

Summer Sanders is a NCAA Champion and an Olympic Champion because of her exploits in the pool. In life she's a real champion because of what she's done since she's left the swimming world. I had a chance to speak with her recently about her experiences growing up as a young swimmer and then ultimately leveraging those experiences in some rough spots around the world and helping people improve their lives thanks to her inputs and experiences as a world class athlete. She has a fascinating story from her early childhood throughout her professional career and I'm happy to share it her with you on the latest installment of the DiploSport podcast.

Morgan: The first thing I have to ask is where did the name Summer come from? Were your parents real into nature? Were they psychic and they knew you would become an Olympian?

Summer: That is a good one. I haven't heard if my parents were psychic. I don't think they have psychic capabilities, but I don't know. They are constantly surprising me. I was born in California so it does kind of go along with California vibe, but it stems from the fact that my brother was due in the summertime. Back then they didn't know the exact day, but ironically enough he was born the first day of summer but he was a boy. So they gave him Trevor because they had both names worked out. Summer would have been his name if he was a girl. I popped out 2.5 years later in October where it makes no sense to be named Summer, but my mom and dad really liked it so Summer seemed to stick. I'm really glad I have that name. It was unusual back then, but now it's much more popular.

Morgan: And it became very appropriate and we'll talk a little about your summer Olympics experience, but where did it start? When did you first get into the pool?

Summer: First moment in the pool was soon after I was born. We had a backyard pool where grew up in California. My mom, who was a lifeguard, she grew up in a small town in Nebraska -- Tekamah, Nebraska. She knew how important it was for my brother and I to be pool safe so there was no expectations that I was going to be this champion swimmer. It was literally to keep me alive with our backyard pool. I had lessons when I was 18 months. I hated every second of it. My instructor's name was Mark and if the name Mark popped up in any conversation at all I would start screaming and crying because I didn't want to get in the pool. I would say "no fin, mommy. Tally up." I had lessons and my mom didn't think I was learning much of anything and then she watched me one day when I was 3 playing in the pool with my brother. I had the little floaty tube around my torso section and all of a sudden I was watching my brother and his buddies in the deep and I put my arms straight up and sunk down. She said I was either going to sink or swim in that moment. She was getting ready to jump in after me and the next thing you know I was up and swimming. Everything my instructor told me I kept in reserve in the back of my mind until I was ready to do it.

Morgan: I'm struck by 2 things. The first is the role of family in creating athletes and this is something in all my interviews that comes up. With female athletes they have older brothers that set the example and the little sister would tag along. Also strong mothers is an important and common thread that I see a lot and that is something I hear from you.

Summer: My mom was supportive, grounding, and consistent. I think that are really good qualities and really good qualities for me. I was a very self-driven kid. No matter whether I had a good race or bad race, we are going to the pizza party regardless. The family fun didn't rely on if I did well. We always had an agenda and it was always fun and consistent even when I wasn't at my best. It made me feel better because it was an underlying love and support without any words that I had. I do feel like it was the perfect blend and I wrote a book about it. It's called, "Champions are Raised, Not Born." It was how my

parents made me a success and I had this perfect blend between a dad. He was a football and basketball guy. Those were the sports that he liked to watch. As far as he was concerned, this swimming thing took up way too much time. He quickly learned and saw that I was really good at it and spending a lot of time and energy and dedicated to this thing. He felt like the least he could do is learn a little bit about it. I appreciated that side of things. I also appreciated the side with my mom where she was a little more educated in the world of swimming. She was very creative in helping me coming up with the correct decision. That is a different way than saying pushing me because she didn't push me. If I suddenly decided I didn't want to go to practice, her response was not, "No, you are going to practice." Her response was, "Alright, why do you think shouldn't be going to practice?" and "Do you think you are going to be happy about that decision later?" and "Do you think you are going to feel guilty if you don't go?" The next think you know, I'm going to practice because I decided it after that list of questions.

Morgan: When did you start becoming one of the best? You grew up in Roseville?

Summer: Yea, Roseville, California--northern California. It was just outside of Sacramento. It was 2 hours from San Francisco and 2 hours from Tahoe so right in the middle.

Morgan: When did you start becoming one of the better swimmers in the region and state?

Summer: I think I was pretty good from the get go. I would say I had natural talent for sure. I was a 4-year-old getting 3rd in my first race. I was scared to death crying in the blocks and the next thing you know I touch the wall and I'm walking around with my chest all high and my stomach out and I'm so proud. I was doing well all through grade school. I think people could see that I picked the sport I had some talent in. I do feel like talent takes you to a certain point and it's the same when it comes to intellect. You're natural, God-given smarts take to you to a certain and then you have to decide if you want to step it up and be one of the best or is that as far as you are going to go right here. There is always at that moment and I know mine was at 14.

Morgan: We'll get to that in a sec. One of the buzz words now about raising kids is instilling grit in them. Just like the story you shared about your mom where she would put it on you to tell her why you aren't going to practice and the next thing you know you are going to practice. Is that something you as a mom now see yourself doing with your kids?

Summer: All the time. And did you call it grit? Yeah, that is so funny because we are starting this campaign with the John Wayne Cancer Institute and it's called "Show your Grit." It's true....it's sort of like that mentality of a generation previous to us where you had to be a little bit tougher. My generation called it sucking it up, right? Showing your grit is actually showing your true character I believe. It's so not so hard core in my household yet. My kids are 8 and 10. I'll use it with their nutrition. I just came back from DC with the Partnership for Healthy America and I said to everyone, we need to give our kids a little more credit. They can handle this knowledge about eating healthy and I guarantee they can make good decisions. My example for them was I'll say to my kids all the time. My daughter has the biggest sweet tooth and she'll say can I have another cookie? I'll say to her, "Do you think your body deserves another cookie?" She cannot stand when I say that because now it's on her. She has to decide is my body going to work if I have another cookie? Should I have another cookie? She'll actually think through it and most times she doesn't have another cookie. If I see her tormenting herself, I'll say, "Sky, go ahead and have one more cookie, but just know what is good for your body. You know this is not the best choice." My point is, yea, I do that in areas of their life right now. I require them to fulfill their

commitment to whatever team they sign up for, but they are not fully committed to anything on the sports side yet.

Morgan: Not skiing or swimming?

Summer: No...They do a little bit of everything. Opportunity is plentiful. I say that because I think it's amazing and awesome. I say that also because it's hard as a parent to figure out...I find myself fighting for my kids' free time more than anything else. I want them to be kids. I want them to go out and create their own fun. I don't want pay for organized fun. We've got a bounce bag and 2 lacrosse sticks. I'm not 100% sure I need to sign you up for full blown lacrosse yet. I want to see you out there practicing the skills that we just learned off YouTube. If you really love it and you're digging and now you want to play, alright cool. Otherwise bike to your friend's house or get outside and play basketball. We just got a hoop up in our front yard. We've got these things at our fingertips. I'll get out there and play with you, but I want to see that you are initiating this and it's your idea and you want to see it happen.

Morgan: When you were 14 how much time were you spending in the pool every day?

Summer: At fourteen, I was knee deep. Fourteen I was one year away from barely missing the Olympic team. At fourteen I was also a pain in the butt. I was not a very good kid and didn't really listen. Anybody who has had a 14-year-old girl can probably relate to this and believe me I know it's coming back to me in the form of my daughter. But I will be ready to hand her off to my sister in law--I'm just kidding. I was struggling at that time and that was when I had to make a very conscious decision to show up at practice. I say that because I wasn't driving yet. My parents were taking me to practice or I was in a carpool situation. Getting there was the easy part. Showing up in the water to do the work was a whole different story. I decided to show up and somewhere along the way I was probably in the water 3 mornings a week at 110 minutes, every afternoon 3.5 hours.

Morgan: Being so close to Cal and Stanford were you training with those?

Summer: Nope. It was a USS club. When I started it was originally AAU swimming back when that existed. Then it became USA swimming so USS swimming. We had our club team. It was California Capital Aquatics. I hit the jackpot when we got a new coach when I was 10 years old. His name was Mike Hastings. I hit the jackpot because it was the perfect fit for me. All of my coaches leading up to that point were fantastic and were perfect for that stage of my life.

Morgan: Even Mark?

Summer: Even Mark! Poor Mark who I cried over all those years. When Mike Hastings came into town, I tell my kids now I am so crazy about being on time because of Mike Hastings, my coach. Probably because of my mom. Six months out of the year she was a single mom and every single moment was detailed in her schedule and if we were off by 1 second it threw her whole schedule off. But Mike Hastings--if we were late for practice we were busted. What that said to him was you don't respect yourself, you don't respect your team, you don't respect your sport, and you don't respect me. It came down to respect. That is something I'm militant about when it comes to my kids.

Morgan: I just heard you say your mom was a single mom 6 months a year? What was your father doing?

Summer: My parents were divorced when I was 7 and my brother and I went 6 months with my mom and 6 months with my dad. They lived a mile apart and its kind of unheard of, but it worked for them and divorce is tough on a kid no matter what.

Morgan: So you end up just missing the Olympics in '88--the Seoul games....

Summer: Yes, by .027 of a second. That is like 3 Lee press-on-nails or something like that.

Morgan: Who edged you out?

Summer: Whitney Hedgepath and Mary Wayte. Whitney was in lane 8. I was winning up until 30m left in the race. Then it was a classic cartoon character moment where I started spinning my wheels. I didn't think about anything up until then. I was this young kid that wasn't supposed to be there. I was having a great time, swimming my own race and all of a sudden I noticed that I was in the lead. I freaked out and tried too hard. Honestly, I looked at the scoreboard and saw my time. It was a 2:16 and I bettered my time by 3 seconds so that stage of swimming that is ridiculous. I was so excited. I was in lane 3 and next to it I saw 3 so I got third. From that point forward, my favorite number was 3.

Morgan: Then you go to Stanford for Coach Quick?

Summer: Coach Quick

Morgan: Hastings to Quick

Summer: Hastings to Quick..pretty awesome.

Morgan: You dominate, right. Nine national titles?

Summer: College was fun. I say that because I'm a better swimmer when I have better people around me. I had phenomenal people around me at Stanford--coaching staff, support staff, academics off the charts. My teammates were amazing and we fed off each other. We got frustrated together and we went through things together and thrived together. We showed our grit together and that is what makes you better. Probably one of the things I miss in life is that camaraderie and chemistry which people don't think of in an individual sport.

Morgan: It's funny that you bring that up. I brought this up with Johann Olav Koss when I talked to him. I just presumed that he was so self-assured and self-confident that he's the reason why he was at the top of the medal stand in Lillehammer and he said no no no no. I didn't get there by myself. It's all my teammates. It may seem like an individual sport, but it's the team that...

Summer: Olympic athletes when we get our moment, we don't get the Oscar stage. We don't get the microphone for even those 3 short minutes before the music starts playing to thank all the people who got us there. It's a laundry list. When you go back, it's literally those "thank you mom" commercials where you see these moms getting up before the sun comes up to get their kids to practice. I woke up at 4:07a. I would go out and pour my cereal. I'd already packed my bags the night before which included my school bag with all my school books and homework, my swim bag, and my bag with all my change of clothes that I was going to need for school. I was in the car with my mom, ready to go at 4:15. She would drive me the 35 minutes to Jesuit High School in Fair Oaks, CA where we'd both get in and swim because

she figured if I'm going to get up this early I'm going to try to get a work out in. Mike would let her and I would do my 1:15 minute workout. I would quickly shower, get my clothes on, back in the car, and it's about 40 minutes to get home.

Morgan: My wife would kill me if I didn't ask this. Did you have to wash your hair every time?

Summer: No - I treated my hair so poorly because food would always trump hair. I would tie it in a knot. I have to say this...I have really good hair now and I think its because I didn't get it a ton of attention and I let it do it's natural thing. I would tie that sucker in a knot and I was in the car in 2 seconds flat. If anybody spent any time in a swimming locker room you know how quickly you want to be in and out of that situation. I get to school around 7:30 or something and school started around 7:30. I went through my day and 3:05 we were out or around that time. I was back in the car with my carpool and back on my way to Jesuit High School for my second workout. I didn't roll into my house until around 7:15 - famished. I would have eaten your arm if you had put it out in front of me. Then I started all over again the next day.

Morgan: At Stanford you talked a lot about your teammates. What role did Title IX play in your life and having those opportunities that your mom, who was a lifeguard and presumably a good swimmer in her own right may not have even had.

Summer: I think a lot of the grandmas out there right now would say they could have been a really good athlete because we are watching them compete now. My mother-in-law is 70 and she just ran in a race with us this past weekend. She did a sprint triathlon not long ago. I feel lucky. I had opportunity. I even remind my daughter about that opportunity word. I said it with excitement, but it's hard because we have so many choices for girls and boys now. My choice where I grew up was mommy and me gymnastics and swimming. We didn't have soccer for girls. There were some girls who played on the boys time, but I didn't have organized soccer. I had swimming and it fit and it was perfect. I think geography plays a big role and I've talked about this with people like Bonnie Blair who is a speed skater and grew up in Wisconsin...or maybe Illinois. But that is what her family did. Ice was everywhere. They speed skated. Everyone in my family swam. That is what our town did and it worked out great for me. I do always recognize that Title IX gave me the opportunity to become who I am. That allowed me to go to college, meet my friends. You learn so much about yourself in your early 20's. I'm forever grateful for the Billy Jean Kings, the Donna de Varonas, the people that came before me and I recognize the fact that they didn't have it and had to work really really hard for us.

Morgan: You go to Stanford for 2 years and then it's the Barcelona Games.

Summer: Yes, the Barcelona Games came after my sophomore year. I was just back at Stanford visiting my classmate, David Shaw who is now the head coach there and we were talking about that. We went back where we lived my sophomore year. He lived on the first floor and I lived on the third floor with 5 of my friends. We had 6 in one room. I was explaining to him that this was such a crazy time for me because it was leading up to the Olympics. It was back in the day when journalists could just get your number and call you.

Morgan: I remember Sports Illustrated..they had pictures of you in your dorm room, right? You were wearing Air Jordans.

Summer: Always Air Jordans! I had Michael Jordan posters everywhere. I traveled with my Jordan posters. I put them up in my hotel room with toothpaste because it didn't affect the paint or wallpaper.

Morgan: Did you meet him in Barcelona?

Summer: I met him..I came home my sophomore year for Thanksgiving. My family was season ticket holders to the Sacramento Kings and it just so happened they were playing the Bulls. The Kings learned about my love of Michael Jordan so they brought me down to meet him before the game. I met him then. It was my moment when I carried a watermelon, that Dirty Dancing awkward moment where it's like OMG - I was not as cool as I thought it would be. It was cool meeting him, but I'm sure he thought I was a total loser. I got to see his game then and then it's crazy how life works. Then I host Inside Stuff and he's very good friends with Ahmad so then I got to know him and I would see him often. Now he is a member here at our golf club in Park City. I saw him not that long ago.

Morgan: What was your attraction to Jordan?

Summer: I just loved his work ethic and he was amazing. I would watch his games before practice and I would tape his games. I remember when he was on Arsenio Hall I can remember every bit of his interview with Arsenio Hall. It was one of his first interviews and I think it was girlfriend at the time, Juanita, was in the audience and he was sick. Arsenio was like, "what do you make for him when he's sick?" I remember when Arsenio asked, "How come you don't wear Chuck Taylors?" He said, "Because you don't look good in Chuck Taylors." It was about all of his Air Jordans. I wore his Air Jordans to my high school graduation. I was dedicated. I was a very dedicated Jordan fan.

Morgan: You won 2 golds in Barcelona. Why not go for Atlanta? How did you know that was the time to hang up the swimsuit?

Summer: I didn't. I wanted to go for Atlanta. In fact I think what's very interesting and it will be interesting to hear after all your podcasts are done if you learn this about the athletes you interview. I didn't even allow myself to soak in the moment. Each medal I would put in my bag. I only had 4 medals. In this day and age, Phelps is bound to lose one or two of them. He's got like 52. By the end of my 8 days, I would find one of my medals randomly at the bottom and I would be like, "How did that get there?" "How am I not keeping better track of my medals?" It wasn't like I didn't love and cherish them. It was that I was 19 and our mindset as athletes is to move on to the next one.

Morgan: I literally am having a flash back...somebody caught you on camera at the airport or something flying back from the Olympics and you had to dig through your bag to find your medal. That literally happened.

Summer: Yea! You have to remember, I was so young and I loved them. Fast forward now, I go run the Boston Marathon I'm wearing that medal on the flight home. I found myself a week later wearing it around the house with no one here for no reason. Just because I wanted to feel better about what I accomplished. My Olympic medals have always been for other people in an odd way. I cherish them and I love them, but when I travel with them and if I take them out for TSA or I get a chance to show them to somebody and it brings them to tears. I think this is what my Olympic medals are for. They mean so much and they remind me so much of what they mean and what they stand for.

Morgan: I've actually worn one of your golds.

Summer: Yes, exactly..at Right to Play.

Morgan: Which leads up into our next thing. In '96 you end up going to Rwanda. How did they find you?

Summer: Let's back up just a second. I thought I was going to go to Atlanta '96. I leave Barcelona and even on the field during the closing ceremonies I'm saying, "I'll see you in Atlanta." I've got all these see you in Atlanta stickers on me. I knew I was going to take off a quarter at Stanford so I traveled and worked since I gave up my eligibility which means I gave up my scholarship. I was still a Stanford student. I just wasn't a student athlete. I do my work and come back in October. I'm swimming for the team but only in exhibitions. Let's go back to the beginning of our conversation. I need my teammates around me, but I wasn't technically part of the team. That was a disconnect and I had no idea how valuable that was to my success and to my love of the sport which is in turn the success. I survived for about a year I think in that setting and I was still going to school and working. I remember we were doing some set and it was right in the middle of the 50m pool and I had to decide to push really hard. For the first time in my life, I was like why am I doing this? I never questioned pushing myself to the brink of passing out. It never crossed my mind to question and I questioned it. That is when I knew. I think I'm done. I went through my pros and cons and had a whole moment. A lightbulb went off and life can exist without swimming. It hasn't for my entire life, but it actually can and I can do all these other things. It became very exciting for me and I knew I was ready to move on.

Morgan: And move on you did. You ended up hooking up with an organization called Olympic Gate. How did they find you and how did they use you?

Summer: I believe Johann or the organization called my agent, but I like to say Johann called me. I do feel like I learned about Johann and what was going on. It was the exact right time. I made a 10-month comeback for the '96 games and I did not make the Olympic team. I really believe that comeback was because I never allowed myself to soak in the moment from '92. It was when I didn't make the team that I had my moment of sitting there and appreciating every part of my '92 experience for the first time. It took me 4 years to go, "Man, my team was amazing," and "that was unbelievable," and "I'm really satisfied." I got the call and I went with them to Rwanda. I didn't hesitate for a second. It was 6 months after the genocide and I wasn't worried for my own safety. I just knew I wanted to give back and I wanted it to count for something. I wanted to physically go and be a part of something great. That is what it was. Now it's Right to Play and you can check it out at righttoplay.com or righttoplayusa.org and we are in 20 different countries. We have 3 pilot programs here in the US and New York. It's called Play at the Core. Early childhood education is really becoming all the rage for the lack of a better way to describe that we can get to our youth very young and we can see incredible difference in the way these children are learning. Even kids we maybe thought were slow learners. If we can get to them early they are not slow learners. They are amazing kids in the classroom.

Morgan: You are the first athlete ambassador to become a board member to Right to Play. You've traveled to Sierra Leone and gone back to Rwanda.

Summer: My Rwanda experience in '96 hooked me.

Morgan: What did you do there?

Summer: We visited with the orphans. There were quite a few orphans and displaced children. If you want to learn about the Rwanda genocide, I suggest you do it. We are very hopeful this will not happen again. These kids and their resiliency and their spirit and smiles and the look in their eyes that they got a chance to play for one day was off the charts. That is what hooked me. I saw this one little girl in particular. She was a double amputee. She was running in this race and was so focused. Her eyes were so big. These huge, big brown beautiful saucers for eyes. Not once did she feel sorry for herself. She just wanted to run this race and she was jamming. When I saw her, I thought I need to be her voice. That is really what I've been. Now that I have 2 kids I know what those eyes look like. It's universal. It's in every country, on every kids face. There is no difference. Just give them the opportunity, the knowledge, the chance and believe in them. That is what Right to Play does. Back when we started out, when Johann first had this idea--learning through play and sport. Think for a moment about your youth and all the things you learned through play, sport, singing, and movement. It's play based learning. It's a better way to learn the goods and bads of life. Conflict resolution is a lot different here in the US than a place like Sierra Leone that has a 10 year civil war. Basically trading a soccer ball for their gun. Their gun was their only constant for the 10 years previous. Young kids fighting and killing. Now we are going to teach them to be loving and caring members of the society. They need some instruction there. That is where Right to Play came in. Every village, every country, every city where we step in we respect the culture. We understand what they need. It's sustainable because the leaders and teachers are their people. That is what makes it work.

Morgan: From the time you were 3 years old, you were being groomed to be an athlete ambassador. All the lessons you've spent the last half hour talking about--self-discipline, work being hard, setting goals for yourself. Even the stuff you were talking about with your teammates at Stanford. That is conflict resolution 101 right there. Those are all lessons that can be applied here in Park City just like they can in Kigali or Freetown.

Summer: It's the universal language. It really is. I do feel like there is more data to prove this. We have numbers to stand behind what we've always believed to be the truth so more people are listening. It's more than just a game. Life is more than just a game. These kids are so hungry and thirsty for knowledge. I sat there with them when I went back there to Rwanda, which by the way is a completely different place.

Morgan: Isn't it incredible?

Summer: Amazing! When I was there the first time no one was in their homes. People had fled or worse. These poor kids and what they experienced and the trauma. I can't even describe it. Then I went back this time and it was green and beautiful

Morgan: You can eat off the roads. It's immaculate.

Summer: Yea. It's really really amazing. It warmed my heart and the people are so forgiving of one another. I know it had been 16 years since I'd been there before but they were very forgiving. The new generation in Rwanda, the recent generation is called the Amahoro generation--the peace generation. They want peace, they want prosperity. They know it comes from within and their kids. They are investing in their kids and its paying off. It's beautiful.

Morgan: This is something Johann harps on constantly. There are not enough child psychologists in the world to deal with the refugee crisis that is going. Rwanda gives it a fantastic template of how sport can be that tool, that therapy to help these kids get back on track.

Summer: Just think when you were a kid when you went through a rough time. I'll take my parent's divorce as an example. That was probably the most traumatic thing that I'd been through. I used sport. My sport was very solitary and I was looking at a black line for a lot of the time. If I was angry, upset, or sad I didn't have to sit there in a corner and cry or act out in any way. I just swam my heart out. That is way a lot of people work. We're not building Olympic champions through Right to Play. We are creating champion citizens. We are creating proud, resilient, awesome young kids. Like the kids that are walking into my house right now. Come in here. So my kids just walked in. This is Spider. Can you come say hi Spidey?

Spider: Hi

Morgan: Hey Spidey, how are you?

Spider: I'm good

Summer: Here, say hi right here. Say hi to everybody.

Spider: Hi!

Summer: And this is Sky. Sky, do you want to come say hi right here to everyone?

Skye: Hi

Summer: Skye wants to be a kid reporter so she has been practicing her reporting.

Morgan: That is why you are so comfortable in front of a microphone.

Summer: We are talking about my trip to Rwanda. In fact, Sky for her 10th birthday instead of asking for gifts from her friends she asked if everyone would donate to Right to Play.

Morgan: Oh, that is pretty cool. I met you guys at the Right to Play ball in November in New York.

Summer: He was at our table at Right to Play. I know..one year seems like an eternity for them. You might remember. They remember the gala for sure.

Morgan: You are doing great work with Right to Play and a ton of fundraising for the organization, in addition to what Sky was doing. You also had a spin on Celebrity Apprentice.

Summer: I did. I keep trying to remember. The kids were so young and they came with me and stayed at the hotel when I was working. Spider was still in a diaper. What?! Did I just say diaper? I think it was 2010..I think that is when we were there. Yes, that was when Mr. Donald Trump was still firing people and what not. It's the most common question that I got after the show and then now since he's been running for President of the United States. Did I like Donald Trump and was his hair real? I'm fairly certain that his hair is real, but I did like Donald Trump. When I was on the show crazy enough he was

like all the men in my life, my dad, brother and grandpa. There wasn't really a filter of any kind. Whatever he thought, he said. Which was cool when you were together. I'm not sure politically if it's the right move. I do wish that if he is President of the United States, I do want him to speak differently. I want him to treat women better. There is a laundry list of things that is ok for reality tv I guess because that is what happens on reality tv. It's not ok in my book, but you forgive it with reality tv. You don't forgive it as the face of our nation.

Morgan: I've heard other people describe that he has this energy and personal momentum that makes him, especially when you are in the same room with him, very attractive to be around.

Summer: Yea--he's engaging and he's real. You assume he's real because...I felt like he was real. I wasn't intimidated by him. He was literally like I said, the guys I was raised with, but you have to have thick skin. I would always say my grandpa was the first to tell you that you had bad breath and he's not gonna sugarcoat it. Buckle up kids and don't cry about it because it's just real life. That was way it was with him. I would chuckle when he would say the things that maybe some people would cry about. I don't know if it's ok or not. Maybe I need to go to therapy or something. I feel like as the face of our country you do have the responsibility to say things properly.

Morgan: Use the language of diplomacy.

Summer: Yea! Don't hurt people's feelings on purpose. I can't assume it's on purpose, but I think he needs to take a beat and think for sure.

Morgan: You've also run the Boston Marathon for Right to Play. I know every time they have the celebrity marathons. Like Runner World will have a slide show and I'll go through it. You are always right at the top as one of the fastest celebrities to run a marathon. What did you run? A 3:14..a 3:19?

Summer: Ok, so this was New York Marathon..3:24 I think I ran. I was very happy about that one. That was in my 40s. In my 30s, actually Adam Silver and I and I'm saying that because you are NBA. The Commissioner was my direct boss and he was President of NBA Entertainment. We used to run a lot. We decided to train for the 2002 New York Marathon. We couldn't run it together and we didn't even know it. He lined up with me and the next thing you know only girls are supposed to be there so he went down with the fellas which was a bummer because we never ran together. I ran that in 3:17 which was my fastest that I ever did. It was fun. People don't understand when I say a marathon was fun, but there is something about pushing through the pain and showing your grit. When you pushed to that brink. People call it the wall or whatever you want to call it. I love the feeling of pushing through.

Morgan: So when are you going to do an Ironman?

Summer: Never! I don't know..I guess I can't ever say never. I love hanging with these 2 people that are next to me, my kids. I also know how much time it takes to train for these things. You can't just hop into it. I could sort of hop into a marathon in my heyday. I don't think I could hop into an Ironman.

Morgan: World class athlete problems. One of the last things I want to get you out on here...one of the things I'm studying is whether or not there should be a Ministry of Sport in the United States. How involved should the US government be in athletics, professional, college, Olympic. We talked a little about Title IX. Doping is forever a big issue. Corruption in sport like what we saw with FIFA late last year. Do you have an opinion one way or the other?

Summer: I have an opinion in that I'm tired of it. We are all taught to play by the rules and there is no gray area. It's black and white. You are either playing by the rules or you are cheating. I'm tired of cheaters. I'm tired of cheater being asked over and over again did you cheat and they said no. I'm tired of liars. A lot of people sit here and look at me say, Summer how could you think most everyone is not cheating? I still really believe that most athletes are playing by the rules, but then there is the few that break my heart. They really do and I'm tired of it. I'm tired of these kids that are not cheating put their blood, sweat, and tears, their whole heart into their moment at the Olympics. You are going to hear this story about Shirley Babashoff a ton this year because its her 40th anniversary of her Olympic games. She lost to the East Germans and then they came out and said they'd been doping. She still has a bunch of silver medals at home. I just think that's wrong. She was the one that spoke out about it and then she was known as Surley Shirley. I think is so sad. It set the tone for you can't complain about it. YOu go and compete and trust that the system works and I don't know to fix the system. I really don't know how to and I want it to be fixed so badly. I don't think a Ministry of Sport is going to cut it. I love our government but they have enough going on. I think we have been doing fine with the way we're working that we don't need government rule or regulation, but there does need to be a shift of the people in charge of every top organization. You saw it with the USOC and that was reorganized when Peter Ueberroth came in there. I feel like that is better. I'm sort of answering your question and not. I'm not an expert in this. I'm just a former athlete that has an opinion.

Morgan: That is why we are here!

Summer: I think our government has enough going on. My kids education, that is important. I just got done talking about kids health and childhood obesity, that is important. I think health care is extremely important. In fact someone said why do we call it health care when it should be sick care because you only need it when you are sick. So let's start talking about health care differently which is teaching kids to be healthy upfront to save costs. I have to fight for my kids physical education in school and their recess. Then there is protecting us. The kids and I are going to Rio this summer and there is protection and our military. We've a laundry list of things that the government has to be responsible for. I'm not convinced that sports needs to be under that umbrella.

Morgan: That is a very interesting take.

Summer: Do most people feel like there should be?

Morgan: They think we absolutely should. Most people absolutely think that we should. It's interesting to hear a balance also.

Summer: Most people think that we should? I can't wait to hear what Condoleezza Rice says. I'm going to have to watch your podcast. Obviously being on the inside she knows how much is going on in there. I spent some time at Capitol Hill this year to lobby for recess and PE. My dad is shocked that these kids...How often do you have PE in school?

Spider: Umm...2 days a week

Summer: 2 days a week. He's 8 years old. A little boy full of energy, busting at the seams and he has PE twice a week. I said that to my dad and he's like what? That is a good situation there. A lot of schools don't have PE and I think people are shocked by that.

Morgan: Inner city Chicago...inner city Oakland

Summer: There is no better data. If you are active, you are better in school. If you are moving, you learn better. If you are physically active, you are better in school. I just want the best for our kids so that is our best priority.

Morgan: I'm trying to keep these evergreen but there are two topics I want to bring up with the Olympics coming up not knowing if we are going to put these up before the Olympics. What do you think of Katie Ledecky?

Summer: Oh my Gosh. Katie Ledecky...gold medal Ledecky! I describe her as an American Ninja Warrior trapped in a distance swimmer's body and personality. She is like this spark plug. I've never seen anyone like her. I think she is amazing. I will say that she's the only athlete who's written me an email after I did an interview speaking about her and I said positive things. The things that I believe in whole-heartedly. She wrote me an email to thank me. She is like inside and out, one of a kind.

Morgan: I think Usain Bolt being her closest comp. The rest of the humanity is here and she's here. Was she just touched by the hand of God?

Summer: She is definitely talented. She has God-given hard core talent, but she also is a beast. She's got grit. She is asked every day how hard do you want to work and she chooses to work as hard as she possibly can. That is something you are born with--that X-factor. I would imagine that her coaches have to work on holding her back so that she allows her body to rest as opposed to pushing her more. For a lot of coaches that is a dream, but it's also difficult and it makes it complicated.

Morgan: When you talk about the grit equation, half of it is the talent, but the other half is passion. You clearly had it. Katie clearly has it. I'm sure there were a number of young women that you competed with that were stud athletes, but just didn't have the desire to take it to the next level.

Summer: For a lack of a better way to describe it, they say they burnt out on it. I do worry about that in the way I see youth sports now. Yet, I focused very early on swimming, but I do see this early focus and one sport focus and I worry that kids are losing sight of seasons and the changing of sports and keeping things fresh and fun. If they focus when they are 6, by the time they are done with high school the last thing they want to do is put on a pair of cleats. I loved my sport. I still love it now. I have a lot of friends who can't be around a swimming pool. It brings back bad memories and I feel bad that they are that way, but I recognize that it does happen.

Morgan: Do you swim at all now? How often?

Summer: Yea...I love it. Not as often as I'd like to. Mostly because of my travel but I would love to be in the water 2-3 times a week. I couple it with my running. I always say running is my heart, but swimming is my soul. If I can feed my heart and my soul at the same time, it's a perfect day.

Morgan: Do you guys swim?

Summer: Hey, who's going to swim practice later? Tell him about your swimming.

Morgan: What is your distance?

Sky: 50 free

Morgan: Oh wow. Are you fast?

Summer: Yea, you are fast. She does great. The funny thing is right now at this stage they are trying to understand and memorize their times so they can learn how they are getting better.

Morgan: The last thing we talked a little bit before the mice came on was the question about Zika. Let's say you were in Katie Ledecky's shoes as a young woman would you have concerns about going to Rio and how would you prepare yourself before you went?

Summer: You know Zika is a huge concern, but I think the biggest concern is where you are getting your knowledge. I have connections to the State Department and the CDC. I'm reaching out to everybody that I possibly can that is one step away from the source of information on Zika. My biggest worry is what is allowed to be published about the story and how easy we can get scared. I'm one of the people..I'm the first to get scared about this stuff. I've learned being that this is going to be my 11th Olympic Games that the easiest story to write is the negative story so I really try to look at all of it and filter it out and then make my decision with knowledge. To be honest with you, I know August is right around the corner but it is always away. I think we're going to see a huge shift. My concern is more back on the homefront. Are we ready for it here? We haven't hit summertime there. I'm going to Rio in the winter. Arm yourself with knowledge, trust your decision. If I was Katie Ledecky and..is she 19 now? She was 15 before so 19 now. To be honest with you, the last thing I would be thinking about would be having kids. If she's read up on it and feels comfortable, she's probably thinking she's going to be ok. She'll just make sure that she uses all precautions to make sure she doesn't get bit by a mosquito.

Morgan: Anything else? Is there anything else that you are working on? Anything you want to plug?

Summer: My show--We Need to Talk. It's on Tuesday nights on CBS Sports Net and occasionally on CBS. I'll be reporting from Rio at the Olympic Games and at the Olympic Trials for Yahoo Sports. What else do I have going, Spider? You can always catch me at Spider's karate and Sky's swimming, right? I make a mean omelet. Those are my claim to fame. Right, Sky? Look it..this is her afternoon snack. They are choosing blueberries and strawberries and I get very proud at moments like this.

Morgan: Sky has her Right to Play bracelet on.

Summer: Yes, she does.

(Music)