

## **DISABILITIES ACQUIRED IN ADULTHOOD: EMOTIONAL ADJUSTMENT**

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When one least expects it, a life can be changed in an instant. Within moments, an accident has the shocking ability to physically harm a person to the point of disability. Accidents such as a car crash, or a fall from a horse, can cause one to lose/be robbed of a body part or function. This is an incident that can change the person's life forever.

It is important to know, although easier said than done, that this unfortunate accident is not the fault of the victim. We as humans do not have total control and power over what happens to us in our lives. After all, this is not a perfect world. Everything happens for a reason and even if you had not gotten in that car, or saddled that one horse, this accident actually has the capability to show a person how to get through this world in a different, yet positive light.

Believe it or not, this new, disturbing disability can actually lead to a affirmative awareness of one's self. The person may need to find different skills that adapt to their new capabilities in a job situation. A person might have to switch from a job that includes physical labor to a job that has to do with research and typing. This switch can be upsetting because it is a change of lifestyle, yet enlightening because it demonstrates to the person that they have had these capabilities all along. It is important that the person does not let it spoil his/her spirit, as there is always a job that needs to be done and a disability only means impairment, not a complete loss of self. This disability can actually open one's world to a new skill that might not have been discovered before the accident. Every employee has a certain flaw, such as an inability to type fast or be punctual. As long as the person presents his/herself to a company with admirable, strong assets, the employers can overcome the disability flaw just as they do with anyone else. It is important to research the options for alternate jobs and disability accommodations that the employer can provide. It not only makes the disabled seem motivated, but able to do the job just as anyone else can.

There are in fact negative aspects to this sudden and drastic change in one's lifestyle due to a disability. The person can be hit with a number of emotions; shock and denial that this could actually happen, anger that he/she was the "chosen" person for this disability, then the anger will eventually lead to a realization that this disability will not go away, no matter how much anger is put into it. Through exploring other assets such as new job skills and a stronger utilization of other senses, the realization will lead to a newfound appreciation and respect for the person's body, no matter how disabled.

Hopefully. It takes a while to get to that life appreciation when someone's life has been so badly shaken up. After all, a disability is most times permanent and can change a life in many ways. Financially, they may not be able to make as much money due to this job adjustment. Socially, through a person's friends and family, people often times do not know how to act towards a disabled person. They want to make sure not to extend pity and be able to overlook the disability. Yet this ignorance can cause a suppression of

emotions for both the victim and the loved ones, which can eventually cause resentment and depression. Independently, one may experience disturbing flashbacks of the event, feel less capable and more dependent, and have to rethink plans for the future. This rethinking can be positive for soul-searching, yet it is discouraging that one is not as competent as before the accident.

At the same time, the victim is also enduring physical pain, and all the inconveniences that go along with being disabled. Modern society expects only what is perfect; which can be observed by flipping through the latest fashion magazines. One must be thin, fit, and beautiful, which can be achieved thanks to plastic surgery and a couple of diet pills. However, a disability cannot be fixed with a simple Slimfast shake. This knowledge can lead to depression in a disabled person and a lack of a feeling of social acceptance. The real world does not accept as much as it should, thus the victim can be left with feelings of despair and a lack of normalcy, when in fact a disability means different, not strange.

A disability is frustrating to get used to, yet one needs to trust that everything will turn out fine in the end. It is important to focus on the productivity that can stem from a victim, despite their disability. Through research of alternate job skills, medical assistance, and environmental accommodations, a person can discover that life does not have to worsen because of a disability. Different does not necessarily have to mean inferior. If one feels like life will never get better, it is also a possibility that psychological help can be received. This does not mean that the person is “crazy”; he/she just needs assistance in coping to this alarming transition. In speaking with a psychologist, one can receive support and work through his/her thoughts verbally, creating a path for acceptance. This release can help rid of the other destructions that may arise from this depression, such as substance abuse and destructive behavior. If one does not have access to a psychologist, speaking to a person that he/she trusts can also serve the same purpose. Anyone who has an ear to lend can provide a great deal of therapy and emotional improvement for the disabled, as well as a feeling of acceptance and knowledge for the listener. It may be difficult to cope, but is not impossible, with the help of loved ones and the community.