

STRATEGIES FOR COPING WITH CEREBRAL PALSY

Learn to laugh at situations e.g. when a relative recently asked if I was left-handed! Because I laughed, she didn't feel as though she'd "dropped a clanger."

Be prepared when people ask, "What's wrong with your hand?" Say "I've got cp". They might be embarrassed initially, but will thank you in the long run. Don't shy away or hide behind your disability. Be confident!

Be flattered when people forget e.g. when someone suggested I fake a limp to use a disabled toilet recently. They see the real you. (I didn't use the loo!)

If people can't accept you have occasional difficulties, it says more about them than you.

Accept that there will always be people in the world who won't understand, and ignore them - One day life might give them a kick in the teeth, and they will realise how blinkered they are.

Make sure your school or workplace fully understands your needs. Make friends with your SEN coordinator (school) or your Human Resources Department (work). If not, try your G.P.

Accept help if necessary and don't be too proud. If you are in a difficult situation, don't be afraid to tell people. If someone expects something of you which is physically impossible, be honest with them. If everything goes pear-shaped, it will be their fault!

In this day and age, it is never too early to master combination locks on doors. They are absolutely everywhere. Learn to use any available body part in your quest to conquer them!

Find a good support network. However positive you are, there will be times when you get "why me?" syndrome.

Be proud of yourself and your achievements.

Don't think you can't do something just because your mobility is impaired. Ways and means. AIM HIGH!

Accept what has happened. We can't change it, but we can make it better.