

Eric Bailey: Your Past Doesn't Define Your Future

People You Should Know

By **Tony D'Urso** August 27, 2026



“Your past doesn't have to determine your future.”

There are moments when circumstances seem to make the decision for us.

A business struggles. An opportunity disappears. A plan falls apart. Someone tells us we're not capable of doing what we believe we can do.

Sometimes the obstacle is even bigger than that.

The question is what happens next.

Eric Bailey knows something about that question.

He was abandoned at birth, raised in South Central Los Angeles, diagnosed with a degenerative bone disease, and told he might never walk. Instead of allowing those circumstances to dictate what came next, he eventually became a professional basketball player, global speaker, and CEO of a multi-million-dollar enterprise.

I recently sat down with Eric on The Tony D'Urso Show to talk about resilience, accountability, vision, and what he calls Championship DNA. You can hear our conversation at [TonyDurso.com/podcast](https://tonydurso.com/podcast), where Eric shares what entrepreneurs and leaders can learn from elite athletes about performing when the pressure is on.

One idea from our conversation stayed with me.

“Vision creates direction – but action creates results.”

Most of us have a picture of something we'd like to accomplish.

Maybe it's building a business, changing careers, becoming financially independent, improving our health, or simply creating a better life for the people we care about.

But knowing where we want to go and actually getting there are two very different things.

Eventually, vision has to become action.

And that becomes much harder when adversity arrives.

Markets change. Customers leave. Businesses struggle. Careers take unexpected turns. Something we spent years building can suddenly require an entirely new direction.

We don't always get to choose the circumstances.

We do get to choose our response.

That's where Eric's experience as a professional athlete offers an important lesson.

Athletes don't wait until the championship game to prepare for pressure. They practice when nobody is watching. They repeat fundamentals. They accept coaching. They measure performance. They build habits long before those habits are tested.

Business and life aren't much different.

Preparation rarely feels dramatic while we're doing it.

But when the unexpected opportunity appears – or the unexpected crisis arrives – preparation can become the difference between being overwhelmed and being ready.

Eric calls this Championship DNA.

I like the phrase because it isn't really about winning trophies. It's about becoming the kind of person capable of continuing forward when circumstances don't cooperate.

That requires resilience, but resilience isn't simply enduring something difficult.

It also means learning from it.

It means asking what the experience is teaching us, what needs to change, and what we can do differently tomorrow.

Perhaps that's the larger lesson in Eric's remarkable journey.

The things that happened to us yesterday are real. We shouldn't pretend otherwise.

They can shape us. They can teach us. They can make the road considerably harder.

But they don't get the final vote on where we're going.

That decision still belongs to us.

“Our past doesn't define our future.”