

Repurposing a wheelchair: reshaping a life article review sample

[Countries](#), [England](#)



" Like the athletes at the Paralympics, disabled artist Sue Austin

is working to redefine the popular notion of disability." PRI's The World
Sue Austin, the founder and artistic director of Freewheeling, demonstrated an amazing deep sea diving feat on TED Talks. These underwater experiences give her a tremendous new sense of freedom after losing use of her legs sixteen years ago because of ME (Myalgic Encephalomyelitis) (Support ME, n. pag).

Seeing her life slip away and become restricted, Austin's new wheelchair gives her an exhilarating feeling having the mobility to whiz around, roam the streets, and feel the wind on her joyful face. Prior to reshaping her life, she found people's reactions toward her wheelchair as a " limitation, fear, pity, or as a restriction" feeding into her thoughts of self-pity. She began seeing herself through the perspective of others rather than through her own perspective. Realizing she needed a story of her own, Austin set out to reclaim her identity. In 2005, when she began to dive, she realized that scuba " extends her range of activity" bringing a sense empowerment to the perception of disability. Through Austin's persistent work over a period of time, her organization has opened up the " thinking space" and raised the profile on being different (Austin, n. pag).

Invited to be a part of the Cultural Olympiad in London, Austin's preparation for that event included a groundbreaking series of live art and video works of an underwater wheelchair (Hartley, n. pag). And when participating in the Paralympic Games, Austin staged stunning underwater scuba performances called " Creating the Spectacle!" to show off her underwater art (DailyMail,

n. pag).

Along with giving Austin a sense of new adventure, it helped her realize that she can do anything she wants, even in a wheelchair. Her attitude, courageous approach, and zest to reshape her life gives inspiration to those of us with legs that walk.

Works Cited

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