

# From 'Soul Surfer' to 'Unstoppable,' Bethany Hamilton Keeps the Faith

*Known most notably as one of the biggest comeback stories of our era, **Bethany Hamilton** has become synonymous with inspiration. Her story of determination, faith and hope has resounded in encouragement worldwide. At the age of 13 as a rising surf star, Hamilton lost her left arm to a 14-foot tiger shark, which seemed to end her dream career. But one month after the attack, she returned to surfing and within two years had won her first national surfing title.*

*Hamilton's foundation of faith has been her backbone; her source of truth, hope and strength. At 17 years old, she realized her dream of surfing professionally and is still an active surf competitor to this day. She has been able to touch a large number of people with her faith message, charitable efforts, and overall spirit. Her greatest joy is being a wife and mother, and she continues to touch and inspire lives globally as a professional surfer, author and motivational speaker. Enjoy our Charisma interview with her today!*

**I know our audience wants to catch up on your life since *Soul Surfer*—and a lot has happened since then! Let's start with the basics. Can you tell us about your family?**

Yeah! I am married now; my husband, Adam, and I have two boys who light up our life! My brothers are both married with kids as well. It's such a joy to see our kids grow up together. Also, I'm surfing professionally as a free surfer, and I'm a motivational speaker.

**How did you meet Adam?**

We actually met through mutual friends. They set us up in a

blind date sort of scenario. We met at the beach and jumped off a cliff into the ocean together. And as Adam will say, "It was love at first jump!"

**You and he competed on the 25th season of *The Amazing Race* (and came in third!). How did your partnership in that event reflect your partnership today, especially now that you've added parenting to the mix?**

It was important to us then, and is still now, to trust and encourage each other, rather than tear each other down by words or actions—especially in front of a worldwide audience. Taking on so many challenges together as newlyweds was so interesting, bonding and fun! We learned a lot about each other and developed a real sense of teamwork, which has definitely helped us now that we're parents.

**What's the best thing about being a mom—as well as the most difficult thing?**

I just adore my boys. I have so much fun getting to know them and see them discover the world; but also discover with them. Adam and I love introducing them to the things we love in life: our faith, surfing, time with family, adventuring (camping, seeing the world) and eventually more! I think it is so special for Adam and me to be the main influences in their life. Teaching, guiding and leading by example is both a blessing and a challenge.

**You're still a professional surfer, so we'll ask you the question every mom gets: How do you balance your career with your family life?**

My family definitely comes first! Adam and I have a unique situation where we've made sure I'm still able to be a full-time mom but also have a career. Adam is a full-time support and partner in it all. Sometimes the boys will come to the beach when I surf or share my cross-training time. Or I'll schedule meetings while they nap! We've found we must say no

to more opportunities and try to balance all we do. We still have so much to learn, but our priority is our family, then surfing along with our other work and ministry. I'm so thankful to share life the way I do. I know I wouldn't want to miss these sweet precious young years, or any years really!

***Unstoppable*, a new documentary about you, released in 2018. Can you tell us a little about that?**

Yeah, *Unstoppable* premiered in 2018 at some film festivals, but it actually releases theatrically this summer July 12, 2019! We've been working on the film for the last five or so years. It's a raw, personal, real-me version of my life story, highlighting my surfing career and many of the different obstacles that I've overcome. I think it will be a really cool way for people to see a deeper look at my life and the journey I've been on; especially the success I've had as a professional surfer, as a mom and in life—and doing it all at the same time.

**How does this film differ from *Soul Surfer*, and what would you like to see come from this continuation of your story?**

I love *Soul Surfer*, but *Unstoppable* is the real me. It digs deeper into my adult journey. While it touches on the earlier parts of my life, it carries on from the end of *Soul Surfer* into life after that. The way it shares my life is so different than any way it's been told. I'm just excited to continue encouraging people through whatever challenges they go through, with the message to chase our passions relentlessly, to not let our dreams get away from us—to live “unstoppable.”

**And you have a *Be Unstoppable* book project as well; what would you like our readers to know about that?**

I do! We published a book to accompany the film, *Be Unstoppable: The Art of Never Giving Up*. It shares some of the beautiful imagery we captured from around the world, along

with some behind-the-scenes stories and inspiring thoughts and quotes.

We also published a children's board book that my husband Adam wrote! It's adorable and has a great message of overcoming fear and life's wipeouts. Check out *Unstoppable Me* by Adam Dirks with illustrations by Gill Guile.

**You have many achievements in your pro surfing career, which began when you were sponsored at age 9. What goals—surfing or otherwise—are left for Bethany Hamilton?**

Thank you. Aside from continuing to work hard to be the best surfer I can be, I am working on setting some new surfing goals right now. Another goal is to spend more time home, we've traveled a ton—as much as six months a year. As we are home, we are looking to share encouragement and our life online and socially more; we need light in the dark places. I especially have a heart for young women and encouraging them through the storms of life!

**Even though you're only 29, you've been a role model for many years now. What would you say is the primary message you bring to other women and girls?**

I'm sure everyone has a different takeaway from my life story. But I'd like you to remind anyone reading that beauty can come from hard times, and God is more than enough for us. Ephesians 2:9 says God's grace and our faith is a gift from God and it's forever ours. Whatever we may go through, we have God-given value and beauty which should be celebrated, cared for and thought of in a healthy way. And while life is bumpy, there is hope to overcome the difficulties we face through passion, faith and the right perspective.

**Is there anything else you'd like to share with our audience?**

I have a new website that's all about being unstoppable! This is part of me wanting to pour more into all who follow my life

journey; maybe that's you or someone you know. On the new site, I'll surf you through life's tough stuff, talk story and all things girly. I'll share about beauty and pain, joy and sadness, failure and triumphs, and help you live a deeply rich and meaningful life strengthened in your faith. I will bring you the very best of what I'm living and learning, and keep it real and honest as I go. Check out the new .

**Connect with Bethany on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram as well as at her website, . *Check out the Unstoppable movie at .***