



Blind Frontiers Podcast Episode 5 Show Notes

Beauty and the Blind

In this episode of the Blind Frontiers podcast, titled *Beauty and the Blind* host Jeff Molzow and producer Jessica Glasebrook sit down with Valerie Alvarez, Blindness Training Coordinator at the Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center, to explore the connection between self-image, independence, and confidence. Valerie shares the inspiration behind her innovative curriculum, *My Reflection Matters*—a program that teaches people who are blind how to make intentional choices about their appearance, grooming, and personal style. Her message is clear: how we present ourselves isn't about vanity, but about self-determination and empowerment.

Through practical lessons—like nonvisual techniques for applying makeup, shaving, dressing professionally, or styling hair—Valerie helps students reclaim skills they may have thought were lost and refine what confidence looks like. She explains that independence is not only about navigating physical spaces or mastering daily tasks, but also about the ability to feel good about oneself and express individuality without relying on others. Her teaching reminds listeners that everyone, sighted or blind, has the right and ability to shape how the world sees them—and more importantly, how they see themselves.

Main takeaway: True independence begins with self-confidence. By learning to care for and express their own reflection, people who are blind gain more than grooming skills—they gain agency, pride, and the freedom to show up in the world exactly as they choose.

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