>> Emily Tironi: Hi, I'm Emily Tironi, an Apprentice at RespectAbility, and I'm here with Tom Olin, a photographer and activist in the disability rights movement. Tom, how did you get into the movement?

>> Tom Olin: [sighs] It was kind of a lifelong thing. I think, you know, all of us that have a disability -- mine was a learning disability. I had to go to -- they didn't have special ed in the small places I went to, you just had a corner of a classroom where the "slow learners," the "dummies," you know, whatever they called us would be. So you know, I understood right off, you know, that there are people that are discriminated against, you know? And I always felt like I was always for the underdog, you know? And -- and it wasn't though -- you know, that was my early life, you know. And then it wasn't until I had to work in a rehab hospital that I really came in contact with very physical disabilities that you couldn't hide. I could hide my -- even though I couldn't write very well, I could hide my disability, and actually would forget about it until something would happen, and I was -- oh yeah. But it wasn't until I actually got to see people with disabilities and see -- I worked -- I was an orderly at a rehab hospital, and I got to see the interactions of family, of friends, with people that were -- very trauma -- it was trauma, accidents that had happened, so they, you know, were quadriplegic, paraplegics, or you know, very involved in their disabilities. And so that struck me. And I had good communications with the people, the persons with their disabilities. As an orderly, you're one of the -- kind of a person that got to talk with a person more than anyone else, more than the family, more than their doctors, more than anyone. So if they wanted to let you in, you know, you got to understand where they were going through and they would talk. And I was, you know -- I wasn't a threat to them. I was very -- I was -- I grew up kind of, you know, being kind of a conic, always for a laugh. So I was like a clownish person, so they didn't have to take me seriously and stuff like that, and -- but I got to understand disability that way, and there was something there that really -- I mean, it was high drama. There were people that -- people that had these dramatic experiences that either wanted to overcome where they were at, or they wanted to die. And those who wanted to die, it was very easy just to let your body die. I saw that happen, you know? If their friends couldn't understand them and want to look at them, or their parents didn't know how to act, it was very easy for people to -- not to think -- to think that there was no life beyond, you know? So that was somewhat -- you know, very interesting. But you have to then -- and I met some really great people, as people with their disabilities there. And one of them that I have always had a conversation with -- and have lived actually lived with was a person -- I was 19 years old and she was 17 years old, and that was Diane Coleman of Not Dead Yet. And we just clicked on how we look at things politically and within the -- in the disability world. It wasn't until we both ended up in California -- I was in Berkeley, trying to follow. I said okay, I want to get back into disability, where do I go? You go to Berkeley, of course! This is back in the early 80s. And I got there, but kind of the movement had left -- or what I thought the movement was had kind of left there. And Diane was living in L.A, so we would spend so much together and then was like, okay, there's a new group getting together down in L.A., and that was, like, Paul Longmore, Doug -- Doug Doug Doug, oh well, shoot. Barbara Waxman, Carol Gill, mother of disability culture, some just incredible -- Anne Finger, author Anne Finger, I mean, there were just incredible, amazing people that were around. And I -- you know, I said okay, I moved in just go down, da da da, you know, and that's how basically I got into the movement there. And we're very involved in the state organization called California Association of the Physically Handicapped -- back then that was called, it changed the name, of course. That wasn't very long after that that Wade Blank and Mike Auberger from ADAPT came down at one of our conferences and said, hey, you know, this is what we're doing. And it was just like, "oh my God, they're doing exactly what -- we want," you know? And that was -- and it was you know at that point we were doing some accessibility stuff, you know, in L.A., we're busking curbs, we're doing, you know, trying to do all this, what they were coming out -- and that was a very California thing -- I was connected with West Side Independent Living Center there -- yeah, Independent Living Center. And so it was, you know -- it was more of an independent living movement that kind of I was involved. But I always wanted more, because we were getting people in a group. We -- got together finally a good ADAPT group there, and there were people out of institutions that you know -- there was this one lady who had cerebral palsy and she was in -- an institution -- for -- I mean -- she was smart, you know, there was no reason for her. She finally got -- you know, she got out and she went back to college, you know, went to college and da da da, you know, but there were so many people like that. And that's where ADAPT, they came from. They came from getting people out of an institution. And even, you know -- even when you look at in history, you know, people might look at -- Independent Living movement and the disability rights movement, which I'll say is coming from Denver, that movement -- they're two different things. One was for getting things -- well basically it started with let's get to college, you know, Ed Roberts, I want to go to school, you know, and then things came, you know, oh, we have to have this and this and this all accessible. The Denver movement was get out and let's get out of the institution, you know? And when they had that first incident where they laid down in front of the buses. That was not accessible -- that was not for accessibility, number one. That was yeah, yeah, you know, getting on the bus was good, but it was because getting out of an institution, they got into their own home -- and you know, got together, but they couldn't go anywhere. It was just almost like being an institution, you know? And so that's where -- I mean, people think of the the gang of 19, you know, when they did the buses back in '78 as something, you know, as accessibility stuff, you know, da da da, you know, but it was really de-institutionalism. And that's -- and that movement is not dead. That's still a movement that is still happening, you know? And that's very important distinction between the accessibility movement of -- of the Independent Living, you know, and that. So that's the kind of how I got into it, you know, and the difference, you know. It's easy to say the movement but you gotta know where your soul is. Is your soul into getting yourself individually -- you know, accessibility and, you know, helping other people at the same time? Or are you trying to help the most marginalized get out of Institutions, you know?

>> Emily Tironi: Yeah it's interesting how the complexity of the history and the movement, that there's actually a bunch of movements happening in different areas. I was wondering if -- had Diane formed Not Dead Yet when you met her, or were you there when -- when she formed that?

>> Tom Olin: Yeah, it's -- before Not Dead Yet came about, there were some cases -- there was baby doll was one of them -- was trying to, you know, always that baby should die, you know, because it has a disability. -- And then beyond that we had the -- oh, I forgot the name of the person -- a person that was going to school, she had cerebral palsy. Going to school, she couldn't -- oh, she just got -- she just broke up with her boyfriend, and, you know, she was just having a very hard time. It was very depressing, and so depressing that she asked the state to kill -- "I want to die," you know? And of course, the state says, oh God, yes, we think you should too! Your -- your quality of life is nothing, da da da, you know? And, you know, all it was is depression, you know, and we -- and so that, you know, became -- a lot of things were happening around that, you know, other cases were happening, other people -- you know, some people were in traumatic accidents like I said, you know, and oh, "I want to die, there's nothing out there, da da da, kill me, please, I don't want to live anymore." You know, luckily our system -- legal system is slow, and sometimes it got to that person, and by the time the courts, the Supreme Court of the state would say, okay, you know, yes, we agree with you, and the person would say, oh, no, I didn't want to die anymore, I found, you know, I can even go to work, you know, and all that, you know. And out of that then, Diane decided to start a group, you know, and it became -- international in scope nowadays also. But that was -- that was a lot of -- it was -- Not Dead Yet comes from a Monty Python movie where they're taking dead people out during the plague, and Anna Clark and one guy said I'm not dead yet, not dead yet, not dead yet! [laughs]

>> Emily Tironi: I did not know that, wow! I was wondering -- well it's interesting that -- that is still, like, an issue today, and still debated. I was wondering what your -- kind of your favorite moment was to photograph and experience?

>> Tom Olin: Well they're our favorite movements -- doesn't mean they're favorite photographs. Those are two different things, maybe. I really don't have -- really, there's not, like, a real favorite. There are some that -- my favorite photograph is what you like the best, you know, what more people like the best. That's mine. But moments -- there's a couple of moments. One was -- I really liked it because it was a -- I think it was on Pennsylvania or Constitution where we blocked the intersection, ADAPT, that is, blocked the intersection. And out of that, after that one demonstration came Money Follows the Person. [laughs] I mean, a whole waiver that changed the whole scope that people don't even know about, but just one action did that, you know? Well I mean -- we're trying to fight -- we're fighting for stuff like that -- at the time. So you know, of course it didn't come out of the blue, it was definitely a coordinated demonstration. And probably -- about 400 or 500 people with disabilities, all kinds of disabilities were partaking of that. But my favorite demonstration and act when I was taking photos was the -- the two weeks of when Lois and Elaine came down for Olmsted -- the Olmsted case at the Supreme Court, and we're sleeping outside -- the night before -- and that was always fun. You know, I -- enjoyed sleeping out because I always had this great queen size air bed, you know, that I could fit on and anyone else -- there was room for about three people to sleep on too, so we all could keep warm too. And just the interactions of that -- of that time -- I mean here's -- here is -- the -- you know, it came out of, you know, the ADA, Olmsted saying, you know, people should be able to live in a community. I mean, God, you know, what greatness this could be, you know? And so after -- about two weeks after that incident -- on the hearing of the court case, we had an Olmsted rally and get together that ADAPT put together. ADAPT put together 150 different organizations to come to DC and rally and support, you know, make sure that the Supreme Court, you know, understands that this is -- really something that we all want. This is like a collective will which I'll talk about, you know. I think that's something that we all -- if we want to progress in our movement, we just -- we do have to have a will that gives together. You know? But it turns out -- I mean, it was -- buses were coming in from a lot of the -- close states. People were flying in. I loved it, because the Amtrak from New York City down to Washington DC, they gutted out -- the cars -- so that all the wheelchairs could get in, you know? And it ended up with the Park Service saying that there were 4,000 people, you know? That's the biggest movement -- we've ever had -- and we did it together. And -- I mean, this is something that doesn't -- is not happening now with so much siloed -- in all different organizations, we don't just work together anymore. And you know -- it's it's kind of -- I love that, you know -- that whole two weeks that happened, because I know what we can do when we work together now, you know, and that was only a part of that. The biggest part of that whole Olmsted thing was that -- during that court case they -- there were 28 --27/28 states that sided with Olmsted saying that no -- we should not have our rights to live. And 27 states' attorney generals put amicus briefs up there. And we got -- we got -- and now I don't remember the name -- like 12 of them off, or 17 of them off by state by state, you know -- [unintelligible] and we had people that said from each state say yes, yes, we'll fight, we'll ask to -- and these are attorney generals that rescinded an amicus. When does that happen? You know? So I know the power that we have -- we can have if we work together, and darn it, do we ever need it now.

>> Emily Tironi: Yeah, that's very powerful, and yeah, today -- I was wondering if you could talk a little bit about today and how what do you think about what we're doing today and the influence of the pandemic and the -- the internet has certainly helped the movement, and if you had any thoughts on that.

>> Tom Olin: Well -- I'll say that the -- you know, you can't -- you can't win a revolution just by the internet, but it's a good tool. That's -- we need all the tools we can get, you know? It's -- what is really needed -- for us to understand, to have that collective will -- there -- it is important that we -- that all of us, you know, how we -- how we treat our life, how we look at -- our life and what we -- what our Visions are -- what is it, you know -- and to get that kind of feeling, we need to be very close to that injustice. We need to be very close, you know, to -- those who are suffering. We did -- we got to be pretty close to a lot of people during COVID, you know, that people were dying. We understood that, but we didn't do anything. We didn't have not a collective will at all when 300,000 people in congregate settings just in nursing homes died. That's not prisons, that's not other places that, you know, don't even have numbers -- that we didn't even count them. That's how -- that's how marginalized a lot of our disability world is. We -- in the whole schema thing, you know, when you talk about incarceration, if you really look at the numbers of incarceration people of incarceration, you'll realize that that they are made up of -- way way more of people with disabilities, whether they be in prisons, in jails, in psych hospitals, in nursing homes, in group homes, it is people with disabilities. In our society, we look at people who actually work, actually make money -- you know, we're in a society that does that, and those who don't do that are what I would, you know, almost as close to what Germany would say "the useless feeders." And so we're -- and we're incarcerated. We are incarcerated into different areas, where it's like a caste system within our own group. We've got people that, you know, we make -- we have -- some of us have jobs, you know, some of the analogy even those who have jobs is a hard to find good attendants, if you need an attendant, you know -- and housing is becoming [unintelligible]. And that's because -- we are the last ones looked at. You know, in the federal government, our disability-led organizations are not at the table, you know? That's how little power we have, you know, that's why we should come together, have the will to become -- to come together and fight together on this. Otherwise more people are going to die. COVID is still strong in prisons. It's not -- a done deal, you know? People are still dying and they're still putting people into prisons -- that have COVID, so -- and the thing -- is that we really have to -- really what is -- what is our priority? Is it, you know, is it accessibility, or is it choices and rights for all of us? And if we -- if none of us -- if some of us don't have choices and rights, then that means that -- you know, they're a part of it. If you use the words nothing about us without all of us, then you're really -- you're lying to yourself, you know? You really have to -- I think my -- my priority is those who are marginalized, get them out of institutions, you know -- it's -- it's what our vision -- people should have a vision. I have a actually there's a -- T.L Lewis on from HEARD, well HEARD, it has a vision statement, and I just love reading the -- just two sentences you know, because it really really says a lot to -- to all of us -- and that -- "we envision a world where multi-marginalized disabled people are inherently valued and have resources, safety, and love they need to thrive and live self-determined lives. We dream of a world that honors our interdependence, invest in our healing from harm and trauma, and recognizes our potential growth and transformation, and ensures our collective liberation." You know, that should be a vision for all of us, for all -- all disabilities -- and we should definitely work together on that, and that's -- that's something that I -- dedicate -- as an elder -- I'll dedicate my rest of my life on.

>> Emily Tironi: Yeah, that's important work and we still have -- it's like, we're doing great things and -- but we still have people in institutions, we still have a group of people that we need work with -- I just want -- you mentioned Lois Curtis, and I was wondering if you could tell us a little bit about her, and maybe the photographs that you took in her home, and if you still stayed connected to her.

>> Tom Olin: Well it was -- Lois -- Lois and Elaine -- definitely were coming out of -- they were institutionalized in a mental health -- a mental institution, a psych institution. And -- and we had some interesting lawyers that had -- had run into them and realized that these people could -- you know, both Lois and Elaine could live out -- in the world, you know -- and I mean, so they actually -- say, hey, you know, let's try this, let's do this. There was a -- a decision before Olmstead called -- oh gosh, Liddell versus ADAPT, oh God, no, I'm getting it wrong. But it was out of -- out of Philadelphia, Steve Gold, you know, did this and -- it kind of was the first step to Olmstead. And you know, we -- ADAPT has always -- said that "Free our People" was -- that's -- that's one of the things. And so -- people were working on it in different ways. Actually this lawyer had not -- had no idea about anyone else trying to do things. She just saw it on her own, you know, yes, yes, and she doesn't need, you know, and that's how -- that came about. Yeah. And it was actually as they were doing that it wasn't until -- the lawyers didn't know there was even community support on this until -- until the -- when the community got the Attorney Generals to rescind their -- it was just like, oh my God, there's people that are listening to this, you know, da da da -- that was -- they finally got out. Elaine -- died years -- years ago, and unfortunately Lois just died -- within the last month. And -- the photos -- it is one of my favorite photos of Lois on the porch of her house, you know, it was just like, "oh my God, that's it," and she's welcoming people to come into her -- into the house. She had friends, she could -- she could say yes or no to people coming in and out. You know, there's so much -- which is -- you're in an institution, you had no rights to say anything like that -- and this was her house. And I had -- there's another picture I love of her. She's in her kitchen -- drawing -- one of her drawings, which she really was -- she was a great artist, you know? I just -- I was always amazed at how fast she could draw and how -- she just loved it -- she loved art. I got to -- we got to -- I got to go to her -- one of her art classes together and she was -- using finger paints at that point -- seeing how what she could do with that. And it was -- just really really fun that -- she was out -- out and about and she just made -- it was definitely -- one of the things that -- that -- it wasn't sad but it really -- it always angers me, because I see it -- I've seen it so many times, is that you go -- the traumatization of being institutionalized is so great that it's -- you might never get over it, you know? And I saw that -- I see that with kids, I see that -- I -- even though -- I mean, even though we do have a lot of our DD -- I mean our IDD and -- other disabilities go into jails and prisons just because of their -- almost just because of their disability, but even those who go into prison and jails with a psych intact, kind of -- it's too much for so many people that they're traumatized -- within 24 hours you can become traumatized -- and I can attest to that. I -- ended up in a -- prison -- deportation prison, and not knowing when I was going to get out. And I -- my nerves just for years were shot, you know? But God -- so we're -- creating disability even -- with being institutionalized. So you know, that should be -- be an abolitionist or something that I might have not said before because other people might not understand it, but I don't care anymore. I'm an abolitionist, you know, when it comes to all institutions. And it's -- the thing is -- the reason why people are -- institutionalized and incarcerated in those institutions are because we don't have community services out in the community. And that means -- and we don't have that because we don't have the collective will to show our power to those in government, you know, and say, hey -- we need the money. We need the money for -- these services. They should come first. And the thing is is that it's a cost-effective way, you know? But people are so ingrained against people with disabilities, or people -- they -- almost equate disability with criminals -- with Frankenstein and all of that, you know. It says -- it's something that -- we grew up with, you know?

>> Emily Tironi: Yeah. I mean we've come far, but it's still such an issue to get people to understand our place in society. And I was wondering what are you working on today with that?

>> Tom Olin: I'm working on two different kinds of incarceration, and one of them is guardianship. That's a -- it's a very interesting one because not a lot of people kind of understand it, but it's -- it's a real big -- it's becoming more and more of an issue. California just passed a law to have care courts, and what care courts are are -- the police can take you off of the street -- usually done with homeless, usually and this is in the metal -- but it doesn't matter. It could be a person with autism, it could be a person with CP, it could be, you know, all these different -- if you act differently, you could go to a court and they -- if they think -- if they just think that you -- can't handle yourself, they'll put you under a guardianship. Once you're on guardianship, they can say, oh, you need to be an institution, you have nothing to say, period. You know? And that is happening not only in a care court. Last week we've been -- we're watching New York City, where people -- where the police and health -- certain health -- policemen, I can't think of what they're really called. But certain people can say, okay, you need to go to the hospital. Once you're to the hospital then you -- then they -- to control you, you're under guardianship. Then they can put you anywhere they want to. Our nursing homes are getting filled up with people with mental health issues, or psychotic issues -- psychosocial issues I should say. And anyone that looks different or acts differently now is in -- you know -- it's up to that person who's looking at you to say, oh, you know, back to the -- oh, your life is not worthy, you know, we should put -- we're going to help you. And it's up to that person to think -- what -- if they don't have -- if they don't know the resources, and that's the whole thing about guardianship, just regular guardianship. You know, you have a person that -- that goes up against a judge because the judge has to decide -- if you're incapable of doing certain things. And if that judge doesn't know that there are services out there -- especially like independent living centers, they have services to mitigate most of all of what -- that person -- that the judge thinks they're incapable of doing. Everyone under guardianship, by definition, is disabled. So you know -- and we -- and they're left on their own with this judge -- that --if that judge usually doesn't even know -- a lot of them don't even know where the independent living center is, or other services. You know? I mean so -- it's like -- I mean what what is -- they actually -- a person on guardianship at times will have less rights than a person in solitary confinement in a prison. And you know, to me -- that's -- I mean, to be -- to know that there's a person on that other side of that door that has no rights, that can't -- that can't say "help," you know -- I mean we're in a physically -- like I said get -- be proximate to that injustice -- I'm working with a person that is -- institutionalized under guardianship. He wants out. He's -- you know, he told us he wants out, but he's threatened to say certain things. And so you know, we can't -- two years we've been trying to get him out -- and a lot of times you have people that should be helping like the P&A system, you know, it depends on where you're at, what state you're at, they can be good, they can be bad, they can be helpful, they can not be helpful, and sometimes are the roadblock, you know? They're supposed to be -- they're supposed to be investigating stuff, so it's -- that's kind of the stuff, you know, I love working down at that kind of level, as well as working -- trying to figure it out, you know, systemically with HHS or ACL. It has kind of worked both ways, but it would really work better if we all work together, you know? It would be great if -- an independent living center could work with -- and we have -- we've worked with other organizations -- at times too, but to have a good P&A system, you know, which for some of you who don't know, P&A is your Disability Rights Ohio, or Disability Rights Pennsylvania, or Disability Rights Colorado, you know -- it's -- they have a mandate -- their mandates are very similar to, like, independent living centers' mandates, which is -- getting people out of Institutions and getting them into the community with supports, you know? So, god, it'd be neat if we all can work together on that one, you know?

>> Emily Tironi: Yeah, that's such important work. What do you think we could do to come together on things like that, especially when we're so -- some of us are so isolated and can't go out because of the pandemic?

>> Tom Olin: I'm isolated right here. This is -- I'm living on -- my tour bus, and it broke down. I'm in -- I'm outside of -- 20 miles outside -- 29 miles outside of Austin, Texas, and I don't have transportation because my bus broke down. So I've been out -- but I'm talking to you, I'm on the internet, you know? I started to work with other groups just by -- I found out a group that was doing amazing work and I just called them up and said, "hey, you know, how can I help?" And I've been working with them for two years, so much so that I'm actually moving to this one -- to another state, you know, to work with -- work with the people in person now. But the main thing -- you know the thing is -- one-on-one, you know, the thing is that not only can we work with each other from different groups, but you know, that supporting -- supporting each other, whether it be online or physically, you know, and just like on the guardianship stuff, you know, we're trying to be able to say, hey, judge, you need to have a peer person there. You know, if that person -- has autism -- have a person -- another person that is a peer with them, you know, with IDD -- any -- we should -- we should be there for our brothers and sisters, you know? We're the ones who know more than anyone else what that person could be going through. So you know, that should -- right there should be something -- well that's something that we all can do. In the mental health world and also in different -- most P&As have -- you're supposed to be directed by the PAIMIs, which is a mental health kind of community group that are -- made up of people with mental health, psychosocial issues. There are the -- which is the -- I think it's the PAIR, that's -- there's a DD part of that equation as well as everyone else, like, physical and whatever, you know. But they're the ones who can get together. If you're -- if you have -- if you have -- if psychosocial is a disability that you're involved in, you know, there are, you know, volunteer as a PAIMI person. I mean -- and they're so different in every state, some PAIMIs are really -- that's how P&A started. It was actually by, you know, Willowbrook, back when they had institutions, and the government said oh God, we got to do something about it. And you know, that was the one focus. Now they're kind of like -- they're off on their own, the P&As sometimes. But it can be very helpful. In Maine they're so strong there that they have a PAIMI person, a person that -- is on -- that gets to -- the good thing about P&As, they can investigate. They can go to any institution and investigate. So that's -- that's a really neat thing to do and be. And so they have a PAIMI person in all institutions, you know? And that's -- now hardly any states are like that, you know, there are some -- like I said, some states are good, some states are bad. But it's up to us -- it's up to us as a community! You know, one of the greatest things that disability justice framework does is it comes from a community, and we -- we work out of that. And there are so many things that -- there are prisoners that need, when they get out, you know, they need help, you know. We should be -- independent living centers and other organizations should be in there, you know, helping them before they come out, you know? HEARD, like you heard me say, is a group that -- goes into prisons and helps them with communication with the deaf and those who can hardly -- have a hard time communicating. And they help them, so when they get out, they understand what a smartphone is, they understand how they can communicate, you know? So the recidivism is less when you do things like that. And the same way with all the other institutions. We should be involved! Everyone of us should spend some time thinking how we can be involved with getting our brothers and sisters out, because it is -- all of us -- all of us or none of us [laughs] or vice versa or something. [laughs]

>> Emily Tironi: Yeah it's such an important mindset to have. Are you still photographing, and what do you think about documenting the movement now that, like, with the pandemic and everything?

>> Tom Olin: [sighs] God we have to, you know? This is -- it's just -- this is our genocide. This is something that happened and we allowed this happen, and we can't allow this happen again, because it could happen again, very very easily. We -- did not learn very much from this last epidemic on how to mitigate the experiences that happen, you know? And it was so funny, NCD, the national disability -- National Council on Disability just did a whole thing on -- on the pandemic, you know, just just a couple days ago. And it was great information. Two years late, you know? [laughs] We were talking to them years ago. We were talking to them -- you know, there were groups of us that were talking to the White House, da da da, you know? We didn't have the power behind us to make it -- to say hey -- they didn't ask us "how do we mitigate, you know, congregate setting deaths?" You know -- they didn't -- to them it was, "oh, let's give the nursing homes more money." You know, where did that money go to? The pockets of the corporate -- they're corporate run, you know? Of course they're gonna -- keep on their salaries -- even though staff is depleting -- and -- I mean, they had a hard time -- it -- there's a lot -- there's a lot to document. Unfortunately we were so bad at -- getting data out there -- real true data, and some data, like in New York, was -- was thrown away, revised -- [laughs] -- It'll happen again unless -- we -- yeah, it's very important that we -- record what happened, and use that -- use that together. I mean the thing is is that anything that we do, if we're in a small group or any -- even a large, you know, organization, if we don't go beyond our own organization, then it stays in our organization, you know? We've got to figure out how we communicate with each other. It's so important to know what one organization is doing or what the other organization -- sometimes they're doing the same thing, you know? And they're not even -- they don't even know it, you know? And they could be helping each other out. The same way with -- even organizations that are in every city, you know, different cities, they don't talk. Unless you -- have a good communication system, you might not know what the good -- good practices are of one place to another place. And it's so important right now. As you can see, 300,000 people died. We were the -- we were the ones who were dying, you know? And -- we couldn't even say, hey, maybe we should do something about it. [laughs] That's where our -- old structured in organizations that are still structured that way. They're still structured that way, that if something new came up, it would take at least a month for them to get a committee together -- and as people die. You know -- we have to figure -- we got to figure out new ways. This is -- something -- and I love being an elder, because it's up to the young to -- figure this out, you know? We've got to -- and what's happening in a lot of disability organizations, if you look at them, the leaders of those organizations are leaving because of retiring or dying or whatever, and there are not a lot of young leaders coming up to fill those places.

>> Emily Tironi: Yeah, that's very important. And I do see a lot of young people that want -- with disabilities that want to help and do the right things, and I'm so grateful for you -- to you for helping us transition [unintelligible] and work on the stuff that you've worked on, and all the work that you've done. I didn't know if there was anything else you wanted people to know, or an organization that you wanted people to follow?

>> Tom Olin: Well, just coming off of what you just said, you know, it is -- it is the work that is the work. It -- actually -- you have to work, you know? I support any young people's ambition to -- to get into -- into all this, you know. And they have -- we have to -- we can't be neutral on all of this, you know? To be neutral is to collaborate with what is happening -- and to allow this to happen. And I would support any organization to get people -- young people into places where things are happening, you know -- hey -- intern there go and do it -- and it works, it really works. And you know, one of the neatest things about the -- ADAPT -- and their part of the movement, is that when they did the work, leaders came out of it. Leaders came out of it. It wasn't like, oh, we're going to make leaders all day, it just happened, you know? It was -- like, years later I said, oh my God, all these people are now, you know, are heads of organizations -- large organizations, you know? Like, I love one of the largest independent living centers, Access Living in Chicago, is run by a woman that has been arrested at least 70 times, you know, during ADAPT -- actions -- it -- we just need to put young people in -- I won't say harm's way, but into that action, and -- there -- listen. It doesn't take much to lead, you know? It just takes -- it takes the will to do that -- and we can -- there are some really good young leaders, you know? We just need to push other people out of the way and put them into place, you know? Put them in, get their feet going, you know? So that's my last words. [laughs]

>> Emily Tironi: Yes. Thank you so much Tom for talking to me and sharing your photos and your experiences. It's been a great experience.

>> Tom Olin: Well it's been really great working with you and talking with you, and I'm sure that this won't be our last time. [laughs]

>> Emily Tironi: Yeah definitely, I really want to work with you in the future, thank you!