

Olympic Athletes

Jeremiah Brown



Commitment, Perseverance

Jeremiah Brown is an athlete who has turned his love of sports into a unique profession - **helping other athletes cope with the aftermath of a life in sports.**

Jeremiah played hockey while a student at high school in Cobourg, but **didn't become a famous star** here. Likewise, at McMaster University in Hamilton, where he decided to learn how to play football. He did eventually earn a position on the Marauders Varsity Team as offensive linesman, but shoulder injuries and subsequent surgery ended his competitive football days.

His chance to shine began the day he first saw on TV the Canadian Men's Eight Rowing Team win Gold at the 2008 Olympics in Beijing. That day, Jeremiah set himself the **"impossible" goal of winning Gold** at the 2012 Olympics in London England, just 4 short years away.

He thought rowing would be easy to learn and that he would teach himself how to row! How wrong he was! He borrowed a single scull for his first rowing venture and headed for Rice Lake. His first mistake was putting on the oar locks backwards causing him to **fall in the lake after a mere 10 strokes.** Undaunted and determined he got himself back into the boat and tried again. He would experience many such dunkings into the water on the road to the 2012 Olympics.

After graduating from McMaster with a degree in Commerce, Jeremiah got a job at the TD Bank in Victoria, B.C and sought out national rowing coach, Doug White. Coach White saw the **steely determination in the young athlete** and began training him. Jeremiah joined the Canadian National Team training full time in January 2011 with renowned coach Mike Spracklen.



Jeremiah expressed his feelings for this very tough coach this way:

Mike was a polarizing figure...I felt a lot of rage towards him (yes, RAGE) at various times in the two years leading up to the Olympics...Mike was the only person around who had coached athletes to Olympic medals...he was my ticket to the podium.

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In describing those months of grueling training Jeremiah gives us an insight into what drives an elite athlete despite injury and other obstacles:

There is not a clear answer to why we willingly suffer on a daily basis. Before I began training at this level I thought it had to be the ego and even vanity that pushed athletes on in the pursuit of an Olympic gold medal. But the ego gets broken down in those first 2 months of training and vanity is overshadowed by fatigue and, at times, despair. At some primitive level we all have a disposition towards fighting or fleeing. The elite athlete is a fighter. When tested, he or she will feel the same symptoms as their fleeing counterpart; fear, nervousness, tension, anxiety, etc, the difference being that something irrational will compel the elite athlete to fight and overcome these symptoms just because it's in their nature. That's why I suffer. I don't have a choice. I'm a fighter and I can't turn it off.

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All that hard work paid off for Jeremiah, and the dream of standing on the podium at London was realized. **After a potentially disastrous preparatory heat, the Canadians fought off the British and Australians** in an exciting final, almost catching the Germans, **but thrilled to be second and silver!**

Jeremiah counts himself lucky that he was spared the post-Olympic depression that afflicts many other athletes. Part of the way forward was to **throw himself into one of his other passions, music**. He plays the drums (and has created a platform to absorb the percussion so as not to disturb the neighbours in the condo below) and - he is an **Honourary Fellow of the Royal Conservatory of Music**.

Jeremiah now works for the Canadian Olympic Committee **helping athletes cope with the "real world" where the demands are so different**. He is an in-demand motivational speaker and blogger as well as the author of an upcoming autobiography, *"The Four Year Olympian"*.



I try to impress on people that striving for excellence in whatever you gravitate toward will give you a road map for excellence in every other endeavor in your life. The painful truth is that you realize that nothing worth achieving is easy...

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Jeremiah Brown is truly an inspiration for aspiring Olympians everywhere!