

2018 International Essay Contest for Young People

[Youth Category – Honorable Mention]

Making Ability Stronger than Disability

(Original)

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“What’s the big dream dear?” asked my mother one fine day in my final year of medical school.

Born as a child who required constant supervision, it was unknown what I had been suffering from that made me get convulsions. After numerous brain scans and tests, it was finally revealed. I was diagnosed with epilepsy at the age of seven. I didn't understand severity of my disability and being on medications since the age of seven was honestly not a challenge until I turned around eleven or twelve.

School life made me feel miserable. My disability restricted me from picnics due to my parents and doctor’s concern .I wasn't allowed outdoor games or rides that could induce seizures. I felt life was unfair and not meant for people like me. I battled inferiority complex. My family believed that the fact that I was suffering from epilepsy should be kept a secret. It hurt me so much, that as a child I often questioned why was I born? What's the point in living when every other child is playing out, while I am in the hospital every two months getting my tests done? Why me? I had so many questions. I had no idea where life would lead me. But being blessed with parents who have been my pillars, they stood by me making sure I completed my education. My parents pushed me to do my best in whatever I could do. I worked hard at school, scored a full 10/10 CGPA in my class 10 board examination. I went on to score 92% in my class 12 examinations.

I decided to make my career in medicine and be a proud doctor who once was terrified about living with epilepsy. My journey at medical school has been life changing .I have seen what children with autism go through, children with down syndrome, cerebral palsy, mental retardation, dyslexia, children born without arms. I realised that what I go through as an epileptic patient is a quarter of what these special needs patients face.

Governments are attempting to make life comfortable for people with disabilities. What I believe is lacking is mental support. We need to give those with special needs an

opportunity to succeed. Why can't we have more scientists, engineers, teachers, singers who are disabled? Is it because we look down upon them or they lack confidence to come out and shine? Opportunities are given to disabled, but not all of them have the courage to grab them. We have to make their families realise that, disability is not something to be embarrassed .Everyone including the disabled, have been born with special talents. We have no right to underestimate them. Their families should identify what is that special talent and push them and be a driving force to them. They must be taught not to listen to the surrounding voices that doubt or discourage them. All they need is a positive attitude and some love.

Anyone of us could meet with an accident and become disabled, any of our dear ones could become disabled. We are truly blessed. I urge everyone to lend your hands and heart to every disabled person, make them feel they are special whether it's the smallest act of sharing a smile or telling them they are beautiful and encouraging them. It's not their fault they were born disabled. Its life's way of telling them they are different and born with special abilities and we have to make them believe that they are people with special abilities and not with disabilities.

My childhood with epilepsy was comparable to that of a special needs. The answer to my mother's question "what's the big dream?" Is to establish my foundation for people of special needs to make them realise that they are not alone and most importantly to support their dreams all the way through to achieve them.

The change that I want to make, is to provide a firm ground and foundation for the empowerment of every disabled person. This I believe can be possible if we work cooperatively towards making their special abilities more powerful than their disabilities.