

# Josh George

## *Wheelchair Athlete and Keynote Speaker*

Josh George is a world champion wheelchair athlete, and an extraordinary keynote speaker whose personal story will inspire your people to step outside expectations, use limitations as a springboard for creativity, and embrace the hard road of change in an effort to maximise their potential.

Josh's enthusiasm and beliefs possess a contagious energy that help others build confidence in their own abilities. His success as a motivational speaker has him in demand on the world stage.

At 4 years old, Josh was momentarily airborne. Life changed forever as he went from walking to rolling in the few seconds it takes for a body to fall from a twelve story window and land on the concrete below.

That Josh survived at all was deemed a miracle by his doctors. That he still had use of his arms and upper body, with no damage to his brain or other vital organs, was a gift on top of that - one that Josh's parents did not take for granted. Their determination that he would have as full and active and normal a life as possible ensured that Josh did not take it for granted, either.

Josh learned to navigate the world by wheelchair and was soon exploring everything available in the realm of adapted athletics, participating in basketball, track, field, archery, table tennis and swimming with a wheelchair sports organisation for children in Baltimore, Maryland. Basketball and racing quickly became his stand-out sports.

Flying soon became a regular and important part of Josh's existence. Competitive basketball led him to Brazil and Australia before he graduated from high school. At the University of Illinois, he began training with his now long-time coach Adam Bleakney, placed first in three Chicago Marathons and eventually took another flight. This time to Athens for the 2004 Paralympic games where he received two bronze medals and lost any remaining doubt that racing was his calling.

Four years later, in Beijing, Josh brought home silver and gold, and set a Paralympics record for the Men's 100m. He followed up this performance with a bronze medal in the 800m at his third Paralympic Games in London as a full-fledged professional racer.

While he didn't crack the podium at the Paralympic Games in Rio, Josh's successes became more frequent. In the four years following the London Paralympics Josh became a fixture in the top five



at major races, success highlighted by exciting, sprint-finish wins in the 2014 Chicago Marathon and 2015 London Marathon, and 2nd and 3rd place finishes at the New York City Marathon in 2015 and 2016, respectively.

Josh's story is still far from over and he is still soaring. After getting his degree in News Editorial Journalism in 2007, he turned his attention to training, traveling, and competing full time. Along the way he has blogged for the New York Times, helped launch IntelliWheels, Inc. (intelliwheels.net), advocated for amazing causes, and even dabbled in coaching. Through traveling, Josh has been able to develop his underlying principles to motivate himself and others.

### **Josh George talks about:**

- **Maximise Your Potential** - Though the benchmark is different for everyone, we all have a unique set of skills and attributes that we can maximise to excel in our chosen paths. Maximise Your Potential is a mantra to help you step outside of expectations, around limitations, and push yourself to become the best you possible.
- **Step Outside Expectations** - Expectations can wreak havoc on reaching your potential. Internal expectations cause stress and distraction. External expectations are either impossible to reach, or underestimate your true abilities, and are rarely in between. By stepping outside of expectations we free ourselves from constraining thoughts and open ourselves up to all the possibilities of success that exist. We become "doers," no longer hindered by complacency or hopelessness.
- **Allow Limitation to Spark Creativity** - Sustained success comes when we are able to see our limitations as a creative springboard, rather than a deterrent from pursuing our grandest goals. Becoming comfortable solving the puzzle of how to accomplish each goal with our specific skill set takes us far on our path to maximising our potential.
- **Love and Respect the Process** - Recognising that our growth is a process and then learning how to love and respect that process, is the most important step toward becoming the people we want to be. We will never get there if we don't find the joy in the incremental improvements or, even, temporary setbacks.

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