

Blind people don't want special treatment, just courtesy

Some people may feel ill at ease meeting a blind person. A few simple points of courtesy can help.

- A blind person is an ordinary person, just blind. You don't have to raise your voice or address him as if he were a child. Don't ask the blind person's spouse or companion what he wants, ask directly.
- If a blind person is walking with you, don't grab his arm. Let him take

your arm. He'll probably keep a half-step behind, to anticipate curbs and steps.

- A blind person usually wants to know who's in the room with him. Speak when you enter, introduce him to the others, include children and let him know if there's a cat or dog. Guide his hand to a chair.
- The door to a room, cabinet or to a car left partially open can be a hazard to the blind.

- At a meal, a blind person will not usually have trouble with ordinary table skills.
- Don't struggle to avoid words like "see." Blind people use them too.
- Blind people, by and large, don't want pity. Don't talk about the "wonderful compensation" of blindness, however. A blind person's sense of smell, touch and hearing did not improve with blindness. He relies on them

more and therefore may get more information through those senses than you do — that's all.

- If a blind person is your house-guest, show him the bathroom, closet, dresser, window — the light switch too. Many like to know whether the lights are on.
- Many blind people are willing to discuss blindness with you if you're curious, but remember it's an old story to

them. They probably have as many other interests as you do.

It is the law for drivers to yield the right of way to blind pedestrians with an extended white cane. Only the blind may carry white canes.

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