

# Family Resiliency Reading Guide

## THE STORY OF MY LIFE

BY HELEN KELLER

After reading *The Story of My Life* with your child, use this reading guide to continue the conversation around resiliency at home. In this guide, you will find a description of how this book relates to Resiliency Characteristics, literacy tips, and sample conversation starters for you and your child.

### SYNOPSIS

Helen Keller suffered a severe illness that left her blind and deaf at 19 months old. Not long after, she also became mute. Helen Keller's life was filled with unimaginable struggles caused by her illness. While her disabilities were extremely difficult to overcome, Keller never gave up. In this autobiography, Helen Keller recounts the life-changing difference her teacher, Anne Sullivan, made in helping her learn to read, write and speak.

### LESSONS IN RESILIENCY

- ▶ Helen Keller faced many challenges in life due to her physical disabilities that many people will never experience. She was blind and deaf from a young age and was unable to communicate with those around her. Because of this, she found herself in numerous predicaments like getting stuck in a tree during a thunderstorm and even catching herself on fire at one point. Despite all the hardships she faced, Keller was **resilient** and overcame many of her setbacks.
- ▶ Helen Keller demonstrated incredible **resilience** in pursuing her dreams of independence and attending college. She had a goal of attending Harvard College. Despite some setbacks and the challenges she faced daily, she finally entered Radcliffe College, a Harvard Annex for women, in 1900. There were additional hurdles she encountered while studying at Radcliffe, such as the lack of Braille textbooks and the difficulty of her coursework, but Helen never gave up. With the **mentorship** of Miss Sullivan, and her own determination, Helen wrote *The Story of My Life* while she was still a student and graduated from Radcliffe in 1904.

### RESILIENCY CHARACTERISTICS



#### Resilience

Coming back after challenges or setbacks.



#### Mentorship

Giving or asking for support, guidance, training or expertise.

### RESILIENCY CONVERSATION STARTERS:



In the book, we learned how Helen Keller navigated challenges and setbacks with help from others, including her teacher who served as a **mentor**. Have your child share about areas in his or her life where a **mentor** could provide helpful advice, encouragement or training.



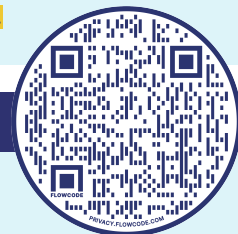
Throughout Helen Keller's life, she often felt alone and left out. Her disabilities were initially a barrier to communication and connection to others. Ask your child about a time when he or she felt isolated or left out. Talk about strategies to be **resilient** in those circumstances and what he or she can learn from Keller's ability to be **resilient** in her life.



Reflect with your child on how Helen Keller's autobiography offers a unique perspective on life and encourages gratitude for things he or she might normally overlook. Explore how practicing gratitude can strengthen **resilience**.

### LITERACY TIP

You can help your child gain a deeper understanding of what he or she is reading by encouraging active reading habits. A few active reading strategies include highlighting sentences, underlining key parts or words, using tabs to flag important parts of the text and note-taking on sticky notes.



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