

Inspired by Kyle Maynard

I was able to attend the event where Kyle Maynard spoke at Utah Valley University on February 1, 2018. His story is incredibly inspiring, and it is something that everyone should have the opportunity to hear. I especially think it is excellent for college students to hear because we live now at a time where we have a lot on our plates. We are going to school, working, getting married, and starting our lives. Sometimes everything that is going on can feel a little overwhelming and it's easy to get caught up thinking that we are unable to accomplish everything that we desire. This is something that Kyle spoke about, and that his story clearly demonstrates.

Kyle was born with a rare condition that left him without the latter part of both his arms and legs. From a young age, Kyle had the drive and determination to accomplish things that he never should have been able to. I really liked how he articulated that ever since he was a child, his parents refused to treat him as though he was disabled. I would imagine that this helped him immensely to understand that he was able to do the things he wanted to/ other people told him were impossible. Kyle has been a motivational speaker for some time now and has been able to touch the lives of many around him. He said that as he got older, he realized that he was starting to fall behind on some of his goals that he had desired to accomplish. He said that one day he started feeling like a fraud because he was believing too much what other people were telling him. He then decided that he wanted to accomplish something to prove, mostly to himself, that he was still the same kid that believed he could accomplish anything that he set his mind to. He planned to summit Mount Kilimanjaro in Africa without assistance from anyone else. He talked about some of the obstacles that he had to overcome to make that dream a reality and it was so inspiring to hear him talk about the sacrifices that he made.

Kyle is such an incredible person not because he is disabled nor because of all the incredible accomplishments he has accrued. Kyle is an inspiration because of his drive and desire to show himself as well as others that our only limitations are the ones we give ourselves. If we set our mind to something, we have the ability to accomplish it no matter what the odds are. My biggest take away from the conference is that when I set my mind to something, I need to understand that while it may take hard work, anything is possible to those that are willing to dedicate themselves to their craft. I am grateful that I was able to attend the conference and think that the lessons I learned will be things that I am able to reflect on for the remainder of my life.

Timothy Jenkins, UVU student