

Lesson 1 The Road to Happiness

Constantly in Motion

We often see individuals who manage to accomplish seemingly impossible tasks. It almost appears as if they possessed the ability to ignite their own spirits. They could be innovators who achieve success after countless trials and errors, athletes who push themselves tirelessly until they go beyond their limits, or activists who are willing to take risks to pursue what they believe is right. They make us wonder: "What could be the driving force behind them? What makes their lives meaningful to them and even to us?" Let us meet two prominent individuals and try to answer these questions.

"Adapt, stay positive, and learn to do things your own way."

Luca "Lazylegz" Patuelli has lived by this motto his whole life. Born in 1984 with a rare disorder affecting the bones and joints of the body, he has undergone a total of 16 surgeries since he was 7 months old, to support his legs, hips, back, and shoulders.

Despite the physical challenges, Lazylegz learned at an early age about the power of adapting positively to any situation. Always eager to stay active and join his friends in any activity, he managed to participate in activities such as soccer, football, and baseball. He also succeeded in learning how to rock climb and ski, and he found ways to join his high school swim and dive teams. As he explored the full range of physical activities, skateboarding developed into a particular passion for him.

In 1999, at the age of 15, Lazylegz was introduced to breakdancing. Immediately, he was attracted to the music, the culture, and most of all, the challenging movements. He slowly began creating a unique style that made the most of his upper body strength. By using his crutches as extensions of his arms, Bboy Lazylegz was born!

As a professional dancer, he competed and performed in a wide variety of international dance events such as Breakin' Convention, World of Dance, and Hip Hop International. He created ILL-Abilities in 2007, an international Bboy crew composed of some of the world's best dancers who are differently abled.

"We have a message, and that message is No excuses, no limits. We want to encourage people of all abilities, all ages, and all races to pursue their passion, whatever it is. Find a way to do it your own way, and that's what it is all about."

With dancing clearly part of his identity, Lazylegz wanted to see how far he could truly go. In 2009, he graduated from Montreal's Concordia University with a degree in business. Combining his passion for dance with his knowledge of engaging the masses, he has become a strong advocate for inclusion and integration, by bringing people of all abilities together through the power of dance. Just as his dancing reached a new peak in maturity and his message drew international attention, Lazylegz was given the honor of headlining the opening ceremony of the Vancouver 2010 Winter Paralympics.

The past few years have been exciting for Luca "Lazylegz" Patuelli, and his dream of sharing the power of adaptation with the world continues to inspire others. As a loving husband and devoted father, he is committed to helping his children grow up in a society where people of all abilities can come together and share their passions despite their differences.

"Where in the world would I rather be than on the front line of history?"

Born in Connecticut, United States, in 1973, Lynsey Addario developed an early passion for photography. Her father gave her an old 35mm camera when she was about 12 years old. She started reading books on how to take photographs. Too shy to approach people, she took pictures of flowers and the moon. Despite her love for taking pictures, she never learned photography formally.

Her parents taught her to appreciate diverse cultures and inquire about the world beyond her immediate surroundings. She studied international relations and Italian at college. After graduation, she moved to Argentina to study Spanish, and it was there that she started working as a news photographer.

Addario's career took a significant turn when she went to Afghanistan in 2000. Her photographs captured the grief, resilience, and courage of Afghan women. This body of work gained international recognition, serving as a stepping stone for Addario's future achievements. Over the years, Addario's work has taken her to many regions torn by war, including Iraq, Sudan, Libya, and Syria.

She knows very well what could happen in the wars: she was captured twice and was even threatened with her life. Time and again, however, she has risked her life to capture images that speak volumes about the suffering of those caught in the conflicts between nations.

"The idea of me going to a war zone was out of the question. Then came 9/11, and it was such a defining moment in history that I felt like I needed to cover it. From there I ended up covering the war in Iraq in 2003 because again, I felt like I needed to be there. Young soldiers of my generation were going in to fight, and I thought it was important to document the war. I'm lucky because I've survived. I'm now at the point in my life and my career where many of my friends are not. And so I think it's important to realize there is a reason I'm still here, and I have to keep pushing forward."

Lynsey Addario has been capturing images that have defined the face of international conflicts and humanitarian crises. She has dedicated herself to throwing light not only on untold stories of individuals impacted by war, poverty, and social injustice, but also on touching moments of resilience and hope. By capturing the essence of humanity in its raw and unfiltered forms, Addario continues her journey as one of the most influential and respected voices in the field of news photography.

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Fall Forward

I have found that nothing in life is of value unless you take risks. Nothing. Now I'm sure in your experiences in school, in applying to college, in picking your major, in deciding what you want to do with life, people have told you to make sure you have something to "fall back on." But I never understood that concept, having something to fall back on. If I'm going to fall, I don't want to fall back on anything. I want to fall forward. This is what I mean. Reggie Jackson struck out 2,600 times in his career, the most in the history of baseball. But you don't hear about it. People remember the home runs. Fall forward. Thomas Edison conducted 1,000 failed experiments because the 1,001st was the light bulb. Fall forward. Every failed experiment is one step closer to success. You've got to take risks. I want to talk to you about why that's so important. You will fail at some point in your lives. You will lose. You will embarrass yourselves. There is no doubt about it. I know that's probably not a traditional message for a graduation ceremony but I'm telling you. Embrace it because it's inevitable.

In the acting business, you fail all the time. Early on in my career, I auditioned for a part in a Broadway musical. A perfect role for me, I thought, except for the fact that I can't sing. So I'm in the wings. I'm about to go on stage but the guy in front of me, he's singing like Pavarotti, and I'm just getting smaller and smaller. I didn't get the job. But here's the thing. I didn't quit. I didn't fall back. I walked out of there to prepare for the next audition and the one after that. I continued to fail and fail, but it didn't matter. There is an old saying: if you hang around the barbershop long enough, sooner or later you're going to get a haircut. So you will catch a break, which is exactly what I did. Last year I did a play called Fences on Broadway. It was at the Court Theater. It was at the same theater that I failed that first audition 30 years prior. The point is every graduate here today has the training and the talent to succeed. But do you have the courage to fail?