

Disability definitely is not inability

I don't know many people who are disabled, in fact I can probably count on one hand the amount of people I actually know through social media, mainly LinkedIn and Facebook.

When I say know what I mean to say is, these are people that I have come across when I was attempting to host "The will to succeed" public speaking conference on the 20th May 2020 where all the speakers including myself had a disability of some description [1].

I had a pretty impressive line-up.

- Obviously, myself brain injury survivor, motivational & Inspirational Speaker and former sales director for IBM Rational;
- Having suffered a huge brainstem stroke at the age of 39 leaving her with locked in syndrome, she was able to recover and is now an Inspirational Speaker, Social Media Marketing Consultant and Author (Kate Allatt) [2]
- Footballing ace, motivation and inspirational speaker (Charlie Fogarty);
- Global speaker, Corporate Trainer, Singer, Model and Minister (Riona Kelly);
- Wheelchair model and passionate about Inclusive Fashion (Samantha Bullock);

It was going to be hosted at Abbey Hotel in Redditch, I say was because the event had to be cancelled due to dreaded COVID-19 virus.

The most impressive and, quite possibly the most inspiration man that I've had the pleasure of knowing is a guy who goes by the name of Paul Fogarty.

Paul was born with no arms and one leg, his left leg. He's used a prosthetic leg since the age of three to walk and to help maintain his independence. He had cycled before: he used an upright trike to get to secondary school and, after turning 18, to the pub when socialising with friends. But he no longer had that.

His search for a replacement was spurred by an old friend, Tom Yendell, a foot and mouth artist. Tom had posted some pictures on Facebook of him riding an adapted trike. "If Tom can ride a trike, I must be able to," Paul told himself. He started doing research

Case blog

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online. The most promising option was right on his Telford doorstep: Quest, based just five miles away from where he lives in Shifnal [3].

Paul also posts almost on a daily basis video of him going about his daily life on Facebook, wow just **WOW**, to say that he has no arms he certainly doesn't let that from leading a purposeful and meaningful life.

I think the most impressive thing that I've seen him do is, he's quite a serious PlayStation user.

How he plays is mind-blowing, I haven't seen how he loads the game, I'm assuming with his teeth but he then proceeds to place, well he drops the controller on the floor in front of him then he plays the game using his toes on his left foot to play the game rather than his fingers.

The guy is simply unbelievable, this morning he did something that even I sometimes struggle with even with two arms, granted for very different reasons but I watched a video of him drinking a cup of coffee or was it tea? To be brutally honest that really isn't important, the fact that he's able to drink from a normal cup of boiling liquid with just two stumps for arms I find totally mind-blowing.

I sometimes struggle because I shake so much due to suffering with Parkinsonism brought on by my brain injury and, I often end up wearing half of it. LOL

This was just pure showing off, somebody gave him

a bar of chocolate it isn't important but it was a Yorkie Bar, what is a man with no arms supposed to do with a bar of chocolate still in its wrapper? Well, this is pure inspiration, he put the bar of chocolate between his right stump and the edge of the table then leaning against the bar of chocolate he bent over and he opened it with his teeth, I'd hate to see his dental bill [4].

I have just watched him take a box of Pringles that had been placed at the back of the kitchen worksurface, now this is pure determination, he went to a kitchen draw where he's able to open the draw with his stump then he leaned over the draw and was able to pick up a plastic spoon in his mouth then using the spoon like an arm he was able to knock the box over and role the box to him pop the lid off, tip some Pringles out onto the worksurface before picking them up in his mouth.

He's also done a video of himself spraying deodorant under his armpits, now this is pure genius, he obviously wouldn't be able to do this with a small tin of Lynx although having seen Paul in action he probably could.

Using a solid surface like a tabletop, he stands the tin having popped the lid off, placed it close to the edge of the surface, then using his stump he pushes down on the spray nozzle to spray under the opposite armpit before doing the same exercise under the opposite stump, like I say pure genius [5].

I recently asked Paul what are the top five things he is most proud of and I was pleasantly surprised at his response when he listed as follows: -

1. I think number one has to be going to work every day, holding down a full-time job and supporting my family;
2. I think two is that I don't let life get the better of me;
3. Number three is all the motivating and inspiring people that I do on social media. For a long-time in my life, I used to cover up my body with cloths to prevent people from staring but, now I'm at the point where I'm comfortable with my body and, it's taken a lot to get to this point where I'm going on social media in front of millions showing people what I can do;
4. This is probably being a foster parent, I mean this could possibly be higher up but, being able to give back and give children a loving upbringing like I had is very rewarding, it has its challenges don't get me wrong;
5. Number five again I don't think these are in order as it's difficult to rank them but, overcoming alcoholism, it's not an easy to beat but, having not had a drink for nearly 18 years it is something I'm proud of! A lot of people say to me don't I miss it? He then went on to say I definitely don't, and I like having my life in control which, is something I didn't have when I was drinking;

The guy is a living legend

When I read his list of achievements, I am almost embarrassed that I've ever had the audacity to moan and complain about my own disability (Figure 1).

Meet Paul who for me is the most inspirational man I've had the pleasure of knowing:



Figure 1. Paul Fogarty demonstrating determination, resilience, and independence in daily life activities despite physical disability.

References

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