

Bethany Hamilton Teaches Us the Power of a Smile and a Little Bit of Yoga

WEDNESDAY JUNE 15, 2016



Jack Manoogian



Bethany Hamilton is a big deal, and its not just because of her tremendous surfing ability. She is much more than just the wildcard who almost won the 2016 Fiji Pro Women’s event, taking out some of the tour’s best female surfers in the process. She is a

mother, a wife and a role model for all those who have ever felt defeated in life.

Recently the nice folks at [Damon Braces](#) (the creators of [the Bethany Hamilton Emoji keyboard](#)) graciously invited me to attend a speaking event with Hamilton as well as a quick workout session with her at West Hollywood's [Sandbox Fitness](#).

Hamilton is not a part of the Women's division of the WSL, and while she undeniably could qualify, she instead elects to spend her time encouraging young women with body image troubles and anyone who has ever faced adversity to "just focus on smiling through it."

At age 14, a year after losing her arm to a tiger shark while surfing in Kauai, Hamilton faced serious issues pertaining to body image and self-confidence. While her struggles seemed inevitable given her situation, Hamilton began to fight her way back by finding confidence in herself and her surfing ability. Getting back in the water was definitely one of the biggest steps she took, but she also began to travel back and forth between Hawaii and the mainland to have orthodontic work done.

Hamilton acknowledges this as one of the reasons for her resurgence in confidence. In fact, she feels so strongly about the power of a good smile that she publicly advocated on the company's behalf (The Damon Braces system requires appointments only every 8-10 weeks and focuses heavily on creating "Hollywood smiles," by avoiding oral surgery as a result of overcrowding).

I got to experience Hamilton's public speaking ability firsthand and definitely developed even more respect for her as a person, not just a surfer. She says her life is hectic right now. She just got back from Fiji and now has numerous speaking events lined up. When asked how she handles it all she said, "I can't eat the whole pie...right now its surfing and speaking events where I can bring hope to other people."

After the event, Hamilton joined attendees in a brief exercise class at Sandbox Fitness. She used the exercise-surfboards in the gym to show first hand that her attack has only made her more stronger and capable.

When asked about where she sees herself in the future and if surfing will be a part of that vision she said, "I cherish being a mother and wife. Those are my number ones." I'm sure this will bring her and her family those "Hollywood smiles" for years to come.

<http://www.theinertia.com/surf/bethany-hamilton-teaches-us-the-power-of-a-smile-and-a-little-bit-of-yoga/>