

## DJ's Founder's Statement

I woke up. The room surrounding me was all white. There was mom and dad looking at me as though they thought this moment would never arrive. Then the doctor comes in. "DJ..you are safe now. You are in America. You are safe. DJ...everything is going to be alright now." I lost my left eye. I lost the roof of my mouth and upper jaw. I lost the use of my left arm. There is a hole through my right leg the size of a fist. "Everything is going to be alright?" Are you serious? Can you not see I am disabled?

You know, it's amazing how three years later, my life has evolved around that one phrase, "Everything is going to be alright." That doctor couldn't have been more dead on. I was alive. I had this great community surrounding me, helping me to get back on my path in life, pursuing my goals and dreams regardless what the obvious may seem.

We tend to live life as if it were an equation. To be successful you must do this, or have this title or position. To be beautiful you must look like this person, or wear this brand. When I woke up in the hospital, I realized that I had gotten sidetracked in this life with the immaterial. Family, friends, community, that was my medicine that helped me get back to living. Not living a life that was 2<sup>nd</sup> rate, but pursuing a life that was just as enriched and fulfilling as everyone else's. Does one really need arms to climb? How about legs to ski? With the marvels of modern technology and the phenomenal power of the human spirit, there truly is no limit to how far one can push themselves in life.

I was walking down a hallway at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC when a friend of mine rolled up beside me. He had lost both of his legs in Iraq. He told me he had heard I had started rock climbing again and wondered if it was possible for him to climb again? He had met his wife through climbing and it had always been a big part of their lives. Instantly I responded, "Hell yeah! Let me know when and I'll take you to the local gym." That night, I couldn't sleep. I kept asking myself, "How is someone with no legs supposed to climb? I can't let him down. There has got to be a way." I called the only person I knew who would have the desire and expertise to help me pull this off, Timmy O'Neill. After many phone conversations and emails, we pulled together a great group of climbers and some specialized gear and picked a date and location, SportRock Gym in Sterling, VA. As the word spread, more and more patients at Walter Reed showed interest in our clinic. Before long, there were over a dozen patients of all injuries signed up. The morning of the clinic Timmy, Reid, myself and the crew were all at the gym going over last minute plans. At one point, the comment was made, "We have absolutely no clue what we are about to deal with...some of these are just theories based off of past attempts. But, we got the gear, we got the heart, and we got the attitude...what more do we need!"

Welcome to Paradox Sports. All you have to do is just show up...and the rest is too easy. Life is too easy, folks. Once you get over the fact that life is not supposed to be but just is as it is right now, life becomes too easy. Deal with it and keep pushing forward. We are not teaching you anything you don't already know. We are just reminding you that you are amazing and you have unlimited potential to achieve greatness in this life.

Live life on your own terms...