

Every Child Can Learn Podcast Episode 7: Peace speaks about her dyslexia

- **Intro**

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- **Interview**

Ann: Welcome to episode 7 of Every Child Can Learn. We are very excited to be back and today I have a very special visitor. My name is Ann, and I am the Co-founder and Uganda Country Director for Backup Uganda in Gulu. And today I am here with Peace. Welcome Peace.

Peace: Thank you.

Ann: I'm so happy to be here with you today. We have already been chatting a little bit right?

Peace: Yes.

Ann: I don't know you very well yet, but I've been learning about you. I'm so happy to be-

Peace: Even me I'm also so happy to meet you.

Ann: Ooh nice, so Peace, can we start by introducing yourself- your name and maybe your age, where you are from?

Peace: My name? My name is Peace, I am 19 years old. I am from the Ndeje Entebbe road. And what people should know that I am unique in my own way. I was born with cerebral palsy. I can't walk. I have some learning difficulties.

Ann: Okay. We will talk more about those. Okay. I know you have much to say. Now I am also curious, what do you want to be when you are done with school?

Peace: I want to become a professional midwife, a consultant.

Ann: Oh, wow. Okay.

Peace: So that I can help ladies who are giving birth to children and I, I stop the death rate-death rate, they over die. You know, you know the excitement of being a mother, people can be

excited. And then I reduce on the rate of death of the children. I am inspired by the children- I love children so much.

Ann: Oh wonderful. That's a nice ambition. And in which class are you now?

Peace: I'm in S.3 and I began studying here when I was in S.1- so young and my Director gave me hope. Then now I'm in S.3 and next year S.4 and I'm very proud of it because soon I'm going to a higher level.

Ann: Right- Yeah, that's exciting. So you're saying 'here' but I think the people who are listening, don't know what here means, where are we? Which school are we?

Peace: Center for Long Life Learning, It's very nice, very interesting. People who are there having many problems. People who are losing hope, I request that don't lose hope because me I was a cerebral palsy girl who cannot walk but my Director gave me hope to see my future and I'm very proud of it. And I'm so proud of what I am because I cannot be sad as any way because I'm lame and I feel miserable.

Ann: Yeah, I understand.

Peace: No, no- no, need for you feeling miserable because God knows your future plans.

Ann: Yeah, I agree. So before we talk more about that, can I ask you one more important question. What is your favorite food?

Peace: My favorite food- My favorite food is spaghetti, liver and rice and chicken.

Ann: And you put everything on one plate?

Peace: Yes.

Ann: Nice

Peace: That's why I enjoy so much.

Ann: Nice, now I'm also getting hungry. Hahah- Okay, Peace so you already told me that you have cerebral palsy? And I am told but you will correct me if I'm wrong, that you're also dealing with dyslexia.

Peace: Yes.

Ann: Is that true?

Peace: Yes, I have- I have dyslexia.

Ann: Okay, so can you tell me what that means, do you know what that means?

Peace: Dyslexia, dyslexia you get some difficulties in learning, spelling. You get some difficulties in everything that deals with learning with curriculum. You get difficulties for examples, spelling, me they just transcribe for me, I can't write and even reading is a problem to me. Although my hands look normal, but I can't write and that is the first problem that I have. I can't write and even reading is a problem to me, but I'm so proud because I got a school that understands me and I'm so proud of it.

Ann: And when I hear you speak, I will never know even that you have dyslexia, right?

Peace: Yes, I have-

Ann: So how did you find out that you have dyslexia? Do you remember?

Peace: Yes, I found it out when my Director explained to me more about dyslexia, then I realized it in my mind that I have dyslexia.

Ann: Yeah. Okay. And how old were you at that time?

Peace: I was- let me see, you know, sometimes we get problems but we can we can easily forget.

Ann: Okay, that's fine. It must have been a few years ago, right?

Peace: Yes, few years ago. I was- I was over- 17 or 18.

Ann: Okay, that's good to know. So I'm curious. What do you think is the most challenging thing about having dyslexia for you?

Peace: The most challenging thing, many schools can neglect us because of our difficulties and many people there and schools in Kampala having many people with dyslexia but they are- they don't know, they are not updated about dyslexia.

Ann: Right, okay.

Peace: And dyslexia is not bad by the way, you enjoy your life when you are with a family which can understand you and you know many people can neglect us, because you can't write- when it comes to my extent where I cannot walk, where I cannot read. And sometimes we get problems in reading, writing and what spelling and some people say, why are they studying- for what, when they don't know how to spell? They don't know how to read, they don't know how to write and now for which reason and they have difficulties in settling in class- they say for what? But for us, we are proud of what we are. We get whatever we need, we get whatever we need here and we acquire more skills. Yes, we acquire more skills, we have a vocational, we have learning. But let those people who are discouraging us that we can do many things, we can't work. We emphasize on it that let them give opportunities to other people, so that they are able to come, like Miss Ann came to see us, discover who we are.

Ann: So I know one thing you are very good at: public speaking, right?

Peace: Yes

Ann: How about other things? What other things are you very good at?

Peace: Public speaking, I'm good and I think my English is not bad.

Ann: Yeah, your English is great.

Peace: Yes, I know, those two things I'm sure. My favourite hobby is singing- but...

Ann: Ooh I didn't know that, okay.

Peace: Yeah, I like singing, I enjoy music.

Ann: So what kind of music do you like to sing?

Peace: I like music which is very slow and very nice.

Ann: And who is your favorite artist?

Peace: He is not very popular. They don't know him. He is called Lutalo David.

Ann: I have heard of him.

Peace: My favourite, but I am not talented in singing, but I'm talented in public speaking. And let me hope that the people we are talking to will be encouraged by my speech.

Ann: I think so. I think so definitely. Maybe a funny question and I don't know if you have an answer to it, but you can see it. Do you think there are also good sides to having dyslexia?

Peace: Yes, there are very good sides because when you have dyslexia, when you have dyslexia, although- although you have dyslexia but you can become a person, even more than those who have who don't have dyslexia, more than you can be, you know, our Director told us that he has many children in the Universities. Someone can be more important. Let me tell you something being with dyslexia is fun because when you live in the society where they understand you, they truly understand you. And, we can become important children- important people in the future. Although some people do not understand, but I emphasize on the people who are dyslexia, let them not lose hope, let them not discourage themselves. Sometimes people with dyslexia need transcribers and people have negative attitude. I know we get many problems with dyslexia, but, but we know what God is there for us and God will do many miracles for us and it's not bad to have dyslexia because God knows, He knows us, let those who have dyslexia don't lose hope in themselves.

Ann: So you mentioned something important, you were talking of a transcriber. Can you explain to us what a transcriber does?

Peace: Transcriber writes for you, reads for you a question. And then he or she writes, writes what exactly what you tell her or him, a transcriber writes for you and help you. You do oral study, you see me I have a problem in writing. Now, I have my friend there who writes for me. She writes for me, she writes for me, she does everything. She helps me. Anyway, we have transcribers during UNEB; someone can read for you and write for you without any problem-any difficulty.

Ann: So am I understanding you well, that you'll have the answers in your head? Yeah. And you speak them and then the transcriber writes them down for you.

Peace: Yes, write the exact thing and what is most interesting is that you also have invigilators who see what we do- who can see what we do.

Ann: Okay. And what do they do? They make sure you don't cheat?

Peace: Yes, they be there to listen, whether you are cheating.

Ann: Okay. So that the transcriber doesn't bribe, like correct your answers.

Peace: Now, many people are saying that when they transcribe for us, they tell us the answer but we also have invigilators, which when a transcriber says a single word and then they fire her.

Ann: Okay. Okay, so what do you think, is the best way that a teacher can help you or can help someone with dyslexia?

Peace: Yes. And let me tell you, when our teachers are teaching, they give us time to understand the question, for example, when you are not understanding the question, for example when you are not understanding the question, we need more explanations than the other people. We need more explanation, we can understand when someone can explain to us, we can understand. We can be flexible everywhere we go. When we went to many schools, are they here? And what I could request let those people who discourage those with dyslexia. They can become important in this world. A teacher can help- for example, can even pardon even like for 10 times and you can listen and you can easily pick.

Ann: That it sounds like it also helps if they're very patient.

Peace: Yes, they have to be patient to do this work of a teacher who teaches people with dyslexia. To help them, it has to be from their heart, it has to be Godly, because it's not easy to be with us people with dyslexia. You know what, we need so much attention, there are some people here who need a lot of care and other schools cannot manage that. And some teachers, when you go to school that are there, they just say that we don't understand quickly but our teachers understand us. They understand us, our teacher has to be patient, our teachers have to be Godly and have to be determined on the job that he or she does because there are some people like me who take a long time to understand something. Head teacher sometimes say

Peace, I said this and after sometimes, I say no- pardon, I have not understood. Again she repeats without any complain and that's why am proud of my school.

Ann: How about parents Peace, you told me a nice example of how teachers can help- yeah, how about parents?

Peace: Parents- my mom- my mother and father are the best. They can understand me. They don't complain whether I don't know how to read and write- they don't complain. And there are some people who can complain on their children when they don't know how to read and write- like they begin to bark on them, they begin to say this boy or girl doesn't know how to read and write. What they need to do- they need to take us with peace and harmony. And there are some people like- many children are really short tempered, when you disorganize her mind or her things, they can easily break into tears, you need to catch her with care and harmony so that you can easily relate with your children. And, parents who are there please relate with children- make sure that you make your children your best friend. You know, a parent to be your best friend, it's very good because even if you get any challenge, it's easy to be open to your parents. But when you just keep quiet, you are meant to be open to them. If you come and bark at me like Peace I don't want you to do this and I hate you doing this. I will not be able to tell you but you come near me slowly- you need to be calm. When you are coming to talk to me, you need to be calm like other children although I'm challenged in academic, it doesn't mean that am not a person- it doesn't mean. It means that I am challenged in certain ways and I am talented somewhere. Some people they know that we are not talented but we are talented in certain way, we are gifted. Like me, I am talented in public speaking that is why I'm here to emphasize on whatever bad thing you do on people who have dyslexia. Parents stop barking at us, parents stop- you be like our parents here at CELL, they understand us that's why they pay school fees and very many people there in the villages they fail to appreciate people with dyslexia. We forgive you because we know that you don't know. But, now, people who are listening to me now I am requesting that you can please understand us and be at harmony with us. We promise that we will be good. But when you come to me barking- barking; now what you expect me to do? I'll do the same thing that you do. If you come so kindly to me, if you come talk to me so calm, I can be also kind but if come barking- barking, I cannot. The thing I know about us the dyslexia people we are short tempered and we are kind also sometimes. We are kind, we are friendly but when you are friendly to us, please don't bark at your children- be kind to them.

Ann: I think we can say well done, parents to Peace. Not so? I'm hearing your parents are such a good example to other parents.

Peace: Yes, they are a good example, they have not neglected me because I have dyslexia although I'm lame they have not neglected me. I'm proud of it. And I pray that every parent can be like my mom and my dad because they have given me a reason to live.

Ann: Yeah. Well done to them and to you of course. So now you've already said some things that you think parents should not do or what do you think people should never say to someone with dyslexia?

Peace: For example that for you, you don't understand. You are like you have mental disturbance. Many people can say you have a mental disturbance. For example when you bring a question and it challenges you as a dyslexia child. You know there are some sounds which we don't know this way that's why we have a reading teacher who teaches us now you know people cannot understand us. They come and they say you are crazy and don't understand anything but when you come to me and you handle me with care, I will be able to explain whatever I am. Don't come to dyslexia child when you are doing a tough face, because that child will be scared of course will say oh God, now what can I do? Because many people judge us, they call us mad people, they call us we don't have, we are crazy, and they call us many obscene words. They call us funny names but for us we forgive them because for them they don't know. Please people stop, people stop calling us those names. Because when you come here at CELL; Center for Lifelong Learning and you start your words, for example children can get annoyed, really we also feel emotional, and we also go emotional. Now if someone comes to you, and comes and tell you- that we are very mad, you can't understand, you are very low in academic. But, we are talented although we are very low in academics, but we are talented in certain ways. Some children can kick football, can do anything, can sing, some people sing. Like me, I have an example for me I can do public speaking you know, that's why am here with you. Now, if you discourage me that I don't have any talent. How can I express my talent? Please people make our environment good for us? Please God may you forgive them because they don't know what they're doing.

Ann: But now they know because you've told them. So now they should do better.

Peace: Yeah, they should change because it hurts us emotionally. When they come saying like that.

Ann: I like how you're saying just because we are not so good in academics doesn't mean we are also we are not people you're also a person with feelings and-

Peace: Yes, and you can get emotional sometimes and feel like crying-

Ann: No one likes to hear that they are crazy or something like that.

Peace: Yeah, no one likes. That is why we want to have a friendly life. We fit in other people although you have your PhD and you have a Masters but we are also professors in our own ways because there are some people whom you see they don't even know how to kick football but you find people in our school know many things but people just discourage us. Like the way I told you, certain teacher chased me because of my disability and dyslexia that I couldn't write for myself, I couldn't speak faster, then he hides away from my parent and we were going to pay money- we were going to pay them money but instead they discouraged.

Ann: Yeah, that's not how it's supposed to be

Peace: That's the bad thing on the people of the world but I request people who are listening to me. Please, please, stop- stop discouraging us, stop abusing us in any way. We need to fit in the world of harmony; we need to love each other. Although you find me with my dyslexia, don't blame me because God decided to give me that gift of dyslexia. By the way, dyslexia is not bad, God created us a different category.

Ann: So we've talked a lot about dyslexia, right, and how it feels to have this and what it means and how people can help. To summarize, what do you think is now the most important thing that people should always know about dyslexia?

Peace: They should know that we understand, we understand at our own level, we understand, we need sometimes to understand but we can understand, we can develop our talents. Although we are not talented in academics, and this way I tell people who are there, let them construct vocational schools, like our Director- Director doesn't care about only academics, but he balances. He balances academics and vocational schools. Now I emphasize when you see that your child is developing something in academic, please do and please, construct vocational institution so that we can be helped. And some people, we are talented but they don't understand us, and people should know about dyslexia people, that we are very good. We are very nice. We are very nice when it comes to people, we love welcoming, you see how I welcomed you properly.

Ann: Yeah, you have haha-

Peace: Without any problem, now it means we are very nice, we are not bad. We are not good when you are not good to us and we are not bad when you are good to us. For example, for you we welcomed you here to chat. So, why can I refuse to share it with you? Because we are friends, we are welcoming. Yes, and we encourage people who are wishing to come here at CELL, they come and do adventure like you have done and see because we are unique in our own ways.

Ann: Well, that's the best way to summarize, I think you're unique in your own way. Thank you so much. I think you are wonderful. And like you said, you have so many talents I can already see and I've just spoken with you for a few minutes. I'm so happy that you feel that confidence, to speak for yourself and to speak for other people with dyslexia. Everybody gets to know what it means and how they can be helpful. Yeah, you should. Yeah. Thanks so much Peace. Thanks a lot.

Peace: Welcome

- **Outro**

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