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After a lifetime of physical and mental health struggles, Peter is now using his own lived experiences to help and inspire other people living with disability.

He now works as a professional keynote motivational speaker and mentor to people of all abilities.

Peter works with Adelaide not-for-profit Employment Options as a mentor with its NDIS-funded BizAbility employment program, helping others to pursue their dreams.

He helps participants develop their confidence, resilience and entrepreneurship skills to pursue business ideas for self-employment and achieve their personal goals.

Peter was an active, healthy child of four when he had an unexplained stroke, leaving him unable to walk and talk and with hemiplegia (paralysis) on the right side of his body.

“I was stubborn as hell to get out of the wheelchair but my balance and coordination were obliterated,” he says.

“Peter’s empathy, understanding, and lived experience has been immeasurable in helping us to develop the BizAbility program, which is now a service available through people’s NDIS plans,” says Employment Options Growth and Partnerships Manager, Sasha Dragovelic.

“Peter is an exceptional person who has inspired hundreds of participants, parents, support coordinators, and other NDIS providers.”

Peter’s dream has long been to use his own lived experiences to help others.

“I want to do my part to help people with disabilities to have the life they want and to achieve the goals they want,” he says. “I believe, if there’s a strong enough will, with the right supports and mindsets, there’s always a way through.”

Peter recently won the Most Inspirational Individual Award at the Brain Injury SA Awards and is on the board of Stroke SA.

He has also been working closely with Adelaide neuroscientist Dr Fiona Kerr to develop a mobile app, which they hope will further assist people with brain injuries and others with disabilities.

“I decided really early on that no one was going to hold me down and that no one is going to put a ceiling on my dreams,” says Peter.

“I like to help by sharing my story because I found that sharing my story inspires others to look inside themselves and see the gold they have within them.”

Before COVID-19, Peter travelled around Australia as a keynote speaker, addressing large audiences about resilience and overcoming challenges, and was often met with standing ovations.

He says it is thanks to the NDIS that he has the physical strength and energy to work.

Peter’s NDIS plan provides him with physical therapy three times a week, which helps manage what he describes as ‘crippling pain’. It helps him to move more freely and have less fatigue. He also has psychological support and support workers who help him with daily activities.

He says support from his own mentors, family, friends, healthcare workers and the NDIS have all helped him to ‘make it through’, together with his stubborn and determined attitude to overcome obstacles and achieve his goals.

“I wish there was an award I could give my family, friends, mentors and teachers because they’ve opened doors for me and believed in me but more importantly they showed me how I can make doors for myself and open them for myself and and believe in myself,” he says.

“They showed me how I can turn a can’t into a can. And I’ve learned how to turn the impossible into ‘I’m possible’ to do that. From where I was to where I am now and to where I will be, anything is possible.”

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