

Love Me for Who I Am

“Love Me for Who I Am,” was written during one session in an in-patient residential institution. There were about twelve participants in this group and all had some form or another of significant impairment: brain injury, spinal cord injury, psychiatric diagnosis, orientation impairment or memory disorder. Some could barely speak. Some barely knew where they were. Some were in wheelchairs. Some were grievously injured and not too physically attractive. A germ of an idea started about a better world. People started throwing out lines and suggestions. My job was to listen; to give everyone the respect of being heard and having a voice, even those whose voice was one word, a whisper, a hesitantly articulated contribution from a seemingly disoriented person who doesn't expect anyone to listen. As we fit the pieces together, little by little, a lyric took form. One lady who could play piano pretty well came up with some chords and a melody, a Latin-influenced Rock feel. Suddenly, we had a song. Could any song be more socially relevant and have a more timeless message?

Love Me for Who I Am

**I may not look like you
I may not talk like you
But I have feelings
And my heart beats like you**

**If you take a little time
Then you might find
If you get to know me
You might come to love me**

**Though ages may pass
It must come at last
When the lion lies down with the lamb**

**The miracle is revealed
And the world will be healed
When you can love me for who I am**

**Ashes to ashes
Dust to dust Life is risky
But in God we trust**

**Sadness will continue to play it's game
Until we realize That we're all the same**

This song was never recorded by the original group that wrote it but was recorded at a later time by a large group in the Studio. 'We have a right to be here. Our perspective is valid and our lives matter. We will not be condemned or pushed into the shadows.' This is the heart of any social advocacy movement. The human tendency to split people into groups, with one group being the dominant and the other being the oppressed, has occurred throughout history, sometimes with monstrous results. Has any member of these groups been less capable or morally inferior to another? The dominant group at the time would try to make it seem so, but is it true?