

Which of these people has struggled with mental illness?



Demi Lovato
Actress and singer of the
Disney hit "Let It Go"



Herschel Walker
Football player and Heisman
Trophy winner



Abraham Lincoln
16th President
of the United States



Alexis Wineman
Miss Montana



Michael Phelps
Swimmer and Olympic gold
medal winner



Brandon Marshall
NFL record holding wide receiver

The Answer? All of them.

Demi Lovato: At 22 Lovato entered rehab after dealing with depression, an eating disorder and self-harm. “I never found out until I went into treatment that I was bipolar, I didn’t know what was wrong with me. Little did I know there was a chemical imbalance in my brain,” she says. “Because I didn’t tell people what I need, I ended up self-medicating and coping with very unhealthy behaviors.” After therapy and treatment, Lovato says she’s in a good place. “Happiness is a choice. Life is a roller coaster. You can make the highs as amazing as possible and you can control how low the lows go.”

Herschel Walker: In his biography, former running back, Herschel Walker, revealed that he suffered from dissociative identity disorder, or what used to be called multiple personality disorder. As a result of the warring personalities, Walker says he doesn’t remember the moment or even the season that he won the Heisman Trophy. “I feel the greatest achievement of my life will be to tell the world my truth,” he wrote.

Abraham Lincoln: The 16th President of the U.S. suffered from severe and debilitating and on occasion suicidal depression, as recorded by Carl Sandburg in his comprehensive six-volume biographical analysis of his life. “A tendency to melancholy” Lincoln once wrote in a letter to a friend, “let it be observed, is a misfortune, not a fault.” The most amazing part of his story is that despite this serious affliction, he was still able to make historical achievements during a tumultuous time in our country.

Alexis Wineman: Having very few friends, the auburn-haired beauty says she was verbally bullied in middle school. “Growing up it was really hard because I didn’t know what was different about me,” she said, “the smallest things could set me off. I was called a ‘retard’ – it was really hurtful stuff.” In high school, though, the bullying subsided. Wineman was able to make genuine friends and accept that fact that she has autism. Eventually, Wineman made the decision to make a go at pageant life. “I have this amazing opportunity to show the world that autism is not a death sentence, but a life adventure,” she said. “Autism doesn’t define me. I define it.”

Michael Phelps: Amid the many world records and Olympic gold medals, Michael Phelps is just another guy who’s had to deal with a problem that’s confronted many other people – attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). After an inability to concentrate led to the diagnosis when Phelps was in middle school, he worked with his parents and teachers to impose a better structure on his life and learning habits. Coupled with the right medication and dedication, he’s been able to realize his dreams of becoming a true champion.

Brandon Marshall: Since he was diagnosed with borderline personality disorder in 2010, the New York Jets receiver Brandon Marshall’s image has been transformed. Once as recognized for his troublesome behavior as his outstanding talent, he has become one of the most important and proactive mental health advocates in the United States. “It’s my purpose, not only in sport, but in this world.”

Mental illness doesn’t have to define you.

