

# A Wish for Zander

50 +1 Inspiring Stories of  
Overcoming Learning Challenges



# Albert Einstein

Physicist and Nobel Prize Winner  
March 1879 ~ April 1955

## Believed to have had Asperger Syndrome

Zander rubbed his eyes. The star in front of him flared brightly. Flashes of light collided together, turning into a man with bushy white hair and a full mustache. The man was writing very fast on a blackboard, filling it with letters and numbers that did not make sense.

"Zander, meet Albert Einstein," Stella said. "Albert was a genius. He was one of the most famous scientists who ever lived. His research papers on light, time, energy, and gravity changed how we see the world.

"But when Albert was a young boy, most people thought he was not very smart. He did not talk at all until the age of three, and still did not speak well when he reached the age of nine. The British Broadcasting Company (BBC) reported that researchers at Cambridge and Oxford universities, the top minds from two of the world's best institutions, believed Albert displayed signs of Asperger Syndrome.

"Albert repeated sentences and preferred to be by himself rather than keep company with others. 'I'm not much with people,' he would remark on occasion. Even as a child, Albert was shy and withdrawn. He often turned to music instead of people, and played both the piano and violin.

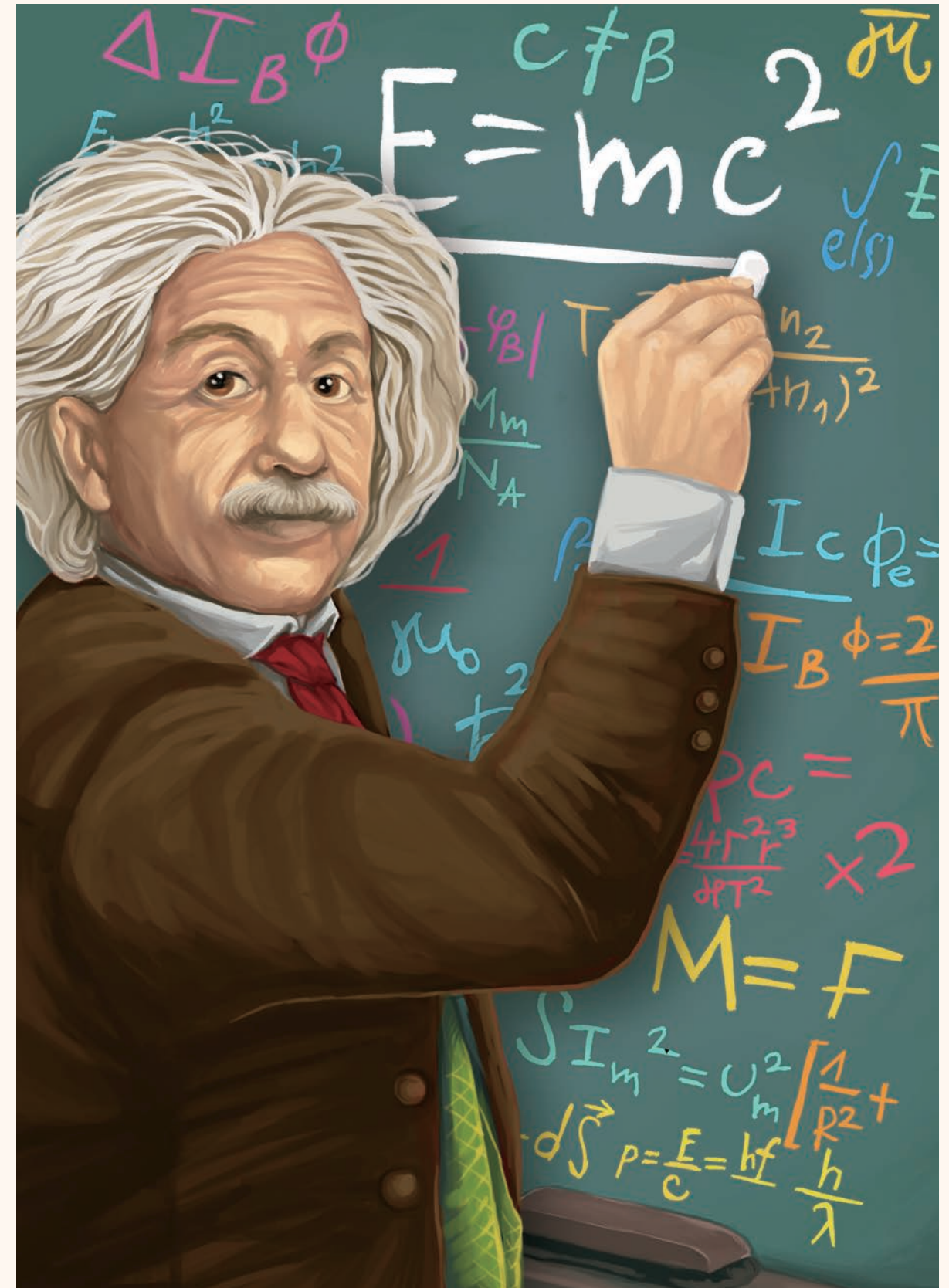
"Albert was most famous for  $E = mc^2$ , a very helpful scientific formula concerning the energy of moving objects. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1921. The Nobel Prize is the most famous award given to those who have done their best to benefit mankind in their field of knowledge.

"Zander, Albert Einstein did not need other people to believe in him. He believed in himself and his ideas."

Zander thought about this. It made sense to him, and it made him want to try new things regardless of what other people thought or said.

“ It's not that I'm so smart; it's just that I stay with problems longer. ”

— Albert Einstein



# Marilyn Monroe

Actress, Model, Producer  
June 1926 ~ August 1962

## Dyslexia and Stutter

“Wow! Who is that?” Zander asked as next star floated closer.

“That happens to be one of the most famous American actresses of all time—Marilyn Monroe,” Stella replied. “She was born with the name Norma Jeane Mortenson, but gave herself the screen name Marilyn Monroe and that has been the name millions of fans remember her by.”

“Her hair is as bright as the sun,” Zander observed.

Stella smiled. “Many people think that Marilyn was one of the most beautiful women who ever lived. She was named ‘The Most Advertised Girl in the World’ at one point in her movie career.

“What people did not know is that Marilyn had dyslexia and suffered from a debilitating stutter. She involuntarily repeated sounds, especially the consonants at the beginning of words. She brought an acting coach to movie sets to help her say her lines. In the film *Some Like It Hot*, she made sixty tries to say, ‘It’s me, Sugar!’ In her twenty-nine movies, Marilyn spoke with a whispery voice. This was from speech therapy, where she was taught breathing techniques to help her speak clearly.

“A doctor at a movie studio diagnosed Marilyn with dyslexia, which only made her determined to read. She loved books and pored over difficult ones even though she rarely finished them.

“Marilyn established her own production company, Marilyn Monroe Productions, Inc. She was only the second woman at the time to have done so. Pictures of Marilyn showed how pretty she was, but she was much more than that,” Stella said.

Zander thought it would be hard to speak in front of a camera. “She kept trying and never gave up,” he said. “That was really brave.”

“Keep smiling, because life is a beautiful thing and there’s so much to smile about.”

— Marilyn Monroe



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