

# Look For Ways to Make Your Disability an Asset

*There is life, love and gifts that still live within me...and I am ready to share.*

## Garden Flowers



These flowers in my garden grow  
They make me happy as can be  
I love their bulbous pink and purple gift  
I think they grow here just for me.

But do they know they have a purpose  
In my world they bring such joy  
However it's not only me they tend to feed  
Also, the butterfly, insect and arachnoid.

I wonder if I were a flower here  
Would I bring beauty and joy  
Could I help others learn and appreciate  
Be a stimulus of change to help others grow?

So I think to myself how often I struggle  
Yet I still have ways to give and be  
I list how I can be of service to others  
Which helps me be a person not just my disability.

Look for ways to make your disability into an asset I often heard during my traumatic brain injury journey. However, I was sequestered to my house for the first three years to recover enough to go to brain injury rehab. During those years I relearned basic self-care skills=recovery. In the 4<sup>th</sup> year after my injury I started participating in a support group with other acquired brain injury survivors. Out of this group another group was formed under the leadership of Bev Bryant and Carole Starr (TBI survivors) to help educate, advocate and support those with acquired brain injuries and the medical, therapeutic and support systems we all were involved in.

And although this group's purpose was to educate, advocate and support others it provided the survivors many surprising benefits in their own lives, such as:

- A personal support system
- New ways to personally think and grow

- The gift of finding a new purpose in life
- A reason to get up and get dressed in the morning
- A chance to relearn old skills with new strategies
- A chance to develop new skills
- Teach, support and help others
- Develop a new circle of friendships
- Reinvent our lives
- And most importantly, in being part of a team with the purpose of helping others turned around how we felt about the disabilities that we were dealing with. Ultimately this lead to finding the good news in our newly reinvented lives.

There are so many ways to share a piece of yourself and yet it can be daunting when you need help just to show up. And it can be difficult to make a commitment when you can't trust your own brain and body on a regular basis. So remember to have self-awareness and accept that you may need help in order to give something of yourself. And ask for help if you need it.

Helping animals, nature or other people are some of the avenues to share the gifts you have to give. Whether it is helping with food, a note to a friend, an ear to listen, painting a picture, writing a poem, journaling your journey, cleaning a space where you live, it is important to start small.

**Journal Prompt:**

These are some ideas I have for how I can share my life, love or experiences:

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This is the help I will need in order to try one of my ideas to share myself:

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**Affirmation: With self-awareness, acceptance and intent I can find a new path to help live my life with new purpose.**