

# *Ableism*

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I can help you to open your mind to a new perspective. I can teach you so many things if you let me.

You don't know what is inside my heart.

All this internalized ableism I have within me -- shame, self-loathing, blame and inferiority.

Ableism locks me in chains, with no one to hear my piercing screams.

Like an icy cold wind, ableism swirls around me. It confuses me, plagues my heart, and leaves me frozen.

Kids say what they want; adults have more knowledge about how to act. Would you know how to defend yourself? When people are looking, staring, mocking and impersonating you? It's incredibly uncomfortable to be watched.

Ableism triggers my anger. Why are you so cold? People don't understand why I can't turn my emotions off. Feelings are painful, even the good ones.

How can we educate ableists to see the pain they cause?

Diversity shouldn't be seen as shame, but as uniqueness, as greatness, as potential, as something beautiful, as something exquisite.

I am not disability. I am ability.

We all have different ways we work to achieve our dreams. Being different doesn't equal less important.

I may be afraid of things that others don't understand. It's hard to overcome these fears when people don't even try to understand.

Where is the compassion? Where is the empathy in the world?

Isolated, I lose my voice. I am part of the community fabric. If others participate in the meaning-making and I do not, doesn't it diminish the community? For one more voice to not be heard? What diversity is there without all voices?

When I am discriminated against I feel  
Disempowered.  
Disengaged.  
Pain persists.

Diversity shouldn't be seen as shame, but as uniqueness, as greatness, as potential, as something beautiful, as something exquisite.  
I am not disability. I am ability.

Ableism exists everywhere. In our media, government, employment, and community.

Ableism undermines my abilities to perform on a job and steals my ability to concentrate. If there is no room in the world to accommodate, how can we be equal?

I can't blame myself for something I can't change. I have the right to be included. I do belong, I am capable of love.

We are all equally important and our voices matter.

Ableism exists everywhere. Between us all. Between you and me.

The pain of being called the R word is the worst of all. How can I trust other people, if I can't sort out the ableists from the safe people?

I don't know who they are.

When people call me names it hurts.

Treat me the way I deserve to be treated, with dignity and respect. Ask about my feelings. Ask me if you don't understand, and I can say it again.

Ableism lives between you and me. Between us all. Hidden in dark corners, where the light doesn't want to shine.

If we shine light on the prejudice and confront our pain, there is hope for change and a deeper understanding and appreciation of differences.

Diversity shouldn't be seen as shame, but as uniqueness, as greatness, as potential, as something beautiful, as something exquisite.

I am not disability. I am ability.

Ableism clouds my perspective on myself and how others see me.

Limited by expectations. Others tell me I need to be faster or better. I compare myself to others. We need to get away from that thinking – so that I can do what I set my mind to, on my own time and the way it works for me.

With fear, vulnerability, and the cycle of ableism, we redefine our possibilities. We want to be aware of this prejudice and how it breaks and separates our community into pieces.

Alienated by ableism, now I live in my solitude.  
But I can't be a lonely heart forever, for I am love in human form.

It is dangerous to be mindless of ableism. It is dangerous to live in fear. We all need to understand - we are all different. We are all equal. We are human. We all have rights. The time is now, to rise up and use our power for us, not against us.

Hope arises from the embers of fiery flames, and I am  
Empowered.  
Engaged.  
Pain subsides.

Diversity shouldn't be seen as shame, but as uniqueness, as greatness, as potential, as something beautiful, as something exquisite.  
I am not disability. I am ability.  
I can help you to open your mind to a new perspective. I can teach you so many things if you let me.