

Surrendering My Driver's License



Looking in my rearview mirror all I could see was a profusion of pink. Leotards, tights, tulle skirts, slippers and dance bags belonging to the three giggling girls in my back seat. It was my turn to pick up the ladies from ballet that very warm fall afternoon. I got caught in heavy stop-and-go traffic. Suddenly, my right leg would not move anymore between the gas and brake, and when I did step on the brake my leg bounced wildly up and down.

Panic was not an option. My daughter was sitting in the front next to me and inquired as to why my leg was acting so funny. I reassured her it was just my bad leg acting up, which immediately was relayed to the back seat, "Mom's bad leg is acting up. We are pulling over for popsicles and treats." Fortunately there was a convenience store up-ahead and with the help of my left foot we made it safely into the parking lot. The corps du ballet jumped out, thankfully oblivious of what could have become a bad situation.

This incident happened many years ago, but it came to mind as my daughter was recently getting her learner's permit. Hannah was taking the written test to obtain her driver's license and I was in line, sitting in my wheelchair, waiting to surrender mine. I had stopped driving many years before, but the act of surrendering my license made me feel diminished, as both a mom and an adult. I could have driven longer had we adapted my car with hand controls, but it would have meant selling my SUV, buying a new car and making the changes, that at the time were cost prohibitive. I wasn't ready for that day and I wasn't ready to feel yet another loss that MS brings.

Having a driver's license gives credibility, an identity, and proof of existence, not to mention the freedom to come and go, for good reasons, bad reasons, or no reason at all. The plus side

to all of this is that Hannah has passed her road test and she can now take herself to softball practice, music lessons, and school functions too numerous to recount, greatly relieving the stress of having only one driver in the family.

As for that warm autumn afternoon, my husband was on his way home from work, and when I called him he was able to quickly swing by and pick us all up. I continued to drive for quite a while after that incident, probably too long, but it was so hard to stop.