

# Are you comfy yet — in your own skin?

by Judy Squier

I'm an amputee secondary to a birth defect, and have had half a century to embrace who I am. Recently I was told that calling myself an amputee is no longer politically correct; instead I should say I am a woman with an amputation. And the word residual limbs is booting out the word stumps.

Imagine my surprise when Ginny, my swimming buddy, informed me recently of her distaste: "I don't like the word stumps."

"What would you prefer I call them?" I asked as my dripping wet stumps and I climbed out of the pool into my wheelchair.

"They're legs," she sounded a bit huffy.

My temperature rose to exceed the YMCA's 102 degree hot tub. "Legs? How can they be legs with no thighs, knees, feet or toes?"

Another swimmer, overhearing our argument, encouraged Ginny, "Can't you just be thankful you don't have them?"

Words are important. Words can unite or divide. Ginny's words made my stumps feel unacceptable, versus another friend, who has lovingly nicknamed me Stumps. Her ease with the word communicates to me she's at ease with me.

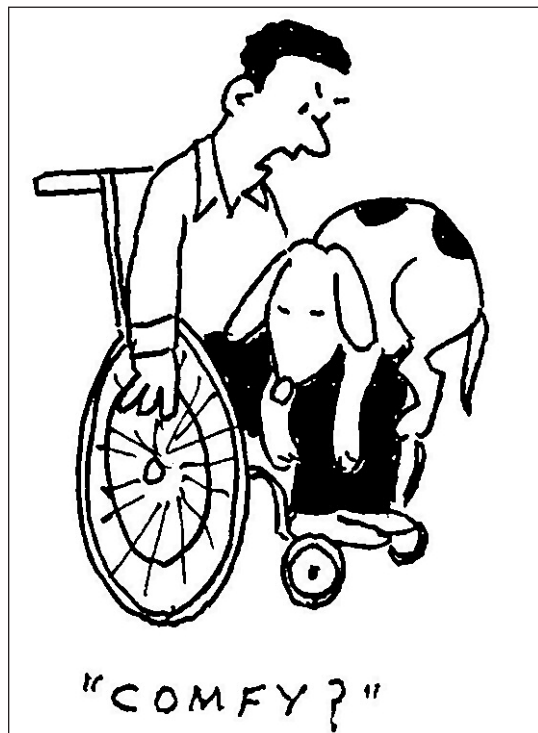
Have you heard about People First Language (PFL)?



Judy and her oldest grandchild, Brianna, who is 4 1/2. (Easter 2012)

([www.disabilityisnatural.com](http://www.disabilityisnatural.com)) It represents more respectful, accurate ways of communicating. People with disabilities are not their diagnoses or disabilities; they are people, first. A child is impacted by autism, not an autistic child. A boy has Down syndrome, not a Down's boy.

I can wrap my head around being a woman with a double



amputation who has residual limbs, but my heart prefers the innocent words I heard from a little boy recently in WalMart, "Mom, look at the old lady with no legs."

My stumps and I have done boot camp together and bonded. If Jesus showed up today and offered to heal me, I'm 95% sure I'd tell Him, "No thanks. I'll pass on the legs, I prefer my stumps."

Even my daughter Emily understood the value of stumps when as a teenager she said, "Mom, you wouldn't be the woman you are today without them."

I've written my initials by Psalm 139, verse 14 in my Bible, "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made." My stumps and I praise Him.

How about you? Are you able to praise Creator God for His

fearfully and wonderfully made creation called YOU? Maybe you are angry at Him because of a birth defect or a life-diminishing illness or injury to yourself or to someone you love.

God has big plans for what's broken in your life, be it your body, your mind, or your heart. May your brokenness drive you to the end of your self-reliance, like it did me, so you can begin trusting God. As we trust Him, distaste gives way to embrace. First, we receive His embrace, gradually we give Him ours and

one day we learn to embrace who we are.

Blessed is the day when we see what God saw all along: what we thought was diminishing us — stumps, degenerating diseases, and paralyzed bodies — are actually making us the awesome people we could never have become without them.

*Judy Squier is an author and inspirational speaker. Learn more at [www.judysquier.com](http://www.judysquier.com)*



**Do you have questions?**

**We have answers.**

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