

# **CRIPPLING OF AMERICA – LIVING ENABLED OR LIVING DISABLED**

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## **Abstract**

Disability is a tragic and largely preventable epidemic; often disability in the workers compensation, disability (governmental and private systems), and personal injury arenas results from archaic concepts and self-serving behavior of participants, particularly physicians and attorneys. Many people who believe they are disabled are not; they can live empowered, useful lives. Our perceptions mold our realities and those same perceptions may be manipulated by others. Disability costs, both human and financial, are bankrupting our society. Those who pander to the increasing expectation that injury inevitably leads to disability often fail to recognize the dynamics of human potential, and the healthy effects of work.

Individuals who perceive, or come to perceive, themselves as “victims” are creating a dismal future for themselves. Physicians, therapists, lawyers, support groups and media who needlessly tell people they are injured, ill and are disabled are complicit in diminishing and limiting lives. They create expectations about the future course of life after injury that are based upon the way that they were trained to practice their profession, their ability to treat the presenting injury, their view of the proper remedy for injury and their pursuit of personal and/or financial agendas that may or may not be shared by the injured person. Physicians often label patients with diagnoses not understanding that the labeling is an act that has lasting psychological significance. Sometimes the diagnosis is one of exclusion, after needless diagnostic testing and treatment, which increases the potential for disability by conditioning the injured person to think of themselves as profoundly damaged. Lawyers supposedly representing their clients may instead use their clients for their own personal financial gain by reducing every injury into the quest for the largest possible settlement. Injured people are conditioned to demonstrate disabled behavior for the purpose of increasing the value of the case, creating needless disability. Employers and insurance adjusters who perceive that claimants are all problematic force injured people to justify their disability behavior, habituating it and creating that reality. Even where these pernicious influences are not present, well-meaning professionals may still “enable” the disabled behavior of their clients and contribute to their

dysfunction unwittingly. By treating the perception of disability already exhibited by the client as an established fact, and helping the client organize their life responses and remedies with that assumption in mind, professionals sometimes assist the client in closing off the broader possibilities that are, in fact, available.

Solutions that empower no disable include creating positive realities, gratitude, traditions of strength, new paradigms rewarding recovery, disarming diagnoses, creating new expectations concerning the legal system and redirecting individuals toward healthy self-identify. People are able to live beyond assigned labels and be exceptional and productive. The ultimate responsibility for our actions, choices, and realities remains with each of us. Changing our state of mind changes our reality, both for ourselves and those around us.

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