



Milt Wright & Associates, Inc.
Organizational Design, Training & Development

Music Within Letter

When I was told that someone wanted to make a film about the disability movement of the seventies, I was thrilled. When I was informed that I would be the main character in the film, I was taken aback. The fight for disability rights was the silent civil rights movement. It happened but it seemed that only we noticed that we had won. I never believed any single person was the acknowledged leader — it was a group effort.

However, the filmmakers chose to show the movement through my experiences and my eyes. They asked me to write down my memories. I was determined not to portray myself as a hero. After a few pages I found myself struggling, instead, not to portray myself as a villain. As the project went on I realized that in truth I was barely the protagonist in my own life. The story was not about me after all — it was about everyone that I knew. It was about persons who had lived with disabilities all their life. It was about those who had come back from Vietnam only to become disabled. It was about the children who were then learning to live with disabilities while, at the same time, learning to live without hope. It was about the marvelous human ability to gain compassion from great adversity.

I was brought up believing that something was wrong with persons with disabilities. When I became one, I realized that there is nothing wrong with persons with disabilities, there is only something wrong with the way we react to them. We took this simple truth to the streets, to the police stations, to the court houses and eventually, to the White House. I was privileged to take this journey of truth with some of the most interesting, entertaining and colorful people that I could ever hope to know.

Now this truth is being brought to “A Theater Near You”. The movie “Music Within” will take this truth to a new generation of young people with disabilities, to their parents and teachers. The film will bring this truth to the returning wounded warriors from Iraq and Afghanistan as well as their families and the employers who wait for them. It brings this truth as a tribute to my generation of Vietnam Veterans and persons with disabilities. Contrary to popular belief, we did not do the impossible. What we did was simply what every Civil Right Movement does. We did the unthinkable.

We were the silent civil rights movement. Now forty years later our story is being told; I am so grateful that the story is being told through a marvelously entertaining movie.

--Richard Pimentel--