INVITED COMMENTARY

Disability Studies in Medical Education

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ABSTRACT

This commentary discusses the paper by Khetrapal and Singh (2012). The author expands on the current reality of disheveled care, an organ-by-organ approach to “cure,” and a disregard for the emotional and social context of disability and shares her own experiences in trying to push victim-hood aside and take some control of the situation. The author lauds Khetrapal and Singh’s (2012) consideration of a program for disability studies in Medical Education.

Keywords: Care, Cure, Disability, Disability Studies, Medical Education

Since we live in a society that worships youth, beauty, and physical perfection, with the old and imperfect often considered diminished, life becomes more difficult to manage when the seeming departure from perfection widens, as the author’s experience clearly illustrates. It is untenable that she was stripped and paraded as an object of study, further complicating an already difficult situation. It would be better to view each of us as cherished rather than damaged. The author’s Disabilities Studies program would promote just that, a very worthy goal.

The Disabilities Study program, as described, would certainly help those labeled ‘disabled.’ I would argue that the program would help all people who are ill, those termed disabled or not. While her case is stark in its severity and complexity, the author, and those like her, have plenty of company in experiencing disheveled care, an organ-by-organ approach to ‘cure,’ and a disregard for the emotional and social context of the problem. I experienced those as well when I was ill. And like the author, the frustrations of trying to meet my needs only added more stress as I was reaching an emotional limit (Young, 2011).

As the authors mention, the key to a quality existence, despite physical and emotional challenges, is to push victim-hood aside and take some control, however difficult that may be. That attitude helped her, and it helped me (Young, 2009). The Disability Studies program would make room for the person, not just their body, but the mind and spirit as well. It would allow the soul to shine. It would ease the way to a better life.

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