



... grows good fruit.™

PHOTOS SPEAK M1



Photos courtesy of Damon Dunn



TAKING RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE THE MOST OF LIFE

IMAGINE

...you are sitting outside your classroom in the hallway because you just got in trouble. This is a normal occurrence for you. But then something happens that isn't so normal. The school custodian passes you in the hall and asks you a question you'll never forget. This happened to Damon.

Damon Dunn grew up in a very poor family in Texas. His father was killed in a car accident when Damon was three. His family of ten lived in a three-room trailer. Food was scarce, so Damon would hunt and fish to help feed his family.

He was a class clown. Damon caused trouble and was sent into the hall often. Then one day, a custodian walked by and looked at Damon. He said, "Look in that classroom. What do you see? What I see are a bunch of kids learning how to be your boss." To Damon, those words were like a punch in the stomach. He realized that his life was not headed in a positive direction. Those wise words made him rethink how he could take responsibility for his actions. He wanted to make a better life for himself.

Damon recalls spending hours in the alley behind his trailer playing football with other kids. Over time, he became a very good football player. Damon knew that on the playing field what mattered was how well he played and how well his team did. Damon knew it was his responsibility to be the best team player he could be.

He succeeded at football and made good grades. He received many scholarship offers from colleges. He accepted a full-ride to Stanford University. This changed his life. Damon was surrounded by many ambitious peers. Some wanted to be senators or Supreme Court justices. Being in a community of high achievers encouraged him to set high goals and stick to them. It also challenged him to keep working hard.

After college, Damon played pro football. During this time, he flexed his character muscles. He did this by tutoring, mentoring, and encouraging underprivileged kids. He also visited sick kids and helped in soup kitchens.

After his football career ended, he started his own real estate company and became successful. But he didn't forget about his humble beginnings. He could see how far he had come and remembered the people in need back home.

Damon saw that the government sometimes made it hard for him to help poor people get ahead. He took responsibility to try and change that. Damon now works with the government so that he can fight for the rights of all citizens. "If one person in my community is suffering, I feel obligated to help." He works hard to help many people. He encourages those who have fewer opportunities to succeed. How can you take responsibility, like Damon, to write your own best *True Success*™ lifestory?

QUESTIONS LEAD TO UNDERSTANDING M2/5

1. What challenges did Damon experience growing up?

2. In what ways did Damon take responsibility to make a better life? How did he help others so they could have a better life?

3. How can we learn from Damon's lifestory? How can you encourage others to take responsibility so they can have the best life?

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