

Look at ME, for who I am please...

Look at me for who I am please, not for what I look like.....

Look at me for the person still within me,
Not for what I physically look like, or for what I cannot do. Not for what I have lost, for I am well aware of what I have lost.

Think about it for a few minutes...

I am still a person,
I still have the same feelings, wants, desires, interests, even though I may not be able or cannot do some of the things I used to do.

Treat me still as one who is part of the team, of the same value to the team as everyone else.

Look at me, for who I am,
Not for the assistive devices I use.

You use a computer to assist you with your job/life;
You use email, where we used to talk with employees and friends;
You use email to assist you with communication.

You use a computer to assist you with your writing and filing, where we used to use "secretaries"; you use a computer as your assistive device. I may need a pointer, pen or adaptive keyboard, to use a computer, but I still can.

You adjust your life to what you can and cannot do, as you have gotten older; just you do not have to make it public. Your disability may be invisible, where mine is visible. One in four person have a disability. Most of us have some "disability" in life; we all have some things we "used to do" but now "do not do."

You buy a particular vehicle because it is comfortable for you; or easy for you to use. I do the same thing, only mine has a lift or ramp. You park in a particular space because you like the location; I park in a particular space because I have to. However, we're temporarily parked in the same parking lot. Even parked in the same "parking lot of life."

Look at me for my "abilities", not for my visible disabilities.
Look at me as "challenged", maybe differently than you, but yet in the same way you are, not as the "handicapped" one. Everyone has challenges in this life, but we all can live

Yes, I may eat differently; I may use a different spoon, or plate, but I still need to eat.

Yes, I may need assistance with cutting up my meat and opening bottles or my milk;

Yes, I may need a ramp to get up a curb, but I can use the same sidewalk;

Yes, it might take me longer to shower and dress, but I still get it done.

Yes, I may need for you to comb my hair, but I still like/need my hair combed.

Yes, I may not be able to take the top off of the toothpaste, but I can still brush my teeth.

Yes, it might take me awhile to get in/out of a car; or I might need your help, but I can still ride and I enjoy riding.

Yes, I have to ride in the "back of the bus"/ van in my wheelchair; but I can ride..

Yes, I may use a cane, walker, crutch or wheelchair, but I can still get there.

Yes, I still like to travel even though that means a "universal" or handicapped accessible motel room. You get a preference in smoking or non-smoking rooms; I have a different preference. But they are all preferences or things we individually like.

Yes, it might take me longer to the things you can do, but I can still get them done...

Yes, I may be old, aged, infirmed, of unique form and shape... but I am still living this life.

Yes, I may have muscle spasms or twitches, and have to use assistive devices to brush my teeth or put my shoes on. Yes, I may have to reach a different way to open a door, or open a can; or jar, but I still want to get inside/outside.

Yes, I may need for you to read the newspaper to me, but I still want to know the news of the day.

Yes, I may be blind, or I may need glasses or extra light, but I can still see.

Yes, I may be hard of hearing, but I still want to hear.

Yes, I may not walk as far, as fast or as well as you, but I can still get there.

Yes, I may need help getting the items off of the top shelf of the store aisle, but I can still use the same items you use.

----- over, please

Look at ME, for who I am please...

Yes, I still like to go shopping, but may need a power chair in the store to do it, but I still like to go shopping.

Yes, I may need a universal design house or bathroom, but I still need a home.

Yes, I still like to sew, but need help threading the needle.

Yes, I still like baseball, basketball, football and soccer, but need help turning the channel.

Yes, I still like to read, even though now I cannot see the words. I love audio books, a different way to read.

Yes, I still like to hear about the grandchildren's experiences in life, although I cannot go and see.

Yes, I still like to hear about and see vacations, although I cannot always go.

Yes, I still like to think about and see the sunset on the beach, although I cannot walk on the sands of the beach.

Yes, I still like to go fishing, even though I have to use this wheelchair.

Yes, I still like to go out to eat in a restaurant, go to the theater, go to movies; or be a part of our free society and vote.

Yes, I am still of a value to society, I still have opinions and wish to discuss them, yet, it might take me longer to get the thoughts to process and the speech to be heard; or I might use a communication board to tell you what I think and feel, but I still need to be heard and listened to.

Yes, I still deserve to be treated with dignity, to have rights as you, to have privacy, to be an individual, not just an inanimate object to be dealt with. Not just a prisoner within walls without bars, or a prisoner within my body, because I am different, than I used to be.

Yes, I care about all the values of life, that you do..... being of value; religion; freedom; music; art; love; friendships; people, hope, family, responsibilities, and life

Yes, I "used to be" might be word in my vocabulary, that is not in yours yet. Yes, I "used to be" the school teacher, the farmer, the theologian, the nurse, the doctor, the therapist, the manager, the bus driver, but now, I've changed; but I'm still me. Look at me, not just for what I "used to be", but for the person I still am.

Yes, I still want a quality to my life, as well as quality of life.

One day, you too, shall lose some of the physical/mental abilities you now have. How do you want others to treat you? Yes, treat me as you would want to be treated, for the person you are, not for what you look like.

Yes, I am still me. I am still the same name; the same social security number, the same daughter or son of someone; the same mother or father; grandmother or grandfather; the same person. Accept me for who I am, remember me the same as everyone else, remember I am a person, who loves, feels, and cares.

Look at me for who I am, the person I am. I am – "differently able", but I am "able"!

Rehab looks at what one can do and what assistive devices one can use to accomplish the goals. The medical model tends to look at what's wrong and sees the medicine, the medical intervention; the "how to do for someone" or "how to fix it" or the disability.

Look at me in the creativity way to "find another way" , with all aspects of interdisciplinary treatment. Look at me for what I can still do, and help me do it. Give me a "helping hand" not a "hand out".

***Please, look at me, for who I am.
For the person I am.***

Remember, I am still a person.

~ In honor of those who are physically or mentally challenged, who fight the challenges of life daily; and in honor and memory of our elderly who have taught us the values of life.

~~~~~ written by: S.A. Elmore ~~~~~ 2002