**Need to explain the bit about striving for excellence coming into play with work/life balance later on**

 **Need to narrow down motivation**

**<<SLIDE>> << OLYMPIC FINAL >>**

            -**nerve-wracking** every time!

            -what most people don’t realize is **that was actually my 5th race run of the day**.

            -(EXPLAIN SKICROSS FORMAT!!!)

            -did any of you watch that live/cheer for me?

🡪(I HEARD you! I *felt* your support.). **THANK YOU** for that.

It really is an **honour to have your attention**. --Thank you SO much for having me –

 it’s nice to be able to **share my story in my *hometown***!

(especially after a day of skiing with yoU! )

 Never in a million years did I think I’d one day be an Olympic Champion, sharing my story with a bunch of incredibly competent go-getters!  But here we are.

So…let’s **figure out how this happened.**

**What does it take, to consistently SHOW UP… to overcome the urge to quit… to truly be at your absolute best, when it matters most?**

When *your time to shine* comes around? Again and again.

**BELIEF.**

(I know, I know… that’s what everyone says.) and I’m here to tell you it’s really about going

***BEYOND* BELIEF.**

To share my keys success… keys to a Deep-rooted, wholehearted belief –

-- that **YOUR BEST IS GOOD ENOUGH. That your product, your offering can beat-out all the rest.**

I’ve now had almost 10 years to reflect on this, and

It’s clear to me… what that **FORMULA for instilling belief** was …

I figured it out *just in time* to have the BEST RACE OF MY LIFE **when it mattered most**.

I had an incrediblearound me, and I believedI.believed that I deserved it.

this

And… much like building a business, putting myself in a position to win an Olympic medal didn’t happen overnight. That was just my own far-off dream…. *my* definition of **success**. Take a moment to think about yours. Is it to pass a successful business down to your kids as a family legacy? To impact society in a positive way? To make enough money to provide for a great life for your family? To employ many people in meaningful work? *Maybe*… your Olympic gold medal moment will be the sale of your company. (?)

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**Sports stories** hold **metaphorical lessons** for all sorts of **real-life situations,**

and I will be **careful to keep in mind** that --**my goals** were all about the Olympic ***Games****,*

whereas**in *your* world – in entrepreneurialism, *real lives* depend on favourable outcomes**. (you are likely to be responsible for the wellbeing of your employees, your families, all of your stakeholders). That’s a lot of pressure, and much like an athlete competing in an individual sport, despite the fact that you have a team around you, when it all comes down to it, it’s all on you.

 **(CLICK) “3 MAIN KEYS TO UNLOCKING *BELIEF*.”**

 **((SLIDE))**

 **1) STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE -- in everything that you do. “**

And I don’t just mean ‘put effort in’. Or ‘put the time in’. I mean ALWAYS DO YOUR BEST. It’s about human potential and self-actualization, which is actually the highest stage in Maslov’s Heirarchy of Needs. Really what set me apart from my teammates was my ability and deep desire to continuously **strive for excellence, every step of the way, and** in a variety of fields – (ideally, you’re interested in a whole bunch of fields that complement one another… I’ll talk about the way my biking complemented my skiing…)

..even when it’s **hard to envision** a clear roadmap to the end goal,

or **as we accomplish goal after** small, inconsequential **goal** and we need to **set our sights** even **higher**…

 --🡪 I’m talking about **strategies for being at your absolute best**, always.

Focussing on the task at hand. ONE STEP AT A TIME.

I had no idea that many of the sports and skills in which I pushed for excellence were indirectly preparing me for success as a future Olympic athlete.

**(CLICK)**

**2) IDENTIFY DEEP-ROOTED SOURCES OF MOTIVATION**

Motivation is key.

But not just surface level, ego driven
**MOTIVATION**… it’s about identifying and tapping into your deepest most inherent sources of motivation.  For me, this goes way beyond medals and sponsor bonuses. What truly kept me going was the desire to be part of something much bigger and more important than my race results. To *create…* create an inspirational story, that wasn’t your typical Olympic success story… a story about following your heart and honouring your emotions…( you know -- less self-deprivation or self-sacrifice.) I *had* to have a **sense of purpose. I had to be emotionally attached to my goals.** That was the only way I would have the willpower to keep pushing. That was the only way I could justify devoting so much of my time and energy to this goal.

 **((CLICK))**

**(I explain where I was at in my career when I clued into this, and then…)**

Before we get into the **behind the scenes race day mental game reveal**,

🡪let's talk about **stress**.

🡪And **work/life balance**.

🡪And **utilizing our resources**.

🡪And stoking our own fire for our **passions**.

 In my situation, there were **two types of stress**: one came from the ongoing day-to-day pressure to work hard enough, sacrifice enough, remain focused enough, and the other was full instinctual fight or flight response to the pressure of a world cup race day, or world champs… or the Olympics.

**(So the 3rd Key to Unlocking Belief is..)**

**3) ESTABLISH THE IDEAL WORK/LIFE BALANCE; STRESS MANAGEMENT**

Strategies for staying positive; utilizing your resources (your team!), alleviating pressure, convincing yourself that you are nailing the **WORK/LIFE BALANCE thing**…

Set boundaries. Negotiate flexibility. Don’t beat yourself up.

Creatively reframe tricky situations, find the silver linings -- *focus* on the positives.

🡪There is a great TED talk, by Kelly McGonigal (?) about the science of stress. (How to make stress your friend).

🡪Stress has a **horrible impact on our physical health** …

-our **heart rate goes up,**

-our **blood vessels constrict**.

🡪It leads to **cardiovascular disease.**

🡪There is measurable, physical, conclusive evidence of this.

But the fact is… if you are able to ***view stress as a positive***,

and *BELIEVE* that it is *good* for you

…and your *health*

…or your *desired outcome* from a high stress event…

If you’re able to *EMBRACE* your body’s stress response,… there is no detrimental impact, physiologically. This was so fascinating for me to learn, because that’s just what I had done, on race day, at the Olympics.

This is the part of my story where – **JUST in the nick of time!**—I *really* unlocked my ability to ***harness the power of*** that second type of stress …race day pressure.

And just prior to that, I had **figured out how to keep the “slow-burning stress”** from building up.

🡪 I learned how to **stay positive and to feel empowered** if I wasn’t doing everything I thought I was supposed to do.

🡪 I learned to **recognize the value of a good work/life balance**.

🡪 I learned to **view my actions that could have been thought of as detrimental… as good for me**. Let me explain. (then I go into it)

and ***once you’ve tapped into these 3 keys to success*** … you have unlocked that genuinely, wholeheartedly *BELIEF* that **your best is good enough**. *That* is the narrative within your psyche that naturally follows. “I can do this.”

**Those are the underlying themes in my story – I clued into the 1st as a teenager, and but it wasn’t until just before the Olympics –Just in the nick of time—that I realized the value of #2 and #3. So this is a 3 –part summary of my ski career. As I take you through the highlights chronologically, I’ll reveal how the importance of these concepts and the synergies between them were brought to light.**

Are any of you parents? I hope some of it will inspire you to recognize your strengths in **parenting** + **mentoring** + **leadership** too!

**(PAUSE)**

So I’ll start right at the beginning… I’ll give you a glimpse into Whistler life in the 80s.

(***as a KID!***No..- not the sex drugs and rock n roll you were probably envisioning !)

**45 sec (10:15)**

**((SLIDE: STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE))**

“**1) STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE :”**

As an Olympic Champion, one of the *most* frequently asked questions I get is

**“When was that moment… when you *knew* you wanted to be an Olympian?”**

and almost every other athlete I’ve heard speak seems to have had that aha moment at a very young age “oh it was watching... Whoever...Compete in... Whatever... In the 1988 Olympics”, but

**-THAT’S NOT MY STORY...**

                         ....>>I **didn’t have any specific role models** who were **household names**.

             Olympians seeemed **superhuman**to me**...**(couldn’t relate to them on any level)...

                         I was **more inspired by**the **people within our community...**the people who spent the most time on the mountain on skis, and in the woods on bikes. **The happiest people I knew.**

it was *remarkable*... **what they’d sacrificed** to be ski bums in Whistler, and **how much time they spent ‘working’ to continually improve their ski skills.**

..To be at their best, in their chosen field.

**Striving for excellence**.

**All I knew was that i wanted to be like them.**

**((SLIDE)) “The quality of a person’s life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence, regardless of their chosen field.” - Vince Lombardi**

Going cven further back…

I **grew u**p in Whistler

-**started skiing** before the age of 2.

->my **earliest memory** is from skiing between my Dad’s legs, under the magic chair

->I just **loved it.** There was definitely a **natural desire to go fast**, **scaring myself** … (*that adrenaline* is a great drug.!)

            ->. BUT OF COURSE, ANY YOUNG CHILD HAS MOMENTS where the whole family has lugged a whole bunch of gear into the car, out of the car, geared up, bought lift tickets, against all odds made it up the chairlift successfully, and suddenly refuses to put her skis on,. Even into a FULL MELTDOWN, if you will. ;) – and my parents would say “no problem, let’s go in for hot chocolate.”

   --they parents were always all about **keeping it positive**

(hot chocolate)…

            and as my Mom says … **we didn’t turn out to be worse skiers for it.**

-My **Dad** had been a **ski racer too** … I got the **competitive genes** from him...

                        He has always been a **risk-taker** – very **spirited** – lives from the heart...

  **If it snowed** more than 10cms, **he wasn’t getting much work done**.

            But he started a (successful?) log home business in 1980 (it had it’s ups and downs.. )

(I like to highlight that we really were **just a regular family**, always getting creative to finance ski racing for two of us girls...because ski racing is typically thought of as an elitest sport.)

  My sister and I had a **firewood business** as kids, we **babysat**, and we always **participated** in ski club **bike-a-thons and other fundraising drives**.

            (And *MY DAD DID WORK HARD* when the snow was (thumbs down!) )

He was determined to provide us with the opportunities he didn’t have as a prairie kid.

(I think he just Wanted to **live vicariously** through us!) (haha)

My (amazing!)***Mom*** .... (and I have to say that she‘s amazing because I’ve gained such an appreciation for her parenting style now that I’m seeing it shine through in her *grand*parenting style. )

But when it comes to sports, SHE has always been **all about participating.**

                         **she doesn’t have a competitive bone in her body!**

They got me into skiing, and my Mom was right there with me when I broke my leg for the first time, at the age of 5. ***Clearly, I must have been striving for excellence to crash hard enough to break my leg at that age!***

(Don’t kids’ bones just BEND??!)

            I remember yelling “take my boot off, take my boot off...” and then they’d start trying to take it off and I’d yell “leave my boot on, leave my boot on!”

            Thankfully my mom is a nurse, and she ORDERED the ski partoller to give me a shot of intramuscular morphine.

**That was the beginning of a long list of injuries**.

I always **used this time** to focus on **getting better at something else**: art or music, or to focus on my school work.  “AND I GOT **REALLY GOOD** AT RECOVERING FROM INJURIES. “

(I’ve actually encountered people who quit sports all together after one broken bone!)

(chalked it up as a “career-ender”)

THAT FIRST LEG **INJURY HEALED UP** and eventually my **parents put me in the race program.**The early days of my racing career were largely influenced by my **peers**, and the **world class coaches** that a **world class resort attracts** .

**----  ---**

Throughout my childhood, I ESTABLISHED A HIGH STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE. (and Matt can attest to this!)

🡪The dryland **training sessions** during that phase of my life were **harder than almost any I’d ever have to power through again**.

* My **parents**, my **teachers**, the **program directors** TREATED *US* LIKE WORLD CLASS ATHLETES, and EXPECTED US TO PUT FORTH A WORLD CLASS EFFORT.
* **The rest of my careeer was just applying these habits**.

AS A *TEENAGER*, I WAS IN ALPINE SKI RACING… skicross wasn’t even a thing then, let alone an Olympic sport.

-worked hard enough to be consistently at the top of my age group…

             Focussed on **what I LOVED about it**. And

             **never put too much pressure on myself.**

**I didn’t really care whether I came 1st or 5th in a race…**

**I would have preferred to keep my results to myself.**

 **(dance like nobody’s watching… ski race like nobody’s watching!)**

            But I *definitely* felt that **overbearing drive**to *BECOME THE BEST* that I could be*, for me.*

**…as long as I was enjoying it.**…

 I HAD TO PURSUE OTHER PASSIONS TO AVOID BURNOUT.

             which meant I was often skipping the organized gate training to go ski powder, or to (super casually) race my buddies

                        - from the **top** of the mountain to the **bottom**

**....** through **gullies** and off **jumps** & **cliffs**...

because that was more fun, to me.

So when I talk about “skipping training” , (and I’ll let you know how this strategy helped me with my Olympic prep much later in my career, when i talk about managing stress and staying positive)

 ...I just mean **STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE IN SOMETHING ELSE**.

INSTEAD of going straight down to the bottom of the chairlift on the groomed ski run after skiing through the gates, I’d deek into the trees with a couple of the boys ( no—no—it’s not what you think! --It just always happened to be that the boys were the most dialed--- the best skiers with the greatest desire to challenge themselves , on skis and bikes – and we’d pick our way down the cliffs and shred the deep pow! – the deep, untracked powder snow that no tourist in their right mind would ever bother to seek out. **And let me tell you – I was determined to progress at that style of skiing too.**

Little did I know, **this would be eqaully valuable prep** for the sport that I would one day represent my country in – **skicross**

              by the time I was 16, I was sick of the structured, boring old alpine racing that had become a **60hr/week *minimum* commitment in the winter. ( we NEVER went to school!)**

                                    ->my **heart just wasn’t in it anymore**.

 I loved *some* components of alpine ski racing, but **the *required commitment*limited my ability to pursue the side of skiing that I was truly passionate about**. I was **too burnt out** to continue **striving for excellence**, but I was **too scared** to call that the **end of my ski career**... It was such a huge part of **my** **identity**, and I couldn’t handle the thought of letting my coaches down... or my parents ---even though they *never ever* actually put pressure on me to stick with it.

(I can’t imagine how hard it would be for the kids whose parents held their **sweat equity** and **finanical ‘investment’** in the kid’s athletic career over their heads as a form of pressure to keep going!)

(I think most kids put enough pressure on themselves…+ that of the coaches,.. then you get parents instilling that fear of resentment ---*That’s* a dangerous combo. )

Anyway…Have you ever noticed that when **your heart’s not in it,**

**your head’s not in it**… and that’s when bad things happen?

A few more injuries, and then came the **“career-ender” (**or so I thought!)

            I broke my leg so badly at the age of 16 (that story’s not for the faint of heart!)… that I managed to use it as an **excuse to quit ski racing**. (ha!)

                        -l looked at it as **an opportunity to focus on my new passion**…**downhill mountain biking**, and of course **my school work**.

THE DOWNHILL MOUNTAIN BIKE PARK HAD JUST OPENED UP HERE,

and I was obsessed.

The way we rode was intense.

It was **next-level drive to be excellent**. At all cost.

I had some horrific crashes… but it all just **toughened me up for skicross**. (I had boyfriend who pushed me hard in this phase of my life)

                        -I had Graduated from High School with good grades and I was going to school at the **University of British Columbia**andI found myself missing being a competitive athlete… I knew I could have gone further with the ski racing and I was wanting more.  I really feel that I needed to go through the process of self-discovery myself though –it had to come from within. Not from a coach or a parent or even a boyfriend.

                        -> I had all of these **skills** that **I’d devoted my childhood**to developing,

 🡪 and because I was programmed to strive for excellence… I felt really invested in them…

                                    …. and I had **quit** before I had realized my full potential.

                                     I *had this nagging feeling* that it would frustrate me for the rest of my life if I didn’t do something about it.

But getting a good education had always been the highest priority.

I had **set my classes at UBC up** so that they were **3 days/week**(Tuesday was a 14hr-solid day!)… so that I could continue to live in Whistler and ski the other 4 days/week.

**I WAS FINALLYPURSUING MY PASSION for the wild side of the sport… freeskiing... in the winter, and mountain biking in the off-season.**

SO WE’LL MOVE ON TO MOTIVATION IN JUST A SEC, but to wrap part one,up

To me, striving for excellence in what I realize now is a **crazy, obssessive manner** seemed totally normal, because I was basically completely surrounded by people who were just slightly more obsessed. And it’s all relative, right? Even though I skipped out on the formal training program a lot, by my calculations, we skied through a race or training course somewhere between 2 or 3,000 times by the time we were young adults... i think the super-keeners were around 3,000.

that’s left, right, left, right, left, right,  0r “red, blue, red, blue, red, blue”.....about **111,000 times..**. if you consider there are about 40-50 gates on most of those courses.!

That’s A LOT!

It was those years as an alpine skier, and a downhill mountain biker where the foundation was laid~~.~~  **STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE HAD BECOME HABIT.**

So – how did I parlay this into a skicross career?

And what were my main sources of motivation to get back into it, and then the hardest part...to *keep* at it?

((CLICK))

((SLIDE : MOTIVATION))

1. **IDENTIFY & TAP INTO** *DEEP ROOTED* SOURCES OF **MOTIVATION**
	1. It’s pretty safe to say that most of us are motivated by money. And the desire to generate revenue runs deep. But... in order to remain committed to tackling seemingly unattainable goals, you have to dig really, really deep.
	2. deeper than monetary incentive, fame & glory; appeal to inherent human desires.
	3. What really makes you tick?
	4. Are you *creating* something special?
	5. What is your purpose?
	6. Do you feel that your role contributing to the greater good of your family, your community, or even…humanity?

You have to feel really good about all of the sacrifices you’re making, and how worthwhile your efforts are, and for me – this is how I justified devoting so much of my life to accomplishing a goal that – to an outsider-- would probably seem a bit superficial. To some, it even seemed like a waste of tax payers’ money to support our athletes.. Did you know that there are a lot of people out there who don’t recognize the value of sport?

I had to find a way to justify my actions. My dedication to this career path. One that felt good. Felt right. One that I didn’t feel guilty about, one that felt honorable. A way to validate my life choices that truly motivated me to keep going.

I had to foster an emotional attachment to the *real* goals. Not Olympic gold.

**ONE STORMY DAY**IN 2002, the upper chairlifts had closed down due to wind… I was inside the Glacier Creek Lodge with some of my ski buddies watching some **X Games coverage**of this relatively new sport… skicross.  There were 6 women racing head to head, off huge jumps and I was convinced (through peer pressure) to try skicross.

                        One of my friends said **“you should race skicross. You’d kill it”.**

** and thus, MY SKICROSS CAREER WAS BORN.**

**(CLICK)**

((SLIDE)) “QUOTE ABOUT PURPOSE AND MOTIVATION”

BACK THEN, (“STILL BEFORE SKICROSS WAS AN OLYMPIC SPORT! “) you had to go over to **Europe** to compete on **the World Cup circuit.**

But There was **a pro tour in North America**–

it had a bit of a **renegade feel** to it,

with **music blasting**in the finish line

and big **wrap up parties**at night.

            It was like this **harmonious combinatio**n of everything I’d loved about alpine ski racing none of the things I’d hated,… plus everything else I’d been doing for fun my whole life, growing up heeeeere...wrapped into this cool new sport.

THERE WERE NO NATIONAL TEAMS and I would have to **fend for myself** when it came to

                        -managing **costs**,

-**logistics**, and

-**training**

….. so the pressure to perform (and win prize money), was **on**.

 I look at this phase of my career as the opportunity to put everything I’d been striving for excellence in to work together

🡪 where the results of always pushing from one angle or another suddenly became measurable. And it had worked.

            I was **almost always on the podium** on the North American Tour, and I **managed to beat every** single **competitor** in the **qualification** **round** in the one world Cup I did travel to **Europe** for that season. (and win a medal in the final!)

THIS WAS THE PHASE OF MY CAREER where I **uncovered what truly motivated me**,

and how important it was **to *tap in to* and *honour* that**.

And to do that, I had to learn what sources of motivation were ineffective, or moreover… had an adverse effect. I HAD THE CHANCE TO LEARN HOW DIFFERENT SKIING FOR CASH WAS.

            I remember being in the lead in a race in Alberta, and then missing a gate… I actually aired up and over the whole panel, which means my body didn’t travel the full distance it needed to go out and around that whole gate… I had technically missed a gate, and I was disqualified from the race… and all I could think about was the opportunity cost. It basically cost me $2,500 to miss that gate by a matter of inches**.  I eventually realized** that

 I **had to abandon ALL thoughts of money** (or medals) while racing,

or my **systems would *seriously* malfunction**.

**so , fastforward a few years to 2006, I was 23,**about to **quit racing** (again) because I just wasn’t having enough fun to justify the sacrifices I felt I was making to travel around**,** all by myself, competing in a high-risk sport.**..** **I was madly in love** with my downhill mountain biker/surfer boyfriend Adam, and **I just wanted to run off to Mexico** with him for the winter....

I had decided I would follow my heart and just hit all of the big races, with BIG PRIZE MONEY, because THAT HAD BECOME MY MAIN SOURCE OF MOTIVATION...

but what have we learned about racing when **your heart’s** not in it, and your **head’s not it in?** That’s when bad things happen.

I blew my knee at the X Games and that was (***what I thought was***) the end of that!

**)**

**THEN!!! the announcement came that SKICROSS WOULD BE ADDED TO THE OLYMPIC PROGRAM for 2010.**

             the Olympic **debut of my sport**

** at home**, in BC

             in **perfect timing**for me to be at the pinnacle of my career.

                        Suddenly, I knew that ***this* was the opportunity I’d been working so hard for that whole time**,

                                                   *and --despite the fact that I wasn‘t clear on* where to **source** *motivation from, or even how to call on my resources or stay postiive, ...* *because I was already programmed to strive for excellence in everything I had ever found any joy in...with skicross really just being an organized version of what we Whistler Kids had been doing for fun our whole lives,* **I was in a good position to make the most of it.**

---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

A SELECTION PROCESS FOR A NATIONAL TEAM was established, and selection camps were held right here in Whistler on the glacier, and on a glacier in southeastern BC, where we actually slept in tents, did a whole bunch of hiking with our skis on our shoulders, and ENDURED SOME REALLY EXTREME WEATHER.

            -  I remember thinking about **how badly I wanted to make that team,**

                        ...and feeling like **I was *made* for this event**, and I kind-of thought I would **just walk onto it**.  ...Afterall, I was ***one of 3*** *Canadian women who actually had experienc*e racing skicross internationally, **with a world cup medal to boot**.

            Well, IT WASN’T QUITE THAT SIMPLE:

            The administration team that had been put in place – **the coaches and directors who held my fate in their hands** – really had *no idea* how to determine who should be on the team. They didn’t have the resources to build a full-length skicross course with full-size jumps, so they put us in **GS** courses, and timed us , **which was great for the athletes** **who** had continued to race alpine *long* after I had switched my focus to skiing powder, cliffs, jumps, and downhill mountain biking. Some of them had now made more than 200,000 turns around gates... I had just stopped at a measley 111,000. ;)

But there was **no way for the other skills I’d developed to shine.**

            ONE OF THE COACHES had a whole bunch of SKICROSS EXPERIENCE, and NO COACHING EXPERIENCE, and the others had a whole bunch of coaching experience (on the alpine side), but didn’t know anything about skicross. They sure made me work for it.

            I remember thinking about quitting really regularly, just telling myself “one more training camp” “one more day at the training camp” or even, at times “ one more gym session” and ***then I’ll quit ..***.ifI’m still feeling like this. I set **manageable goals,** no matter how small. And **celebrated each small victory**. And somehow, **this kept me going**. I had a lot of time to reflect, in that tent on the glacier.

I had **learned a lot about what did *not* motivate** me before this point, and THIS IS WHERE **I BEGAN TO UNCOVER THE DEEPER SOURCES OF MOTIVATION**.

I realized that I needed to feel like **what I was doing was *important***. Like it was going to **impact** a whole bunch of people **positivitely**. “I had the feeling that our nations’ youth would be inspired by our team, and particularly my unique path to success, but if I had known the scale of it then –man i would have been on fire!”

**----- ---------**

My coaches finally broke the news to me that I had made the team in November of 2007.

They claimed that they had always planned to put me on the team, --they just needed to see if I was the type of person to just rely on my natural talent… or if I would actually work for it… and If I had it in me to obey the authoritative figures in my life.

**SUDDENLY, I HAD THIS ENTIRE SUPPORT SYSTEM IN PLACE:**

            -funding

            -physios/massage therapists

            -coaches – who trusted me to respect them now, so allowed me to provide a lot of input

            -world’s best ski techs

            -and a really **talented group of teammates.**

IT WAS SUCH AN INCREDIBLE FEELING, to finally make the team. But I realized **I had been so focussed on that,** that **I’d forgotten what *being* on that team was all about**. The goal posts had shifted wayyyy back and I hadn‘t recalibrated.

LOOKING BACK NOW, I can see why the beginning of that first season on the National Team was so horrible. I didn’t even qualify for the QUARTER final in either of the first 2 world Cup races. (I think I was like 28th or something.) They were such horrible results, that I had become completely convinced that it was all over. That all of these women had come out of the woodwork, now that it was an Olympic sport, and I could not compete. I had just **felt so** ***accomplished*** for making the team, that

**I forgot to keep striving for excellence day in, day out.**

**I did manage to pull it together briefly, for the 3rd World Cup race… but THAT FIRST SEASON on the National Team**got cut short.

We were racing in Les Contamines, France, on a really stormy day.

The fog made for horrible depth perception.  I could hardly see the tips of my skis!

 ~~,~~

 I dislocated my shoulder for the 22nd time while winning the semi-final …

                                    and my coaches decided I should head home to have it operated on,

so that I would **be ready to go for the next season – where all of my results would count for Olympic qualifying.**

**WHEN I CAME BACK**, I was **stronger than ever**, and i’d had a **nice break.**

             I’d done a whole bunch **of soul searching,**really evaluated whether this was something I wanted to continue to devote my life to, and **realized that there was some unidentifiable source of motivation deep down that was keeping me going, even on days that were really hard.  I couldn’t put my finger on it, but it was there.**

Just knowing that, made me really **excited** to be back on the circuit.

* **The PASSION was reignited! (arms up!!)**
* I landed on the podium in almost every race that year, (though *rarely* on the top of it. --and I'll talk about that more in a minute)

The big event that season was the World Championship, which is held every two years.

**I have a crazy World Champs story.**

            THIS IS WHERE I DROPPED ALL OF THE BARRIERS -- *labels* I’d assigned to myself about performing poorly in the high-pressure events, expectations, any arrogance that had weaseled its way in, and got to the core of the whole mission.
* **I finished uncovering my true source of motivation, and I think you’ll be able to relate.**

**P**icture this:

            **Fukashima, Japan**… a **little ski area** overlooking a **giant Lake**… **NO SNOW.**

Literally, NO SNOW , ON THE GROUND IN THE TREES, and they had **plowed as much snow as they could make** on to *one* run to try to pull a skicross course together.

            BECAUSE THEY HAD SO LITTLE TO WORK WITH, they built **one HUGE jump**, right in the middle of the steepest pitch within hundreds of kilometers, and **called it a race track.**

            Only **35 women** qualify for World Champs, just like the Olympics… max of 4 from each nation, tough selection criteria. Then we all **compete for the 32 spots** in the head to head racing, by doing a qualification run, one at a time, against the clock.

            WELL, AFTER DAY 1 OF TRAINING, we were **down to 28 women**. Some had decided there was *no chance* they were hitting that jump. Some had tried, and failed miserably. There were some *bad injuries* – just making it down that course successfully was an accomplishment in itself.

            Standing in the start gate, about to race my qualifying run, my coach clued into the fact that we were down to 28 women, as he added the DNSs up (Did Not Start).

He told me “If you blow out of the course or miss a gate, hike back up, get around that gate, and finish your run. “

* + and **that’s just what I did.**

	            COMING INTO THAT INSANELY STEEP PITCH, naturally a little tentative, I stood up to make the switch of direction, and came down hard on my edges, miscalculating how far I’d drift out to the left by …mmm… about an inch… and my inside ski tip caught on the gate I was supposed to go around. It stayed, I kept moving down the hill, FAST… twirling around like a ballerina on one ski, until I was finally able to get that ski to dig in and stop myself. Almost all the way down the pitch.

	            **I looked up at the group of coaches standing right there**, looking absolutely stunned, none of whom, my coaches.  And the Swedish coach yelled **“HIIIIIIIIKE!!!!!”**

	            I will love him forever.

   I hiked straight up this mountain as fast as I could. 2 minutes of hiking to get back up around that gate, ski the rest of what should have been a one minute course, and finish in 28th place.

**I have NEVER wanted to give up** on anything **as badly as I did that day.**

* But Some of the other athletes were **lobbying** to get me kicked out of the race, trying to come up with some rule that there must be a time limit.

            I was passed out,( literally,) on the floor of this Japanese ski lodge , ski boots clunking by as people shuffled around – actually sleeping – I felt like I had just completed a critical power test in dryland training. I was so exhausted. **I SO didn’t want to race.**

            EVERY RACE COURSE IS DIFFERENT, but the start mattered on this one. It would be pretty much impossible to get to the first turn in the lead from the far right start gate... I would have last pick , when it came to lane selection, and I would be at a serious disadvantage. My coaches went to bat for me. It was a big deal. They managed to convince the officials to keep me on the start list.

            I had **worked my butt off to qualify** for world champs, **conquered the fear of that big scary jump more effectively** than 7 competitors already, and **I deserved to race.**

**It became a matter of principle.**

I wanted this sport that I love so much to be **fair**. I wanted my story to prove that doing the “right” thing is best.

I wanted the World Championship to include the world's best. No disqualifications over a technicality.

I found that to be **more** **motivation than anything .**

I still wanted the chance to **show people what was possible**.

I wanted to **prove that my approach** to success works.

I wanted people to **change their views on what it means to become your best**, and to **recognize** that **you don't have to sacrifice everything**, it doesn't have to be horrible....

I wanted to inspire young girls to have an awesome life full of JOY and FREEDOM, **following their hearts** wherever possible, and **putting the work in** when the time comes... *just enough* work into all sorts of channels to be ready to seize the moment when opportunity knocks.

To be **healthy** and **active** and **so dedicated** to becoming their best that they don't even have time to get into trouble. **THIS was what truly motivated me**, **far beyond any medals or sponsor endorsements**.

And at the end of that day,

i realized, **i had already won.**

I **won all of my heats** -- threw down some sick passes on that tricky corner, diving into the pitch that had put me in my place in that qualifying run.,…won every heat, including the final, to become the **2009 World Champion.**

It was a note of my facebook wall from the parent of a 12 year old girl, to say congratulations, and that her daughter is so inspired by my story that she has decided to give her sport one more try.

**)**

and then someone else who wrote "you've already won."

I just remember that realization hitting me like a ton of bricks.

**That was what it was all about.**

**That was the goal I was emotionally attached to.**

**I'd already won.**

**---- ----------- -----------------------------**

**“So from there, the pressure was off! Right?”**

Not quite, but I was **able to channel that deep-rooted sense** that this was *much*, *much* BIGGER than my own fame and glory...into the **reason to get out of bed each day**.

and the words of encouragement and appreciation kept pouring in.

(I'm pretty sure **every single teacher** in this country got their kids to write letters to us Olympians, and we each had a massive pile of them waiting for us in the athletes village in Vancouver! )

**SO -- NEXT SEASON WOULD BE THE OLYMPIC SEASON.**

Before we get into the **behind the scenes race day mental game reveal**,

🡪let's talk about **stress**.

🡪And **work/life balance**.

🡪And **utilizing our resources**.

🡪And stoking our own fire for our **passions**.

 In my situation, there were **two types of stress**: one came from the ongoing day-to-day pressure to work hard enough, sacrifice enough, remain focused enough, and the other was full instinctual fight or flight response to the pressure of a world cup race day, or world champs… or the Olympics.

**(CLICK)**

**((SLIDE))**

**MANAGING STRESS EFFECTIVELY: ESTABLISHING THE IDEAL WORK/LIFE BALANCE… or at least convincing yourself that you have. ;)**

🡪There is a great TED talk, by Kelly McGonigal (?) about the science of stress. (How to make stress your friend).

🡪Stress has a **horrible impact on our physical health** …

-our **heart rate goes up,**

-our **blood vessels constrict**.

🡪It leads to **cardiovascular disease.**

🡪There is measurable, physical, conclusive evidence of this.

But the fact is… if you are able to ***view stress as a positive***,

and *BELIEVE* that it is *good* for you

…and your *health*

…or your *desired outcome* from a high stress event…

If you’re able to *EMBRACE* your body’s stress response,… there is no detrimental impact, physiologically. This was so fascinating for me to learn, because that’s just what I had done, on race day, at the Olympics.

“This is the part of my story where – **JUST in the nick of time!**—I *really* unlocked my ability to ***harness the power of*** that second type of stress …race day pressure.”

And just prior to that, I had **figured out how to keep the “slow-burning stress”** from building up.

🡪 I learned how to **stay positive and to feel empowered** if I wasn’t doing everything I thought I was supposed to do.

🡪 I learned to **recognize the value of a good work/life balance**.

🡪 I learned to **view my actions that could have been thought of as detrimental… as good for me**. Let me explain.

Skiing and training was my work. That other stuff was my life.

WorK: **Gym sessions** 5 days a week, for 4 - 5 hours, and then **agility and quickness** sessions in the afternoon, **on top of my mountain biking** social schedule.. ***and* dirtbiking** by that point too. (I’d traded the the mtn biker /surfer boyfriend in, and I was dating a snowmobiler/dirtbiker guy).

…the fun stuff (more extreme sports) I did with them…

…that was my “life.”

🡪It was hard for my coaches to manage **their concern for my safety** with **their understanding of my passions**, and the **value of the cross-training**.

🡪 Thankfully, they put a lot of faith in my decision-making ability.

They knew it was **my way to de-stress, stoke the fire inside.**

I’d **skip gym sessions.** And then I’d **beat myself up for it**.

 But then, the good results on the world cup tor followed anyway.

…**Some may argue** that I **would have skied *even better****,* had I been more devoted to my coaches’ schedule,

🡪 but I *now* believe that I *--in fact --* **skied as well as I’d ever dreamed I could..**

…**as well as I *needed* to**,

to be **the best,**

 **when it mattered most.**

SO YOU *COULD* ARGUE THAT

” **I JUST MANAGED TO ACHIEVE THE IDEAL WORK/LIFE BALANCE.”**

**I always (internally) justified any lack of effort somewhere with my extra effort somewhere else**...

I had a **mental tally** in my mind, and **i was eventually able to convince myself that i was doing enough.**

I *remember* the moment that my mindset – my attitude toward my “**OP Ashleigh**” (explain) tendencies –shifted for the better.

* It was the **first race of the season,** in Les Contamines, France

I had this incredible coach, WILLY RAINE, (Nancy Greene's son), who granted me SO much flexibility, knowing that  **I absolutely HAD to be** in a positive frame of mind **to** **perform**.

(He actually learned to say **"have fun Ash!"** in the start gate... instead of "good luck" or "kick some ass".)

However, with it being the last off-season before the Olympics, my **other coaches** had *convinced* me to:

-**stop riding** my **dirtbike** and my **downhill mountain bike**…

-to ***really buckle down*** and focus on my skiing, my gym time, my training…

 …*without* the risk of getting hurt.

 I remember skiing the course in that first race of that season, and thinking

**“wow. My skiing has suffered for it.”**

 **I felt resentful.**

I felt like my coaches had convinced me to abandon the approach that was **tried tested and true to my heart**, and that my skiing had suffered for it.

 🡪 It was in *that moment*, that I truly began to understand the value of my other lifestyle choices for two reasons:

1) As an **outlet to stay in love with my life**, and ***every* aspect of it**.. **including my sport.**

2) **Cross-training**.

🡪

So… yes, it could be assumed that

 HAD I ***SKIPPED fewer gym sessions***, I would have had more success as a ski racer,

🡪but **I realized in this moment** that **the argument that rang true within me** was that I

Had been doing exactly what I needed to do. Nothing more. Nothing less.

(I actually think I may have had more success as a ski racer if I had held out for even longer

 before buckling down and doing exactly what my coaches told me to do. !)

Going into the Olympic season, I had **broken up with** the snowmobiler/dirtbiker boyfriend, and I had **started dating my favorite teammate.** (haha)

(… It seems crazy to talk about romantic relationships this way, but in reality, these intimate details are a big part of my story and my success—I can’t leave them out ..

And really, each of you has a right hand man(person), right?

Or a husband, or a wife, or partner who is your go-to when it comes to getting the support you need to accomplish your goals? )

 My teammate, **Chris Del Bosco**, was my biggest supporter at the time.

So maybe I went about it a bit backwards…

but I know that’s not uncommon:

I fell in love with the one person who coached me more than my coaches.

The one person who could make me stop feeling FOMO on all of the crazy adventures and activities my friends were off on at home…

The one person in the world who could help me win an Olympic gold medal.

🡪 He inspected the courses with me,

🡪he told me what to do, where,

🡪 and the most crucial role of all, he let me follow him down the courses in training.

It was like he was holding my hand all the way down, every time we skied the course on training days **(typically we’d get about 6-8 training runs**),

…SO THAT *WHEN RACE DAY ROLLED AROUND*,

**I KNEW WHAT TO DO AUTOMATICALLY.**

---He took the **burden of fear and uncertainty** about hitting those big jumps *right off* my shoulders. **I literally don’t think I could have won an Olympic gold medal if it weren’t for him.**

 **SO LET’S TALK ABOUT THAT OLYMPIC RACE.**

But first, in summary – what you can learn from this is that it’s incredibly important to **trust your instincts -->** when it comes to **work/life balance** and ensuring that you feel energized and stress-free in working toward your goals. **Choose a lifestyle that complements your work,** if at all possible (how many of you use your passion for golf as a means to connect with business partners/clients?)

**Negotiate flexibility**. And allow your employees to have some flexibility.

And most of all, **utilize your resources**. Call on the people you’ve surrounded yourself with to alleviate some of the burden – some of the work, some of the pressure, some of the fear -- of going all-in on your goals. We all need help if we are going to go do big things.

THIS LAST PART IS ABOUT recognizing what it takes to **have confidence** that **your best is good enough**

 **…to *BELIEVE*.**

During the offseason before the Olympics, we trained *HARD*.

I believed --at that point --that I had to **train *like a******superhuman*** to ***compete* with those “superhuman “ Olympians** on the *one most important* *day*..

and that I had to strive for an **out –of –this –world LEVEL OF BELIEF**.

**(SLIDE)) “DON’T LIMIT YOURSELF TO THE SKIES WHEN THERE IS A WHOLE GALAXY OUT THERE!”**

I had learned to **CALL ON MY SUPPORT TEAM to alleviate** some of my **workload**, **responsibilities**, and therefore, **pressure**. But the **pressure was INSANE**.

I remember one of the speedskaters complaining – after a poor performance just before my event —about the **Own the Podium** initiative. That **it put too much pressure** on us Canadian athletes. Corporate Canada had stepped up. More money: more pressure – but that’s because we suddenly had no excuse! We were equipped to compete with the best in the world!

That was a real turning point for me.

🡪 I turned that pressure into confidence that I had been given *every opportunity* to be **worthy of success.**

For the first time in my career, I **embraced that pressure**.

 **((SLIDE))) OLYMPIC GOLD** (PHOTO OF ME IN MY TUCK)

So let’s talk about **THAT BIG WIN…**the **2010 Oympic Games**… right here, **at home.**(in Vancouver).

 The **atmosphere** in the city was incredible... **it felt like pure magic.** It was like the **entire nation was buzzing**. I couldn’t believe how much support was pouring in. **I felt like what i was doing represented so much more than my individual performance**.

The Olympic movement is *really* about world peace.

... and it was so special to see the way it brought people together, galvanizing our nation, *and* ---what was ***even closer to my heart***... **it brought my family together**. My parents had just settled their divorce, and they stood together in the grand stands and cheered me on, and **later watched my medal ceremony as a team.** (oh I might *CRY*!)

CONVINCING MYSELF THAT I WAS NOT GOING TO buckle under the pressure was a **full time job**. It was crazy, how overbearing it was. But **I just kept *putting it off***. I kept *procrastinating* on dealing with the feelings of **stress**..

**---- ----**

 BEFORE RACE DAY, we had **3 days of training** on the Olympic course.

 I remember **my first try at the features** they’d built **out of the start**. It looked like an obstacle course, with 3 “Wutangs” ... aptly named for their resemblance to the W in the Wutan clan emblem.

Standing in the start gate, it looked like you’d be skiing straight into a vertical wall... like your ski tips would dig straight in, and your body would make an imprint like a cartoon character’s running into a wall, before falling backward slowly, squashed flat as a pancake.

 WE HAD SIDE-SLIPPED DOWN THE TRACK ALREADY, getting a close inspection of the course, and **I could visualize a run through the whole thing** in my mind, **but it was HUGE**. So there was *that* **added stress.**

 ***FEAR.***

**...**I don’t know **if you remember how little snow** there was here during the Olympics... but they were **literally helicoptering snow in** to keep our jumps covered.

NORMALLY, ON THE WORLD CUP CIRCUIT, they would **build the course** with big huge jumps like this, then **send some racers down**, and **some would have trouble** or be too scared about some of the jumps, so they’d **come in and ‘dumb it down’**... shave the take-offs down.. .make the jumps **smaller**.

But with the lack of snow, these jumps had been built out of **wood** and **hay**. **There was no shaving them down.**

 *I remember* standing in that start gate, **watching my teammate** (that boyfriend **Chris Del Bosco)** tightening his buckles on his ski **boots** up, clamping them down into race mode, then carefully placing his **goggles** over his eyes...

as I said **“are you just gonna run it???”**

 And i remember the ***exact tone*** with which he responded...

**“yeah.”** Like it was the dumbest question i had ever asked.

 **And so. WE RAN IT**.

 I followed him as closely as I could, watching as he **safely made it from the takeoff** of each massive jump to the nice, **big**, **well-built** **landing**. (I almost had a heart attack flying off the final jump into the finish... it was like a cliff drop, and so big...

about 40 feet down, from takoff to landing.

 But he had guided meall the way down...

🡪having him to follow – **one of the most technically sound skiers on the circuit**... so **smooth** and **fluid**...was my ace up my sleeve when it came to keeping the stress under control... working through the process systematically, one step at a time, **without getting too scared.**

--Plus, I knew I **JUST HAD** TO BE A **LITTLE BIT LESS SCARED**

than the women I’d be racing against! --

**------------------------------**

 I REMEMBER ***DAY THREE*** *OF TRAINING*, **one athlete from Romania** watching us practice starts from the sidelines... crying... telling me she kept having nightmares about it.

 I ALREADY HAD **5 FULL-LENGTH RUNS** under my belt so I took the opportunity to

**rest my legs,** and **practice some more starts**,

while some of the women had not even made it through the course *once*.

I was having **so much fun**, and I felt **so confident**, IT WAS **AMAZING**.

I had never felt so good going into a race. IT WAS ALL COMING TOGETHER.

 (I just couldn’t *wait* to go hit those jumps again!!!)

\*As I picked my way down the side of the course to **watch/size-up my competition**, i **stopped and chatted** with each and every one of the **volunteers**,

(the **gatekeepers** – who *literally* keep the gates in place if someone crashes into one).

\*I ***connected*** with them.

\*I ***thanked*** them for all of their hard work, answered their questions, and showed them how important each of their roles was to each of us.

\*Those connections turned out to be **top of mind** for me as I rode the **chairlift** up over them for each of my race runs**. I felt like they really *wanted* me to win**. That wasn’t why I had stopped to express gratitude and appreciation, but it was a pretty **special byproduct**.

            One of the most **vivid memories**for me is the **moment that third day of training ended**, two days before our race.

             I WAS ASTONISHED BY THE way I just **instantly relaxed**.

🡪This *huge weight* had been lifted off my shoulders,

*right* when i needed it to go away the most.

            I remember thinking “**that’s it! I’m done**! I;ve done everything in my power to be ready for this race. There is *nothing* more that I can do to prepare. All I need to do now is just**see how it all unfolds**.”

**(SLIDE))** “quote about everything falling into place.

I ***TRULY BELIEVED*** THAT I HAD **DONE MY BEST**, & that **MY BEST WOULD BE GOOD ENOUGH**.

^^I believed that my motivation was ***pure*** and ***powerful***,

^^and I believed that my **positive attitude** and **excitement** would serve me well. ...

...The kind of positivity and excitement that is from **genuinely being in a good headspace**, which was the result of some of the things I’d done that could have been perceived as cutting corners. 🡪That start was a section that ***only a downhill mountain biker could nail***. I was **FIRED UP!**

When I woke up on race day, I felt like it **was MY DAY.**

I *convinced* myself that *every single thing* that happened...

                        was a sign that it was **MY DAY.**

          I REMEMBER LOOKING OUTSIDE, and **discovering that it was stormy.**

**I LOVE storm days**. .... You see, *most* days here, are storm days...

 (Those **European women** don’t even go skiing when it’s too foggy to see... a lot of their ski areas are above tree line, so they can’t just deek into the trees for better depth perception. )

 I KNEW THAT IT WOULD BE HARD TO SEE UP THERE. The **landmarks we had lined our takeoffs up with** ... (mountain peaks in the distance the *only thing* you can see as you approach those launching ramps)... **would be invisible**.

 But i *also* knew that **it would affect me less than it would affect the other my competitors**.

 I made these things that were *surely* stressing them out, MY COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE.

 I think TO GO INTO SUPERHUMAN-MODE, you **have to get a bit spiritual**. (and I had never been one to get spiritual!)

I **started believing** that **this was my** **destiny.** >>that *everything that had happened in my life* had *led me to that point*...

**...even farfetched things** like our family **car** breaking down right on the route that athletes’ bus had to take through what would otherwise have been unfamiliar part of East Vancouver up to the mountain once... **that happened right there so that I could have a warm** childhood **memory** of family time as i travelled through there, **to calm my nerves**.

...Or that my Mom had left Whistler, and ended up living in Vancouver, just down the street from that athletes village, so that I could feel right at home there during my Olympic experience.

You, know... *that* kind of thing.

 **I had learned to trust in my systems... to BELIEVE!**

 I KNEW **I DIDN’T NEED TO THINK ABOUT** the **seemingly ridiculous idea** of **winning the Olympics**,

* or how it might feel to be **standing in the start gate**, **about to race** for the victory,

...until I was ***actually* standing in the start** gate, ***about* to race for that victory**.

(I set manageable goals. It was **like a method of *defering* the stress**,

which *actually* **meant I didn’t really have to feel into it at all**... and I’ll tell you why!)

 >>I KNEW that the **first step was to have a good qualifying run**,

and I KNEW that I **didn’t need to worry about any of the other athletes**, or **their performances**... only the things I could control.

I KNEW that **my ski tech was the best**, and I **trusted my coaches** to only give me *valuable* information as it was needed.

I KNEW ***they knew*** *how* much **I appreciated them**, and that they **genuinely wanted to see me succeed**. (gatekeepers, volunteers too)

 >>I made a couple of tiny mistakes on my **qualifying run**, and finished .**02 of a second** behing the big Swedish girl, **Anna Holmlund**.

 That, to me, was a victory.

I KNEW **i could make up 2 hundredths of a second**, and i was happy that **all eyes were on her**, instead of me.

COMING 2ND ALSO MEANT that I would be in the **bottom bracket**,

--the **8th heat** to leave the start gate.

I HAD NOTICED, watching the **men’s race** 2 days earlier, that those in the FIRST HEAT had to spend **SO much time standing in the start gate** , **on standby**, boots buckled tight, goggles down ( it’s really hard to keep your goggles from fogging if you are nervous and sweating, by the way!)..

... whereas those in the LATER HEATS could **recognize a cadence** once the race was underway...

...once the **6th** heat went, **I’d know** almost exactly **how much time** i’d have **until** **the 7th went**, and then enter the start gate ***right when i needed to*** for mine, the **8th**.

 I DIDN’T EVEN HAVE A CHANCE **to stress about that first round** because i **was still celebrating that small victory** from the qualifier...

I **gained energy** from it., ***and confidence***.

 I **WON THAT ROUND OF 8**, and **advanced to the quarter final**.

>>My skis were like rockets.

 And again, **you see the pattern here?!** (and this applies to any series of goals!)

I WAS SO **FIRED UP FROM WINNING THAT ROUND OF 8** that i carried that energy right with me into the start gate of that **next round**, and **that next round**,

 and *then!!!* *before i knew it!!!!*

**I was standing in the start gate, about to race the Olympic final**,

>>and I was **WAYYYYY too excited** for the (negative ) **stress i thought would creep in there** to even *stand a chance!!!*

 I remember the **words that were echoing in my mind.**

“this is your day” “you were made for this race”

 ...a **Pele quote** about sailing through his opponents effortlessly...

...that made me feel like in was **locked into a groove of flowing energy**...

 “savour every moment”.

 I remember the **butterflies in my stomach**. >>They were ***exploding!!!*** to my outer extremeties... my ***whole body* was *buzzing***...

 I remember thinking “**this is good**.

**This is your body doing what it’s supposed to do**.

 You will have **more *strength***, more ***finesse***, more ***poise*** because of it.

***This*** is how to achieve that ***seemingly superhuman*** power.

 I realized later it was KIND OF LIKE AN OUT-OF-BODY EXPERIENCE... like my *mind* was very *separate* from my *body*. My body was just the tool ***I***, or ***my mind*** or ***my consciousness*** or ‘whatever you want to call it’ ***had* ...to carry-out this mission**.

                        ---*DEEP DOWN*... I felt so ***calm***... So ***at ease***

 The gate opened, and **my body took over.**

That’s the beauty of training at that level -- once you’ve **put the work in**, **your systems really run on autopilot** on race day. ***Like habit***.

The actual race run is a blur, but I REMEMBER CROSSING THE FINISH LINE,

and feeling that ***immense* sense of relief** .

 I put my **arms out** and **felt like I was *actually* floating.. flying**...

...like **my arms had become wings.**

**<(( SLIDE)) > photo of the finish line.**

I couldn’t remember anything that had just happened!

I just knew ***IT HAD WORKED****!!*

It was THE **ULTIMATE CULMINATION** of a *lifetime* of

--**striving for excellence** from all angles,

---uncovering and **tapping into deeprooted, heartfelt sources of motivation**,

---and **impeccable implementation of stress management strategies...**

in the pursuit of passion and purpose ---

---To ***BELIEVE*** that **my best was good enough to become an Olympic Champion.**

**<<CLICK>> PHOTO WITH MEDAL**

So **THANK YOU for listening!**

I am ***certain*** that *to accomplish* ***what you’ve*** *already* ***accomplished***,

-- you are **familiar with these concepts.**

>>> and **I hope I have inspired you** to *reflect on how they have impacted your life*,

>>>and to *continue to honour them* and *put them to work for you.*

 I **wish you all the best** in your **life** and **career** and I hope you leave Whistler feeling **fired up**!