

During the course of the 248 years that America has existed, there have been countless historical figures that have contributed to the success of the American people. There have been thousands of leaders, authors, explorers, teachers, you name it, that have marked America's history forever. And within those thousands, there is a handful that stand out. One, in particular, who stands out to me the most, is Anne Sullivan. Anne Sullivan lived during the women's suffrage movement and is best known for her contribution to the success of her pupil, Helen Keller. Sullivan was an extremely dedicated and determined teacher, whose patience was light years long. Her life was anything but easy, but she was able to overcome her life's obstacles, and, because of that, she is someone I greatly admire.

Anne Sullivan was born on April 14, 1866 in Massachusetts, and was the oldest child of Irish Immigrants, Thomas and Alice Sullivan. When she was five, Sullivan contracted trachoma, which left her with vision loss that she would need many surgeries over the course of her life to improve, and she would then lose her family at the age of eight. Even with these tragedies marking her past, Sullivan was determined to live her life to the fullest, which, at the time, began with getting an education.

In 1880, she gained attendance to Perkins Institute for the Blind by speaking to a member of the commission who visited the almshouse she was living in. Her ability to go out on her own and achieve her goal of getting an education is very admirable. It takes a lot of determination to be able to ask for something that, at the time, was considered less important for women. There can be moments in everyone's lives that may feel daunting, like we cannot move forward to reach our goals, whether that be because of your past or just because of current anxieties and worries. For me, I often feel like I have to be dependent on myself to be able to reach my goals, and sometimes that makes my goals seem intangible. One of my goals right now is attending and

matriculating through college. Although I am not the first person in my family to attend higher education, there is still an expectation set by going. College is unfamiliar and will be full of challenges that I will have to navigate on my own or with little help by others. I struggle with new things, and this is a very big new thing, but it is my goal to get my degree, so I will not back down just because it is a challenge. I have to push through. Sullivan had to succeed on her own, which led to her becoming one of the most influential teachers in history.

Anne Sullivan is widely known because of her pupil, Helen Keller. Many of us already know the story of Keller, a deafblind child who, with the help of a miracle teacher, was able to learn language and break the expectations people held of people similar to her. Anne Sullivan started teaching Keller when Keller was seven years old, and continued to be her companion until Sullivan's death in 1936. Keller was an adventurous and undisciplined child, but eager to learn. Sullivan had to completely change her teaching style to better suit her pupil. Instead of having strict lessons, she decided to teach Keller by following Keller's interests. With immense patience and dedication, Sullivan was able to teach Keller almost 600 words, the Braille system, and her multiplications up to five in just six months.

Anne Sullivan's patience is another quality I admire about her. Although I am not planning to become a teacher, I was very interested in the educational field for a while and was given the opportunity to learn about different teaching techniques and strategies. Teaching is extremely difficult, and educators must be able to change their teaching styles to better fit their students. This process requires a lot of patience and dedication, and I admire that Sullivan was able to do just that. Throughout my years of being a student, I always believed that there were better ways to teach. I've many times needed help with my assignments and had endless lists of questions for my teachers, which I believe may be because everyone was taught the same. Of

course, certain students were educated differently, but I don't believe a student needs a diagnosis to be able to receive the best possible education. Anne Sullivan, at only 20 years old, was able to completely change her teaching style so Helen Keller could thrive.

Sullivan's patience can be used outside of the educational world, as well. Having patience for yourself and others is important. Nothing changes overnight, not people, not the world. I believe having patience can dull the pressure of society, knowing that, someday, things will be different. Anne Sullivan lived during a time of great change, and even when things were against her, she was not willing to give up. She was patient. She did not start school until she was 14. She was patient with Helen Keller, she never gave up on her. Patience is a strong quality to have, and Sullivan had a lot of it. I believe I can use patience to achieve my future goals by accepting that things can change, I will achieve what I want. I cannot expect my entire life to change so quickly. For example, I'm not sure what I want my career to really be, and I really wish I did; I like knowing things immediately, I like knowing what the plan is. But, in this instance, I do not. So I have to be patient with the movement of time, and I have to be dedicated to who I want to be, and I believe Anne Sullivan thought similarly.