



## SOMETIMES IS ENOUGH: WHY ACCESSIBILITY MATTERS

*(2-minute read)*

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James used to sigh every time his Architect mentioned accessibility.

“Ramps take up space,” he’d say, as he pointed to the plans. “Elevators cost money. This is a small office building. No one here even uses a wheelchair.”

The Architect never argued. She simply explained that accessibility was not optional. Code requires it. More importantly, people require it. James nodded politely, albeit begrudgingly, signed the change orders with mild resentment, and privately wondered why rules were written for situations that clearly did not apply to him.

The building opened on time. It featured a gently sloped ramp at the entrance, wide corridors, lever handles on the doors instead of knobs, and an elevator serving all three floors. James rarely noticed any of it. To him, these elements were invisible.

Until the day they weren’t.

One rainy afternoon, rushing to meet a client at their office, James missed a step on a wet curb and fell hard. The pain was sharp and immediate. A broken foot, the doctor said, followed by surgery, a cast, and strict instructions not to put weight on it for weeks.

The next Monday, James arrived at his own building on

crutches, irritated and embarrassed. Instinctively, he headed for the stairs, then stopped. The ramp was right there. For the first time, he used it.

Over the following weeks, James began noticing everything he had once dismissed. The elevator spared him the risk of stairs on one foot. Wide hallways made maneuvering with crutches manageable. A restroom with grab bars allowed him to care for himself instead of asking for help. Even the lever door handles mattered. Gripping knobs was difficult when balance was uncertain and hands were sweaty and tired from leaning on crutches.



One afternoon, he overheard a delivery driver thank the receptionist for the ramp after struggling with a heavy cart. Another day, he watched an older client move comfortably through the lobby with a cane. None of these people were special cases. They were just people, going about ordinary days, benefiting from thoughtful design.

Sitting in his office with his foot propped on a chair, James finally understood what his Architect had been trying to say. Accessibility was not about predicting who might use a wheelchair. It was about acknowledging

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that bodies change. Injuries happen. Age happens. Pregnancy happens. Fatigue, illness, and temporary limitations happen.

The building hadn't changed, but James had.

When the cast finally came off, he no longer saw ramps and elevators as wasted space or forced expenses. He saw them as quiet acts of foresight. Code doesn't require accessibility because everyone needs it all the time. It requires it because everyone needs it sometimes. And no one should be shut out when that time comes.

