

Role Model: The Real Deal !

The primary area for providing today's role models is overwhelmingly from the world of entertainment, sport, or business. However my experience working in the world of special education has established more authentic role models. I have been privileged to observe dedicated parents of children with disabilities. These disabilities cover the entire spectrum in both name and need. Certainly being the parent of Lindsey, my daughter who has Down syndrome, has illuminated a previously myopic perspective on the qualities of a role model. Lindsey enters into any relationship with unconditional love. She brings warmth to the other person that melts even the coldest heart. How? Through her sincerity in welcoming you to her inclusive world. She is deemed to be a member of the disability community. Upon reflection I need also to include myself as a citizen since I am disabled in the skills of car repair, cooking, and home repair, just name a few.

“Love conquers all” is a valid quote that comes to mind in reviewing Lindsey's interpersonal humanness. She views individuals as friends who are “perfect”. Wow! What an endorsement? The feeling of genuine welcomeness and concern is clearly demonstrated throughout her established list of questions. What's your favourite food? What's your favourite ride at Wonderland? Etc. She listens attentively with direct eye contact, gives hugs and high fives and makes you feel regal.

Our current society is deeply troubled by feelings of loneliness and isolation. This would be eliminated in Lindsey's world. Lindsey has earned the precious friendship of so many people who have responded to her being, who she is ... a loving, genuine, caring friend. To all of them, their return for what they give can be calculated as being exponential.

Personal perspectives can look at a glass of water as being half full or half empty. One can lament at the absence of half the water already drunk or be joyfully jubilant at the half glass of remaining liquid refreshment. All our children with special needs are uniquely individualistic. They provide parents with challenges that take them to a journey deep within their inner being that promotes our genuine personal growth and furthers our understanding of what it means to be fully human. Parents are provided with joy from the achievement of small steps in the development process that make winning a lottery seem insignificant and pale by comparison. Long live diversity in all its grandeur.

Disabled... NO! Differently Abled...YES!

Now you know the REAL Deal.

Dr. Ashleigh Molloy.

Director

Transformation Education Institute.