



# Chandra 's Update

May 2006

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## The last few months...

In Italy they were calling me La Campionessa and everyone I ever knew and never knew has congratulated me. As Devon has said to me "You were more than prepared be the fastest skier in the world on that day, and completely unprepared for the aftermath!" The thought of gold didn't enter my mind until I had the finish line under my feet with no challengers in sight. It was the best day of racing of my entire life, and I'm so glad to have been able to share it with my parents, my teammates, the whole country, and the people who have believed in me since way before I was an Olympic Gold Medalist. We did it! Of the 84 gold medals awarded in Torino, one big shiny one came home to Canmore to a huge parade and dance party in the street.

The celebrations were great, but having accomplished my dream, I realize more than ever that the saying "success is the journey" is so true. The life of an athlete is rewarding every single day as you stretch and push beyond your limits to reach your potential. To help you in your journey, I'd like to share with you a couple of the key concepts that got me into that ready state for the Big Event.

Pragelato Plan, one week before the race... I was the girl skiing lap after lap around the one km loop, glaring at the snow in front of me and breathing like an aggravated bull. These were what I called "Focus Laps," and meant that for 30 minutes of every workout, I was in another dimension where nothing existed except that 1.1km course. I worked a lot on the finishing stretch, which initially didn't suit me at all in that it was long and uneventful. My lack of confidence on this section was tackled head on with specific workouts, mental cues and imagery. First I made myself a mental cue that would

resonate through every muscle and make me feel the joy of skiing that I'd had so much success with in Davos the weekend before.

"Yeesssssssssssssss!" was the cue, said the way Napoleon Dynamite does in his wacky movie. In every race I said this in my head as we came off the last downhill and I reacted the way I had trained myself to, which was to put the pedal to the metal all the way to the finish line. Because of this training my weakness became my strength.

The second helpful mental skill came at the suggestion of my psychologist Cal Botterill, and required me to put my body's internal clock to work. I told myself often that on Wednesday, February 22nd at 10am I would be completely and totally ready to go. Similarly to when you set your alarm for 7 but wake up at 6:58 (how does your body know to do that? It's amazing!) The act of setting in your mind a time to be ready can be very powerful. Try it yourself. Take a minute to tell yourself that you will be totally ready for that upcoming event you have, and notice how everything flows towards this bargain over the days leading up.

These details worked for me in the days before my event, but to getting into Olympic shape started a year ago in May with a principle that Stephen Covey calls "The Law of the Farm." You have to prepare, plant, water, nurture, and grow if you want to reap a jackpot harvest at the end of it all. I have really enjoyed training with maximum dedication and focus this past year. What's so great about it? That amazing feeling of total peace that comes from knowing that I have done my absolute best washes over me in the week before a big event.

The Law of the Farm is just one of the many, many concepts flying through my head that I've really enjoyed sharing with the school kids here at home. Instant Gratification is a completely over-rated experience. Persistently applying your will to something worthwhile to you is where it's at. But mostly I like to tell them that everything on TV is crap, the brand of their clothes doesn't matter, and that they can make a choice right now lead really rewarding lives.

As for my choices lately, I've enjoyed some time off in April and May during which I went sea kayaking in Belize and heli-skiing at Mike Wiegele's in Blue River. Currently I'm taking a late start to the training season (we usually start May 1), to ensure that I'm starting with a full tank of energy.

I'll leave you with a quote that I read often this summer, which, along with the amazing support of my family and team, has definitely helped me to get to this point.

["Excellence is an art won by training and habituation. We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then, is not an act, but a habit." -Aristotle](#)

Yours in sport,

Same Old Chandra