

The Inspiring Story of Tamika Catchings

# DREAMS

ARE FOR

# CATCHING

Discovering The Star In You



Tamika Catchings with Kym S. Reeves



PHOTO BY ROBIN JERSTAD

**PURE GOLD:** Tamika Catchings' two Olympic gold medals. On the left is her medal from the 2008 Games in Beijing, China, and on the right is her medal from the 2004 Games in Athens, Greece.



## CHAPTER FOUR

# Look What's Being Built!

**W**ith a positive attitude, Tamika found that the goals she had set for herself started to become a reality. Tamika worked harder than ever to do her best. She watched people she admired and imitated their positive traits.

In her sophomore year, Tamika led her team at Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire, Illinois to the 1995 State Championship. She was also the youngest player at that time to win the Illinois Ms. Basketball title.

Being the new kid in town didn't throw Tamika off her search for success. When she was a junior, Tamika and her mother moved to Duncanville, Texas, where she helped her high school team capture its only state title in volleyball. Her new independence and exposure to a more diverse environment helped break her out of her shell and deal with the world without Tauja's daily help.

## Dreams Are For Catching: Discovering The Star In You · Tamika Catchings

Tamika didn't stop there. As a senior, she led her undefeated Duncanville Pantherettes to another state championship while also collecting the Texas Ms. Basketball title.

Attending the University of Tennessee from 1997 to 2001, she helped lead the Lady Volunteers throughout her college basketball career. Tamika was able to give her all on and off the court. As a freshman under mentor and coach Pat Summitt, Tamika and the University of Tennessee Lady Vols went undefeated (39-0) and won the NCAA Championship title in 2001. Tamika gave her all on and off the court throughout her college basketball career.

Aside from equipping her with the knowledge to become a better player, Tamika credits Coach Summitt for giving her confidence beyond the court by teaching her the importance of being a solid person and role model. With Summitt's urging, Tamika put on her dreaded hearing aids and has since become someone that other hearing impaired individuals can look up to.

In 2001, she was drafted by the Indiana Fever of the WNBA, although a torn ACL sidelined the rookie forward for her entire first season. In typical Tamika fashion, she worked hard at rehabilitating her injury and came back strong as the WNBA's Rookie of the Year in 2002.

During her youth, Tamika set goals of making the USA Women's Basketball team and winning an Olympic Gold Medal. As part of Team USA, Tamika earned back-to-back Gold medals at the Athens Olympics in 2004 and the Beijing Olympics in 2008. This was truly a dream come true.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY TAMIKA CATCHINGS

**OLYMPIC GOLD:** Tamika with her Olympic Gold Medal from the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, China.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY TAMIKA CATCHINGS

**MAKING HISTORY:** Tamika and Team USA during the 2004 Olympics in Athens, Greece at the site of The Parthenon.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY LADY VOLUNTEER MEDIA RELATIONS

**SIBLING RIVALRY:** Rising college stars Tamika (right, University of Tennessee) and Tauja (University of Illinois).



PHOTO PROVIDED BY TAMIKA CATCHINGS

**GREAT ACCOMPLISHMENTS:** Tamika's sister, Tauja, her nephew, Kanon, Tamika and her mom, Wanda, at the Great Wall during the Beijing Olympics.

## Timeout

Just look at what Tamika had been building on! The lessons learned early on were paying off for her: sportsmanship, positive attitude and giving her all on and off the court. Her hard work shows in her Indiana Fever statistics. In 2005, after only four seasons of playing professional basketball, Tamika became the fastest player in WNBA history to score 2,000 points. She has also set records for rebounds, assists and steals.

Tamika has been named WNBA Defensive Player of the Year twice and was the leading vote-getter for the 2006 WNBA All-Star Game, although she had to sit out that game due to an injury. She has been named to the WNBA All-Star team five times in her career. Despite injuries and setbacks, Tamika never stops working to be her best. The goals she sets for herself continue to motivate her to her utmost efforts.

Tamika appreciates being able to help others discover their gifts and talents and especially enjoys sharing her life story with others. She believes that everyone has the potential to be a leader. Everyone can achieve their goals in life with the right attitude and lots of hard work.

## Journal Entry #4

What are your proudest accomplishments?

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What steps did you take to reach those accomplishments?

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List three of your current goals:

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What steps can you take to reach your goals?

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**DREAMS**  
ARE FOR  
**CATCHING**  
Discovering The Star In You

## The Inspiring Story of Tamika Catchings

Do you have a dream that seems as far away and impossible to achieve as a star might be to catch? Believe it or not, Tamika Catchings – Academic All Star, high school and collegiate champion, WNBA veteran and oft-named All Star, two-time gold medalist Olympian and much more – has overcome many obstacles to reach her dreams and become the star she is.

Like most girls, Tamika had problems growing up. With a speech impediment and family troubles, wearing hearing aids, glasses, and braces, Tamika struggled to find the star within her.

Everyone has the potential to reach the stars, to be a winner and a leader. With hard work, dedication and a positive attitude, you can achieve great things in your life. Use the journal exercises throughout this book to help you discover the star within YOU!

**The Catch the Stars Foundation is preparing our youth to catch their dreams one star at a time.**

To make a tax-deductible contribution or to learn more about Tamika Catchings' Catch the Stars Foundation, please visit [www.catchthestars.org](http://www.catchthestars.org).



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