

# SNOWBOARD



## **Ursula Bruhin** (Switzerland)

Four time world champion, ranked in top 1-3 in the World Cup from 1999 to 2006, with 109 podiums.

Statement:

*“All of the hate and anger against my ex-boyfriend vanished when my sister prayed for me”*

Ursula was a four time world champion, world number one, two and three until 2006. She finished seventh in the parallel giant slalom at the 2006 Winter Olympics.

In 1994, just three years after she started snowboarding, Ursula participated for the first time in regional racing and the Swiss Cup. Immediately, she placed in the top ten. "During that time I worked full-time as a confectioner in Zermatt and was therefore able to train during lunch breaks." Without a professional coach or any special training camps, she won the Swiss championships just four years later.

In 1998, at the peak of her success, Ursula recalls experiencing "something like a crisis". "I was injured and had to undergo surgery on my knee, and my boyfriend left me. Because I wasn't able to train, I gained a lot of weight. On top of that, I was angry at my ex-boyfriend. That relationship was detrimental to my self-esteem and made me feel miserable. I actually wondered if anybody would miss me or be sad if I don't exist anymore."

In this dark time, Ursula noticed that her sister had a very different approach to life. "My sister attended a Bible School at that time and projected a very satisfied and peaceful appearance. Her eyes sparkled with joy. She told me, 'I think God wants the best for you.' "

Ursula says, when she was a child she went to Church with her family every Saturday or Sunday. The sermons made no sense to her, and that's why she no longer attended Church when she worked in Zermatt. However, in the middle of despair, she asked her sister again for advice on how she could come out of this crisis of hatred and rage. She said: 'You should forgive your ex-boyfriend,' but it was not possible for Ursula at the time. The wounds of the failed relationship were too deep and she could not bring herself to pray.

*"I realized that God has the best plan for me, whether I win or lose"*



So, her sister prayed that Jesus may forgive her ex-boyfriend. "At the moment, when my sister started to pray, the burden of hatred and anger was lifted from my heart!" Amazed at how God freed me, Ursula began to trust in Jesus more and more. She experienced firsthand that God helps, gives blessing and heals, if you ask it in the name of Jesus. But she was torn: "Should I give my life to Him unconditionally? HE does with me whatever HE wants? And, I was afraid that he would put me in a monastery, but I wanted to snowboard!"

Ursula decided to continue Snowboard racing again and was successful. So she thought: 'If God was angry with me, HE would not have allowed me the gift of success.' My faith in God continued to grow and served as a source of strength. HE gave me strength when I thought I had no more, and even let me fall when I thought I didn't need Him. I realized that God has the best plan for me, whether I win or lose."

Through her own initiative in management, Ursula joined the World Cup Circus at the age of 28 as a professional athlete. Ursula was devastated when, in 2002, as the second best Swiss Snowboarder, she was not selected for the Olympic Games. She felt unfairly treated and was still hoping that somehow a door would open for her to attend the Salt Lake City games. As a devout Christian, she asked the question: "Does God really want the best for me?" After a long time of doubting, she realized, "If God only wants the best for me then going to the Olympics was not in his plan. HE must have something better for me." In retrospect, she could say that the numerous encouragements, and letters she's received have become a gold medal in the heart. This gave her renewed strength for the coming races.

In 2006, Ursula found herself again in the qualifying race for the Olympics. During her hard training, it became increasingly difficult to stay motivated. She prayed and asked God, "Do you really want me to once again give everything I have towards it?" Ursula remembers that she asked for a sign, whether she should or should not go on. "One day while jogging, I heard music and had a sudden feeling that I could jog forever and never get tired. I felt like God was telling me, 'Yes, I will give you the power to do this.' This memory was my engine at that moment and also when the training was difficult." After the intense training, Ursula was certain that she would win Olympic gold. But, when she realized in the final that she will not win, she never-the-less felt joy and happiness in her heart. A Bible verse reminded her, "The joy of the Lord is your strength." Nehemiah 8:10

At the end of the season 2006, Ursula ended her career as a professional snowboarder. She is now dedicated to new challenges in exclusive events. She serves as a coach in sports camps and as a sports mentor for athletes and individuals.



[www.ursulabruhin.ch](http://www.ursulabruhin.ch)