



ACTION

Copy/print sufficient to allow a minimum of one story per group. Cut along dotted lines with scissors or guillotine. Teachers should feel free to include other stories that their students may respond well to (e.g. Jessica Watson's solo sailing voyage).



Ishmael Beah had a fairly happy, if poor, childhood in Sierra Leone when civil war began raging through the country. Aged 12, Ishmael and friends went to a neighbouring town to attend a talent contest. On their way home, they learned that their home village had been attacked, and returned to horrific scenes of violent death. Ishmael wandered for months before discovering his family had been burned to cinders. With no family, Ishmael was easily recruited as a child soldier.

Ishmael survived to be rescued by the UN, and was slowly rehabilitated from the drugs and violence that had been essential to his survival, and has since written a book about his life.



Dr Ian Gawler was an ambitious young veterinarian and athlete, but at age 24 he was diagnosed with bone cancer in his right leg. That leg was amputated at the hip. A year later, the cancer had spread to Ian's pelvis and chest. He was told there was nothing that could be done for him and, eventually, that he had only weeks to live.

But Ian was not ready to die. He began studying meditation and developed a healthy diet that he adhered to strictly. He continued to research the disease, eat well, think constructively and concentrate on healing himself.

Against all the odds, Ian's cancer retreated. He was eventually declared clear of cancer and went on to become a successful author and mentor to other cancer sufferers.



Grace Bowman was keen on horses since she was a little girl. By age 12 she'd become a champion horsewoman. But then she suffered an accident in 2002, and was left a paraplegic as a result of a severed spinal cord.

Grace had many excuses to give up. But was determined to regain her independence and get back in the saddle. After three months in hospital, Grace found the skills and strength to return to the sport she loves.

Grace describes herself as a normal teenager, and in many ways she is exactly that. But she is also a member of the Australian Paralympic Equestrian Squad, and competed in the 2008 Paralympics.



In 1995, Major Glenn Todhunter was enjoying his dream job as an ambitious Blackhawk pilot. Flying was Glenn's passion: he'd earned his student's pilot licence at age 16, and after joining the army became a junior officer, with flight responsibility. But everything changed dramatically when an aircraft he was training in crashed from a height of 70 m.

Glenn was on life support for several days and both of his legs required amputation below the knee. He was in hospital for months, and faced the prospect of never flying again. But he was determined to return to the air, and underwent the painful process of mastering his prosthetic limbs. He then reacquired his pilot's licence and was flying just 18 months after the accident.

After being told he would never fly again, Glenn returned to the controls of a Blackhawk, and became the only bilateral amputee actively serving in the world, a first since Sir Douglas Bader in WWII.