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5. Personalities with a disability

Frances “Fanny” Crosby (1820 – 1915)



Crosby was an American mission worker, poet, lyricist, and composer. Despite being BLIND from soon after birth, she became the most prolific hymnists in history, writing more than 8,000 hymns and gospel songs, with over 100 million copies printed. She is also known for her care for the needy of society.

Became known as the “Queen of gospel song writers” and the “Mother of modern congregational singing in America, with most American hymnals containing her work and also represented by the largest number of hymns of any writer in modern

hymnals with the exception of Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley—as she is the *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*.

Some her best-known songs include “Pass Me Not, O Gentle Saviour” (569), “Blessed Assurance” (462), “Praise Him, Praise Him” (249), “Rescue the Perishing” (367), and “To God Be the Glory” (341). Because publishers were hesitant to have too many of her hymns in their hymnals, Crosby used nearly 200 different pseudonyms.

Had four books of poetry published; co-wrote popular secular songs, as well as political and patriotic songs, and at least five cantatas on biblical and patriotic themes.

Crosby’s hymns have a simple, homey appeal, which struck a chord in the Victorian culture. They were popular because they placed an emphasis on personal religious experiences and emotions, with which singers and listeners could identify, reflecting the relationship between the believer and Christ their Savior, rather than using the perceived negative descriptions of earlier hymns that emphasised the sinfulness of people.

In her 1906 autobiography, Crosby insisted she wrote her hymns “in a sanctified manner,” and never for financial or commercial considerations, and that she had donated her royalties to “worthy causes.” She was committed to Christian rescue missions, and gave away much of her royalties funding homes for the homeless and wayward.

Most importantly, whenever she wrote a hymn she prayed it would bring women and men to Christ — she set a goal of winning a million people to Christ through her hymns — and kept careful records of those reported to have been saved through her hymns: a blind woman with a great vision.

Jamie Oliver



Celebrity chef Jamie Oliver and familiar TV personality, with a world-wide network of restaurants, and currently holds the title of world’s richest chef, with a net worth of over \$230 million. He has authored more than 20 cookbooks: “I’ve never read a book in my life, which I know sounds incredibly ignorant, but I’m dyslexic.”

Nick Vujicic



Nick Vujicic is an Australian evangelist and international motivational speaker.

Born with tetra-amelia syndrome, a rare disorder characterised by the absence of all four limbs. As a child, he struggled mentally and emotionally as well as physically, but eventually came to terms with his disability and, at the age of seventeen, started his own non-profit organisation, Life Without Limbs.

Vujicic presents motivational speeches worldwide, on life with a disability, hope and finding meaning in life. He also speaks about his belief that God can use any willing heart to do his work and that God is big enough to overcome any and all disabilities.

(More information and great video at <http://www.lifewithoutlimbs.org/>)

Stephen Hawking

Stephen Hawking is familiar with the challenge of living a fulfilling life while being limited by disabilities. Since he was born, he has been battling disability for the better part of his 75 years. While most people with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) die prematurely, Hawking pushed through his illness and became a world-famous physicist. Over the years, his work in theoretical physics has captured the public eye due to his intelligence, insight, and creativity.

ALS has forced Stephen Hawking to live life in a wheelchair and use a computerized voice synthesizer to speak. Despite these limitations, he still jokes about using the voice synthesizer: "It gives me an American accent."

Richard Branson (Dyslexia)



Richard Branson, international entrepreneur and billionaire, is a model for success. He is also dyslexic. Unlike many, who consider dyslexia a curse, Branson calls it his “greatest strength.” He grew up in a time when dyslexia was largely misunderstood: his teachers simply labelled him as lazy and “not very clever.”
