

## D.I.Y. as Privilege – 13 point Manifesto for Musicians

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1 See the privilege in being able to Do It Yourself.

2 Disabilities can be visible and invisible. Physical barriers and lack of understanding can exclude people. Think about how you can help remove barriers.

3 “Using privilege to dismantle privilege... one of the best ways to use your voice is to amplify voices that aren’t being heard.” - Rebecca Solnit

4 Do It Yourself can mean different things to different people and is a misleading term - it can mean you still work with people that record your music, people that make and sell your records, people that own the buildings you rehearse in, people that put on gigs, just as much as music facilitators, support workers or transport to and from a gig.

5 Be a supportive tool, be patient, listen, give people control.

6 “They’re catching me on my weak points but not on my strong points.” David M talking about Job Centre Plus. Catch people’s strong points.

7 Don’t assume what’s accessible; ask and learn.

8 Disabled people performing at or attending gigs shouldn’t be exceptional; the more it happens the more ‘normal’ it becomes. Make it the norm.

9 There is an audience for everything and ideas of what is ‘good music’ will always be political.

10 Everyone, regardless of their ability, can contribute to a music scene. Use existing support networks to get people on stage and in the audience - disability arts charities, organisations and support workers.

11 Turn up and keep turning up. Sometimes when supporting people being consistent is more impressive than being spectacular.

12 The more invisible you make yourself the more visible others will be.

13 Disabled people have senses of humour, laugh with people and enjoy yourself.

## **D.I.Y.**

Stands for "Do It Yourself". In music it promotes the idea that anyone is capable of becoming a musician and sharing their music. It empowers individuals and communities, encouraging alternative approaches when faced with obstacles to achieving their objectives.

## **Disability**

I use the social model of disability. The idea that it is the environment, society and culture that surrounds someone that creates barriers and obstacles which disable and exclude them.

## **Privilege**

The idea that advantages are available only to certain people in society.

## **Manifesto**

A text that promotes a new idea with ways for carrying out changes the author believes should be made.

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This was written by Richard Phoenix, who has spent many years dedicated to using his ability, privilege and experience to open up the D.I.Y. ethos to musicians with learning disabilities. He has supported the creation of a music scene in Brighton around the long running Rock House night; organised three UK tours for bands with members with learning disabilities; supported DIY Space For London to be the first volunteer run venue in the UK to achieve Bronze accreditation for access; and worked as a music facilitator supporting people with learning disabilities to form bands, create music, record and perform, as well as organising countless other gigs, releases, events and projects. He has found that these scenes are the most wildly creative, egoless, positive, full of the most amazing music, fun and the best he's ever been a part of.

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This is the second version of the manifesto, it uses the words 'Disabled people' rather than 'People with Disabilities'. This is so the language in the text better reflects the social model of disability.

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