

Recognizing Beauty

You may remember it; it is certainly etched into my mind. The most jarring television commercial of 1999 did not say a word. It simply showed a series of people who have one thing in common – a nasty injury or scar.

There was a cowboy with a huge scar around his eye, and something wrong with the eye itself. Another fellow was shown with a bulbous cauliflower ear. Then there was a man with horribly calloused feet. There was no explanation at all. What the viewer saw next was the Nike swoosh and the marketing slogan, “Just Do It.”

The ad has been analyzed and criticized widely as being incomprehensible and extreme. The key to the commercial, however, lies in the background music. Joe Cocker sings, “You are so beautiful ... to me.”

To these athletes portrayed in the commercial – the wrestler with the cauliflower ear, the surfer with a shark bite, the bull rider blind in one eye – their injuries are beauty marks. And to their fans, these athletes are beautiful because of their scars, emblems of what they have achieved and survived.

“Beauty is in the eye of the beholder,” said Mike Folino, creator of the ad.

The commercial strikes me as representative of the actions and attitudes of associates in the centers of Life Care and American Lifestyles and in the work of Life Care at Home. The residents we serve have made a long journey through many years, and life has not always been kind to them. They have been buffeted by storms, setbacks and personal tragedies, and their bodies show the effects of time and many experiences.

And yet, by what our associates do for them every day, they sing in word or deed, “You are so beautiful ... to me.”

And the symphony of love and service is music to their ears ... and to the Creator.

--Beecher Hunter