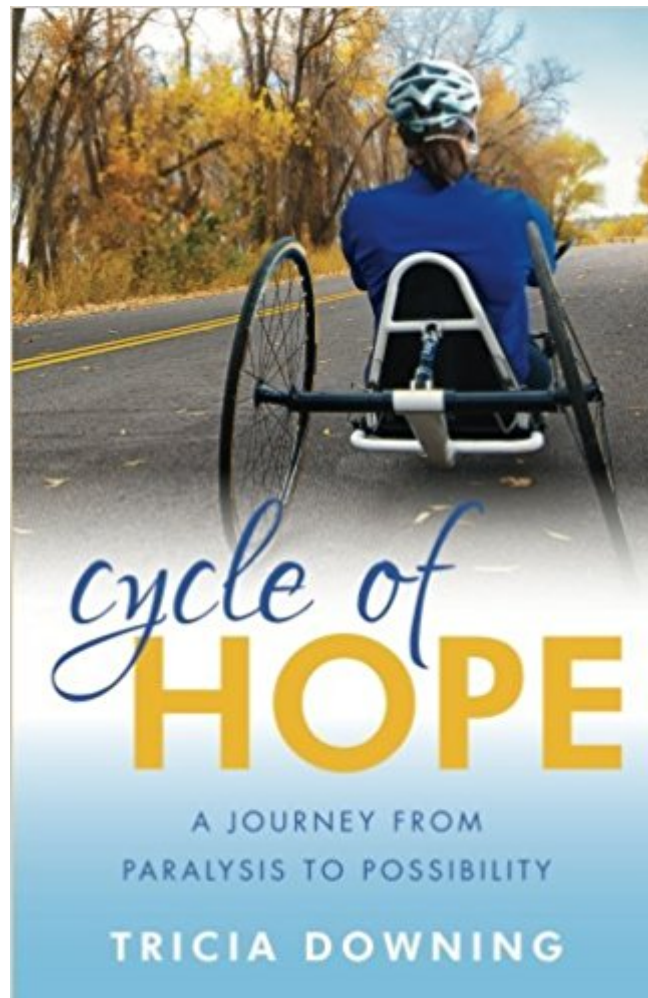




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Cycle Of Hope: A Journey From Paralysis To Possibility



Synopsis

At thirty-one, Tricia Downing was in the best shape of her life. In the summer of 2000, Tricia, an avid cyclist, drove across the country for what amounted to eighteen races in twenty-three days. She returned from her adventure to a fresh start: a new job awaited her, and determined to make the next summer the year she would make her mark on the world of cycling, she began a rigorous training strategy. But on September 17, 2000, Tricia Downing's life took a detour. While training on her bicycle one sunny Colorado afternoon, Tricia collides with a car that turns directly in her path, and instantly becomes paralyzed from the chest down. As a competitive road and track cyclist and lifelong athlete, losing the use of her legs is devastating on all accounts. As she re-learns to do everything from sitting straight up to navigating through her house in a wheelchair to returning to work and operating a handcycle, her grueling recovery takes her to the very core of her athletic mettle. This inner strength helps her to not only learn to live life as a paraplegic--a label that takes time to grow accustomed to--but to have the courage to return to the competitive sport she loves and almost lost. Determined to live life on her terms, Tricia turns her misfortune into opportunity, and is now a wheelchair racer, competing regularly in triathlons around the globe. *Cycle of Hope* chronicles Tricia's journey from the first terrifying moments of impact with the car through rehab and her emergence as a world-class athlete.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Tricia Downing is recognized as a pioneer in the sport of women's paratriathlon, as the first female paraplegic to finish an Iron distance triathlon. She has competed in that sport both nationally and internationally, in addition to competing in road racing and other endurance events. She has represented the United States in international competition in five different sport disciplines--cycling (as a tandem pilot prior to her 2000 accident), triathlon, duathlon, rowing and Olympic style shooting, in which she was a member of Team USA at the 2016 Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. She was featured in the Warren Miller documentary *Superior Beings* and on the lifestyle TV magazine show *Life Moments*. She has been featured in *Muscle and Fitness Hers*, *Mile High Sports* and *Rocky Mountain Sports* magazines. Additionally, she is founder and Executive Director of *The Cycle of Hope*, a non-profit organization designed for female wheelchair users to promote health and healing on all levels--mind, body and spirit. Tricia studied Journalism as an undergraduate at the University of Maryland and holds Masters degrees in both Sports Management (Eastern Illinois University) and Disability Studies (Regis University). She lives in Denver, Colorado with her husband Steve. Visit Tricia at triciadowning.com

By her own accounts, and I have no reason to doubt her, Tricia was, in short, a bad ass cyclist. She had always been fit and athletic as she grew up, but somewhere in her 20s she discovered cycling. As a cyclist myself I understand her feelings of saddling up and never wanting to stop. For me it's seeing the countryside on the back of a bike. For her, it was racing, going fast, and competing against the best. The lady was smart. She got a job with a school district. This left her the summers to ride all over the US, compete in different races, and in the summer of 2000, she was doing just that. Then on September 17th, 2000, a driver who said the sun was in her eyes turned left, directly in front of her. Next thing she knows she is on the ground paralyzed from the chest down. Tricia did an excellent job recounting her stay in the hospital and rehab center. I had to laugh though, when she explained her preaccident love life. At the time, she was seeing 2 different cyclists. In fact, she was with one of her guys when the accident happened. So of course, when she was in the hospital, both were there. Loved her comment about this: A good mother will teach you to wear clean underwear "You never know when you'll be in an accident and have to go to the hospital"... But I never heard my mom say, "Never have two boyfriends at once, because you might have an accident and you don't want both of them to show up in the hospital at the same time, do you?" This was about the only funny part of the hospital. There were surgeries, depressions, and a bed sore so deep they had to have her flat on her back for 6 weeks to let it heal. This had to be pure hell for a competitive

cyclist. Plus the knowledge that she would never again be able to do what made her so happy, ride the bike. However, and this is why she truly impressed me, the heart was strong with this one. She fully admitted she would never accept and be happy that she could not walk (read her letter to the person who hit her with the car for specifics...) but she was NOT going to be a couch potato. She soon learned about racing wheel chairs and hand cycles. After a few fits and starts, she got swimming down pat. So naturally, as a person who is paralyzed from the chest down and needs help just sitting up, she plans to do a triathlon! Now once again, she and I think alike. I don't race, but I HATE being last. I always want to finish in front of someone! On her first tri, she was pretty hard on herself. She was NOT fast, and was beating herself up pretty bad... Until she caught her first 'able bodied' runner. She was not last! She could compete! She then set her sights on an Ironman hoping for the granddaddy of them all, Kona Hawaii. But for THAT you will have to read yourself. The author did an excellent job here. I never knew a racing wheel chair had to go backwards up steep hills. Or even though how hard it would be to swim with no legs. Tricia gave us the details, and shared her deepest thoughts, both good and bad. I would be cool to meet her someday! It's a great book, fast read, and well worth it! I gave it 4 stars!

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