

2017 Best Self Atlanta Magazine Courage Award Finalist

SCOTT GARMAN



Growing up I was bullied, and mentally and physically abused. As bad as that was, it spurred my desire to become a bodybuilder. The dream became a goal and in 1991, I placed 3rd in my first bodybuilding show; Mr. Northern Arizona. Life issues beyond my control, kept me from pursuing competitions after that. Many years later, opportunity allowed me to once again, follow my dream. However, in the late fall of 2011, I woke up one morning with my left arm tingling and partially numb with almost no strength. I went to my doctor. An MRI was conducted revealing a fractured C-5. It did not matter that we never discovered how this happened, nevertheless, a cervical fusion of the spine was performed followed by 6 weeks in a neck brace and 8 weeks of physical therapy.

Once again, I slowly began training only to wake up with the same tingling and numbness on the other side. This time an MRI showed post surgery swelling and scar tissue. I considered my options and decided to try additional physical therapy and pain management. After weeks of injections into the cervical spine to reduce swelling, my strength was slowly coming back. In the process, we discovered certain muscles were growing and some weren't growing at all due to irreparable nerve damage, aka: partial paralysis of my right side. I was also told that I would never be able to compete again, let alone workout at a high level. That hit me like a ton of bricks. Depression sunk in. Going to the gym and watching others using weights that I could no longer lift was very painful mentally and emotionally. I would say to myself, "I use to be that big, I use to look that good", resulting in many nights of tears and frustration.

When both my daughter and son decided to compete, I went to support and cheer them on but all I could think was, "YOU WILL NEVER COMPETE AGAIN." Even so, watching them inspired me and friends encouraged me. I put together a great team including a dietitian, prep

coach, training plan and a posing coach. Now in my 50's, it was a challenge to teach my body how to train, find exercises and angles that worked without causing pain due to nerve damage. But I refused to give up, despite what I had been told. A lot of people told me I was crazy to even attempt a show. Since the year 2000, I endured 13 joint surgeries but I was determined to defy the odds and make my dreams come true.

It took two years to fit in all the necessary training and the progress was slow. My job, long haul semi truck driver with 12-14 hour days, added to the challenge of preparing for a show. For years I prayed, asking God if it's in your will and plan, please allow me another opportunity to fulfill and dream.

My prayers were answered April 23, 2017. With emotions high, I entered the NPC Thunderdome Bodybuilding Show in Arizona placing 3rd in Men's Physique Masters over 35 and 2nd in the Masters over 45 division. The following week I entered the NPC Palmetto Cup in Columbia, South Carolina placing 1st in Men's Physique Masters over 45. Five weeks later I entered the Upstate Classic in Spartanburg, South Carolina and placed 3rd in Men's Physique Masters over 35 and 1st place in Masters over 45.

Through perseverance, I defied medical odds and now I want to inspire others. I am proof that a dream that was once shattered, can in fact become reality. No matter what the circumstances are in life, follow your dreams. Despite what anyone tells you, never give up on your dreams. I thank God everyday for the opportunity to train and for giving me another chance. God humbled me with life issues and injuries. With a new perspective, I now look at life different and can share what I have learned - Do not take things for granted. Do not love things, more than God. Enjoy life, live life, look at yourself and your surroundings everyday, and say, "THANK YOU LORD JESUS FOR ANOTHER DAY OF LIFE".