



PHOTOS SPEAK M1



Photos courtesy of Richie Parker and Hendrick Motorsports



CREATIVE CHOICES OVERCOME CHALLENGES

IMAGINE

... your favorite meal sitting on the table in front of you. Your stomach is rumbling. All you want to do is reach down, pick up your spoon, and dig in. Now imagine not having any hands to do that. What would you do?

That's Richie Parker's daily struggle. Richie was born without arms, but he takes responsibility to overcome challenges. Even when he was young he found creative solutions to problems. At age 1½ he groomed his dog by holding a small brush between his toes and brushing his dog's fur.

Richie said, "Every step of the way in life there have been people that said that I can't do things. They said that I couldn't ride a bicycle.

There were people that said that I couldn't live on my own. I couldn't get a good job and support myself. I couldn't go to college and graduate. I don't listen too much to people when they tell me I can't do something. There's not much that's going to stand in my way."

Richie was right. When the other kids in the neighborhood started riding bikes, Richie rode a bike with special handlebars. He just shoved his shoulders under the tall handlebars and took off riding like the other kids.

He opens a microwave with his chin. He gets into the refrigerator by hooking his chin in a strap on the door handle and pulling it open. He eats by grabbing a spoon in his mouth and scooping the food. Then he rests the spoon on a special holder, spins it around and leans forward to take a bite.

Richie has even been driving a car since he was 16. He opens the car door with his chin and shoulder. Then he clicks in his seat belt with his shoulder and cheek. He starts the engine by turning the key with his toes. He even washes his own car. He holds the spray nozzle under his chin.

Richie was an honors student in college. He earned an

engineering degree from Clemson University. Today, he engineers specialized car parts for Hendrick Motorsports NASCAR racers. He uses his toes to click a mouse and type on a computer. ESPN featured him on a special because his designs are so impressive. They were amazed at the way he has overcome life's struggles.

Richie says we all have choices when faced with struggles. You've got to face the challenges and find a way to deal with them. Otherwise, the obstacles will get the best of you. His advice is simple: Set goals, have a plan to meet those goals, and find the motivation. Richie knows that he is responsible for his own happiness.

If he wants to do something, he has to find a way to get it done. "I can't say there's anything that I can't do. Just things that I haven't done yet." How will you take responsibility for your own happiness and create your own best TrueSuccess lifestyle?

QUESTIONS LEAD TO UNDERSTANDING M2/5

1. Explain how Richie takes responsibility for overcoming his challenges. What 3 creative solutions does he use for everyday tasks?

2. How does Richie deal with people who say he can't do things? Why do you think he has this attitude?

3. How can you learn from Richie's lifestyle? What specifically will you do to take responsibility for your happiness and your future?
