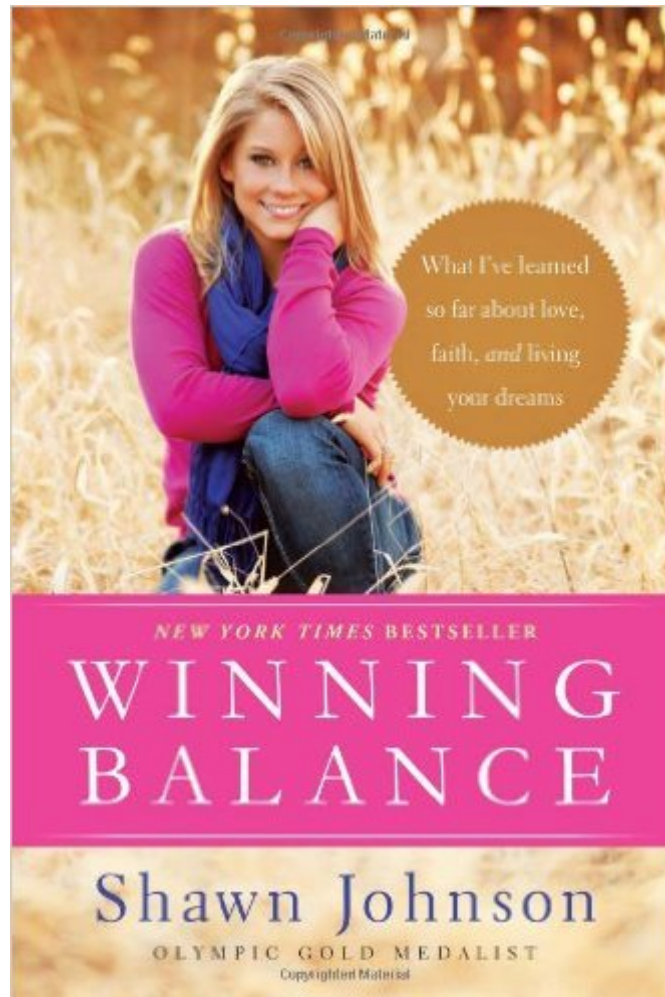


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Winning Balance: What I've Learned So Far About Love, Faith, And Living Your Dreams



Synopsis

Twenty-year-old American gymnast Shawn Johnson is a four-time Olympic gold and silver medalist; a national- and world-champion athlete. Already a popular role model to all ages, in 2009 she captured the national spotlight again when she won the widely popular Dancing with the Stars. Yet Shawn is no stranger to hard work and adversity. Her loss of the major gymnastics prize everyone expected her to win in Beijing, the all-around Olympic gold medal, was the loss of a dream sheâ™d worked for since childhood. And later, she suffered a potentially career-ending injury in a skiing accident that forced her life to a halt and made her rethink what was really important. She wasnâ™t sure who she was anymore. She wasnâ™t sure what her goals were. And she wasnâ™t sure she was satisfied with where she was with her faith and God. Could she find the right kind of success in lifeâ•the kind that doesnâ™t involve medals or trophies, but peace, love, and lasting joy? This is the amazing true journey of how the young woman who won an Olympic gold medal on the balance beam became even more balanced.

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Customer Reviews

When I think of Shawn I think of a great athlete with a bubbly personality and a big smile. As a gymnastics fan I would've liked to read more on her dealings with other athletes, coaches, us gymnastic staff, travels, etc. I realize she was still competing while she worked on this book so maybe that played a factor. She did share some stories of her adventure in Beijing and they were fun tales. I did find the 2nd half of the book (post Olympics) surprising and honest, a lot of highs and lows for a young woman. Although I think she is probably 15-20 years too young to write a memoir

on life lessons this is a decent book for a 20 year old athlete and is a fairly entertaining read.

"I was an interesting combination of nerd, tomboy, and girly girl," Olympic Gold Medalist Shawn Johnson writes in *Winning Balance*. Shawn knows what it's like to be a girl who doesn't always fit in, who isn't part of the cliques, and who can't always figure out what life is supposed to mean. She also knows what it's like to lose the gold medal everyone expected her to win--and then to win again where she least expected it. *Winning Balance* might best be categorized as an inspirational memoir. With co-author Nancy French, Shawn describes her struggles and successes in finding true balance in life. This is the story of Shawn's journey from her childhood in Des Moines, Iowa, to her introduction to gymnastics, her growing love for the sport--and its competitiveness--and finally to international fame and the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Along the way, though, Shawn tries to follow two competing desires--"I wanted to win, and I wanted to be just like everyone else." My biggest quibble with the book? Since much of its promo material focuses on Shawn's 2008 skiing accident, I expected the book to address this and her recovery process more in depth. It does highlight how Shawn struggled to find purpose and direction after her win--and how the injury actually helped Shawn refocus on her priorities--but don't expect a lot of detail. Still, I found Shawn's story to be encouraging and enjoyable. The book is an easy read, and each chapter ends with a short thought for reflection. Enthusiasm seems to win out over depth in places, but overall, I found Shawn to be an engaging role model. She talks openly about the pressures she faced and her family's attempts to keep her sane in the midst of an intense training schedule. I liked her sincerity and vision, and I would recommend this book to any teen girl to read. [My thanks to Tyndale for sending me a review copy of *Winning Balance*, in exchange for my honest opinion of this book.]

Shawn Johnson was a 2008 Olympic gymnast who won three silver medals and one gold and also captured the heart of America. Her energetic smile, pint size body and precious heart attracted many and now she is here to tell her own story. Her story is not the typical Olympic medalist story at all and it's not a chronological autobiography either. *Winning Balance* is more of a memoir filled with lessons learned and how Shawn learned to keep balance in her life. Nothing about her life was typical but at the exact same time she was your typical American girl. She went to public school, participated in school activities, dreamed about her future, but all while she was doing your typical things she was falling in love with gymnastics. She never thought about going to the Olympics till she was older and thought that it was possible. Through it all she was able to live her dreams and more, but had to relearn many times what it takes to keep balance in her life and what really is

important. I can't even tell you how much I loved this book. To be honest I had never heard of Shawn Johnson before I saw this book was coming out (I missed watching the olympics 2008) and I have always been fascinated with the sport. I just knew I had to read her story and I was not disappointed at all. I fell in love with Shawn and her story and find her raw talent and passion to be so encouraging. Shawn drew me into her story so much that I finished the book within 24 hours! Since reading the book I have enjoyed going on youtube.com and watching her many gymnastic performances and her dances from Dancing with the Stars. I highly recommend this book to anyone who loves gymnastics, wanting to be encouraged by her strength and faith, and anyone who has already loved her and wants to know her story! *I received this book through Radiant Lit and Tyndale for the purpose of this review!

I read this first to see if it's appropriate for my tweenish daughter, a gymnastic fan, and I feel it is. It is NOT primarily a memoir of her gymnastics training, experiences, or career, so if you are looking for that, this isn't it. She does of course talk about it, but it doesn't provide a lot of details on the training or moves itself. Her emphasis is her personal journey to date, and the second half is all post-Olympics, talking about her Dancing With The Stars experience, and her personal struggles to make sense of her life post-gymnastics. She talks a lot about her Christian faith in this part of the book, but I didn't feel it was proselytizing or judgmental. She is young, so it does seem immature compared to most memoirs- but most memoirs aren't written when someone is 20! For the short life she has had, she has done a lot, and she has a great optimism and heart to her. So if you are a fan, and/or a young girl or woman, you will probably really appreciate this book.

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