

Struggles That Make Us Who We Are Meant To Be

by Roving Correspondent Sierra Rasmussen

I have Cerebral Palsy, which is brain damage that occurs before, during, or after birth. It is usually referred to as CP. No two people with this disability are alike. My CP only affects me physically, but it can also affect people mentally. I have gone through some hardships, but I needed to go through them to become who I am. I pretended my CP wasn't there for a while – if I didn't acknowledge it, then it didn't exist. I was trying to spare myself some pain. I was trying to escape to a fantasy world, but reality would creep in and ruin everything.

I go through struggles that most people can't even imagine, and this is true for everyone. Unless you go through the same experience as someone else, then you really can't understand how they feel. I was in this battle for a while, a battle I couldn't win. I got tired of people saying "I know how you feel." These people love me so much, but honestly they couldn't feel what I was feeling. I felt lost and no one could help me find my way. That's the main reason why I tried to escape reality, because there my problems couldn't follow me.



It's not easy to be in a wheelchair. I haven't used a wheelchair all my life, but for about 11 years. This is probably why I had so much trouble accepting it, because I lost the ability to walk and talk. I was never good at either one, and over time I got worse. You never really appreciate what you have until it's gone. Life wasn't fair, and growing up you hear that all the time, but it doesn't sink in until you accept it. I would wonder why I was like this, and what was the purpose for my life. I grew up going to church, and it was so hard when I could hear about people getting healed. I would pray for healing and nothing would happen. I began thinking that maybe I didn't have enough faith or I was being punished. I didn't like who I was, and there were nights I just laid in bed and cried.

There wasn't a moment when I saw the light and I was changed. It has been a process, and some of the puzzle pieces have come together. I have grown as a person, and that has helped me face reality. I finally accepted that my problems will follow me wherever I go. I've accepted who I am, and I know there is a reason I have to use a wheelchair. I've looked over my life as seen how far I have come and all that I've accomplished. I want to change the face of disability, show people that we have just as much drive as a

"normal" person. I want to break some of the barriers down. Everyone has something to offer, and hopefully I can show all the people that come and go in my life.

From this experience I am a stronger person. If I didn't go through this, I wouldn't be where I am today. It has truly shaped me in a way that nothing else could. I wouldn't be as determined to prove that I can do something as good as someone else. Of course there are times when I get discouraged and feel like I will never get it. At times like this I remember that life has its thorns, but at the top there is a beautiful rose. It might sound silly, however sayings like that inspire me to keep going. Everything happens for a reason, and no matter how bad it seems, it will work out. I am on a journey, and I can't wait to see where I'll go next, because I know that I am ready for it.