



CFSI Conference Reflections By Ray Grand, 2018

I was born and raised in Boston, Massachusetts, and I am currently living in Atlanta, Georgia. Reynald Louis Grandoit is my name, however, my friends and family called me Ray Grand. I became paralyzed at the tender age of fourteen years old because of bacterial spinal meningitis, which left me paralyzed from the waist down. Now, I am an inspirational speaker who trains and coaches individuals on how to overcome adversity. I also teach individuals about leadership and entrepreneurship by connecting, teaching, and inspiring through cinematic stories and real life practical examples.

The EMERGE conference at the Hollywood Loews Hotel was enlightening, an impactful experience, and a seamless process. I really enjoyed the conference at the hotel—everywhere was easy to locate, and CSFI staff was ready to help with anything I needed.

I believe the disability community brings a unique perspective to fintech that adds value to products, solutions, and diversity to the finance world in many ways. Being an entrepreneur, the two most valuable advantages to me are people and time. Inclusion is vital for a company's success, and I will continue my efforts to uplift, inspire, and change the world by serving with excellence for all.

The EMERGE conference has given me the opportunity to meet great people that are like-minded individuals who have hearts to add value and solutions to change the world. From a professional perspective, this conference has exposed me to the data on the financial health of our country.

Opportunities create possibilities; possibilities create hope; and hope creates change! We all serve a purpose in this world, and having the opportunity gives someone with a disability the chance to fulfill his or her purpose.



Ray as a Disability Ambassador



Ray with the other Disability Ambassadors during a plenary session

Ray Grand is a speaker, coach, and entrepreneur. His childhood aspirations were to play basketball in the MBA and to become the CEO of his own business. Though his wheelchair changed his life, it did not change his aspirations. He received a full scholarship to play wheelchair basketball at Oklahoma State University, where he studied Entrepreneurship, and he built his own company Ray Grand Apparel (<https://www.handprinteverything.com/> or www.raygrand.com).