



# How My Disabilities Make Me A Better Developer

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**bounteous**

# BOUNTEOUS?

## 20+ years of experience

**Award winning design team** with a collaborative design approach and integrated Agile process

**Deep content management** and Adobe platform expertise delivers solutions marketers love

Extensive **healthcare and regulated** industry experience

Collaborative partner with a strong, healthy culture, that has yielded exceptionally **high client and employee satisfaction**



acquia partner of the year  
super smart people

## WHAT IS THIS TALK?

- **My experience with disability.**
- **“Nothing about us without us”**
- **This is emotional and personal.**
- **This is how I survive.**

Fredric Mitchell -  
This is not a call for pity  
I encourage questions  
this is scary - what is my future



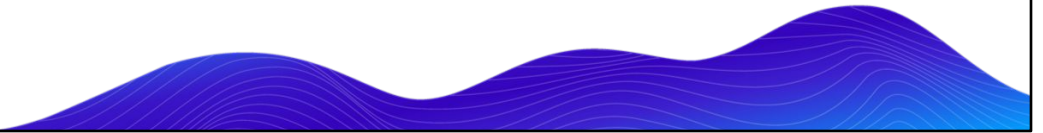
**Matthew Ramir**  
Senior Web Developer

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@crasx

- Started doing Drupal in 2012 during college
- Computer Science Major, Gender Studies Minor
- Enjoy performance optimization and long running queries on the beach
- Golfer, athlete, outdoorsman
- Got the name crasX because of the number of times I crashed my bike
- Funny, good looking

**DISABLED.**



I am also disabled

## **DISABLED?**

A physical or mental condition that limits a person's movements, senses, or activities.

I am a respected senior developer.  
What is disability?

## DISABLED?



Am I disabled if I can do these things?

left video - me golfing - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MWEjWOaLWug>

right video - me bowling -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RpnBoIOwWA>

## CEREBRAL PALSY (CP)

Cerebral palsy is a group of disorders that affect a person's ability to move and maintain balance and posture

### **Spastic Hemiplegia**

- Right side of my body
- Super toned muscles

### **Dystonia**

- Involuntary muscle contractions
- Difficulty with speaking and swallowing

### **Ataxia**

- Balance and Coordination
- Fine motor control

tone=constant state of contraction



**DISABLED.**

Sometimes I am, sometimes I am not  
Socially disabled  
Medically disabled  
Here are how these things affect me.

## HOME IMPROVEMENT



- My dad taught me to use tools
-

## HOME IMPROVEMENT

It feels impossible at times



With the right tools, it doesn't have to be.

- I would drop this nail 5 times
- I would hit my fingers
- Switching hands is not an option (unless I get a hammer helmet?)

## BASIC TASKS

Life requires perseverance



With the right help, I can keep up.

- time it takes to tie shoes
- tying in 6 flags
- being nervous makes things difficult
- This is the case in almost everything I can do
- People can help
- Shoe comes untied - I am too scared of falling behind
-

## INDEPENDENT LIVING

- Finally got my first flat tire!
- Not the most ideal situation, but I had a friend to help.
- A man came to offer help.
- He did the opposite of help.
- I have proved to myself that I can do (almost) anything.

- move to denver
- got a flat tire on way home from golf expo
- Not ideal place, near old college, familiar with area
- I want to change this tire to prove I will be ok in colorado
- Homeless man offers to help, I try to explain why I don't want help
-

# I AM LOUDER THAN A BOMB.



## The Largest Youth Poetry Festival In The World

LTAB is an annual event hosting over 500 youth poets for 5 weeks of Olympic-style poetry bouts, workshops, and special events. Students rep schools and community groups all throughout the Chicago area. They perform original solo and group poems in a tournament-style competition. Louder Than A Bomb is currently hosted in over 13 other cities across the U.S. by partner organizations.

my disability isnt fair but i can do anything, am I disabled?

[ performing poem ] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hlll31VxWC0>

**THERE IS NO MAN PAGE ON DISABILITY.**

is my experience valid?  
am I allowed to ask for help?  
I can do anything

**I CAN'T DO EVERYTHING.**

what happens when someone who doesn't let anything stop him is unable to do somethings  
- I can't always keep up



## I FIGHT DEPRESSION DAILY

- **Being disabled sucks.**
- **“When people make fun of me I can’t concentrate”**
- **Sometimes I need to escape my reality.**

I wouldn't wish it on my worst enemy  
quote from childhood - depression  
more debilitating than my cp

Sept 2018

- **Something simple can change your entire world.**
- **I often think about what would happen to others if I were gone.**
- **I was jealous.**

Aunt suicide, talk about it, then show bullet points

June 2019

**I was committed to a psychiatric unit.**



I was seeking help

I was honest, and at the end of my sanity

I was in for a week

It was one of the worst times of my life. I felt like i was captive

i'm glad it happened

**THERE IS NO MAN PAGE ON DEPRESSION.**

is my experience valid?  
am I allowed to ask for help?

## LESSONS

Things I wish I could tell a younger me

- It doesn't get easier, I find ways to manage it.
- You can't be perfect, and that is ok.
- Every obstacle is a chance to learn.
- The most important lesson you will learn is how to ask for help.
- It is important to seek balance.

I work harder to compensate for my disability.

## SUPPORT SYSTEMS

I moved 1000 miles away from home during COVID-19

- Therapist
- Family and Friends
- Doctors and Medicine
- Myself

be honest with how you are feeling

there is always something that can help you

## HOW DO MY DISABILITIES MAKE ME A BETTER DEVELOPER?

- **Cerebral Palsy** and **Depression** force me to problem solve on a daily basis.
- They teach me compassion and patience.
- They give me a different perspective.

by better, I mean “internally better”

If I were to hate problem solving, I would hate my life.  
this does not mean I am smart, it just means I practice  
these are important qualities in leadership.