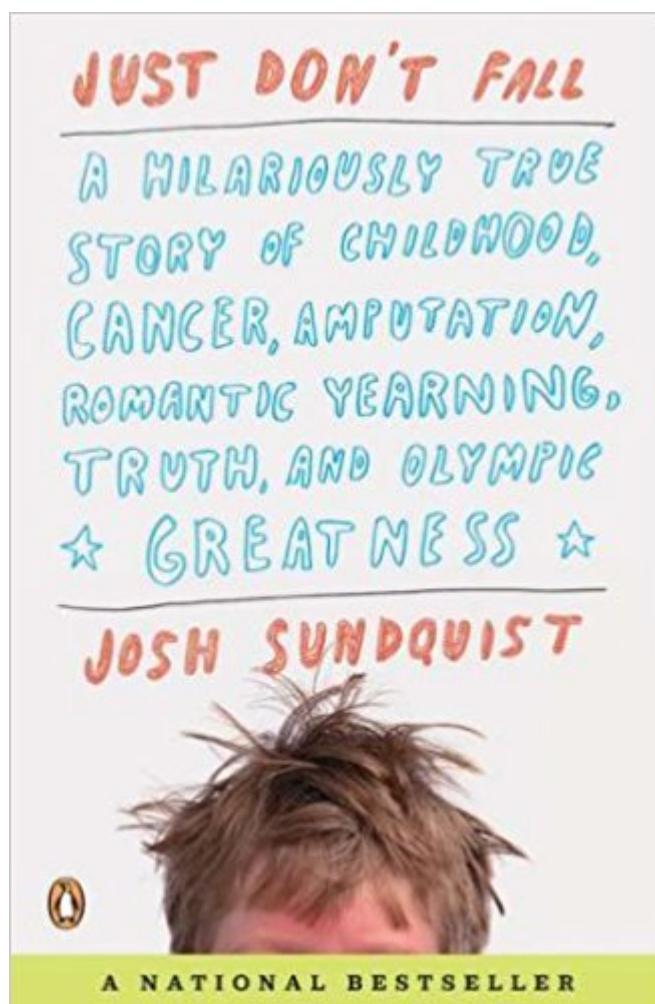


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# Just Don't Fall: A Hilariously True Story Of Childhood, Cancer, Amputation, Romantic Yearning, Truth, And Olympic Greatness



## Synopsis

Read Josh Sundquist's posts on the Penguin Blog. "Just Don't Fall is one of the most inspiring books I have ever read-not too mention poignant and funny." -A.J. Jacobs This winning memoir of triumph over tragedy tells a story that has deeply affected thousands of readers. When he was just nine years old, Josh Sundquist was diagnosed with Ewing's sarcoma, a virulent cancer strain that eventually claimed his left leg. Told in a wide-eyed, often heartbreak voice, Just Don't Fall is the astounding story of the boy Josh was and of the young man he became-an utterly heroic struggle through numerous hospitalizations and worse to become an award-winning skier in the Paralympics and renowned motivational speaker. What emerges is one of the most fresh and sincere works of inspiration to come along in years.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Sundquist proves to be equally enthralling and witty at the written word in this sometimes heartbreak, mostly uplifting memoir. Diagnosed with cancer at the age of nine, Sundquist eventually is forced to deal with the harsh reality of losing his left leg to amputation. Yet even at his young age, he deals with the setback with courage and determination, eventually setting his sights on becoming a ski racer at the 2006 Paralympics in Italy. While skiing becomes a large part of his life, his story is just as much about growing up in small-town Virginia and, for example, dealing with common high school heartbreak. His dreams of a world ski racer are eventually met, because in his words, "I don't have time to fail". Some of his retelling of events at times seem over the top, but overall Sundquist is an honest and charming writer. And there are countless lighthearted anecdotes,

like his desire to stop being homeschooled and attend public school partly for the pizza without whole-wheat crust. The final chapter provides a fitting conclusion to Sundquist's, proving that life is more about the journey than the destination. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Sundquist was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer as a nine-year-old and soon thereafter lost his leg to the disease. His dad was an aspiring minister and his mother a very conservative Christian who home-schooled her children. This first-person memoir relates his and his family's struggle with the disease and his evolution into a young man who competed successfully in the 2006 Paralympics in Turin, Italy. Readers expecting an inspirational tale of faith, family, and determination in overcoming a devastating illness will not be disappointed. What will delight readers even more is the unexpected literary skill and absurdist humor employed by Sundquist to recount his journey. Particularly telling are his memories of the years when he was diagnosed and the period immediately after the amputation; his child's-eye view of the proceedings is both heart-wrenching and laugh-out-loud funny. It's those Sedaris-like observations "substituted for the overwrought seriousness that fuels many inspirational first-person accounts of adversity overcome" that make this a very special book. --Wes Lukowsky --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Josh Sundquist is a funny funny man. I've been a subscriber of his YouTube videos for a while now (Game of Thrones for Math Nerds is great, as is his advice on how a man should choose and wear a suit), and I bought his book to get a background for the videos I have enjoyed so much. It succeeds on every heartwarming, cringe-inducing, literally laugh-out-loud-and-quote-to-your-friends level. Sundquist narrates his life story (from early childhood to just after his experience with the Paralympics in Italy) with characteristic humor and optimism, and plenty of subtle surprises. For example, as the Josh in the story ages, Josh the author uses a more mature voice. The author always remains in the background, though, selecting just the right details for the reader to see the hilarious big picture. For example, when Josh of about ten years old is in the hospital after his amputation, a resident makes an embarrassing mistake and covers by claiming to be late for a meeting he just remembered. The reader has no doubt that the doctor is lying, and Josh the author gives enough information for us to be very clear on that point, but the young Josh in the story shares how there's a positive side to everything, and maybe even a really embarrassing moment can help you remember a meeting for which you were running late. It's a perfect blend of innocence and

wisdom, and there is really no point in the book where Josh the author loses the perfect balance of that blend. What I love the most about this inspirational book is that, despite the protagonist's aspirations as a motivational speaker, the book never really stoops to blatant attempts to inspire. Yes, Josh survives a serious battle with cancer, and he shares his story and heart with open hands, letting the reader choose what to take from the telling. Yes, Josh has some amazing romantic disasters, but he doesn't preach about relationship values - the reader just gets to share space with him as he struggles. Yes, Josh experiences impossible challenges as an amputee, but Josh the author has a remarkable sense for when his status as an amputee is relevant to a story and when he just needs to focus on how his unique personality brought about a certain turn of events. Yes, Josh the author seems to recognize the absurdity of many of the rules in his loving and strict homeschooling family, but he neither criticizes his parents nor admonishes the reader to accept or reject a certain kind of faith, even saving his own personal statement of faith for a gentle moment near the end of the book. This book really is an author telling his story in a powerful way to connect with readers, and I can recommend it (and Sundquist's YouTube channel) for anyone looking to be inspired with hope for humanity.

I'm not the type of person who enjoys nonfiction. I've tried to read some motivational, self-help type books before and the end result is almost always the same: I don't finish them. I can't help it, I get bored. I start out with good intentions, and I may even be enjoying the book, but at some point I almost always lose interest. I think that's because there's no story, nothing to keep me wondering about what's going to happen next. And that's fine, some people are into that kind of thing. I'm just not one of those people. So, I said all of that just to say this: I never in a million years would have picked this book to read on my own. However, I am glad that Christina picked it because if she hadn't, I would have seriously missed out. This book was fantastic. I think my favorite thing about this book was the way that it was written. It was written in what I took to calling "The Voice of Joshes Past", or first person narrative for anyone who wants to get technical. The BRILLIANT thing though, was that it was done in such a way that you really felt like what you were reading was coming straight from the mind of a nine-year-old boy--Or whatever age he happened to be at that point because as Josh grew up, so did the voice of the story. This was very effective for two reasons: 1. It allowed him to tell his story in the way that only kids can: Candidly and with unfettered honesty. You know how we say that "Kids say the darndest things"? Well, there are several moments in the book that capture this to the fullest. Not only was it endearing, but a lot of the time it was hilarious. I laughed. Out loud. A lot. 2. That same honesty added emotional depth that I'm not sure I was

prepared for. Viewing things through his nine-year-old eyes, you get a look at what it's like to have cancer as a child. You get to see his strength, determination, and his fear. It's very real and very raw. There were several times throughout the book that the emotions consumed me to the point of tears and I had to remind myself that he beat it. That, he may have lost his leg, but he is alive and well, and I can go look him up on YouTube right this second if I wanted to. It was very powerful stuff."I just try to believe that it's possible. Because if it's possible, then there's hope, and if there's hope, it's worth my best shot. That's why I get a bracelet, why I put it on my wrist. It says, 'Believe.'"That is probably my favorite quote from this book. I feel that it encompasses the whole moral of the story: That if you want something bad enough and you're willing to work hard to get it, all you have to do is believe in yourself. Not only did Josh Sundquist fight and win the battle against cancer, he went on to represent his country by skiing in the 2006 Paralympic Games, and fulfilled his dream of becoming a motivational speaker, all because he chose to believe. Now that's INSPIRATION. If you haven't read this book already, I highly recommend that you pick it up. You will totally thank me later.Originally posted on brilliantlynovel.wordpress.com

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