

Louise Gooding



JUST



LIKE



ME



40 neurologically and physically diverse people who broke stereotypes



USAIN BOLT

"I have shown that anything is possible.
I always tell people not to limit themselves."



Usain Bolt was born in Montego Bay, Jamaica on August 21st, 1986.

As a young boy, Usain would often be found on the streets playing cricket with his younger brother. Using an orange as a ball and banana tree stumps for the wicket, they would keep themselves busy whilst their parents ran the family grocery store.

Usain had a keen interest in sports, and when he entered high school, he showed promise as a fast bowler in cricket. However, it was Usain's cricket coach at school who noticed his phenomenal speed whilst watching Usain run up to bowl. With the encouragement of his cricket coach, Usain began training in track and field athletics. The head of sports at his school, seeing Usain's talent, gifted Usain his first pair of track shoes. This aided Usain's technique on the track and helped keep him motivated. Usain soon discovered he was the fastest runner in his school.

By the time he was fifteen, Usain took part in the World Junior Championships, which was being held in Kingston, Jamaica. He won gold in the 200 metre sprint, becoming the youngest athlete to win a gold medal in the games. He also took home two silver medals: for the 100 metre sprint and as part of a team in the 400 metre relay. He was on his way to achieving great things!

Training didn't always come so easy for Usain. When he was younger, he had been diagnosed with something called scoliosis, an abnormal curvature in his spine. His scoliosis would occasionally limit his progress due to pain. Usain did not know much about his condition but, to help ease some of his discomfort, his coach put together a special programme to help Usain strengthen his core and back muscles; providing extra support and stability for his spine, which in turn eased some of the pain.

With a lot of hard work and a strong competitive streak, Usain wanted to prove he was not just a great athlete, but could be the greatest!

ACHIEVEMENTS

Usain competed in the Olympics, the World Championships, Diamond League and Commonwealth Games, winning medal after medal and smashing world records. He earned the nickname 'Lightning Bolt' and was often seen striking a lightning bolt pose before and after his races.

Usain has claimed nineteen world records including the fastest 100 metre, fastest 150 metre, fastest 200 metre, the most medals won and many more. He has nine Olympic gold medals, has won numerous awards for his sporting achievements, and is one of the highest paid athletes in the world.



Usain considered a career in football after he retired from track and field in 2017. He played for a team in Norway for a short while and also for a team in Australia before announcing in 2019 that he was going to retire from all sport.

What is scoliosis?

Scoliosis is an abnormal curvature of the spine. The curvature develops in an S or C shape. Although you can be born with scoliosis, it often develops during childhood.

Scoliosis is more common in women and tends to run in families. Sometimes, scoliosis can develop when there is an abnormality elsewhere in the body, like one leg being longer than the other. The spine then creates an artificial curve to correct the balance.

Scoliosis can cause pain or tiredness following long stretches of standing or sitting. Treatment varies from person to person, depending on the degree of curvature in their spine; core muscle training and strengthening, back braces, physiotherapy, pain medication and, in some cases, surgery may be needed.

SELENA GOMEZ

"You are who are; you're unique and you're rare."



Selena Gomez was born in Texas, USA on July 22nd, 1992.

Selena's career in the entertainment industry began at a very early age. At six years old she successfully auditioned for a part in a children's show called *Barney*. Selena's bubbly personality impressed the producers and she was later taken on to work for the Disney Channel. She was cast as one of the lead roles for a show called *Wizards of Waverly Place*.

Selena became a household name, not only as a TV star, but as a pop singer, too. With music singles, albums and world tours, Selena often performed in front of thousands of people.

Then, without warning, Selena went very quiet, avoiding social media and not promoting any of her new music. Selena had been dealing with poor health for quite some time and was told her declining health was due to something called lupus. She needed

to pay closer attention to her health.

Choosing to ignore her doctors, Selena carried on with her busy lifestyle, until she found her body was just too weak, forcing her to stop.

Having chosen to ignore the doctors' warnings, Selena was now being told that her kidneys had suffered a lot of damage and she would need a kidney transplant. It was a life or death situation and a very scary time for Selena.

She would need chemotherapy and strong medication, as well as a potential ten year wait for a suitable donor for a new kidney. A close friend found out about her plight and volunteered to get tested, to see if she could be a match. As luck would have it, she was. Selena's friend offered to donate one of her kidneys to Selena to save her life. To Selena, this was the most amazing gift anyone could and would ever give her.

The operation was a success for both Selena and her friend. Selena was told that after the operation it would be extremely unlikely her lupus would return, but she would need to continue to take better care of herself in future.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Selena is a world-famous actress, television producer and singer. She has sold over seven million albums and over twenty-two million singles.

She was named as one of the 2012 Glamour Award Women of the Year. Not only does Selena collaborate with many top name perfume, make-up and fashion brands, but she also has her own fashion line Dream Out Loud, producing clothing made using eco-friendly materials.

Selena is a UNICEF spokesperson, she helps raise awareness of the importance of providing clean water to those living in Ghana, Africa.



Selena loves dogs. She has adopted many dogs over the years from various shelters. One of her dogs was originally saved and taken to a local animal shelter by her father. The shelter said they would have to put the dog down if a home wasn't found for him within a few weeks. Appalled at hearing this, Selena adopted the dog straight away.

What is lupus?

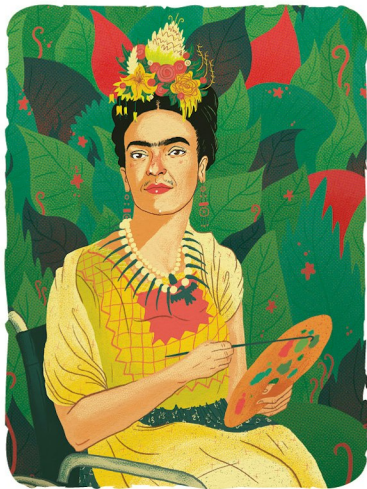
Lupus is a long-term autoimmune disease. Instead of the body's immune system protecting and fighting off infections, it turns on itself, attacking healthy cells, causing inflammation and permanent damage. Lupus mainly affects the skin, joints and internal organs. Anyone can get lupus, and at any age but it predominantly affects women aged between fifteen and forty-four. There is no cure for lupus and its cause is unclear.

Medication and treatment depends on the type of lupus someone has and the severity of the symptoms. There is a high risk of heart disease, kidney disease and stroke if the symptoms are not closely monitored and treated by a doctor.

FRIDA KAHLO

1907 - 1954

"Feet, what do I need them for if I have wings to fly."



Frida Kahlo was born in Mexico City, Mexico on July 6th, 1907.

Frida was born in a little blue house, where she was raised with her six sisters. She would often prefer to sit and draw rather than play.

At the age of six, Frida caught a disease called polio, which nearly killed her. Luckily for Frida she was strong and recovered, but it left her right leg weakened and with a limp. Frida's father encouraged her to do a lot of sports to help strengthen her leg as much as possible. She swam, played football, and even wrestled, something that was very uncommon for girls to do at the time.

As Frida grew older she hoped to become a doctor, but at eighteen, whilst in medical school, she was badly injured in a traffic accident. She broke her back, ribs, pelvis, leg and foot, and dislocated her shoulder! Being so badly injured meant Frida

was bedridden and would have to stay in hospital to recover.

Frida's mother, knowing Frida's childhood passion for art, brought in some paints and an easel to the hospital so that Frida would have something to do whilst she recovered. It was during this time that she rediscovered her love of art and decided she would waste no more time in pursuing a career in medicine. She would be an artist!

Feeling confident about her talent, she took her work to an artist she admired to seek his

advice on becoming an artist herself. He ended up not only falling in love with her work, but also with Frida. He supported Frida's dream, encouraging her to take her painting seriously.

Frida used her art as a way of expressing herself. The accident meant she was living with chronic pain. This was something that would stay with her for the rest of her life and was often highlighted in her work.

Frida lived her entire life in the blue house where she was born. The house is now a museum, which many people visit from all over the world to see all Frida's personal belongings still on display.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Frida is a world-famous artist. Of all the paintings she created, fifty-five of these were self-portraits. She was very proud of her Mexican heritage and would often exaggerate her eyebrows and facial hair whilst wearing beautiful, brightly coloured traditional Mexican clothing and jewellery, with flowers in her hair.

Her paintings stood out against traditional art. They weren't like anything seen before. Frida told her story through art, not letting her pain define her, or deter her from embracing her uniqueness.



Each colour Frida used held a different thought or feeling, which she noted down in a journal. Green symbolised good, warm light. Navy blue was to show distance, but also tenderness. Yellow was madness, sickness and fear but also represented the sun and joy. Frida's work was inspired by Mexican folk culture and the Aztecs.

What is chronic pain?

When someone lives in constant pain for three to six months or more, this is known as chronic pain. Some people live with chronic pain for their whole lives.

The pain leaves the person feeling very tired and uncomfortable. It not only affects them physically, but also affects their mental health.

It is difficult to understand what it is like to have to live with chronic pain, but many people have found a way to manage their pain and continue to lead normal lives with the help of physiotherapy, medicine and support from others.

DANIEL RADCLIFFE

"The fact that some things are more of a struggle will only make you more determined, harder working and more imaginative in the solutions you find to problems."



After years of being called stupid, he had started to believe that he probably was. Daniel was chatty, socially awkward, disorganised and found it difficult to sit still in class and concentrate on the tasks given to him. His dislike for school grew as he got older, when he found himself struggling to keep up with his classmates in writing and reading. He felt disheartened, everything he tried to accomplish he failed at, and it seemed he lacked any sort of talent in any academic field, when actually, it was probably just down to a lack of understanding and support for his dyspraxia.

Daniel Radcliffe was born in London, England on July 23rd, 1989.

Daniel was an only child. His mother worked as a casting director for the BBC and his father was a literary agent. Being born into a creative family, it was no surprise to them that aged five, Daniel declared he wanted to be an actor when he grew up.

School wasn't particularly fun for Daniel; he was quite clumsy, a slow reader and writer, and was often told by his teachers that he was stupid. When Daniel's mother heard what the teachers were saying, she marched straight into his school to confront them! Daniel was different, but his vocabulary was way above that of his peers, he just struggled with his motor skills. Things such as tying his shoelaces, swimming and even riding a bike proved challenging for Daniel.

At seven years of age, Daniel was diagnosed with having dyspraxia.

Determined to help Daniel build his self-confidence, his parents decided to let Daniel explore his interest in acting. He was soon asked to audition for a part in a BBC production of *David Copperfield*. The producers, impressed with Daniel's charm and easy-going nature, cast him in the role of young David Copperfield over the other more experienced child actors.

After this success, Daniel was keen to keep acting. His parents were wary of his desire to go into the world of acting, having had experience with it themselves. However, Daniel insisted this was what he really wanted to do. Not long afterwards, at the age of eleven, Daniel found himself auditioning for a role in an adaptation of a very famous children's book.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Daniel was lucky enough to know some of the people who were already cast in this new film, having worked with them previously. He had the right experience, looked the part, and was soon given the lead role of Harry in the film adaptation of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. Daniel went on to play Harry Potter in all eight movies, winning many awards for his performance, stretching over eight years of filming.

Once the filming of *Harry Potter* was complete, Daniel decided to take some time to explore acting on stage. He performed many different shows on New York's Broadway and London's West End. Alongside his stage career, Daniel continues to work in the film industry.

Despite his earlier struggles at school with reading and writing, Daniel enjoys expressing his creativity by writing short stories and poetry. Being an actor, Daniel felt he was often just using another person's voice, and he wanted to share his own. At seventeen years old, he created the pen name of Jacob Gerson, and he published four of his own poems.

What is dyspraxia?

Dyspraxia, otherwise known DCD (Developmental Coordination Disorder), is a neurological disorder. Dyspraxia usually runs in the family and is three to four times more likely to develop in boys than girls, with mild to severe affects.

People with dyspraxia usually have trouble with their motor skill coordination; things such as running, tying shoelaces, drawing and writing may prove more difficult. Dyspraxia may also affect a person's sensory and social responses.

Treatment or therapy for dyspraxia is available with ergotherapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy and language therapy options.