

My employment story

Financial Freedom = Empowerment

By Chris Van Ingen

Socially valued role

- Good employers **respect** my skills as: a Qualified Trainer, Actor and Writer
- They have always treated me **as an equal**
- I know I am **valued** because I have the same rights and responsibilities as the other staff

Focus on strengths not weakness

- **Communication:** is the one thing that has allowed me to participate in the community and the best people I have worked with are those who have recognised that fact
- **Motivation:** because of the challenges of my disability I have had to be motivated just to achieve the simplest thing, so motivation is a strength I can bring to any organisation
- **My Disability:** I always considered my disability as a strength and I have been able to use it to make the community organisations I work for more accessible for people with disability
- **Acting/Writing:** the skills that I have as an actor and writer I have been able to transfer into strengths to help the community

Overcoming Barriers

- **Access:** to the community is one of the biggest barrier for people with disability because people have different ideas on what is acceptable. For me one step makes it not accessible
- **Social attitudes:** another big barrier for people with disability is social attitudes. Many employers believe that if I hire a people with disability that they will be off sick all the time when in fact the opposite is true
- **Using equipment:** the use of assistive technology allows me to work independently with as little assistance as possible
- **Government funding:** many employers believe it is too expensive to hire someone with a disability, they are unaware that there are government grants and funding available to assist in this area

Financial Freedom

- My goal is to get off the disability pension
- Money gives me control over my life
- I also hate relying on government handouts and the more financial freedom I have the more I can pay for my own support

What it Means To Me

- **Work** lets me look after my family, wife and step daughter
- I am employed because of my disability not in spite of it
- I get the opportunity to **make a difference**