

From *Original Sin* by Lisa M. Konoplisky. Angela (early 20s) explains why she can't watch movies with cognitively disabled characters.

ANGELA: Anyway, so when Didi was born she had, um, Down syndrome. She was the only kid in the neighborhood who—you know—wasn't right. Everyone took care of her, protected her. No one let her get past our four square blocks. She was sweet. Really sweet. A great kid. She would run up and say "I want to hug you!" And everyone would hug her and...because she was Didi and everyone knew she was different, and that was cool.

But I'd watch...I used to watch how people...I'm very linear, y'know? I didn't have a very good...well, my father—who just plain didn't want me, or, you know, whatever....And I thought, "There's gotta be a way I can fix this." Pretty much the worst thing you can think, right? When you're a kid? So I'm watching things and thinking, "Well, Didi's retarded and everyone really loves *her*." So I would kind of...I use to (*clears throat*) It wasn't something I decided, all of a sudden, one day—but I would, walk by a mirror—or I'd be brushing my teeth and I'd be, kinda—do like a face that looked retarded, you know? And make a noise—you know? "UUUUUuuhhhh" Sounds like Marlon Brando now that I hear it. "UuuUUUUuuhhh". That's kind of what he sounds like. "Uuunnnhh...uuunnnhhlll"

So I looked at myself and thought...I was basically saying if I were retarded *I* would love me. I don't love me *this* way—I'm not—maybe he is right. I'm not loveable. But if I were retarded I'd be loveable. Right?