

AUDACITY

Ability (noun)

1. Possession of the means or skill to do something.
2. Talent, skill, or proficiency in a particular area.
3. Phrase [Best Of]: To do something as well as one can.

"If civilization is to survive, we must cultivate the science of human relationships - the ability of all peoples, of all kinds, to live together, in the same world at peace."

Franklin D. Roosevelt

Welcome...

Welcome to this "Ability" issue of Audacity. May I start by saying how pleased I am that you are able to read this? Whether or not you realise it we are all affected by disability in some way (we may be disabled ourselves or we know someone who has some kind of disability (be it physical or a Mental Health issue)).

When I came up with the idea for this issue I was fed up of the idea of disabled people being almost forced to shut up whilst everyone else decided what was best for us, or even what we are capable of. We are not the sum total of our disabilities, we do have minds of our own, our own opinions, needs, experiences, etc.

The idea behind this edition is to show the world that disabled people do have our own voices as well as the ability to be as creative as the rest of society.

I hope you enjoy reading this.

Ineke Poultney
@Inkyworld

This Pill

This pill is not like anything you've had before.

Mother has never given this to you with a homemade soup saying it will be okay as your temperature rises. For it to taste like artificial cherry and the soup to taste suspiciously mass-produced and from that can which lies at the back of the cupboard between a chutney given to you by a long-lost aunty and an unused sample packet of sauce.

You haven't had this pill before the night out, during the night out or to recover from that night out.

This pill gives you superpowers.

No CGI, ropes and strings or gruelling work regime needed here. One dosage of this pill will provide you firstly with a minty freshness (**DISCLAIMER: minty freshness in no way impacts on the overall transformation process added afterwards**), then a radiating warmth as your neurochemistry rewires so you gain:

New perceptual awareness; see things in a whole new light! Your brain will link two and two together, make five, take five out on a hot date, perhaps a movie and then some nice soup (not like the lies your mother fed you). After a few more dates you realise the answer was seven all along. Seeing red will bring you understanding and depth; seeing blue will make things slow down a little. Sensitivity and details lie in front of you like a puzzle which you can rearrange and define to your own devices.

Unique ideas; why are French fries called French fries? The word itself will radiate with you, hitting your eyes with a confusion and perplexity as to why a word designed like that, shaped like that, or spelt like that. Only you will see a connection between things that has not been made before, word play and ideas come to your fingertips like a phonetic highway of twists, bends and turns as you explore and discover.

Multitasking: when your friends are finding it hard to separate in their noggins fiction from non-fiction books, you can lament over Plato while also discussing why they didn't just fly the bloody eagles to Mordor. All in a day's work for your new mind.

(DISCLAIMER: side effects may include,

Words moving around on the page.

Not understanding grammar, realising about or using punctuation or the correct spelling of words.

Difficulty sleeping as your mind races from one topic to another in a sporadic mess. Did you eat? Did you forget? Where does forget come from? For and get make up the word, for like before get as in go get, what was I thinking about again?

Working twice as hard on trying to comprehend some piece of writing but being told repeatedly you are not concentrating enough and you should try and work even harder. Typecast sentences may include 'oh so you can read?' 'so you can't write normally?' and 'so is it hard for you to do, you know, work.'

So, just ask your pharmacist for **DYSLEXIA** at the checkout.

Thomas Florence
@TJFlorence

Mere Depression

I vomited fear. The stench and wrenching
And shaking in iceful anxiety,
The nerve like fear, my body pervading,
My writhing mind, gassed with insanity.
My blood has become black, thin and bile,
My heart and lungs, turned allergic to air.
I twitch like a hung body, dropped a mile,
To where demons below torture me there.
Death winks at me; shows me every worst fate,
And circumstance prepares my funeral,
And people, they point, and they mock my state,
'The weakling', they call me, 'The unable'.
Creditors, last, take my reputation,
And make me write it off: 'Mere depression'.

Scott Gould
@scottgould

Tandem

My partner in business and bookery and such will be in a wheelchair soon enough. For now, he has canes. I keep a cane in the corner myself, as his knees and my retinae rot.

This isn't my first team-up. I used to do odd jobs for a lady with a muscle disorder. If she could tell me where the dirt was, I could scrub it. Tactical coordination for everyday tasks. Explanation before action.

But this guy. I love him, but /this guy/. He can't just steer the tandem bicycle. He's gotta pedal full speed with legs made of pain. Momentum. Sometimes it's why we work. Sometimes it's why we crash and burn.

I always figure maybe our trouble understanding each other is because I was born this way. A congenital degenerative disorder. Professionals have said it may play a role in my mental disorders as well, a lifetime's experience reinforcing certain things. Go to the doctor every time. Learn alternative ways to read. Watch your step. Watch the symptoms. Watch your head. Watch your heartbeat. Watch out, because you won't see.

My legs got like this in the same place I spent a lot of time running into people head-first. The latter may have something to do with some of the other issues; it may not. Regardless, it was a lot of time spent running. Full-speed into people, full-speed to the next place... I just remember a lot of running. And then one day I couldn't run anymore. And it terrified me like nothing else.

I found a lot of refuge in imaginary worlds – some good for my writing career, some bad for my mental health. Both matters are tangled up with my writing partner I can't imagine anyone I'd rather have on the metaphorical tandem bicycle with me. It's exhilarating when things are going well. But now I'm trying, after way too long, to figure out how to stop pedalling so fast, to stop rushing. And like when I had to stop actually running, it's terrifying. I'm finally, after too long, getting some help to re-learn riding the bicycle, trying to appropriately value the person pedalling behind me.

With her acknowledged conditions, steering, finding a direction in several senses, was on me. To be someone else's eyes. Which should involve not taking action while that someone's still asking 'What does it say?'

And just like, once upon a time, I had to stop literally running, I need to find better ways to deal with the fear, with the crashing and burning, with the feeling of my knees slowly tearing themselves apart from the inside... by remembering to let someone else be the legs and set the pace. And we talk of professional help.

And it scares me, as much as being crippled did, maybe, to admit that's not the only way I'm messed up. But it's even more important.

Because she is worth it. Explanation before action, tactical execution... and remembering that we're both on this thing.

Katherine Perkins and Jeffrey Cook

Catch 22

It is a torment to live in this mind,
That is a tempest between day and night:
There is no break, nor a place to unwind,
For my good days are not free, just respite.
All my life I've been in a civil war,
A bloody battle neither side will concede,
That as long as I breathe I'm subscribed for,
And death, my only course to liberty.
I would happily live life but for this;
The incessant splinter stuck in my mind.
The battle without victory, endless,
The tempest renewed, at every twilight,
These perils tormenting me even now,
That I cannot escape, though I know how.

Scott Gould
@scottgould

Forgotten

I am the forgotten, the ignored.

Please allow me to introduce myself,

I am your friendly local afterthought.

Never complaining as much as I probably should,

Only because I know you are so easily bored.

Trying to make my way through the neighbourhood,

The Manor of which you seem to have styled yourself as Lord.

Someone once said to me,

“It’s your sight – it’s your problem”.

They don’t understand so how can I blame them.

I can only hope to educate and make them see,

How they sometimes make life extremely difficult.

So much so that I had to grow up long before I became an adult.

My natural world is blurred and fluffy.

Put simply – without my glasses I cannot see clearly.

Even with them on I sometimes have to pay very dearly.

Grocery shopping can be a nightmare,

And when walking in the road I have to take great care.

However, and I mean this most sincerely,

Be very careful how you treat me.

I may not say very much,

But you will soon know,

Exactly how far I am prepared to let you go.

I see more than I say.

I go by actions – not words.

Please Sir, Madam, MP, or Lord of the Realm,

Are you going to help me,

Or just follow the herd???

I wish you wouldn’t try to leave,

People like me in our personal version,
Of your nicely created Hell.
Trust me – given half a chance,
I could turn your life into a great expanse.
One filled with opportunities,
To help yourself as well as people like me.
There is a saying.
“No man is an island”!
We need to find a way of creating,
A world where everyone is treated equal.
Anything else is just like a house built of sand.
Reading this might have been tough.
But I bet you have never had it so rough,
As the forgotten, the ignored –
Never mind your friendly afterthought.
I might have a pair of glasses on my nose,
But them being some kind of miracle worker???
I think they must be on a “Go Slow”.
I wish I could properly explain.
But I think you,
Would end up so confused,
That you would probably never speak to me again.
Yes – glasses help me see.
Including the discriminating con,
In those offers of “Buy one pair, get another pair free”.
It is just not on.
Those offers are not open to me.
My glasses do help me see.
The gorgeous and the ugly people,
Who sit and stand around me.
The ones who help me automatically,
As well as the ones who watch me struggle.

I have problems with angles,
As well as bright lights and the dark.
I keep waiting for a human Angel,
To realise being me is not such a nice walk in the park.
So, next time we meet,
Instead of commenting and complaining,
Because I am inconveniencing you.
Offer to help me,
Or ask what I need.
Just do not try feigning,
Your interest in me.
I am a sensitive soul,
Who can speak for herself.
All you need to do is truly listen.
Hear me when I end up needing your help.
Don't take over,
Let me advise.
You are the disabled one,
When it comes to dealing with my sight.
I haven't usually got the energy,
For the required mental fight.
I am no longer intending to be,
The forgotten, the ignored.
Or even the friendly local afterthought.
I am going to be me.
What that entails – you will just have to wait and see.

Ineke Poultney
@Inkyworld

With Thanks To Our Contributors

Welcome / Forgotten – Ineke Poultney
This Pill – Thomas Florence
Mere Depression / Catch 22 – Scott Gould
Tandem – Katherine Perkins and Jeffrey Cook

Editorial

J.J. Patrick and Ruby Lilith compiled and curated this edition of Audacity, published in the United Kingdom by:



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