

## Mark Robinson shares his experience of living with dyspraxia

My name is Mark Robinson and I am 42 years old and was diagnosed with dyspraxia at the age of 40 in 2015.

I always had problems with coordination from a young age and was very poor at sport and handwriting. I started school in 1979 and secondary school in 1986 when dyspraxia was unheard of. I was routinely bullied in school, especially secondary school as a result of my poor performance at all sport, this was especially difficult for me as I am black and the stereotype back then was that all black people were supposed to be good at sport. I had the most abysmal school reports and was put in the bottom sets for most subjects and routinely ridiculed by both staff and students with little or no help or encouragement even at home. In a nutshell I hated school and ultimately at 16 years old left school having sat only one GCSE, Maths of which I obtained an F grade.



I then went to college to do Maths, English and Biology re-sits but I did not fare much better. I dropped out of Maths and Biology and only sat the English GCSE of which I obtained an E grade. I gave up on education but in 1992 I was introduced to being a DJ and that became something I was good at in a short space of time. I had a successful career playing several popular dance music genres across the country and internationally in countries such as the USA, Canada and mainland Europe. The highlight of my career was being chosen to present the House Mix Show on BBC Radio 1Xtra, which I did weekly from 2007 until 2010. I also produced and remixed lots of music, one of which was for DJ superstar David Guetta. I also released a compilation album with the Ministry of Sound in 2009.

I quit being a DJ at the end of 2012 as I felt I wanted more from life and not be ruled by the pressures of the music industry. I met my wife during this period and unfortunately had an altercation with her violent ex-partner in May 2013. This led me being falsely accused of assault; I was charged by the police and went to Crown Court 12 months after the initial incident. The day before my trial the barrister that was supposed to represent me said he could no longer attend my trial due to his other case over running. I decided to defend myself and prepare my own case, cross-examine witnesses and research the relevant statutes and trial procedure.

I impressed my Prosecutor so much that on the second day of trial he took off his wig and offered it to me and said I should become an advocate, the judge also provided positive feedback. However, due to a hung jury (which means they could not come to a unanimous decision) I had to have a retrial. I elected to represent myself again much to everyone's amazement and this time was unanimously acquitted. Several Barristers watched me during my week in court and encouraged me to consider a career as a Barrister and exchanged contact details with me at the end of the trial.