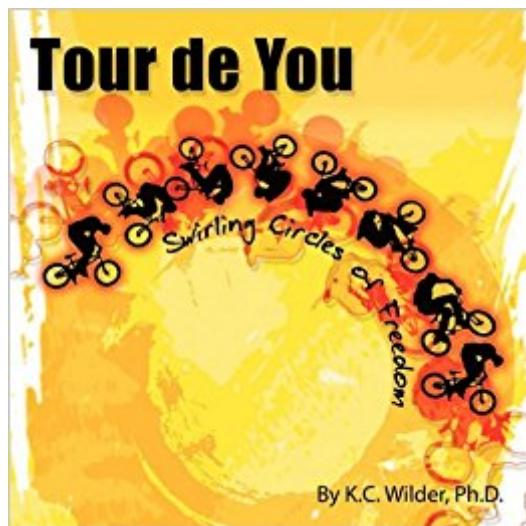


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# Tour De You: Swirling Circles Of Freedom



## **Synopsis**

Tour de You: Swirling Circles of Freedom was created with K.C. Wilder, Ph.D.'s children in mind. She searched for an inspirational sports themed book for her two boys who are seven and five, and did not find the message that she wanted to pass along to her children. After her initial search she decided that with the input from her boys that she could write a book of her own that motivated them to always do their best.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

This is a very sweet and fun picture book that imparts a wonderful message about living life positively. The author, a sports psychologist, used cycling as a metaphor. The graphics are fabulous. It is very colorful and the words have a really nice rhythm. I especially liked the emphasis on staying true to yourself. I think any youngster would enjoy the tempo and the feeling of movement in the graphics and parents will appreciate the positive message. Definitely recommended!

Another poorly designed, poorly written book. Nice concept, bad execution.

Reading this book inspired me a women over 60 to write! I do not remember when my training wheels were taken off, or even if training wheels existed at the time. Perhaps one just seamlessly graduated from tricycle to bicycle. I only know that after a bit of practice on my home turf, I took the leap and decided to ride down the hill near the local high school. Not just any hill, the one where my

classmates often stood on the sidelines to watch rider after rider attempt to conquer this formidable obstacle. As I began to brake on the way down, fear overtook me and I could not face the plummet. Making the worst of all possible decisions I froze and fell off the bike. It flew down the hill, and both knees were bloodied. Humiliated in the face of cruel taunts I limped home, head in hands, leaving my demolished bicycle behind. No one was there to greet me at the house and I was left alone to dress the wounds whose scars would forever bind my knees. Intrepid warrior that I was, the knee mishap did not deter my desire to successfully master the two-wheeler. My destination became the very empty schoolyard early in the morning, before the cacophony of shrill voices filled the air. From then on, I avoided the children who witnessed my great fall, although the face of one taunter remains indelibly etched in my brain. Mastering the bicycle became my secret, something wonderful, an escape from the house of sorrows that was my family. When I rode, I could forget the present situation and daydream of what was to come. Powerful moments took place as I passed the familiar landscapes. I wondered if I would eventually end up as a resident of the Actors Fund Home, sitting in a rocker on the front porch, quoting the soliloquy from Hamlet I had just memorized. "To be, or not to be -- that is the question." Several years and a new bicycle later, I began to ride in earnest and experienced how wonderful it was to feel the cool wind, whether I was smiling or my face in tears. The bicycle gave me hope. Perhaps it seems funny/absurd to think a simple machine could have such meaning, but I had found a simple truth: riding was special meditation in motion that was mine alone. I left my bicycle behind when I graduated from high school and moved to California. Time passed, but I never forgot that feeling of both freedom and control. Over the decade of my 20s, I moved around quite a bit, traveling from Europe to the United States with possessions as few as fill a small suitcase. On occasion, I was able to borrow a bicycle from a friend and remember weekends of riding to lower Manhattan when businesses were closed and the area was like cinematic ghost town. Riding my bike was like being in prayer, and even on the most sticky summer days when I carried it back up the six flights to my apartment, I was refreshed. When I had enough cash to purchase my own bicycle, things had changed. Five-speeds and much thinner wheels replaced the stalwart one-speed I had known for years. It took many weeks to save my tips from waitressing at Shelley's near 34th Street to purchase my sleek and shiny new machine. I was up at dawn, riding along Seventh Avenue to Central Park before the crowds descended. Paradise found was the circuit around the park, extending from the entrance on 59th Street along Central Park South, passing the zoo where I had so adored the seals as a child, through Harlem before gentrification, and back down the west side. Exhausted and spent, I made my way home along Broadway. Those days were unforgettable and forged in me an independence from knowing that, if

given the opportunity, I could get almost anywhere on my wheels. So much is lost behind the mechanical wheel of the automobile, small wonder that its confinement never held any fascination for me. Moving westward, bicycle in tow, I landed in Santa Barbara, which, along with Ireland and Vietnam, became my most exotic biking locations. The Southern California rides were at a time of transition; I was just beginning college and leaving the more bohemian world I had known in Europe. Getting up early and traversing the foothills behind Montecito was spectacular. It was the first time that I had ever seen brush and chaparral, and from the road one could see down to the Pacific Ocean and up to the Santa Ynez Mountains. The eclectic residents of these mountains and foothills were entrenched in the hippie culture and became familiar through their hospitality. The air around the many quirky and constructed dwellings was rife with the smells of eucalyptus and marijuana. People would often invite me in for a cup of tea, some water and a chat. One of the most memorable personages was Turquoise Terry, who wore her fantastic collection of Navajo jewelry with pride. She would disappear for days on end, searching thrift shops and garage sales for jewelry to sell. With the passing years, I have often wondered what happened to those mountain people. Did they come down from their perch and assimilate, losing the freedom to which they aspired? Maybe one day, dame fortune will bring me to the outskirts of Santa Barbara once again, or perhaps I should simply frame the memory and leave it undisturbed. Continuing on my reminisced travel log, in the late 1980s I took off for Ireland in search of where a beloved children's book took place. My itinerary was copied from the various biking magazines I read with great devotion. The destination I chose was Rathlin Island in the Irish Sea off the coast of County Antrim. This could not have been a more difficult journey, since a war was raging between the North and Southern Ireland. I borrowed a three-speed bike from some friends in Dublin and took off by train over the border. From there I biked and walked up some spectacular hills where residents seemed to speak an ancient dialect combining Irish and Scottish. I arrived at the fantastic seaside Victorian Town of Ballycastle and the next morning, leaving my bicycle behind at the youth hostel, caught a ferry for Rathlin. The Irish Sea was rough and the island was bereft of the swans I remembered from the book, but nevertheless, a childhood dream was fulfilled. Biking around the tip of Northern Ireland provided a challenge. I felt deep compassion for the people of this wondrous land, especially in Londonderry that had just been subjected to bombings. The city was in tatters, impoverished, and seemed without hope, yet the children, whose experience of war and privation was commonplace, remained bright-eyed and curious. Crossing into the south, the countryside became even more beautiful, and I lost my heart forever to this fabulous country. This was my first solo bike trip, and it resulted in my making new friends, preparing me for an even greater adventure when I traveled to Vietnam to volunteer at an

orphanage outside of Hanoi. Here at last was a land where everyone road a bicycle and I felt completely at home. The first thing I did was to purchase two bikes: one for me to ride while I was there, and the other for one of the orphans. I knew when I left I could leave them both and that this would be a fine gift. It was hot in the Northern Vietnamese market place, very hot, and beyond any heat that I had ever experienced. Every morning, several of the boys and I took off on the dusty roads to the market. We passed villages, where pigs roamed in and out of the houses, and saw other riders with dead dogs on their backs from which meals would be prepared later in the day. When it was time to leave Vietnam, I knew with certainty that the bicycles were homed and that they would have a long life being built and rebuilt, going from hand to hand over the years. Back at home the story takes a twist; my bicycle was stolen and left me without wheels for the first time in many years. Somehow it was difficult to get over this loss, and rather then get back on the saddle, my favorite pastime was relegated to spinning classes at the gym. I actually did have a bike. It was an old three-speed Schwinn that was left in the basement by a previous resident in the home that I purchased. It remained in the basement for years, until recently when, with the spring, my curiosity was once again aroused. Although it seemed that this bike would be too short for me, I longed for my old best friend. Now over 60 years in age, I walked the Schwinn to the local bike shop and found that it indeed could be properly fitted for me to ride. As if I was taking off the training wheels for the first time, I sat on the bike. It was difficult, and I was challenged. Tentative steps, feet on the pedals, I began to ride, each day going a little further. I had not forgotten. Time had not dulled the passion. The meditation began again. "The bicycle is the most civilized conveyance known to man. Other forms of transport grow daily more nightmarish. Only the bicycle remains pure in heart." -- Iris Murdoch.

Awesome.

I was looking for a book that was more general in scope--not strictly cycling. The message that the pictures and captions conveyed was very difficult for me to really parallel to other sports. I thought that the book would illustrate the need to stress the goal to give it your best effort - - that's what makes you a winner--not the score.

I read this book with my daughter who has aniridia, a genetic condition that left her with no depth perception and low vision. There is no cure for this in the scientific community. We adapt with what we have to work with, work through the rough spots and celebrate life's crowning glories. Upon

reading this book, she and I felt that this book was talking to us. Although my child cannot ride a bike she does competitive horseback riding and that is our metaphor. Recently, she fell off as the horse became spooked. As Ms. Wilder promotes, my daughter found her inner strength to not only get up but to walk the horse until he was calm and remount. Our life together as a visually impaired team (player and her coach) just poured with love and strength from this book. I hope that parent's of visually impaired will find comfort, strength and inspiration from this book as I did. We will absolutely read this when life's moments call for it.

I'm always looking for great books that impart an inspirational message while conveying fundamental lessons for life. Dr. Wilder accomplished this feat with *Tour de You*. During my first read of the story, I easily picked out several messages that resonated with my current work/life--surprising considering this is supposed to be a "children's book". In my second read, I was taken by the imaginative graphics that Dr. Wilder chose to accompany her words. And by my third reading, I was thinking of those within my circle of friends and family who could benefit from hearing *Tour de You*'s wisdom. Whether you purchase this book as a friendly reminder to yourself or as a motivational gift to an important someone else, you'll love it.

This is a children's book with an adult message. This book is for everyone, whether you are just learning to read, a parent or single (I am single and 54 yrs.). It is a quick read, but it is full of inspiration and lessons about setting goals, obstacles, challenges and the freedom that comes from doing your best. It is a great book to read to your kids if they have had a rough day. It is a reminder to stay focused on the important things in life. Bonus points for vocabulary words your kids will learn reading this book, that they probably will not learn in grade school.

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