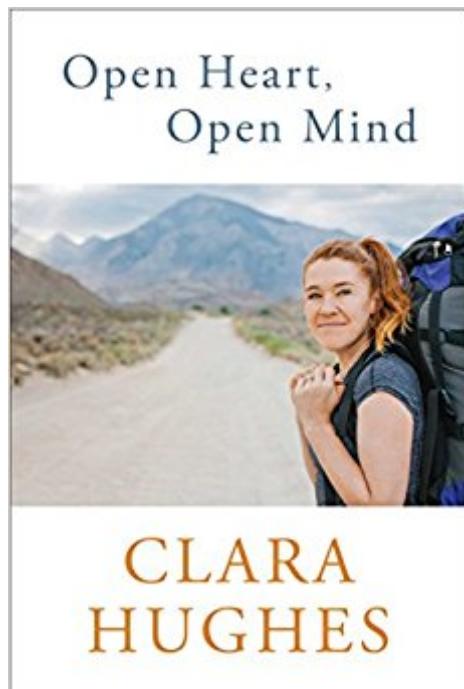


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Open Heart, Open Mind



Synopsis

From one of Canada's most decorated Olympians comes a raw but life-affirming story of one woman's struggle with depression. In a world where winning meant everything, her biggest competitor was herself. In 2006, when Clara Hughes stepped onto the Olympic podium in Torino, Italy, she became the first and only athlete ever to win multiple medals in both Summer and Winter Games. Four years later, she was proud to carry the Canadian flag at the head of the Canadian team as they participated in the opening ceremony of the Vancouver Olympic Winter Games. But there's another story behind her celebrated career as an athlete, behind her signature billboard smile. While most professional athletes devote their entire lives to training, Clara spent her teenage years using drugs and drinking to escape the stifling home life her alcoholic father had created in Elmwood, Winnipeg. She was headed nowhere fast when, at sixteen, she watched transfixed in her living room as gold medal speed skater Gagnon Boucher effortlessly raced in the 1988 Calgary Olympics. Dreaming of one day competing herself, Clara channeled her anger, frustration and raw ambition into the endurance sports of speed skating and cycling. By 2010, she had become a six-time Olympic medalist. But after more than a decade in the gruelling world of professional sports that stripped away her confidence and bruised her body, Clara began to realize that her physical extremes, her emotional setbacks, and her partying habits were masking a severe depression. After winning bronze in the last speed skating race of her career, she decided to retire from that sport, determined to repair herself. She has emerged as one of our most committed humanitarians, advocating for a variety of social causes both in Canada and around the world. In 2010, she became national spokesperson for Bell Canada's Let's Talk campaign in support of mental health awareness, using her Olympic standing to share the positive message of the power of forgiveness. Told with honesty and passion, *Open Heart, Open Mind* is Clara's personal journey through physical and mental pain to a life where love and understanding can thrive. This revelatory and inspiring story will touch the hearts of all Canadians.

Book Information

Hardcover: 240 pages

Publisher: Touchstone; Canadian Origin edition (September 8, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1476756988

ISBN-13: 978-1476756981

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.9 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars 4 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #648,835 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #59 in Books > Sports & Outdoors > Miscellaneous > Women in Sports #730 in Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Mental Health > Depression #3002 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Sports & Outdoors

Customer Reviews

“An amazing athlete, a great person, and a wonderful motivating example for all!” (Joëf Juneau, ice hockey Olympic medalist and former NHL player) “Clara Hughes is both an extraordinary and an ordinary Canadian. This honest memoir reveals the determination of a champion to overcome external adversity and internal struggles, finding her place as an athlete, an advocate, and a person.” (Dr. David Goldbloom, Senior Medical Advisor, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health) “Clara’s story is just like her: It is energetic, strong, full of character, and very powerful. You really feel the determination within her and you cannot fail to wish you could award her another gold medal for the way she turned her life around and makes it her duty to help others.” (Gatien Boucher, speed skating Olympic medalist) “Clara brings us along on her journey from childhood to her incredible Olympic success, through her victories and her failures, all while dealing with her own personal torment. I now believe Clara to be superhuman, not for her incredible Olympic success and athletic feats, but for her dogged battle against depression, first for herself and now for the rest of us through her advocacy work. I couldn’t stop reading.” (Johann Koss, CEO, Right to Play International) “Her book puts us on the handlebars and rides us headlong into a childhood tainted by her father’s alcoholism, a multi-generational addiction pattern that affected herself and both her grandfathers as well. [...] With the same stealth and fight that brought her gold, Clara Hughes is talking, sharing and learning. [...] She’s unstoppable, even in the off-season.” (Vancouver Sun) “Honest and courageous.” (Guelph Mercury) “... a fine, honest book, a revealing look inside the life of a world-class athlete who also happened to have the intelligence and sensibility to regard herself while this was happening. It’s like having an unusually perceptive journalist with unparalleled access to the mind of an athlete.” (Montreal Gazette)

Six-time Olympic medalist Clara Hughes became the only athlete to win multiple medals in both the Summer and Winter Games. She is a member of the Order of Manitoba and an officer of the Order

of Canada, has received a star on Canada's Walk of Fame, and was inducted into Canada's Sports Hall of Fame. Hughes is the national spokesperson for Bell Canada's Let's Talk initiative, a campaign dedicated to breaking down the stigma of mental health. In 2014, she was awarded the Meritorious Service Cross, which recognizes those whose outstanding personal commitment has brought honour to Canada. She lives with her husband, Peter, in Canmore, Alberta, and continues to enjoy bike touring and hiking.

A real down to earth book. Clara has so much heart and open mind to be able to tell her earlier life

Loved hearing Clara's story, her struggles and triumphs!

Self discovery and all that comes with it! I loved this book!

You can find me glued to the television during national and world sports coverage - especially the Olympics. I remember watching Clara Hughes race over many Olympics - she is a six time Olympian with six medals to her credit - in two sports - speed skating and cycling. She has numerous other accolades and victories. But what you don't see on television is what's going on behind the scenes, what it takes for an athlete to rise to this level, the obstacles they've met, the obstacles overcome and who they are besides being a public figure and athlete. Clara Hughes' newly released memoir, Open Heart, Open Mind, lays all of that bare. Hughes' father was a verbally abusive alcoholic, Clara drank, did drugs and skipped school. When she did start to channel her energy into competitive sport she landed with a coach who was results driven, caring little about her mental health. Hughes has suffered from depression for most of her life. In 2010, she put her own struggles in the public eye when she became the national spokesperson for the Bell Let's Talk mental health initiative - "A wide-reaching, multi-year program designed to break the silence around mental illness and support mental health all across Canada." I am always appreciative of reading someone's memoir - the bravery in sharing your life with the public. Hughes shares both professional and personal. I was fascinated by the behind the scenes look at a professional athlete's training and performance. Clara's athletic accomplishments are extraordinary. But it is her personal triumphs that are outstanding. Hughes has taken that same energy and drive that she used in sports, applied it to her mental well being and advocating for others through numerous projects, such as Right to Play. The title? Hughes participated in a Squamish First Nations brushing-off ceremony in 2010....."Another elder addressed each of us in turn, opening our hearts

to the energy of the flame and brushing away negativity. He told us, I cannot heal you of your pain. Only you can heal yourself with your open heart and your open mind."Wise words. Great read. Amazing and inspiring woman.

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