

# Profiles of Self-Discipline

## Shaun White – 2010 Winter Olympic Gold Medalist in Snow Boarding

Shaun White had two major surgeries to correct heart defects before he was one year old. By age four, Shaun was skiing as fast as he could in a fearless effort to keep up with his older brother. At age six, his mom decided to put him on a snowboard, trying to slow him down. Unfortunately for his mom, it didn't slow Shaun down.

Shaun entered his first amateur snowboarding competition at age seven. He won.

When he wasn't able to practice snowboarding in the summer, he turned to skateboarding, improving his boarding skills year round. Between the two sports, Shaun holds 16 "X Games" medals, 10 of them gold.

For the 2010 Winter Olympic Games, Shaun wanted to go all the way and invent new snowboard tricks. In an intense one-month training session, he perfected his signature back-to-back double cork variations - a double-back rodeo, a front double-cork 10, a switchback 9, a Cab double-cork 10, and the daring Double McTwist 1260 that he showcased during his victory lap at the Olympic games.

Shaun White also finds time to give back. He supports Target House, a place for families and patients of St. Jude's Children's Hospital to stay during a child's long-term care. He paid for the *Shaun White Great Room*, a place for the sick children to hang out and meet new friends.

On Shaun White's official website, [www.shaunwhite.com](http://www.shaunwhite.com), the first sentence of his official biography says it all: "Shaun White is many things, but most notably he's driven."

## Kristi Yamaguchi - 1992 Olympics Womens' Figure Skating Gold Medalist

Kristi was the first American woman to win the Olympics in figure skating since 1976. Kristi Yamaguchi grew up in Fremont, California. She is a fourth generation Japanese American.

Kristi was born with a birth defect, **clubfoot (foot pointed inward)**. Some children are treated with surgery. Others, like Kristi, wear heavy casts and undergo physical therapy to straighten the feet.

As a little girl, Kristi watched her big sister Lori ice skating, so of course she wanted to try it. Skating was also recommended as physical therapy for her club feet. When she was five years old, she was further inspired by watching 1976 Olympic Champion Dorothy Hamill on T.V.

Kristi said, "I loved it from the beginning. I was practicing before school and things started to get more serious. By junior high, it was like, 'All right. My family's invested a lot of time and money into the sport. Is this something I want to continue to do?' Because the training time and juggling with school becomes an issue. So at that point I started competing and representing the state of California, and continued to progress. I definitely wanted to keep at it, so my parents said, 'All right, as long as you keep your grades up and you're giving it 100 percent.'"



After Kristi Yamaguchi's Olympic gold medal in 1992, she continued to compete as a professional skater. For many years she starred in the skating show "Stars on Ice." Kristi Yamaguchi was inducted into both the World Figure Skating Hall of Fame and the US Figure Skating Hall of Fame in 1998.

Kristi founded the "Always Dream" Foundation in 1996. The mission of the foundation is to encourage and support the hopes and dreams of children. One project of her foundation is building playgrounds where children of all abilities can play together. She is determined to make a positive difference in children's lives.

In 2008, Kristi took on a new challenge as a contestant on *Dancing with the Stars*. She practiced for several months for up to six hours a day with her partner Mark Ballas in order to break what she called bad ice skating habits. She and her partner won the 6<sup>th</sup> season championship of *Dancing with the Stars*.

### ***Jim Whittaker – First American to climb highest mountain on Earth – Mt. Everest***

Courageous, hardworking mountaineer and outdoorsman James W. Whittaker embodies the spirit of adventure, determination, and self-discipline. Jim was born in Seattle, WA in 1929, in the shadow of Mt. Rainier. As a boy he was a member of the Boy Scouts and the Mountaineers Club of Seattle.

Jim and his twin brother, Lou, climbed "The Tooth," a 5,605-foot tall spire of rock in the Cascade Range of Washington when they were 14 years old. By age 21 both brothers were mountain guides on Mt. Rainier. They led life-saving rescues of skiers, climbers, and aircraft. In the Army, Jim taught mountaineering and skiing to Tenth Special Forces and Green Berets during the Korean War.

Jim was the first American to reach the summit of Mount Everest. He reached the top on May 1, 1963. He ran out of oxygen but managed to reach the summit and plant a US flag. This was a great accomplishment, but just the beginning for Jim Whittaker.

In 1978, Jim climbed K2, the second tallest mountain in the world, and a harder mountain to climb than Everest. He led the first successful American team to summit that mountain.

Jim Whittaker led the Earth Day 20 International Peace Climb in 1990 that brought together climbers from the United States, Soviet Union, and People's Republic of China to climb Mount Everest. Jim persuaded three superpowers to put aside their differences to support this effort for the sake of world peace and the environment. Those climbers hauled off more than two tons of trash left on the mountain by previous climbers.

In a promotion of his 1999 autobiography, Jim shared his philosophy of life. He said, "I heard a phrase not too long ago that pretty well captures my philosophy of life: 'If you aren't living on the edge, you're taking up too much space.' It has nothing to do with thrill-seeking. It's about making the most of every moment, about stretching your own boundaries, about being willing to learn constantly and putting yourself in situations where learning is possible-sometimes even critical to your survival. Being out on the edge, with everything at risk, is where you learn - and grow - the most."

He also said, "You never conquer a mountain. Mountains can't be conquered; you conquer yourself."



## Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi

1869 –1948

Gandhi is known around the world as Mahatma Gandhi ("Great Soul"). Gandhi led efforts to reduce poverty, increase women's rights, encourage tolerance and respect, and end discrimination. He is best known for his belief and practice of nonviolence and peaceful resistance in response to **injustice** (unfairness). His leadership brought India's independence and also inspired movements for civil rights and freedom across the world, including South Africa and the United States

Gandhi was jailed often in South Africa and India for his nonviolent protests. He often used **fasting** (willingly not eating for a period of time) as a form of protest. He would refuse to eat until his demands were met or until his death.

Gandhi spent one day of each week in silence. He believed this brought him inner peace and made him a better listener.

Gandhi's life and beliefs have influenced important leaders and movements, including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement in the United States and Nelson Mandela and the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa. While he was a Senator, U.S. President Barack Obama said, "Throughout my life, I have always looked to Mahatma Gandhi as an inspiration, because he embodies the kind of transformational change that can be made when ordinary people come together to do extraordinary things. That is why his portrait hangs in my Senate office: to remind me that real results will come not just from Washington – they will come from the people."

Gandhi set 11 rules for himself and disciplined himself to follow them:

1. Tell the truth.
2. Practice nonviolence.
3. Use self-control.
4. Eat a healthy diet.
5. Don't steal.
6. Don't possess more than you need.
7. Work hard for what you need.
8. Use local products.
9. Have courage and love others.
10. Don't feel or act superior to others.
11. Respect other's beliefs.

Gandhi died in 1948. He was shot while speaking at a prayer meeting.

