



Coming into BEST, I had a million thoughts running through my mind. "What would they be able to do for me? What might future co-workers think of me?" The thought of working alone and not having someone to check in with on a regular basis frightened me completely. I had little interest in having an Employment Specialist (ES) on my team and was quite resistant during the process of discovery to allow someone into my personal bubble.

Looking back at my journey over the past few years, I realize now how much I've grown and how much of that has been thanks to the support of my ES. She not only helped build my inner strength and confidence, she taught me to advocate better for myself and worked with me to achieve all the goals I had set out that I thought were unattainable. I was able to pay off all my debt, opened a savings account, renewed my license and even purchased a car! The feeling of being able to not only meet all my goals but surpass them felt amazing and powerful.

Currently I work at Ramada Inn, part time, with above minimum wage pay. When asked what my boss thinks of me, he said that he would love to have more individuals like me who are driven and focused at work, who not only love what they do but do it willingly and go the extra mile. Hearing my boss say that and having him request for me to work full time really encourages me to work harder. I feel as though my family and community circle have expanded since working at Ramada Inn and I feel as though I'm finally seen for who I am and as an equal. Having my boss see hidden potential in me and say that one day he could really see me rise from working in the hotel to holding a position with more responsibility and better pay pushes me to dream bigger.

Being able to provide for myself and reach goals that I have set makes me feel successful and has helped transition me into a position where I can help support my family. "I feel as though I am on a peak in life right now and I just see the peak getting bigger and bigger." With my new found love for life and the passion to work harder I aim to save up enough money to travel outside of Canada and look forward to seeing where life takes me!

