

# Pass It On®...

## Judging by Appearances Misses the Most Beautiful Part of Life: Friendship.

*When Oliver Bromley was asked to leave a restaurant because of his facial disfigurement, he didn't seek revenge. He only asks that we all seek understanding.*

In our TikTok, filtered-reality world, it's easy to get caught up in comparisons. Do I look as good as her? Are my cheekbones high enough? But these questions only narrow the lens through which we see the world. There is no divine standard by which we should all be measured.

We all look different, speak differently, think differently. Yet we all make snap judgments. Social science studies conclude that most of our first-impression character judgments are incorrect. Turns out, to really know someone takes time. It takes conversation.

Oliver Bromley has had to learn this the hard way. Due to a genetic condition called neurofibromatosis, he has many small, benign tumors on his face. One day, when he left the hospital after a series of procedures to treat neurofibromatosis, he was disheartened when a restaurant turned him away because *he was scaring customers*.

Oliver understands how his appearance can be disconcerting at first. But his heart is forgiving and kind. Even as the story was picked up by the BBC, charities weighed in and comments poured in from readers, Oliver remained unruffled. He hopes "some good can come from this" and that the whole incident will "create awareness around people with facial deformities, facial differences."

Oliver's story reminds us to pause our frenetic scrolling and judging for just a moment and ask: "What is really important?" The labels we wear, both visible and internal, can imprison us in ways that limit our ability to really feel and experience life.

Friendships help us overcome loneliness and teach us to be more tolerant, more grateful. A diverse set of friends helps us be more reflective and kind. We become deeper, more thoughtful human beings when we engage with different cultures and ideas. And when we become that one friend that accepts

and encourages rather than judging, the people we touch will multiply outward and return many kindnesses to us.

The famous story of Cyrano de Bergerac is one such example. Cyrano had a nose that was described as "obnoxiously large." While he could do nothing about his protuberance, he could learn to express himself. He became a poet and wrote verses that made women swoon. His friend Christian employed him to write love letters to his lady-in-waiting. It worked. The woman loved the words, believing they came from Christian. But when, alas, Christian was killed in war, the woman heard Cyrano reciting the words he had written for Christian. After this twist of fate, she realized it was Cyrano she was in love with, not Christian. She also realized the large nose didn't bother her in the least.

As we look past our own noses, beyond the imperfections of others, we will find people like Oliver. Kind. Forgiving. A privilege to have as a friend.

Friendship...[PassItOn.com](https://passiton.com)

By The Foundation for a Better Life®

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