

ZERO TOLERANCE

WHAT IRRITATES ME
MOST ABOUT DELHI

'People are afraid of the disabled'



— Activist for the disabled,
member, Devotion for Motion

DO you know that 90 million individuals in India are disabled? And that these 90 million people are still waiting to be accepted by the rest of society?

Supposedly, this is a country which prides itself on its acceptance of people, cultures, religion, etc. If this is so, then why are my words bothering many of you now? Before you pass judgement, I ask you, "What do you feel when you see or hear about someone who is disabled?" Is it compassion, inspiration, do you wonder "why?" Or do you stare, pityingly, or say to yourself, "I'm glad that it is not me!"

Be honest with yourself. There is no right or wrong answer. All that is suggested is if you have any feeling other than that of compassion, take a good look in the mirror and make a journey towards to find out why you can't accept this individual. Maybe, it's because you have yet to accept yourself!

Many worthwhile organisations are doing excellent work to integrate the disabled into mainstream society, but their efforts will continue to move at a slow pace unless society embraces them. My belief is society cannot accept the disabled because there is an enormous amount of fear within each individual. Until you begin to heel that fearful part in you, this will remain an

unresolved issue. It irks you.

If you are not educated about disabilities then make an effort to find out. If you see someone who is disabled, don't always think they need sympathy or money. What they need is a friend. Take some time to volunteer for organisations working to integrate the disabled. Approach someone who is disabled and be open to the gift I am sure you will receive. I have always believed that illness or disease is a direct path to rediscovering one's true essence. We all have limitations. Find out yours before passing judgement. 90 million out there are waiting for you and want to be your friend.

By the way, I am an American, my wife is Indian, and I have been confined to a wheelchair for the last 14 years. Thanks for listening!

