



## DISABILITY

### LET'S LISTEN MORE

**On 3 December, International Day of Persons with Disabilities. "If you want to be a better friend to people with disabilities, start by listening to what they have to say" suggests writer Kelsey Borresen in an article on Huffington Post.**

With Awareness Days reminding us that 3 December is the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, now is the ideal time to listen more.

Especially as there are an "estimated one billion people living with disabilities worldwide" and they face many barriers, says Awareness Days.

One thinks of barriers as things like stairs that bar access to wheelchair users, but "the hardest part about being disabled isn't my disability itself. It's the way society treats you" says Ola Ojewumi in the Huffington Post article.

Other messages from the Huffington Post article:

- "Before you tell a disabled person about your great idea to fix them, remember that if there actually was a quick fix, we would have done it by now." Sara Youngblood Gregory
- "I am many things before my blindness and it does not define me. ... I am a wife, sister, operations assistant for a consulting firm. I love shopping, horse riding, 'Grey's Anatomy,' and I just happen to be blind." Steph Agnew

Writing for Forbes, Andrew Pulrang, who describes himself as "a freelance writer with lifelong disabilities" says:

"What most disabled people want most deeply is to be seen, heard, believed, and taken seriously."

However, it doesn't help that "nondisabled members of society have been socialized to feel incredibly uncomfortable around disability" as Mickey Rowe told Huffington Post.

Rowe, the first autistic actor to play the autistic main character in the Tony Award-winning play *The Curious Incident Of The Dog In The Night-Time*, has overcome many challenges. He has an inspiring message for other actors with disabilities.

From an interview with Disability Arts Online:

"My advice would be, know your worth! Don't discount yourself or apologize for being you. Find accommodations that work for you and know your strengths and weaknesses really well. I think that all young people with disabilities need to see role models who will tell them that if you are different, if you access the world differently, we need you! The world needs you!"

I don't know about you, but I find Rowe's words inspiring for society as a whole.