

Suggested Interview Questions for Jenny Smith

Live the Impossible: How a Wheelchair Has Taken Me Places I Never Dared to Imagine

1. How were you injured?

I was outside tumbling, but the grass was wet with the morning's dew. My feet slipped while I was taking off for a round-off back handspring layout. I didn't have enough height or rotation and landed face-first in the grass. I heard a pop and lost all feeling and movement of my arms and legs. I sustained a C6-7 spinal cord injury.

2. What is one thing you want people to know about spinal cord injuries?

Using a wheelchair is the easiest part of a spinal cord injury. It's the secondary issues such as bladder and bowel dysfunction, recurrent UTIs, spasticity, osteoporosis, inaccessible building or bathrooms, and the financial burden of personal care that make life difficult with a spinal cord injury.

3. What advice do you have for others who are going through a difficult situation?

It's OK to be sad or mad about what you're going through. Just don't stuff it as I did! But don't stay stuck there. I think it's important to be grateful for the family and friends who support us and. We also live in a country where we have access to good medical care. I have a wheelchair. So many people in developing countries don't even have access to a wheelchair. Sometimes it's being grateful for the small things that can make a big difference in how we perceive our situation.

4. Would you change what happened?

I wouldn't change what I lost for what I have gained. I truly believe I've done more from a wheelchair than I would have walking. But that doesn't mean I wouldn't mind an easier life. Life with functioning hands. No suffocating medical expenses. No concerns about becoming more dependent on others in the future as I age.

5. What is one misconception that people have about you or others with spinal cord injuries?

So often – especially in the media and in Hollywood – people with disabilities are portrayed as superheroes and or as an inspiration. We're just people who are doing life from a wheelchair. (Watch [Stella Young's TED talk](#) on inspiration porn.)

6. What is a typical "day in the life of Jenny Smith?"

I'm not sure there is a typical day. Getting dressed and out of bed is the first feat. On the days I don't have help, it takes about thirty minutes to get on my pants and shoes, and transfer into

my chair. Once I'm up, I get to the typical stuff – go to the bathroom, do my makeup and hair. I always have a big mug of herbal tea in the morning with breakfast. Then I'll start work, either from home or at the office. After work, I schedule any medical appointments, like occupational therapy to keep my shoulders in good shape. After dinner, I get to work on prepping new content for my website, YouTube, or social media or work on contract writing jobs I've taken on. Or I rehearse for upcoming speeches. I always make time around 8:30 in the evening to work out for at least 20 minutes. Then I get ready for bed which takes about an hour. I enjoy reading in bed before the lights go off at 10:30.

7. How did your faith impact your response to your injury?

My faith was – and is – the foundation of my life. When everything around me was changing, God was the one thing I could rely on. My faith was “the anchor for soul, firm and secure” and gave me the hope that I didn't have to do this in my own strength.

8. What's the name of your book?

Live the Impossible: How a Wheelchair Has Taken Me Places I Never Dared to Imagine

9. What is the message of the book?

I hope the primary message people will take away is that we can all live the impossible, even when life doesn't go as planned. But to live the impossible, we need to get outside our comfort zone. The impossible rarely happens where it's comfortable.

10. Where can people buy the book?

The book will be available on Amazon both in digital and paperback formats on July 11. The digital version is available for pre-order now.