

AWARD-WINNING

# Able

THE NEWSPAPER *POSITIVELY* FOR, BY & ABOUT THE DISABLED

## SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

### Let Freedom Ring

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Everyone has their own interpretation of what freedom means. It's probably a fair assumption that most people think of freedom as the ability to live independently with minimal restrictions on their lifestyle. Everything within reason of course.

When it comes to someone with a disability, especially but not limited to a person who is vision- and/or hearing-challenged, it becomes life altering. Freedom of movement becomes most challenging for someone who is visually-challenged or blind.

I have met several individuals who harbor anger within. This anger is expressed through body language, tone of voice and their overall demeanor. Freedom of expression is a great tool, but in my opinion, a positive outlook renders a more positive outcome in life.

Freedom is earned, it is not an entitlement. Our forefathers were forced to fight to earn the freedom we all enjoy today. However, we sometimes need to be advocates for ourselves first before we can be advocates for others, the goal being the betterment of humanity.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) came about as the result of hard work and a fighting spirit to provide accessibility and equality for the differently-abled community. The ADA has provided a means of accessibility which allows for a better mode of freedom with less restrictions.

This is what Freedom is all about — working hard for the positive outcome which allows each and every person the same rights.

So, back to mobility. As a visually-challenged person, the freedom to move about independently can be a difficult subject. A blind person is simply someone who cannot see and has a physical restriction to moving about freely without the possibility of injuring oneself.

A person with limited vision, unless trained to use a white cane or guide dog, has difficulty walking the sidewalks or country roads without fear of the many obstacles along the way.

I cannot tell a person what to do, but I do have a few simple suggestions. If you are reading this and have mobility issues, and if you really want to get out there, find the tools that work best for you.

Make friends or reach out to family for support. Get over your fear of asking for help — it is not a sign of weakness but rather showing the desire and determination to lead a full life like anyone else.

Reach out to one of the many assistance programs that can help teach you to be more independent. Give yourself permission to have the freedom to do what you'd like to do in life.

Don't hold back! Like Nike's commercial said ... "Just do it!"