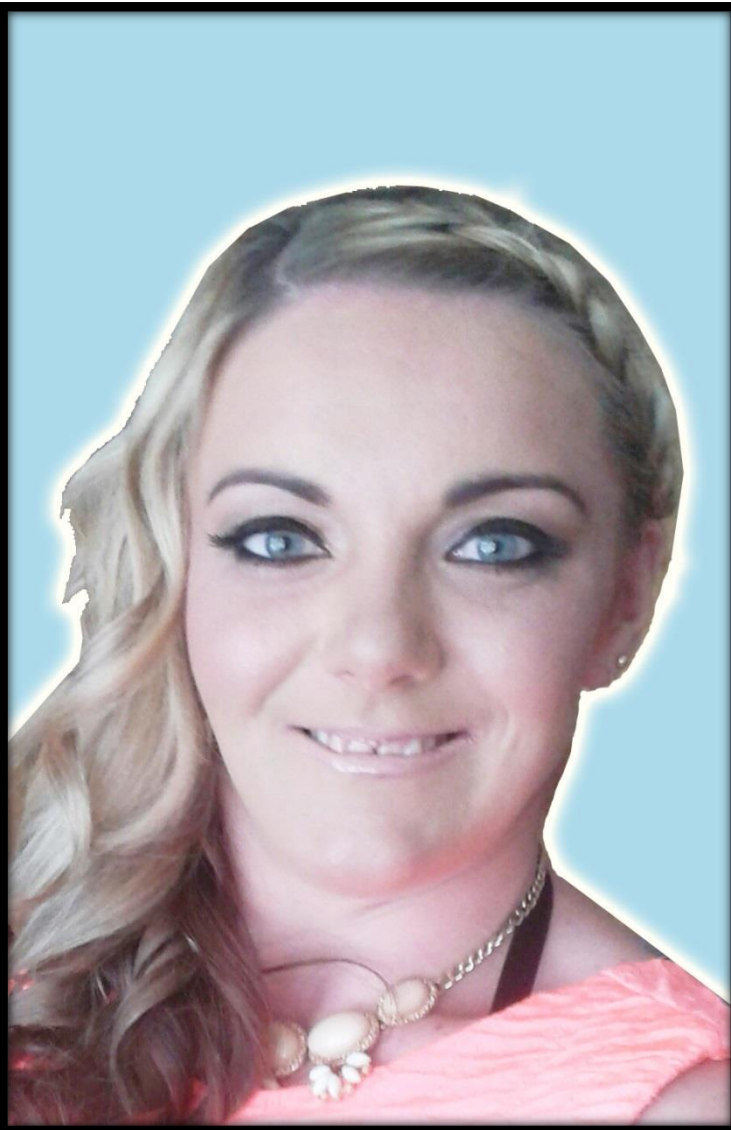




***“Metamorphosis is not just reserved  
for the moths and the butterflies”***

**Tracey Ellen Maria**



**Hello everyone, my name is Tracey McCann and I am a bestselling author, public speaker, life coach and disabled advocate.**

**I am both honoured and privileged to be here talking to you all today.**

**Firstly, I would like to give you a bit of background on myself, and how I came to be the person standing in front of you all.**



**When I was 8 years old, I was struck with a sudden and life changing disability known as Rapid Onset Muscular Dystonia. In more or less a few days, I went from being an able bodied child, to a child locked in an extremely painful and constant spasm, unable to communicate.**





"Once we  
accept our  
limits, we  
move beyond  
them."

- Albert Einstein



**Now, years later, I am here in front of you all, not talking, but still communicating my message. How it is that I am doing should be fairly obvious to anyone familiar with assistive technology, and what it can enable us all to do. We all have within us the ability to do whatever it is that we want to do, some of us however have limitations, be it physical or intellectual. However, the current assistive technology available to us all, can remove those limitations, be it fully, or at the very least, lessen how restricted we may find ourselves.**



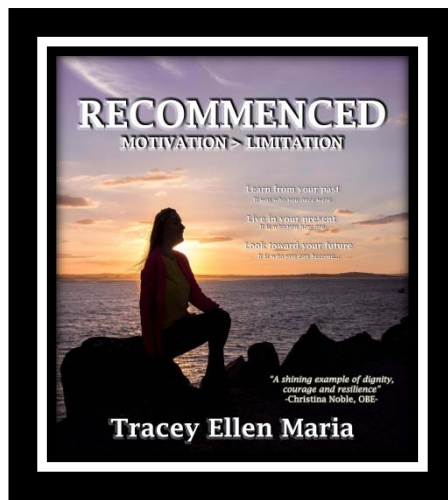
The assistive technology that I have used over the years, like myself, has evolved. All those years ago when I first get diagnosed with Dystonia I was using a touch talker to communicate. This was a big and heavy device that I carried around my neck, which I found very awkward to use.



**Then, a number of years into my teens, I was given a little handheld digital organiser that could speak on my behalf. I used this device for a number of years.**



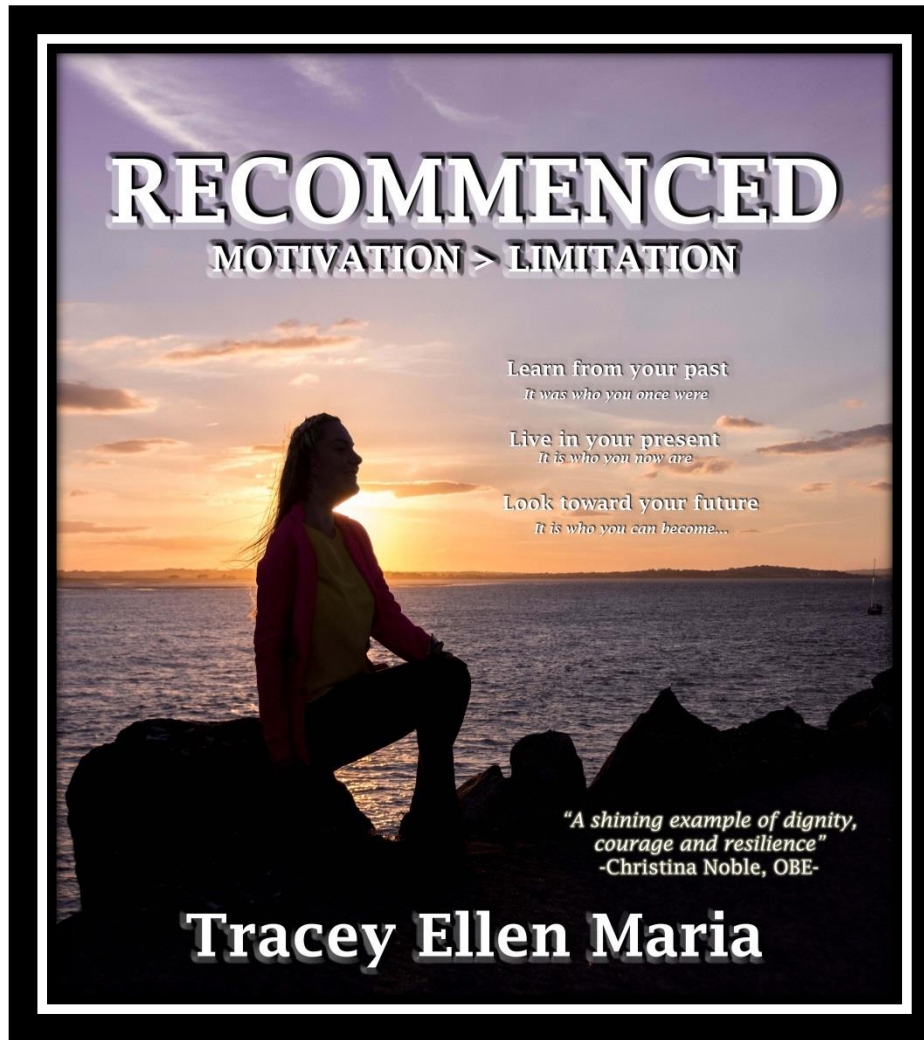
**Then the creation of the smartphone enabled me to access great tools. I discovered a number of apps that I could download to my mobile, which would communicate for me. I found at times however that people still were not listening to me, and it was still not enough for me. I had a story and a message burning inside me that I wanted to get out.**



I began writing my book. It took me 2 and a half years to put it together as I had to type 1 letter at a time, with one finger. I am now a public speaker and use different apps on my phone, and laptop, to shout out my message to the world. This technological boom that we are seeing in the world today is great for everybody, disabled or not, but as a person with a disability, given my story of the constant struggle I underwent trying to communicate, I can 100% relate to the following quote, and I am certain some of you here will too...







**RECOMMENCED**  
MOTIVATION > LIMITATION

Learn from your past  
*It was who you once were*

Live in your present  
*It is who you now are*

Look toward your future  
*It is who you can become...*

*"A shining example of dignity,  
courage and resilience"*  
-Christina Noble, OBE-

**Tracey Ellen Maria**



Thank you for your time, and thank you for listening to me.

[www.traceyellenmaria.ie](http://www.traceyellenmaria.ie)