

You and I (adult version)

From the www.disabilityisnatural.com E-Newsletter by Kathie Snow

Other "You and I" comparisons are out there; this is another that can hopefully generate positive change. Not all scenarios apply to all people, but they represent the real lives of too many adults with developmental disabilities.

You're frustrated, sad, scared, or angry. *I'm told I have inappropriate behavior.*

**You're addicted to coffee, chocolate, texting, reality TV, and more.
*I'm told I have obsessions, and others use these as rewards or punishments in my behavior plan.***

You eat what you want, when you want. *I'm told what and when I can eat.*

You protect your personal space and property. *I have no right to personal space and property.*

You speak up and defend yourself. *I'm described as noncompliant.*

You protect your private information. *I have no privacy; it seems everyone knows everything about me.*

**You left your parents' home, and went off on your own, whether you were ready or not.
*I'm not allowed to move on until I meet "readiness" standards for "daily living skills" and more.
(Why didn't my family help me learn these things when I was younger?)***

**You live where you choose, with the people you love.
*I'm "placed" wherever there's an "open slot," with people I don't know.***

**You network to find a new job.
*I'm told I first need pre-vocational training; then maybe someone will try to find a job for me. (Why didn't public school prepare me for a job? And now, why can't others help me to learn to get a job on my own?)***

You get help from co-workers in your new job. *I'm told I need a job coach.*

**You fall in love and have intimate relationships.
*I'm presumed to be asexual; no one seems to care if I'm lonely and have no real relationships.***

You have fun at the mall, shopping for holiday gifts for your family and friends. *I'm taken on an outing to the mall. I have no money to spend on gifts and no one to give them to.*

You're surrounded by family and friends. *I'm surrounded by people who are paid to be in my life.*

You're known by your abilities and interests. *I'm known by my diagnoses and problems.*

You live by your hopes and dreams. *I'm supposed to live by the goals others write for me.*

**You live a life of responsibility, inclusion, and freedom.
*I'm held in a state of helplessness, isolation, and dependency.***

**You work to improve your standard of living throughout your lifetime.
*I'll most likely live below the poverty line for the rest of my life, unless significant changes occur.***

You're included because you're alive. *I'm supposed to earn the right to be included.*

You're presumed to be competent. *I'm presumed to be incompetent.*