

## Individualization - Seeing People as People by Embracing Individualization with Samantha Crocket

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**Kyle Johann-Baker (he/him):** [00:00:00] Hi friends. It's Clifton strengths, coach Kyle, Johann Baker, and this is love your strengths today.

I am excited to get to introduce Samantha Crockett. Samantha is the Founder and Chief Encouragement Officer of Enthusiastic Neighbor, where the vision is a world where people feel special. Her mission is to encourage adults in growing their social emotional skills to turn good intentions into supportive actions by helping them embrace Connection, care, compassion, and context.

Samantha lives on the South Side of Chicago with her husband and young daughter. She loves headbands, cardigans, and graphic t shirts about as much as she loves banana pudding, local food, and quirky TV procedurals.

Samantha's top five strengths are input, connectedness, individualization, and Empathy and developer, Samantha, welcome to the podcast and I'm excited to get to have you here today as we explore your strengths

together.

**Samantha Crocket (she/her):** Thank you. I am really excited. I actually, I took the [00:01:00] test for the 1st time in college and then just before I left my job. Last year, today is, I think, but left my job, they did they asked us to do our strengths and I did it again and things mostly stayed the same, but I didn't really start digging into it until I started listening to season one of Love Your Strengths.

And so it's really, it's, I'm thrilled to be chatting with you about it.

**Kyle Johann-Baker (he/him):** Oh, I love that. That's it. It's always fun when you get to hear these moments of like how these conversations really impact and especially I'm sure. And hopefully, like, as we talk today, we'll get to explore how this has impacted understanding your business, the way that you operate, and the ways really that help to accentuate what it is that you do best and really create impact with others.

**Samantha Crocket (she/her):** Yeah.

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**Kyle Johann-Baker (he/him):** So, as you know, with this podcast, we love to talk about one strength per episode. What is the strength that you would like to talk

about

today?

**Samantha Crocket (she/her):** Individualization. Yeah. Again.

**Kyle Johann-Baker (he/him):** All right, [00:02:00] so we're going to start with that textbook definition to help get everybody in the same spot so that we can begin understanding what individualization means. So the Gallup definition cites that people exceptionally talented in the individualization theme are intrigued by the unique qualities of each person.

They have a gift for figuring out how different people can work together productively. So this is that Gallup definition, that starting point. I would love to hear from you, Samantha, about what this strength means to you and some of the ways that it actually shows up in your life.

**Samantha Crocket (she/her):** Yeah, so I. I really like the definition and for me, I take it a bit of a step further in that it's really about seeing people as full human beings and not just as a number or a stranger on the street or a non player character. One of the things that I like to think about a lot with is the idea that I don't know if you've seen the movie Free Guy with [00:03:00] Ryan But it's essentially about. A video game character who is a non player character who comes to life. And I won't spoil the movie on how all of it happens, but he, he becomes sentient within his video game world. And one of the things that I, that helped, that movie really helps me see is that as humans, the way that we are, our brains work and our, our, we're designed and all the things is that we often don't re like, we often don't recognize that.

Every other person who is on the street or other place is also another full human being with their own whole life because it's, it's really easy to just see them as like. The NPCs in lives. And so for me, individualization is really getting past that and remembering that everyone has their own story and their own life and their [00:04:00] own needs and wants and, and skills and identities.

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And that, that, for me, individualization is saying, I see you as a full human and who has more than just what I. Can see a view in this one moment that we are together.

**Kyle Johann-Baker (he/him):** Oh, that's such a fun, I love a good like video game reference like with that like NPC that non playable character, this person that otherwise we may think what's there special about you or, oh, like I go and I talk to you and you always say, Oh, isn't the weather nice today. Thanks for watching. Oh, isn't the weather nice today?

It's coming in and it's recognizing the full spectrum of like, what makes somebody human, what's makes somebody unique in that

way.

**Samantha Crocket (she/her):** Especially because one of the like parts of our, our dominant culture, like in the U S is that every relationship is [00:05:00] very like transactional. It's like, I'm, I'm talking to you to get something from you. So like, I, like, if I'm only seeing people in terms of what they are doing for me or what I am getting out of the conversation or like how I'm impacting Really looking at like, well, what, like, like if the weather and now, you know, but like, sometimes it's like, here's this clue for the game or whatever, and I have to go to that person to get the clue for me.

And so instead, like, when I go to those, the characters who are just like, Oh, how's the weather? It's like, well, I don't need, I don't need, that has nothing to do with me because I'm doing this other thing, but like, tell me, tell me about why you want to talk about the weather. It's like about seeing that full.

That they're not just random things to, like, divert me. They're actual human beings with their own, their own lives. And I think that a lot of this comes both from... My ADHD and my anxiety [00:06:00] and my, sort of general neurodivergence and a lot of things in childhood around like school and parent and just like a bunch of different stuff that sort of meant I never really totally bought into the like rugged individualism, like, pull yourself up by your bootstraps idea.

And I think one of the things that is so interesting about this is that there is a huge, huge difference between individualism. And individualization and they're not at all the same thing. And I think that that may be the reason I can see that in

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such a specific way. And the way that I apply individualism in my life is because the 1st.

My first two are input and connectedness. And so when you sort of put that together, I'm able to, I take in all of this information and I observe all the things and I see the patterns and then I can see the big picture of how it, how it all is and how it comes together. And then I, I see [00:07:00] the ways in which the.

People all work together and have their own pieces so that we can make the bigger picture, something that works for all of us. I think that when we think about individualism, it is very much about that. Like, what can you do for me and transactional relationships and like all of the pieces there, but individualization is saying.

I see you as an individual, like no matter what your identity is, no matter how you like your coffee or any of these things, I see you as a full human being and that we all have to come together in order to make things happen or make it work. And so I think the mix of all of these things together is what really makes my specific. Individual [00:08:00] individual individualization piece be very much about respecting people as human beings who deserve the same amount of dignity, regardless of their situation or their identity, because. Everyone is an individual. But that doesn't mean they have to do everything on their own.

**Kyle Johann-Baker (he/him):** Yeah, I really love that line that you draw. between around together with individualism and individualization. One of those English language things that it's like, why do we have words like this? But they mean such different things. And also, I think like, they You make a really great connection about how they in a way support what you're doing and make it as to like why individualization is your strength because individualization like it may be about recognizing the differences, but it's also about recognizing the differences so that we can come together so that we can [00:09:00] have diverse teams so that we can have it so that there are multiple people in our lives supporting us really having that community effect in a

way.

**Samantha Crocket (she/her):** Yeah. And on the, you know, on the Gallup page, one of the things that it talks about is like, one of the things that gets brought up a lot around individualization in certain ways is that idea of like, well, if we do that, then it's not equal and it's not fair. And like, you can't, and it says like, like, it talks about living into the idea that that's.

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It's not true at all, which is a big part of what equity is about. Like I don't know if you've seen, there's a little, I like to talk in memes and pop culture, so it is what it is, but there's a little meme about, it's like people standing in front of a baseball, like in front of a fence and you, it's like the different levels and they're all standing on boxes and like the first one is like equality.

And it's. It's three. It's people who are three different heights. And so they're [00:10:00] each one box. And so one of the tallest person can see over the fence. The middle person can, like, kind of see over the fence. And then the shortest person, like, is just staring at the fence. And then, like, the second one is.

equity, which is about the fact that like the tallest person doesn't have a box because he doesn't need it to see over the fence. And then the, the other people have one box and two boxes because that's what they all need to be able to see. And so different people need different things in order to do what they need to or what they have to.

And so it's that idea of saying, I'm not just going to look and say, this is what's equal and fair. Because that's not what it is. And so like recognizing people's strengths and all the things is really that, you know, equity piece of it. And so, and, and that's of course the new memes people have added onto it, and that adds, instead of having a.

Like a wooden fence. It has a little [00:11:00] chain link fence and then under nobody's standing on boxes and it just says which is like a nice,

**Kyle Johann-Baker (he/him):** know.

**Samantha Crocket (she/her):** right,

which also still doesn't necessarily work because, but then it's just, it's a really, it's a neat meme to like show about how individualization really matters.

And like I said about the, you know, my neurodivergence ADHD and things like that is like. Some people do need accommodation in, in being able to just live. And so for me, I think individualization very much speaks to that idea of like, we have to let, we have to, my goal is to support everyone in living their best life in the way that they define it.

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And that's what equity is, because we can't, we can't force our, we shouldn't be, we shouldn't is still a word I don't love, but we really shouldn't be forcing our values onto [00:12:00] other people or forcing our beliefs and ideals. the way in which individualization really contributes equity is by recognizing that everybody does.

things and that there, there is a major, major difference between how we deal, like how we interact with people when we recognize who they are more than just what we're putting onto them.

**Kyle Johann-Baker (he/him):** yeah. And I love that. I mean, that image and recognition of the ways that individualization helps you, like, see these things connect with others and really make this happen. So, I'd love to hear a little bit about, like, if you have a story or a recent example of how individualization has helped you in your business and find success, even.

**Samantha Crocket (she/her):** Yeah. So I think that for me, one of the big [00:13:00] pieces of it is, is that a lot of the, the other. Sort of what started this whole thing was the idea when you're a kid, we spend all this time learning about how to be kind to each other and to be a team player and to like, see all these, these different things and be in relationship.

And then as soon as you're an adult, it's like, no, it's like transactional relationships, rugged individualism, don't care about other people, like just all of these, like very different things. At the same time, everyone is expected to still know how to be kind to each other or how to show up when people are, you know, when there's an emergency or there's trauma or, or even celebrations, like people are just expected to know how to show up to those things.

And I think a lot of what I had seen and a lot of what I still see is very much like checklists. of like, don't say this to this person or a person with this identity or [00:14:00] like, don't do this or like, this is how things can be that, you know, but that, that doesn't. Always work because with my view of individualization, every person needs different things.

And that means not only the people who need support, but also the people who are being is we chatted on a live on an Instagram live on my channel. And we talked about the fact that you were doing, I can't remember like landscaping or home improvement or something along those lines.

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And you invited friends over. to help and you tried to figure out what their strengths were and where they would best be suited to, like, figure out how they could support with this. And so,

for me, one of the things that My, what, what I try to do is that's important because oftentimes we think we have to be showing up in a specific way we think that we [00:15:00] have to be doing X or Y or Z to be effective and if we can't offer that, like if someone, if you invited someone over and they just like have the, have the inability to be outside because their allergies are horrific, then they might not be a great, like they might want to help you, but being outside just isn't, Okay.

What they can do, but one of the like pieces of

society and how we sort of deal with things like I was talking about the conditions is that we like kind of make people feel Like, they have to do it anyway. Like, if somebody, you know, like that, that there's only 1 way to support someone that, like, if you're asking, you know, you had people coming up for landscaping, they would feel like sometimes people feel like they have to say yes, because they, they want to help.

But what, what enthusiastic neighborhoods to do is help people recognize that there are. 1, 000, 001 ways to show up and that there are 1, 000, 001 different people and 1, 000, 001 is, you [00:16:00] know, countless, infinite number of ways to show up and that showing up for a person in one way is not necessarily showing up, is not necessarily going to work for the next person.

And so what I really try and do and what I have been really focused on in, in the business is trying to recognize how. Instead of

a lot of the discussion over the last couple of years has been about systemic change and the ways in which we can change the world through policy and. And shifting things and all of that is incredibly important and all of that has to happen. And at the same time, that work is happening. Individuals also have to be working on the skills that it takes to do those things because [00:17:00] if, if we just force, you know, the example I use a lot is that. If tomorrow we were like, if tomorrow we were able to like one of my personal, you know, things is like, if tomorrow we were able to make abortion legal across the United States now that Roe v. Wade was overturned in 10 years, if another, you know, Mitch and the Supreme Court, they could just overturn it again.

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In fact, one of the there's a story about how Ruth Bader Ginsburg actually didn't want Roe v. Wade to be the case that legalized it because it wasn't built on a solid foundation. Like, she knew that the way that it was, the Supreme Court would be able to overturn it because it was built on that.

And so, the part of it that I'm... Trying to focus on is it's so important to do those things, and it's also important to work with individuals to get them to [00:18:00] understand why. Not imposing values people about the, the way to, the ways to be kind is not necessarily being civil. Sometimes it's about being very straightforward about the harm that they're doing because they are hurting all of these people that they aren't even thinking about.

And so I think that for me, the, for trying to say. In the ways that I was talking about that, like, everybody has to do different things that everybody brings different skills and strengths. And that, since my strength is individualization, really working with people to get to that part of like, yes, this is really important.

And all of the ways that we show up are super important, like, even just not having a fight with a friend. Who you know is really upset [00:19:00] about, like if you, if you have, if you personally wanted, not you,

**Kyle Johann-Baker (he/him):** yeah, yeah, huh, proverbial, proverbial,

**Samantha Crocket (she/her):** the proverbial

you,

if you proverbially were very excited about Roe v. Wade being overturned, and then, you know, your friend was not, don't rub it in their face, like, the simple act of literally just not bringing it up, Is still taking action.

It's still doing it because you're just letting, letting it pass by and not furthering the harm. And so I think it's one of those things where we often think, and I think this is the other piece of individualization we often think that these big brand gestures are like the perfect thing is what showing up is or like taking action has to be about doing something or activism or, or something like that.

And a lot of times. Yeah. [00:20:00] It's the things we don't do, or it's the things that we, that are so small. And so I think that that's why individualization really



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works. And what I do is because I can see the, the, the points, like the pieces in which people have to take different actions based on all of who they are.

And so I think that that's kind of how it shows up. Is that I'm, I spend a lot of time. people that have to make big changes in their life or that they're causing harm or that they like need to shift the way that they think about a certain subject. And a lot of times that doesn't really go very well because it's just like, well, you just think that because of Z. But because I'm coming at it from the perspective of like, I've established a relationship, I've shown. That I know what they're thinking about and what they're [00:21:00] talking about and like where their skills and all the things that when I go to them and say, Hey, hi, friend, like

this action is maybe not it, or if they come to me and they're like about this, that I think that, that it helps to know that it's not just a thing that is like a pronouncement.

Like that you have to do this and it doesn't matter who you are. It's about like showing them. And again, I think it comes back to that input connectedness individualization little like triangle that I But that it really allows me to help people understand. where they fit into the type of like collective humanity and collective liberation that I talk about a lot.

**Kyle Johann-Baker (he/him):** yeah. I love that way that, I mean, even as you like continue to identify like what you're doing, the work that you're helping others experience within their community as they're navigating this, we have [00:22:00] this individual approach to having these conversations and really assessing like what it is that we've done, you know, I'd be curious to hear about like how you have like honed this strength over time, like what are the ways that you invested in it so that This can really be something that happens so effortlessly and works for you.

**Samantha Crocket (she/her):** Yeah. So in addition, again, in addition to the ADHD and anxiety, which just like makes it easy because it's how my A lot of it is that I love just talking to people and like learning about them, which comes from the input. A lot of it is that I can take that and then.

Understand who they are, but also understand more about other people through that person, like giving me more context about how I want to make so I also, 1 of the things that has is like giving gifts. Is really a skill that I, like, deeply possess, which is part of how enthusiastic you ever started and some of [00:23:00] it is about, like, seeing.

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If I'm right about whether like, one of the ways I've like honed it is like seeing how people react to stuff and like, if they do really like it, or if I like misunderstood where we were at or or but that 1 of it is that continue to just make every effort to. Always see everyone as a human being because it's this renewing cycle of, as you said, once you're doing it, it's hard.

Like I tell that to people I work with or even just friends, it's hard. And that's because it's not, we weren't socialized to necessarily like as a whole and a dominant culture in our country. Like we weren't necessarily socialized to do this. And so it's hard. But as you said, the more you do it. And the more you, you screw up, like I don't always make the right choice.

Like there's no way to always predict what someone else is going to need. And even one of the things I say a lot is that there's so much discussion [00:24:00] about like consent and collaboration and making sure you're asking people what they need. And one of the things for me about individualization. And how I've honed the skill is recognizing that that's not always

**Kyle Johann-Baker (he/him):** Yeah.

**Samantha Crocket (she/her):** true and that knowing people very well is a of that.

And like is I have, I, a decent example of it is I had a friend well, there was a woman in college she and I did not sort of in any way get along. It was sort of this loop. Long but at some point she was asking me or she she's mentioned a bunch of times that she does not like it.

When her name has capital letters, which is becoming more of a thing, but, like, in the. Early, you know, 2008, nine ish was thing. And so we were fighting one day and I don't remember how it happened, but like, she saw how I had her name in my phone and it was with all lowercase letters. [00:25:00] And it was sort of this like small turning point of like, Oh, Hey, like that's okay.

Like, why would you do? And I'm like, because that's what you asked for. And I think that, like. In that moment, it would have been much easier to just not care that much because we along. But it was still being. But at the same time, what I was sort of talking about with the knowing what people are asking for or not asking for is, is that in that case, what she was asking for, I was, I did it and it was great and it was wonderful.

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But there, there are other times when it really. Isn't always about what people are saying. Like she didn't necessarily really, and I don't know. I mean, I guess I'll use a different example cause I've never taught, like I hadn't talked about her, so I don't know. But like a great when my dad died or when anyone's, [00:26:00] you know, parent dies, you really don't know necessarily exactly what you need at any given moment.

Like you think you're fine and you're. You're not necessarily fine. And also before I forget the woman name that was the moment that our friendship shifted and she was actually the maid of honor, she was the matron of honor in my wedding. So our

**Kyle Johann-Baker (he/him):** Huh.

**Samantha Crocket (she/her):** so much because of that, just like tiny just the and so friends will ask you a lot, like, what do you need?

What do you need? And you're like, oh, I don't need anything. And it's not because you don't. It's because you just don't have an answer. And so had her husband who we all went to high school together and she had her husband just come over. She was like, I'm sending, I'm sending him over.

He's going to drive you around, do whatever you need. He'll just sit. You don't have to worry about him. But like, if you need him, he will be there on the day of my dad's funeral. And I easily could have said, no, I don't need that. And, and I may have even said that. And she's like, no, no. [00:27:00] He's coming and she knew that because she knew enough about me and she knew enough about sort of what was needed to know that even though what I was saying was, was one thing, actually, she needed to press to make something else happen that actually really needed to happen.

And so I think that part of individualization is, is and where the honing and all the things is like. Yes, I cannot stress how much collaboration and consent and all of those things are incredibly important. And sometimes it is about seeing a person enough to know when they're not necessarily making the decision from a place that is.

As true to them as it, as you know, it could be because you're outside of the direct area that feels very [00:28:00] pushed.

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**Kyle Johann-Baker (he/him):** Yeah. I love, I mean, like, this is kind of like going way back, but what I really appreciate is that you talked about, like with individualization growing as a strength, that wasn't something that just, I think like a lot of strengths, there's a lot of it that is like natural. These are natural ways of thinking, but that doesn't mean we always execute in a way that is like at that excellence level right away.

So there are moments of like failure of misstep that happens along the way. And that's something that we don't always talk about. And so I appreciate you like sharing that. normalizing that and recognizing that when we're developing strengths like these are, it starts with a natural way of thinking, feeling and doing.

And over time we develop it into this place of excellence where we get to consistently see those positive results. And so I think that's really important for folks to know and recognize with developing

strengths.

**Samantha Crocket (she/her):** Absolutely. And then to take that even [00:29:00] like a half step further, especially when it comes to individualization, you could be at that consistent level of excellence and you will still screw up and make mistakes because. Everybody needs different things and it what works with

one person will work with another and so one of the things that really helps me is remembering that as it's a relationship strength like individualization is under the like relationship bucket with this and and that's important because we often think of relationships as these like Static things like we're friends.

So now we're friends and it doesn't necessarily, you know, and, and we think of conflict as a bad thing. And I've found that some of my best relationships have had the most conflict because we have talked about it and we have seen each other as human beings and we've had this individual, you know, this individualization approach to it and saying, okay, well, I'm [00:30:00] not going to think about. other expectations or other people, like, let's just talk about what's happening with us right now. And we get through it and we repair the relationship and we understand what's going on. And so I think that one of the other pieces of this skill specifically is getting to that like excellence point is recognizing it will absolutely be easier.

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It won't feel like you have to think about it so hard or that you have to like really pay attention or really think about, but that it's. Just because it's not hard doesn't mean you're always getting it right. And that if you go into individualization with that understanding of. It is a very renewable, like a renewing kind of thing because everything is always changing and people are always changing and life is always changing.

And so what works, even as I've said, you know, what works for 1 person won't work for another, what works for 1 person today

**Kyle Johann-Baker (he/him):** I [00:31:00] know I was gonna say even what's happening

**Samantha Crocket (she/her):** that you can take tomorrow. Exactly. Even with the same person. And so I think individualization is, is definitely a strength where you have to say it is impossible.

To never make mistakes and you, you can't, but that you have to look at it as a strength where you will make fewer mistakes, but that when you do make them, you, you have built this space for you to understand that it just means that the other person is a human being too. And that you just have to work through it and repair it and listen to them about what they need.

You know, 1 of the things that comes up a lot and I think, you know, is. With the connection and all the things it's like, just because somebody forgives you doesn't mean that they have to be in your life. And so it's all of those different pieces of like that, letting the individualization and relationships help figure out what relationships really can [00:32:00] be and how they can be the strongest and the best that, that works for everybody within the relationship and an, in an equitable, not an equal.

But an equitable way.

**Kyle Johann-Baker (he/him):** Huh. Love that. So, I mean, like, kind of, like, place to wrap up for today. This has been such a great conversation. It's, like, what is it that you're looking forward to in the near future that's coming up in your life that's giving you

life? Silence.

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**Samantha Crocket (she/her):** Yeah. So on September 5th, I launching an online community. It's an affinity group. It's called the white ladies getting our shit together More than club. It's on circle and it's essentially an accountability and growth group. For white ladies who are recognizing that they're the way that we, again, the way that we're socialized in this sort of like dominant culture is.

Really screwed up because of the mixed messages and that what I'm attempting to really work through all of it so that we can. [00:33:00] See the ways that

**Kyle Johann-Baker (he/him):** Silence.

**Samantha Crocket (she/her):** individualization and connectedness and all these things sort of come together to get us there to get us to this place of collective humanity and collective liberation and all these that's what I'm really working on right now. And I think it's most important. In the context of information for a really ironic reason, we really want everyone to be individuals, but especially people from marginalized groups don't often. Get that, like, we often think of people as monoliths.

If they hold a non identity and so. A piece of it is that I often say that I. Like the, some people would say like, well, why are you calling it? The white ladies getting their shit together? Because like, we're all individuals and not all of us do these things. And it's like, well, yeah, but until everybody else gets to be individuals, we don't get to be the only group of people.

Who are that? Like it's it's [00:34:00] not about not seeing people as individuals. It's about finding the ways in which we're not putting ourselves at the center of the story, and we're not seeing everyone else is just N. P. C. S. And so it really is about that individualization piece of of getting to know everybody and working through these skills sort of, yeah, Be able to show up for the world around us and, and really work towards the collective liberation that I think we all really want to see.

**Kyle Johann-Baker (he/him):** Yeah, how exciting. I was excited to see how that goes and what continues to develop from it. So if folks want to stay in touch with you, where do you like to hang out in the Internet? What's the best way for them to

connect with

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you?

**Samantha Crocket (she/her):** Yeah. So am at enthusiastic neighbor on Instagram and then at enthusiastic Samantha on threads, which I don't know that like tons of people are using it or using it anymore, but I it. And it's really and then I'm also on [00:35:00] LinkedIn and. I am mostly in those three places when it comes to social media.

**Kyle Johann-Baker (he/him):** Awesome. Well, thank you so much for being here today, Samantha. I really enjoyed this conversation getting to hear about the unique ways that individualization shows up for you, helps you be successful, and even the ways that you help enable others to live into this value and support their communities.

**Samantha Crocket (she/her):** Thank you so, so much for having, I've had just, it's been a wonderful, wonderful joy and I'm so thrilled. And thank you again, not only for having me on, but just for the podcast, generally, it's so lovely and wonderful and it's just amazing how you are able to make people feel special in your own special way.

**Kyle Johann-Baker (he/him):** I love that. Appreciate it. Thank you.