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## Cerny: R.J. Mitte says be a leader, change a life

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Posted: Monday, March 31, 2014 12:00 am

By Tasha Cerny

I-went to listen to R.J. Mitte speak about his cerebral palsy and experiences living with a disability.- A John Locke fan whether he knew it or not (at one point during his talk he



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claimed that “all people are inherently good”), I thought that Mitte's talk was insightful-if a bit informal.

In a full ballroom filled with eager students ready to share a room with fame, I was perhaps the only person there who has not seen more than thirty seconds of the show, “Breaking Bad,” for which R.J. Mitte is famous.- This isn't to say that part of my motivation wasn't my curiosity in seeing a celebrity close-up. On the contrary, that was certainly part of my interest. But I am glad I chose not to watch an episode of the show before going to listen to his talk.

My inability to subsequently know this man through his role on television gave me the opportunity to listen more to his words than gawk at his face.- Of the many, many things Mitte said on that stage, there are a few that stand out to me.- In particular, Mitte's straight-forward, upfront answer to a question, for which he responded, “I am able to fill a room like this because of my good fortune and privilege. But I realize that this talk will only matter to a handful of you, and the rest are here because of my privilege. But because of that handful of people, that's all that matters.”

R.J. Mitte also told a story of an old woman who fell with no one to help her, despite being surrounded by people. Instead, the people around her turned away or stepped over her. In shock about what he was seeing, Mitte helped the woman up and began to take care of her. And because of his assistance, the people who had previously ignored the woman began to help her.

This, I think, was the most important point of Mitte's speech for myself.- Mitte's point was that every cause needs a leader and that when one person takes initiative-even alone-they will find followers.

I think this is a very important point for students everywhere across our campus to know and understand.- We have not all struggled physically, mentally or emotionally throughout most of our lives.- We have not all been bullied so cruelly that we go home to cry every night.- We cannot all understand these things or how they affect those who experience any number of things.




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We can, however, take initiative.- We can be leaders. We can identify the problems of our society, and we can come up with creative solutions to fix them.- All it takes is one 'yes,' and knowledge of where to start.- If you are looking to get more involved around campus and help people at the same time, consider joining the Center for Community Outreach, applying for an alternative break, or volunteering your time at places like Jubilee Cafe or the Willow safe center.- Remember, you may not be the one knocking, but you can build the door for the one who does knock.

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