**Transcript**

**Part One**

G'day. Ben Pettingill here. Professional speaker with only 2% eyesight. I'm really excited to be with you here today to share with you how to communicate your value with confidence.

I want to introduce myself to start with though. When I was 16 years old, I lost 98% of my eyesight overnight to a rare genetic syndrome called Lehmer's Hereditary Optic Neuropathy, or LHON. As you can imagine, and as I know a lot of you will be able to relate, this turned my world upside down. At that point in time, I thought it crushed all my childhood hopes and dreams in an instant and especially when I thought about my future and a potential career, I thought this was going to be next to impossible. Thanks to the support of family, friends and other resources and networks and organisations such as Vision Australia, I was able to build up the skills and knowledge to be able to not only finish school but then go on to launch my own career.

To introduce that journey for you, after I finished school, I went onto university and I studied a Bachelor of Business. But after a little while I figured out that wasn't what I was passionate about. What I really wanted to explore when it came to a career was professional speaking. I wanted to share not only my story but most of all, the lessons I've learned and help build resilience and introduce the power of perception to corporate companies, corporate organisations and also schools all around Australia.

I've now been doing this for four years and I'm excited to share with you some of the lessons that I've learnt today. There's four tools that I want to share with you and I'm going to share the first two with you in this video.

The first tool that I want you to take home today is the Independence Impact. When you're going to meet a potential employer for the first time or when you're going to visit their premises or their organisation, what I want you to remember is even though it may be a little bit more difficult, it might be completely unnatural for you and it might put you out of your comfort zone, you’ve really got to make sure that you take ownership and step up to visiting that workplace for the first time or going to that job interview by yourself. Even if it's challenging, even if you have to ask for help and use those self-advocacy skills that you've got, that is going to be the first big tick in the box of a potential employer.

If they see you stepping up to the plate, coming through the door whether it’s with your guide dog, whether it’s with your white cane, your ID cane or even if it's just by yourself and you’ve got to go to reception and ask for help, whatever that may be, even if you run into a few obstacles, coming by yourself shows that you're a problem solver, shows that you embody resilience and shows that you don't need assistance. If you walk in with someone helping you to the door, helping you to the reception, that automatically communicates to a potential employer that you might be hard work as an employee. Now you and I know that that's not the case but the first thing we want to communicate to a potential employer is that we are resilient, that we are independent and that we are up for a challenge instead of needing assistance.

That's the first point. The Independence Impact is the first thing that I want you to remember when you're going to meet a potential employer, whether it's a job interview, whether it’s just for a coffee at the local cafe, whatever that may be, the Independence Impact is the first key and will really help with that first impression.

The second tool that I want you to take away from this video is to Leverage Language and this is both when you talk to yourself but most of all when you’re talking to that potential employer. Leverage the language you use. If you're sitting at a cafe or if you’re in a job interview and you get asked what you're after and what you want out of this job, you're not there just for a job- you're there for a career. Just because you're blind or have low vision, just like me, we're not just after a job because we live with a disability. Anyone who's able-bodied, will get asked in an interview "What do you want your career progression to be?" That's what you need to focus on as well - a career instead of a job. You're not just there for a job. You're not "just". Don't use the word "just" because that's degrading. What I want you to remember is to use positive words and empowering words and use them with confidence. Don't bring yourself down due to something that you can't control being your blindness or low vision. Use words and use language and leverage that with positivity because if you're telling yourself that you just want a job or if you go into that interview and say, "Oh I've applied for 17 jobs before but they've all focused on that fact that I’ve got low vision and it's going to be harder to employ me," that's not going get you off on the right foot. What you want to do is focus on positive language, leverage that and talk about your skills, your knowledge and experience with confidence. Now, I don't want you, up until this point in time, you shouldn’t have even have to have mentioned your blindness or low vision. That doesn't even have to come into account yet. Talk about your skills, knowledge and experience with confidence and leverage that language.

In the second video, what I'm going to share with you is the last two points that are going to help you communicate your value with confidence. We'll see you there.

**Vision Australia. Blindness. Low vision. Opportunity.**

**Vision Australia logo. Three navy blue ovals linked together diagonally within a bright yellow rectangle.**

**Part two**

G'day, Ben Pettingill here, professional speaker with only 2% eyesight. Welcome to video 2, of how to better communicate your value with confidence.

In the last video, we shared the first two tips, and first two tools of how to better communicate your value with confidence. The first one was the Independence Impact, and the second was Leveraging Language. We're going to get into the second two points now.

The third point of how to communicate your value with confidence is that Humour Helps.

If you're in a cafe and having that coffee with a potential employer or introducing yourself for the first time or if you're in a more formal job interview setting, don't underestimate the power of humour especially when it comes to your situation. Now you and I can't control the fact that we live with blindness or low vision. We've got to leverage that and use humour to help us and use that situation to our advantage.

Now often that potential employer, whether it's at the cafe or in the job interview, they're going to feel a little bit uncomfortable potentially about the fact that you and I live with a disability. Now, I'm not saying let’s take advantage of that, but let's use that and make the most of it. Now the best way to break the ice and address the elephant that's in the room is to use humour. Now I know that sometimes it's a little bit edgy or a bit risky to poke fun at yourself, especially when it comes to searching for that career we've dreamed of for so long and this could be the opportunity that is that career that you have been dreaming of but trust me, humour helps. Now, that might be simply saying when they say “What you've got coming up for the weekend?” because often, the person that you're sitting in front of is a person just like yourself. They've got a life outside of business or outside the organisation that you want to work for and they're going to say “What have you got coming up for the weekend?” Now, even if it's not true, chuck in the old "I’m going on a blind date, no, just joking." Now, I know that's a terrible joke, but you know how to poke fun at yourself just like I know how to poke fun at myself, especially using your low vision or blindness to do that and trust me, when it comes to that potential employer, it will show them and communicate to them that if you are employed by them, you're not going to be fragile. Your disability isn't something that you are going to take offence to if someone says the wrong thing or doesn't provide you a document with the right format. You're not going to get hurt or offended by that and that you'll be able to laugh that off and help people learn together how to approach that situation and how to make the most of it. That is our third point in how to communicate your value with confidence - Humour Helps.

The fourth and final point is that you need to address your limits last. Limits come Last, I cannot stress this enough. We all have a tendency sometimes, because we get nervous about having blindness or living with low vision, that we have to address it straight away, it's something that this potential employer is going to be worried about, it's going to be their biggest concern. STOP.

You are a normal person. You are a person just like any other person that wants a career in life. Address your limits last and the potential limitations that your blindness or low vision might bring to that career or that role in the workplace. And you and I both know, that with the right skills and the right knowledge, limitations for us really don't exist. Limitations are only just doing things differently.

So at the end of the interview, at the end of the coffee at the cafe, wherever you're meeting

this potential employer, whenever that may be, if they do ask what impact is your low vision or blindness going to have on your potential in this role, that's when you address it. Address it last and address it with confidence. Don't play it down, just simply address that you might need to take a photo of something and then upload it on your computer to access it. Or you might need a magnifying glass and most of these things you already have already. It's not going to impact the potential employer when they employ you. So address your limits last. Don't go in and address them first. Address them before you walk away and address them with confidence and ownership because like I said, they're not even limits, all they are are differences and make sure you communicate that to them too by leveraging your language which was point two in how to communicate your value with confidence. Make sure you say if the potential employer asks “what are your potential limits?” say "I don't have limits in this role, what I do have are things that I will have to do differently." Explain that to them with confidence and go from there.

So, in summary, to wrap up our four tools of how to address your value with confidence to a potential employer, whatever stage you're at in the employment cycle, whether you've come out of a role or looking for a new job or career or if you’re just straight out of school and looking for that part time job during a gap year before university, whatever that may be, the first tool is the Independence Impact. The second tool is to Leverage your Language in a positive way. The third tool is that Humour Helps, and the fourth and final tool is Limits come Last. I hope that's been helpful - these two videos about how to communicate your value with confidence to a potential employer. My name is Ben Pettingill and we'll see you soon.

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**--------------------------------------------------ENDS------------------------------------------------------**