Conversations with Ivanova: The Dignity of Risk

Energetic music.

Image description: Montage of images featuring disability rights activists and past guests of Conversations with Ivanova. Dissolve into interior of hotel meeting room with Ivanova Smith sitting at a round table with other advocates who are not in view.

Ivanova:

Welcome to another episode of Conversations with Ivanova. This episode is really special I actually get to have some other self-advocate here with me today and we're going to be talking about dignity of risk. Dignity of risk is the idea that there is dignity in making mistakes, that there is dignity in doing things that may cause self, uh, that you may make a mistake, that you may do something wrong. And that that's okay.

So dignity means, like, respect and um [background conversation] value into something. And risk is something that is sometimes scary or sometimes you're not going to be perfect at or you may make a mistake.

For me, Dignity of Risk was moving out, going on my first date. It was risky, but I'm glad that I did it because I learned from it. Another way that my parents enforced Dignity of Risk is they wanted me to try to drive. And it was—it did not work out. I messed up and it was not a good idea, but it was really important that I tried.

So I have some other self-advocates here and they want to talk to you about what Dignity of Risk means to them.

Image description: Camera pulls back to show other advocates at the table.

Advocate: I'll just touch on what Ivanova was just saying. It is g—nice to make a mistake 'cause people can learn from it. Or if you're like— have you heard anybody being soft-hearted? It's like I would like to support that person, but how can I support the best way you can? It's a learning experience.

Advocate: Sometimes I made mistakes myself, too, sometimes. And sometimes made a mistake and then, and my mind tells me please don't do it because it does not, it does not pay. And also, also I made sure , I made sure I did it the right thing this time.

Advocate: Understanding we all are going to have inherent risks in life. But if you have a positive attitude and you know that you're going to get over that. That's the best way of approaching it. And also what has been said here is support, support of a person that's making that risk. Support them.

Advocate: Um, I do Special Olympics for a living so I know about risks, and I know about making mistakes all the time. When you're up on the mountain skiing, there's a lot of risks, a lot of mistakes you can make. Um, going around a turn at 40 miles and hour and accidentally missing that turn and um yard sailing—that's a big risk. And sometimes you can take it out on yourself but you just have to pick yourself back up go right back through the gate and try to make a calculated risk.

Energetic music.

Image description: People with disabilities moving through hotel lobby and through automatic doors to outside.

Advocate: I see this a lot with our youth. They never get a chance to fail. And if you never fail, you never learn. And so here, when they become adults, they've never had a chance to make mistakes and then they end up making them later in life. And sometimes they're a lot more harmful when you have them later in life than you do when you're younger. And people are—they're more easily exploited when they don't have this experience behind them. So I think letting them risk, letting them live normal lives that take risks and make failures and have the consequences of those failures, is a natural part of life. And we'll see people farther ahead in life by taking those risks.

Advocate: If we don't make our own choice about dignity and we are not going to get nowhere in life.

Advocate: You got to learn from your mistakes. So if you don't make mistakes, how can learn from life?

Image description: dissolve into hotel interior with Ivanova and advocates meeting around a table.

Ivanova: We heard some really important examples of how Dignity of Risk is absolutely one of the most important teachers of lessons of life lessons, you know. We have the same rights to do things that are scary, to do things that are risky and to learn from those risky decisions. And if we need supported decision-making that people will support us in allowing us to take the risks and do it in a way that's safe. And so thank you for being here today And thank you to all the fellow People First members here at People First Convention 2019! Woohoo!

Cheering.

People First!

Image description: Fast moving camera shot through the morning banquet gathering of People First.