

## Vision, mindset and grit

Posted by Alison Esse on Wednesday, 22nd June 2011

I've heard many motivational speakers in my time, but one person stands head and shoulders above the rest: Scott Burrows, one-time kick boxing champion and former athlete.

I heard Scott speak at a conference in Atlanta earlier this month. Young, all American good-looking, vibrant, sparkling blue eyes and white teeth. Smiling from ear to ear from the minute he started. And in a wheelchair, diagnosed quadriplegic after a tragic car accident six years ago or so.

His presentation was a truly inspiring message about adapting to change. His own experience took him to the brink of the precipice as his life as an able-bodied person ended and he faced life unable to move from the neck down - dependent on family and friends for his most basic needs. Yet he maintained a clear vision that he would walk again. Crazy speak, the doctors said, as a quadriplegic.

His message was clear. With change comes chaos and confusion. To make change happen you need to get out of your current mindset. You need to stretch yourself beyond your self-perceived limitations, make a positive response to the challenges you face. Go with what scares you. Take risks. Get out of your comfort zone and do things differently. Fear of the unknown and fear of uncertainty can cause paralysis. Stand up to your fears, focus on what's within your control.

To do all of this you need a clear vision of what you need to achieve. Be willing to see success in your mind and imprint this idea again and again 'until your brain just can't tell the difference'. Visualising success enables us to create a clear path to achievement. Without a vision we have no goal – no end game – to aim for, so no means of shaping a path towards it.

In Scott's case, his vision was to walk again. Amazingly, through months and years of physiotherapy, struck down by triple whammy of pneumonia, a pulmonary embolism and a collapsed lung on the way, he gradually regained some movement in his wrists, which allowed him to pick things up using a different type of movement by moving his wrists up and down. From there, through sheer grit and determination, he gradually regained the use of his arms (shaking his father's hand again, he said, was one of the highlights of his life). When the doctors reminded him that walking again just wasn't going to happen, he lost sight of his vision and gave in, until his family gave him renewed strength to carry on working towards his goal.

Nobody in the room could believe it when he struggled out of his wheelchair to stand, and walked very unsteadily across the stage. A film that followed showed him scuba-diving and playing golf. A truly outstanding achievement that took him six years of mindset, vision and grit, and a relentless determination not to give up.

What defines us is our willingness to scale our efforts and stand up to our next challenge. Whether personal or in business, a clear vision will enable us to define the path to success. Yet achieving that vision is down to our own mindset, and being prepared to test ourselves on a daily basis in a way which will be uncomfortable and difficult at times, but totally necessary to make change happen.