

Would you like to be free?

Helen Keller was born on June 27, 1880 in Tuscumbia, Alabama.

In 1882, Helen contracted an illness that produced a high body temperature. Within a few days after the fever broke, Helen's mother noticed that her daughter didn't show any reaction when the dinner bell was rung, or when a hand was waved in front of her face. Keller had lost both her sight and hearing. She was just 18 months old.

As Helen grew into childhood, she developed a limited method of communication with her friend, Martha Washington, they had invented more than 60 signs to communicate with each other. But Helen had become very wild and unruly during this time. She would kick and scream when angry, and giggle uncontrollably when happy.

Looking for answers and inspiration, Keller's mother began to look for someone who could help her daughter. In March 1887, Ann Sullivan, came to Helen's home to be her teacher.

After a lot of endeavour, Ann found a way to teach Helen how to communicate. Helen eventually learnt the word "water". She made the connection between the word and the object by feeling the water flowing from the water pump by spelling out the word w-a-t-e-r on Helen's other hand. Helen was so delighted by nightfall, she had learned 30 words.

In 1904 Hellen graduated from Radcliffe College with a degree and led an esteemed life as an educationalist, author, political activist and lecturer until her death in 1968.

The story of Hellen Keller reminds us that we can choose a life that is full of burdens or despite many burdens, we can choose to be free. Hellen Keller chose freedom.

Most of the time we associate freedom with the freedom to do what we like. However, the eminent write Victor Frankl describes freedom in a complete different way.

“Our greatest freedom is the freedom to choose our attitude.”

So next time you face exams, consider the question, are you free to choose your attitude.

Indeed the challenge for the coming week is: What are you free to choose?