Richard Peacock

Profile:
Rich Peacock is an artist, publisher, curator, and live event producer who has been immersed in the creative/design world since 1985.

He was a senior editor in advertising until he got Multiple Sclerosis in 1997. Within four years, he was forced to stop working due to multiple disabilities and fatigue.

MS is a very difficult disease, but when Rich is well, he has worked as an independent creator. He has also spent twenty years as a producer and curator, putting on music, art, theatre, exhibitions, and circus shows in my community. He also has a publishing company – Peacock Imprint and has returned to his first love of printmaking and publishing.

Transcript:

[00:00:00] Okay, my name's Rich Peacock. I've got multiple sclerosis and I've had it diagnosed since 1997, but I probably had it earlier than that. And that had quite a big effect on my life in that I had to stop my career after about four years after diagnosis. I was then extremely ill with MS for quite a few years, but I've managed to recover a lot of my mobility. I managed to diminish the effects of MS over the years.

(Voiceover) Why is it important to have diverse inputs in research?

[00:00:34] I think to understand people's lives and to serve people better, you've got to hear from them what their experience of life is. It's no good judging on behalf of other people or making decisions on behalf of other people.

[00:00:50] You've got to hear from, from disabled people, people who live with disabilities, what their life is like, and then you'll know a little bit more how we may be able to include people like me or people with different disabilities or other disabilities into whatever it might be, whether it's transport or education or employment or health provision, unless you hear from people who've got disabilities then people won't know how to make judgments about where to invest or make decisions about how to serve the community better.

(Voiceover) Have you been involved in contributing to co design or as a research participant?

[00:01:28] I've never been involved in co-design or as a research participant. I'm part of various MS organizations, whether that's the local MS society or even the GDI hub. I've been to some events here and I've never contributed part of that You know, as, as a, a participant? No.

(Voiceover)What advice would you recommend to early career researchers to create inclusive settings when co-creating or conducting research?

[00:02:00] I think early researchers should just ask lots of questions and just listen to what people suggest. I mean, it's difficult to know what research that might be. Whether or not it's accessibility or whether or not it's, it's ensuring that people get enough breaks through a process or what their energy, for MS energy can, can drop quite quickly. You can get fatigued quite quickly, quickly, for example. So you might want to know that, you know, the schedule of the day is different for people with some disabilities than for other people. So I think asking lots of questions and providing lots of opportunity for people to give feedback.

(Voiceover) In terms of your lived experience, what have you seen done well or what has worked well for you in the past?

[00:02:39] I haven't really been involved in a lot of research. I must confess, I think this is quite a new thing. I think it's a good thing. I think it's a good discipline that's developing. And also I think society is moving in the right direction. Recently, I got something called Access to Work because my business went bust during COVID. And so I've been found an Access to Work support advisor. And he is helping me access some things, for example, a more comfortable chair.

[00:03:04] I got, MS is very painful, can be very painful, not for everybody, can be very painful. So he's been helping me get a chair that's better for, for me so I can work at home and get less fatigued. So in terms of research, again, someone had to ask me, how does the MS affect me? Where does it affect me most?

[00:03:21] What's the things that's causing me most difficulties as a business person? And from that, they were able to say, well, you need a foot rest. You need a better chair and we can provide some of those things and give you advice, how to go for your day, taking proper breaks. You know, so I think again, the listening was very important.

(Voiceover) Can you share any common mistakes that researchers should avoid?

[00:03:45] I think probably researchers should try to avoid, obviously, one of the things about being disabled, particularly if you, if you, I don't know what it's like to have a disability from birth, but I had a career, then I lost my career. And you can kind of feel that you've then cast, been cast aside.

[00:04:00] You've been then thrown to the kind of side as a, as a person with disabilities. So I guess researchers, It would be very easy to be patronising without meaning to be, you know, without meaning to be by making judgments on behalf of other people rather than listen to what people say. So I guess it's just been very building that rapport with the person, building the space that they're able to speak without judgment or without values, you know, being, being judged or, you know, being made to feel that their opinion is not worthwhile, whatever that might be, because disability is very wide.

[00:04:38] Obviously it can be anything, it could be physical disability, it can be sight disability, it could be hearing disability, it could be all sorts of disability, cognitive disability, MS can affect cognitive disability. In other words, you can get very forgetful. So you might forget time of an appointment. You might forget place of an appointment.
[00:04:55] You might forget day of an appointment. So, so just helping people make sure that they're able to get to the appointments on time, where it is. All of those things are part of respecting people's different experiences of, of the process.

(Voiceover) Do you have any final tips or recommendations you would like to share?

[00:05:11] No, I don't think so. I mean, I think it's really terrific you're doing this. I think it's really great that, that you shall spending the time and the money involving the end user in the process of how best to research it, because it's a difficult thing to do. I mean, people are as diverse as their disabilities and, and most disabilities might not even be visible, you know, it might be, you can't see someone can't hear very well unless they're wearing a hearing aid, but, uh, exactly, exactly.

[00:05:42] Yeah. So, but that, you know, that people's disabilities can, can affect people in so many subtle ways, people can feel rejected because of their disabilities very easily. So this is a terrific process that you're going through, I think. I think a great starting point. Is what do people need? See needs and wants are two different things.

[00:06:05] You might want something, but what do you need? And need is about where is there a pain in your life process? I don't mean physical pain. It might be physical pain. But where is there a difficulty in your life journey? And what can be done to help you with that journey? And therefore asking people, what might be a difficulty that you would like help with?

[00:06:29] Is that getting out of bed because you're in too much pain? You know, is it reaching for some medication? Is it, well, it could be anything. That's the point. People's needs, they will know themselves. So I think spending a bit of time just listening to people's needs, what do you need? What would help you?

[00:06:50] Because then, A, that might be a good business because you're providing a solution to a need. But also the listening part of it will be organic because by discussing things, people discover their needs that they might not have even remembered or realised or thought about previously. So I think just doing a great period of, I don't want to call it market research, it sounds like a market, but it's, that's what it kind of is, you know, is hearing what people want and need. Yeah.