

Encouragement

Two men, both gravely ill, occupied the same hospital room. One man was allowed to sit up in his bed for an hour every afternoon to help drain the fluid from his lungs. His bed was next to the room's sole window. The other man had to spend all his time fixed on his back.

The men babbled for hours on end. They spoke of their wives and families, their homes, their careers, their involvement in the military service, where they had been on holiday.

And each afternoon when the man in the bed by the window could sit up, he would pass the time by reporting to his roommate all the things he could see outside the window. The man in the other bed started to live for those one-hour periods where his world would be broadened and enlivened by all the action and color of the world outdoors.

The window overlooked a park with a lovely lake. Ducks and swans played on the water while youngsters sailed their model boats. Young lovers walked arm in arm amid flowers of every color of the rainbow. Grand old trees graced the landscape, and a fine view of the city horizon could be seen in the distance.

As the man by the window described all this in keen detail, the man on the other side of the room would shut his eyes and imagine the picturesque scene.

One warm afternoon the man by the window described a parade going by. Although the other man couldn't hear the band - he could see it in his mind's eye as the man by the window portrayed it with descriptive words.

Days and weeks passed. One morning, the day nurse arrived to bring water for their baths only to find the lifeless body of the man by the window, who had died peacefully in his sleep. She was saddened and called the orderlies to take the body away.

As soon as it appeared appropriate, the other man asked if he could be moved next to the window. The nurse was happy to make the switch, and after making a point to see that he was comfortable, she left him alone.

Slowly, painfully, he propped himself up on one elbow to take his first look at the world outdoors. Finally, he would have the joy of seeing it for himself.

He strained to slowly turn to look out the window beside the bed. It faced a blank wall.

The man asked the nurse what could have compelled his deceased roommate who had described such wonderful things outside this window. The nurse responded that the man was blind and could not even see the wall. She stated, "Perhaps he just desired to encourage you."