

## ***Thoughts on Hope***

***by Steve Rietveld***

*As a person with a chronic lung disease, you might think that my injury, leaving me paralyzed, is a very bad thing and worse than what you have, but you cannot look at it that way. Each person's situation is different, and comparing it is like thinking the grass is greener on the other side of the fence or vice versa. Sure, this is a devastating injury but the main thing is that I still have my MIND and I am still ME. My body is not disfigured – it still looks the same. It just cannot move. Of course it could be worse: I could be on a respirator, not able to move my arms like I can now, or my mind could be damaged, but none of those things have happened, so I'm very fortunate.*

*I have discovered the world of computers and that they are a godsend, and my link to the outside world. Had I not been injured would I have been this involved with computers? Probably not. So out of a tragedy there have been positives. If I can inspire or help just one person, with words, comfort, or visiting my web site, then that is good. Don't look at me as a person that has lost so much – but someone that has gained so much more.*

*And now regarding the subject of... Hope. Anything I have to share or help people with, I am happy to give. Hope is something that is hard to keep a hold of, to keep it in your sights when something happens to you – chronic or terminal illness, an accident – anything.*

*At first when something devastating happens you think there is no hope and never will be. Personally, I did not even want to hope for anything when first injured. My first thoughts were to pretty much give up because, what was the point? My life is over. My plans are over. My dreams are gone. What good will I be, or could I be ever again? With an injury like mine, or a chronic/terminal illness, acceptance of your situation is a key before you can begin to hope. Sure, I hope there will be a cure for paralysis and someday there will be, but not in my lifetime. I try not to get my hopes too high or go overboard with anticipation when news comes out about new research or new discoveries, because it is easy to think it will be available the next day. In truth, it still could be years away and you have to hope in perspective. Even small advances that help you deal with day-to-day living means a lot, even if it is not a cure.*

***I think you always have to have hope... have to keep that flame burning.*** A lot of days it is easier said than done and every situation is different. Every day brings something new... the sun always comes out and we never know what that day will bring. This is why I will never give up or lose hope because I want to be around to experience everything that I can. Without hope we are nothing, I feel. Whether you are spiritual or not it is still there. ***On the coldest darkest days of winter there is still hope... remember***

*how we feel when we see that first flower pushing up through the snow? Human beings are very strong inside even if we do not realize that. I have been handed in life this deck of cards to play with and will make the best of it.*

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