

## **Kyle Maynard on seeking our own “Why?”**

The stories, thoughts, feelings, and encouragement from Kyle who spoke at Utah Valley University on February 1, 2018 was nothing short of inspiring. He talked about hardship and failure, fighting to get to the summit, working on a little bit at a time, and seeking our own personal "why." These are the things that have driven him throughout his life and have led him to where he is today.

Being born without arms and legs is an incredible challenge. These words show just how strong Kyle's mindset is as he said to us during the event, "At one point...I realized that I had won the lottery...to be born with no arms and no legs." To have this type of mindset is honorable and shows that we can turn hardships into positives. Kyle narrated many stories where he had to fight through physical and mental pain in order to reach a goal. These stories ranged from climbing mountains and wrestling, to learning how to use a spoon. With every hardship he has ever experienced four words come to his mind, and they are the same words that he turns to every day of his life: "Not dead. Can't quit." Kyle invites us all to live with this same mindset.

It was emphasized that doing a little bit at a time is what will bring you to reach your goals and also break them. As he told the story of him climbing to the tallest peak in South America, he said this is what pushed him through: "...I told myself just three more feet and then once I had done that, I told myself just three more feet again, and again, and again...at one point my guide grabbed me by the belt and told me to look up...I was 15 minutes away from the summit. At 4:15 PM I reached the summit."

Not only does Kyle invite us to live this way, but to go even further. He invites us to break barriers by saying "...know your limits and then never give up trying to break them...in life there is no summit...we should reach our goals, break our limits and then enjoy the moment but not for long... there will always be another summit in our lives." These words show the true character of Kyle. A man who has a passion for life and breaking its barriers. An extreme and awarded athlete who never gives up and has earned what he has achieved. We should realize that the difference between Kyle and most of us is not the fact that we have limbs and he doesn't; it's his mindset.

Kyle instructed that each of our minds is a map. This map is determined by what we are going after, our goals, and how we want to live our lives. He also taught that because of this we all have

different maps, points of view, and ideas. When Kyle was born, the message that the doctors gave to his parents was an expected one. Sports would be out of the question and they would have to take care of him for the rest of his life. Kyle broke those thoughts and so did his parents. In Kyle's first year of wrestling he lost every match. He went on to become a feared opponent and a nationally recognized wrestler. Regarding situations like these he says, "...there will always be doubters and people who won't support you...you are going to have to push past that...go seek your 'why' and your passion and live it...your why is not going to just come to you, go find it."

Kyle Maynard may be seen as one who has a disability, but he has a strength and mindset that we all wish to have. He has spent his whole life fighting and failing, but he has also won and become stronger. Kyle invites us to try and fail because by doing so we become stronger and we too can break barriers.

*Karson Kester, UVU student*