

Fiona in Focus

People who Inspire - David Norcott

By Fiona Green



The first thing people notice about 47-year-old David Norcott is his smile. Warm and comforting, it reminds me of a mug of hot cocoa on a cold winter's day. The next thing you notice is his friendly personality and easy conversation. He instantly makes you feel relaxed, the way you feel when chatting with an old friend. After his races, David usually finds himself surrounded by friends, exchanging stories and enjoying life to the fullest. He is a very popular guy who has almost 3,000 Facebook friends.



His Facebook page is full of inspirational quotes and positive messages that lift the spirit and give pause for thought. Through my conversations with David, it quickly became clear that motivating and inspiring people is his purpose in life, and he sees it as his mission to help those experiencing hardship to see the light at the end of the

tunnel and realize their full potential. (He's pictured with friend John Neal Wells.)

His life might have turned out differently had it not been for a twist of fate. On September 3, 1998 David was in a head-on car accident that almost ended his life. He explained that because of the accident his first life ended and a new one began. He lost both legs and went through a prolonged period of despair and depression. Struggling to come to terms with his loss, he relied on medication and alcohol to help him cope with his new reality.

He is not proud of those days but at the time he did what he needed to do to survive. Yet, he acknowledges that even in his darkest moments he still clung to a faint glimmer of hope that he would one day emerge from his turmoil and experience joy again.

David received support and help from his family, but he realized that his journey was ultimately one he needed to travel alone. It was an arduous journey, wracked by fear and self-doubt, which came to an abrupt crossroads when he experienced a frightening blackout in 2010. Thankfully, his faith and trust in God allowed him to turn his life around.

Around this time, his emotional wounds finally started to heal and for the first time he felt he had the energy to look to the future. He embarked on a new chapter in his life where, instead of focusing on his own personal trauma, he reached out to others in need of a rock. Through what he would describe as divine opportunities,

David became a motivational speaker and he has shared his story with countless others, often helping people come to terms with life-changing events.

He has helped coworkers and friends and family, strangers and fellow amputees. He has spoken as an agent of the Amputee Coalition of America, where he is a trained and certified peer visitor. He has assisted the Dallas Amputee Network and the Fort Worth Amputee Coalition and he has given his time and shared his experience at his church, Tabernacle of Praise, the YMCA, Inpatient Addiction rehabilitation centers, Federal men's prisons, Discovery Training seminars, Tango Tab monthly events, and even children's churches. He also has had countless one-on-one conversations with people going through some type of personal crisis.

When asked what advice he would give to someone experiencing the loss of a limb, he offered these words "Relax and take many deep breaths. It will be worth all the work. The reward is greater, so much greater than the cost. Whatever you do, do not give up! Keep searching for the answer and resources needed. There is always something positive to take away from any tragedy, or negative experience, we usually have to look for it, even be shown that it is there and usable."

Two years ago, David decided to begin challenging himself physically. It started when he was invited by some work colleagues to participate in the Fort Worth Zoo Run 5K. After successfully completing the race, he signed up for another local 5K. In 2014, he participated in seven races -- five 5Ks, one 10K, and a walkathon in New Braunfels, which was a fundraiser for the amputee support group Get Your Limb On. This year, he already has completed 30 races, 12 of which were part of the tough Trinity 5000 summer series. In his first race in 2013, his mile pace was around 60:00 and he completed his first 5K in 1:58:00, and his first 10K in 3:00:00. His new PR for the 5K is 1:18:00, but he recently clocked an amazing 43:01 in training. As a result of his frequent racing, he has met hundreds of people and is amazed at how the running community has embraced him and made him feel like family.

Norcott's weekly schedule would put many of us to shame; he trains 4-5 days a week, swimming a minimum of 4 miles, walking/running on the treadmill 3-4 days a week, and lifting weights. He also participates in local weekend races and a few virtual races, where he can earn a medal and a runner's bib.

His endeavors have earned him a celebrity-type status as he was recently chosen to be a poster (and postcard) child for the YMCA. The postcard was created as part of the organization's annual fund-raising campaign. The larger than life-size poster, which features him smiling at the Fort Worth Turkey Trot 10K, came as a complete shock to him and he almost fell over in surprise when he saw it on display at the YMCA. Norcott feels honored to be featured in their campaign and is excited that his experience and challenges are inspiring others facing adversity to realize their full potential.

David is excited about the future and explained that his bucket list keeps growing. He is continually setting new goals for himself, both physically and professionally. Next on his schedule are two half marathons in the fall and a full marathon in January. He is a member of Team Cambridge, a triathlon team in Dallas, which has a Para athlete division. A YMCA staff member, who is also a team Cambridge member, provided the referral to the team. For more details on this, visit <http://www.teamcambridgetri.com/home.html>

As for future goals, he would like to get his motorcycle license and his pilot's license, go skydiving and certify in SCUBA diving. He also plans to continue pursuing his entrepreneurial journey of Public, Inspirational and Motivational speaking. "I want to experience everything I can, to the fulfilling of my calling and destiny, Simply put I want it all, all life has to offer me, and all I have to offer the world in exchange."

Today when he reflects on the accident, David has this to say,

"It was tragic and horrible when it happened. Now it was the greatest thing that happened to me. Life is so much more valuable. It is a gift above all else... it has given me a door of opportunity to give back to so many different groups of people. Every person has something to contribute to society. No gift is too small to be shared."

We would like to thank David for sharing his story with us and wish him luck in his future adventures and endeavors.