



LADIES IN THE HOUSE
PODCAST SERIES

MOAD

Museum of Australian Democracy
at Old Parliament House



LADIES IN THE HOUSE EPISODE 13: STELLA YOUNG

Lesson Plan

Learning Intention:

Understand the role of the people working behind the scenes in politics and how important people who work behind the scenes are in a democracy.

Success Criteria:

Reflect on the unsung heroes in your life and take action to thank the unsung heroes in your life.

Before Listening:

Activity One:

Pre-Listening
Vocabulary

Write up or project the following words on the board:

- democracy
- public servant
- discreet
- allegiance
- apolitical
- coronation

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Activity

One:

Pre-Listening Vocabulary

In groups ask the students if they can put the words into one of the 4 categories.

- Don't know it at all
- Have seen or heard, but don't know the meaning
- I think I know the meaning
- I know the meaning and can explain it

If any of the students are in the 3rd or 4th category, see if they can explain it to the people in your group or to the class.

Share the following definitions for the vocabulary.

Definitions:

- **Advocate** - an advocate of something is someone who recommends it publicly.
- **Objectify** - to treat somebody/something as an object, without rights or feelings of their own.
- **Accessible** - If a place or building is accessible to people, it is easy for them to reach it or get into it.
- **Amenities** - another word for bathroom.
- **Inclusivity** - the fact or policy of not excluding members or participants on the grounds of gender, race, class, sexuality, disability, etc.



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Activity

Two:

Before listening
discussion
questions

1. What different types of disabilities are there?
2. What problems might a person with a disability encounter in their daily life?
3. What kinds of discrimination might a person with a disability from a stranger?

After Listening:

Activity

Three:

After listening
reflection
questions

4. What kind of work did Stella Young do?
5. In the episode Stella is quoted as saying “I want to live in a world where we don’t have such low expectations of disabled people that we are congratulated for getting out of bed and remembering our own names in the morning.” What does she mean by this?
6. How is the Disability Discrimination Act system flawed?
7. What are some of the statistics mentioned surrounding people with disabilities?
8. What accessible features have been built in to the statue commemorating Stella Young?



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Activity

Four:

Write a letter to your future self.

- Creative writing: Write a letter to your 80-year-old self, outlining all of the changes that you would like to see in the world by the time you are 80.
- How will the world be a better place? What hopes and aspirations do you have for your life.
- Research: Visit <https://stellayoung.com.au/> Read through the information on the website. What are some of Stella's achievements that were not mentioned in the podcast episode?



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Episode Transcript:

Hi, this is Kelly Chase and you are listening to Season 4 of a Museum of Australian Democracy and History Detective Collaboration: Ladies in the House. In this 3-part series we are celebrating the lives of incredible trailblazing women who have made significant changes in Australian society. I am excited to introduce you to advocate for disability rights, Stella Young.

Before I begin, I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which this podcast is being recorded today. I pay my respects to the elders and knowledge holders past, present and emerging.

Stella Young was a writer, comedian, television presenter, disability advocate and an editor for the ABC's Ramp Up website. She was also on many boards, committees and councils advocating for people with disability. As a writer Stella was honest, wise, witty, thought provoking, heart-warming and generous. She wrote in such an open manner that when you are reading her work, you feel like it was written by a friend.

Stella Young was born in a small country town in Victoria called Stawell. She studied journalism and public relations at university before doing a graduate diploma in education. Stella had a genetic disorder that prevented her body from building strong bones which meant that she spent the majority of her life using a wheelchair. But one thing that she disliked, was being underestimated just because she was a wheelchair user and looked different to people without disability. She was quoted as saying, "I want to live in a world where we don't have such low expectations of disabled people that we are congratulated for getting out of bed and remembering our own names in the morning. I want to live in a world where we value genuine achievement for disabled people."

Stella was not only open and honest in her writing; she was also incredibly funny and performed live comedy shows. In 2014, Stella won best newcomer at the Melbourne International Comedy Festival and was a two-time state finalist in the Raw Comedy competition. Her 2014 TEDx talk, called "I'm not your inspiration, thank you very much" has been viewed almost 6 million times. In this eloquently written speech peppered with humour, Stella discusses how society objectifies disabled people in both the media and in social media for the motivation and inspiration of people without disability.

She wanted people without disability to know that disabled people should not be congratulated for achieving everyday tasks, but instead the world should be much more accessible so people with disability can participate in everyday activities easily. People who use wheelchairs should be able to go out to a restaurant, without having to do reconnaissance that the toilet is wheelchair accessible, so they do not have to limit their liquid intake, just in case the bathrooms are inaccessible. Many of us take it for granted that being able to go to the bathroom in public is a basic human right, but sadly this is not the case.



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The Disability Discrimination Act, is a complaints-based system, and so it often falls on the shoulders of people with disability to prove that an establishment is breaking the law by not providing accessible amenities. Imagine having to bear the responsibility of making a legal complaint every time you discovered a non-accessible toilet. Providing bathroom access for everybody should be a matter of course.

Stella wanted people without disability to become more aware of the inequities that people with disability face. For example, in Australia, less than 40% of people with disability participate in the workforce and half of people with disability live near or below the poverty line. She wanted people to know that some people, who need assistance with things like showering, can only access this kind of support twice a week. These things need to change.

In December of 2014, Stella died suddenly of a suspected brain aneurism at the age of 32, and in 2023 her hometown of Stawell in Victoria unveiled a bronze statue dedicated to Stella Young. The statue is located near an accessible playground and the statue incorporates many interactive elements such as motion-activated sensors that give audio descriptions of the statue, a raised print plaque and QR codes that enable visitors to access online videos and auditory components. A true commemoration celebrating Stella Young's life with accessibility and inclusivity.

Before Stella died, she wrote and published two open letters to herself. One to her younger self, reassuring about her future and one to her 80-year-old self, outlining her dreams for an accepting and accessible world. What I would like you to think about today is, if you had to write a letter to your 80-year-old self that describes an ideal world that is a better place, what things would you change about our society to make it a better place in the future?

If you are a teacher and would like a free lesson plan for this episode or any of the Ladies in the House episodes, you can head to the Classroom Resources page on the Museum of Australian Democracy website to download the lesson plan. You'll find a link to the page in the show notes.

This is Kelly Chase, on the case.

See you next time!

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