



# The Three Principles of Disability Etiquette

FROM DISABILITY AUTHOR AND SPEAKER GARY KARP

## The Three Principles

### 1. THEY ARE PEOPLE FIRST

A disability tends to loom large, the primary feature a person with a disability is often identified with, the elephant in the room. For people with disabilities, though, it's just one characteristic of the much greater whole of who they are as individuals. They are after the same things as everyone else; finding meaning, having choices, being valued by their family, community, and colleagues, and the pursuit of whatever in the world they are interested in and enjoy.

### 2. THEY TREASURE THEIR INDEPENDENCE

The general stereotype holds that living with a disability is very difficult, so the natural impulse many have is to help. However much a person might need help in certain situations, what they are able to do for themselves is all the more precious—exactly because of whatever degree of help they might need in certain situations. Ultimately, helping is about who gets to choose, who's in control.

### 3. THEY ARE EXPERTS AT THEIR DISABILITIES

Active people with disabilities often seem remarkable—heroic, even. But they simply use skills and strategies and tools to optimize their independence which might not be evident. They gain mastery at living with disability through training and experience. It's partly a matter of method. They've just learned how it's done. They are also motivated by a greater force which every one of us shares—the innate drive to live to our potential.

## About Gary Karp

Gary Karp is a highly-regarded figure in the business and disability communities for his unique ability to convey the true human experience of disability. Injured in 1973 after falling from a tree at the age of 18, Gary is an accomplished author, speaker, trainer, and juggler, known for his natural and humorous style. In 2007 he was inducted into the Spinal Cord Injury Hall of Fame as a disability educator.



## Modern Disability

People with disabilities are now living in a radically changed world. Thanks to a variety of clear, observable developments, they are an emerging population with a tremendous amount of growing potential.

People with disabilities are more mobile, more active, and more educated. They are more healthy, live in a more accessible world, and are more empowered by technology. Than ever before in history.

The implications are immense: a large population of people, freed of artificial obstacles, their possibilities expanding. People with disabilities of all kinds and degrees have real, valued roles to play in every domain of society and the world. And they are a growing consumer segment with money to spend.

Yet they remain misunderstood, viewed through an obsolete lens—until we embrace the new model of Modern Disability.

## Services

Gary Karp brings these fresh insights and perspectives on Modern Disability to his business clients through:

- Keynote Talks
- Interactive Group Training
- Webinars

Contact him to learn how he will make a difference for you and your organization.

**ModernDisability**  
Real People. Exploding Potential

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