

## The Ways to Tolerate and Enjoy Disability

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# The Ways to Tolerate and Enjoy Disability

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**Abstract:** My success story of an educator, PhD, a paralympian, a public speaker, is a story of ups and downs, of highest aspirations and frustrations, a story of a polio fighting for self-realization. This is the story of building the world of self-maturing the world that you are building not only for yourself, but for all the people who lost courage, hope and belief, because you feel that you are blessed with the mission to encourage people with disability. And this understanding helps me to draft, to involve in my ranks of successful people a great many of others.

**Keywords:** Inclusion; Disability

**Knowledge Focus:** Best Practices Focus

**Topic:** Inclusion

## Introduction

Nowadays, when my country, Kazakhstan, witnesses new challenges and new opportunities in our daily social life it is quite timely to speak here about the disability issues that require quite a new approach, the approach based on the experience of a person with disability whose life can serve as a practical example of overcoming and enjoying disability.

What is it – to have disability, to live with disability and to enjoy it? Yes – to enjoy!! And that is not a perversion. This is a kind of a challenge to the inability, some definite physical inability to perform some practical action connected with the functioning of some body organs. This is a challenge that brings forth all the hidden potential a person with disability can possess, a challenge that calls for compensation. And here where I come out with all my life experience of struggling and enjoying disability. This is my success story that follows – the story that can serve an example for those ones who are searching for life orientation in circumstances that sometimes run counter to one's wishes and expectations.

My success story of an educator, PhD in Linguistics, an internationally known wheelchair athlete and a two time Paralympian, a public speaker, an advocate of the course of people with disability, a fellow of a number of international educational, sporting and recreational programs is a story of ups and downs, of highest aspirations and frustrations; a story of discrepancies between the ambitions and intellectual abilities and the impossibility to properly realize yourself and a story of harmony, when you overcome the hardships inherited by you because of your disability and find your own individual peculiar way self-realization.

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This way runs through the detriment of a mean and humiliated thought that your life is predetermined by your disability through denial of a preconceived opinion of you. And through the building of your own world – the powerful world of self-maturing, the world that you are building not only for yourself, but for all the people who lost courage, hope and belief, who are grouping in darkness trying to find something which will keep them going.

And so far as you are blessed with this power – the power of imposing your own vision of a successful life on the people with disability, so far as you are blessed with understanding your mission, you are facing the challenge to improve the world of the disable to transform it from the world of suffering and surrendering into domain of *joy* and *happiness*.

This is what I have done for myself. The complete and profound understanding of my mission helped not only me to make my life a success but also it helped me to draft, to recruit, to involve in my ranks of successful people a great many of others, not only physically challenged people among them.

One of the most inspiring activities of mine is teaching physically challenged people self – advocacy and leadership which would be a breakthrough people’s mistreatment and misunderstanding of the possibilities of the persons with disability. The stereotypes that I would like to be broken is the attitude to physically challenged people in regard to their leadership qualities. Being a person with a disability, I tried to develop leadership qualities in myself for the purpose of self-advocacy. Now the time comes when I am teaching people with disabilities not only to advocate themselves, but also to develop leadership qualities.

This is a challenging task for a person with a disability to teach leadership able bodied students (which I was doing before our country gained independence). But it’s becoming even more challenging when it comes to teaching leadership to physically impaired persons. And this is the field where destruction of stereotypes begins. If a teacher of leadership himself is an active socially recognized leader, and if he can awake in a physically challenged person the desire to follow his example, this would be such breaking the ice of mistrust, humiliation, pain, disrespect, self-deprecation that it would create the entirely new vision of the possibilities of the disable and would bring the long-awaited changes into the life of our country.

The idea of harmonious physical and mental development was always dear to the hearts of our educators. The only trouble was that the disable were extinct from that educational concern. Nowadays, the situation is different in Kazakhstan. Disable sports, the Paralympic movement, became the reality of contemporary life. In Kazakhstan there were lots of clubs for disable people, associations for physical culture, and sports for the handicapped and the Paralympic Committee, which made it possible for our athletes to participate in the Paralympic Games in Atlanta, Sydney and Athens.

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This gave birth to many new challenges in the world of communication in the fields of learning diversity and celebrating new cultures. The only list of my sporting achievements can speak how broad is the world from which I can bring examples and the authentic information of the countries whose language I am teaching already for 48 years.

My serving an active challenging example, my teaching activity, sporting achievements, recreation, my educational and scientific ambitions of creating a unique system of teaching English, introducing a new way of Sport and Inclusive Learning Program for disable kids – all that contributed to a real success story of my life.

### **Author**



**Yevgeniy Tetyukhin, Ph.D.** Born in 1942, and has had polio since early childhood. Dr. Tetyukhin has 48 years of educational work in North Kazakhstan State University teaching Linguistics, English and American Literature, Multiculturalism, Disability as a part of diversity within Civics, and is currently a Professor of Germanic-Romance Philology Chair. As a wheelchair athlete of international rank and two time Paralympian (Sydney and Athens), he is a public speaker and advocate of the rights of the people with disability. In addition, Tetyukhin is an organizer of public events and lectures connected with the problems of disability and diversity.

*Image Description: Photo of Yevgeniy Tetyukhin*