

HARDSHIPS OF DISABILITY

IT HAS BEEN A LIFE WITH MANY CHAPTERS - SOME OF PAIN, FEAR, HEARTACHE, A SENSE OF INSECURITY AND LONELINESS, BUT ALSO MUCH LAUGHTER, HAPPINESS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS, AND I AM A **SURVIVOR**, BUT I DON'T THINK FOR MUCH LONGER. I HAVE FALLEN OFTEN OVER THE COURSE OF MY LIFETIME, (BUT I ALWAYS GOT BACK UP), HAD A FEW CUTS AND LOTS OF BRUISE, BUT I HAVE NEVER GIVEN UP - THAT IS NOT EVEN AN OPTION FOR ME. I HAVE LEARNED TO BE CAREFUL ABOUT SLICK, WET FLOORS AND RUGS. (THE TILE IN A SHOWER ALWAYS SCARES ME). I HAVE TO SCOPE OUT MY SURROUNDINGS TO MAKE SURE THAT THE BATHROOM IS ONE I CAN COMFORTABLY USE. I HAVE TO MAKE SURE THAT A CHAIR IS STABLE ENOUGH, OR IF I CAN GET IN AND OUT OF A VEHICLE - IT CAN'T BE TOO HIGH OR TOO LOW. I BELIEVE ITS TIME FOR ME TO GIVE UP MY VAN OR TRADE IT FOR SOMETHING EASIER. THERE IS AN OLD SAYING: "WHAT DOESN'T KILL U OUTRIGHT JUST MAKES YOU STRONGER", AND THIS HAS PROVEN TRUE FOR ME OVER AND OVER AND OVER MANY TIMES.

THE MAIN PRINCIPLES OF CONSERVING ENERGY INCLUDE (1) DOING WHAT YOU MUST WANT TO DO, (2) PLANNING YOUR ACTIVITIES FOR TIMES WHEN YOU HAVE THE MOST ENERGY, (3) LEARNING WHAT YOUR MAXIMUM WORK IS AND RESPECTING THE SIGNS OF FATIGUE YOU EXPERIENCE AND (4) STOPPING BEFORE YOU BECOME EXHAUSTED. I STILL HAVE TROUBLE WITH THAT ONE. BEFORE YOU BEGIN ANY ACTIVITY, YOU SHOULD THINK ABOUT WHETHER YOU REALLY WANT TO DO IT AT ALL. DON'T ASK YOURSELF WHAT YOU SHOULD DO; ASK YOURSELF WHAT YOU WANT TO DO. (DO I WANT TO SWIM TODAY?) IT IS IMPORTANT TO BE FLEXIBLE. ALWAYS LET OTHERS HELP YOU WITH THE JOBS YOU FIND TOUGH. **PLAN YOUR ACTIVITIES FOR WHEN YOU HAVE THE MOST ENERGY.** I HAVE CHANGED PHYSICALLY. MY OLD COPING STRATEGIES DON'T WORK ANYMORE. I MUST DECIDE IF I WANT MY WEAKNESS AND FATIGUE TO PROGRESS. I AM RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT I DO. I CAN LIVE BETTER IF I ADAPT TO THE CHANGES IN MY BODY. ENERGY CONSERVATION CAN HELP ME FEEL BETTER AND DO MORE WITH LESS.