'I Spent Three Years Looking for My Watch Today'

Rob Guttenberg, Performing Songwriter

Rob is a youth counselor and performing songwriter who experienced a cerebral hemhorrage in 1983 at the age of 29. Since that time, he has presented songwriting concert/sessions with students in the local community and college campuses throughout the United States Rob will perform music and focuses his participants on important concerns of persons with 'invisible disabilities', including short and long term memory deficits, attention deficit, visual-spatial and other cognitive impairments. Participants will discusses issues of 'social equality' and 'disability' along with the significance of adopting 'person first' language when speaking to and about persons with disabilities.

website: robguttenberg.com

301-545-5660

e-mail: robjob2@verizon.net

A Few Words About PEOPLE FIRST LANGUAGE by Kathie Snow

Visit www.disabilityisnatural.com to see the original, full-length article.

People with disabilities constitute our nation's largest minority group. It's also the most inclusive: all ages, genders, religions, ethnicities, sexual orientations, and socioeconomic levels are represented.

Yet the only thing people with disabilities have in common is being on the receiving end of societal misunderstanding, prejudice, and discrimination. And this largest minority group is the only one that *anyone*

The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and the lightning bug. Mark Twain can join, at any time: at birth, in the split second of an accident, through illness, or during the ag-

ing process. If and when it happens to you, how will you want to be described?

Words matter! Old and inaccurate descriptors perpetuate negative stereotypes and generate an incredibly powerful attitudinal barrier—the greatest obstacle facing individuals with disabilities. A disability is, first and foremost, a medical diagnosis, and when we define people by their diagnoses, we devalue and disrespect them as individuals. Do you want to be known primarily by your psoriasis, gynecological history, or the warts on your behind? Using medical diagnoses incorrectly—as a measure of a person's abilities or potential—can ruin people's lives.

Embrace a new paradigm: "Disability is a natural part of the human experience..." (U.S. Developmental Disabilities/Bill of Rights Act). Yes, disability is natural, and it can be redefined as a "body part that works differently." A person with spina bifida has legs that work differently, a person with Down syndrome learns differently, and so forth. People can no more be defined by their medical diagnoses than others can be defined by gender, ethnicity, religion, or other traits!

A diagnosis may also be used as a sociopolitical passport for services, entitlements, or legal protections. Thus, the only places where the use of a diagnosis is relevant are medical, educational, legal, or similar settings.

People First Language puts the person before the disability, and describes what a person has, not who a person is. Are you "cancerous" or do you have cancer? Is a person "handicapped/disabled" or does she "have a disability"? Using a diagnosis as a defining characteristic reflects prejudice, and also robs the person of the opportunity to define himself.

Let's reframe "problems" into "needs." Instead of, "He has behavior problems," we can say, "He needs behavior supports." Instead of, "She has reading problems," we can say, "She needs large print." "Low-functioning" or "high-functioning" are pejorative and harmful. Machines "function;" people live! And let's eliminate the "special needs" descriptor—it generates pity and low expectations!

A person's self-image is tied to the words used about him. People First Language reflects good manners, not "political correctness," and it was started by individuals who said, "We are not our disabilities!" We can create a new paradigm of disability and change the world in the process. Using People First Language is right—just do it, now!

A Few Examples of People First Language

Say:

Children/adults with disabilities.

He has a cognitive disability.

She has autism.

He has Down syndrome. She has a learning disability. He has a physical disability.

She uses a wheelchair.

He receives special ed services.

People without disabilities.

Communicates with her eyes/device/etc.

Congenital disability/Brain injury
Accessible parking, hotel room, etc.

Instead of:

Handicapped, disabled, special needs.

He's mentally retarded.

She's autistic.

He's Down's/mongoloid. She's learning disabled.

Lla's a guadrialagia/arinal

He's a quadriplegic/crippled.

She's confined to/wheelchair bound. He's in special ed; a special ed kid.

Normal or healthy people.

Is non-verbal.

Birth defect/Brain damaged

Handicapped parking, hotel room, etc.

Copyright 2006-13 Kathie Snow, All Rights Reserved. You may print and/or make copies of this article to use as a handout (non-commercial use). Before using it in any other way (on websites, blogs, newsletters, etc.), and to comply with copyright law, see the Terms of Use at www.disabilityisnatural.com. While you're there, sign up for the free Disability is Natural E-newsletter! 01/12

People-First Terminology Handout # 6

Translate the inappropriate term into one that is people-first and more respectful of one's abilities For example, say woman with arthritis. This puts the focus on the individual, not the particular functional limitation. Also, do not use nouns to describe people, such as epileptic, diabetic, etc.

Inappropriate Term	Translation	
Handicapped person		
Crippled		
Deaf boy	•	
CP victim		
Confined to a wheelchair		
AIDS carrier		
"Suffers with"		
Special needs child		
Physically challenged		
Mentally different		

Cycle of Oppression Handout # 3

Taken from a handout developed by Sheri Schmidt in 1994 from Taking About Race, facilitation guide.

One way to explain how oppression is perpetuated in our society is by defining the following terms and showing the link between them, the momentum that keeps the cycle going.

1. Stereotype

A preconceived or oversimplified generalization about an entire group of people without regard for their individual differences. While often negative, stereotypes may also be complimentary. Even positive stereotypes can have a negative impact however, simply because they are broad generalizations.

The stereotypes we hold form the basis of our prejudices.

2. Prejudice

A conscious or unconscious negative belief about a whole group of people and its individual members.

When the person holding the prejudice also has and uses the power to deny opportunities, resources or access to a person because of their group membership, there is discrimination.

3. Discrimination

Prejudice plus the power. Discrimination can take many forms, including racism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism, ageism, etc.

Many acts of discrimination build up over time, perpetuated against one relatively less powerful social group by a more powerful social group, lead to a group of people being in a state of oppression.

4. Oppression

The systematic subjugation of a group of people by another group of people with access to social power, the result of which benefits one group over the other and is maintained by social beliefs and practices.

Because oppression is institutionalized in our society, target group members often believe the messages and internalize the oppression.

5. Internalized Oppression

The "buying into" the elements of oppression by the target group.

When target group members believe the stereotypes they are taught about themselves, they tend to act them out and thus perpetuate the stereotypes which reinforces the prejudice and keeps the cycle going.

5 ELEMENTS OF A WELL-WRITTEN LYRIC

From: The Craft of Lyric Writing By Sheila Davis, Copyright 1985

- 1. An Identifiable Idea
- 2. A Memorable Title
- 3. A Strong Start
- 4. A Payoff
- 5. An Appropriate Form

Name of Technique: Living Every Day

Time Needed:

999

> a a

> 4

5 minutes

Original Words and Music by:

Rob Guttenberg

Description Dirty old red, rag shirt Hanging on my back Guess that's why I'm not driving A big, black Cadillac I won't go chasing for better things I guess that's okay I go slow now As I go now Living every day		Well, some folks chase And some folks race And some folks run around Me, I'm just staying in one place With my feet on the ground I won't be famous I won't be rich I won't be on TV No, I'm just doing the best I can And that's all right with me	It used to be That I could see The reason and the rhyme Now, I stop and think about And boy, it takes some time My life has changed It's rearranged I guess that's okay I go slow now As I go now Living every day		
Materials Needed	Copy of song lyric Recording of 'Living Every Day' (Found on the cassette, 'Living Every Day' by Rob Guttenberg, ROB-JOB). Also included on the CD recording, 'FDR in a Wheelchair' by Rob Guttenberg, ROB-JOB 2005 Song and video can be found at: robgutttenberg.com To purchase recordings by Rob Guttenberg, contact: robjob2@verizon.net				
How to Front Load	Ask participants to think about some point in their life when they felt inferior. Encourage them to select a memory about a time in their life when they faced deep feelings of things not being the way they wanted to be. Ask them to listen to the song for the inspiration it may provide.				
Concept(s) Illustrated	The courage to be imperfect Compensatory strategies for inferiority feelings (moving from felt (-) to felt (+)) Social interest The role of humor during life struggles The Encouragement Process				
Harvesting Process & Questions	What was the most meaningful message you gained by listening to this song? How do you think that Rob Guttenberg was able to maintain his positive approach to turning a (-) into a (+)? What assets do you have, that will serve you well in facing adversity?				

F.D.R. in a Wheelchair Name of Technique:

continued

Time Needed:

3 minutes

Source of Technique:

Rob Guttenberg Copyright Rob Guttenberg, 1996

Harvesting Process & Questions

Do national memorials belong to the person being memorialized, their family members, or are they supposed to reflect more the current values and beliefs

of the nation?

Have peoples' attitudes towards disability changed from the time in which FDR was President? If FDR were alive today, would he want to be displayed sitting in his wheelchair at his memorial?

Chorus: We all need a vision to succeed

And this great man inspired us to believe

We all need a vision to succeed

And this great man inspired us to believe

1st verse: Franklin Delano Roosevelt

I have seen your message felt

In the eyes of those who cannot see

In the minds of those who cannot talk

On the 'souls' of those who cannot walk

You've given us your strength and courage to succeed

[Chorus]

2nd verse: Franklin Delano Roosevelt

The world has changed since you were dealt

That fateful blow that left you in your chair

But have we changed enough to say out loud

That we have overcome, and we are proud

Or must we shame this generation with our fear

[Chorus]

Bridge: We all need a vision to succeed

And this great man inspired us to believe

[Chorus]

So, sit down, and be counted Bridge:

Let your voices ring out loud!

Tell the story to the children, and the youth

FDR led from his chair

So let his statue show him there

The time has come for us to finally tell the truth

Chorus: We all need a vision to succeed

And this great man inspired us to believe

We all need a vision to succeed

And this great man inspired us to believe

1st verse: Franklin Delano Roosevelt

I have seen your message felt

In the eyes of those who cannot see In the minds of those who cannot talk

On the 'souls' of those who cannot walk

You've given us your strength and courage to succeed

We all need a vision to succeed

And this great man inspired us to believe

'I Spent Three Years Looking for My Watch Today'

Rob Guttenberg, words and music Copyright 2005

Verse 1

I spent three years looking for my watch today Found it in the same place, where I left it yesterday Oh my! Oh why! Did it go away!

Chorus

Always losing, always losing Everything I own So confusing, so confusing My dog can't find his bone!

Verse 2

It took me five miles to drive around the block last night Guess I turned left
When I should've turned right
No gas!
Alas!
What an ugly sight

Chorus

Turning left and turning right
I just can't find my way
If I keep driving around the block
I might find my home some day

[Spoken bridge]

"I lost my car...
I lost my wallet...
I lost my keys...
I lost my mind!!!!"

Always losing, always losing Everything I own So confusing, so confusing My dog can't find his bone!

I spent three years looking for my watch today! I spent three years looking for my watch today! I spent three years looking for my watch today...

"Hey! Can anybody help me find the ending for the song?!!!"

Name of Technique: I Carry On

continued

Source of Technique: Original words and music by Rob Guttenberg

Copyright 2009

[Chorus]

I am able
I am strong

And I know that I belong
As I stumble through each day

My life has meaning

I have the good I take the bad

My life is happy and it's sad In the face of all I face

I carry on

Verse 1

In the middle of my life, I was wakened from a dream
All the bridges on the path I walked had crumbled
Left without a solid plan, this new life for me began
Filled with struggles I had never known before

[Chorus] [Bridge]

I choose to face all my tomorrows
Till the day I die
No time, to drown in all my sorrows
To watch life pass me by

Verse 2

Taking twice as long to plan, makes me no less of a man
Do you blame a blind man because he cannot see?

Some people go to such great lengths, to notice everything but strengths I guess this must be their disability?

[Repeat bridge]

Verse 3

Every day I pay a cost For the things that I have lost And with every loss, there's something to be found

As we mourn what is no more We prepare for what's in store And this cycle in our life Goes round and round

[Repeat Bridge]

I am able
I am strong
And I know that I belong
As I stumble through each day
My life has meaning

I have the good
I take the bad
My life is happy and it's sad
In the face of all I face
I carry on

In the face of all I face I carry on