

Born in Maryland in 1956, the talk show presenter, Montel Williams has had an extremely varied career. Before show business beckoned, he served 22 years in the military and was decorated. His service was in the US Marine Corps and the US Navy and he participated in the invasion of Grenada.

His current career began in 1991 when he hosted The Montel Williams Show. He was awarded a Daytime Emmy, five years later, for Outstanding Talk Show Host. The show has been a big success, broadcasting to the USA, Australia, the UK, Denmark and Norway. It is one of the more uplifting shows of its kind and often reunites divided families and finds lost loved ones. Psychic performer Sylvia Brown appears on the show, once a week, to give psychic readings for the guests.

In addition to his talk show success, which gave him his household name status, Montel Williams has enjoyed an acting career. He has been a guest on several television series and has also performed in off-Broadway productions. His military background proved useful for his role as a Navy SEAL in several episodes of the drama series, JAG. Williams took the role of a judge in the soap opera, All My Children in 2002. He appeared as himself in the same show, in the following year. He has also made guest appearances in My Name is Earl, Touched By An Angel and American Dreams.

In 1999, Williams was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis and he founded the Montel Williams MS Foundation to raise money for research in to the illness. The Foundation has raised over \$1 million and all the money goes to fund research with the administration costs being covered by Montel Williams personally and by business organizations. Many fundraising methods are used, such as walkathons and bikeathons. There have also been golf matches, luncheons and lawn mowing competitions.

Williams has written a book, with Lawrence Grobel, about his experiences of MS and his near death incident in hospital. His book, Mountain, Get Out of My Way: Life Lessons and Learned Truths is an inspirational book, outlining Williams' philosopher of life. His touchstone for raising children is to teach restraint, respect and responsibility. He also presents a 3 disc DVD called Living Well - Dollars and Sense, in which financial experts give advice. Williams has taken his life experiences and turned them into a positive message, remaining an influential personality.