

FROM MISSION TO FRUITION – JARED ESTES FIRES BACK IN 2015

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A mission was born.

Jared often gets asked how he got started on his dream job. He typically kindly corrects the inquirer letting them know that he *was* doing his dream job *before* he began speaking as a full-time career.

"I was working as the marketing director at Hartman Arena, a multi-purpose venue that hosts concerts, sporting events, circus events, etc," said Estes. "I love music and was able to meet some amazing bands and use my creativity to promote the shows. I was one of the lucky people that landed a career within the industry I sought after."

While the charismatic Estes was working at Hartman Arena (post-accident), he would get an occasional request from a high school or military base to tell his story to an audience in need of some rejuvenation. Sometimes there was an alcohol-related death or a suicide that prompted a wake-up call/intervention plan, which often included a guest speaker. Decision makers would reach out to Estes after finding out about him by word of mouth. Estes would use his vacation days to speak to audiences for no charge about once or twice a month, as he noticed that it seemed to be helping some listeners with their own battles. Often times audience members would privately introduce themselves after hearing Jared speak and let him know that he really helped them reflect on the decisions they have made in their own life.

"I can think of one young man in particular in my early speaking days that pulled me aside after I shared my story, and offered me a glimpse into his shattered world," said Estes. "This poor kid had been through a lot in his short life. He told me that my story helped him to see his situation in a different light, and that life may be worth living again. While my heart broke for him and what he had been going through, the thought of the path he was headed down was even more unsettling. The idea that I may be able to help redirect his course even one degree in the right direction is what made me realize I simply cannot deny that to people."

"I believe I was put in a position to be a messenger; to give others a more hopeful lens to view their lives through."

-Jared Estes

However, even with proof that Estes was helping people's lives improve, deciding to relive his most difficult moments regularly as a career was not an easy choice. He would have to give up his dream job that included a salary with benefits, leading well-intended friends to advise him not to take the leap. He gave it some more time to be sure of his decision, but the relentless tug on his heart gave him a clear answer.

"I had so many people reach out to help me when I was in such a dark place," said Estes. "Their encouragement is why I'm still here, and I don't forget that for a minute... I believe I was put in a position to be a messenger; to give others a more hopeful lens to view their lives through."

So, in December 2013, Jared made the decision to leave his marketing job at Hartman Arena and put his effort into speaking as a full-time career.

"I am not looking for personal credit, and I don't compare my trials with other people's trials. When you're going through something tough, there is no "difficulty" gauge... And that is why I named my presentation "Fire Back". Because when life knocks you down (and it will at some point), I don't believe it is enough to just get back up. If you get back up, you are only standing still. I believe you have to get back up and also "Fire Back" ... Take some shots of your own to really defy your circumstances."

"When life knocks you down, I don't believe it is enough to just get back up... You have to get back up and Fire Back."

-Jared Estes

Thousands hear Jared's story in 2015.

After spending a good portion of 2014 creating a business plan and branding himself, Estes hit the ground running in 2015. He took every opportunity possible and traveled the country speaking to military bases, burn survivor camps, junior high and high schools, colleges, corporate conferences, detention centers, charity events, hospitals, first responder banquets, community rallies, foster care retreats and other venues.

SCHOOLS



Jared has always enjoyed the challenge of reaching students and in 2015 he spoke to over 20 schools about choices, perseverance, and their own personal struggles to help chart a course towards a brighter future. "I understand there is great responsibility involved in speaking to our youth because they are still impressionable and have so much life ahead of them," said Estes. "The potential I see in the students I meet is massive to say the least, so the notion that I might in some small way help them to reach that potential keeps me extremely motivated." As far as *how* he reaches students, Estes says, "I think that being a kid-at-heart really helps when I speak to young adults. Students are smart and they appreciate sincerity. I don't claim to have all the answers, and I try to put myself in their shoes and think about the things they may be going through," said Estes.

MILITARY

"No Mission Too Difficult. No Sacrifice Too Great. Duty First!"

-1st Infantry Division motto



The biggest "Fire Back" news of 2015 came when Jared secured a contract with the US Army to be a resilience trainer for the soldiers. Last year alone he spoke to more than 6,000 soldiers in New York, Missouri, and Kansas. Fort Riley has become one of Jared's favorite places on earth.

"It's impossible not to feel hopeful and grateful when I am around these soldiers," said Estes. "I feel like the most blessed man on earth spending my days and having meaningful conversations with people whom I greatly admire. These men have so much courage and they live their mantra while on and off duty. *No mission too difficult. No sacrifice too great. Duty First!*"



Along with getting to meet the soldiers and hear their inspiring stories, Jared also accepted invitations to take part in various activities with his heroes. Some of his favorite events have been a competitive 12 mile ruck march at Fort Riley, leading a 5k run with 800+ soldiers behind him at Fort Leonardwood in Missouri, and learning how to consistently crash a Blackhawk helicopter in the flight simulator.

BURN CAMPS

Last year Jared also had the good fortune to speak and volunteer at two different camps for young burn survivors in Wisconsin and Oklahoma.

Jared commented, "I wish everyone in America could attend these camps. These young survivors have so much to teach us all about strength, perspective, gratitude, and rejecting pity. They absolutely brightened up my world, and I can't wait to see where they all go from here."

Jared went into these camps believing he was going to teach the campers about resilience and accepting oneself, but said he left feeling like the young burn survivors taught him just as much, if not more.



VETERAN'S DAY SPECIAL EVENT



One of his most interesting events this year was a Veteran's Day event put on by the Kiowa County Media Center and Twilight Theater in Greensburg, KS. The team at the media center had already been a huge help to Jared's career, producing an impactful preview video for "Fire Back" and helping him with multiple marketing projects. The Veteran's Day event took it over the top. The 2 hour, professionally produced program was a wonderful tribute to the men and women who have served our country. The event was live streamed on www.jaredestes.com and also included live tweets during Jared's message, a massive live video feed on the theater screen, and a compelling video produced by students honoring our veterans.

"DISCOVERY MOMENT" PHOTO SESSION WITH CELEBRITY PHOTOGRAPHER, JEFF VESPA

At the beginning of 2015 Jared submitted a short essay about his discovery moment for a chance to win a trip to L.A. and photo session with world renowned celebrity photographer Jeff Vespa. Vespa had just released his motivational new coffee table book called "The Art of Discovery" which features dramatic portraits he has taken of celebrities in his unique style along with a quote from them about their discovery moments. He has shot celebrities including George Clooney, Matt Damon, Robert Downey Jr., Julianne Moore, Jennifer Aniston and many others. Jared needed some professional photos for his speaking career so entered the contest on a whim. Imagine his surprise when he actually won and was whisked out to L.A. and Palm Springs in April! The photo session took Jared outside of his usual comfort zone and the results were captivating. Jeff Vespa was not just a great photographer, he was an outstanding human being and Jared very much appreciated the time he spent with him.



RADIO OPPORTUNITIES

The list of amazing experiences didn't stop there. Jared also had a chance to exercise his radio muscles co-hosting the B98 Morning Show with Lukas and hosting his own show a few times on Alt 107.3. Alternative rock has been one of Jared's great passions so he jumped at the chance to have a show on his favorite station. He even got to take over the airwaves on Christmas Eve to share some hope, play some of his favorite inspirational alt rock songs, dust off some unique Christmas tunes, and showcase the stuff he loved listening to growing up. The show was dedicated to nurses, first responders, and everyone who had to work over the holidays so the rest of us could enjoy the time with our families.

MAKING A MARK



The feedback received after Jared's visits have been overwhelmingly positive and have fueled Jared's already existing desire to continue his mission into 2016. Jared ended his year on a high note when he received a photo and a message from a soldier stationed at Fort Drum, New York. In the picture the soldier (SPC Schafer) is showing off his new tattoo, the words "Fire Back" tattooed across his forearms. In his message he said he did it "to always remind myself and those around me to never stop fighting the good fight. Someday I want my children to ask me what that means and I will tell them about you and everything you have accomplished and tell them that no matter what never stop and never give up."