

Going for the GOLD



The 2012 Olympic gold medalist in the women's pole vault is Jenn Stuczinski Suhr. After winning the silver medal in 2008 in Beijing, Suhr set her sights on the highest honor in this particularly difficult sport.

But to stand on the top platform – “a mile high and two feet off the ground,” as they say – Suhr had to consistently apply the principle stated in Philippians 3:13-14: “Forgetting what is behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal ...”

Suhr first picked up a pole after a track and field coach, Rick Suhr (now her husband), saw her playing basketball at Roberts Wesleyan College, where she had been a standout star. Rick suggested she try the pole vault, but she strongly resisted. Her first attempts were “stiff pole,” not bending the fiberglass pole at all. She *forgot* about that.

Early on, she didn't achieve the heights of 9 and 10 feet. She *forgot* about that.

Slowly, she began to understand the dynamic, the physics and the flow of pole vaulting. In time, Suhr began to soar, and win. She enjoyed the moments, but *forgot* about that, too. Within just a few years, Suhr became one of the premier vaulters in the world.

She won silver, and *forgot* about that. She set the U.S. record and then the world record. She *forgot* about it. She ripped her quadriceps in her upper thigh, potentially a career-ending injury. She did what was necessary to heal, and *forgot* about that.

In order to win the gold medal in London in 2012, Suhr had to *fuggedaboutit!*

Both the successes and the failures, they all contribute to who she is, to be sure. But she had to focus on what was ahead – one vault, one setting, 15 feet and 7 inches – and make that one vault.

She did it. The best in the world.

The Apostle Paul said to the Philippians (and to us), *Fuggedaboutit!* Forget the wonderful successes that give us standing and credibility and reason to brag; leave them behind. But also forget about our failures; leave them behind.

Stop talking about them. Stop bringing them up to yourself, to others and to God.

The principle, as noted by Paul, surely applies in the spiritual realm: *Forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus* (Philippians 3:13-14 ESV).