

by **Michael McCarthy**

who first presented this as part of a parent training session in Bismarck, North Dakota

In the beginning...

there was *placement*,
and Lo! it was a wonder to behold.

And so we said, this is good.
As placements multiplied and filled the earth.

And then, we said, let us make
programs, to serve *clients*.

And clients were given *diagnoses*,
and grouped according to their diagnostic
labels and given unto program.

And the programs created *services* for each diagnosis, and state agencies developed
unit costs for each service.

Programs and unit costs prospered and multiplied, and we said, Yea, this is very
good.

As programs multiplied, a cry arose: let us evaluate our programs to see how good
they are.

And so it was that we created a host of *program evaluations*, *state regulations*,
quality assurance, and *compliance plans*.

And our measurements went forth and multiplied, and filled volumes.

And in those times arose a person who was a client, who said:

“I don’t want to be a *client*,

I am a person.

I don’t want a *diagnosis*,

I have a name.

I don’t want *services*,

I have human needs.

I don’t want a *residential placement*,

I want a home.

I don’t want a *day program*,

I want a job, and money.

I don’t want a *program*,

I want a life.

I want only what you want: a life of my own.”

And Lo, we listened and we trembled and were troubled in our souls.

For would not each person live his own unique life?
And we cried out, Would not each person measure her own life for herself?
And the prophet answered:
“Even as you say, so should it be done. Just as you do for yourselves.”



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