Changing Society’s View: Creating the Future TODAY

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Changing Society’s View

I dedicate this presentation to my family, the society in which I was shaped. Both of my parents modeled treating everyone with dignity, striving to see the “intelligence” and value in everyone regardless of outward appearances. For this, I am forever grateful.

Barbara
“If you ever think we are too small to make a difference, try spending the night cooped up with a mosquito.”

Swahili Proverb
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“Dreaming is important. You must be able to imagine it before you can do it.”

George Lucas
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What is the *current* view of society towards children and adults with disabilities, special needs, or disorders?

Is it the view we *want* them to have?

What is OUR dream?
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How does each person in society form an opinion about the value and contribution of people with disabilities or disorders?

Opinions are largely based on the daily life and personal experiences of every person in society.
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Our goal for the future?

Society perceives everyone as valuable members of the community who are safe, belong, can participate and contribute.

BE SAFE

BE VALUED

BELONG

PARTICIPATE

CONTRIBUTE
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Well then, who is Society?

SOCIETY IS EVERYONE, EVERYWHERE, ALL THE TIME
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To accomplish change in society's views, we need to change the daily life and personal experiences of every member of society.

OK?
Domain of Concern

Domain of Influence
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The only thing we can control in life is Ourselves!
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To promote valuing, participation, safety, contributing and belonging, we need to:

EDUCATE
AND
DEMONSTRATE

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“You ARE being watched…and this creates the opportunity for others to learn to appreciate and value the individuality and contribution of people with special needs in the world.”

Barbara
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YOU ARE BEING WATCHED
AND
IT’S A GOOD THING!

- Get over it! It is not about YOU.
- Recognize opportunities to teach society
- Recognize opportunities to model valuing, belonging and contribution
- Recognize opportunities to keep everyone safe

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Changing Society’s View by Changing Ourselves

What does society learn when they *watch* you interact with people with apparent differences?

What does society learn when they *listen* to you interact with people with apparent differences?
“We must BE the change we wish to see in the world.”

Mahatma Gandhi
Listen to yourself!

Does society hear AFFILIATION when they *listen* to you?

Avoid:

- Psychiatric terminology
- Complex explanations
- Overstatement, melodrama
- Emotionally charged words
- Information protected by confidentiality

*See the handouts on my website*

www.barbaradoyle.com

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AFFILIATE yourself unconditionally with the individuals you support

“I’m with her.”

“Best Friend” behavior

Use repair strategies. If something goes wrong, fix it together.
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Model UNCONDITIONAL Valuing without reservation:

- Even when non-compliant
- Even when inappropriate
- Even when not using known skills
- Even when attracting attention
- Even when making a mess
- Even (and especially) when having a melt down

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The “I” in the plan does not stand for “INSIST”.

How did the focus of our interactions in human services become fixed on compliance?
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- Dispel the “no one can understand him but me” myth.
- Dispel the “he is not making any sense” myth.
- You might have to make it up sometimes! (Take your best guess.)
- Dispel autism myths. See the handout on my website www.barbaradoyle.com
Dispel the “US” and “THEM” Myth

What are the true underlying messages behind these statements?

“You must be such a SPECIAL person to take care of them!”

“I could never do what YOU do for those people.”

“God only gives them to special people who can handle it.”
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Be **SUBTLE**

- Provide the least amount of correction
- As quietly as possible
- In the most subtle way you can
- In the most dignified way possible
- Only when needed
- PLAN for needed support

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Be FLEXIBLE

- Respond to ALL communicative signals as quickly as you can
- Put *relationship* ahead of compliance
- Put *safety* and *belonging* ahead of program goals
- *Prevent and plan for* dangerous behavior
- PLAN for flexibility
Be FLEXIBLE. Be ready to change:

- The activity
- The schedule
- The materials
- The outcome
- Your goal
- Your priorities
- Your mind
- Your plan
- Your behavior and responses

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Be FLEXIBLE: Use the “rule of three”

The third time you have had the same problem, ask for help and make a plan to change what you do!

In the meantime, choose a respectful response, minimize the problem at that moment, keep everyone safe.

Make a note of it and ask for help before it happens again.
Teaching the Person with ASD: BE SAFE

- Focus on **safe** behavior. Never stop working on this goal.

- Prioritize safety goals. Work to **eliminate** unsafe behavior.

- Self-care is necessary for safety.

- Unsafe people have limited lives.
Teaching the Person with Special Needs: BELONGING

Belonging is NOT the result of:

- How smart you are or your grades
- Being able to walk, talk, see, hear, pay attention, stay on task…
- Facts you know or how much you remember
- Your academic knowledge
- How many years you went to school
- Numbers of skills you have acquired
- Conventional manners

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Teaching the Person with Special Needs: BELONGING

Belonging results from:
- Sharing interests and activities
- Being able to communicate
- Being safe around others
- Being non-destructive
- Having a calm demeanor
- Appearing to have something in common with others
- Doing nice things for others

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Model and Teach:

- Carry or hold things for others
- Give compliments (verbally/non-verbally)
- Share foods, toys, books, etc.
- Take turns with others
- Honor birthdays and occasions
- Set the table for the group
- Make surprises and gifts for others
Teach people *simple* and *obvious* acts of courtesy such as:

- Hold a door open for the person behind you, or help to carry things
- Open the car door for someone
- Offer a snack or treat to someone
- Offer to help someone
- “Listen” to another person and show concern and interest
- Let someone in line *before* you

What else?

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Teach the Person to CONTRIBUTE

- Become volunteers, companions, helpers
- Hand out playbills, books, materials
- Participate in activities that help those in need in the community: work at a breadline, food bank, library, Habitat for Humanity, animal shelters, public gardens, etc.
- Maintain physical environments (start early!)
Teach Everyone Some Way to CONTRIBUTE

Teach children and adults to do nice things for their families and siblings.

Families need to be rewarded with clear demonstrations of caring.
My Gift to You

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO
FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS
WITH DISABILITIES

A poem for you
based on
“The Star Thrower”
By Loren Eiseley

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO
FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS
WITH DISABILITIES
Thank you for all you do!
Contact us if we can help.

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