

FROM TRAGEDY TO TRIUMPH

PHOTOS SPEAK M1

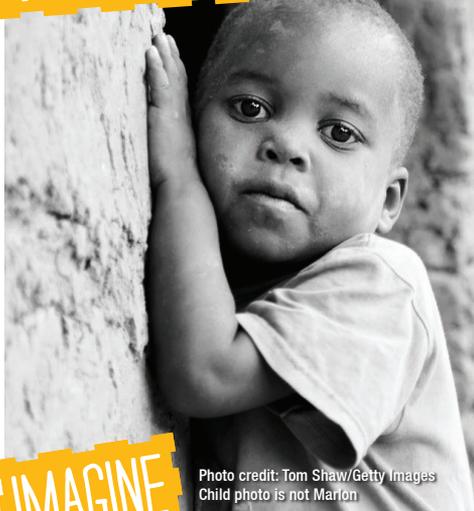


Photo credit: Tom Shaw/Getty Images
Child photo is not Marlon

IMAGINE

... you're six years-old and you're watching other kids having fun jumping on and off the riding lawn mower. They're laughing and calling for you to join in. You do, and when you do, you slip. You wake up in the hospital with your foot amputated, just above the ankle. This changed Marlon Shirley's life forever. But he calls it his "greatest blessing." It gave him the opportunity to inspire others to make the most of challenges in their lives.

Marlon's life started out rough. His mother was a drug addict. She left him to live on the streets of Las Vegas when he was three. Marlon learned to rely on himself. He developed habits that would hurt him later. He moved into an orphanage that same year, which is where the accident occurred. Six years later, Marlon was adopted by the Shirley family. He is very grateful for them.

His struggles didn't end, though. When Marlon was a high school senior, he was lazy, humiliated and flunking. His irresponsible habits haunted him. He decided he needed to take responsibility for his life. He chose to compete in the Simplot Games in Idaho. He hoped that he would get a college scholarship. Two things were working against him: he had little track experience and he had only one leg! He went for it anyway. He set the record for the high jump, jumping 6' 6", off one leg!

Marlon went on to win two gold medals, two silver medals, and one bronze medal in Paralympic games. He owns three world records in the 100-meter dash, the 200-meter dash, and the long jump. He is the first and only lower leg amputee to break the 11 seconds mark in the 100-meter dash.

Marlon's track and field training and success shows he learned how to take responsibility for his life. He recognizes "the only person who can make things happen is you." Marlon was a treasure hunter. He put effort into watering the seeds of his abilities and reaped the fruits of gold medals, world records, and success in life. He also recognized the importance of having an

attitude of gratitude. He says, "Being an amputee, it's hard to miss my disability. It's the greatest ability I've ever been given and by far the greatest blessing... to be able to turn people's eyes to understanding this is what makes me and will define what I do. Hopefully, by that, it will give other people the inspiration to achieve things greater than they ever could have imagined."

Taking responsibility to inspire people is Marlon's purpose in life. He says, "I started off thinking the medals mattered the most; what I came to understand is that inspiring people was the most important thing." Marlon experienced great tragedy in his childhood, and he had a choice to make. He chose to use his tragedy to triumph. How can you take responsibility for your life and become the author of your own TrueSuccess lifestory?

Note: See more lifestories, videos and more: www.TrueSuccessTools.org.

QUESTIONS LEAD TO UNDERSTANDING M2/5

1. What evidence is there that Marlon took responsibility to make the most out of his life? What challenges did he have to overcome to do that?

2. How did Marlon's responsibility help him deal with his challenges? Why do you think he chose to have the responsible attitude he had?

3. How can you learn from Marlon's lifestory? How can you take more responsibility to improve your own life?
