WATCH THIS VIDEO!

I hope you will take time to watch this extraordinary story of Carly Fleischmann, a 14-year-old girl who has autism and is unable to speak, but has found a way to communicate with the world.

"I am autistic, but that's not who I am. Take time to know me before you judge me. "

~~Carly Fleischmann

Happy, Sad, Inspired, Guilty all at the same time.....

Happy- I am always happy to see news reports like this which help bring autism awareness to yet another level. We do underestimate people with autism particularly those who appear to be on the lower end of the spectrum because of the added obstacles they face and therefore, present. It is easy to do this because what we see on the outside does not match up to what's may be on the inside. In many ways, there is a devaluing or undervaluing of people based on their functioning level. Hopefully stories like this help to shift this mentality.

Sad- The sad part comes in when I think about how frustrating it might be to be my son Kyle. Many wants and needs unmet and locked into a body which acts on its own volition and is unable to settle enough to learn to communicate in a more sophisticated way.

Inspired- This story is so inspiring because it shows us that our kids and adults who function on the "lower" end of the autism spectrum have a lot more locked inside than what appears on the outside. I have always believed this though admittedly have not acted upon that belief as much as maybe I could. The day to day care can be overpowering and overwhelming, making it easy to forget to talk to and connect with the guy inside vs the guy who is not in complete control on

the outside. It is also inspiring to see what the perserverance and support of a family can do. Watching this report makes it look easier than it is for the family. The work, dedication, commitment and output are huge. They were rewarded with an equally huge result. Often the rewards are smaller and more subtle.

Guilty- I wonder if there are things I have missed in helping Kyle bust out of the trappings of his body. Have I done enough? This question seems to be one that comes to haunt parents of kids with special needs even after their children are adults. Or am I the only one? Ha! Guilty because in many ways, I have run out of steam on this path and am currently coasting. I still find myself slipping back into the pattern talking in front of Kyle as if he does not understand.

Inspired- All the dedication I put into seeing that Kyle has a quality life to the best of my ability such as providing activites which I know he enjoys may be having an effect at an even deeper level than imagined. And for all those who wonder if driving him around to activities and dedication to therapy and an extreme concern for what he does during the day makes a difference, here is more evidence that it does. Admittedly, sometimes I question it too because I don't get a lot of feedback from Kyle. Giving without needing to get back directly is part of interacting with a person with autism.

Throughout Kyle's 28 year life, there have been many news reports of breakthroughs. Friends and family think of me when they see them. It seems that often the treatment reported doesn't seem to apply to Kyle and we are left happy for the child and family featured, but with a little layer of sadness for us. Wouldn't it be nice if this could be Kyle? I am not asking for a fix or cure as I have come to accept Kyle "as is". But if his life could be made richer or more satisfying or a little easier for him by being able to reach out and communicate, it sure would be nice. And wouldn't it be nice if people could see him a little differently as well?

Years of our family's hard work have yielded a different result. I'm happy for Carly and her family, but admittedly a little jealous too. At the same time, I am inspired to keep creating little shifts in my own attitude and actions to help Kyle be the best he can be in his life.

Would love to hear your thoughts after you have seen this video.