

No Limbs, No Limits

Growing up with no arms or legs, **Nick Vujicic** proves that faith and spirit can overcome all obstacles. ::

BY TROY ANDERSON

NICK VUJICIC GREW UP hoping people wouldn't focus on what he didn't have and focus on what he did have — courage, strength, and tenacity. Today there's little chance that anyone would underestimate his perseverance. He swims, surfs, and skydives despite being born without arms or legs.

But his greatest worries involved matters of the heart. He often wondered what woman would want a husband who couldn't hug and

protect her, or hold their children. Vujicic had doubts he'd ever get married — that he'd ever meet anyone who would love him and want to spend the rest of their lives together.

"As a kid, I never thought I'd be able to get married," Vujicic tells Newsmax shortly before speaking to thousands of young people gathered at Thanksgiving Church in Buena Park, Calif. "I never thought I would have a fulfilling life."

Yet, the 30-year-old motivational speaker, best-selling author, and preacher has not only married the

"intelligent, spiritual, fearless, and beautiful young woman" of his dreams, he's also overcome nearly every other obstacle life has thrown at him. Now, he and Kanae Loida Vujicic-Miyahara, 24, are expecting their first child.

In the last decade, the director of Agoura Hills, Calif.-based Life Without Limbs has traveled to 43 countries and spoken to tens of millions of people, bringing a message of hope and healing. He's met seven heads of state. In his free time, he enjoys active sports including surfing and skydiving.

"We went skydiving this year, me and my wife," Vujicic says. "It was just a rush. It was a really cool experience."

He's become a media sensation, having been featured on *60 Minutes*, *20/20*, *Oprah*, and *The 700 Club*.

Hundreds of millions of people have heard his incredible story of overcoming nearly insurmountable obstacles and achieving his dreams.

Fulfilling a bucket-list goal, he and Saddleback Church Pastor

Rick Warren met recently with Oprah Winfrey to record an episode of Oprah's *Lifeclass* for the release of the 10th anniversary edition of Warren's blockbuster book, *The Purpose Driven Life: What on Earth Am I Here For?*

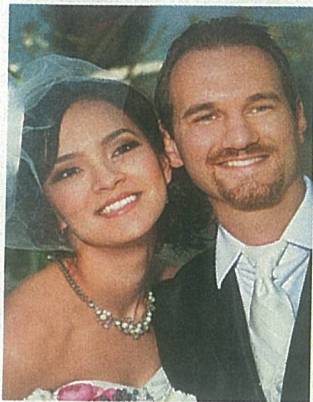
"The opening joke I used for the first five years and 500 speaking engagements was, 'Hi everybody. I've got some great news. I'm going to be on the *Oprah Winfrey Show*.' And they are all like, 'Wow,' and I say, 'She just doesn't know about it yet,' and everybody laughs. Now the dream has come true for me."

In his new book, *Unstoppable: The Incredible Power of Faith in Action*, Vujicic tells the story of how he met and fell in love with Kanae.

"Our love is contagious," Vujicic wrote. "An elderly woman saw us together one day, talking and laughing, and she came up to us with tears in her eyes and said, 'Now I believe in true love again.'"

In the book, Vujicic also delves into a bout of depression he experienced in late 2010 shortly after meeting Kanae. At the time, his speaking and inspirational DVD business, *Attitude Is Altitude*, looked like it was headed for disaster.

Vujicic's company became overextended, and he wound up



WEDDING BELLS Kanae, Nick tie the knot on Feb. 12, 2012.

“As a kid, I never thought I’d be able to get married. I never thought I would have a fulfilling life.”

— Nick Vujicic

\$50,000 in debt. He became depressed, despairing that his worst fears, going bankrupt and not being able to support himself, were about to be realized.

But after Kanae offered to get a nursing job to support them, and his father came through with

a \$50,000 loan, Vujicic realized he had overreacted. He shook off his depression and his faith was reignited. It's part of a lifelong pattern, a "trademark passion for turning negatives into positives."

"The truth is that people still suffer," said Vujicic. "They endure sickness, financial problems, broken relationships, and the loss of loved ones. Tragedies occur in every life, and I believe we are meant to learn from them. My hope is that when people who are in pain see that I have a joyful life, they will think, If Nick, without arms or legs, is thankful, then I will be thankful for today, and I will do my best."

The son of a pastor and a nurse, Vujicic was born on Dec. 4, 1982 in Melbourne, Australia. Without warning, Vujicic came into the world



INTERNATIONAL INSPIRATION Following a motivational talk and an impromptu game of soccer, Vujicic poses for photos with students while on a mission trip in Surat, India.



PASSION FOR LIFE Vujicic possesses an incredible faith in God, which drives him to achieve and to be an inspiration for others. Never one to back away from a challenge, Nick's courage and determination propel him on the soccer field and on the surfboard.

without arms or legs — shocking his parents. The condition, called tetra-amelia syndrome, is a rare disorder characterized by the absence of limbs and has only been reported in a few families worldwide.

However, he was born with a rudimentary left foot, and his parents had his two toes surgically separated so he could use them like fingers.

With this appendage Vujicic learned to swim, skateboard, play soccer, and operate a wheelchair.

“I had my little foot as a kid, and I learned how to type on a computer. Today, I can type 43 words per minute and after two cups of coffee 53 words per minute. I love this thing. I have two toes so I can do the peace sign,” Vujicic told thousands recently at Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, Calif., while flashing the peace sign to the cameras.

During childhood, Vujicic endured heartless teasing from bullies. He fell into a depression at age 8 after his prayers for arms and

legs went unanswered. Believing he was a burden to his family, at 10 he attempted to drown himself in the bathtub. But the third time he rolled over to take water into his lungs, he couldn't follow through, seeing a picture in his mind of his family crying at his grave.

The turning point came at age 13 when his mother gave him a

newspaper article about a man with Lou Gehrig's disease who had created a website to encourage bedridden people around the world.

At 15, he read in the Bible that Jesus gave sight to a blind man so the “works of God might be displayed in him.” If God could use a blind man, Vujicic reasoned, he could certainly use a man without limbs, and he decided to dedicate his life to Christ.

Believing God had created him to be a “miracle of joy and strength” for others, Vujicic became passionate about sharing his story. Not long afterward, teenagers in a Bible study

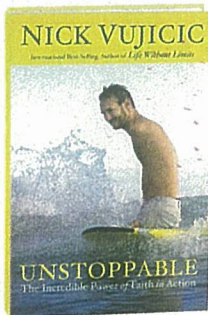
group asked him to speak. His story brought the room to tears. Soon, word of his inspirational tale spread and invitations to speak began piling up.

At 21, he graduated from Griffith University in Logan, Australia, with a double major in accounting and financial planning. Afterward, he became a motivational speaker and began traveling internationally.

In 2007, he relocated to Southern California. Joni Eareckson Tada, an internationally famous author and artist who was left a quadriplegic after a 1967 diving accident, gave him office space at her Joni and Friends International Disability Center in Agoura Hills. Not long after that, he started Life Without Limbs nearby.

Since then, Vujicic has become an inspiration to people around the world, speaking regularly to huge crowds about overcoming obstacles and achieving dreams.

“I am as imperfect as anyone you will ever meet,” Vujicic said. “I have good days and bad. Challenges rise up and knock me flat on occasion. Yet I know that where I am weak, God is strong, and when we put our faith into action, we are unstoppable.” □



TRUTH IN FAITH Vujicic's true life story is aptly titled.