

BEAN GILL BIO

"There is a lesson in everything."



Benveet "Bean" Gill's story serves up a dose of reality like you've never heard before.

In her 20s, Gill was working as an X-ray technologist in a cardiac catheterization lab. But, in 2012, when she turned 30, everything changed. She left an abusive relationship, her dad left her family and, during vacation, a virus paralyzed her from the waist down.

While relaxing in a hotel room with close friends, she felt a sudden, stabbing pain in her spine. *"The pain lasted only a few minutes, and then I couldn't move my right leg. I was paralyzed within 10 minutes."*

Multiple neurologists told Gill a virus was likely to blame, and she would regain full use of her legs within weeks.

After several months of no progress, Bean was forced to come to grips with her new reality. A **once athletic young woman who enjoyed modeling, kickboxing, and weightlifting**, she struggled with betrayal by her own body. She couldn't roll over, sit up, or get out of bed without help. She was **forced to find her way through an inaccessible society**, all the while living with paralysis and learning how to love herself - disability and all.

"My life was flipped upside down. I hated everything about me. I hated my life."

Bean **took her health into her own hands**, seeking out the answers and help she needed to confront her challenges head-on. Eventually, Gill found her confidence again. She **worked to regain movement in her legs** and pushed herself to try sports she never would have attempted before being paralyzed.

If it wasn't for the worst year of her life, Gill wouldn't be who she is today.

Bean's sudden onset paralysis opened her eyes to the many **injustices, inequalities and challenges that are a part of life for those with disabilities**. She went from dealing with a new identity of life in a wheelchair to using her situation as a **platform to help others**.

In 2017 she co-founded **ReYu Paralysis Recovery Center** - a non-profit she started with her Neuro-Exercise Specialist and zero capital. The wellness center exists to **inspire, motivate, and promote recovery** with increased function for individuals with spinal cord injuries and associated neurological disorders. *"We show them that they can do the things that they were told they were never going to do."*

Being a **woman of color who also has a visible disability**, Gill is an example of **unwavering strength and resilience**. By confronting adversity and sharing her story, **Bean Gill breaks down barriers and is changing stigmas surrounding people with disabilities**.

Gill's work has earned her **local and national recognition**, including **Top 40 Under 40, RBC Canadian Women Entrepreneur Award, and Global's Woman of Vision Award**. Bean is the **reigning Miss Wheelchair Canada** and was recognized by Mattel as **one of Canada's top 60 inspiring women as part of Barbie's 60th Anniversary**.



KEYNOTE DESCRIPTIONS

"Rejecting Impossible: Standing Strong When Life Gets Flipped Upside Down"

During summer vacation of 2012, while relaxing in a Las Vegas hotel room with close friends, Bean Gill felt a sudden, stabbing pain in her spine. She went numb from the waist down.

"The pain lasted only a few minutes, and then I couldn't move my right leg. I was paralyzed within 10 minutes." She couldn't roll over, sit up, or get out of bed without help. She felt betrayed by her own body.

She was faced with two choices: Give up or keep going. Although she wanted to give up many times, she chose to keep going. Today Bean Gill grips the handles of her walker, her muscular frame tense as she lifts her legs to take a few laborious steps she never thought would be possible.

Bean shares with audiences her journey to rebuild her life and regain her strength and co-founded ReYu Paralysis Recovery Centre, a growing non-profit organization where they reconnect the brain to the body, retrain the nervous system and redefine what is possible for people living with Spinal Cord Injuries and associated conditions.

"One of the reasons why we opened ReYu is because I went through so many of my dark times alone, and that's very scary. And I don't want anybody else to have to go through their dark times alone ... It's incredible to see when you believe in somebody, and you give them hope, and you give them the tools they need, how they blossom." – Benveet Gill

"Modeling Diversity: The Transformational Impact of Unrelenting Inclusion"

Bean shares what it was like to grow up in a strict Indian family and a culture that had rigid religious rules. Heavily bullied as a child, her sudden disability was a catalyst that forced her to face trauma head on.

Bean took her health into her own hands, got the answers and help she needed, and bravely embraced an 'attitude of gratitude'. Her vast experience, strong background in human connection and positive thinking strategies makes her perfect for organizations who seek ways to help employees overcome adversity, improve self-awareness, limit self-doubt, and inspire individuals to embrace change within themselves and their communities.

She delivers fun, upbeat engaging presentations which leave the audience feeling rejuvenated and ready to change their world. *"I want to rid the world of the stigma surrounding people with disabilities and will continue to speak about racism and discrimination. By educating others we can release bias, anger and hatred."*