

# What is in a Word?

By  
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"What's in a name?" Shakespeare wrote in Romeo and Juliet. "That which we call a rose by any other name smell as sweet." I ask you, what do you think of the word Handicap? How does it affect you? How does it make you feel? And, how does it digest within your own conscious and subconscious being. Does it make you angry, hurt, enraged, or does it make you feel beside yourself? Does it leave a bitter taste in your mouth, or does it make you feel more at ease or comfortable?

There are so many definitions for this word; handicappable, disabled, cripple, and challenged; these are only a few descriptives' that are used regularly throughout our world today. Each on there own, carry a big weight. Each, by themselves, takes on a whole new meaning, connotation, and undertone. Depending on how we see, think, and perceive things, within our own selves, lives, and the world around us. That will be the ultimate determining factor. It all depends on how we see things and look at life. Our impressions, perceptions, and concepts- This is called our belief structure. All of these factors make up conviction. Particularly, what we were taught by our own parents; friends, and family members.

Each feeling, and each judgment, based on reason or actual experience, along with specific prejudices and pre-conceived opinions and ideas can and will affect us, as well as alter how we live, and view the world and people around us. They can all vary a person's belief system. What one person thinks is positive; another could find it down right rude and insulting. I pose this to my readers to not only open up this word for discussion, and dialogue, but to create a safe, and secure atmosphere where we all can talk freely and openly as well as acquire the benefit of each others experience, so that we can gain a whole new outlook, understanding of, and interpretation to not only encounter what that word means to us, but, what it means to each other, and all it represents.

Having Cerebral Palsy, myself, and hearing these words all my life makes me think about how others feel. It makes me want to ask questions, see how other people think, deal with, and react to these words; but it especially make me what to know how you have been swayed and molded. It is an unavoidable reality that these

physical challenges and daily occurrences change how we all look and deal with life on a daily basis. They are all too real. It not only impacts other people's lives and attitudes, but it affects those directly closes to us. It absolutely affects whom and what we are; as we can see concrete results taking hold in all areas of our daily lives. We are an exceptionally aware species, who have a six sense. We can tell when others hold back what they truly feel, when one interjects with a conniving control, and begins to assign rules and regulations of what we are and aren't truly capable of doing and becoming.

Why, you may be asking yourself? Well, because people will be people. People well look at us and judge us thought their own prism of experience. They will look at us through their own light and transparency. They will intellectually think they know better or more then us. That is why it is so very important to analyze our own thinking, our own attitudes, and our inner most thoughts.

There are so many old fashion words, and terminologies that are still used in today's culture and society that are derogatory, and show a critical or disrespectful, disregard for us as people. Even though out-mouted, these words are still used. They seek to limit us as individuals and our dignity as human beings. They take away all our pride to move forward. Some of these ideas and concepts sell a forced notion and an obligation of what we are and are not allowed to become. In every aspect of our lives, there is an entire set of rules and regulations written and unwritten which the general public believes and leans towards. It is imperative that each of us, in our own way, search our souls at our core root, and make a conscious choice to be visible, and communicate these feelings within our community.

The more active we communicate and share, the more confident we become. We gain a self-worth to reach out more to others, as we inspire and encourage. As we do this, we summon up hope for all. We help others to get out of themselves, as we aspire others to think new thoughts, and reach for new goals. Moreover, the more we engage freely in all activities, the more empower we become. Not just to help ourselves, but to help each other as, we breakdown the walls of isolation, separation, and exclusion. We easily and effortlessly introduce new ideas and ways to look and maneuver through life.

The more active and willing we become, the more engaged and committed we become to give back and make a difference in our community, in the things we say, and the friendships we have entrust, the more we summon up and invoke a new belief system. We initiate insightful meaning in things we share dialogue about. We have a chance to make a difference, open up new channels, and make new passages towards the way people talk, think about us, and use words from there heart. By being mindful, sympathetic, and conscientious, people will learn to treat

us with dignity, and respect. By doing so, we will be passing it forward. We will be making a difference, and hopefully, change people's attitudes. Perhaps one day they won't utter words of contempt. Life will take on a whole new meaning as we become a vital voice, and source contributing to everyone in our community.

In closing, I think the most important thing to remember is to retain ultimate decision making over our own lives. That is the only way we can thrive and survive in this world. That is the only way we can make a true difference. It is the main ingredient to live up to our fullest potential. This way, we will demonstrate to all those around us that our word and desires mean something and have merit. We will exhibit to the world that we want our thoughts, and our desires to be taken seriously. We will show everyone that these wishes are to be reached for and to be fulfilled. And that no one can take them away from us. No one!

By demonstrating our determination and staying steadfast to our thoughts and beliefs, we will teach the world and the people around us that our word means something and warrants respect, admiration, credibility, and is to be valued with high-regard. If we hold fast to these truths at our core the impossible will become possible!