Would you like people to define and judge you only by:

- Where you live?
- The clothes you wear?
- Your tattoos?
- How you look?

Of course not.

And people with disabilities don’t like it either.

If a person’s disability is not relevant to the conversation, don’t mention it. If it is necessary to mention it, then always be respectful and use PEOPLE FIRST language.

PEOPLE FIRST language puts the PERSON before their DISABILITY, and recognizes that a person HAS a disability, a person IS NOT the disability. There is more to each of us than any one characteristic we may have.

Using PEOPLE FIRST language positively empowers and includes people. Using stereotypes and negative language limits and segregates them.

A person with a disability is – first and foremost – a person.

“Handle them carefully, for words have more power than atom bombs.”

Pearl Stratchan

Some examples of PEOPLE FIRST language:

- Instead of: Antoine is slow or retarded
  Say: Antoine has an intellectual disability

- Instead of: Marly is confined to a wheelchair or wheelchair bound
  Say: Marly uses a wheelchair

- Instead of: Roberto is psycho, crazy, or loco
  Say: Roberto has an emotional disability

- Instead of: Handicapped parking space
  Say: Accessible parking space

- Instead of: Mr. Joseph is afflicted with, a victim of, or suffers from Alzheimer’s Disease
  Say: Mr. Joseph has Alzheimer’s Disease

- Instead of: Jimmy is slow or learning disabled
  Say: Jimmy has a learning disability

I’m not crippled or confined. I use my wheelchair to play basketball.

I’m not autistic or on the spectrum. I’m Robbie.