

**Serres, D. Think Everything's "Normal?" Then It's Time To Reconsider And Promote A New Narrative Of Disability. Retrieved from <http://organizingchange.org/think-everythings-normal-then-its-time-to-reconsider-and-promote-a-new-narrative-of-disability/>**

Drew Serres commented on the idea that we have a desire to participate in today's day and age. This again links back to the idea of a participatory culture. One of the previous articles discussed its importance and usefulness and how it can help to build creative and improvisational techniques. Yet, I find it interesting how Serres points out that this desire to participate can also present the problem of conformity and exclusion. When you think about it, there are many people who may feel like outsiders in group settings for whatever reason that may be. For example, a shy personality or a disability. This shouldn't be a determining factor of whether a person feels included or not. This is just their way of life.

I had never thought of viewing disability as an identity like gender. I had never drawn the comparison like that. I had grown up under the impression that if someone had a disability it was okay for us to pity them because they were clearly suffering as they didn't have the opportunity to live to their fullest potential. Disabilities were, and still are, viewed as a burden to the person instead of their way of life. How selfish for us to think we are the only ones capable of living a full life! What does a "full" life even mean? I'm sure that a person with a disability can live a beautiful life like anyone else can.

After mentioning this, I'm wondering if people would be inclined to say, "Oh yes, they could live a full life by making the best of a bad situation!". That's an interesting idea of viewing this disability as a "bad" situation because it does not measure up to the "normal fully functioning body". I truly detest this idea of normality and that we live in a culture of normalcy. Maybe it is true that persons with disabilities are unable to live a fulfilling life, but this is because society is so concerned with bringing them closer to the norm and, by doing this, are oppressing and discriminating them. This is why they cannot live a fulfilling life, because we won't let them, and not because of their disability. I think we also try and belittle and pity them, because we think they are incapable of performing everyday tasks as well as "normal" people are able to.

I have a medical condition myself that limits some of the tasks I am able to perform, but I have learned to adapt and perform them as best I can. I can relate to not wanting to feel inadequate just because my body may not be a fully functioning one. I like the point Serres made about supporting persons with disabilities by allowing them to adapt to life based on their specific disability and not eliminating things we view as 'hazards' or 'difficulties'. We jump to the conclusion that just because they have a disability they are totally and completely unable to perform said task. Well, maybe they are and it just takes them a little longer or they have an alternate method to do it. At the same time, I believe

there are some disabilities, like those who use a wheelchair, who must be accommodated for things to be accessible to them.

I'm sure no matter what way of life they are living, they all want to feel a sense of pride. If society continues to oppress them and keeps setting their expectations lower and lower, they will never get this feeling. Serres presented the idea of self-determinism, which is another point I liked. Yet, I feel like not just persons with disabilities want to build their confidence. I think we need to eliminate fears about all stereotypes and stigmas and instead support one another in our own unique independent ways of living. If we came to this mutual respect, we would gain so much perspective and insight to one another - something that I think is truly overlooked in today's society.