THE POWER OF TWO

TOGETHER, WE CAN OVERCOME DIFFICULT ROADBLOCKS

By LIN LAY HUAN
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In honour of all fathers this Father’s Day, we caught up via e-mail with Dick, 77, and Rick Hoyt, 55, who make up Team Hoyt, a father-son duo who have advocated for people living with disabilities. They have encouraged the “yes you can” belief through their participation in numerous athletic events around the world close to four decades now.

What makes Team Hoyt more unique and compelling is that Rick was born in 1962 as a spastic quadriplegic with cerebral palsy and mute. Despite the disabilities, Rick’s mind and spirit have always been strong.

His family overcame various roadblocks (and the naysayers!) to support his quest for independence and inclusion in community, sports, education and the workplace.

This is an extraordinary story of a father’s love that surpasses all human understanding and has inspired many to do the same when faced with similar predicaments or life’s challenges. Here’s a Q&A session between Leaderonomics and Team Hoyt.

Q How has the journey been so far?

A I recall the time when we had our first training run. Rick was born, the doctors concluded that he would be nothing but a vegetable all of his life. We went against the doctors’ advice to institutionalise him. We brought Rick home instead and brought him up like any other child, like his two younger brothers.

Our message is “yes you can”. There isn’t anything you can’t do, as long as you make up your mind to do it. In our Hoyt dictionary, there’s no such word as “can’t”.

Q What was a time when you felt like giving up?

A We all know this saying very well, “Two heads are better than one”. I love to compete. I absolutely love the competitive atmosphere from everyone at all the races.

Q What are some of the obstacles you had to go through?

A When Rick was 5 years old, he gave me inner strength to persevere and press on. He is a courageous fighter and he will never give up, ever.

Q What would you like to say to Rick?

A My advice to families who have differently-abled children is to give them our message of “yes you can”. There is nothing your child can’t do as long as you encourage them along the way. They might just do it differently from other children.

Q What is the most memorable moment?

A It was when I received my Bachelor of Science in special education, and having my family there to get my certificate.

Q What do you think your life purpose is?

A I’d like to say to those who feel hopeless in life?

A Your most memorable moment.

A I hope to continue to grow and influence others in my job as a patient advocate. I am so happy to have a great new “set of legs” who also believe in the inspirational motto of “yes you can”.

Q What would you like to say to your dad?

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Q What would you like to say to Rick?

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