

CINDY KLASSEN BE THE HERO IN YOUR OWN STORY

“As soon as the gun sounds, get out in front of everybody, and go as hard as you can for the whole race” (Cindy’s Dad whispered in her ear she entered a bike race as a young child). And it seems that’s what she did for the rest of her life.

BUT WAIT! DID YOU KNOW?

The legendary Cindy Klassen originally had a dream to go to the Olympics for hockey in 1998! She did everything in her power to become a great hockey player, and she went to the team try outs in 1997. She thought the tryouts went well and she’d done her best. And she was cut.

“I was devastated. It was just heartbreaking finding out that the dream I’d had for years wasn’t going to come true for me.”

DEVELOP A RESILIENT MINDSET

She didn’t give up. She decided to move to Calgary where she would get a chance to attend some practices with the national team.

Due to self-proclaimed embarrassing factors, that didn’t work out either. It seemed hockey was over for her, all her high school sports were also over, and she was looking for something to do. Her parents suggested speed skating, which initially did not appeal to her at all.

But she finally gave it a try, and it was so much harder than she thought it was going to be!

“There I was at 18 years old, just struggling to make my way around the ice surface, hoping that I wasn’t going to fall down, and little five-year-old kids are flying past me. So, it was a very humbling experience.”

REFLECT

Do disappointments drown your dreams or fuel your next steps?

When has a set-back or failure changed the course of your life? It takes courage to face failures and to continue to accept yourself in the face of them.

How do you practice accepting your emotions and moving forward with a deliberate mindset?

Despite the struggle, she decided to continue training, hoping to improve her skating skills for hockey.

“I think I liked the challenge. I wanted to see what I could do.”

And now, looking back on her failed hockey try out, she reflects,

“There were some outstanding hockey players there. It was an honor to be able to go to those tryouts. They unfortunately didn’t turn out the way I wanted them to. But that’s the way life goes sometimes.”

And in Cindy’s case, becoming a nationally recognized hero in another sport might never have happened otherwise.

BECOME EMOTIONALLY AGILE

That didn’t mean it was easy. After a mistaken false start at her first World Cup, she learned from her mistakes and got better. Only a few years later, she was at the 2002 Olympics.

“Leading up to my first race, I was extremely nervous. I couldn’t believe it. This was the biggest competition of my life and something that I had always dreamed of. It felt to me like the whole world was watching.”

She was so nervous that she had trouble eating and sleeping. Then after getting emails from teachers and students at her former high school, it hit her;

“I had done all the preparation I could. I couldn’t change anything at that point. I was as ready as I was going to be. And so, I didn’t have to be nervous.”

And the rest is 3-time Olympic, 6-time medal winning, record breaking history.

EXPLORE

[Listen to Soccer Olympic Champion, Desiree Scott](#) for another great story about following a unique path.

[Listen to Dr. Curt Tribble](#), a heart surgeon who talks openly about his process for navigating failure. His process of “remember and forgive” is invaluable for resiliency.