

There are Two Sides to the Disabled Permit Coin



Isn't it amazing how a piece of card with your picture on can be the biggest help, yet the biggest hindrance at the same time?

From the perspective of a 20-something-year old who doesn't need a wheelchair, but still has a disabled permit, the following is what generally goes down.

You park up. Throw your permit on your dash. Get out your vehicle and stagger to the nearest store or wherever you're going to, hoping your legs don't give out, and you collapse in the street whilst having every man and his dog make remarks and comments at how you "shouldn't be parking there when you're not disabled."

I remember when someone first suggested to me about getting my permit to help me with when I'm exhausted, and I absolutely shot the idea down.

"I can't get one of those, I'm not 'disabled enough'!" I kept on saying!

In the end, though, I realized I was being stubborn. And so, I applied for one.

When I received it, I was so scared to use it at first. Truthfully, I was scared of what people would say to me. It wasn't till after I had a particularly bad relapse when I decided enough was enough, and I had no option but to use it.

I've found it to be a challenging thing to use even to this day. And even to this day, I feel like I need to "act it up" to make people visibly see I'm struggling. Stupid right? I don't need to do that. I know I'm entitled to one... shouldn't that be enough?

Thing is, other people can't see what's happening on the inside.

There are definitely two sides to the disabled permit coin!

See the thing is, I think, the main reason why people discriminate against us using our permits is because the parking lot spaces have a picture of a wheelchair on, the permit itself has a picture of a wheelchair on, oh look there are signs around the parking lot with a wheelchair on!

So, because of this, the general public have a preconceived idea that the person parking there has to be in a wheelchair.

Well it makes sense if there is a wheelchair on everything—right?!

WRONG!

See the thing is, these permits and spaces are actually not helping people with invisible illnesses by having a wheelchair picture.

Is there anything we could do about this? I'm not sure. Should there be something in place like color coded permits or even a different symbol for invisible illness? Absolutely!

But before you start feeling frustrated and angry with these people who make comments, what we need to remember is that there is currently a lack of education about invisible illnesses and what they are.

In my experience, I've found so many people that unless they know someone or that have MS themselves—they have no idea what MS is!

If someone has never been taught any different about the kinds of illness that are out there, how can we be angry at people who discriminate against us for using our permits when we are not in wheelchairs?

On one hand, permits are a great help when your fatigue is acting up, you're feeling weak and your legs will just not do what you want them to!

On the other, comes the snide comments that I know I've certainly encountered before. It may not be the case for you, it depends where you live.

So, what's the answer here?

Use your permit if you need it. If someone says something to you see it as an opportunity to educate them about your symptoms instead of feeling guilty for using it.

Either that or just ignore them completely because they don't understand. Remember there are an awful lot more people with invisible illnesses out there possibly feeling the same.