

Still Sitting Tall

Category: Grit

written by Lauren Falcon | October 12, 2025

My patient, a middle-aged woman with cerebral palsy, sat beside the exam table in a wheelchair. She had a steady presence about her—a quiet strength that filled the room.

“I used to stand,” she said. “But it’s harder now. My legs don’t work the way they used to.”

She wasn’t seeking pity. She was simply stating a fact. Her face showed both fatigue and resilience.

“My husband’s been struggling,” she continued. “His depression’s getting worse—he can barely get up from bed or take care of himself. He hasn’t come to terms with losing his leg yet. And my youngest—he’s still a kid. I don’t want him to feel like he has to take care of us.”

As I examined her swollen legs, she talked about her routine—how she still cooks dinner, folds the laundry, and pays the bills. “Everyone depends on me,” she said. There was not a hint of resentment in her voice.

I found myself thinking how easily we mistake disability for dependence. She had built a life that defied that assumption—a family and a home that might falter without her.

Though her body ached, she never wavered, no matter what tested her limits. She measured love not by what she received, but by what she could offer unconditionally.

I realized that being someone’s rock doesn’t have a certain look. She may not be able to stand on her own two feet anymore, but she holds firm in every way that counts. Sometimes strength is the simple act of showing up, even when your physique betrays you.

Grit isn’t always easy to spot; if you’re not paying attention, it might just glide past you on wheels.

Lauren Falcon
Rootstown, Ohio