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Olympic Gold Medalist Speaks Out

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Press Release

Take Control Of Your Life NOW Says Olympic Gold Medalist

Sexually abused by her coach, breast cancer survivor, personal training coach, and motivational speaker tells what you can do to be truly Happy!.

San Diego, CA, November ??, 2007: In 1972 Deena Deardurff Schmidt achieved what everyone has always considered the ultimate goal, winning an Olympic Gold Medal. Standing on the high center podium with her gold medal around her neck and listening to the playing of The Star Spangled Banner brought tears of joy. But there was more behind those tears than the triumph everyone saw.

For 4 years she had been sexually abused by her swimming coach, Paul Bergen. Going to daily practice sessions was a duel challenge - training her body for the grueling competition that lay ahead and succumbing to the advances of her coach.

"I wanted so much to reach my goal and please my coach. It's as if I had to take the abuse or lose the opportunity to become the athlete I had always wanted to be. I just regarded the exploitation as a price that I had to pay," Schmidt confided. Over the years, I've seen so many others trying to do the same thing - always unsuccessfully, always leading to unhappiness"

The challenges in her life didn't stop with the sexual abuse. The lump she felt in her breast was diagnosed as cancerous. Her natural beauty and her always positive attitude would be put to the test once more when she underwent a mastectomy.

"Once the shock wore off I felt, better me than someone who could not handle the unbelievable pressure. Ultimately, my husband and I separated and my contract with the university where I coached was not renewed. What else could possibly go wrong?" Deena commented with a certain amount of humor in her voice.

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Yet through all these challenges, challenges that would defeat most of us, Deena kept her chin

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up and weathered it all. How she got passed all this, how she overcame these hurdles, and how she kept herself and her children safe and well is an inspiring and wonderful story - a story each of us can emulate, according to Schmidt.

"When I work with and train aspiring swimming athletes, when I train business people in the corporate environment, I remind them, perhaps a bit aggressively, that they will never achieve success or reach their goals unless they are focusing on themselves," Mrs. Schmidt admonished. "I know this idea may sound as if one is being rather selfish. I promise you that you are not being selfish. It sounds cliché, but 'you can't help anyone until you learn to help yourself'"

It reminds us of the safety points one hears as an airline passenger. "Put the mask on yourself, then help those next to you"

Her students and clients constantly remark about this amazing woman. "Every time I think to myself 'Can I do this?' or 'This is too hard', I listen to Deena's words, I know what she's been through and how she succeeded. I am inspired to push myself. At the end of the day I see Deena's smile and I know I'm going to be able to win," for former collegiate, Samantha Peters says proudly.

"When Deena speaks to our staff, whether it be senior staff or new-hires, everyone performs so much better. Productivity soars immediately," corporate president, Frank Miller, asserts. "She's the best thing that ever happened to us,"

At age 50, Deena Schmidt, a San Diego, California, resident, spends her time with her two sons Michael and Tyler and training & coaching. In the field of athletics, her specialty is swimming. She has taken her life experience and developed it into training vehicle all of us can put to good use. Corporations and associations invite her to speak on overcoming life's challenges and reaching that seemingly unreachable star - personal happiness.

With all the news about the use of performance-enhancing drugs by athletes, Deena comments, "The most effective drug is your own desire to be happy. When you realizes this, when you decide to be truly happy, a whole new world opens up to you instantly. Fear and guilt disappear. The first step is to make that total commitment to yourself to be Happy! Then whatever life throws at you becomes so much more easier to face," Deena Schmidt encouraged.

Ms. Schmidt can be reached via e-mail at deenadschmidt@aol.com.

- 30 -

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