

Lesson Plan #1 - Global

Title: I Can Be Whomever I Wish

Objectives: In this lesson students will:

1. be introduced to the concept that they have control over obstacles
2. understand that everyone encounters difficulties
3. learn that overcoming these difficulties and learning from experiences is what helps us to become who we wish to be

Session Time: 45 – 60 minutes

Materials:

Readings on famous people who overcome adversity such as: Martin Luther King, Jr., John F. Kennedy, Helen Keller, Bruce Jenner, Franklin D. Roosevelt, or Frederick Douglass, or Whoopi Goldberg.

Procedure:

1. Ask students to research a person they want to report on or assign them a person. As they read remind them to think about what difficulties this person encountered and what characteristics helped them to overcome these difficulties.
2. Have students fill in the chart on the next page.
3. After completion of the chart, ask students to report to the class what they have learned. Points to consider include: it's not the ease of the life but the determination that often sets people apart; discussion of important characteristics to succeed; and how does the student compare to the person researched and how would he/she like to compare.
4. Further extensions include:
 - write an essay on the person researched;
 - explore the time period when this person lived and what historical events happened during this person's life;
 - make a timeline and place this person on it;
 - what important contribution or discovery did this person make and how did it change history or add to the lives of people today – write about this or report it to the class;
 - have students set goals for themselves so they can work toward overcoming obstacles and making contributions or accomplishments.

Note: This lesson plan is included in the workshop, *Give Yourself a Present – Set Some Goals*, in the *SIPDC Catalog of Professional Development Opportunities*.

I Can Be Whomever I Wish

Name of person: _____

Obstacle	Characteristics/Traits

I Can Be Whomever I Wish

My Name: _____

Obstacle keeping me from achieving my goal(s)	Characteristics/Traits I possess that will help me overcome this obstacle

Frederick Douglass

Frederick Douglass stood at the podium, trembling with nervousness. Before him sat abolitionists who had traveled to the Massachusetts island of Nantucket. Only 23 years old at the time, Douglass overcame his nervousness and gave a stirring, eloquent speech about his life as a slave. Douglass would continue to give speeches for the rest of his life and would become a leading spokesperson for the abolition of slavery and for racial equality.

The son of a slave woman and an unknown white man, "Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey" was born in February of 1818 on Maryland's eastern shore. He spent his early years with his grandparents and with an aunt, seeing his mother only four or five times before her death when he was seven. (All Douglass knew of his father was that he was white.) During this time he was exposed to the degradations of slavery, witnessing firsthand brutal whippings and spending much time cold and hungry. When he was eight he was sent to Baltimore to live with a ship carpenter named Hugh Auld. There he learned to read and first heard the words abolition and abolitionists. "Going to live at Baltimore," Douglass would later say, "laid the foundation, and opened the gateway, to all my subsequent prosperity."

Douglass spent seven relatively comfortable years in Baltimore before being sent back to the country, where he was hired out to a farm run by a notoriously brutal "slavebreaker" named Edward Covey. And the treatment he received was indeed brutal. Whipped daily and barely fed, Douglass was "broken in body, soul, and spirit."

On January 1, 1836, Douglass made a resolution that he would be free by the end of the year. He planned an escape. But early in April he was jailed after his plan was discovered. Two years later, while living in Baltimore and working at a shipyard, Douglass would finally realize his dream: he fled the city on September 3, 1838. Traveling by train, then steamboat, then train, he arrived in New York City the following day. Several weeks later he had settled in New Bedford, Massachusetts, living with his newlywed bride (whom he met in Baltimore and married in New York) under his new name, Frederick Douglass.

Always striving to educate himself, Douglass continued his reading. He joined various organizations in New Bedford, including a black church. He attended Abolitionists' meetings. He subscribed to William Lloyd Garrison's weekly journal, the *Liberator*. In 1841, he saw Garrison speak at the Bristol Anti-Slavery Society's annual meeting. Douglass was inspired by the speaker, later stating, "no face and form ever impressed me with such sentiments [the hatred of slavery] as did those of William Lloyd Garrison." Garrison, too, was impressed with Douglass, mentioning him in the *Liberator*. Several days later Douglass gave his speech at the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society's annual convention in Nantucket-- the speech described at the top of this page. Of the speech, one correspondent reported, "Flinty hearts were pierced, and cold ones melted by his eloquence." Before leaving the island, Douglass was asked to become a lecturer for the Society for three years. It was the launch of a career that would continue throughout Douglass' long life.

Despite apprehensions that the information might endanger his freedom, Douglass published his autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written By Himself*. The year was 1845. Three years later, after a speaking tour of England, Ireland, and Scotland, Douglass published the first issue of the *North Star*, a four-page weekly, out of Rochester, New York.

Ever since he first met Garrison in 1841, the white abolitionist leader had been Douglass' mentor. But the views of Garrison and Douglass ultimately diverged. Garrison represented the radical end of the abolitionist spectrum. He denounced churches, political parties, even voting. He believed in the dissolution (break up) of the Union. He also believed that the U.S. Constitution was a pro-slavery document. After his tour of Europe and the establishment of his paper, Douglass' views began to change; he was becoming more of an independent thinker, more pragmatic. In 1851 Douglass announced at a meeting in Syracuse, New York, that he did not assume the Constitution was a pro-slavery document, and that it could even "be wielded in behalf of emancipation," especially where the federal government had exclusive jurisdiction. Douglass also did not advocate the dissolution of the Union, since it would isolate slaves in the South. This led to a bitter dispute between Garrison and Douglass that, despite the efforts of others such as Harriet Beecher Stowe to reconcile the two, would last into the Civil War.

Frederick Douglass would continue his active involvement to better the lives of African Americans. He conferred with Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War and recruited northern blacks for the Union Army. After the War he fought for the rights of women and African Americans alike.

From: pbs..org

Helen Keller

Helen Keller was born in Tuscumbia, Alabama on June 27, 1880. Her infancy was normal until, at a year and a half of age, she contracted meningitis. The disease rendered her both deaf and blind. The next years were hellish for her family, as they knew of no way to reach through her double disabilities to communicate with her. As for herself, she was imprisoned in her body, and lonely, unable to make her needs and desires known.

Alexander Graham Bell was not just the inventor of the telephone. He was also a teacher of the deaf. Keller's family contacted him and when he met her he sensed her innate intelligence. He suggested that the family hire a young woman named Anne Sullivan to tutor the young Helen. The family was well off and able to afford this tutoring for their child, so they contacted Miss Sullivan.

Anne Sullivan was herself partially blind. She had studied at the Perkin's Institute for the Deaf and Blind in Boston, and at the age of 21 hired on to live with the Keller family and work with Helen. Sullivan devised a method of making hand signs that Keller could understand by pressing her hand, making the signs, into Keller's palm. By this method the young girl was able to learn to communicate brilliantly. By her eighth birthday she was well known, and her fame would grow throughout her life. Mark Twain befriended her and called her The Miracle Worker.

Helen Keller went to Radcliffe College, and by means of Sullivan spelling out lectures into her palms, she obtained a degree. During her years at school, encouraged by the Ladies' Home Journal magazine, she wrote her autobiography, entitled, *The Story Of My Life*, in order to answer the endless curiosity of people across the globe. She even learned to speak by pressing her fingers against Sullivan's throat and imitating the vibrations. She was the first deaf and blind person to graduate from college, and she did so Cum Laude.

Throughout her life she would meet many famous people and have many experiences. She met with every President who served in her lifetime. She even had the experience of enjoying music, thanks to the violin and talent of Jascha Heifetz, a prominent 20th century violinist. By feeling the violin's vibrations she could tell which composer's music was being played. She also danced in Martha Graham's studio by feeling the vibrations of the music.

She spent much of her life on the lecture circuit with her teacher and companion, Anne Sullivan. Sullivan briefly married, but divorced and return to work with Keller. Keller became a champion for the blind, published numerous books throughout her lifetime, and participated in speaking out against such things as child labor and capital punishment.

The Gold Medal of the National Institute of Social Sciences was conferred upon her in 1952. In 1953 she was honored at the Sorbonne in Paris, France's highest honor. In 1955 she won an Academy Award for her documentary, "Helen Keller In Her Story" and received an honorary degree from Harvard. In 1964 she was given the United States' highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Lyndon B. Johnson.

Helen Keller died at the age of eighty-eight on June 1, 1968. Her legacy lives on as Foundations and Institutes are formed to continue the work of putting an end to blindness. The Helen Keller Prize is awarded to those who focus the attention of the public on the matter of vision research.

from http://id.essortment.com/helenkellerann_rsla.htm

Franklin D. Roosevelt

Assuming the Presidency at the depth of the Great Depression, Franklin D. Roosevelt helped the American people regain faith in themselves. He brought hope as he promised prompt, vigorous action, and asserted in his Inaugural Address, "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself."

Born in 1882 at Hyde Park, New York--now a national historic site--he attended Harvard University and Columbia Law School. On St. Patrick's Day, 1905, he married Eleanor Roosevelt.

Following the example of his fifth cousin, President Theodore Roosevelt, whom he greatly admired, Franklin D. Roosevelt entered public service through politics, but as a Democrat. He won election to the New York Senate in 1910. President Wilson appointed him Assistant Secretary of the Navy, and he was the Democratic nominee for Vice President in 1920.

In the summer of 1921, when he was 39, disaster hit--he was stricken with poliomyelitis. Demonstrating indomitable courage, he fought to regain the use of his legs, particularly through swimming. At the 1924 Democratic Convention he dramatically appeared on crutches to nominate Alfred E. Smith as "the Happy Warrior." In 1928 Roosevelt became Governor of New York.

He was elected President in November 1932, to the first of four terms. By March there were 13,000,000 unemployed, and almost every bank was closed. In his first "hundred days," he proposed, and Congress enacted, a sweeping program to bring recovery to business and agriculture, relief to the unemployed and to those in danger of losing farms and homes, and reform, especially through the establishment of the Tennessee Valley Authority.

By 1935 the Nation had achieved some measure of recovery, but businessmen and bankers were turning more and more against Roosevelt's New Deal program. They feared his experiments, were appalled because he had taken the Nation off the gold standard and allowed deficits in the budget, and disliked the concessions to labor. Roosevelt responded with a new program of reform: Social Security, heavier taxes on the wealthy, new controls over banks and public utilities, and an enormous work relief program for the unemployed.

In 1936 he was re-elected by a top-heavy margin. Feeling he was armed with a popular mandate, he sought legislation to enlarge the Supreme Court, which had been invalidating key New Deal measures. Roosevelt lost the Supreme Court battle, but a revolution in constitutional law took place. Thereafter the Government could legally regulate the economy.

Roosevelt had pledged the United States to the "good neighbor" policy, transforming the Monroe Doctrine from a unilateral American manifesto into arrangements for mutual action against aggressors. He also sought through neutrality legislation to keep the United States out of the war in Europe, yet at the same time to strengthen nations threatened or attacked. When France fell and England came under siege in 1940, he began to send Great Britain all possible aid short of actual military involvement.

When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, Roosevelt directed organization of the Nation's manpower and resources for global war.

Feeling that the future peace of the world would depend upon relations between the United States and Russia, he devoted much thought to the planning of a United Nations, in which, he hoped, international difficulties could be settled.

As the war drew to a close, Roosevelt's health deteriorated, and on April 12, 1945, while at Warm Springs, Georgia, he died of a cerebral hemorrhage.

from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/fr32.html>

Whoopi Goldberg

Whoopi Goldberg was born in New York City in 1949. She grew up in a housing project in Manhattan with her brother. Her father abandoned the family, and her mother worked a variety of jobs to support the family.

Goldberg began performing at the age of 8. She changed her name from Caryn Elaine Johnson because she felt her birth name was boring and she wanted a name that reflected her claimed heritage of being half Jewish and half Catholic.

With her trademark dreadlocks, wide impish grin, and piercing humor, Goldberg is best known for her adept portrayals in both comedic and dramatic roles, as well as her groundbreaking work in the Hollywood film industry as an African-American woman.

Goldberg discovered as an adult that she has dyslexia, a type of learning disability. Whenever she tried to read, the words didn't make any sense to her. She admits that she was considered "retarded" for years. She dropped out of high school at the age of 17.

In 1974, Goldberg moved to California to pursue a career in show business. She became a successful comedian, winning an award for her portrayal of Moms Mabley in a one-woman show. In 1983, she starred in the enormously popular *The Spook Show*. The one-woman Off-Broadway production featured her own original comedy material that addressed the issue of race in America with unique profundity, style, and wit. She recorded an album of comedy skits from the show that won a Grammy award.

Goldberg gained even greater accolades as a film actress. She launched her movie career with the lead role in the film *"The Color Purple,"* for which she received an Oscar nomination and won a Golden Globe award for Best Actress. She has since appeared in more than 80 films and television productions, including the movie *"Ghost,"* for which she won an Oscar for Best Supporting Actress - only the second African American actress to do so - and another Golden Globe award. She has performed in the *"Star Trek"* series, both in movie and television roles. She has hosted the Academy Awards three times, and was co-host for Comic Relief benefit for the homeless.

Goldberg holds a PhD in literature from New York State University and an honorary degree from Wilson College in Pennsylvania.

From: http://www.catea.org/Day_1.html