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ZION:

ON TOP OF THE WORLD

ZION CLARK ON THE
IMPORTANCE OF GOAL-
SETTING, DETERMINATION
AND THE WILL TO FIGHT FOR
WHAT YOU WANT



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"I'M BLESSED
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OF THE BEST AT
WHAT THEY DO."
—ZION CLARK

BY ALL MEANS, ZION CLARK COULD BE A REAL-LIFE SUPERHERO. HE IS THE GUINNESS WORLD RECORD HOLDER FOR THE FASTEST MAN ON TWO HANDS, IS A COMPETITIVE WRESTLER AND HAS A THEME-SONG-WORTHY NAME THAT MEANS “HIGHEST POINT.” WHAT’S MORE, HE HAS THE POWER TO MOTIVATE AND UPLIFT PEOPLE ALL AROUND THE WORLD.

Like most heroic backstories, Clark has experienced tremendous adversity, but his valiant transformation didn’t happen overnight. It didn’t happen because he was struck by a bolt of lightning or was given a super serum like in some of our favorite comic books. Instead, Clark’s powers first came from within, and it was that inner fortitude that allowed him to build his superhuman strength—both physically and mentally.

Clark, now 24, was born with a rare congenital condition called Caudal Regression Syndrome, which impairs the development of the lower body; in Clark’s case, this meant his legs. Unable to care for him, Clark’s birth mother put him up for adoption, which landed him in the foster system, and not every home proved to be a positive or safe space for him, sadly.

“I never used to be very strong. I got bullied and pushed around. I just wanted to be stronger,” Clark explains. So when he found wrestling, he knew he had found not only his calling but a path towards a better life.

“I thought the best way to avoid getting pushed around was by getting stronger and getting faster, and nothing was doing that for me better than wrestling,” Clark shares. “I’ve stuck with it for a very long time—18 years now to be exact.”

After 16 long, trying years in the foster system, Clark was adopted by Kimberlli Hawkins, whom Clark credits as being a huge contributor to his success. With Hawkins and his wrestling coach at Massillon High School, Gil Donahue, as his strongest supporters, Clark finally had the foundation and the means to become the force he is today.

“I was blessed with an amazing family at the very last second. You know, there wasn’t a lot of hope for me to have a family, to have a roof over my head,” Clark says. “So with that being said, I was so grateful and finally at peace.”

With a focus on wrestling and the forming of his family and support system, Clark’s philosophy began to develop. One mantra that has stuck with him since high school is “no excuses,” which came from a pep talk from Coach Donahue during a particularly intense and difficult wrestling match.

By Clark’s senior year of high school, he finished the wrestling season with a record of 33-15—one grueling match away from qualifying for the state championships. Clark was recruited for wrestling by several colleges before choosing to attend Kent State, where he continued to hone his wrestling skills while studying business management.

“Wrestling is definitely a big part of my life, but it’s not what I circulate my life around, you know?” Clark says. “I do a lot of other things, but being an athlete has definitely been a fun ride and has helped me achieve my different goals.” Some of Clark’s other goals have led him to become a successful and busy multi-hyphenate, including being the subject of a documentary short, a motivational fitness influencer across several social media platforms, an author and so much more.

“I’m blessed to be a professional,” says Clark. “Not everybody gets to say that they’re one of the best at what they do.”





**DON'T JUDGE
A BOOK BY
ITS COVER**

» Clark considers one of his greatest accomplishments to be publishing his first book, "Zion Unmatched," which is a beautiful picture exposé. "It's something that I really felt passionate about and I've been working on for the last 2.5 years," he says.

**BOOKMARK
THIS**

» Expect more books from Clark in the future! "I'm almost done with my second book and recently started working on my third one," he shares.

SCREEN TIME

» "Zion," the documentary short by Floyd Russ, covers Clark's high school wrestling experiences and was a nominee for the Short Film Grand Jury Prize at the 2018 Sundance Film Festival. You can watch the inspiring 11-minute film on Netflix or on Netflix's YouTube channel.



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—ZION CLARK



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**“AS SOON AS YOU ACCEPT YOURSELF,
BE YOURSELF AND EMBRACE YOUR
DIFFERENCES, YOUR QUALITY OF LIFE
IS GOING TO GET BETTER.”**

—ZION CLARK

B Beyond his physical goals and achievements, Clark wants to use his platform to help people become stronger versions of themselves and to live their lives more authentically, encouraging people to lean into what makes them different rather than backing away from it.

In Clark's book, "Zion Unmatched," he writes: "Technically, I'm disabled, but I refuse to see my body as less than whole. There is a difference between not having legs and believing you are missing something, and I can't miss what I never had."

Rather than making excuses for what he would be able to accomplish, Clark pushed himself and set a high bar. That's a perspective that anyone, regardless of physical condition or insecurities, can learn from.

"At the end of the day, you are you. There are 7.8 billion people on this planet walking around. You're going to be different. So just accept it and move forward with your life," Clark advises. "The longer you wait, the longer it takes *you* to accept *you*. As soon as you accept yourself, be yourself and embrace your differences, your quality of life is going to get better."

While some of Clark's most obvious superpowers would be his strength and his determination, another one is his willingness to dream big and trust that he will make those dreams a reality. According to Clark, accepting oneself might be key to having big goals and the perseverance to accomplish them, but having the right people around you is also an important factor.

"My mind is very active. I'm constantly thinking, constantly looking for ways to improve myself and the people around me," Clark says. "Plus...having a good support system and a good team around you makes realizing your ideas so much easier."

"I did a lot of successful things by myself," Clark continues. "But as I've built my team over the last four years, we've stepped into a whole new level of doing things."

Despite touching the hearts of current, future and non-athletes from around the world, Clark remains humble and focused on his goals. "I never came out doing this with the intention of being an inspiration. I was getting traction and attention because I was an athlete having success on a level that most people don't get to—even with legs," Clark says. "It just kind of blew up and people were getting inspired by what I do. And I didn't even realize that at first, but over the last couple of years, I've realized 'Oh, wow, I'm out here really changing lives,' and it feels great."

Like his name prophesizes, the world can be sure he'll hit his highest point—whatever he chooses that to be. For now, Clark, who became a San Diego resident in 2021, has his eyes set on becoming an Olympian and continuing to share his story through social media and his writing. And with his mindset and drive, only great things are soon to follow.

"It is honestly a good feeling to have somebody come up to you and say, 'Seeing you do this got me out of bed. Seeing you do this stopped me from committing suicide.' I've heard all of it, and it's very humbling, you know? It puts it in perspective for me," Clark reflects. "That's why wherever I am, I'll try to sell my best side at all times. That's the way to do it. And don't get me wrong, I have those days where I'm not perfect. I have those days where I'm going through crap just like everybody else, but I do have influence that can affect everybody on a worldwide scale—and that's what I want to do." ■

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