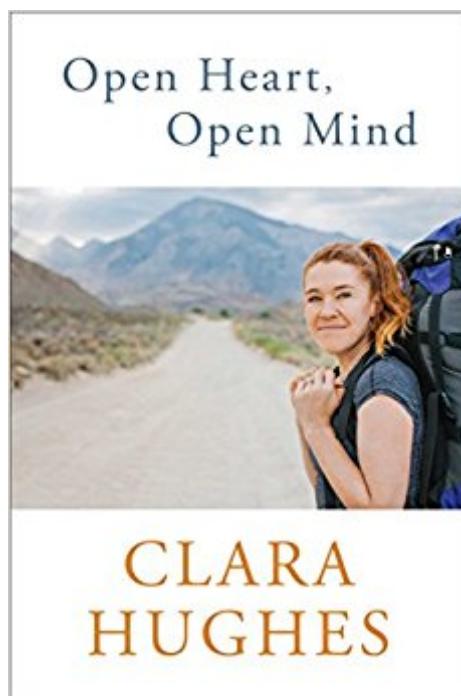


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# Open Heart, Open Mind



## Synopsis

From one of Canadaâ™s most decorated Olympians comes a raw but life-affirming story of one womanâ™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 thereâ™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 GaÃ©tan 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 Canadaâ™s Letâ™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 Claraâ™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

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## Customer Reviews

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?

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