



What I Can Be Is Up To Me

The inclusive children's book that empowers readers to believe in themselves no matter the challenges that come their way!

by Kristin Smedley, Author of the Best Selling Book, Thriving Blind: Stories of Real People Succeeding Without Sight

Illustrated by Kim Crothers, a Visually Impaired Artist

What I can be
Is up to me.
Because, you see,
I believe in me!

I can be like Justin.
I can ride a skateboard too.
Whooshing down the hill.
Wheels going fast.
Pushing hard.

**Push! Kick!
Push!**



“What I can be is up to me Because, you see, I believe in me!”

"What I Can Be Is Up to Me" is an extraordinary children's book that not only inspires young minds but also promotes inclusivity and accessibility. This captivating story is a celebration of boundless possibilities, highlighting that each child can define their future. The book's unique feature of being printed in both Braille and print ensures that every child, regardless of their vision, can embark on a journey of self-discovery and empowerment.

What I can be is up to me
It does not matter what others see
All I need to be what I want to be
Is always here, inside of me.

Erik, Diane, and Justin,
Tina, Clarke and Alex too,

**Don't use their eyes
To do what they do.**





Meet the Author, Kristin Smedley

TEDx Speaker, Best Selling Author,
Co-Creator, Thriving Blind Academy

Kristin Smedley is the Mom of three children, two of which were born blind. Kristin is a Best Selling author of *Thriving Blind: Stories of Real People Succeeding Without Sight* and *What I Can Be Is Up To Me*, a print + Braille children's book.

A recognized expert in the blindness and rare disease communities, Kristin won the highly regarded Champion of Hope Award, was named an Ambassador for the National Organization of Rare Disorders, and is a 2022 inductee into the Conwell-Egan Catholic Wall of Fame. Kristin is a popular, in demand speaker who has been invited to share her message at the NIH, United States Congress, the FDA, and national as well as international conventions, conferences and events.

As CEO of a global patient organization, she coordinated legislation (H.R. #625) that became the first in US history to be submitted in Braille. Kristin spoke at the FDA to help achieve the first ever FDA approved gene therapy to treat an inherited retinal disease in the United States. Her TEDx Talk, books and international summit change perceptions of blindness, and sparked a global movement, Thriving Blind Academy, that is solving the unemployment, literacy, and financial crisis in the blind the community.

WHAT I CAN BE IS UP TO ME!

The inclusive children's book that empowers readers to believe in themselves no matter the challenges that come their way!

Written by Kristin Smedley, Best Selling Author of *Thriving Blind*.
Illustrated by Kim Crothers, a Visually Impaired Artist



[CLICK to WATCH the video about this book!](#)

Readers will:

- Learn about role models that access the world differently and are successful
- Be exposed to the success principles of Responsibility, Believe in Yourself, and Believe It's Possible
- Learn about the important literacy tool for the blind, Braille
- Understand that people with blindness/low vision are just like them - they just access the world a little differently
- **Smile and enjoy the story!**

TAKEAWAYS

What I Can Be Is Up To Me is a fun, engaging story that introduces young readers to real life people that do interesting things in this world. With rhythmic, action text, it invites readers to see themselves in the jobs those featured have.

Each page has an exciting action for the reader to envision (a mountain climber climbing! climbing! climbing! A skateboarder whoosh! whoosh! whoosh!).

The surprise: Although it is hinted at throughout the book, the reader does not find out until the end of the story that the stars of the story are all blind or low vision!

With characters that are all blind or low vision, this book gets the children engaged and excited about principles like:

- Take 100% Responsibility
- Believe It's Possible
- Believe In Yourself
- Access Tools for Success

Not only will blind/low vision children be empowered to believe in themselves, all children that experience this book will be empowered to believe in themselves no matter the adversity they may experience.



IMAGINE if the bias against blindness & disability never starts in the first place.

TARGET AUDIENCE of the book = First Grade

The uniqueness of *What I Can Be Is Up To Me*

- Gives young blind and low vision children role models for succeeding without sight
- Empowers all young readers to know they are responsible for their dreams
- Educates all young readers, blind and sighted, to know adversity can be an advantage
- Aligned with educational standards for reading
- Utilizes grade level appropriate high frequency words
- Print + braille format to be accessible to all readers and expose all to the tool of literacy for the blind
- Illustrator is legally blind

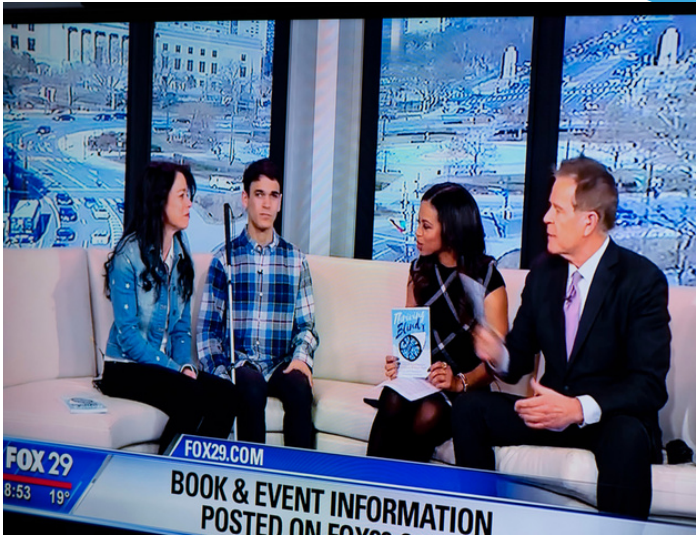
What I Can Be Is Up To Me

is the GOLD STANDARD for inclusivity and accessibility

- "Characters" are from different races, ethnicity, nationality, and genders.
- Every person in the story has a disability (blindness/low vision).
- The print + braille format makes the book accessible for all readers.
- **The illustrations were created by a visually impaired artist.**



The Book First Graders Can't Stop Reading (and Touching!)



Questions to ask to sound like you know Kristin and her mission:

- Can you tell us more about the inspiration behind "What I Can Be Is Up to Me" and how it addresses the concept of inclusivity and accessibility in children's literature?
- The book's message of empowerment is particularly compelling. How did your personal experiences as a parent to two blind sons influence the creation of this book, and what impact do you hope it will have on young readers?
- "What I Can Be Is Up to Me" is notable for being printed in both Braille and print. Could you share the importance of this accessibility feature and how it enhances the reading experience for all children, regardless of their visual abilities?
- Your two blind sons, Michael and Mitchell, have achieved remarkable success. How have their journeys influenced the themes and narratives within the book, and what lessons can parents and children learn from their experiences?
- In a world that increasingly values diversity and inclusion, what role do you see children's literature, like "What I Can Be Is Up to Me," playing in shaping young minds and fostering a more inclusive society?



To schedule an interview with Kristin, and/or inquire about getting copies of “What I Can Be Is Up To Me” to children in your community, send an email to:

Kristin@ThrivingBlindAcademy.org

Visit Us:

www.WhatICanBeIsUpToMe.com

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