

## Why A Diagnosis Of Your Child's Physical, Mental, or Learning Challenge Can Be A Blessing In Disguise



Many, if not all parents, fear for their child's health, safety, and well-being. They want them to thrive and live happy and productive lives. When a doctor suddenly diagnoses a child with a learning disorder, disease, or disability, parents may feel scared, overwhelmed, or disappointed. That is only natural, as they are dealing with the unknown, only hearing the potential bad and none of the good. As a mom of a child who needs special services and attention, I can tell you that a diagnosis doesn't have to feel like a disaster. It may even be a blessing in disguise.

The world has many successful people who have overcome great personal challenges to become world-class athletes, brilliant inventors, creative talents, wealthy entrepreneurs, and political leaders. These people did not let anything serve as an excuse or impediment to living their dreams. They used adversity and challenge to motivate them to greater heights.

One of my three children has Dyslexia, ADHD, and ASD. He was thrown out of pre-school and it took over a year to finally get a complete and accurate diagnosis of his condition. With extra work, help, and love, he is thriving. I have every bit of confidence that he can live at whatever level of life he chooses to pursue.

But when my husband and I first went through getting my son tested and going to a lot of doctor appointments, we were worried and doubtful of what was to come. I questioned if I can parent the way my child will need me to. We felt tremendous stress and anxiety. But as we found the

resources that were useful, the experts who were helpful, and saw progress, we realized we can do this and that our son could break through any perceived limitations.

**Just look at these highly accomplished individuals who persevered despite their diagnosis:**

- Tesla inventor and billionaire Elon Musk has Autism Spectrum Disorder
- US President Joe Biden was diagnosed with a stutter.
- Henry Winkler, an Emmy-winning television star, was diagnosed with Dyslexia.
- English poet John Milton wrote *Paradise Lost* while blind in both eyes.
- Gold-winning Olympian Simone Biles has ADHD.
- FDR became president of the United States despite requiring a wheelchair.
- Jim Abbott pitched in the Major Leagues for a decade without a right hand.
- World-renowned theoretical scientist and best-selling author Stephen Hawking was diagnosed with a degenerative motor neurone disease, and was limited to a wheelchair without the use of his arms, legs, or vocal chords.
- Beethoven composed many of his genius works when he was nearly deaf.

If your child is diagnosed with something that may need extra attention, time, money, or strength to handle, know that you can rise to the occasion. I know that you have so much hope for your child and that a diagnosis of anything gives you a fear of what the future may hold for him or her. Don't give up hope. Seek out help, advice, and support for you and your child.

Having ADD and Bell's Palsy, I know firsthand that it takes a certain level of endurance and hard work – and a thick skin – to overcome challenges and obstacles to function at a high level, and to ignore those who may treat me differently. But as people like Musk and Hawking have shown, the sky is the limit for anyone with a diagnosis of anything.

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