



Questions for "Jean Vanier on Student Leaders of All Abilities"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ia6ECn-X9KE>

1. Jean Vanier says that people who have differing abilities have a contribution to make and can be our teachers. Their contribution may be a capacity to relate to different people, to bring people together, or a capacity for goodness. (a) Can you think of someone who fits one of these descriptions and who is a teacher in this way? (b) Describe this person.

2. Vanier speaks about twinning people of differing abilities. (a) Explain the power of twinning people in this way. (b) What is needed for such twinning to be effective? (People need to be open, to accept others who are different from them, and to recognize that they have something to contribute.) (c) L'Arche chose for its 50th anniversary the theme of "WITH." It is an illustration of the idea of twinning. An example might be watching a hockey or soccer game with someone who is different from you. What are some things you could do with someone who has a disability? Are there programs or activities in your school where the idea of WITH can be practised by including people of differing abilities?

3. Read the story of the hockey parent (below). How did this parent enable himself and Terry to receive the gift of each other? How did Terry do this? What did the parent receive? What did Terry receive?

A Parent's Story

*My son plays junior hockey in Niagara Falls. His team employs Terry as an equipment manager. For me, Terry always makes travelling the ninety-minute drive to the game worthwhile. Terry has some differing abilities when it comes to learning, and he uses those abilities in ways I really appreciate. Besides the great work he does helping with the equipment, no matter how intense the game is, no matter how well or, maybe, poorly the team played, no matter what sort of game my son played, his warm welcome, his sharing of hockey photos, or his positive comments about the team **make me feel** that there's a sense of community about this team. He helps to give a realistic perspective to playing hockey and to life because he points out what is truly important in both. Terry is a great ambassador for this team and a good teacher because he uses his gifts and talents to build community.*

4. In life, we may have an ability or a disability at a younger age that may change as we grow older. Can you think of someone in public life of sports or entertainment whose abilities have changed over the years, so that they lost one ability but gained another and were able to make a different kind of contribution? Describe this person.

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