

Lecture to
California Rehabilitation Services
By Karen Lynn
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Dear Ms. Russel and friends of the California Rehab. Services.

My name is Karen Lynn, and it is indeed a pleasure being invited here today. During the next hour, I will not only be sharing my experience as a disabled person with you, but I will also teach you a brief exercise session.

Some of you may have already heard my story; however, for those of you who haven't, I will take this opportunity to share that with you now. I was born many, many years ago, a perfectly healthy, normal child. However, at the young age of 5 months old, I was given a DPT shot, and over night, fell into a deep, deep coma. For the next 14 days, I slept in a prolonged state of unconsciousness, having 30 % chance to live. I was also deemed and considered to be severely disabled. But I fooled them all-

18 months after being diagnosed with left side hemiplegia, Cerebral Palsy, my mother found a kind and warmhearted man, who had his own dance studio. She talked to Al Gilbert, and tap dance lessons began at the young age of 3 and $\frac{1}{2}$ years old. These lessons, not only helped me physically, and taught me how to hop, jump, skip, and run; but these lessons build my self-esteem and self-confidence. These lessons became the driving force to develop my determination, tenacity, and will power never to give up on myself. These lessons also became my life's goal towards helping others like me, and, my livelihood.

It also gave me the drive and push to go back to school, win the first Civil Rights Case, in the State of California, and attain my AA degree in English and dance. I was propelled and directed in this direction because I went through 12 years of education in a handicap school, never learning a thing; while being passed from one class to another. Although early on in my academic career, it was discovered that I had Dyslexia.

The other strong influence that directed my purpose in this specific direction was my dance teachers unconditional love and devotion. Moreover, my ambition and effort to achieve these goals and dreams was a paramount and prime importance throughout my struggle.

The culmination and climax of all my previous efforts, was the publication of a fictionalized autobiography in 2006, called "The Broken Hoof." This story in its infancy and incarnation won second prize in the Kaleidoscope Literary Prose fiction art contest of 1983. I am sure most of you can identify with the experience of an expert imposing rules or status on you. We all have to face these informalities, and define our own lives by our own terms. Unfortunately, I was mislabeled mentally challenged on three separate occasions, and it made me fight the fight of my life. It not only made me a stronger human being, but it made me realize that I could achieve my goals no matter what any one said or called me. These adversities empowered me to carve out a place in this world that is so heartless, and cold. I had to stand up to their unfeeling, insensitive and cold approach towards my wants, needs and desires, like a warrior. It has become and remains an aspiration of mine to continue to seek and stay the course, and keep the never ending journey.

I will close for now, so that you may ask any questions you like of me, and so that we can have a 20 minute exercise class. If you'd like to purchase my book, you can do so by special ordering it at your nearest book store. Or, you can either get the info from me or Ms. Russel. Thank you for this wonderful opportunity to share with you. And now I will take questions.