

The impacting life story of helen keller

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Helen Keller was an important and successful author, political activist, and lecturer in American history. Helen was born a healthy child, but at the age of two, she contracted an illness called “ brain fever” which left her deaf and blind. As a result, Helen became unruly, violent, and would constantly throw temper tantrums. She was believed to be impossible to teach. Refusing to have her institutionalized, her parents hired a teacher who specialized with deaf and blind children. Helen’s teacher, Anne Sullivan, not only taught her and gave her the ability to communicate, she transformed her life. Helen Keller was able to attend college and later became an advocate for the blind. She never allowed her disabilities to get in the way of her success. Her story to this day is so impactful that her life was portrayed in the Broadway Play “ The Miracle Worker”. Helen Keller is an important figure in history because of her impacting life story, her ability to overcome her disabilities, and her life’s work.

Helen Keller’s life story is extremely impacting and unique. She overcame her disabilities and never allowed the challenges those disabilities brought hold her back from reaching her goals and accomplishments. Helen Keller reached developmental milestones very early in her infancy. In 1882, Keller contracted an illness that produced a very high fever. Days later, the illness changed her life by leaving her deaf and blind. Helen’s mother was the first to notice that something was wrong with her. Helen’s personality had changed, and she just appeared to be disconnected. “ Within a few days after the fever broke, Keller’s mother noticed that her daughter didn’t show any reaction when.... when a hand was waved in front of her face” (Helen Keller Biography). Her mother’s concerns were confirmed by their family

doctor who diagnosed Helen to be deaf and blind. Not only was Helen unable to recognize others, her behavior became wild and unruly. Her mother began to have a difficult time controlling her and was in need of assistance. Doctors as well as family members suggested to Helen's parents that she should be institutionalized. Helen began having uncontrollable tantrums. Her parents disagreed and began searching for someone to educate their daughter.

As Helen's tantrums appeared to worsen, she also began to develop an ability to communicate with the young daughter of the family's cook. The two developed a type of sign language which enabled them to communicate with one another. Because of this, her behavior improved. She no longer had the frustration of not being able to communicate and express herself and her feelings. This also proved that Helen was able to learn. Her parents began to actively search for a teacher who could work with deaf and blind children. They were desperate to seek someone who could reach their daughter's mind and help her to communicate. After being examined by Alexander Graham Bell, Helen was referred to a remarkable young teacher from the Perkins Institution for the Blind in Boston by the name of Anne Sullivan. She specialized in educating children with these disabilities. Within just a few months, Sullivan helped Helen to associate objects by touch with words spelled out by finger signals on the palm of her hand. She also taught her to read sentences by feeling raised words on a cardboard block (Helen Keller. John P. Rafferty). With the help of Sullivan, she was able to learn how to read and write. This laid the foundation for Helen to go on to college and become a successful author and educator. Helen's education represents an amazing accomplishment in the education of persons who are deaf and blind. She

attended several schools for persons with these disabilities to learn to read Braille, to speak, and to lip-read by placing her fingers on the lips and throat of the speaker while the words were simultaneously spelled out for her.

Helen's determination to overcome her challenges lead her to a successful school career. By the age of 14, Helen had enrolled in the Wright-Humason School for the Deaf in New York City. She was admitted to Cambridge School for Young Ladies in Massachusetts by age 16. Her excellent grades in high school won her admission to the Radcliffe College in 1900. Although her four years of college may have been very difficult, her determination and perseverance lead her to graduate cum laude in 1904. She began to write about her life and overcoming so many obstacles during her college years. Helen and Sullivan became well known in the college circles of the time. Together, they made several presentations on advocacy for persons with disabilities. "Keller and Anne Sullivan... struggled together through four years of college like a pair of Siamese twins, joined by their flying fingers" (Helen Keller. Roger Shattuck). Sullivan never left Helen's side from the moment they met. She became Helen's voice throughout high school, college, and career. Sullivan helped Helen reach her full potential and remained her faithful companion throughout her life. By sharing her story, she inspired and became an example to those who have disabilities and feel that they are limited to what they can do. In addition to having to overcome her disabilities, she also had to face many critics during her college years. Helen and Sullivan were often accused of being frauds. She never allowed any of the negativity surrounding her get in the way of achieving her goals.

Helen Keller's effort to learn to communicate and desire to overcome her disability meant that she had to work harder than the rest of her peers while in college. She relied on Sullivan as her personal companion during all classes in order to complete her work. Unlike her peers, Helen used unconventional approaches to academics while at Radcliffe College. She communicated through touch-lip reading, Braille, typing and finger-spelling. Sullivan sat by her side in all classes to interpret lectures and texts. Regardless of how difficult it became, she was determined to graduate from college. She was willing to do all it would take to reach her goals and get to where she strived to be. Helen was the first deaf and blind person in American history to obtain a bachelor's degree. While in college she published her most famous autobiography called "The Story of My Life". In addition to writing numerous articles, she also published 12 books that instantly became best sellers (10 Major Achievements of Helen Keller. Anirudh). The story of Helen Keller began to grow popular with the public. Many famous and influential people wished to meet her. One of those was Henry H. Rogers, a Standard Oil executive. Rogers was so impressed with Keller's talent, drive and determination that he agreed to pay for her to attend Radcliffe College. After graduating from Radcliffe, Helen dedicated her life to advocacy for persons with disabilities. She became a role model and idol to those who struggle with disabilities and brought much hope into their lives. She became a highly recognized and the recipient of numerous awards.

Helen was determined to work on behalf of others living with disabilities by sharing her own experiences. She became a well-known celebrity, lecturer

and outspoken social activist. In 1924, Helen became a part of the American Foundation for the Blind. This was a non-profit organization for those who are blind. Her membership in the foundation paved the way for the rise of her social activism. Helen became well known throughout the twentieth century as she campaigned for issues such as women's suffrage, labor rights, socialism, antimilitarism, and other similar causes. "Keller traveled across the United States for AFB and helped in the creation of rehabilitation centers and state commissions for the blind" (10 Major Achievements of Helen Keller. Anirudh). Helen did not believe enough services were being offered for those who were blind. Therefore, she testified before Congress, strongly advocating to improve the welfare of blind people. She became the cofounder of Helen Keller International to combat the causes and consequences of blindness and malnutrition. It is to this day one of the world's premier international not-for-profit organizations dedicated to preventing blindness and reducing malnutrition. Helen also helped found the American Civil Liberties Union. A foundation named after her provides treatments and any medical attention necessary for any type of disease that may cause one to be blind. Helen's achievements and strong spirit helped to change the way people view persons with disabilities.

Helen Keller's courage and fortitude are one of the main factors that allowed her to accomplish her goals despite her disabilities. She focused more on achieving her goals than on worrying about what her disability was going to hold her back from doing. Helen refused to allow being blind and deaf restrain her from doing what she desired and had a love for. Being a captivating author, Helen documented her life in memoirs. She also was a

well-known speaker who delivered motivational speeches assisted by Sullivan by her side. Her life's work became recognized throughout the nation by leaders and celebrities. Her accomplishments included multiple awards for her courage. She also received honorary doctorates from Glasgow, Harvard, and Temple Universities. " In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson presented Ms. Keller with the Presidential Medal of Freedom " (Waltzing with Helen Keller. The New York Times). Helen was bothered by the way others viewed the disabled and had a desire to change it. This desire led her to help influence people's perceptions of the deaf and blind by focusing on their determination to overcome obstacles rather than on inviting others to feel pity for them. There is no doubt that Helen Keller was one of the most remarkable figures from the mid twentieth century. All those who she influenced began to focus their works on her life. They realized that it had a major impact on many, and that the affect it had on the people would be long term. Keller's life story was portrayed in the 1919 film, " Deliverance" and in a Broadway production in 1959 called " The Story of My Life". These productions became very popular and attracted the many people who she influenced, and those who looked up to her as a role model. Her life story was later picked up by Hollywood. The " Miracle Worker", a title often given to Anne Sullivan, became an Oscar-winning film in 1962.

Helen's impacting life story, resolve to overcome her disabilities, and countless achievements, lead up to her becoming a notable figure in American History. Her life's work opened doors of opportunity for the deaf and blind. Helen Keller served as a major influence in changing society's perception of disabled persons. Anne was the one who taught Helen what

she needed to succeed and stayed at her side through it all. Sullivan also had and continues to have an impact on teachers who work with children whom have disabilities. The teaching techniques Sullivan used to educate Helen are presently cited in most special education textbooks used in colleges till today. Her techniques along with her teaching skills had a major impact on the many accomplishments of Helen Keller. Over a half a century after her death, Helen is still as popular today as she was while she was alive. She continues and will continue to influence and affect the lives of persons with disabilities, teachers, families with disabled children and politicians as she did in the past. Her significance in history will continue to increase day by day. By the time of her death in 1968, Helen was the recipient of numerous honors, university degrees, awards and even elected to the Women's Hall of Fame. Her life story stands for courage, determination, and relentlessness. Helen fought overwhelming odds to triumph over her loss of hearing and sight to become an advocate and voice to those who did not have one.

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