

Speech to Senator Dole and Crowd

DISABILITY IS NOT INABILITY

1. Disability is not inability; but it is a big problem for those who are disabled.
2. Disability is a problem because people don't know how to coordinate action with the disabled
3. The public's level of discomfort increases directly and proportionately with their inability to communicate and coordination action
4. Must deal with this breakdown. It is part of the prejudice that comes from their lack of competence.
5. History: Stanford/Wharton Story
6. What is a prejudice?
7. What's the offer?
8. Reinterpretation of ADA

78% think of disabled people more as having underused potential to contribute by working and producing

82% think that, if disabled people were brought into the workforce, it would be a boost to the nation by taking people off welfare and putting them to work, rather than taking jobs from people without disabilities

81% think that employers and colleges should have similar affirmative action programs for people with disabilities as they do for women and minorities.

From Wilmington:

- o history and historicity
- o the advice I give to people who are disabled; and
- o what is disability?

-Absolutely convinced that we do not understand what disability is; if we did understand what it was we wouldn't have the prejudices that we have and would not need to have passed legislation like the ADA.

-One of the notions that I have come up with is that the way to solve the problems of civil rights is to have a growing and expanding economy, one that produces job opportunities for everybody, and to have certain legislation to encourage people to open those opportunities where they otherwise might not do that.

History and Historicity

History - set of events that represent my biography, or my story, what happened to me -- Stanford declined, Wharton accepted, couldn't get a job, then I did.

Historicity - the story you make up about the events, the interpretation you make about what happened. It is the story that lets you decide to go forward or fall back; it is the story from which you generate the possibilities of the future. It is the story that allows you to do something different than someone else that has the same history.

Now, it is not always easy to generate this historicity in a country that is always telling you that because you are blind you can't -- can't ride in a taxi, can't sit here. But in order to keep moving forward and being effective in life you need to generate a historicity that is different than the history.

ADVICE:

To the disabled
To employers

Differentiate the offer that you are, distinguish your unusual competences.

Disability does not equal inability.

Advice: What are the domains of action on this job? What do we really need? Where are the limitations a problem? Where are they not? And, what are the unusual competences that a person might have that has some limitations in the physical domain? Answers to these questions better prepare you to get down to the business of business.

ADA:

Encouragement: to do what is right. Hire the disabled, but only if they are qualified -- Only hire people who are disabled if it makes good business sense.

Conscience: The real value of ADA is that it provides a little bit of conscience for people; it encourages us to look behind our automatic negative prejudices about people who are disabled.

RUSSELL G. REDENBAUGH

Russell G. Redenbaugh, Commissioner on the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, says:

"The US is now in the middle of an industrial crisis -- major established companies are losing market share, and employment base, and resources, assets and profitability are shrinking.

As the economy contracts, job opportunities and productivity diminish. In this situation it does not matter what kind of affirmative action programs and legislation such as ADA are implemented, these provide tickets to a train that is not moving.

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is increasingly aware that progress in the areas of social, economic, and civil rights can only be achieved if we are experiencing a healthy and growing economy. As a result, economic expansion must remain an important national objective."

Mr. Redenbaugh is committed to increasing economic opportunities in this country. As a Commissioner on the US Commission on Civil Rights, he promotes the adoption of policies, legislation and attitudes that will encourage people to open opportunities for the economically and otherwise disabled citizens of our country.

In addition, and more importantly, he works to insure that we have a strong, robust and growing economy. History shows that only through the expansion of the economy can each generation be advantaged able to move from poverty to prosperity.

In addition to his position on the US Commission on Civil Rights, Mr. Redenbaugh is Partner and Director of Cooke & Bieler, Inc., an investment counsel firm in Philadelphia, and the Chairman and CEO of Action Technologies, Inc., a company that develops technologies to support coordination of work in the office.

Mr. Redenbaugh was born and raised in Salt Lake City where he attended the University of Utah, magna cum laude. He attended the Wharton School of Business and has authored numerous articles on the topics of money, financial instruments, production of income, and language.

Mr. Redenbaugh was blinded and lost most of hands at age 17.