



"DISABILITIES" are WONDERFUL ABILITIES (Opportunities) in *DISGUISE!*

Everyone is a package of both capabilities & challenges.

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Blind-Bartley the Duck

EVEN DISABLED NON-HUMAN ANIMALS

I'm more of a speaker than a writer, as you'll easily see. Despite this, hopefully I'll at least succeed in communicating my heart as a counselor about the issue of *disabilities*. In most of my writings and talks, you'll notice that I often reference animals. There's a very personal reason. To be vulnerably honest, it's because I owe animals my life, *literally*. It was my animals' unconditional love growing up as a boy (*both my domestic dogs and wild animals I rescued*). They not only "helped" me believe in the reality of unselfish love, but literally saved me from depression and suicidal temptations — due to my dysfunctional childhood, and my struggle with personal "disabilities". Plus, over the years, I've seen our AAT (*Animal-Assisted Therapy*) animals in my pastoral *counseling*-psychology and my biological-science *teaching* careers provide the same wonderful blessing for thousands of other people!

So I'm committed to be *their voice* in a world of humans who so often use and abuse them for personal pleasure and convenience. I believe our human *lack of consistent* compassion for the suffering of sentient animals is directly related to our lack of compassion and action for vulnerable humans (***abused children, the enslaved, the oppressed, the disabled, etc.***).

"Righteous people care for the SOUL [Hebrew = nephesh] of their animals,
but the kindest acts of the wicked are cruel.

Proverbs 12:10

Dr. Arthur Schopenhauer, German philosopher (1841 book - On the Basis of Morality)

"Compassion for animals is intimately connected with goodness of character,
and it may be confidently asserted that he, who is cruel to living creatures, cannot be a good man".



For example, the photo at the left is of me hugging our rescued duck, **Blind Bartley**, when he was a baby. He was born blind in a store where they sell baby ducks to be bought, raised, slaughtered, and eaten. No one wanted to buy and hassle with raising a blind duck, so the store owner cruelly threw him into a trash dumpster. But one of our friend's sons, who worked there and heard him making little noises, quacking for his mother. So our friend's son rescued the little duckling but could not keep him. We adopted him to be one of our menagerie of rescued Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAT) helpers. By the way, Bartley quickly learned to love music, and like the blind musician Stevie Wonder, would sway his head to the beat. Bartley would listen intently, sway his head back and forth, and then start quacking and dancing in a circle with joy. He even had favorite songs!

After years of AAT with us, he was adopted by a wonderful large animal rehabilitation sanctuary north of New Orleans, when we moved to Texas, because our new neighborhood HOA would not allow us to have him.

Among all of our AAT animals, Bartley for years was one of the *most powerful* therapeutic *bridges* for human hearts — helping them open up and learn the joy of living a life committed to compassionate love and *self-sacrificial service* for others (for ALL “persons”). Please think about it. “Persons” includes both human-people and *non-human* people. We all know that each individual animal (*your dog, cat, etc.*) has a *unique person-ality*, and only a *person* can “be” a *personality*. Therefore, each animal is a real “person”. No, *not* a *human* person, but still a person deserving compassionate comfort, protection from suffering, and respect as an individual being.

WE’RE ALL BOTH DISABLED & ABLED

TWO OF MY SIX CHILDREN’S STORIES

Each one of us has a combination of both abilities and “disabilities”. Some disabilities are more obvious than others, yet we all have them. After 40 years as an individual, marriage, and family pastoral counselor, one of the most important things I’ve learned about all of us is that everyone is insecure and struggling with their childhood past, and their current fear of inability and failure. No matter how “successful” or “got-it-together” a person looks on the outside, everyone struggles on the inside and deserves compassion. I’ve had the privilege of witnessing countless people learn to view and use their “disabilities” (mental and physical) as opportunities for discovering and developing the highest, most valued, and truly *successful* human quality. That valued virtue is *humble*, compassionate, unselfish, even self-sacrificing love for others. Each of us as “disabled” people have the choice to either *harden* or *humble* our hearts. *Hardening* our heart leads to selfish bitterness, insecurity, anxiety, depression, broken relationships, and a whole host of other problems. In contrast, *humbling* our hearts leads to love, manifested as “joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control”.

Two of my six adult children have lived their entire lives with what are considered to be *significant* disabilities. One of our sons struggles on the autism spectrum (high functioning). In addition, he has further neurological issues due to severe lack of oxygen (anoxia) during birth. He was constantly bullied, even though he grew to be a 6’3” gentle giant of a man. Despite all of this, he has chosen to use his interpersonal neurobiological struggles to help him develop a deeper compassion for others who suffer. Plus, he’s become an amazing peer-encourager.

Another of our adult sons was born with a severe heart-lung condition called Tetralogy-of-Fallot. Over the course of his childhood, he’s had five open-chest heart surgeries, each involving excruciatingly long and painful recoveries. He is extremely intelligent, yet during his childhood and teen years it was hard for him to motivate and study, because he knew he might not survive each upcoming risky heart surgery. Ironically as time progressed, it was his *physical* heart condition, which opened up his *non-physical, emotional* heart to a profoundly wise truth that usually takes people a life-time to learn. When he was only about seven, we were driving to an out-of-state hospital for another serious surgery. Understandably he was nervous, so, we bought him some new toys to occupy his mind in the backseat of the car. It was a long trip to that hospital, and after a few hours of driving, he suddenly leaned forward and said,

“Hey Dad, I think I know what’s most important in life. It’s not things like toys and doing fun stuff. It’s relationships with people you love, including God!”

He has now grown into a strong, compassionate, very intelligent man. And, we are so thankful he met his loving, encouraging wife. He'll soon have two college degrees, pursuing a career in information technology, programming, etc.

Most people foolishly think that using their "abilities" to become "successful" by *competing* in the world's way of *self-serving* survival of the fittest, coolest, and cruelest is the most important thing in life. But that false "way" of supposed "success" is superficial, self-deceptive, and can never fully satisfy. In counseling, I call it, the "*painful pursuit of pleasuring self*".

In contrast, the good news *truth* is so profoundly simple that even a child can understand it. Yet many PhD's miss it. The true way to increase deep satisfaction and fulfillment in life is by growing humble, strong, compassionate love in order to help others and not just self, especially to serve others who are in even greater need than you. Even better is the fact that *anyone*, no matter what their disabilities, can learn how to grow in this *free*, life-transforming, *successful* character. Paradoxically, this quality is best forged in the crucible of our struggles and sufferings - it's formed in the *tough-times* of life. This is why our "disabilities" are actually the best soil in which we can grow the fruit of this highest human quality.

**It's why *all* of our "disabilities" are actually wonderful *abilities* in disguise.
"Disabilities" are opportunities to grow in the character (the fruit) of
strong, compassionate, self-sacrificing love for others.**

"The fruit of God's Spirit is LOVE: [*manifested as*] joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23).

[There's no punctuation in the original Greek MSS so based on the Ch. 5 context, especially v. 14, the singular "fruit" is "love", and the flavors are "joy, patience,, etc.]

"God IS love" (1st John 4:8)

MY WIFE'S STORY

My wife, Linda, a *brilliant* retired registered nurse, is on the very high functioning side of the Autistic Spectrum, just like one of our sons. Her life-long struggle on the spectrum has been extremely difficult and at times deeply painful. She shares that her greatest difficulty has been in communicating, especially trying to figure out when and how to enter a conversation or transition between topics. As a result, while she enjoys social events, she's emotionally drained by those situations afterward. The positive side is that she'd eagerly tell you her ASD "disability" has helped her grow in empathetic compassionate love for all others. It has helped her realize that everyone suffers with their own imperfections and trials. She's the most empathetically loving, caring person I've ever known. It's the core of who she is, in part because that's the way her mom and dad were, especially her mom — the sweetest, most accepting mother-in-law anyone could ever hope to have. In fact, during my very first evening with Linda's parents and her four brothers, I felt more "at home" and loved than I had felt in my own biological family growing up. When I say that, I'm talking about back *before* my parents later grew spiritually.

Also, because of Linda's nearly *photographic* type of visual ASD memory (*very much like the autistic animal behavior scientist Dr. Temple Grandin PhD*), she helps balance many of my deficits, especially my non-visual SDAM and Aphantasia *inability* to "see" my past or visualize my present and future (*see below*). For example, I can't even "see" images in my mind of our wedding 42 years ago, or any other past event. Yet Linda can describe the church, who stood where, the type and color of the clothes people had on, etc..

MY OWN STORY

Before I discuss my own package of disabilities, please know I empathetically realize that there are countless people who struggle much more from issues and hurtful histories that make my own difficulties and challenges pale in comparison. Some of their stories told to me during their counseling sessions have caused me literally cry along with them.

I've chosen to share below much more about my *own* personal disabilities than I shared about those endured by my children and my wife. Their full story is for them to share, not me. So, my choice to open up in more detail about my own, is simply to illustrate the depth of inner suffering that each person in this world, personally (*and usually secretly*), can experience — no matter what individual package of struggles and histories might have been endured.

MY CLUSTER-TRIGEMINAL (“Suicidal”) HEADACHES, ADHD, INSOMNIA, ETC

My own struggles (*especially when I was a child, youth, and young adult*) included significant ADHD, plus generalized anxiety, insecurity, hyper-vigilance, life-long insomnia due to adrenaline rushes during nightmares (*which for me were PTSD induced extreme night-terrors*), and frequent severe cluster-trigeminal headaches (*which are sleep-dependent / insomnia-related, and have been called “suicidal” headaches due to the severity of pain in the trigeminal nerve tract; much worse than migraines*). Lack of sleep makes them worse and more frequent. Most likely, I inherited at least a genetic predisposition to the headaches, because both of my parents also had frequent, severe vascular headaches (*my mother had migraines, and my father had cluster headaches that are often called “suicidal headaches” due to the severity of the pain*). As a boy I learned to *hide* most of these *inner* struggles from my friends and family.

MY BOYHOOD “BREAST”

In addition to those *inner* disabilities, I also had some *external* disabilities during puberty that had their own psychological effects. Not only did I have significant *acne* on my face, I also developed a hormone imbalance called gynecomastia (*relatively common to boys*). Even though I was a “normal”, skinny, XY genetic male, the gynecomastia caused me to grow partial *female* breast tissue on both sides of my chest (*and it remained for years — until surgery at 20*). It was minimal physically and visibly, but the psychological effect on my insecurity was huge. The doctors told me it normally disappeared in a few months or years, but could grow into full breast. The thought of that terrified me every day, all day. It never increased in size but stayed present until surgery at 20 to remove it all. The acne and minimal gynecomastia tempted a lot of my peers to respond with cruel teasing, which resulted in a crippling sense of shame and a very distorted self-image. These psychological struggles were less *after* the chest surgery and acne treatment, *but* the psychological-emotional roots often arose temporarily whenever certain circumstances triggered them.

As, I'll discuss further, practical agape-centered pastoral counseling and a new supportive church community in my late 20's (*before the current politicized types of churches today*) tremendously helped me overcome these issues. I learned how to *manage* and greatly reduce the residual effects of my childhood-induced PTSD, which I'll talk more about later. But before I do that, I'll try and describe a couple of my neurological challenges: *SDAM* (*Severely Deficient Autobiographical Memory*), and *Aphantasia*.

MY SDAM, & APHANTASIA - ChatGPT explanation link here: https://chatgpt.com/s/t_6947f9b933f8819180e14409f5b0bfa5

SDAM is an inability to *visually* (technically it's called *perceptually*) remember (“see”) any *images* of past events, people, etc. The second neurological disability, *aphantasia* is an inability (*even in present time*) to form *visual* images in my mind. For example, if I look at a person or a room or a picture, and then immediately close my eyes, I see absolutely *no* image. I only see a blank black screen in my mind. The

result is that all of my past memories, and my present thinking, are *conceptual* (it's also called *semantic* memory) and *emotional* memories, *not* visual. As I mentioned already regarding my wife, she has the *opposite* of my kind of memory condition. Her type of memory is often found among some people who are on the autism (neurodiverse) spectrum. Like Dr. Temple Grandin, many on the autism spectrum have near *photographic* visual memories, as well as powerful *present-time* imaging capabilities. For example, Linda can “see” in her mind the page of a book she has just finished reading, almost like a photograph.

Despite my lack of “visual” (image) memory, my *conceptual-semantic* memory functions extremely well in *extemporaneous* situations, which is why I've been successful in such roles as *counseling*, *conflict-mediation*, *seminar speaking*, and *teaching*. My thinking process and conceptual memory unfold in present time extemporaneously — especially when I'm involved in *verbal dialogue* during those activities. Past information, data, and concepts that I've learned over the years just seem to flow up into my mind, and then my natural verbal skills easily express them. But there are *no* mental images to draw from, so in a strange way it often feels like having no past — at least not a past I can “see”.

Both my Aphantasia and SDAM might be congenital (*genetic and from birth*), but they also could have resulted from a severe childhood brain infection (*meningitis*), which I contracted as a boy. That boyhood brain infection caused me to go into a deep and dangerous *coma*. At that time, the doctors told my parents I could die, and if I managed to survive the *coma*, then I'd likely have some form of residual brain damage.

MY SUPPOSEDLY HIGH IQ “ABILITY”?

Interestingly, I later tested as having a very high *conceptual* IQ, because IQ measures conceptual, logical reasoning, *not visual* capabilities. My point here is that even with my supposedly high, *intellectual* “ability”, it's been significantly *hindered* by the challenges of SDAM and Aphantasia. Remember, we each are a package of both abilities and disabilities. Unfortunately, my parents did not understand the significance of my struggle. Because my parents knew my IQ score was high, they assumed I was capable of achieving any academic/professional goal. So they constantly pushed me to take on stressful pursuits (courses, careers, etc.) that were more than my personal package of abilities and disabilities could handle neurologically and emotionally.

Comically, as I'm nearing 70 years old now, my wife and I joke about how our aging is making all of our life-long mental and physical disabilities even more of a challenge. Yet, the great news is that all of these *challenges* are always *positive opportunities* — *choices*— to either *harden* our hearts in bitter depression and anxious fear of failure —or instead to *humble* our hearts and practice empathetic compassionate agape-love for others — especially those with harder life conditions.

* * **So, my advice to you** is to discover and *humbly* accept/embrace the *reality* of your disabilities. Beware of the pressures from others who cannot fully understand your limitations. Learn how to accommodate your life choices to fit who you are — not what others expect you to be and become. Avoid the temptation of taking on more stress than you can handle. By the way, this simple truth reminds me of a favorite verse in a psalm (*song*).

“Lord, my heart is not proud, nor my eyes arrogant;
Nor do I involve myself in great matters, nor in things too difficult for me.
I have finally soothed and quieted my soul, ...”

Psalms 131:1

On our web-sites's (SidGalloway.com) “**ABOUT**” web-page, (SidGalloway.com/about), I share in more detail how my IQ and high grades, *unwisely misled* me to enter and pursue a PhD program for counseling

psychology. My stress level already at that time due to six children, plus also working as a counselor full time, and then adding the rigor of that *doctoral* program, were too much for my limited emotional combination of abilities and disabilities. Even though my grades were always “A’s”, my increasing anxiety and fear of failure exacerbated my insomnia and sleep-dependent cluster headaches. Even more importantly, the combined work and study load hindered my personal time and emotional energy to serve as the husband and father I was committed to be.

Thankfully, increasing family financial bills for some of our children’s medical needs, forced me to *withdraw* from my PhD pursuit. That withdrawal was actually a *freedom* that ended up being the very best thing for me and my family! So, please beware of your own ego temptations and pressures from others. Later, as years unfolded, the temptation be called “Dr. Galloway” re-arose when a couple of colleges offered to pay the tuition in order to complete my PhD. But, they wanted me to simultaneously work full-time for them as a counselor and also as a teacher of counseling-psychology. I’m glad that by then I knew my limitations well enough to decline both offers, and instead chose to protect my commitment to my *family*.

MY PTSD — *has been managed — yet its roots regrow at times & surface in night-terrors ...*

The most crippling “disability” in my life was and to some degree has continued to be the PTSD from my dysfunctional childhood experiences growing up. In fact, our family’s psychiatrist, who tried for years to help our family, apologized *privately* to me one day when I was a teenager, about the experiences I had endured at home. Having said that, please understand that I no longer personally blame or hold resentment towards my parents for their own psychological struggles, words, and behavior patterns. I’m now convinced that they did the *best* they could, given their own interpersonal neurobiological, culturally-shaped package of abilities, disabilities, hurtful histories, and beliefs.

My mother, who I now believe loved me the best she could, exhibited all of the destructive patterns of *BPD* (*Borderline Personality Disorder*). Many people with BPD, in order to *deflect* from their own insecurities, inner struggles, and relationship conflicts, will unconsciously *target* one or more people (usually a family member) as a “scapegoat”. For my mother (and our family system), I became that scapegoat. My father had to work a lot, so he did the best he knew how, when he was home. However, as is common in BPD family systems, his well-meaning efforts to help often resulted in simply covering-up and enabling my mother’s negative BPD patterns.

THE KEY TO OVERCOMING WAS CHOOSING TO OWN MY RESPONSIBILITY (ability to respond)

I now realize and admit that my *assertive*, verbal personality, and immature bitter choices made me an easy scapegoating target. As a boy, my assertive personality reacted by becoming the classic, “acting out” juvenile delinquent — bitter at them, God, and life in general. Every night in bed, I was angry with God about how “unfair” I felt it was that I didn’t freely choose to exist in this world that’s so full of suffering. Then, during the day, instead of passively tolerating or avoiding my mother’s BPD patterns towards me and towards others when she’d lash out, I reacted by confronting her. Later, as a young adult I learned how my reactions were the absolute worst thing to have chosen — for her, for me, and for others who were a part of the family system. As I shared before, there are so many people who have experienced unimaginably more difficult histories and disabilities than I faced. As a counselor, I’ve had the opportunity to counsel and get to know as friends, so many of these hurting people. And, it’s been a privilege to be a part of helping them learn how to manage, overcome, and grow new lives of joy and love.

Yes, understandably, I still wrestle with conceptual-emotional memories that cannot be magically wiped away — at least not in this *earthly* life. For example, I still have night-terrors, though a small dose of

sleep medication does help make them less frequent. Another example is that even today at near 70 years old, if I glance at photos of my parents, I *immediately* experience a rush of *fear* and rejection that feels like emotional electricity. So now, each time I look at a photo of my parents, I have to consciously remind myself that they did the best they could, given their own histories and disabilities.

As I've mentioned, my own change and growth was due to the compassionate, practical, *pastoral* counseling I received as a young man. It was centered around Jesus's Good Shepherd principles about empathetically seeing the bigger picture of people's *hurtful* histories, the power of *forgiving* them, and most of all learning to *love* those who *act* like "enemies". So instead of hanging on to the bitterness and rebellion that I had chosen as a boy and teen, I finally choose to forgive, to see both my parents as equally hurting adults who were suffering from their own childhood histories — just like me. I learned my parents did *not* think, feel, speak, *nor* act in the patterns they did on purpose. It was *not* in order to *intentionally* hurt me. They did the best they could, simply following their own learned patterns of handling the stresses of life.

Plus, I realize that culturally and generationally back in their childhood and young adulthood, they didn't have any opportunity to receive *effective* counseling to help them learn how to better deal with their issues. So they never received the help they needed to change their *destructive* patterns of *self*-protection. Such patterns are *natural* in this broken world that so often follows the "way" of competitive survival of the fittest.

I'm so grateful for the good-shepherd style of holistic pastoral-counseling that helped me learn (*despite my current minimal struggles*) to give love, empathy, and compassion towards my parents. The best thing was that much later in their elder lives, after I had personally changed as an adult, they too eventually received wise *pastoral*, compassion-centered counseling. That's when they had their own gradual (in a *supra*-natural kind of way) *spiritual* awakenings that helped them change and grow.

One of the motivations that might have led my parents to pursue pastoral counseling was my choice as a young adult to write a letter apologizing for all of my youthful rebellious arguments and behaviors, *without making any excuses and without blaming of them*. I didn't hear from my parents for months after I sent my letter. So I called on the phone to be sure they got it, and to try and verbally express my apology more personally. My mother answered the phone, and her only response was, — "*It's about time you apologized!!*". I had hoped that she would say that she forgave me. And I also a bit selfishly that she might acknowledge at least some of her own responsibility for our family struggles. Sadly, at that time, she did not. For her at that stage of her life, my call to apologize was just an open door to vent her anger and life frustrations

However, the good news is that many months later, she finally called one day and told me that she had come to realize that my childhood and that of my sisters' would have been much *better*, if she and my father had *fully* followed the relationship principles Jesus taught about love. Both of my parents have passed on now, yet I look forward to a new relationship beyond this physical realm. My hope is focused on the evidential-faith that our future *reality* will be filled with agape-love — reunited together forever.

BEWARE OF PASSING ON GENERATIONAL PATTERNS

When I think of my my now grown six children (*and my own failures as a parent to reflect the pure way of agape-love back when they were kids*), I'm grieved that they surely struggle with some hurtful memories, emotions, and patterns as a result. My wife and I know that we passed on a measure of dysfunctions we developed from our own parents and childhoods, which then contributed to our children's life struggles. Yet hopefully, the fact that as newlyweds, we consciously made the effort to go to seminars and read books about how to build a healthy family, to see how to unlearn past patterns,

and to learn how to better live the way of agape more *consistently*. The good news is that according to each of our adult children, that's the case. By God's grace and the growing practice of agape compassion principles, all of our kids, their spouses, my wife, and I are all best of friends and have intentionally moved near the Austin Texas area to be close to one another. Having so many adult kids, plus each of their wonderful life-partners, it's an amazing time of never ending get togethers and parties! *The moral of the story is that you too can learn and grow, your relationships can be healed, and past negative generational patterns can be stopped.*

POSITIVE OPPORTUNITIES

Instead of going into more details about our own disabilities in this brief essay (*and remember that like most folks we each have many more*), I simply want to highlight that our struggles have been the *positive* "weights" that allowed us to *exercise* and *strengthen* our *capacity* for faith (evidential trust) in the way of agape-love, in order to grow stronger in compassionate service for others. Remember that when you, me, or anyone is faced with struggles and suffering, each of us has a crucial heart *choice* to make. Each person can respond with a *humble* compassionate commitment to help meet the *real* needs of others who are worse off. Or, we can *choose* to respond with selfishly *hardened* bitterness, focusing on ourselves merely as *victims* — which always becomes a bottomless self-destructive pit. Please beware of this *natural* temptation.

THE PROFOUNDLY PRACTICAL PATH TO GROWTH

Remember that it helps to keep in mind that no matter how "perfect" *other people* might *appear* to be on the *outside*, they are all *inside* like little children at their core, struggling with often *hidden* imperfections, insecurities, past dysfunctional families, and therefore learned *less-than-best* patterns of coping (just *surviving* instead of *thriving*).

Learning to grow in this way of love, and to choosing to let it *flow* through you to others — is our human *purpose* in life — the ultimate *meaning* of life. It's why we're here on this planet. It's the only way to grow genuine fulfillment. It is *never* by *self-righteousness*. It's simply by *humble* dependence (*rational, evidential faith*), depending on the ultimate Source of Love, *not just on yourself or on others*. We all have an huge hole in our soul that only infinite, *pure* love can fill. That's why dependence on the transcendent *Source* of love is so important.

Jesus used an outdoors, nature metaphor to describe it. He said it's simply the way a grape *branch* depends on (*yields to*) the grape *Vine* (*the Vine is analogous to the transcendent Source of love*). Only by yielding/connecting to the Source of love, can the *sap* (*the Spirit of love*) then freely fill and flow through you (*the branch*) to produce *good fruit* (*the relational spiritual fruit of agape-love*). It's a gradual growth process, *not* by some set of magic *religious* rituals or by following rigid rules. It's just a profoundly simple, free-will *relationship*, by humbly choosing to connect to, depend upon, the Source of love more than upon yourself or other finite, flawed people. It's choosing the attitude of humble gratitude for the opportunity and privilege in this life to "be" love for others who are in need, due to *no* fault of their own.

Below one of my favorite quotes from Dr. Henri Nouwen's personal story about his deep friendship with Adam, a profoundly disabled, non-verbal man. Dr. Nouwen came to know Adam when he volunteered to help at a facility for *neurologically impaired adults*:

"Adam's humanity was not diminished by his disabilities. Adam's humanity was a full humanity, in which the fullness of love became visible for me, and for others who grew to know him. Yes, I began to love Adam with a love that transcended most of the feelings, emotions, and passions that I had associated with love among people. Adam couldn't say, 'I love you,' he couldn't embrace me spontaneously or express gratitude in words. Still I dare to say we loved each other with a love that was as enfleshed as any love,

and was at the same time truly spiritual. We were friends, brothers, bonded in our hearts. Adam's love was pure and true. It was the same as the love that was mysteriously visible in Jesus, which healed everyone who touched him." <https://henrinouwen.org/read/adam-gods-beloved/>

All of the following is an AI-SUMMARY QUOTE about the Positive Benefits of "Disabilities":

"While navigating the world with a disability can present challenges, it's important to recognize that individuals with disabilities often experience unique benefits and contribute positively to society. Some of these positive aspects include:

1. Enhanced Personal Growth and Self-Acceptance:

New Perspectives: Living with a disability can provide individuals with a unique perspective on life and themselves, fostering self-acceptance and appreciation.

Improved Coping Skills: Individuals with disabilities often develop strong coping skills and a greater sense of self-acceptance as they navigate life's challenges.

Increased Self-Confidence: Overcoming obstacles and achieving goals while managing a disability can significantly boost self-esteem and confidence.

2. Increased Empathy and Compassion:

Deeper Understanding: Having personal experience with a disability can lead to a deeper understanding and appreciation of the challenges faced by others, fostering empathy and compassion.

Enhanced Relationships: Individuals with disabilities may forge closer and more meaningful relationships with those who demonstrate respect and understanding.

Advocacy and Teaching: Many individuals with disabilities find immense satisfaction in teaching others about disability and advocating for disability rights, sharing their unique experiences and perspectives.

3. Creative Problem-Solving and Innovation:

Adaptive Skills: Individuals with disabilities often develop exceptional problem-solving skills as they find creative ways to navigate a world that may not be designed for them.

Innovative Solutions: These experiences can lead to innovative solutions, such as the development of assistive technologies and universal design principles that benefit everyone.

Fresh Perspectives: Disability inclusion in the workplace has been shown to drive creativity and innovation.

4. Enhanced Resilience and Perseverance:

Strength in Adversity: Navigating challenges related to disability can foster a strong sense of determination, resilience, and perseverance.

Motivation for Success: Overcoming obstacles can provide a powerful motivator for individuals with disabilities to work harder and achieve their goals.

Emotional Resilience: Developing coping mechanisms to manage the challenges of living with a disability can lead to increased emotional resilience.

5. Positive Workplace Impacts:

Diverse Talent Pool: Employing individuals with disabilities provides access to a wider pool of talent, skills, and creative problem-solving abilities.

Improved Productivity and Morale: Companies that embrace disability inclusion often experience increased productivity, better employee morale, and higher retention rates.

Access to a Broader Market: Individuals with disabilities represent a large consumer market, and employing individuals with disabilities can help companies better understand and serve this segment.

6. Unique Opportunities and Experiences:

Meaningful Connections: Disability can lead to unique social connections and relationships, fostering a sense of belonging and support.

Community Participation: Opportunities to engage in community activities and contribute to society can be incredibly rewarding.

Personal Growth through Advocacy: Sharing their experiences and advocating for disability rights can provide a sense of purpose and fulfillment.

In conclusion, while living with a disability presents challenges, it can also be a source of strength, resilience, and personal growth. Individuals with disabilities bring unique perspectives, skills, and talents that enrich both their own lives and society as a whole.”

HERE ARE JUST A FEW RECOMMENDED BOOKS (there are so many others):

For more, go to my website's ARTICLES page, and click the PDF with a long list of books by category.

- (140 pages) **ADAM: GOD'S BELOVED.** Henri Nouwen PhD psychologist, philosopher, theologian.
“In his final book Henri shares the spiritual lessons he learned from a profoundly disabled young man [Adam].”
- (100 pages) **THE WOUNDED HEALER: Ministry in Contemporary Society.** Henri J. M. Nouwen PhD, psychologist, philosopher, theologian.
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