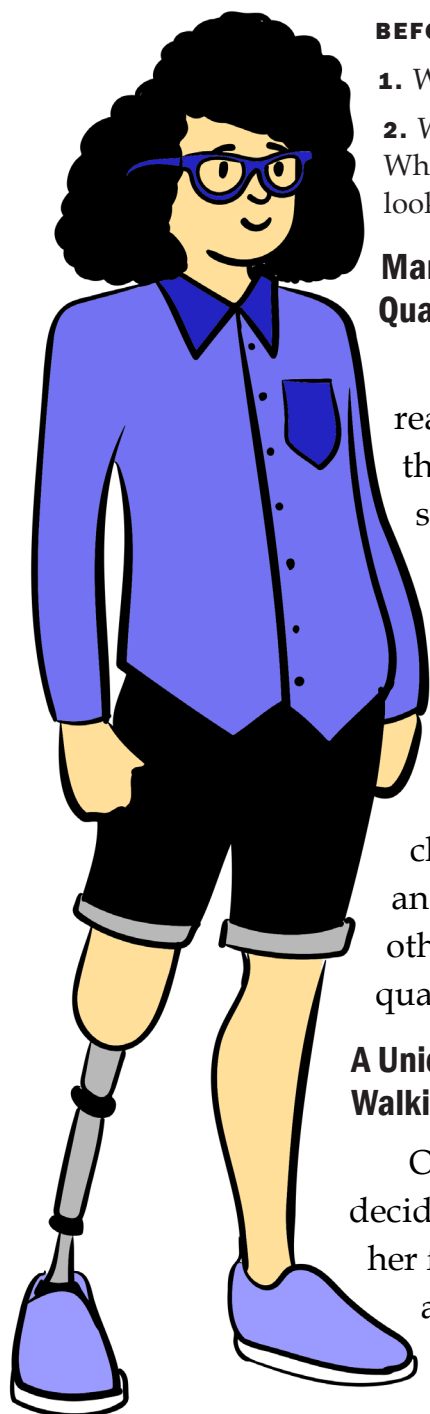


A Whole Woman

J. Antonio Rodríguez Carreon



BEFORE YOU READ:

1. What is a *prosthesis*?
2. What are *qualities*?
What qualities do you look for in a person?

Many Beautiful Qualities

“Oh, she is really pretty!” I thought when I saw my new co-worker. As the days went by, I became more interested in her. She was determined, cheerful, gentle, and had many other beautiful qualities.

A Unique Way of Walking

One day, I decided to invite her for a walk. She accepted! Over time, our walks continued. Her way of walking was very unique. I asked her

friends about it. I found out that she used a *prosthesis* due to a birth defect. She had a problem with one leg. The doctors had to amputate one leg above the knee.

The Big Question

We continued dating until one day, I decided to ask her the big question: “Do you want to be my girlfriend? I have found in you everything I was looking for. You are a whole woman.”

She responded, “A whole woman?”

“Yes,” I said. “A whole woman!”

We looked into each other’s eyes and laughed.

A year later, we got married. We had three beautiful children. Our marriage, like many others, had ups and downs.

A Question That Surprised Me

Some years later, we met a young couple. In a private moment, they asked me, “How long had you been married to your wife when the accident happened?”

The question surprised me. They assumed my wife had an accident *after* we were married. They thought I would never marry someone who already had a disability. I realized that most people think that living with someone with a disability is an accident and cannot be a free choice!

Yes, this life is hard, but it is not a curse. With the support of others, it is more bearable. A cross carried by many weighs less!

Why not recognize ourselves as individuals with imperfections? Why not recognize ourselves as people with disabilities, which we all have to a *greater or lesser degree*? Disabilities are part of being human.

After 40 years of marriage to a disabled person, I can say for sure, “She is a whole woman. I love Lore!”



AFTER YOU READ:

1. Why did the author choose the title, “A Whole Woman”?
2. What do you think of the author’s statement that we all have disabilities to a *greater or lesser degree*?

Antonio Rodríguez Carreon is a student at Ysleta Community Learning Center in El Paso, Texas. He has been living for two years in a new city, a new country, and a new world. He’s struggling every day to make his dreams come true. This is his second article for The Change Agent. The first was published on p. 3 of Issue 63. The Title is “We Need Rules” (see the box below).

Read More by this Author

‘We Need Rules,’ by J. Antonio Rodríguez Carreon is a humorous piece posing serious questions about what age children should be before they are exposed to the internet. You can read it as a [PDF](#), listen to it in [audio](#), or view the story in [Google slides](#). It was originally published in Issue 63 of *The Change Agent*.

