

TRUE G.R.O.W.T.H.
MOTIVATE. INSPIRE. GROW.
BALL AND CHAIN

TRUE G.R.O.W.T.H. challenges us to do what is necessary for our personal growth and development, even when it's the most difficult. It requires us to face the things in life that present the biggest challenges instead of pushing them aside to deal with later. Whether those challenges exist in the past, present or future; we must be willing to acknowledge their existence to prevent them from being our ball and chain. We either acknowledge them as an opportunity to grow or let them hold us back from the lifestyle we desire.

For me, my biggest challenge is my physical disability. I have permanent nerve damage in my leg, and I've had three operations on my spine due to degenerating disks and jacked up vertebrae. It's fair to say that life was kicking my ass for a while. Now, allow me to be honest. Some days suck. Chronic pain is humbling but here's the thing, it doesn't hold me back anymore. Why? Because I grew sick of it. I want what I want too bad to let anything hold me back. Excuses don't have a place in my life anymore, and they don't have a place in TRUE G.R.O.W.T.H. We are allowed to be mad at our circumstances. It's ok to be angry that some people have it easier than us, but eventually we must decide when it's time to adapt and overcome. TRUE G.R.O.W.T.H. calls us to decide how badly we want to move forward.

When something is difficult or scares us, it's easy to compartmentalize it and convince ourselves we'll address it later, but we never do. We can only avoid something for so long before it starts to hold us back. Without the willingness to embrace life's challenges, they jeopardize our ability to move past them. That's toxic to TRUE G.R.O.W.T.H. because eventually it begins to eat at our pride, self-confidence and motivation.

What is your ball and chain? What is holding you back from what you want to accomplish in life? We all have obstacles but only those who want what they want bad enough see those obstacles as opportunities to grow and learn. My disability sucks some days, but I have found ways to use it as a strength in my life instead of accepting it as a hinderance. I have used it as a way to build stronger connections with my clients at work who also face disabilities. I have used it as a way to change my perspective in life which led me to writing my second book, *Secrets from Strangers*. The best news I ever heard from the doctor was "there's nothing else we can do now, it's yours to manage at this point." That meant the ball was back in my court now. It was my turn to make the choice of where I would go from there.

It sucks that some people appear to have an easier road than others, but nothing good comes easy.

In the military, obstacles were around nearly every corner. I learned early in my military career that backing down from those obstacles was never an option, so the only choice we had was how to face them. That's life. The obstacles won't just go away.

That's a huge reason why the first principle of TRUE G.R.O.W.T.H. is to surround yourself with *good people*. As strong as you think you are, life is the ultimate team sport. You need to surround yourself with *good people* who will help you navigate any obstacles put in your way, and in your moments of weakness, they are there to lift you up. You must also surround yourself with the people who will call you on your shit. Who will tell you when the time for excuses has passed?

The only moment we are guaranteed is right now. We must decide what we want to use this moment for and what we want our life to mean. You have made it this far despite every other obstacle that has been thrown your way this far. Give yourself the credit you deserve for what you made it through and set your sights on the stars and don't let anything hold you back.

Timothy A. Natale

Motivate. Inspire. Grow.

