**Paralympian Taiga Kantane: “You can do everything, when you are.”**

26.07.2012

**Soon we will be watching the Olympic Games keeping our fingers crossed for our athletes. At the same time, feeling very proud, we will follow our Paralympians, who will take up and carry the torch from Olympians at the end of August and in September, and will be opening the Paralympic Games 2012 in London. Taiga Kantane is one of the nine athletes of Latvian Paralympian elite and a participant of Paralympians support movement “Tu esi. Tu vari” (“You are. You can”.). Taiga will participate in the Paralympic games in the discus throw and shot-put disciplines.**

Taiga had a stroke when she was 35, and since then half of her body has been paralyzed. Seven years later this lady has proved to herself and others, that the impossible could become possible if you are an optimist with will-power and self-discipline. This is a story about big and small victories in anyone’s life. This is a story about sincerity, passion, vim and vigour. Taiga tells her story about the difficulties she has been through on her way to the Paralympic Games. Feel inspired! One of her ideas may become your thought of the day!

**How did you come to the idea to take a part in the Paralympic Games?**

That has not been my original target. But the proverb says: “A soldier who doesn’t dream of becoming a general is a bad one”. For any athlete – whether fit or not – the Olympic Games appear to be the highest achievement. For us the Paralympic Games are the goal. Doctors say: „Be happy that you have escaped death! “ So, all my future depends on me, when I have been given so much for granted. Upon my own hook I have got to the Paralympic Games. I have used to think about what I could do and what hobby to choose for my leisure time. I used to like the mushrooms hunting, (during summer after Ligo celebrations) while I was healthy. I was spending almost all my time in the forest and loved playing hide-and-seek with mushrooms. Since this hobby is inaccessible for me I have decided that I could get into some sport activity.

Then I had to think over what sport can I do using one arm and one leg. I do play chess or checkers. Because I am not very patient, I do not enjoy those kinds of sport, therefore, I had to choose something more active. I have come to an idea that I could try a throw discipline. My luck has brought me to meet the coach Aldis Shupulnieks. At first, I thought to get involved only into one sport, but my coach has advised me to choose one more. Shot-put and discus throw sports don’t exclude each other; on the contrary, they complement each other. I became unwell in 2005 and got back to sports in 2007. And step by step I have reached the participation in the Paralympic Games.

**Which were the greatest challenges regarding the participation in the Paralympic Games?**

The greatest challenge for me was to get over my own inertia, laziness and apathy.

The greatest battle an individual can face is the battle with him/her.

**How to find the right ways to push yourself beyond your own limits?**

Just do it! I told my psychologist that I do lack the confidence, self-esteem and belief in myself.

His answer was: ”Just go for it, the confidence will come.” The confidence would never come before you have actually performed. So, at the moment I am facing my own trial- to make sure, it is what it is!

**Do you have training’s routine? How does the training vary?**

My life is a routine. I have a plan I follow in my everyday life. There is a special schedule, which helps me to discipline myself.

Sometimes I get irritated and angry if someone interferes into my timetable. But I can get over that as well. While comprehending my training routine, I have realized that it is a complex of exercises, which are quite plain and may seem even childish. It seems that such a kind of child’s exercises would not be able to help you to achieve anything, may be playing cars could be more effective. Training should seem serious to make you feel its importance.

But then, I try to talk with myself like with a wise person. After having a stroke I am not able to eat, to get dressed- I have to learn everything from the beginning. Why the little children do not complain about that they do not want to eat or to put their boots on? We have developed the programme with assistance of doctors and psychotherapists and ergo therapists, which includes the game approach during every training. If there is a task to stretch across the table-then I need to put a small ball in front of me and make myself to push it forwards. There should be a tiny idea, target, and creative thinking to start it off! Every day is the same-just spice it up! But the spicing depends on the individual. You should find and develop your taste buds yourself!

**What are the essentials to fulfil your dreams?**

First of all the person should understand, what is it he or she wants. A person should be able to specify and find out the dream. Once I have read somewhere that very often people set their target to be fulfilled in the time of their whole life, while they could have achieved the same result in a couple of days. But they speak about it as a lifetime ambition. So another key is –just do it!

**What is the motivation for you to fulfil your dreams?**

I have philosophical attitude to everything. I went to Saint Peter once, but he did not except me. Make the conclusion yourselves then! There is no point to try to break the locked door. First thing to do is to earn your changes yourself. My motivations are my interests in life, world, and my inner self. The main thing is not to get bored with yourself and not to give up. Do not write yourself off! That’s why the moto: ’You are, you can’- does work as long as you exist, you are able. You can do anything!

**What does inspire you?**

Over the last few years I have been reading philosophical and esoteric books which give your ideas of living your life in different ways. However you are to make your own choice. The feeling of joy does inspire me! I enjoy communication with other people. Even an unexpected phone call or text message gives me inspiration. It can be just a little news about someone.

**What is your daily routine?**

I usually get up at 4 o’clock in the morning and do my morning exercises. My daily routine means –everything should be planned in advance. The evening before I decide, where I will go tomorrow, what shall I do, how everything will be carried out? That is my way of planning to live my life.

**Is there any thought or saying which gets you going in your life?**

Actually, there is! While one door is open, you cannot open another one. You could fulfil your dreams and achieve your goals faster, only if you are looking ahead of yourself. Movement and looking out should always bring up the future.

Text: Madara Zvejniece

Source: <http://cosmo.lv/personibas/16075-kamer-esi-tu-vari-jebko-paralimpiete-taiga-kantane.htm>