

# “RESPOND, RESPECT AND REALIZE”



My name is **Dennis Harvey** I am founder & president of a small business called “*Bee in Motion*”. It is a Movement and Music therapeutic workshop designed to assist people with disabilities to feel better. If you would like more information about how to host a workshop, give me a call at 401-347-7288 or check out my website at:

<http://www.beeinmotionri.com>



I want talk to about how the mainstream community treats persons with disabilities. Maybe those with and without disabilities can learn from each other. I also have a disability.

When I am out in the world going about my day to day life people react and respond to me in very specific ways. They usually stay out of my way, sometimes avoid me, don't speak to me and don't understand me. Sometimes they even giggle.

In high school other students were distant and UN-welcoming to me. Sometimes some people were cruel and nasty. I was spared most of the cruel nastiness because as you can see I'm a big boy. :D lol

When you or I meet people we respond to each other... “*Hi, how are you?*” When you see a person with disability do you take that same time and social engagement? When you meet someone with a disability please stop and take an extra moment and look past the wheel chair or other obvious issue that say “*I am disabled*”.

**Really SEE THE PERSON, and you will find their values, experiences, likes, dislikes, fears, hopes, dreams, passions and desires. Because... WE HAVE THEM TOO! (BIG SMILE).**

Show respect. Has your mom ever said “*oh honey you can't do that!* “ because she thought you weren't ready to try it—because of your age or the level of complication it took to do something?

Well, people tell us all the time, “***You can't do that.***” When people speak down to us with pity or judgments and limiting beliefs their speech makes us feel worthless and as though we cannot achieve our goals like everyone else.

Believe me I know my limitations already! I know for a fact that I am never going to be a rocket scientist. I also know I am never going to be a cart associate at Wal-Mart either! Believe me, I know I've tried the Wal-Mart job and you wouldn't believe how many carts I've scratched up.

*I am*  
**SOMEBODY**

But GUESS WHAT? There are a lot of jobs between a Rocket Scientist and Wal-Mart employee that I can and will do. **I am somebody!** I've been called a “*visionary*” by the president of the Providence CCRI campus. I am an entrepreneur, a public speaker, a creator. And guess what else? I am a big time wrestling fan. I do all these things with great passion and joy; but I can barely read or write or even drive a car.



*Dennis Harvey sitting on the stage at CCRI Providence Campus waiting to perform as Mayor Tavares speaks to the students on the vast international diversity represented on the campus.*

A long time ago my sister came up to me and asked why I even bothered trying to work. I was struggling with a physical ailment at that time. My sister said... **“You’re always going to be disabled.”** That moment made me more determined than ever to show my family and the rest of the world that **I can add value to this planet.** I am somebody too! I was working at a fine Italian restaurant as a dishwasher at the time. My feet were in constant pain and getting worse. I worked until I was practically crawling, then I finally went to the doctor to see what was wrong with me and I got better with treatment. I worked at this job and received a raise, and more importantly, the owner’s respect.

I kept going, I might be disabled but I am not lazy and I want to build my own life. **“I can do this”** is my attitude.



I have done many things since that first job I had.

So to sum it all up, I hope you will take a few extra moments to get to know your students, neighbors, and co-workers who have disabilities.

We are **just like you** but with extra challenges.

We have potential and want to have the same life experiences as you. School, college, work, friends, vacations, homes, music, cars, sports and lots of love!!!

Try to remember... No belittling or bullying anyone!

**“RESPOND, RESPECT, AND REALIZE”.**



*Dennis Harvey is a member of the Systems Advocacy Committee (SAC) of the RI Developmental Disabilities Council (RIDDC), a member of the RI Cross Disability Coalition and also a member of Advocates in Action.*