

POSSIBILITIES!

By Alex Kimmel

Ahh... POSSIBILITIES!!



Outline of our time together:

1. Self-Determination overview
2. Dig into audio quotes from the “Possibilities!” video
3. Possibilities! Video from Michigan Developmental Disability Institute
4. Time for reflection

Because I like to really think of how to best answer your questions. Instead of question and answer session, I ask you to please email me at alex.kimmel@hotmail.com.

Note before starting:

- Michigan Developmental Disability Institute (MI-DDI) created the “Possibilities” video project. *“The purpose of the Possibilities series is to present a vision of how individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities and their families can lead the lives that they wish to lead, without barriers and in the direction they truly intend to go.”*
- (<https://ddi.wayne.edu/possibilities>).



I. Self-Determination Overview

- Wehmeyer and Field (2007) state that “Self-determination generally refers to having the

Self-Deter

STOP!

Let's listen
to Ed Kiefer
first.....

○ Wehm

ving the

- Ed Kiefer is the Training Supervisor at Macomb Oakland Regional Center and their Center for Positive Living Supports. Ed and I both really enjoy the philosophy of the Culture of Gentleness.

“Safe and Loved”

“People want to feel safe, and they want to feel valued. Everything else comes second.”

Ed Kiefer

“Safe and Loved”



- In Culture of Gentleness, the ultimate goal is all about love.
- The purpose is to build safe, loving relationships where all feel valued

“Safe and Loved”

- Every person has a different idea of what it takes to be safe, loved, loving and engaged. This is the foundation of a Culture of Gentleness (or COG)
- A big component to how we move toward these positive places is how we are approached.
- From the start it is about **investing time in the relationship**

“Safe and Loved”

- An underlying pre-requisite for me feeling safe and doing my best is that there is intentional and frequent verbal and non-verbal **positive interactions**.
- Positiveness to me is not just the obvious of something that is good.

POSITIVENESS

“Safe and Loved”

- Anything that is not overtly and obviously positive is negative, even what most people would term as neutral.
- People need to see that neutral interactions are almost more in the negative column as far as I perceive it.
- More people knowing that means that I might have less anxiety and extend where I feel safe.

“Safe and Loved”

- My way of showing interest may not look like your way of showing interest.
- Please do not demand eye gaze. I can communicate better if my neurotransmitters focus on your verbal message.



“Safe and Loved”

- Regarding non-verbal communication, for some people it has no additional information than their words.

“Safe and Loved”

- In others, the body language is so loud that I do not hear words at all.



“Safe and Loved”

- Top of the list for me is **keeping positive**: to keep me having hope and help me to remain optimistic. This is helpful to let my anxiety keep submerged.



“Safe and Loved”

- What I would want to get across is telling that whenever I talk I would be taking a risk because too often I am ignored. The thing that makes it risky is the unknown outcome

“Safe and Loved”

- Good that you have the understanding that having both **good follow through** and the respect to make sure that I am **kept informed** go long way to relieving my anxiety

“Safe and Loved”



- Think the need to have someone I trust alongside me helps me feel safe and less anxious and **hopeful** that I won't be rejected.

“Safe and Loved”

- The feeling I am safe gets changed all the time with relationship to my anxiety. Some days having ability in people who make it not impossible to have hope and then...
- ... there are cancelled times that we have when I **need certainty** and **words of assurance that I should be hopeful.**

“Safe and Loved”

Get Your Worksheet Out

My “safe and loved” top 5”

1. positive interactions
2. Optimism
3. Keep promises
4. Keep me informed if schedule changes
5. Words of assurance that I can be hopeful

What are your “safe and loved” top five? Take a minute to think about what you would want and put on your **worksheet**. You have 1 minute. If you don't finish, that's ok. Go ahead and start!



Times up!



Self-Determination

- Self-Determination is about personalized needs, NOT “Special Needs”



○ Here is a quote to transition us from “safe and loved” to “empowered”:

Go and love someone
exactly as they are.
And then watch how
quickly they transform
into the greatest, truest
version of themselves.
When one feels seen and
appreciated in their own
essence, one is instantly
empowered.

~wes angelozzi~

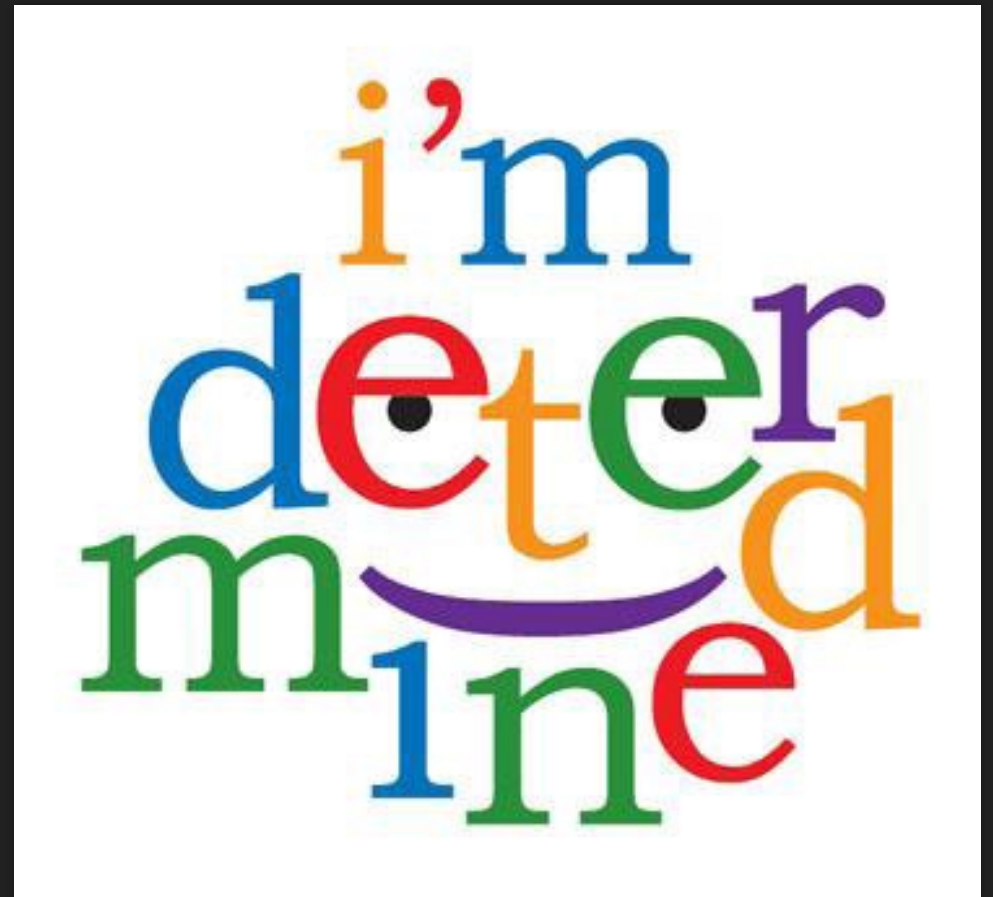
Self-Determination concepts

*“Self Determination is really an inalienable right that all have, **with or without disabilities**, to have control on how they spend their life.”*

Alex Kimmel

Self-Determination concepts

- There is a website that does a good job of promoting self-determination at www.imdetermined.org





Factors that influence long-term social/emotional competence make up the [core components](#) of self-determination. The I'm Determined Project bases tools, materials, and training opportunities around these core components.

Self-Determination concepts



- CHOICE MAKING: The skill of making a choice between two known options
- DECISION MAKING: the skill of choosing among more than two known options
- PROBLEM SOLVING: The skill used when a solution is not readily known; decision making and choice making are part of the process

SOURCE: www.imdetermined.org

Self-Determination concepts



- **GOAL SETTING AND ATTAINMENT:** The skill of determining how you are going to accomplish what you want (setting the goal, plan for implementation and measuring success)
- **SELF-REGULATION:** This includes self-observation, self-evaluation, self-reinforcement
- **SELF-INSTRUCTION:** This includes skills that assist in using their own prompts for solving problems

SOURCE: www.imdetermined.org

Self-Determination concepts



- SELF-ADVOCACY: The skills necessary to be able to stand up for oneself
- INTERNAL LOCUS OF CONTROL: The belief that one has control over outcomes that are important to life
- SELF-EFFICACY: The conviction that one can successfully execute the behavior required to produce a given outcome

SOURCE: www.imdetermined.org

Self-Determination concepts



- EFFICACY EXPECTATIONS: The belief that if a specific behavior is performed, it will lead to anticipated outcomes
- SELF-AWARENESS AND SELF-KNOWLEDGE: The skills and knowing one's own strengths, weaknesses, abilities and limitations AND knowing how to use these attributes to beneficially influence one's own life

SOURCE: www.imdetermined.org

Self-Determination concepts

- Multiple research studies find that a person's self-determination status predicts higher quality of life.
- *(A National Gateway to Self-Determination funded by the US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Developmental Disabilities)*

Self-Determination concepts

- *“Despite the clear benefits of self-determination, Landmark and Zhang, (2006) found that parents of children with disabilities are less likely to teach their children self-determination skills than are the parents of children who do not have disabilities.*

Self-Determination concepts

- *Parents of children with disabilities provide fewer opportunities for their children to make choices and decisions, to engage in trial and error activities, and to set and work on personal goals" (Landmark & Zhang, 2006)*

NOTE TO AUTHORITY FIGURES:

- “Take it or leave it” is not really a choice opportunity.
- Neither is “Like it or lump it”
- Or “ My way or the highway.”



Self-Determination concepts

- I was asked “What opportunities did you have growing up that you feel helped you to gain confidence of being self determined? “
- I thought of me walking around by myself and my dog, Buddy.

Self-Determination concepts

- I feel walking around helped me to gain of being self determined. Taking Buddy for a walk out. I know that when a vehicle drives by, I move into the neighbor's yard.

Self-Determination concepts

- Taking Buddy for a walk makes me feel self-determined because I am being responsible to keep Buddy safe.

Self-Determination concepts

Self-determination \neq independence

Self-Determination concepts

○ Steven Covey quote
from “7 Habits of Highly
Effective People”

“Life is, by nature, highly interdependent. To try to achieve maximum effectiveness through independence is like trying to play tennis with a golf club”

Self-Determination concepts

- My mom and I have work sessions almost every day where we sit together at the laptop. It is an intentional way for me to take care of what I want in my day, my week and my life.
- Here is an example of a recent work session where I worked with my mom to figure out a solution to a problem together.

Self-Determination concepts

- Before I went for a walk, I forgot to check the weather temperature, and I forgot to wear a jacket, and I was cold. I was uncomfortable without a jacket. I was walking with Buddy without a jacket, and I was so worried about my coat.
- Coat, systems, checking temperature: that is my thought of independence and interdependence.

Self-Determination concepts

- So I am wanting you to learn about movement lapses I experience. I have the cognition to be aware of what is needed in a certain circumstance. I cannot always make my body respond.

Self-Determination concepts

- These lapses are classified as involuntary. This is where I might do something I might not want to or not the thing I wish to.

Self-Determination concepts

- I have sometimes raised my hand at a meeting and not really wished to volunteer (but was unable to lower my hand). At other times I am unable to initiate a motion.

Self-Determination concepts

- This can be alleviated through a set of asking me my plan of intent, like those work sessions.
- Understand that my needs are physical, not cognitive
- Not being able to do these things does NOT make me unintelligent.

Self-Determination concepts

○ Here is the routine we figured out together:

“jacket routine”

1. Check the temperature on my phone
2. 50 to 60 degrees can be a hoody or light jacket or raincoat.
3. Lower than 50 degrees is my winter coat
4. Lower than 40 degrees also wear hat and gloves

- Having steps written out vs spoken directions helps with anxiety

Self-Determination concepts

○ My mom pointed out to me that this was another EXCELLENT example of independence/interdependence. I identified an area that needed some discussion (independence) and worked **together** for a solution (interdependence) that allows me to carry out my desired actions solo (independence).

Self-Determination concepts

- This strategy of brainstorming together how to put systems and routines into place reflects another Steven Covey quote from “7 Habits of Highly Effective People”:

*“**Dependent** people need others to get what they want. **Independent** people can get what they want through their own effort. **Interdependent** people combine their own efforts with the efforts of others to achieve their greatest success.”*

“Not looking for a cure”

*“I don’t think we were ever looking for a cure,
because Alex is Alex is Alex.”*

Beth Kimmel, mom

“Not looking for a cure”



- Accept the things I cannot change” is a line from the Serenity Prayer.
- This is the hardest part for me since there is so much that I would want to change.



○ For example, it is hard to be this good looking AND intelligent.

○ LOL

“Not looking for a cure”

- But seriously, The most significant difficulty I experience is that I am judged and dismissed socially amongst peers all the time and rarely do people take the time to **s l o w d o w n** to include me and accept me as the smart, good looking, funny guy that I am.

“Not looking for a cure”

- Courage is a balance to acceptance. Acceptance without courage leads to a stalled life. Courage without acceptance often is done without a purpose.
- For any forward motion or accomplishment, there must be risk involved. This requires courage to go beyond our current circumstances.

“Not looking for a cure”

- I have had great success in meeting past challenges and have the confidence that I have the skills and resources to keep on that path.
- Those resources include a strong sense of who I am in my family and in my faith. I have been raised with enough confidence that I am ready to risk and move beyond my current comfort zone.

“Not looking for a cure”

- One way you can easily convey to others who you are is in a tool called a “One Page Profile” .

“Not looking for a cure”

- *“We believe that one-page profiles are the foundation of personalization, and can lead to positive change for people, whatever their age or circumstances. They provide us with an at-a-glance way of knowing what really matters to people, that can be taken with them as they move through services and come into contact with people.”*

(Source: HSAOnlineLearning.org.)



“Not looking for a cure”

My one-page profile includes:

- What people appreciate about me
- What is important to me
- How to support me



“Not looking for a cure”

- WHAT PEOPLE APPRECIATE ABOUT ME:



- What I have working for me is patience and humor and determination
- Champion, dynamic and passionate speaker, thought provoking, mellow voice
- You can count on me

“Not looking for a cure”

○ WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO ME:



- Playing games, and talking with my friends
- Go to the movies and the zoo with my friends.
- Taking care of the pets and family
- Having a schedule and doing things by and for myself are important
- Being respected
- My faith

“Not looking for a cure”

- Please do not call what I find important or enjoyable a “special interest”
- I am not certain I would call it a “special” interest, because many people have special intense interests



“Not looking for a cure”

HOW TO SUPPORT ME:



- Being positive helps
- Team of people who care about me, treating like family
- Schedules and lists, lazy lion days, and reminders that keep me safe

A close-up photograph of a lion resting its head on a wooden log. The lion has a thick, golden-brown mane and is looking slightly to the left. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting a natural habitat. Several thought bubbles of various colors are overlaid on the image, each containing a text prompt.

Relaxing

**Comfortable
Clothes**

**More
sleep**

**No
Sudden
Moves**

**No
Interruptions**

Take a rest

“Not looking for a cure”

Get Your Worksheet Out



Your turn. How do you feel appreciated? What is important to you? How do you want to be supported? Find the section on your **worksheet** to write in a couple of thoughts for each section. It is ok if you do not finish. You will have 2 minutes. Go ahead and start!



Times up!



“If we could make this “thing” easier, life would be easier”



“If we could make this “thing” easier, life would be easier”

○ **Insecurity** paralyses me and certainty frees me.

“If we could make this “thing” easier, life would be easier”

- I have always had difficulty in my **sensory overload** due to auditory input. Sensory/auditory being sudden or loud was always perceived as a negative to me and caused great stress and anxiety caused by sound.

“If we could make this “thing” easier, life would be easier”

- Another struggle is in having difficulty in spontaneous spoken communication due to a **chaotic nervous system**.

“If we could make this “thing” easier, life would be easier”

Lifestyle includes:

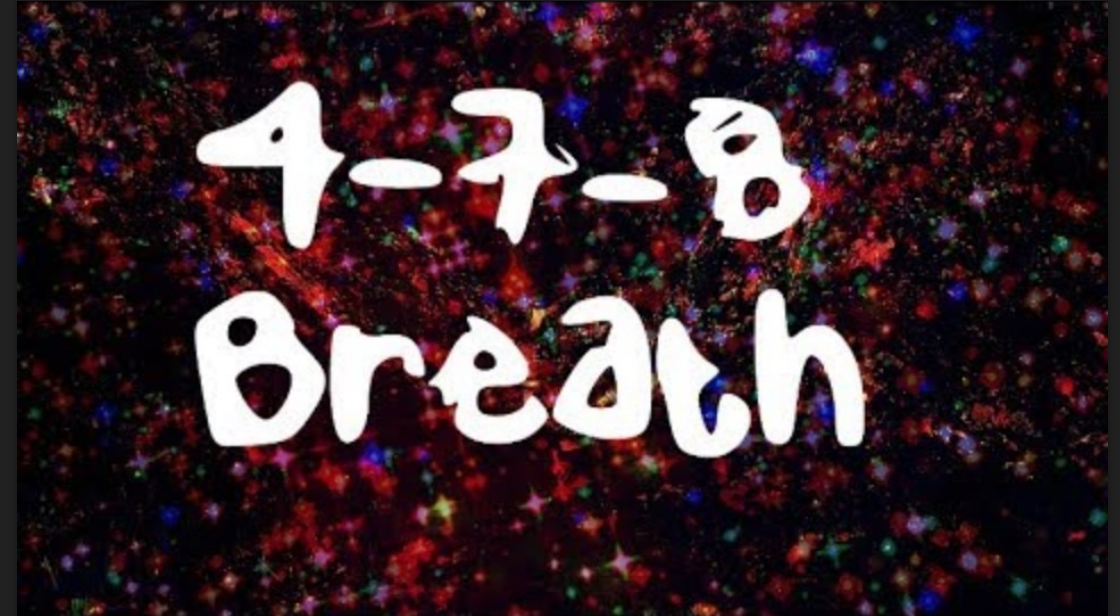
- removal of most carbs and grains
- Good amount of all kinds of vegetables and fruit
- Use of supplements
- Use of exercise

Positive results:

Feeling of anxiety lessened
More energy
Improved communication

“If we could make this “thing” easier, life would be easier”

- To release anxiety and stress, I do deep breathing. Please join me in this video.



“If we could make this “thing” easier, life would be easier”

○ Movement is another key way that I feel anxiety lessen

“If we could make this “thing” easier, life would be easier”

- Having visual tools like schedules and lists **helps** me in a lot of ways, too.
- **Lowers my anxiety** to see what and when I am doing something
- Makes **certain** that my transportation and staff are lined up
- Helps me see that all my goals are being addressed
- Helps me be more independent

“If we could make this “thing” easier, life would be easier”

Having lists helps me in a lot of ways

- Once I am taught, I am able to be more independent when I just follow a list
- It helps **lower anxiety** to know that I can just look at the list if I forget
- By using a similar list styles, learning new tasks seems easier and it **gives me confidence**

Moving from Easier to Possible.....

- Priming my health, **address my uncertainty** and **using lists and routines** helps me move forward.

“Possibilities if given the opportunity to make decisions”

“He’s someone who helps educate/inspire about the possibilities that people can have if given some opportunities to make some of those decisions.”

Ed Kiefer

“Possibilities if given the opportunity to make decisions”

- When I was younger, what my day looked like had changes based on my mom’s schedule and I wanted to change that to being based on my desires instead.
- The thing that I got mad about if there was change to the schedule I did not like that I felt I didn’t have right, and that others thought what they said was the important thought.

“Possibilities if given the opportunity to make decisions”

- What I worked on was having the time that I have doing freedom to my having my own schedule.
- Schedules should be set based on what the individual asks for not what is left over from those that give support.

“Possibilities if given the opportunity to make decisions”

- I have different routines that my family and staff have helped me create. These routines provide the opportunity for me to be in charge of my schedule.

“Possibilities if given the opportunity to make decisions”

- Some of the routines I have include:

- Responding to facebook and emails
- Checking weekly ads for meat that is on sale
- Laundry , dryer and other home chores
- Prepping before giving a presentation

“Possibilities if given the opportunity to make decisions”

- Doing something useful helps me for feel hopeful of change.

“Alex contributes ...”

“Alex contributes ...”

- The core value of responsibility respects individuals with disabilities having the responsibility as well as the capacity to be making contributions to the communities where they live.

Worship assistant



“Alex contributes ...”

- The ways that this has shown to be evidenced currently in my giving is at my church and with animal shelters.

“Alex contributes ...”

- I belong to the Journey Lutheran Choir.
- I am a member of the Journey Lutheran Bell ringers and have been for over 5 years.



“Alex contributes ...”

- The right to belong is innate to respecting that all are worth the chance to be included.

“Alex contributes ...”

- I want you to gain an understanding that having a disability in and of itself has no bearing on how successful and fulfilling life can be.

“Desire to help...blessed to be called”

“I remember him telling me that he believes that he is blessed to be called a person with autism because he thought there were those in the autism community who needed to hear what he had to say.”

Beth Kimmel, mom

“Desire to help...blessed to be called”

Only three things in life matter. God has a purpose for all of the world. Living that captures that purpose in all that you do is the meaning of life. Helping others through their quest only gives your purpose more traction. Third, do all things pleasing to God and God will pour out his blessing

“Desire to help...blessed to be called”

- I have 100% conviction that my purpose in life is to bring hope and healing to those that are on the outskirts of mainstream society.

“Desire to help...blessed to be called”

- I have a chance to live my dream of bringing words of hope to those society forgets to take seriously to have them get stoked to get self determined life.

“Desire to help...blessed to be called”

- One of the ways to see the caliber of a person's character is to observe how they act, interact and don't act when they don't think anyone is watching them.

“Desire to help...blessed to be called”

- Those of us with character and vision for the future have a responsibility of recruiting and leading. This involves taking risks, taking a stand, taking others and taking the lead on edging towards progress.
- Not acting on social injustice is tantamount to endorsing them.



“Desire to help...blessed to be called”

- Think I have the best help that you **help with my fear** that I am not worthy
- Great thinking that I make a small difference in the world.

“What it is we all need”

“He’s trying to help others understand what it is we all need and he’s trying to help others understand it.”



Ed Kiefer

“What it is we all need”

- A few years back, I asked an English class I was in to feel free to ask any questions they wanted to of me, so as to demystify the “differences” and really highlight the similarities.

Here are some of their questions and my responses.

“What it is we all need”

- *Why do you like to read the dictionary?*
- Because it is comforting to know that somewhere all that I am thinking is only a page away from being in my mouth and to your ears.

“What it is we all need”

○ Will you be able to have a social life with regular people?

○ No, only those with constipation.

“What it is we all need”

○ Seriously, though, I hope that someday soon all will be considered regular.

I do not consider myself irregular except when I eat too much corn.

“What it is we all need”

- SERIOUSLY, seriously, I ask you to view me as the peer that I am. Talk about asking nice me to parties, dances, the movies, games or lunch.
- I am a pretty funny guy. You really are missing out if you take only “regular” people.

“What it is we all need”

- Noam Shpancer, Ph.D. wrote “The Two Things We All Want and Need Most” in Psychology Today June 11, 2018

“What are our deepest psychological needs? Later in adulthood, if all works well, one may get to be both genuinely connected (belonging somewhere) and confidently autonomous (being someone).

This, I'd argue, is what our psychology is ultimately after.”

“What it is we all need”

- Friendships, relationships and **community belonging** are critical aspects, if not the most universally valued condition, of quality of life.
- National Core Indicators
- July 2015

“What it is we all need”

- Some say quality of life is similar to happiness
- Think that I can have happiness for others while being wistful.
- Actually, no; happiness is having the strength to find contentment through all circumstances.

“What it is we all need”

- That longing to fit in and belong that you all have is the same for me.
- How can you get to know me if you don't spend time with me?

“What it is we all need”

- In high school, I recall a poem I read and how it made me feel. I was thinking that I was born here and over and over I feel like a foreigner. Every minute of every day I am reminded that I am not fitting in the mold.
- When I hear an accent it is interesting and beautiful so I turn facing the fellow foreigner and be not alone.

“What it is we all need”

- The American Dream is dreamt differently by different dreamers. I interviewed my grandmother to learn of her dream. Marilyn thinks that having formed such loving and safe relationships in her home, school, church and neighborhood while growing up allowed her the confidence to follow her dreams.

“What it is we all need”

○ For fulfilling of others' American Dream, Marilyn prescribes the following:

- Have a dream or a goal
- Work at it
- Don't expect things to be handed to you.
- Be patient!
- Be satisfied
- Give back what you have been given, beyond yourself and your family

Possibilities! Video



- Thank you, Wayne State University, Michigan Developmental Disabilities Institute and the Pure Michigan crew for making this video of Possibilities!

Possibilities!

Get Your Worksheet Out

Reflect individually to the following questions:

1. What is a concept that was reinforced or challenged today?
2. What are universal goals for quality of life?
3. What core components of self-determination did you see reflected in the video?
4. How does your life and/or the life of someone you support reflect self-determination?
5. What resources and supports do you need to accomplish your goals?
6. What resources and supports could you provide to another to help them accomplish their goals?

You will have 5 minutes. Go ahead and start



Time's up!



“Don’t put limits on your dreams or the dreams of others”

- Please commit yourselves to be as accepting real ways to all passengers placed in your path.

“Don’t put limits on your dreams or the dreams of others”

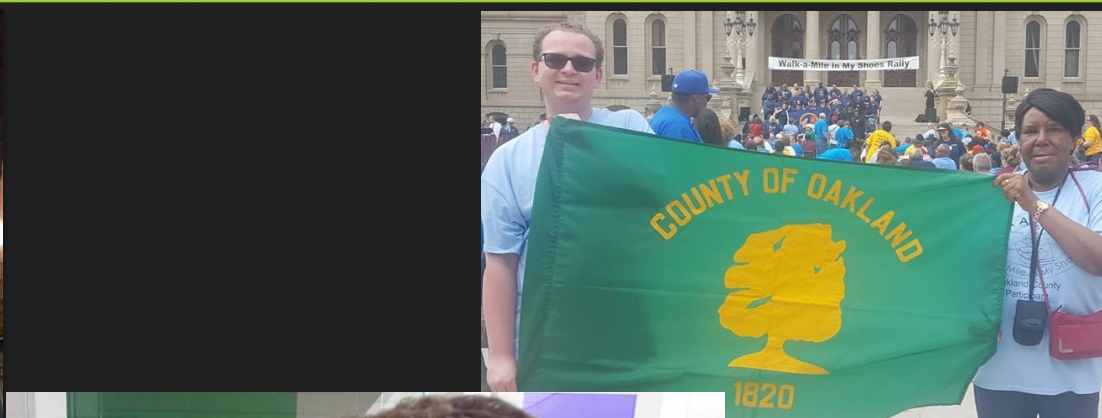
- To think that there are people that would label me with their limited vision of what I can accomplish and not see that as their disability is something that I struggle in seeing their logic.

“Don’t put limits on your dreams or the dreams of others”

- What I most believe to be right minded, whether they have a disability or not, is all have the inalienable right to keep what would give them contentment in choice to live life on their own terms. This philosophy is key in all that I do.

“Don’t put limits on your dreams or the dreams of others”

- We all deserve sharing that all believe that are worth listening to and yearning to be heard and valued community members without neurotypical bias of what is considered to be “normal”
- I am eager to interact with peers who accept me for who I am and are mature enough to recognize that intelligence has many faces.



“Don’t put limits on your dreams or the dreams of others”

- I have a path planned but the cement is not yet poured. I look forward to mesh my spirit of resilience to support those who live on the fringes of society. I may encounter unanticipated twists to my current blueprint but plan to keep my faith in my Architect and Creator.

“Don’t put limits on your dreams or the dreams of others”

- There are no limits to hope in a world that is willing to hear neurodiverse voices and accept what truths we share as equally valid.

- Thank you for having me share about the values that empower all of us and for letting me lend you my philosophy of possibilities.
- You could tell that I am passionate about these topics and would welcome an invitation to speak to your circle of influence.
- Thank you.

- Because I like to really think of how to best answer your questions, please email me at alex.kimmel@hotmail.com
- The Self-Determinator on facebook
- Follow me on LinkedIn.
#SelfDeterminator
- You can also visit my website www.alexkimmel.com.

