

In his insightful new memoir, *Able-Bodied like Me*, Matt Glowacki, disability advocate and author, chronicles the changing attitudes in our society—and in himself—about what it means to be disabled.

Matt writes about what it was like growing up in the 1970s without legs. He examines how attitudes have evolved in the past few decades but also lists the major assumptions people still tend to make about disabled people.

He didn't want to be an "inspiration" to people without impairments or a convenient way for others to signal their own virtue. Glowacki wanted simply to live his life, and he clearly explains how harmful certain remarks and interactions can be for people in the disabled community.

The book explores the term "disabled" and helps to explain Matt's changing relationship with this loaded term. He stresses the work still to be done by lawmakers, advocates, and everyday people, and explains the importance of inclusion and diversity in every aspect of modern society.

Glowacki is the founder of Myriad Communications, an organization that develops interactive programs to expose people to different viewpoints. He has spent the last twenty years visiting college campuses to talk about his life's story and is currently one of the most sought after speakers in the country.

Thoughtful Comments About the Book:

The book is eye opening in that no matter how hard one tries, it is difficult to understand the reality in someone else's life, but you made it real and gave me the possibility of feeling empathy and understanding. I was moved by your honesty and wisdom. You discovered that you were human and compassionate, and your experience also gave you humility. None of us has all the answers but together, if we care, we can find our way.

Lee Gardenswartz, Ph.D.
Partner at Emotional Intelligence and Diversity Institute

With this book, veteran speaker and activist Matt Glowacki has achieved something quite remarkable: a work that is simultaneously warm and approachable on the one hand, and bracing and challenging on the other. Combining wit, candor, and insight, he invites readers not only to rethink their ideas about disability, but also their own embodied relationship with the world. I recommend it heartily.

John Corvino, Ph.D.
Professor of Philosophy and Dean of the Irvin D. Reid Honors College
Wayne State University

This is a book that will turn the world upside-down for the serious reader who is not afraid to follow Matt on this quest for self and transactional knowledge. He untangles the psychological interplay of perception, expectation and outcomes, any reader would be wise to ride along with him as he takes us on this unblinking journey of self-discovery and public engagement.

Jeff Moyer
Author, President, Music from the Heart



MattGlowacki.com

DISABILITY IDENTITY

"The Largest Hidden and Intersectional Unrepresented Culture on Your Campus!"

If retention is important to the stakeholders in your institution, why not co-sponsor an equity outreach event which inclusively addresses students with disabilities?



You Need to Know This!

- 1 in 3 incoming Freshmen have hidden disabilities such as Anxiety, Depression, PTS, or a diagnosed/undiagnosed disability. - 2018 Study from Columbia University, NYC*
- 1 in 4 self-identify as having a physical disability that impacts their major life activities. - 2018 Centers for Disease Control**

* <https://consumer.healthday.com/mental-health-information-25/depression-news-176/1-in-3-college-freshmen-faces-mental-health-woes-737653.html>
 ** <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2018/p0816-disability.html>

MattGlowacki.com

Targeted Tabling Promotion "Come Out as Disabled"



Matt Glowacki developed the Come Out as Disabled Tenting/Tabling activity and the "Come Out as Disabled" Facebook page for your campus to target and make connections to students with hidden and apparent disabilities.

Reaching these students can be difficult because of the stigma surrounding disability and the personal privacy issues that both hinder and stifle the conversations necessary to offer the best assistance to them.

This event gives students a chance to engage in person and/or online in a supportive community. Both platforms encourage participants to describe how discrimination impacts them and to share their successful self-advocacy outcomes.

Upon observing the tent or table top display, students will:

- Self-select based on disabled branded imaging around the tent and have a safe conversation about the impact of disability on their life.
- Identify with a credible person who can understand, empathize and direct them to the campus offices and services that can best accommodate their needs.
- Build excitement and receive promotional information about the accompanying multicultural identity event, "Nurture Your Nature."

"Why do you say 'Come Out as Disabled'?"

- Historically, members of marginalized groups have a real concern about simply claiming or acknowledging their true identity publicly because it can put their lives, health, and societal status at risk.
- The urgency of those threats looks different depending on which group a person is a member of. But the dangers of specific, personal, and institutional discrimination directed towards oppressed minorities manifests itself as real fear for the disabled, and this influences them to inauthentically cover, pass, and misrepresent their identity to survive.
- People with disabilities still find benefits in keeping the impacts of their disabilities hidden in "closets": not able to explain to an able-bodied person exactly where it hurts because they won't be believed; not allowed to tell the truth about why they aren't participating because they don't want other people to feel bad about having to leave them out; or simply not attempting to participate because they don't want to be perceived as "less than" one more time.

Come Out as Disabled is a space where people can empathize and support one another, while increasing the awareness of what discrimination exists towards the disabled beyond physical accessibility.

Conversation Starter: What excuses have you used, so that you didn't have to self-disclose your disability?

That's Fine-Don't Worry About Me-I'll Catch Up-I Forgot-I'll Wait-You Go On-I Wouldn't Like It-That's OK-Maybe I'll Try-Someday I'll Own One-That's on My List to Try One Day-Oh Sorry-I'm Artsy Not Sportsy-You Don't Want Me on Your Team-Next Time-I'm a Better Cheerleader Anyway-Let Me Take the Picture-I Don't Like Those-I Don't Have Money For It-I Have to Finish Painting-It's OK-Don't Worry About Me-I Probably Shouldn't-I'm Really Tired-I'm Just Too Busy-I am Wiped Out-I Have House-Work-My Family Needs Me at Home...



"Come Out as Disabled" is a safe space where people can claim their disability identity and talk about what discrimination looks like to them.

Come Out by doing these three things in a group post:

1. Share your name and describe your disability.
2. Reveal a time when you made up an excuse, chose not to do something, or allowed yourself to be discriminated against, just so you didn't have to explain the intimate nature of your disability to someone.
3. Talk about how it felt. If you wanted to advocate for yourself in that situation next time, what would that look like?

Inclusive Identity Event "Nurture Your Nature"



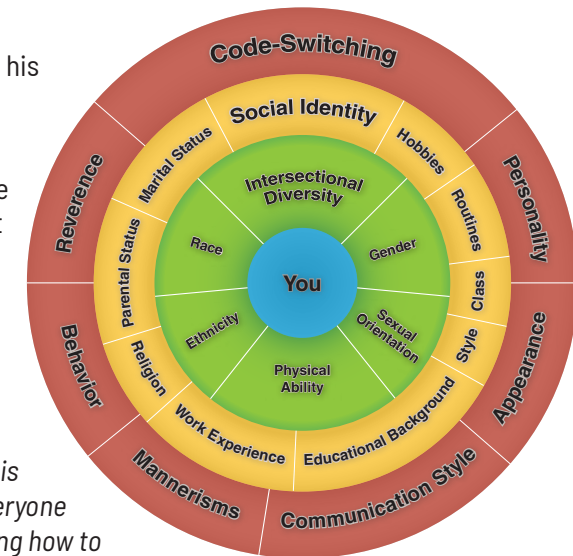
Matt's "Nurture Your Nature" presentation is an inclusive identity event that welcomes everyone and helps them better understand who they are, why they are, and what they want to be. His revolutionary approach to storytelling conceptualizes difference into common familiar struggles and builds empathy amongst different groups of people.

Through guiding interactions between audience members, Matt gives voice to the collective experience of the group. He utilizes that experience to broaden the conversation to include perspectives beyond disability, while creating a safe space where everyone can feel like they belong.

To help his audiences with the exploration into their own identities, Matt developed his Identity Circle model*.

Through the visualization of ones' Intersectional Diversity, Social Identity, and Code-Switching presentation, the model illustrates how the different groups people are inherently members of, choose to be involved with, and how individuals present themselves in different environments all contribute to how someone sees themselves and is seen by others.

The most important take away from the model is: "Your identity is simply the story you tell yourself about yourself."



"Matt worked with our Emerging Leaders again this year. His 'Nurture Your Nature' training helped everyone better understand their own identity while teaching how to empathize with people based on what they might be going through. He encouraged our students to grow from the feelings of uncomfortability to empowerment."
- Tiffany Schmidt, Coordinator Residential Co-curricular Programs & Activities, The University of Akron

Our student government brought Matt in for Social Justice Week. Our students enjoyed him breaking down stigmas about different social justice topics, the group was able to talk about ability & oppression, and they all had a few laughs while reflecting on their personal experiences and what they were learning. I highly recommend Matt Glowacki!
- Rachael Amick, Area Coordinator, UW Milwaukee

In his discussion of "Nature vs. Nurture," let Matt's enthusiasm for life and his resilience to every day issues empower each individual on your team toward giving and being their best in any situation, in a spirit of genuine inclusiveness. I know my world is a better place since I learned I am sharing it with Matt.

- Tina Vires, Director of Disability Services, Georgia State University

Matt, you were awesome to hear. Your Diversity event set a campus attendance record for us. Everyone really enjoyed your honesty as you shared your stories, while truly making about the people in the audience. We will keep you in the loop for next year!

- Elonda Ervin, Executive Director of Multicultural Services and Programs, Indiana State University

Matt was our Keynote speaker for our Florida Higher Education and Disability Networking Conference this year. Matt's use of humor was always present as he explained the absurdity as he shared his personal experiences of social injustice. He educated and inspired us talk about abilities and intersectionality of identity and how we can be aware of our own in our diverse community.

- Michelle Shaw, M.Ed., Director of Student Accessibility Services, FAU

* Inspired from Diverse Teams at Work, Gardenswartz & Rowe (2nd Edition, SHRM, 2003).