

Disability and Coaching

To effectively manage a disability an individual must learn new skills and refine the ones that they presently possess. This Website includes information about many issues that the health care and rehabilitation providers may not have addressed. Time and resources in our health-care system to assist individuals with a disability or chronic illness remain scarce commodities.

What constitutes a disability, or for that matter, an ability, is a relative matter. Having been born without a left hand I remember that it took me a number of years to feel like it was okay to be just as mad over that as the individual who had lost the use of their legs through a car accident. I have often been seen as being more "able bodied" than individuals with a more "severe" disability. Physically my loss may have been less than theirs, but my anger at the time was no less intense.

Being born with or acquiring a disability can have a pervasive effect upon your life. It can shape or reshape the way in which you look at yourself and the way in which you relate to others. Managing a disability is a time consuming process. It can place you in a "dependent" role with others. It is frustrating! It can limit your life in many ways. It can close doors but it can also open new ones. One of the new ones is the ability to see things from a very different perspective.

Making the switch from focusing on what you cannot do to what you can do is often difficult. In part this is due to the fact that our society is focused on our limitations rather than on our abilities. For us to make this shift often requires coaching from others who have done it, who have made the shift and are continuing to focus on and build on their strengths.

Coaching focuses on the present and the future not the past. It is not focused on limitations but on strengths. It is a process that can facilitate the growth and development of the individual. It assumes that a person with a disability is resourceful and creative. It focuses on the positive, on learning new ways of dealing with issues and problems and on taking action. It is not based on the medical model. It focuses on self-actualization, e.g. living up to ones potential.