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March 13: What better time could there be to start a journal than in the waning hours of Friday the 13th? What could go wrong? Back in March, when the magnitude of the pandemic was just settling in and stay-in-place self-improvement resolutions were all the rage, I decided this historic period would be a perfect time to start keeping a personal journal.

Understand that I’ve tried to keep a journal too many times to count and I’ve always failed. Always. But this was going to be different.

March 28: Two weeks and still going strong! COVID-19 seemed to present the perfect opportunity: an unprecedented global event, complicated emotions, constantly changing circumstances and, perhaps most importantly for me, lots and lots of time. With months of lockdown looming and no social events, dinners out or trips, I was bound to have plenty of opportunities to document my day-to-day. All of those predictions proved correct.

April 6: I ventured out for the first time in three weeks today. I didn’t like it — everything feels like a threat. The world is crazy. Emotionally I’m all over the place, and I have tons of newly-free time. After five months of journaling, I wish I could tell you my endeavor lived up to my expectations, but in keeping with COVID-19 trends, the reality is more complicated.

On the one hand, I finally succeeded in sustaining a journal and have grown to enjoy composing my daily entry. On the other, staying in place and pandemic living don’t exactly make for the most compelling journaling. When you don’t go anywhere or see anyone for days on end, the entries begin to resemble a less funny *Groundhog Day*.

April 18: Swapped out the gray hoodie for the orange one. It still smelled OK, but five days in a row seems gratuitous.

May 7: I set a new personal record wearing trusty old gray seven days in a row! #Proud

June 25: Is it OK to wear a hoodie on a work Zoom? It wasn’t always so mundane. Looking back on my early entries, I’m impressed by my own insights and thoughtfulness. Back then, I took time to reflect on the latest news and clearly made the effort to chronicle how it impacted me.

By month two, I could hardly bring myself to read the newspaper. In month three, I started blocking friends on social media and rethinking where and how often I got my news. By month four, I resigned myself to passing the hours playing video games.

August 7: I’m tired. I have nothing interesting to say. Sleep is all I desire. COVID fatigue has set in. The always-on, 24/7 social media/news cycle is exhausting and, quite frankly, overwhelming. Between the depressing realities of isolation and the daily casualty counts, the pandemic has proven its ability to crush our plans and hopes.

Finding ways to stay sane is more important than ever, and to my surprise, I’m finding solace in my nightly writing. Having time for reflection, no matter how mundane, has been therapeutic. Keeping up the journal is a bulwark against depression and the idea that COVID-19 fatigue can win.

The irony of my journaling “success” is not lost on me. That I finally managed to keep a journal in a time of unprecedented monotony has led to some good laughs. As humor is in short supply these days, I’m thankful for that.
This month’s “Redefining Possible Revisited” spread isn’t the first time we’ve featured the work of Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer Bear Gutierrez. But it is the largest showcase we’ve given him, and I think you’ll see why we did. His passion for portraits pops off the page, and his images stay with you. Based in Colorado, Gutierrez says working with Denver’s Craig Hospital for this shoot stands out as one of his favorite projects. “It felt like a family,” he says about the rehab. “It didn’t feel like a hospital.” The experience also motivated Gutierrez to change his life. “The project inspired me to take steps to reclaim my health and lose weight so I could have the knee surgeries that I needed.” He had the first knee replaced earlier this summer and the second surgery was scheduled for press time.

If you ever snap photos to try and capture the experience of life as a wheelchair user, you know that taking shots while seated is not as easy as it seems. If you’re like me, you probably end up with a forgettable panorama of butts and midsections. So when I saw Nolan Ryan Trowe’s photo-heavy op-ed in November 2018’s New York Times, I took note — this guy is different. And then in December 2019 he won top prize of Getty Images’ first-ever disability-focused Creative Bursary. I’m excited to share Trowe’s work with NM readers. And, in case you’re a baseball fan like me and are wondering, he is named after the MLB legend.

When I broached the idea of this photo-based issue to Kirk Williams, he was trapped in an Airbnb in Buenos Aires. In the middle of an epic van-voyage through South America, the world stopped for COVID-19 and he and his brother got stuck in Argentina for a whopping 140-plus days. Before all that happened, we discussed running a feature of photos from the trip. But now, unless we wanted a montage of shots of his accommodations’ white walls, we were out of luck. Being the pro that he is, Williams, who is finally back stateside, pulled together an informative guide for aspiring photographers. His pro tip? “The best camera is the one you have on you. You don’t need something fancy to get good pictures — just get out there.”
ADA Impact
Excellent job highlighting the importance of the ADA law and how it has made a difference in the lives of those that live with a disability (“The ADA Enforcers,” July 2020). The testimonials certainly highlight the challenges to enable accessibility and improvements in the quality of life for so many. Thank you for sharing your work to educate everyone and to create greater awareness.
Frank Fernandez
Newmobility.com

A Table Too Low
Thanks for your column (“Ervin: Taking the ADA on the Chin,” July 2020). In one assisted living facility I lived in — I am in my fourth — I went to great lengths to have my wheelchair measured so that I could fit under the table. After many fittings, the maintenance crew decided the answer was to have the table legs replaced only when I was eating, but not permanently. It must have been a relief when I moved.
Kathy Dumas
Roseville, Minnesota

Beyond Access
A very good read and right to the point (“Big Ideas In Travel And Tourism,” July 2020). Big businesses are still allowed to avoid implementing the needs of everyone, yet smaller businesses have to ensure they meet the requirements or they do not receive a permit. If you make your voices loud enough and challenge everyone that is breaking the law with the law, change will be achieved.
Simon Williams
Newmobility.com

Enforcement Needed
The problem is no teeth to the enforcement of ADA laws on one hand, and predatory lawyers who blanket businesses with demand letters looking for a quick settlement on the other — which ultimately results in a business owner fearing that every disabled guest is a potential lawsuit rather than a customer.
Jake Steinman
Newmobility.com

Help Picking a Doctor
The presentation by Dr. Stillman referenced in the article (“How to Find, Train and Work With a Primary Care Physician,” July 2020) was part of the SCI Forum series from the Northwest Regional Spinal Cord Injury System at the University of Washington. If you go to sci.washington.edu/primary, you can find additional presentations, podcasts, and other SCI-related content. Thanks for including this great presentation on primary care and spinal cord injury.
Northwest Regional SCI System
Newmobility.com

Not What We Deserve
My husband, a quadriplegic from a diving accident in 1958, died on July 23 of COVID-19 (“Assessing the Impact Of COVID-19, July 2020). He had been in declining health with decubitus ulcers and kidney failure that required dialysis. He was hospitalized for breathing problems and diagnosed with the virus in the ER. A few days later his heart stopped, and he was revived with CPR. He was about to be placed on a respirator when I reached the hospital and intervened. As soon as possible, I had him transferred to hospice, where he died four days later. I was unable to see him. After 28 years of marriage, it was not the ending we deserved.
Judy Friedman
Newmobility.com

A Legend Remembered
A number of readers mourned Paralympic legend Angela Madsen in the comments of Bob Vogel’s story on her death at sea (“News: Angela Madsen Dies Attempting Solo Crossing from California to Hawaii,” June 26, Newmobility.com).

This is tragic and inspiring in the same breath. Amazing human.
Matt Fritsch

I read Angela’s book, Rowing Against the Wind. What an inspiration for girls and women of all ages.
Kathi Klosterman Day

Angela will forever be in our hearts
Koray Guner

You will be forever remembered, my dear friend mentor and coach. I miss you and salute my hero.
Jeanette Nichols
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Choosing the right one:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Weight capacity</th>
<th>Base width</th>
<th>Seat width*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alltrack M3 (HD)</td>
<td>300-450 lb</td>
<td>25.5&quot;</td>
<td>Up to 26&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alltrack R3 (HD)</td>
<td>300-400 lb</td>
<td>25.5&quot;</td>
<td>Up to 26&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alltrack HD3</td>
<td>Up to 550 lb</td>
<td>27.5&quot;</td>
<td>Up to 28&quot;</td>
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</tbody>
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* Wider seat sizes are available as custom modifications.
Making Masks Accessible

You can’t go anywhere these days without a mask — literally. With mask mandates almost universal, it figures that a great deal of attention would be paid to improving the comfort and accessibility of 2020’s most-in-demand facial accessory. In July we highlighted Montana quad Tyler Stosich’s novel adaptation that allowed him to control his sip-and-puff chair while wearing an N95 mask. Hot on Stosich’s heels, Shepherd Center’s Assistive Technology Center created three guides that show users how to easily and quickly modify masks for their specific needs. The first guide follows in Stosich’s tracks with instructions to adapt an N95 for sip-and-puff in five minutes. The second guide shows how to do the same just as quickly with a fabric mask. The final guide shows how to insert a clear vinyl window into a mask for lip visibility in less than 30 minutes. Download the step-by-step guides at news.shepherd.org/making-masks-more-inclusive-modifications-meet-patients-specific-needs-and-protect-from-illness.

D&D Combat Wheelchair Miniatures Ready for Battle

Tabletop role-playing game and fantasy enthusiasts rejoice! Now you can roll into dungeons or fight the next dragon with a wheelchair-using fantasy hero. Strata Miniatures, a United Kingdom-based maker of figurines, has designed a set of miniatures for Dungeons & Dragons that take disability representation to the next level: a fierce human druid, a sly elf rogue, a gentle tiefling cleric, and a battle-ready dwarf barbarian. All four were specifically designed to play with the new combat wheelchair rules designed by D&D innovator and disability advocate Sara Thompson. According to the gaming website Kotaku, Thompson’s rules allow players to “to use magical wheelchairs with super-tough wheels, the ability to float (take that, stairs), and other mystical abilities. They are built for comfort, contain plenty of gear storage, and can even be used to attack enemies, just like my real wheelchair.”

Check out Thompson’s Patreon for the combat wheelchair rules, patreon.com/mustangsart, or visit strata-miniatures.com to buy the figurines or download the 3D printing instructions. Proceeds will be donated to Ehlers-Danlos Support UK.

LEARN

NORCAL SCI HAS ASSEMBLED A COLLECTION OF VIRTUAL SCI-FOCUSED EVENTS THAT WOULD MAKE ITS SILICON VALLEY NEIGHBORS PROUD. FROM COOKING TO ELECTRICAL STIMULATION TO PAIN MANAGEMENT, THE ONLINE PRESENTATIONS ARE LOADED WITH VALUABLE INFORMATION. CHECK NORCALSCI.ORG FOR THE SCHEDULE OF UPCOMING PRESENTATIONS OR TO ENJOY THE ONLINE ARCHIVE.
Wheels of Courage

Award-winning journalist David Davis has written for some of the most prominent media outlets in the country, and now he turns his gaze to a group of World War II veterans who pioneered the sport of wheelchair basketball, and in the process, changed how America sees wheelchair users. *Wheels of Courage* is the best kind of nonfiction — it’s packed with history, reads like a fast-paced novel and will give you a new understanding of the origins of disability culture as we know it. Order direct online at bit.ly/2Y0p7aX or buy wherever you buy books.

Barbie's New Look

Barbie finally rolled into the 21st century this June when toymaker Mattel launched its first Black Barbie figurine that uses a wheelchair. While Mattel has made wheelchair-using Barbies before, this is the first Black Barbie to use a wheelchair, and the first one that actually fits into current Barbie Dreamhouses. The new doll is part of the Barbie Fashionistas line. It has natural hair and comes with a pink ramp and a modern-looking wheelchair. A Mattel representative told Insider.com that the new doll was introduced to the Fashionistas line alongside others to help the collection “be more reflective of the world girls see around them.” The Fashionistas line includes dolls with diverse body types and prosthetic limbs. The new Black wheelchair-using Barbie is available everywhere for $15-19.

**In an alternate timeline, the world would be basking in the glow of the Tokyo Paralympics this month. Thanks to COVID-19, the games will have to wait, but if you’re jonesing for some adaptive athletics, Netflix may have the fix you need. **

*Rising Phoenix* is a new documentary on the history and importance of the Paralympics. The movie features an array of athletes, including American stars Tatyana McFadden and Matt Stutzman.
United Spinal Association is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life of all people living with spinal cord injuries and disorders (SCI/D) by providing programs and services that maximize independence and enable people to be active in their communities.

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Membership in United Spinal Association is free and open to all individuals who are living with SCI/D, their family members, friends, and healthcare providers. Visit unitedspinal.org or call 800/962-9629.

United Spinal has over 70 years of experience educating and empowering individuals with SCI/D to achieve and maintain the highest levels of independence, health and personal fulfillment. We have 50+ local chapters and 190+ support groups nationwide, connecting our members to their peers and fostering an expansive grassroots network that enriches lives.

**NEWS FROM UNITED SPINAL**

**GRAMMY WINNERS CELEBRATE #ADA30, RAISE FUNDS FOR UNITED SPINAL**

Disability rights movement fans have a new way to celebrate the Americans with Disabilities Act and support United Spinal Association — and look cool while doing it. The Grammy-winning rockers of Portugal. The Man have created a fresh new T-shirt inspired by the movement’s revolutionary origins to honor the 30th anniversary of the ADA, and all proceeds will benefit United Spinal Association.

Portugal. The Man’s guitarist, Eric Howk, a wheelchair user with paraplegia, was inspired to do something in support of disability rights and the ADA by the film Crip Camp. “I was fired up about the idea of a disability revolution. I know that it was an incredibly hard-fought battle to get recognized and to get our voices heard. But it’s something that I obviously take for granted,” he says. “At the end of the day, we can either write songs or sell merchandise. We’re just dudes in a band. I can speak on camera, but just having the shirt and being able to wear that shirt and have it be a conversation starter is going to be a great thing.”

A passionate advocate, Howk says United Spinal was an easy choice as the fundraiser’s beneficiary. “I look to [United Spinal] because I think you do such a good job within the spinal cord injury community, and you look at it from a 360-degree angle. I couldn’t think of anyone else that could get anything done that really was looking out for people like us.”

The fundraiser is being coordinated through the PTM Foundation, a new organization the band launched to focus on building community resilience, empathy and awareness through music, stories, art, education and connectivity. It aims to convene and organize partnerships and projects informed by community need, and then mobilize Portugal. The Man’s listeners and supporters around that shared vision.

Its work is centered on human rights issues, including community health and the environment. A special focus is placed on highlighting the stories of indigenous peoples, as well as other marginalized populations.

To find out more about the PTM Foundation, visit ptmfoundation.org. To order your own ADA T-shirt, visit bit.ly/2XKifxZ.
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With the 2020 Paralympic Games in Tokyo postponed due to COVID-19, and its future up in the air, three-time U.S. Paralympian Kerri Morgan finds herself at a crossroads. But not for the reason you might expect.

This year’s Paralympic Games was supposed to be Morgan’s retirement party. After racking up four medals — one silver, three bronze — in the last two Paralympics, the 46-year-old was going to make one last push for gold as a T52 wheelchair racer and then call it a career.

Then, in December 2019, her only event, the T52 100 meter, was cancelled because there weren’t enough athletes racing in the classification. A strong long-distance racer, Morgan had long ago switched to sprint races for an opportunity to compete. Morgan has transverse myelitis and classifies at T52, a less-populated classification for elite athletes. When you add that she’s a woman, the frequent result is that there aren’t enough competitors.

“I’m not saying it’s intentional, but it appears a lot of things are being cut from athletes who have higher impairments or less function. So you end up with a lot of sports being offered for people with more physical ability,” says Morgan. “There are more of them, so I get it. But we need to rethink how we organize events with a caveat that some classes need to remain because they offer opportunities for athletes that aren’t going to get them elsewhere.”

Nevertheless, the circumstances mean Morgan has decisions to make: Does she end her Paralympic career and...
I always felt like it was on me to overachieve and show, no, I got this. Then I’d roll into a patient’s room and they’d be like, ‘Wait a minute, you’re my therapist?’ I had to prove myself to them too.

I also had to find my place, because you can do so many things as an occupational therapist. Like the other aspects of my life, I had to figure out how I could communicate, how I could relate to others and how I could adapt it.

So many OT students with disabilities reach out to me and say, ‘They’re making me do transfers — how did you handle that?’

I learned how to direct someone to do the transfer for me. I was the one in control and responsible for the actual transfer. I honestly wish there were more OTs with disabilities because as people with disabilities, I think we have a lot to contribute to the profession.

concentrate on being an occupational therapist and parenting her two kids with her wife? Or, if she wants to go for gold, does she try to do so in a new sport?

If she chooses a new sport, it may be handcycling, since she cross-trained in it. “Now, I never did it competitively,” she says. “But people have reached out to me to say, ‘Hey if you’re interested, this is where you should start, and this is what you should do.”

But even as she explores handcycling as her next competitive mountain top, she is also weighing the consequences of choosing to pursue the sport full bore. “I need to see if this is something that motivates me enough to want to rearrange my life again and basically get up at 5 a.m. every morning so I can get my workouts in before I go to work,” she says.

The possibility excites her, and she especially likes that handcycling uses different muscles than wheelchair racing. “I appreciate the challenge of it, and I’m doing something that motivates me to keep moving my body and pushing the limits a little bit,” she says. “But whether I move my commitment from recreation to competition is to be determined.”

As she mulls over that decision, one silver lining of not training is getting to spend more time with her wife and their 2-year-old twin boys at their home in St. Louis, Missouri. Because of her past training schedules, she wasn’t the one who was there when they woke up and went to bed. “And since I’m working from home now, I get to have my lunch with them,” she says. “My bond with them has grown way more over these past few months.”

However, Paralympic competition still beckons. “I think the problem I’m having is I didn’t decide to end it,” she says. “I want to go out on my own terms and I didn’t get to do that, so I’m feeling really incomplete about it. Do I feel incomplete enough to take on a whole new sport? I don’t know yet.”
I've gotten used to being looked at when I roll into a room in my wheelchair. My disability is visible, so I don't have the option of whether or not to disclose that I am disabled. People can immediately tell, so I often arrive with a “let’s see how this person will react when they realize I’m disabled” attitude. Sometimes it’s no big deal, and other times things get super awkward.

The rise of video meetings has changed the way I enter a room.


We are all just boxes on a screen with thoughtfully-designed backdrops, bookcases or artwork. Some wear accessories or fun hairstyles in efforts to feel creative and unique. Personally, I started wearing earrings, sometimes makeup, and I switched up the corners of my house where I join meetings.

Thinking about my virtual persona, I realized people don’t get to see my wheelchair when I enter the room anymore. They don’t get to make assumptions about my abilities. They just get to see my face and listen to all the smart things I have to say.

I’m trying to figure out my feelings around this because I realized that I purposely find ways to show my “quad hands” during a meeting with someone who doesn’t know I’m disabled. I will pick up my mug of coffee or drink water, apply lip balm or move my hair. Sometimes, as a meeting continues into dusk, I even get to move across the room to turn on the light switch, and the other attendees get to see me in my wheelchair.

So many times, I have wanted to hide my disability, but now I don’t want that part of my identity to be unseen. I like that people know I’m disabled, and I want them to know.
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GEAR HACKS
By Seth McBride

MASTERING TRICKY TRANSFERS

Hacking equipment to fit your life can be about modifying it to suit your needs, but sometimes it’s simply about getting your body into the right position to use it. There's perhaps no skill that can better increase your access to the great wide world than mastering the tricky transfer. And while some transfers depend upon brute strength, getting the most out of whatever function you have often comes down to leverage, technique and, when you do need some extra oomph, communication. Here’s the no-trunk, no-grip cheat sheet for getting your body wherever you need it to.

That said, New Mobility assumes no responsibility for tricky transfers gone wrong. Please use care and common sense, and build your skills slowly.

Floor-to-Chair

The floor-to-chair transfer is the key to opening up your world. If you can get on the ground and back in your chair again, you can get just about anywhere. Mastering this move helps build confidence because you can now try more transfers and other sketchy maneuvers, knowing that if something goes wrong and you wind up on the floor, it’s no big deal.

1. **Starting on your butt**
   With your legs out in front of you, pull your chair to the strong side of your body. It’s helpful to be able to transfer in either direction, but starting by transferring up to your strong side should be easier. If you have brakes, lock them now. If not, don’t worry — it’s still doable.

2. **Pull your knees up tight**
   To your chest. You want to position your knees so they’re in line with the wheelchair downtube closest to your feet. Your outside leg may want to splay away from your body. You can either turn your heel away from your body, or you can bend your head forward and use your chin to push your knees into your downtube and hold them in place, which is my preferred method. What I like about
the latter is that it also puts you in a good position to start the transfer.

3. **Put the hand of your strong arm on the midpoint of the forward-most edge of your wheelchair cushion.** Those with good hand function may prefer to grab the frame tube in front of their cushion instead. I close my hand into a fist, as it’s easier on my wrist and lets me lift my butt just a little bit higher. Put your other hand just behind your butt. If you have weak triceps, externally rotating this arm can help to lock out your elbow, letting your shoulder take over more of the lifting.

4. **With a smooth, rocking motion, start by pushing forward and up to lift your butt off the floor.** Your head shouldn’t come up with it — instead it should stay roughly at the height of your knees. As your butt comes up toward the height of your cushion, push it toward your chair with your lower arm. If you don’t have brakes, pull your chair under your butt as you’re lifting. You’re aiming to land your butt far enough back on your cushion that you don’t fall out of your chair when you try to sit up.

5. **Take a moment to move your feet into a solid position on the floor in front of your chair.** If needed, push off your downtubes to wiggle your butt farther back into your chair seat.

6. **Using the tops of your caster housings and the downtubes, walk your hands up your frame to push yourself back into a seated position.** Pull your feet back onto your footplate, adjust your hips and you’re rolling.

---

**The High Vehicle Transfer**

In some ways, the high vehicle transfer is a brute strength exercise. There’s no good way to get your feet into a similar position as a floor-to-chair transfer to provide leverage points. And sticking your head down while transferring up into a high seat is liable to leave you, well, on your head. Still, there are a few things you can do to make the process easier.

1. **Lock your brakes** or have someone hold your chair. Lift one foot up onto the floor of the vehicle. If the vehicle seat is really high (or you have short legs), you can leave the other foot on your footplate to get some extra leverage.

2. **Scoot your butt out** to the edge of your seat. This gives you better access to the door and vehicle seat. Plus, if you have some dump in your wheelchair, it sits you up a few inches taller, giving you a little better leverage and less distance to lift yourself.

3. **If you don’t have good enough grip strength to grab the roof handle and pull yourself in,** the iron cross move is about your only option. The best way for me to get good leverage is to pull the vehicle door tight to my body. Play with hand position and arm angle until you find a combo that doesn’t put funky torque on your shoulders. If you have any weakness in your deltoids or shoulder stabilizer muscles, do yourself a favor and ask whoever is driving to help with at least the initial lift by grabbing your belt or the back or your pants.

4. **As you get your butt up at seat height,** use your inside arm to pull yourself over onto the seat. With your hand still in the door, wiggle your butt back into a secure position on the seat.

5. **Lean into the vehicle so you can move your hand off the door without falling on your face,** then scoot your butt farther in. Sit up and lift your outside leg in.

6. **Woo, ready to go** (yes, this is my excited face). Ask Pops to stop cleaning sap off the windshield and throw your chair in the back.
The Piggy Back
I know a C6 complete quad with no triceps function who has ridden on friends' backs up flights of stairs to a fire lookout station and down forest trails to find the perfect fly-fishing spot [see sidebar]. I’ve had Kelly piggyback me along the Great Wall of China and around Machu Picchu [see youtu.be/-A4kPpGWCas]. To get some places, you really just need a strong pair of legs. Here’s how to borrow someone else’s.

1. **Either lock your brakes, or** back up into a wall. Pull your legs off your footplate and spread them so your feet are wider than your casters. Scoot your butt out as far to the edge of your seat as you can.

2. **Have your sentient exoskeleton kneel down with** their back against the front of your chair. Have them grab your ankles and pull your legs over their thighs, wrapping them around their hips.

3. **Put your arms over their shoulders,** lean forward and let your butt slide off your seat and onto their back. It’s going to be easiest for them to stand up if they lean forward to get out of their deep squat — this is going to feel weird and it takes some trust.

4. **To make the process easier,** they can do a mini-jump to hike your hips farther up. The higher you are, the easier it is to maintain your grip.

The No-Triceps Guide to Transfers
To get some perspective on ways to make transfers easier when you don’t have the strength to do them on your own, I spoke with Jake French, a C6 quad with no triceps function. Pre-pandemic, French traveled a lot for his job as a motivational speaker. With good transfer skills, he and a single caregiver can navigate inaccessible Ubers, tall hotel beds and tight bathrooms. He also loves the outdoors and spends a lot of time driving off-road utility vehicles, fishing and hunting. Here are a few of his tips for transferring with a minimum of function.

1. **Communication is key.** People want to help but usually have no clue on proper mechanics. It’s your job to educate them. Get good at explaining how your body moves, and where someone can grab to help lift and where they shouldn’t. Giving a countdown (1, 2, 3, lift) may sound cheesy, but making sure you and your helpers synchronize your efforts is key to a successful transfer.

2. **Slow isn’t the way to go.** When you don’t have a lot of strength, rocking forward and transferring in one fluid hopping motion is often more functional than trying to do a slow lift.

3. **Be selective with ride-hailing vehicles.** When booking typical Uber and Lyft service, you can’t pre-select exactly what kind of car you want. But if you book a ride and see that the driver’s vehicle is too tall or otherwise won’t work for you, don’t be afraid to cancel and hail another ride, hopefully with better results. Typically, you have to cancel within the first few minutes of booking or Uber will charge a fee, but French has had success appealing the cost.

4. **Reconsider the transfer board.** Typically, experienced gimps think of transfer boards as something to be ditched as soon as possible. But when you’re dealing with tricky surfaces that aren’t level, a transfer board can mean the difference between a single person helping and a two-person heave-ho. French recommends a board called the Ultraslick, which as you might guess, has a surface that’s easy to slide across. He uses a long, 27-inch model that can span larger gaps.

5. **Let go of the ego.** Sometimes helping in the transfer is the best method, but
around their shoulders and for them to maintain good balance. Take a moment to give a little FU to the doctors who said you’d never walk again.

French borrowed his brother’s legs to get up the many steps to a fire lookout station for a memorable night’s camp.

other times, letting a strong friend do the heavy lifting is easier for everyone. The carry-the-bride-across-the-threshold move and a piggyback can get you all sorts of places you wouldn’t be able to otherwise.
In 2015, Craig Hospital commissioned Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer Bear Gutierrez to shoot portraits of SCI/D survivors who had gone through its rehabilitation programs. The series he produced is striking for its creativity and its illustration of our community’s strength and diversity.

We’re excited to share a few of our favorites, along with updates on what the people in the photos have been up to. Whether they’re further along on their path toward recovery or embracing new adventures, one common theme emerged: They are all grateful for the support received throughout their initial recovery and are dedicated to paying it forward. See the complete original Redefining Possible project at redefiningpossible.org.

Dave Denniston, an NCAA champion and Olympic hopeful before a 2005 snow sledding accident that resulted in his T10-11 SCI, had reestablished himself as an elite swimmer by the time he posed for Gutierrez in 2015. After competing at the 2008 Beijing Paralympics, he became a coach at the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic training center in Colorado Springs, where the photo was taken.

Denniston, 41, is now head swimming coach at the University of Wyoming. The difference between his students and elite Paralympians is that, “swimming isn’t everything to them,” he says. “Athletes in college are transitioning into being adults and productive members of society, and helping them through that process is pretty rewarding.”

Even as he mentors a younger generation, Denniston still finds new passions. “I was up last night in the mountains, out in the middle of a lake, in a rowboat fishing, and I was rowing the boat,” he says. The experience was miles away from his competitive pursuits, but similarly valuable. Whatever your age or circumstance, he says, “You’re still defining who you are and what is possible.”
The rifle Jesse Alberi holds in the original photo is the same one he took on the hunting trip when he rolled his truck and came away with a T10 SCI. For Alberi, redefining possible was about figuring out how to get back to life in his new body. He adapted a crib for his young daughter so he could roll under it and safely get to her, and then he and his wife had a second child. With the help of friends, he relearned favorite outdoor activities like shooting and floating on Montana’s rivers.

Today, at 42, Alberi is still passionate about his family, friends and the outdoors, though he’s added a new endeavor: helping others develop the confidence and skills to live with a disability. He cofounded a nonprofit, Access Unlimited, which partners with Craig Hospital and the High Fives Foundation, to take small groups of disabled adventurers on multi-day hunting and fishing trips. Many newly-injured participants start off with some fear since they haven’t gone into the wild since their accident, but being with peers in a remote setting often helps push them further than they would go on their own. “It’s like, ‘All right, they’re doing it, I’m going to do it,’” says Alberi. The camp is all about being in the outdoors, “but then they can take what they learn home and apply it to their own life, asking themselves, ‘What do I like to do, and how can I shake the fear out of that and get back into living again?’”

David Ortiz was an Army warrant officer and helicopter pilot when he was paralyzed at T10 in an active-duty crash. He says the Redefining Possible photo depicts, “how critical and empowering it was to have my younger brother help me in my recovery and regain my independence.” When Ortiz needed it, his brother had his back.

Since his medical discharge from the Army in 2015, Ortiz has dedicated himself to supporting others. He’s directed the programs of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1, worked with disability-support nonprofits, and helped get veteran-support legislation passed at the state level. Now 36 years old, he just secured a landslide victory in the Democratic primary for Colorado’s state legislature and looks to unseat the Republican incumbent in the general election. His platform, he says, is simple: “Your ZIP code and socioeconomic level should not dictate the access to opportuni- ties that you have.”

Running his first political campaign during a pandemic may not seem like ideal circumstances, but Ortiz says the time he spent stuck in a hospital bed after his injury forced him to “get really good at communicating with people via phone, FaceTime, text messages and social media. I feel aspects of my life and my injury kind of prepared me for what it’s like to run in a time of COVID.”
Mary Collechi, 34, who uses a wheelchair due to a brain injury from a stroke, kept having problems with her personal assistance agency. “They weren’t sending good staff, or they would call and say, ‘We don’t have anybody.’ And then they’d mark it down as me denying services,” she says.

Colorado’s COASS program allows some Medicaid recipients to hire their own attendants, but people with brain injuries weren’t eligible. So Collechi lobbied the state legislature and won, allowing her and other Coloradans with brain injuries to take control over their long-term supports.

The win was exciting, but the grind of advocacy took a toll. “I was burned out,” Collechi says. She took a step back to focus on wellness, gardening and adaptive sports, and then got a job as a cashier at a local golf course — something that never would have been possible before she was able to manage her own PCAs.

Having taken a moment to breathe, Collechi says she feels rejuvenated. She recently testified at the state legislature for the expansion of Medicaid access to services like acupuncture, massage and physical therapy, and also lobbied her national representatives to make sure people with disabilities aren’t forgotten in pandemic stimulus legislation. “I’m just watching out for everybody,” she says.
**JASON REGIER** RETIREMENT OPENS UP A NEW PATH

Jason Regier, 45 and a C5 quad, had already won two Paralympic medals in wheelchair rugby and in 2015 was gearing up for one last run before calling it a career. Then he and the U.S. team lost a heartbreaking final at Rio 2016 to finish with a silver medal, and while Regier stayed true to his plan to retire from playing, he found it hard to leave elite sports altogether. “It becomes a little bit of a drug,” he says. “It gives you structure. It’s the one thing that you shape most other things around.”

He coached his local team in Denver for years, and shortly after Rio, he accepted the head coaching position for Denmark’s wheelchair rugby team with a commitment through Tokyo 2020. He loved using all the knowledge he built up over the decades to form connections with the players and help them play their best.

Around the same time, a chance encounter with an old friend led him to a different kind of coaching: consulting with business managers and executives to guide them through important life and business decisions. The timing couldn’t have been better, since shortly after he completed a rigorous certification process and started working for an agency, the pandemic brought the rugby side of his work to a crashing halt.

Regier is still committed to seeing the Danish team through Tokyo, but has no idea how or when that may happen. Until then, pandemic life isn’t too bad. He gets to spend more time with his wife and two young children, and his executive coaching — now conducted over video calls — helps ease the shakes of being away from rugby. “It’s connecting with people at a deeper level. It’s having real conversations,” he says about his new gig. “You get in a spot where you’re able to help them through some meaningful change.”

**STEPHANIE MARTINEZ** IT’S OK TO ASK FOR HELP

Stephanie Martinez, 31, and her son, Derek, were dealt a unique situation — having to learn about their new worlds at the same time. In 2009, while pregnant, she met with her ex-boyfriend to talk. Instead they argued and he pulled her car’s steering wheel away from her … which was the last thing she remembered before the accident that resulted in her T7-8 SCI.

The rest of her pregnancy was spent in the hospital, as she recovered from her injuries and figured out how to care for herself. That process was by no means complete when Derek was born and she had to learn how to take care of him, too.

She credits her family and friends for getting her through. “At first, I had a hard time asking for help,” she says. “But I learned that you do what you can with what you have, and if you need help, it’s perfectly OK to get it.”

With Derek now 10 and in elementary school, Martinez is back in school herself. She completed her high school diploma and an associate’s degree, and is now pursuing a degree in psychology and counseling.

Martinez hopes to use her education and experience to help others in similar situations. Whether someone is dealing with domestic violence, traumatic injury or single parenthood, she wants to connect them with support systems and let them know there is no shame in using that assistance as a stepping stone to the life they want to live.
Alex invited me to check out a podcast recording up in Harlem. The podcast is called The Juggernaut Show and is for people with disabilities, by people with disabilities. Everyone there used a wheelchair, so the room was super congested, but it was cool. It was literally where I met almost all of my friends. Every Sunday people would travel from all over the city and converge in this tiny apartment in Harlem. I became so close with everyone and looked forward to every Sunday. We would just chill. We had drinks going around, someone would be cooking dinner — it was a family atmosphere, and being new to New York and disability, I really needed that. I think we all did actually. Those are some of the fondest memories I have of New York in my two and a half years. I feel a lot of nostalgia with that picture. People will be like, “Oh, that’s so cool like all of you guys get together and hang out.” And I’m like, “Yeah, no shit people with disabilities like to hang out in groups, just like every other group of people.”

“I think people are just like, ‘Oh, it’s cool to see that perspective of people with disabilities.’” —IAN RUDER

In the four years since Nolan Ryan Trowe acquired a spinal cord injury while cliff diving, he has established himself as an award-winning photographer with a knack for documenting the intimate, often overlooked moments of daily life. His stark black and white imagery often focuses on disability and has been featured in The New York Times and various other outlets. Last Fall, he was awarded first prize in Getty Images’ first-ever Disability-Focused Creative Bursary.

Trowe shot the photos in this spread over a two-year period when he lived in New York City to attend graduate school at New York University. All the photos depict his life with his friends.

“My original name for the Getty project when I proposed it was Adopted Family, because that’s how I felt about everyone up in New York. I moved there and it was just like being adopted by this family. I felt so accepted and loved,” he says. “I’m not trained as a photographer, so I just followed my friends around and showed their daily lives in New York City.”

Some of the photos have been published in the Times, others were part of the Getty Bursary, and others have not been presented until now. Trowe shot the photos while using both his crutches and wheelchair. He hopes they will shed light on what real life is like as a person with a disability.

“There’s such a lack of real imagery of people with disabilities regardless of what their race or economic status or country they’re from or whatever it may be,” he says. “I think people are just like, ‘Oh, it’s cool to see that perspective of people with disabilities.’”

—IAN RUDER

NOLAN’S STORY

I moved to New York in 2017 to attend grad school, almost exactly a year after my accident. When I moved, I didn’t really have friends in the disabled community or friends at all for that matter. Alex (pictured) was the first real friend I made. He was the root of how I met people and got connected to the disabled community. Alex was a bike delivery messenger in the city and he got hit by a car. It’s kind of hard to tell in the photo, but on the tattoo there’s actually a bike helmet on the wheelchair.
“ADHIAMBO IS THE GUY WHO STARTED THE JUGGERNAUT SHOW. HE LOST BOTH HIS LEGS IN A CAR ACCIDENT. WHEN I MET HIM, HE WAS GOING TO SCHOOL FOR BIOMECHANICAL ENGINEERING SO HE COULD DESIGN AN AFFORDABLE PAIR OF PROSTHETICS THAT DIDN’T SUCK. I THOUGHT THAT WAS REALLY COOL. WE STARTED HANGING OUT AND BECAME REALLY CLOSE. HE’S LIKE MY BROTHER.”
Azalia suggested we should make a documentary about her life because she had a lot she wanted to say about being a Black disabled woman and being a mother. She faced a lot of adversity through her pregnancy. People told her she was unfit to be a mother and that she shouldn’t be a mother. Strangers would come up to her in the street and try to lecture her on what she should be doing with her body because of her disability. The photos gave her a platform to talk about these issues. The little girl helping her off the ground into her chair is her daughter, Tia.

AZALIA MALLORY-BING

A group of us went to visit our friend Eddie’s grandma in her nursing home. Everyone other than Don and I had already gone up, and we were just chilling there when I noticed this American flag. I thought, man, if that’s not a metaphor for what people with disabilities have to go through in this country, I don’t know what is.
Donahue runs an adaptive boxing clinic at a training facility in Ozone Park. He is a bilateral amputee. He lost his legs due to being hit by stray bullets, and he also has a spinal cord injury. The woman he's helping has spina bifida, and she doesn't have much feeling or mobility in her hands. Donahue has to help a lot of the people in the program put their gloves on because they can't do it by themselves.
WINNER: Ashley Schahfer (@schahferz)
Photographer: Matt Jones
Location: Alvord Desert, Oregon

Ashley Schahfer — an inclusion and accessibility consultant at EmpoweringAccess.com — lives in the outdoor mecca of Bend, Oregon, but nearby trail heads and other wilderness access points were closed for much of the spring and early summer due to the coronavirus pandemic. Fortunately, she knew a perfect and still-open escape, the remote Alvord Desert in southeastern Oregon. “It’s an awesome spot because it’s completely flat,” she says. “The vast openness is really beautiful.” She and friend Matt Jones arrived late at night and slept on camping mats in the back of the car. Dust storms kept them in the car for most of the morning, but then the winds quieted down and they popped open the hatch to a scene out of their social distancing dreams.

Submitted by @poorhouse lovelab:
Life, it seems, has simmered down to the essentials, no?

For this Instagram #RollUnited2020 photo contest, we asked our followers how they are handling the year of COVID. Kinda #RockingIt.
Submitted by @daniizzie: I have tuned out the world in recent months in order to reduce stress and anxiety during my twin pregnancy. I see a heart in this photo, do you? There is so much love in humanity, so much to protect and nurture, and I’m not just talking about babies ...
Submitted by @wheelchairpapi:
Making sure my girl is ready before she hits the stage.

Submitted by @jade_mf78: Stay home 2020! With my home of 14 years, a wheelchair-accessible 1975 Airstream Sovereign, relocated pre-COVID from Los Angeles to Helper, Utah.

Photo by @jasonhuntzinger

Submitted by @c_severson95: Escaping to the mountains is a great place for therapy and healing. Doing it in a sweet chair is just an added bonus!

Submitted by @impact.overland: It felt great yesterday when I was crossing the street and this boxer was so excited to say hi that he couldn’t handle himself. Touch is important, dogs are important, and wearing a mask so we can beat this virus is important!

Submitted by @impact.overland:
It won’t be long now, I can feel it. The end of one adventure and the beginning of another. The turning of a page, start of a new chapter...
Submitted by @pushylawyer:
To the people who say you can’t do it all … I say, what ya got next for me? Thanks to COVID, I get to show every day that I can be a mom, a wife, a lawyer, a business owner, an entrepreneur, an advocate, a dishwasher, a cook, a teacher, a hair stylist, a cleaner, a landscaper, a gardener, a boxer, a yogi, a handywoman … all at the same time … all from home … (often with a kid sitting on me) … AND ALL ON WHEELS. If this year hasn’t stopped me — nothing will!
BY KIRK WILLIAMS

IN TODAY’S SOCIAL MEDIA-DRIVEN WORLD, WHERE FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM AND TIKTOK REIGN SUPREME, IT COMES AS NO SURPRISE THAT KNOWING HOW TO TAKE GOOD PHOTOS IS MORE POPULAR — AND MORE IMPORTANT — THAN EVER BEFORE. WHETHER YOU OWN A DSLR OR A SMARTPHONE, HERE ARE SIX PHOTOGRAPHY TIPS I’VE DEVELOPED OVER THE YEARS TO HELP YOU BECOME A BETTER PHOTOGRAPHER ON WHEELS.

ACCESSORIZE

JOBY GorillaPods: Tripods with flexible legs that allow you to wrap them around tree branches, armrests, or set them on the ground to hold your camera. $15 and up.
CamKix Remote Shutter: A remote shutter for phones so you can use the rear camera to take photos from a distance. $6.
Microfiber cleaning cloth: It’s always good to double-check that your camera lens is clean before taking photos. A microfiber cleaning cloth is the best way to clean the lens without scratching it.

NO DEXTERTY, NO PROBLEM

Not having enough finger movement to press the shutter button on my camera, I’ve resorted to using a remote shutter to take photos. Using a camera with remote shutter capabilities gives me the ability to use my mouth for shutter control. I use my teeth or tongue to compress the remote shutter — halfway for focus and completely to take the photo. This frees my hands to hold the camera where I want the shot.
MOBILE CONTROL

Some camera companies have jumped on board in recent years to create mobile interfacing between your camera and your mobile device. This interface varies between manufacturers, but generally allows camera control from your phone while connected via Bluetooth or Wi-Fi. What’s really exciting is the ability to transfer photos directly from your camera to a mobile device and then upload them to social media without ever removing the easily-lost memory cards!

LIGHTROOM LUXURY

Adobe has long been the premier name in media software, and the free Adobe Lightroom mobile app only adds to their legacy. Phones can take really good photos these days, but photo editing apps like Lightroom mobile can quickly make a good photo great. After tapping the “Auto” button, I can tweak a few adjustments to change the photo slightly or completely change the feel depending on what I want. Crop, export, and I’m ready to upload.

TIMER TO THE RESCUE

The self-timer feature is something I use for many more situations than just snapping a family photo. I use the self-timer to take photos in hard to reach places so I can focus on holding the phone with limited dexterity and let the timer count down. The self-timer gives me the ability to focus on the framing of the photo rather than figuring out how to press the shutter button.

VERTICAL PANORAMA MAGIC

Did you know that the panorama feature on your phone camera works vertically as well as horizontally? I use the vertical panoramic feature when taking photos of trees, buildings or anything tall that my lens can’t capture on its own. It distorts the perspective some but can make for some really interesting and unique points of view.

THREE APPS TO AMP YOUR PICS

Hey Camera: Gives iPhone users the ability to tell the phone to “take the picture.” Android devices have a built-in talk-to-photo feature.

PhotoPills: An augmented reality app for astro-photography and photo planning. $9.99

Prisma: Using AI, Prisma can transform your photos into artwork. Free three-day trial.

EYE IN THE SKY

Drones give you the freedom to have an eye in the sky. Regardless of how much mobility you have, a drone allows you to see perspectives you couldn’t achieve any other way. Whether it’s above the tree tops, over water or hovering three feet off the ground, my drone helps me see the world in a new way. If you use a drone, make sure you are not in a restricted area.
THE RESET

It's cold for the second day of April and I'm glad to be indoors. We just finished a fine supper and decided to retire early. My wife, Terry, lowers me into our hot tub with our battery-powered lift and I lean back in the water. Man, I love this cozy heat at the end of the day. Like most people with spinal cord injuries, I am often cold by the time bedtime rolls around.

After making sure I'm safe, Terry stands up. "I heard something fall in the garage," she says. "I'll be right back."

"OK," I say, looking forward to my 15-minute soak. Life is good.

A few seconds later, she runs back into the room, terrified. "The garage is on fire — we need to get out!" she yells.

"What? Get me out of here!" I say. She is already hitting the up button, but it's painfully slow.

"How bad?" I ask, trying to get a feel for the situation.

"It's huge. We have to run now," she says, panicked.

"Put me in my chair, let's go!" Terry's already on it. She swings me past the bed with our ceiling-track lift, over to my chair, and lowers me into it. The lift is sooo slow. She grabs a blanket off the bed and throws it on me — no time for clothes. Then she dials 911 and hands me the phone as we head for the door. I talk to the operator as we speed for the exit.

"We need to go out the front, the other side is engulfed," she says.

As we open the front door, Natasha, a friend's niece, is standing there. She saw the flames from the nearby highway and, concerned for our safety, pulled into our yard. She sees me look around the corner to the west and says, "You can't go that way, the fire's too big."

I stare down the ramp to the back yard at the huge pile of snow blocking our way. Not good.

Terry runs in to get another blanket, and grabs her laptop and our deceased son's urn. I wheel down the ramp and see the enormity of the fire. Flames and smoke are billowing hundreds of feet into the air. Unbeknownst to me, my buddy Dave sends a picture of the smoke plume from his front yard, 30 miles away!

I hit the end of the ramp. Terry and Natasha try to push me through the snow, but it's too deep. We're stuck.

"Now what are we going to do?" one of them asks.

"You'll have to drag me away from the fire through the snow," I say. Then, trying to reassure them, I add, "It'll be OK."

Luckily, a couple of teenage girls who saw the fire from the highway come to offer their help. The four lift me out of my chair, carrying and dragging me through the snow and away from danger. Natasha pulls her 4x4 truck up to the house, the ladies somehow lift me into the back seat and we drive a safe distance away.

"How's my van?" I ask.

"Gone"

"Motorhome?"

"Gone"

"White van?"

"Gone"

We lost nearly everything we had. The
house, garage and all their contents were destroyed. Terry was in her pajamas in bare feet, and it was 32 degrees out, so she ended up with frostbite.

At first, we missed the necessities. We had no medical supplies, no clothes, no toothbrush, no wheelchair charger ... on and on. Going from having our world set up the way we want it to losing almost everything within a few minutes was very humbling.

One day we were thinking of target shooting, then realized there are no guns, no gun rack and no trigger-puller. We thought of fishing, then realized there were no poles or hooks. The lawn-mower survived but we realized my cuffs to drive it are gone, as is the rail to lift me onto it. Likewise, crossbows, kites, cameras, 4x4 wheelchair ... you get the idea. And of course, Terry lost all of her hobbies, keepsakes from the kids, pictures, jewelry, clothes, not to mention the renovations she did to make our life so comfortable.

The Long Return
We are slowly getting back to life nearly four months later. We made another motorhome accessible and are camping at the farm, awaiting the rebuild. My buddy Dave adapted a couple of drone radios so I can get back in the air to enjoy one of my favorite hobbies. Also, I now have a 3D printer to rebuild adaptations and a computer to return to writing and bookkeeping. Fortunately, we subscribe to an online computer backup system so we have our records and most of our pictures and videos.

We’ve been told that we hit the “reset button,” and now get a chance to start over. So how has this affected my outdoor adventures? I’m reminded to appreciate everything. It is now summertime and nice outside. I really appreciate walking our dog, Ginger (yes, she survived!). I also appreciate sitting on the local nature trail and calling chickadees with a phone app. I love watching for wildlife and smelling the grass after a rain, all the while giving thanks that Terry, Ginger and myself got out of the fire and will live to experience more adventure. My adventures will restart slowly, but most enjoyably.

Lessons Learned
• Every day is a gift and material items are temporary, so take nothing for granted.
• People are good in this world. Terry, Natasha (our new family member) and the two teenagers who stopped are real heroes. They turned a life-threatening situation into one where the only casualty is stuff — and we can get or build more stuff.
• We live in a wonderful place. The outpouring from our community, friends and strangers has been absolutely overwhelming. We feel truly blessed and will focus on supporting our community, as they are the ones who have our backs when we need it.
• Back up your computer and pictures online.
• Keep all exits clear and have multiple exits.
• Don’t charge batteries indoors unattended. An unattended lithium-ion polymer battery charging in the garage is the likely fire culprit.

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MULTICHAIR 6000RS

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The search for validation is a common quest for verts (that's what I call people who can walk, because it's short for vertical). But for crippled people, that common quest is twisted into a search for invalidation. This seems to be especially true for people who are both crippled and broke ass, because there are some programs for which being merely crippled isn't enough to qualify.

That's how it is if you want to sign up for something like SSI or Medicaid or public housing. You have to go down to an office with your doctor's note certifying that you are crippled and you also have to turn your pockets inside out and sign a bunch of papers swearing under penalty of perjury that you are indeed as broke ass as you attest to be. Then they stamp the word INVALID on your forehead, so to speak, and you're good to go.

Ah, but the stamp isn't permanent. It fades over time, so you'll have to go get re-invalidated again sooner or later. That means you have to make sure you stay broke ass.

Becoming invalidated is a broke ass cripple rite of passage. This may even be what you have to do if you need the state to pay for the people you hire to come into your home and help you get in and out of bed every day. In a lot of states, to qualify for such pampering you must be "Medicaid eligible," which is the official government term for broke ass. But in this case, you usually don't have to go to an office to get invalidated. A social worker will come invalidate you in the comfort and convenience of your own home. There's probably even a contact-free method of invalidation, executed completely online.

Invalid. Don't you just love that word? It's so versatile. It's an adjective that means not valid, according to Merriam-Webster. But all you have to do is subtly shift the accent from the second syllable to the first and this nifty little word is magically transformed into a noun that means a crippled person. But I think the definition needs to be updated to mean a person who is not just crippled but very, very broke ass as well.

If you're crippled but not yet sufficiently broke ass, you will have to liquidate your way into invalidation. And that's like being a contestant on a perverse, reverse game show.

On a regular game show, the prize is riches. But on the twisted game show Liquidation, the prize is rags. You're the contestant. How much money do you have? Too much? Well, then the unctuous host takes away your surplus cash and stuffs it in their pocket or maybe throws it in the air and makes it rain while audience members dive for it.

On the regular game shows, contestants compete for valuable prizes, such as a lovely dining room set, some brand-new Samsonite luggage or an exciting vacation in Aruba. But on Liquidation, the contestant maybe already has those things. If so, they're taken away. If you already had an exciting vacation in Aruba, they can't take that away, but they can make damn sure it never happens again.

And the show goes on and on until you're finally broke ass enough to be invalidated. Your forehead is stamped while the audience stands and applauds. Balloons and confetti fall from the ceiling. Strike up the band! Congratulations — you win the grand prize.

When you become invalidated, your status changes from human being to human been.
NRRTS is a professional association supporting individuals who provide Complex Rehab wheelchairs and seated positioning systems for people of all ages and diagnoses.

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Early in the quarantine, I ordered some new skincare products. A couple weeks later, one of my daytime caregivers was filling in on an evening shift. After she got me into bed, I asked her to get my new facial oil instead of the regular moisturizing cream I usually used. Obediently, she returned with a palmful and rubbed it into my cheeks and neck. My skin felt soothed and I fell asleep.

The next morning, my mom woke me up while it was still dark so we could get to an appointment. When she switched on the light, she looked concerned.

“Do you feel OK? Your skin looks funny,” she said. “What is going on?” I felt fine, but she was freaking me out. I looked in a mirror and gasped at what I saw.

My face looked like a little kid finger painted red-brown swirls up and down it. When we saw my pillow was brown too, we realized my nighttime assistant had grabbed self-tanning lotion instead of the new facial oil.

Desperately, I rubbed it hard with my fist and was relieved when it started to budge. It scrubbed off, mostly.

Tanya
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