

# 9/11 Changed My Attitude about Life

Wen Fei Liang

It was an ordinary morning for me. I brushed my teeth and washed my face. Then I turned on a radio and I did some exercises for my upper arms. I made breakfast for my mother and me. After I finished breakfast, I drove my power wheelchair to school. On the way to school, I felt the crisp air fill my lungs. A few white clouds floated in the blue sky. The sun was bright. I felt very comfortable. I said to myself, "It is a wonderful day, isn't it?" However, I did not know that a terrible thing was about to happen and that it would affect many people in the world.

After the terrorists attacked the World Trade Center, our English class was dismissed. I went home as quickly as I could. I was thinking about

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my mother who was old and alone at home. I heard fire trucks. Their sirens blew the silence out of the air. When I arrived at my home, I saw two police standing in front of the building. We were not allowed into the building. The police said that the terrorists might attack other tall buildings in Chinatown.

We were permitted to go into our homes at 3 p.m. I had been on the street for about six hours. I was so worried about my mother. Finally, I saw her. She was well, and we were happy to see each other. Then I watched the news on the television. I felt sad because people's lives were not secure. I felt that there were no safe places in the world. Suddenly, terrorists can kill thousands of innocent people.

Many people were affected by 9/11. They had trouble sleeping at night. They woke up from nightmares. They needed to see psychiatrists. Suddenly, everyone was a suspect. The police set

up many barriers to check the pedestrians. Trucks were not allowed south of Canal Street. Some streets were sealed by the police. The prosperous Chinatown changed. Many garment factories and restaurants closed or moved to New Jersey.

Since 9/11, my attitude about life has changed. I realized the fragility of life and that I should cherish

every moment of it. I am a happy person in the world. I should be satisfied with what I have. I should not complain about why I don't have healthy legs. 9/11 taught me that we should be more concerned for each other.

Before 9/11, I didn't pay attention to my neighbors. They were Chinese seniors who did not speak English. After 9/11, I realized I wanted to help them. So I became their interpreter when they needed me. I read letters to them. I helped them resolve their issues with their telephone bill and cable bill. I was happy to help elderly people because I could see their smiling faces.

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*Wen Fei Liang is an ESOL student from China who takes classes at University Settlement in New York City. She has been living in New York since 1991 and started studying English a few years ago. Wen Fei developed polio which caused her to walk with difficulty. Her parents always gave her the encouragement she needed to help her get through the difficulties in life.*

