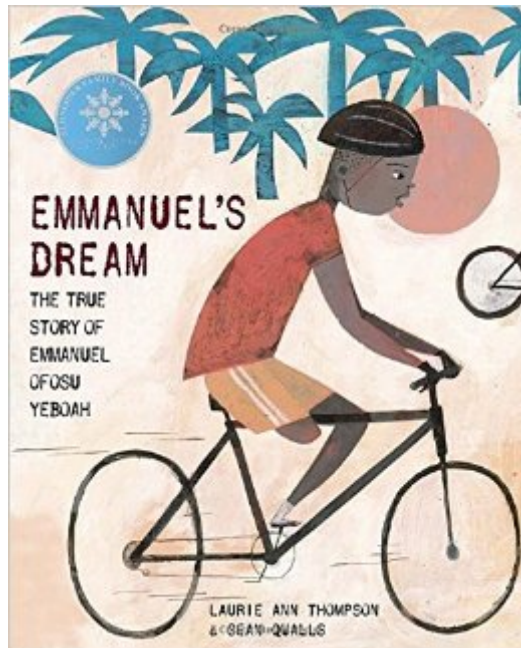


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# Emmanuel's Dream: The True Story Of Emmanuel Ofosu Yeboah



## Synopsis

Emmanuel Ofosu Yeboah's inspiring true story "which was turned into a film, Emmanuel's Gift, narrated by Oprah Winfrey" is nothing short of remarkable. Born in Ghana, West Africa, with one deformed leg, he was dismissed by most people "but not by his mother, who taught him to reach for his dreams. As a boy, Emmanuel hopped to school more than two miles each way, learned to play soccer, left home at age thirteen to provide for his family, and, eventually, became a cyclist. He rode an astonishing four hundred miles across Ghana in 2001, spreading his powerful message: disability is not inability. Today, Emmanuel continues to work on behalf of the disabled. Thompson's lyrical prose and Qualls's bold collage illustrations offer a powerful celebration of triumphing over adversity. Includes an author's note with more information about Emmanuel's charity.

## Book Information

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Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars See all reviews (19 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #19,073 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #1 in Books > Children's Books > Sports & Outdoors > Cycling #12 in Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Social Activists #13 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > Africa

Age Range: 4 - 8 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

## Customer Reviews

This inspiring picture book by author Laurie Ann Thompson tells the moving true story of Emmanuel Ofosu Yeboah, a young man born with a severe disability in rural Ghana who nonetheless bicycled across the entire country, raising awareness for disabled people throughout Africa and around the world. The book opens with a touching tableau--a beautiful baby boy has been born, but with only one strong leg. We can see the despair in the father's posture and the fear in the mother's eyes as she looks at the baby's father. Disabled children in Ghana were not only considered worthless--they

were considered a curse, and the baby's father soon abandons the family. The mother's hope is seen in her naming the baby "Emmanuel," which means "God is with us." Emmanuel's mother refuses to allow her child to become a beggar, as was the custom for disabled people in Ghana; instead she helps him to become self-sufficient, hopping to school, two miles each way. When his classmates scorned him, he saves money to buy something no one in the school had--a real soccer ball, and earns their respect by learning to play on just one leg. When his mother falls ill, Emmanuel moves to the big city to earn money to support his family. Sadly, his mother dies, but he honors her memory by dreaming up a way to show that disabled people could do anything--a bike ride around his country--nearly 400 miles. Support for what others deemed an impossible project came all the way from America, along with the equipment he needed. We see Emmanuel riding across the country, surrounded people cheering, including disabled countrymen. Thompson concludes this inspiring story as follows: "He completed his astounding journey...in just ten days. But Emmanuel's success goes even further than that. He proved that one leg is enough to do great things--and one person is enough to change the world."In her first picture book, author Laurie Ann Thompson admirably succeeds in her mission of teaching children about social justice issues, a campaign she began in her young adult nonfiction book, *Be a Changemaker*, a how-to book for young social entrepreneurs. Thompson's tale is enhanced with mixed media illustrations by award-winning children's illustrator Sean Qualls (*Before John Was a Jazz Giant* and *Skit-Scat Raggedy Cat* among others). He uses a "primitive" style of illustration, relying on collage and paint to convey the emotion of Emmanuel's story. An author's note explains that Emmanuel has continued to achieve great things, competing in major athletic events, carrying the Olympic torch, and starring in a documentary about his life, *Emmanuel's Gift*, which I will be putting on my Netflix queue. He continues to work to help disabled people, particularly in Ghana, realize their full potential. This is a wonderful book to share with elementary school children; for older children it can be paired with viewing the documentary.

This is such a beautiful, true story about overcoming obstacles and perseverance. I was moved to tears by it and my son loves it. I give this book my highest recommendation and an unequivocal 5 stars. Well written, compelling, and inspiring.

This is a lovely story, beautifully illustrated. I sent it to my daughter-in-law who teaches a class for disabled children. She said that they loved the story and that it evoked more conversation than anything she has yet read to them.

Circumstances of birth should never limit a person's destiny. Emmanuel Ofosu Yeboah was born with a malformed leg, but was pushed to go to school, work, and be proud. The focus of this book is Yeboah's first bike ride across the country of Ghana, and the effect it had on the country's perceptions of disability. The artwork on the pages is occasionally spare, with lots of whitespace, but this is mostly done when Yeboah is in less populated areas. When he is depicted in cities, the artwork fills the pages, creating an interesting contrast. This is a great book for teaching children about the importance of supporting dreams and never denying someone based purely on the condition of their body. This would pair well with a unit on writing brief biographies for other influential people whom society has labeled as "disabled."

Having been a Special Education Teacher for the past 20+ years and working with children with many differing abilities, both cognitive and physical, Emmanuel's Dream really spoke to me. Laurie Thompson's ability to tell Emanuel's story by showing strength of character and perseverance is truly inspirational. A must read! A wonderful story for children and adults alike.

Summary: In this world, we are not perfect. We can only do our best, says Emmanuel Ofosu Yeboah. When Emmanuel was born, his right leg was deformed. Growing up in Ghana, he learned to use his left leg well enough that he could hop the two miles to school, play soccer on crutches, and ride a bike. His mother was his biggest supporter, and when she died, her final words to him were, "Don't give up." Emmanuel used these words to inspire himself to pursue his dream of riding a bicycle from one end of Ghana to the other. Wearing a shirt reading "The Pozo" (meaning "the disabled person"), he fulfilled his dream of riding over 400 miles in just one day. He's continued to raise awareness about the disabled in his country, and was instrumental in the 2006 passage of the Ghanaian Persons With Disabilities Act. Grades 1-6. Pros: An inspiring read for anyone to pursue their dreams. Cons: Four miles of hopping a day.

Gain a new perspective on overcoming obstacles by reading this biographical book about Emmanuel Ofosu Yeboah. Born in Ghana with a deformed leg, Emmanuel was considered "useless" and "a curse," but not by his mother, Comfort, who "had faith." She uses tough love to show her son that he can be independent. When Emmanuel loses his mother as a teenager, he is determined to honor her by showing everyone

that being disabled does not mean being unable. Emmanuel organizes and completes a 400-mile bike ride across Ghana to bring attention to the difficulties the disabled in the country face. The young man once thought of as cursed was becoming a national hero. The mixed-media illustrations transport you to Ghana and burst with as much faith as Mama Comfort. You can't help but be inspired by this book.

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