**SAMPLE 1**

**LIVING WITH DIABETES**

Diabetes is the cause of one in ten deaths in adults in England alone, and amputation is 15 times more likely to be necessary in people with the disease. 80 per cent of people with diabetes will die from cardiovascular disease. These are frightening statistics, but can all be prevented with one simple commodity: knowledge. My father, Steve Lambert, 53, a probation officer from Ripon, England, is one such sufferer. When I expressed my interest to use his experience and knowledge of the disease to help people understand the complications of diabetes, but also how it can be managed and kept under control, he jumped at the chance. This is a simple plea to anybody who develops or notices any of the symptoms explained below: pay your doctor a visit. It could save your life. It could save your family.

Diabetes is known as the silent assassin as it has the ability to shorten lives without the victim being aware they even have it. “I went to the doctor’s for a rash;” Steve’s tone is bleak, “which I didn’t realise was directly related to diabetes. It just wouldn’t clear up. They said that I should really be tested because that is directly linked to diabetes.” Most symptoms can be as simple as a small rash, yet the implications have the potential to be life-threatening. He continues, “I said no, I haven’t got diabetes, I’m not diabetic. I’ve been fit all my life, and all I wanted was some cream for the bloody rash!” His spirits appear elevated momentarily. What if Steve, my father, had not returned to the doctors? What if, through blind ignorance, he had ignored the warning signs? I do not even want to envisage having my father taken away from me by something which could have been prevented, and I presume I am not alone. Diabetes sufferers have families. They have children, sons, daughters, fathers, husbands, wives.

The message, thus far, is clear: if you have any doubts, then get it checked out. “The rash never cleared up. I had to go back because it got really bad. He said “Look, we really need to test you,” so we carried out blood tests and something called a 24-hour fast. If your blood sugar is still high after that then you’re diabetic. All of this proved I was,” Steve says, dejectedly. “I was devastated, absolutely devastated.” Who can blame him?

Symptoms can also include increased thirst, having to visit the toilet more often, extreme tiredness, weight loss, genital itching, thrush, and blurred vision.

So, how would a disease such as diabetes affect one’s everyday life and work? According to Steve, taking the right course of action is vital, as he discovered the hard way. “At the start it was absolutely drastic,” he begins sternly. “It was like being told you’re a horrible dirty person and you’ve got this horrible disease inside you. I just reacted very badly.” Nobody wants to ‘feel dirty’. I can only imagine how terrible an experience it is to be told that, in a manner of speaking, you are. Steve doesn’t need to imagine, just like copious amounts of others across Britain. Their feeling is very real.

Steve appeared particularly disheartened at this point, so I allowed him a few moments to compose himself. It was obvious that this was quite a low point in his life.

His drive and intrepidity, however, are an inspiration to us all. “I was determined to beat it rather than take medication: I could beat diabetes. Rather than listen to the experts, I ended up on a campaign of trying to beat diabetes. I didn’t eat much, exercised like a complete lunatic, and got down to only 9 stone.” You can only empathise with Steve’s distressing yet inspiriting story. His determination to ‘beat diabetes’ certainly inspired me.

It isn’t all doom and gloom. It can be treated. It can be beaten. There is hope for people living with diabetes.

Surely, in this day and age, there must be a way to keep it under control? “I’m on insulin so I just test myself for my blood sugar. A little machine does a gentle pin prick on my fingers. Then a teensy drop of blood is put onto the special machine and it shows you what your blood sugar is.” Steve’s mood appears more contended, and rightly so. Diabetes can be kept under control if it is tested for and treated. You don’t have to ‘feel dirty’. Your life does not have to be detrimentally affected by diabetes. My father has shown that by accepting your condition and seeking medical help, life will go on.

Apparently, exercise is also crucial. “It burns off your blood sugar,” he says whilst smiling. “Your body keeps producing blood sugar and the insulin balances it out. My body doesn’t produce insulin so it’s not able to use the blood sugar for exercise. My blood sugar gets extremely high and I get incredibly weak, which is why I need to inject the insulin. I mustn’t overdo it though.”

By keeping in shape via regular exercise and healthy eating, you can reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. The reason for this (pay attention, here comes the scientific part) is that muscles which are functioning utilise more glucose than those which are not. In simple terms: exercise equals low blood sugar levels.

There are major benefits to being a recognised diabetic, too, as Steve enthusiastically explains: “Health wise, I get a full check up every few months. I’ll get to know very early on whether I have any heart, cancer, or other problems so they don’t turn into longer term issues. Also, when you have a chronic illness, it really makes you think that you may not be here tomorrow. This has made me value my friends and family even more!” The smile is now beaming from his face. He is clearly overjoyed at being given the ability to carry on living after the, originally, horrifying news. He has ‘beaten diabetes’.

There are two types of diabetes; type 1 and type 2. Type 1 is where the body does not produce any insulin at all, whereas type 2 is where your body is not producing enough. Type 2 accounts for approximately 90% of all cases of diabetes, and is the less serious of the two. Steve, luckily, only contracted the latter.

The long term implications of diabetes can be devastating. The tone is lowered once more as Steve explains. He has a worrying look on his face throughout. “Heart disease, heart attacks, it can affect your eyes and you can go blind, lots of people end up having their feet amputated in later years if they don’t keep active and exercise. If you don’t manage it well, it cuts your life short by at least ten to fifteen years.”

Sound shocking? Worryingly, it is all true. Life expectancy, on average, is reduced by 20 years for those with Type 1, and up to 10 years for type 2 sufferers. Also, victims of diabetes are two to three more times likely to have a stroke when compared to those without. Moreover, it is the most common cause of blindness in people of a working age in the UK. Steve has managed to avoid all of these complications through acceptance, determination, and assistance from his doctor. Not everybody is this lucky.

Diabetes can threaten your life and end it prematurely. It can also affect your quality of life in a detrimental way. However, diagnosis and treatment are the way forward and can allow you to live a normal, and virtually carefree life as the diabetes can be kept under control. This is clear, and Steve is living proof. The key, according to him, is balance. “Having a healthy mind, a healthy attitude, a healthy balanced life and exercise will allow you to have a decent life; the same as anyone else.” There is a certain amount of radiance about him as he speaks this time.

**SAMPLE 2**

**ROBERT JOHN LUTHER, 16th JULY 1951**

Robert John Luther was raised in Horsley Hill, South Shields in a small street called Farne Avenue with his Mother, Father, one brother and three sisters. Robert also known as ‘Bob’ was nine when he lost his right leg to an horrific train incident.

At the age of nine, crossing the public footpath over a railroad in Blackberry Hills on the way to the beach with his two close friends, Robert’s right foot got caught and trapped under the rail of the track. He struggled and struggled to get it out but as he was wearing his brother’s wellies, which where a size too big, he could not manage to free it.

As he struggled more and more the train began to appear in the distance, everyone began to panic and as the train come closer he knew there was nothing he could do “I struggled and struggled and began to realise it just was not going to free, my heart began to race and my breaths became short as if I was choking on air, I heard the train’s horn sound but knew it could not stop. I thought it was my time then and there as my life flashed before my very eyes”. The train was not stopping and it was clear what was about to happen. Both friends panicked and ran, leaving Robert by himself, all he could do was be brave and face the inevitable head on. He lay back waiting and praying for his life to be spared.

The train passed and completely severed his ankle and foot, leaving a lot of blood and agony “ I could not feel the pain I shut my eyes and within seconds it was over. There was a numbing sensation throughout my body, I remember all I could think about was seeing my parents I truly believed I was going to die”. After the train passed his two friends returned but could not tell what the full damage was, as age and immaturity held them back. The welly was also still in tact. However, they could see he was in a lot of pain so they tried to assess the situation “the wellington did not tear so I could not see the damage but with the pain I was feeling I knew it was not going to be very pretty”. They removed the welly to find the foot hanging by the skin with no bones whatsoever and a lot of blood.

Once they realised that the injury was very bad they tried to put the welly back on to stop the blood and helped carry him to a nearby street where his Grandmother and Grandfather lived. His Grandfather came out as soon as he heard the shouting and broke the police box to ring for police assistance and an ambulance.

Once the ambulance arrived they provided a blanket for warmth to prevent shock. Robert did not lose consciousness until in the ambulance on the way to the hospital “if it weren’t for the paramedics turning up on time I would not be here today, they are the guys that saved my life”. The paramedics could not believe how brave and strong Robert was, they told him he had lost seven and a half pints of blood and another five minutes could have resulted in his death.

Once in Hospital he was taken straight to theatre where the doctors decided it was best to amputate the ankle and foot. After receiving the operation, he was stitched back up and left in the hospital ward for a whole month, “the longest month of my life” said Robert. Then gangrene began to occur in the lower leg due to an unclean wound. The only way to prevent this disease spreading was to amputate again only this time five inches below the knee. This impacted him for the rest of his life, “I still remember to this day the doctor’s names as if it were yesterday”. Whilst in hospital his grandfather, his namesake, began to stay at the hospital 24/7.

The thing that affected Robert most was when his uncle would visit him in hospital and show him photos of his sons playing football and running around. Robert never classed himself as disabled until he saw those photos. He became upset at the realisation that he might never play football again. There were many mixed emotions throughout his time in hospital due to the lack of counselling and support back then. There was no clear distinction of what could and could not be done as a result of losing one leg, “You lose your leg and that was it, I felt like an outsider as if I didn’t belong no more, I kept thinking people would look at me differently.” The bed he was lying in was the closest bed to the window so he would often look out and wonder what it would be like just to walk out onto the pavement or run across the grass. This made him think, would he ever walk again?

During the eight months, his father was away at sea so his mother decided it would be best to send George (his father) a telegram to tell him the news. After receiving the telegram his father came rushing home and went straight to the hospital. As George was away when the amputation took place Robert’s mother had no choice but to sign the consent form giving the go ahead for the amputation. During those days society was seen as male dominant and therefore it was the male’s job to take control of signing consent forms, bills and any other legal documents. When George found out about the signing of the consent form he was not happy and began cursing the doctors calling them butchers as he did not realise the seriousness of gangrene.

Finally after around eight months a nurse entered the ward and gave confirmation of the date Robert could go home. After spending Christmas in hospital going home was the best news he had heard in long time. His granddad bought him his first ever suit to wear to leave the hospital to go home. After the ambulance transported him home from the hospital, it was the start of a new beginning.

Robert began life living with his grandfather who had been with him through thick and thin. As soon as Robert had arrived home all he could think about was going back to school. However the school believed it would be too dangerous for him to go back as he was on crutches and could easily be knocked. Robert was so determined and eager to go back that both parents attended a school board meeting and appealed to let him back. After the hearing Robert was allowed to return to school but he was restricted to what could and could not be done. This was until teachers realised he was joining in football whilst on crutches, getting around school and mixing in with friends as if nothing had ever happened. “I was never prepared to let this disability hold me back”.

After leaving school Robert began to work, as time moved on the artificial limbs began to modernise and make movement and flexibility a lot easier. After years went by Robert married and had three children. He was promoted to the manager at work and became a grandparent. One day at the age of thirty six Robert was at work on an average normal day when a man asked him why he walked with a limp, he replied by telling the man he was involved in an accident with a train. The man could not believe his eyes as he turned around and said, “Yes, I remember. You’re the young boy that had his foot squashed.” Robert couldn’t believe it, it turned out this man was the ambulance driver who saved his life 27 long years before. To this day at the age of fifty seven Robert continues to work and enjoy his life, there is rarely a day goes by where he is not smiling. If I turn out to half the man my grandfather is, I will be proud.

**SAMPLE 3**

**WHO IS THAT GIRL?**

An interview with Agnyess Deyn look-a-like Sarah Hood on the importance of colour in everyday by Nathan Mackley

The question on the lips of every student, in South Tyneside College, since early September! Now the resemblance seems to be uncanny, however I am afraid to say guys and girls, this is not Agnyess Deyn, she is in fact Sarah Hood. We can forgive you for this assumption you are only human after all! “A lot of people have said that I look like Agnyess, and to be honest I think it’s pretty ludicrous ‘cos let’s face it if I didn’t have the short blonde hair I doubt anyone would have said it to me! I do take it as a huge compliment though as I think Agnyess Deyn is gorgeous and has great style”. It has been said however, by many a young fellow, Sarah is too, gorgeous and radiating style...”I guess I kind of mimic her style sometimes, I just think it’s crazy though because I don’t think I look at all like her”.

Much like our British Beauty (Deyn), Sarah has a strong magnetism towards fashion, particularly that of a colourful orientation, after all, “it’s essential”. When I asked her how she felt about the use of colour in fashion she replied “pretty important, it depends upon your personality really though”. According to our look-a-like, “injecting colour into your daily life makes her feel happy and gleeful!”

As a nation, we aren’t nearly as confident as we would like to be, that is why we notice these daring characters more, those who dare to challenge our melancholy choice of clothing, the old jeans and scruffy t-shirt, and throw on an oversized ‘Frankie says relax’ tee, and match this with a pair of neon tights, and ‘doctor martens’, just to get ourselves noticed! “Generally I wear very bright, vibrant colours people comment on this, and it gets me noticed more!” On the other hand, sometimes we like to wear these daring ensembles, for our own benefit, “if for example you’re in a bad mood, you can wear bright colours, it will brighten up your dull days and make you feel much better”

Her bright, bubbly character is definitely similar to that of Deyn, she even said that “no specific colour could define my personality, many, if not most colours make me feel happy.” I did try and find out, whether she could assign particular moods, to specific colours, “White can typically signify sadness, and red generally means anger,” I was also keen to find out, whether or not personality traits could be represented via colour, from such a dedicated advocate of fashion, after some quite quiet contemplation, Sarah responded “in my experience, black can symbolise people with depressive or generally sad personalities” (as she said this, I quickly noticed I was sitting in a lovely dull black shirt, how depressing!)

Normally, fashion staves slave over their outfits, constantly worrying about their next day’s ensemble, Sarah is no different! “On college days, I generally get up at 7 o’clock and it takes an hour to do my hair and makeup...maybe a little longer sometimes.

That gives me half an hour to put my clothes on, that might seem like a ridiculous amount of time but I can try on up to like 8 outfits before I choose which one I will wear. I also have to then choose jewellery, accessories like a scarf, hat and gloves and I also need to choose which bag I’m taking and then make sure I have all my essentials in it!” for those of you who are wondering, what on earth miss. Hood’s college essentials are...you need wonder no longer! “Mainly makeup! Obviously I need books and stationary but I have to make sure I have top up eyeliner, lip gloss, chapstick, blusher and eyelash curlers just in case they fade throughout the day”! Thinking this is as torturous as it gets? Oh, wait...Sarah went on to discuss a night out’s routine.

“I have to plan my outfit at least 24 hours in advance so I can try it on and make sure I don’t need to go out and buy anything new like shoes or accessories or a general new outfit”. Gruelling? Stay tuned viewers! The plot thickens...”I have to make sure I don’t wear the same thing too often as well so ill put clothes to the back of my wardrobe that I’ve worn recently, I like to co-ordinate my makeup with the outfit too....but not too matching just so it doesn’t clash”.

I think at this point in the article, I should comment on Sarah’s attire, a rather fetching t-shirt teamed with a pair of black leggings and the brightest pair of yellow Dr. Martens I have ever seen! Ironically, when I asked her to choose a colour to describe herself, without even thinking she said “Yellow, it represents my bright, happy and sunny personality.

At the moment, we students as a collective seem to be obsessed with EBay and rifling through the baskets in our local charity shop, hardly concerned at all with whether the cardigan we are sporting, was keeping warm the corpse of someone’s Gran! So it is hardly surprising that our interviewee is a fan of trooping round these charity shops and vintage boutiques to find a vibrant, oversized sweater such as one our Brit-born Supermodel could be found in!

As individuals, fashion allows us to reinvent and also express ourselves, regardless of what others think of us, “If I walked past the person I am now, in the street 8 years ago, I’d probably have thought 'ew what’s that strange girl wearing' this would be on one of my odder days though, I sometimes just go out in a t-shirt and jeans so I doubt I would have passed much comment on that”. With a short burst of laughter, Sarah explained that an ‘odd day’ is a day when things she wears “conjure up some funny looks in the street”. Surely fashion should allow us to wear what we want, without causing any drama? “My fur coat causes a bit of controversy”.

“I can’t stress enough, how much what you wear, affects the way you feel.....If you don’t feel good in what you’re wearing then generally, you’ll have a miserable day, if you feel great then you’re a happier person”. Has our fashion icon just stumbled upon the answer to the lifelong question, ‘what is the secret, to feeling great’? “It’s not just all about looking good however, if you look amazing but aren’t comfortable then you aren’t going to enjoy the day and what your wearing. You have to find a happy medium between feeling comfortable and looking amazing”.

Aside from the stereotypical teenage angst, and avoiding doing any kind of work which will involve leaving our beds, we teens constantly worry about being popular, having friends and fitting in, all at the same time, “I felt like I blended into the background all through school and I think it was when I went to college that I really found myself and started to wear what I wanted and not feel peer pressure to be 'cool' I had a few mishaps along the way but I gradually just became more and more interested in clothes and started to read vogue and look at what designers where making... and so it was definitely a gradual progression”. Sarah always wanted to break free, and be who she really wanted to be, it took her 5 years of school, and the maturity of college to learn this.

“I take inspiration from 'fashionistas' such as Kate Moss, Sienna Miller and Pixie Geldof but I don’t necessarily copy and stick to their styles...if I see them wearing something that I like then I will try and find something similar but then mix it up with something completely different. Fashion is all about individuality, recreation and accessorisation”.

So, according to our style guru, it is important to find something you like, a style you like and make it your own. How does she suggest this is done? She recommends five places:

Urban Outfitters, TopShop, eBay, American Apparel and ASOS.

“Fashion is fun, I live and breathe it. We all need fun in our lives, we all have fashion in our lives, we just need to choose to allow the fun to follow”!

**SAMPLE 4**

**WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE A MARINE ENGINEER?**

When do people decide what career what they want to take? Can you decide later on in life? From a recent interview with a Marine Engineer, I found out the ins and outs of their career at the early stage. The purpose of the interview was to find out what events have happened throughout the early days of Ryan’s career, to raise awareness to Marine Engineer’s or those aspiring to become Marine Engineers about the type of possibilities being a Marine Engineer could bring you.

From the early age of 14 Ryan realised that becoming a Marine Engineer was something that he really wanted to do, following in his father’s footsteps. ‘With me wanting a good standard of living marine engineering seemed an obvious choice’ Ryan stated.

When he left school in July 2005 his first step was to apply to South Tyneside College where he could enrol on the course that was needed to build him up to his career. By doing this, he knew that he was on his way to the career that he had always wanted. Before he started the course Ryan was given the layout of the course which he happily agreed to.

In September 2005 Ryan started his first step up the career ladder when he arrived at South Tyneside College to start the first day of his course. A couple of weeks into the course Ryan knew it was right for him. ‘Although the course is challenging I believe I am succeeding at it. I wouldn’t say the course is easy.’ He stated proudly.

With time passing quickly, it was Ryan’s first long trip away from home when he had to continue his career away to sea for three months. He explained, ‘Although it’s a good experience it’s also a hard one. It makes you realise how much you miss your home comforts and the people you love.’ Ryan added: ‘However once I have my qualifications I can change onto shorter routes spending more time at home and less time away.’ Ryan’s first trip was very successful with him achieving over half of his portfolio completed and many assignments to go with it. He proudly admitted, ‘Training to become a marine engineer over the past two years has given me valuable experience in marine engineering and I personally believe it has given me vital life experience.’

When asking Ryan why he thought he had made the right decision he stated:

‘Not only am I training to be an engineer and get paid to do so, but I’ve been lucky enough to travel the world while getting paid. Not many people my age can say that.’

At the young age of 16 Ryan had been to many places such as America, Australia, across the Pacific and many more while carrying out his career.

Ryan continued with his college studies after his first trip to sea with his mind still set to become a Marine Engineer. In July 2008 his time had come again to travel the world, but it didn’t quite turn out the way it was planned unfortunately.

Ryan patiently waited a considerably long time for his company to ring to confirm that a ship awaited him. From the 10th of July until the 12th of September he waited anxiously for his date to go away. When he did eventually receive his call he was told that he had two days to book his plane tickets to Southampton and be ready to leave for sea. With time seemingly going quicker than it usually did it was time to board the plane and set off for his 3 month trip around the world.

Ryan explained to me, ‘During my second sea trip I joined a vessel in Southampton to find I was the only British person onboard.’ ‘As well as the men being foreign they spoke very little English making it very difficult to communicate at all.’ Could things get any worse for Ryan?

It did get worse, not only did he have no-one to speak to, he also had nowhere to stay when he got there. ‘There were no available cabins for me, so as a result I was sleeping in the ships hospital, isolated from all the other crew.’ This was a horrible experience for Ryan as he was not used to this, his other trip couldn’t have gone any better. When entering the different time change Ryan was not informed and thereby was late arriving to the engine room. Nobody asked him where he had been or if he was ok.

When trying to solve his problem by bravely speaking to the Captain of the ship he was travelling on, nothing was solved. He explained to him that he did not feel comfortable and nobody was communicating with him which made it difficult to work and was causing depression.

As time passed slowly, nobody came to check on the brave engineer to see that everything was ok. Ryan stated: ‘As a result of this I ended up having a series of panic attacks which I have since had counselling with.’ Within a couple of days Ryan was back at home where he felt it was best and safest to be.

Since his bad experience at sea Ryan has recovered very well. ‘Although this was a bad experience I believe that life is a learning curve and as a result of the bad experience I will be made a stronger person.’ He proudly stated.

With there being no age restrictions to the course Ryan knew that panicking wasn’t the right method to deal with his situation. ‘I’m currently the youngest cadet in our intake as I started this course when I was barely 16.’ When asking him ‘Marine engineering has often been described as a ‘mans job’, is this the case? He stated anxiously ‘No not in the slightest. Companies now encourage women into the career as it is very rewarding. As for the deck side of the course, with that being a less “dirty” job, females are certainly more attracted to that.’

After everything that he has been through, Ryan hopes to successfully finish his course at college and his time away at sea, this should be happening at the end of June. This will mean that he will be an official qualified Marine Engineer and will be quickly climbing to the top of his career path, which is what he has always wanted.