

Grumpy Old (AAC) Woman

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Short Abstract

Over 50 years on, society has left me a Grumpy Old Woman. The same society that has given me the National Disability Insurance Scheme has left me a society with unchanged attitudes towards a person that does not have a voice. My tolerance levels are tested as taxi drivers and airport staff keep thinking I cannot be intelligent! The complaint letters keep piling up. Why do I have to waste my time writing or emailing to big companies for no thanks or little effort on their part. Complaining takes a lot of time and energy.

WARNING THIS PAPER HAS A LOT OF NEGATIVE STORIES AND NOT MANY HAPPY ENDINGS!

An example of rage- I was visiting my mother in aged care.... A staff member arrives as I am leaving, I proceed to enter the exit code, something goes wrong and the code is not right. I hear the staff member calling reception calling reception "the new person on second floor is trying to escape". My mother is on Ground floor. He has no idea what he is talking about. I yell at him, Press the code and exit to my car. Another staff member runs out following me. I spell out "I am not a resident!". She replies "I know you are Margo's daughter" and apologises.

Several other times other visitors ask "can I let this person out?" The last time it happened, the person was fingered!

Long Abstract

Over 50 years on, society has left me a Grumpy Old Woman. The same society that has given me the National Disability Insurance Scheme has left me a society with unchanged attitudes towards a person that does not have a voice. My tolerance levels are tested as taxi drivers and airport staff keep thinking I cannot be intelligent! The complaint letters keep piling up. Why do I have to waste my time writing or emailing to big companies for no thanks or little effort on their part. Complaining takes a lot of time and energy.

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In February 2023 I was going to Newcastle for work. The stupid taxi driver yelled to the traffic warden to help me. I did not want help. I can walk with my case the 50 metres to check in. The traffic warden led me in with my case. I tried to point to put the case down to check in station but no he went to the check in desk. The lady on the check in desk yelled at the traffic warden and me "I don't have time.... Where's her carer....". I told the taxi warden to "go away". Five minutes later another staff member came up to me and asked "do you need help?" to which I said "they think I do?". She left me alone. I had checked in and proceeded to Bag drop. Why did it take the fourth person to actually ask if I needed help? I now tell taxi drivers I can manage by myself.

On Easter Monday I had visited a friend in a suburban rehabilitation centre and was leaving. The huge corridor was clear, I was safe, so decided to stand up straight and use the walking frame with one hand. I often do this when I have a long walk and it is safe to do so. My body tires of being bent over. A woman came up to me and asked me why I was using only one hand, and that I should be using two hands. She said she was a physio and finally asked "are you patient here or visitor?" I replied "visitor". She left, returned to the nurses station and said "job's done". At no time was her ID facing me or I would have reported her to the physio association. No, her job was not done, because she was not my physio, she was not going to watch me, or help me get to the car, or even put the walker into my car! Her job was done if her job was to humiliate me!

I was getting a taxi to work one morning. The taxi driver demanded to know how I was paying, even though I had written "Cabcharge" in the details box when I had booked. I said "CabCharge" and showed him that I had the card. The taxi driver then took the card. He then drove me to the destination and ignored me when I asked "Which way are we going?". At the end of the journey, he returned my card. A work colleague happened to be passing by, so she stopped to help. The taxi driver started being friendly calling me by name and even offered the work colleague the receipt for my taxi ride. The taxi driver on the way home, a different taxi driver, treated me with the same ignorance taking my CabCharge card holding onto it and ignoring my request to stay on a particular road. There is a small nuance in attitude between treated with dignity, or being humiliated at every turn.

I had an appointment with my specialist to get Botox on the bladder. I was 25 minutes early, that didn't matter, I was happy to wait. I was in the waiting room outside pathology. The Urodology clinic door was half open, I supposed they were having lunch. About ten minutes

later, a woman from the clinic, who I knew from my appointment six weeks earlier, saw me, entered the clinic and closed the door. About 50 minutes after I arrived, I needed the toilet so started getting grumpy. Someone from Pathology came out, I pointed to the Urodology door, she knocked on the door, made staff come out and attend to my needs which included all the pre Botox stuff and changing into the gown as well as going to the toilet. The specialist arrived apologising for her lateness explaining that she had been called in to emergency surgery adding "I assume the staff told you"> I shook my head, to which the Specialist looked surprised. No phone message, no email, np polite information from a staff member jus a closing of the door in front of me, not to be opened until I get grumpy.

Maybe all people face ignorance, it would have taken only a few polite words on all of these occasions but