



Winning Balance: What I've Learned So Far about Love, Faith, and Living Your Dreams

By Shawn Johnson

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At age 20, American gymnast Shawn Johnson is a four-time Olympic gold and silver medalist; a national- and world-champion athlete. Already a popular role model to all ages, in 2009 she captured the national spotlight again when she won the widely popular *Dancing with the Stars*. Yet Shawn is no stranger to hard work and adversity. Her loss of the major gymnastics prize everyone expected her to win in Beijing, the all-around Olympic gold medal, was the loss of a dream she'd worked for since childhood. And later, she suffered a staggering injury in a skiing accident that forced her life to a halt and made her rethink what was really important. She wasn't sure who she was anymore. She wasn't sure what her goals were. And she wasn't sure she was satisfied with where she was with her faith and God. Could she find the right kind of success in life? the kind that doesn't involve medals or trophies, but peace, love, and lasting joy? This is the amazing true journey of how the young woman who won an Olympic gold medal on the balance beam became even more balanced.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Four-time Olympic gold and silver medalist Shawn Johnson narrates her memoir with charm, vigor, and youthful eloquence. She sincerely portrays her belief that everything happens for a reason and all things happen for the good when you walk by faith. In a soft, mellow voice she characterizes herself as part "nerd, tomboy, and girlie girl." Her tone changes to one of thoughtful conviction when she describes her purpose in writing: to reflect on lessons learned. Specific examples include the disappointment of losing the gold medal in Beijing, the drama of a potentially career-ending ski injury, and the excitement of her surprise flirtation with Hollywood stardom when she won "Dancing with the Stars" in 2009. A section called "Lessons I've Learned" ends each chapter. Johnson's story and narration engage and inspire."

G.D.W. © AudioFile Portland, Maine

From the Inside Flap

What the World Is Saying about Shawn Johnson "Perhaps the best gymnast in the world--a compact, powerful package who is just as at home on the beam and bars as she is in the vault and floor events. . . . Shawn Johnson has an easy smile and confidence and rarely betrays the nervousness she says she feels at every competition."--"Time" magazine "She packs the power of someone twice her size yet somehow manages to still look dainty. She tumbles without fear, whether it's on the floor or up on the balance beam, and makes the toughest tricks look easy. She's the type of gymnast one can't help but watch."--ESPN.com "A powerful tumbler and nerveless competitor . . . Johnson smiles and bubbles while competing--a 4' 9" firecracker."--"Sports Illustrated" "Not only an extraordinary athlete, but also something altogether more profound and worthy of celebration: an uncommon human being . . . a young woman whose gifts stretch well beyond sports."--"The Christian Science Monitor"

From the Back Cover

The inspiring story of a pint-size American gymnast with a big smile and an even bigger heart

You've seen her perform gravity-defying gymnastics moves. You've seen her win Olympic medals in Beijing and the coveted mirror ball trophy on *Dancing with the Stars*. You've also seen her land on her feet?with her trademark smile?even when things haven't gone her way.

Despite achieving more success and celebrity in her first two decades than most people experience in a lifetime, things haven't been easy for Olympic gold medalist Shawn Johnson. Her first gymnastics coach told her family she lacked talent. Her modest upbringing in Iowa made elite competition unlikely. Although she won four medals at the Beijing Olympics, she was denied the big prize she'd dreamed of?the all-around gold medal. She had a terrifying experience with a stalker and would-be kidnapper. And after suffering a potentially career-ending injury, Shawn ultimately had to rethink what was truly important. What did she want most in life? What kind of success was worth pursuing? Would she ever find true faith, lasting hope, and real love?

In *Winning Balance*, for the first time Shawn reveals her journey so far: her against-the-odds quest to become a gymnastics world champion, her flirtation with Hollywood glamour, her growing faith, and her struggle to find herself. It's the full, behind-the-scenes story of how a young woman who won Olympic gold on the balance beam learned new lessons about balance? as well as love, faith, and what winning really means.

What the World Is Saying about Shawn Johnson

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?*The Christian Science Monitor*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Brandon Li:

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Lynn Gowen:

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