



Inspirational Story

ASPIRE: to long, aim, or seek ambitiously; be eagerly desirous, especially for something great or of high value

SAM PRIMEAUX

Age: 23 Goals:

- To walk again
- Compete in an NPC Bodybuilding competition
- Use his apparel & merchandise line to share his message of hope, hard work, optimism, gratitude

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In June of 2017, Sam Primeaux's life was forever changed when an elderly driver pulled his truck in front of Sam's motorcycle. The brutal accident left him paralyzed from the chest down. Sam is determined to fight his way out of the wheelchair and along the way share his journey with a positive message of hope and hard work. His experience has led him to build an apparel and merchandise line he calls Inner Animals Experience.

What would you say gives you the drive that you have, because what you've been through is tough, yet you exude hope.

What allows me to push consistently, is knowing I got a second chance at life. I was only 17 when I had the accident. I was young and thought I was invincible. At first, this wreck made me angry and depressed. But being disabled has really given me a new perspective on life, on how people operate, how they think, how they act and behave. My conclusions, I think people want to see people get better, especially if they want to help themselves. So again, I knew this was my second chance.

Usually you only get one life, but with a new opportunity I have these big aspirations that at first may sound unattainable. But the more I voice my goals, the more I believe I can attain them. The closer I move towards my goals, the reality becomes clearer that I can be successful in reaching them. Through the internet, I've met people that have been paralyzed for several years,



and made a recovery. It's not easy. Every day, I wonder if that will happen for me. Science tells me my chances are .001%. More importantly, what I've learned was that timelines are detrimental for success. Originally, I enthusiastically set my goal of wanting to walk by my 19th birthday. The truth was that I wasn't even able to move a toe yet. At one point I was suicidal; we all have our bad days. Then Scott, my physical therapist, shared with me his perspective, he said, "whenever you let someone else set your limits, that's when you become limited. Until then you're limitless. Everyone thinks I am crazy for thinking I'm going to walk again. But I'm going to keep trying.

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You amaze me at just 23 years old. If there is one thing you want to tell others, what would that be?

For me, one key takeaway from this whole experience, is that it really opened my eyes to a lot of things that we overlook, like gratitude. So many people are focused on the negatives; I got to go to work, I got to do this or that but when your life is changed so drastically, you learn to be thankful every day just for being able to get out of my bed, get in my car and go to the gym. There were months where I was in that hospital bed, I couldn't move, and there was no way I could even think about driving. I have regained small bits of independence and as it came, I



really learned to appreciate it. I focus on the positives, and on the things, I get to do rather than the things I can't. I found that an optimistic approach really helped. I took away the deadline, and just focused on the direction, moving forward. I focus on one small step in front of me, knowing it's a lot easier. The small steps are turning into small successes and they're starting to come quicker and they're compounding to be greater. It's an important life lesson.

I understand you have plans to give back to the disability community.

You bet! One of my big aspirations is to build the Inner Animal name and brand to be able to help other people like me, not just spinal cord injuries, but people with paralysis or amputees. I hope to be able to have a portion of our proceeds donated to help others fully rehabilitate

or sponsor their treatments or therapy, or even assist them in acquiring an adaptive wheelchair. It's these types of programs that improve the lives of those whose lives have been changed due to spinal cord injuries, paralysis, or limb loss. Currently, it's easy for a patient, me included, to be forgotten. Insurance companies feel that once they get you to a point of "comfort", the basics for sustainability i.e., wheelchair, handicapped adapted car, therapy completed, they figure they've done all they need to for you. If your goals are to live a bigger, more meaningful life, where do you turn to for help? Through social media, I've come across people like me, who want to get better. I started asking questions and researching on google ways to reach my goals with heart and hard work. That's how I met my physical therapist, Scott. After receiving stem cell treatment, we started to work on learning how to stand in increments of 30 seconds at a time, then working with a walker, and then how to take a step. Last month I walked 450 feet!

How has this translated to the business you've created and what's the next step?

I believe I have a calling in my life, that my purpose is to show others that miracles can happen every day, any day, and they look like me, and if you're willing to put in effort, the sky's the limit for you, too.

My first hurdle was figuring out a plan of action. Right now, I'm focused on marketing. I found a production team, and I'm still learning the whole retail side of the business, like which products sell best. I sell direct-to-consumer through my website, and have even sold to some international customers, and I also have my products in some local retail stores. The most important thing to me is the symbolism of my product line. I never want to lose that. I have a small audience of people that see me in person regularly, value my work ethic, and get motivated from me. Sharing that symbolism on social media is the only way I know that I can reach a broader audience in hopes of selling more. Lately, I've been playing with YouTube, and Tik Tok. We've gotten about 70,000 views between the platforms. I'm just working on building my brand by letting people get to know me through this online community. Everyone can use a little extra motivation so that's what I hope people see when they watch my videos as well as showcase other people that are putting in the work for their journey. It's not only about rehabilitation, I think everybody has an animal within him, or an animal that kind of guides them in some sort of way. In addition, I'm working on starting a podcast

to share my message. For some, hearing the stories I want to share may lead someone to say, "Okay, that makes sense to me." Down the road, I see myself writing a book. Who knows, maybe my story can become a movie that will really move mountains for people!

I am so fired up about trying to progress the company side, because once I learned and understood what inspiration is, and what it does, the whole game changed. People are always telling me, "You're so inspirational" because they see a guy in a wheelchair trying to work out and, in my mind, I literally just got in my car and rolled into the gym, like what's inspiring about that? But then I was personally inspired by another member of our community, who has owned a gym for about 60 years. Reading his stories, seeing his consistency, and I thought he's really made a positive impact in his community and in people's lives. That's the kind of influence I want to have, to be able to inspire the next person to be their best and pay it forward. That's kind of a cool thing. I figure, if I can inspire 10 people, how many people can they inspire? It's a domino effect.

Because whenever I am asked the question, What's your physical goal? Do you want to walk? Do you want to run?

My goal is to climb Pikes Peak. People can relate to that, and I have always loved the outdoors. From a symbolic viewpoint, some of the lowest points of my life, to make it to the top of the mountain illustrates the big picture of my life and my message. Right now, people hear me say this and they ask, when are you going up? The truth is, I'm just learning to walk with a walker, it'll take some time, but it's going to happen. I know that I don't know when; that's the journey. That's another really important point. People don't want to focus on the journey, they are just about getting the results right away. They need to understand that focusing and enjoying the journey along the way is the most important part of somebody's transformation, or challenges. To enjoy the journey requires gratitude and appreciation for it all that it takes to make tiny progress. Or maybe not make progress but just didn't go backwards. When I started training, I had no feeling in my legs, but I am determined to be stronger. Every day, I get on the leg extension machine and try to lift it. It's taken time and the progress is slow but now I can move the weight and while it's not much, I am so grateful to move the weight at all and see and feel that I am getting stronger!



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I love your positivity Sam and wish you and your Inner Animals Experience business success!