

WORLD-CLASS TRIATHLETE

The Indestructible Karen Newman

By Sherisse' D Woodley



Dream a big dream and don't give up. There will be so many stumbling blocks and each block will build you up.

-Karen Newman

Karen Newman is a world record-breaking triathlete, and the survivor of two life threatening diseases. She has battled with anorexia and breast cancer. "God saved me," she offers. "He miraculously saved me from anorexia. I was 78 pounds and knocking on death's door. It is a miracle that I am here." Newman had advanced aggressive cancer and is now cancer free. "God brought me through both of these disease so that I could give back to the world and help other like I never could without the experience. I am here as a living example that all things are possible. The fact that I am alive is amazing enough, but God has more.

Newman is a mother, wife, friend, daughter, and the list can go on, but most of all she is a fighter. In our interview, she goes on to talk about her life journey with over coming breast cancer and anorexia. She's a mother of three beautiful boys and a wife to the most supportive husband. She's been honored with the 2013 Courage Award from the Connecticut Sports Writers Alliance. When asked how did it feel to be honored with the award Karen says, "It was such a great thrill. I felt really blessed and also felt accepted on behalf of everybody...We all have a deep courage that we are unaware with a big trial."

Newman is also the American Cancer Society's 2010 Determination Champion and spoke a motivating message to the quest. She stressed to the guests how important it was for them to dream really big dreams, not to give up, and that our mind is powerful and the words we speak to others and ourselves. She said, "We can either build each other up or down. The most important words are the ones we speak to ourselves. Dream a big dream."

While listening to Newman share her story over the phone, she started to tell me about a time when she broke down in tears after one particular chemotherapy while she was driving on a country road. She said it was the first time she cried, and in that moment, she heard a message from God. She said He told her, "I will take you through the valley and I will put you on a mountain and you will be singing." Four year later at the Auckland New Zealand Triathlon Age Group World Championships, she came in second in the world, and was the top American out of all the participants. She described it as a miracle and one of the greatest moments in her life.



Newman had went to the tent at the race to get her jacket and when she entered, she heard the song "You Raise Me Up" by Josh Groben. Newman said she fell to her knees and raised her hands in the air and thanked Jesus. Newman said, "I knew in that moment that THIS was THE long ago promise, that I would be on a mountain. My mountain was a podium, and that night I was indeed singing and the world was singing with me. The number one women from Australia pulled me up onto the podium and said you deserve this too. I am amazed at your story, and together we all sang."

Newman also lectures all over the world inspiring individuals to dream the big dreams and to never give up. She said, "Sometimes we have to force our friends to take help. When we allow people to help you they're blessing them...It's a beautiful circle to allow other to help us." Some of the advice Newman gives to people battling with life-threatening diseases is to follow your gut. "Don't listen to the noise. Don't be afraid to get more opinions. Knowledge is power, and pray."

Newman find humor in things that aren't she said her family and friends really helped her get through the hard days. She told the story about one day she got done with chemo and she was starting to lose her hair and someone came up to her and said I love your haircut. Newman is a perfect example to those battling with disease. You can either sit at home or feel sorry for yourself or you can find humor in every aspect of your life like she did.

Newman believes that the greatest trials are the greatest opportunities. With being diagnosed with advanced aggressive stage-3 breast cancer and finishing the world triathlon championship after receiving her 4th chemotherapy, she talked about never giving death a chance. "I didn't want my boys to grow up without a mother...God loves us all. Our trials are our opportunities to transform us, and in the end there will be blessings."

Newman and her whole family participate in races and charitable events together. They recently raced in a Connecticut 5K to help raise money for cancer for the Susan G. Komen Foundation. When asked what advice she would give to individuals wanting to follow their dreams, Newman said, "We need to pour love in the world. I receive so much love and I want to let it out."

