



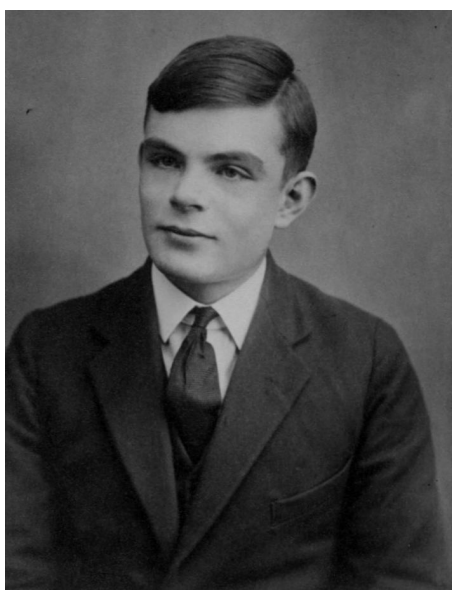
# Challenging Stereotypes

#ImWithSam

Below are short biographies of some people in the public eye who have or had learning disabilities or autism. Can you find out more about them, or anyone else who has challenged stereotypes about learning disabilities and autism in this way?

The book *Different Like Me*, contains more examples of inspirational and famous people with autism spectrum disorder: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Different-Like-Me-Autism-Heroes/dp/1843108151>.

## Alan Turing



Alan Turing was a mathematician that played a crucial role in the Second World War. Turing developed a computing machine that cracked the codes being used by Nazi Germany to plan attacks.

Nowadays we recognise that Turing was probably autistic. However, that kind of diagnosis wasn't readily available at the time so there is not factual evidence one way or the other. Turing was also gay at a time when it was illegal, and was convicted of 'gross indecency' in 1952. He chose a 'chemical castration' treatment over imprisonment, and died in 1954 at the age of 41. The inquest into his death concluded that he committed suicide.

In 2009 a public apology on behalf of the British government was issued by the then Prime Minister Gordon Brown, for the appalling way that Turing was treated. He was granted a posthumous pardon by the Queen in 2013.

Temple Grandin is a leading spokesperson for people with autism and one of the first people to speak publicly about her personal experiences of autism.

Grandin has published several books that looked at the different ways people with autism think and experience the world. Grandin describes herself as a visual thinker, meaning she thinks in photographically specific images.

Alongside her work on autism, Grandin is also an activist for the humane slaughter of animals. In 2010 Grandin was listed in the Time 100 most influential people in their 'Heroes' category.

<https://www.templegrandin.com/>

## Temple Grandin



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## Jessica-Jane Applegate MBE



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Jessica-Jane Applegate is a British Paralympic swimmer who competes in the S14 classification for swimmers with intellectual disabilities. She is a four-time Paralympic medallist, winning three medals at the Rio Olympics in 2016, to add to her gold medal won in the London Olympics in 2012.

She has autism spectrum disorder and is an ambassador for the disability charity Mencap.

<http://www.jessicajaneapplegate.com>

Jamie Brewer is an American actress, known for roles in television dramas such as American Horror Story. Brewer is an active campaigner for people with Down Syndrome and successfully campaigned in her home state of Texas to have the term 'retarded' taken out of legislation.

Brewer is also the first person with Down's syndrome to walk the catwalk at New York Fashion Week.

## Jamie Brewer



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## Lauren Potter



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Lauren Potter is an American actress with Down syndrome, best known for her role in the TV programme Glee. Lauren was not able to walk until the age of 2, but then began attending dance lessons, which paved her way into her acting career.

In 2012, US President Barack Obama appointed Lauren to the President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities, which advises the US government on issues relating to that group.

Having been bullied as a child, Potter partnered with AbilityPath, an organisation that works to end bullying against people with disabilities and encourage inclusion. Lauren is also an advocate with other organisations and has been an ambassador at the Special Olympics.

[instagram.com/thelaurenpotter](https://www.instagram.com/thelaurenpotter)

Dan Aykroyd is an American actor, comedian, producer and musician. Dan has Asperger's Syndrome, which is part of the Autism Spectrum. Dan starred in the first Ghostbusters film, having developed the idea for the movie in the early 1980s. Dan has been nominated for Academy Awards for his acting roles in film, as well as appearing in multiple television series.

Dan helped to start the Blue Line foundation, an organisation working to redevelop much of the city of New Orleans following the devastating Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

## Dan Aykroyd



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