

As Tall as You Want to Be by Denis Waitley

When he was two years old, this adopted child of two college professors suddenly and inexplicably stopped growing, and his health started to fail. A team of doctors gave him six months to live after they diagnosed him as suffering from a rare disease that inhibits digestion and nutrients in food. Intravenous feedings of vitamins and supplements allowed him to regain his strength, but his growth was permanently stunted.

Confined to hospitals for long periods of time, until the age of nine, he quietly plotted his revenge on the kids who taunted him and called him “peanut.”

He recalled many years later that subconsciously “the whole experience made me want to succeed at something athletic.” Sometimes his sister, Susan, went ice skating at the local rink, and he would go along to watch. There he stood, a frail, under-grown kid, with a feeding tube inserted through his nose and down into his stomach. When he wasn’t using it, one end of the tube was taped behind his ear.

One day, as he watched his sister whirl around the ice, he turned to his parents and said, “You know, I think I’d like to try ice skating.” Talk about two adults, looking at their life-threatened child, with glances that were beyond belief!

Well, he tried it and he loved it, and he went at it with a passion. Here was something fun at which he could excel, where height and weight weren’t important.

During his medical checkup the following year, the doctors were startled to discover that he had actually started growing again. It was too late for him to reach normal size, but neither he nor his family cared. He was recovering and succeeding. He believed in his dream, although he had little else to hang on to.

None of the kids taunt him and tease him today. Instead, they all cheer and rush to get his autograph. He has just completed another dazzling performance on the world professional ice skating tour, with a long string of triple jumps, complicated maneuvers, and athletic moves, capped off with a racing front flip that brought him to a sudden stop inches from the audience. Although he has retired from professional skating, he remains a coach, mentor and commentator revered by everyone in winter sports.

At five feet three inches and 115 pounds of pure muscle and electrifying energy, former Olympic gold medal figure skating champion Scott Hamilton stands as tall and as proud as any winner. Scott’s size didn’t limit his faith and reach. Don’t let doubts and critics limit yours. This doesn’t mean that you’ll close almost every sale or get promoted in record time. Scott Hamilton certainly didn’t hit every triple-axel jump he ever attempted, especially during the initial learning phase. Success in developing any skill requires a basic trust in your ability that should never be allowed to waver.