that question of, you know, where do the other people in my community go that love music? Right? Well, there's

Cade (15:47)

Mm, right.

Sami and Will Peterson (15:48)

music stores here in town, there's a radio station here in town, there's venues that have musicians coming in and playing music, there's record stores, there's recording studios. Those

Cade (16:01)

Mm-hmm.

Sami and Will Peterson (16:01)

are the places that people who love music go. There's meetup

Cade (16:04)

Yeah.

Sami and Will Peterson (16:05)
groups about music,

Cade (16:06)
Mm-hmm.

Sami and Will Peterson (16:07)
you could even

narrow it down to specific kinds of music, bluegrass or jazz or you
know whatever you'd like.

Cade (16:14)
Yeah.

Sami and Will Peterson (16:15)
But then that leads to opportunities to meet people who have the same
interests that you do. And then that

Cade (16:18)
Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Sami and Will Peterson (16:21)
leads to finding a friend because you have something in common. And
you're seen as a

Cade (16:25)
Mm. So

Sami and Will Peterson (16:27)
person who loves music instead of a disabled person that's here
listening to music.

Cade (16:32)
Right. Mm

hmm. So how do you think, you could go about turning that
initial connection with someone in like a space like that into a more
meaningful relationship?

Sami and Will Peterson (16:43)
So

we're when we're out on the foodie walk or if we're meeting someone
that's new that's that you wanna talk to or that you can how do you
talk to your f to people that you don't know that maybe food comes up
as a topic? What do you do in situations like that? Do you invite over
for dinner? Mm-hmm.

Yeah. Or we schedule a night to meet at a restaurant and have dinner

together. Yeah. Right? Yeah.

Cade (17:11)

Mm.

Sami and Will Peterson (17:11)

Yeah. Something like that. It could be simple like that. I think another thing that you do really well will, because you love movies, is you host watch parties and we have people over to watch shows

Cade (17:20)

Mm-hmm.

Sami and Will Peterson (17:22)

with you or movies or series. We invite them to join us for watching a series together. Things like that, right? Yeah.

So those are kind of some strategies to use.

Cade (17:34)

Mm.

Sami and Will Peterson (17:34)

with the things that we're familiar with. But I think depending on your area of fascination and what you love to do, it's just a matter of creating being intentional around creating a time and space for people to engage around that together. And

Cade (17:49)

Mm.

Sami and Will Peterson (17:50)

and being intentional around inviting people into your life to do that. You know, we

Cade (17:55)

Mm.

Sami and Will Peterson (17:56)

have on Will's calendar he has down that he wants to invite people to do the foodie walk with them before the week.

Cade (18:02)

Mm-hmm.

Sami and Will Peterson (18:03)

before it happens so that we can do it as a group.

Cade (18:07)

Hm.

Right. Cool. So it sounds like inviting people into things after afterwards is a big step as well. Hm.

Sami and Will Peterson (18:14)
Yeah. Inviting

people to share that love with you, right? Yeah.

Cade (18:19)
Right. Mm hmm.

Sami and Will Peterson (18:21)
That's the way

Cade (18:21)
Cool.

Sami and Will Peterson (18:21)
that we all do it. But I think a lot of times when a person has a disability, they have to go to a special group or a special class to do that. And

Cade (18:30)
Mm-hmm.

Sami and Will Peterson (18:31)
and that's in a special place with special people doing special things and then everybody

Cade (18:35)
Right.

Sami and Will Peterson (18:36)
has the same barrier to society and so you can't really take action on your own after that class or that club is over, right? So

Cade (18:44)
Mm.

Right. Yeah.

Sami and Will Peterson (18:46)
Yeah. Like another thing that

Will loves is theater. So we go to a lot of theater shows or concerts,

Cade (18:51)
Mm-hmm.

Sami and Will Peterson (18:53)
right? We go to a lot of concerts. And there's free concerts that happen, you know, all summer long up here. That kind

Cade (18:59)
Mm.

Sami and Will Peterson (18:59)
of stuff. What are you doing? So that kind of stuff happens.

Cade (19:02)
Mm-hmm.

Sami and Will Peterson (19:03)
I love you too. I know that this makes you happy when we talk about this, right? Yes. Yeah.

Cade (19:07)
Hm, hm.

Gotcha. Cool. Well, maybe we could just wrap up here, with if there's anything else that we didn't touch on that maybe you would like to talk about or share or comes to your mind when you think of finding community.

Sami and Will Peterson (19:23)
One

thing that

Cade (19:23)
Anything

Sami and Will Peterson (19:24)
up for me is what is the difference between a person who's paid to be in your life and someone

Cade (19:29)
Mm.

Sami and Will Peterson (19:29)
who is just a part of your life. It's not

Cade (19:32)
Mm-hmm.

Sami and Will Peterson (19:32)
that a person who's paid to be in your life can't be your friend. They c you know, those individuals know a lot of information and details about you and your life and your body and your day-to-day activities.

So they ki could

Cade (19:46)

Mm.

Sami and Will Peterson (19:47)

become a friend, right?

Cade (19:49)

Yeah.

Sami and Will Peterson (19:49)

but it's important to look at are those your only friends?

Cade (19:53)

Mm-hmm.

Sami and Will Peterson (19:53)

Because

if your life is just people, if your friendships are just people who are paid to be in there in your life, then it's important to have conversations with those individuals about what it will look like when eligibility for a program or funding for their service changes or goes away, or if that person moves away, gets married, has a baby, goes on vacation,

Cade (20:16)

Mm-hmm.

Sami and Will Peterson (20:17)

quits their job, whatever it is.

Cade (20:19)

Yeah.

Sami and Will Peterson (20:19)

A lot of times a person with a disability doesn't just lose you know their speech therapist, but they also lose a friend when

Cade (20:26)

Mm. Right.

Sami and Will Peterson (20:28)

their funding stream changes. So that's

Cade (20:30)

Mm.

Sami and Will Peterson (20:31)

why it's important to have those natural, meaningful relationships with friends because they're not paid to be there. And it's okay

Cade (20:39)
Right.

Sami and Will Peterson (20:39)
to have paid people in your life, but you need to have both. So

Cade (20:43)
Mm-hmm.

Sami and Will Peterson (20:43)
we all live interdependently. Nobody lives life fully independently.
dependent.

Cade (20:50)
Hm.

Sami and Will Peterson (20:51)
I have a friend who's doing their doctorate on what is the difference between a professional athlete and a person with a disability as far as the services that they access. And it's really the same, right? They have

Cade (21:00)
Hmm. Hmm. Hmm.

Sami and Will Peterson (21:05)
someone who drives them around, they have s maybe have somebody who's who cooks their special diet. They have a lot of trainers that they're working with, they're physical

Cade (21:13)
Mm-hmm.

Sami and Will Peterson (21:14)
therapists and they're yada yada, they're quarterback specialists, yada yada, whatever.

Cade (21:18)
Yeah.

Sami and Will Peterson (21:19)
But a person with a disability is seen as you know needing those supports, whereas a person who's a professional athlete is seen as being exceptional. And so I think that helps

Cade (21:29)

Right. Mm.

Sami and Will Peterson (21:30)
us to kind of reframe how we look at support. We all need support. You know, everyone relies

Cade (21:34)
Mm. Mm.

Sami and Will Peterson (21:36)
on other people to help them do life well. So it's okay

Cade (21:40)
Right.

Sami and Will Peterson (21:40)
to invite people into the journey that you're on in your life.

Cade (21:43)
Mm-hmm.

Sami and Will Peterson (21:45)
invite people to be a part of the mix of good and bad that's happening

Cade (21:49)
Mm-hmm.

Sami and Will Peterson (21:50)
because your true friends are gonna hang in there with you. And if you define

Cade (21:54)
Yeah.

Sami and Will Peterson (21:54)
those relationships with paid people, then they may quit their job but they still are a part of your life after their so yeah.

Cade (22:01)
Mm. Mm. Gotcha.

Yeah, that's great. I'm glad you got to share that and we took a second to

Sami and Will Peterson (22:08)
Yeah.

Cade (22:09)
be able to talk about that. Yeah. Anything else, Will, that you wanna say while we're here?

Sami and Will Peterson (22:15)
No.

Cade (22:15)
All right. Well

Sami and Will Peterson (22:16)
Okay.

Cade (22:16)
thanks everyone for tuning in today and listening and we hope that you got something from our conversation here and that as you know we go into new season of fall and everything and maybe new routines are starting and new things are changing that you can step into new community and find new places to go and new people to

Be with and lean into the relationships that you already have.

Sami and Will Peterson (22:41)
You know, Cade, that's one thing that reminds me is that when we are

Cade (22:44)
Mm.

Sami and Will Peterson (22:44)
in new groups, Will and I kinda watch for people that are are gosh.

maybe sensitive to or genuine in the support and help that they offer just

Cade (22:56)
Mm.

Sami and Will Peterson (22:57)
automatically. The people who are kind and generous and seem to be sensitive to how Will engages with the world around him.

Cade (23:05)
Mm-hmm.

Sami and Will Peterson (23:06)
We'll spend time asking them questions and getting to know them

Cade (23:10)
Yeah.

Sami and Will Peterson (23:11)
with the hope of maybe finding something in common that we can invite them to participate and do with us.

So that's one way of getting over that hump

Cade (23:17)

Mm. Mm. Okay.

Sami and Will Peterson (23:20)

is to watch for those people who are sensitive to who you are as a person. Just like

Cade (23:25)

Mm.

Sami and Will Peterson (23:26)

you and I do when we go to social things, I pay

Cade (23:29)

Mm.

Sami and Will Peterson (23:29)

attention to the people who are kind to me and then

Cade (23:32)

Yeah.

Sami and Will Peterson (23:32)

ask questions about their lives, right? So yeah. So sorry to kind of off track you there on your wrap up. Okay.

Cade (23:35)

Right, totally. Hmm. Cool. No. No, you're good.

It's always good. great. Well, yeah. as always, if anything sparks your interest or you have any questions on anything, reach out to us. We'd love to chat. and with that we will

Say bye for now and see you next time.