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THE BRIGHT SPARK OF

RESILIENCE

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CEYLON TODAY FEATURES

The will to survive, to succeed is innate in most humans – however, adversity is the true test of a person's spirit. Living one's life to the fullest against all odds is the mark of a true hero. To describe Dr. Dinesh Palipana with these words seem almost a cliché and yet, those very words are the best to describe this inspiring young man who is creating headlines Down Under for becoming Queensland's first and Australia's second quadriplegic medical intern.



At work

Ceylon Today caught up with this 33-year-old doctor with a refreshing take on life, who took some time off to answer a few probing questions.

Early days

Born in Kandy, Palipana spent his childhood moving around a lot, going to nine schools while in Sri Lanka, one of which was S. Thomas' College, Bandarawela.

Moving to Australia, he spent some of his formative years in the picturesque town of Byron Bay in New South Wales and then finished high school in Brisbane, Queensland.

He credits his idyllic childhood to his mother. "I'm close to my mum who has always been a tower of strength in my family. She's my hero. I had a great childhood. My mum made sure that we had the best of everything."

As a child, he thought about "becoming everything from a pilot to an astronaut" and had an IT business through early high school.

Halfway into Law School, he had a change of heart. "I had an experience with depression and was subsequently diagnosed with Coeliac disease. This experience gave me the opportunity to take stock of life and think about what's important to me. It

was this thought process that eventually grew into a passion for medicine. I went into medical school straight after I finished law."

That fateful day

In 2010, halfway into his medical degree, Palipana was on his way home after visiting his parents when life as he knew it, changed forever.

"I remember everything quite vividly. I was on the highway at around 8 p.m. It had been raining. My car suddenly aquaplaned and lost control. It mounted an embankment, came back down and rolled nose-to-tail. When it landed, the car was a mess. I couldn't feel or move my body. Emergency services cut me out of the car. I subsequently spent over seven months in hospital."

In 2015, Palipana, after spending some time in Sri Lanka recuperating went back to Australia to complete his medical degree, after a five year break from studies.

Through the rocky road

Palipana's determination to forge a career in medicine powered him as he graduated from Griffith University as one of its brightest graduates. Among the awards he has won are the Clinical Sub-Dean's Prize (Griffith University) and the Excellence in Electives Prize (Griffith University). He was also the recipient of The Board's Choice Award (Gold Coast Association of Postgraduate Students) and The Gregory and Dolores Farrell Scholarship (Northcott).

However, due to his spinal cord injury, getting a job offer proved a long wait, despite the fact that in Australia, every domestic medical graduate is guaranteed a job.

"Unfortunately, my application got removed from the normal application pool in my home state due to the spinal cord injury. I wouldn't have minded being told up front that my application was problematic due to the surrounding circumstances. I would have applied elsewhere, as there are some areas that are quite progressive.



In Bandarawela as a child



At Law School graduation with his mum



Graduating class at Medical School

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