

Klyn Elsbury

Best-selling Author, CEO of MK Foundation

Klyn Elsbury was born with the life-threatening genetic disease, Cystic Fibrosis. Her lungs are prone to infections, because she naturally produces a thick sticky mucous that she can't cough out. It has destroyed her pancreas, and requires her to take more than 30 pills a day, just to digest food. The stress on her pancreas and years of malnutrition led to a month-long diabetic coma in 2001 and now she manages diabetes with daily insulin. Last year, she spent over 100 days on IV antibiotics accessed through a port that she had surgically implanted into her chest for immediate vein access.

Failing to see the importance of attending Iowa State University (despite having a 4.0 GPA), because she didn't believe she'd live long enough to pay off her student loan debt, Klyn dropped out of college and headed to Orlando, Florida.

At the age of 22, with only a few hundred dollars to her name, she took on several unfulfilling careers until she found one that capitalized on the essence of who she was; a super-connector.

She took a small job as a recruiter for a staffing firm and was promoted several times until she had a corner office, bought a house, and was solely in charge of all internal recruitment needs for a \$26 million dollar company. She was 22 years old.

As hospitalizations increased, work became tough. So tough, she was let go and decided to move to San Diego, California to recruit for a Boston-based biotech and pharmaceutical recruitment company to be close to the very drugs that were being made, hoping to save her own life.

She found hope. Yet in less than a year, she quit because of excessive hospitalizations and faced the reality that was far too common in the Cystic Fibrosis community, exploring life on the lung transplant list.

In 2014, she was confined to a wheelchair with her lung function plummeting below 40%. Subsequently, following another two-week hospital stay (which was one of five that year), Klyn set off on a six-week road trip across the United States to visit friends and family she wasn't sure she would live to see again.

Despite the realization she may be buried soon, she proved everyone wrong by going to the gym daily and participating in Zumba classes. After one particularly grueling workout, she set a goal of becoming a Zumba Instructor. She had to live. She had to push herself. If she didn't, she would die before the life-saving drugs she tried to have access to earlier that year, would be available.

And in the middle of all that, she found time to hop online, and meet the love of her life, Jeff Shelton.

When the drugs came on the market, with a price tag of \$259,000, she was denied coverage. Using her recruitment background, she cold-called everyone in the industry until eventually, she landed on PBS. This ultimately led to an interview with an Emmy-award winning correspondent of NBC's *Nightly News with Lester Holt*.

Once approved, the sky was the limit.

From her hospital bed one dreary day, she decided to interview famous people who overcame incredible odds. This became the model for writing her best-selling book, *I AM ____: The Untold Story of Success*.

She then combined her love for recruiting and bringing people together, to co-found Landmark Makers. With her tenacious and powerful presence, she shares how she challenges the narrative about her physical limitations to pursue her passions.

In the years that followed, Klyn went on to found MK Foundation, specializing in sales consulting and training for organizations. She became a two-time international bestseller in 2021 with the release of her book, *Unstuck Yourself*, a motivational sales playbook designed to create top producers in sales organizations in under 30 days.

She reminds us all to live authentically, love deeply, and to recognize adversity as an advantage. After all, "Life isn't measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the number of moments we create, that take our breath away."

