

Bill Walton

NBA Legend, Broadcaster, Humanitarian, and Survivor

RISE TO THE CHALLENGE. "Those not willing to risk going too far will never know how far they can go." Those words from Bill Walton sum up his philosophy of life. At 6' 11" in his Grateful Dead tie-dyed t-shirt, Bill Walton is one of the most recognizable and colorful sports legends ever. He also has one of the greatest can-do attitudes you'll ever encounter. It's a mindset he's cultivated and he gives it credit for helping him adapt, persevere, and ultimately succeed in challenges on and off the court. Named one of "50 Greatest NBA Players of All Time," Bill incredibly missed 9½ of his 14 NBA seasons due to injuries related to orthopedic problems. Despite that, his achievements on the court were enormous. When his storied career ended with his 30th surgery, Bill's dream was to pursue sports broadcasting. One problem: a severe lifelong stutter that prevented him from even saying a simple "thank you." Undeterred, Bill set about the task of learning to speak. He conquered stuttering and found a place behind the mic - earning numerous awards and honors since. Bill's greatest test came in 2007 when severe back pain confined him to the floor of his home for 2½ years. Finally relenting to surgery in 2009, the grueling rehab and recovery from that 37th surgery could well be Bill's biggest achievement. While Bill exclaims regularly, "I'm the luckiest guy on Earth," it's clear his outlook on life helped create that luck. Bill loves to inspire audiences to rise to the challenge of seeing just how far they can go.

WHAT GREAT COACHES TAUGHT ME ABOUT LEADERSHIP. Basketball icon Bill Walton was part of legendary college and NBA championship teams: UCLA, the Boston Celtics and Portland Trail Blazers. He was also part of the last place San Diego Clippers. According to Bill, the difference between winning and losing was leadership. The best coaches knew how to get the best out of their players. In Bill's career no one was better than legendary UCLA coach John Wooden. An English teacher who coached on the side for extra money, Wooden focused on the fundamentals. He never talked about winning – and rarely even mentioned the opposing team. Wooden did insist that players work together, not be selfish, execute flawlessly, and be accountable for doing their best. Armed with that approach Wooden went on to win 88 consecutive games (a men's collegiate record which still stands) and ten national championships. Bill, the consummate storyteller, shares tales that are as insightful as they are entertaining – about lessons of leadership he learned from John Wooden, Red Auerbach, Jack Ramsey, and others during his storied career. Bill provides an inside look at how world-class performance is really achieved on the basketball court - leadership and teamwork lessons based on principles that transfer off the court, too.

CREATE A TEAM THAT ROCKS. What separates great teams from everyone else? Basketball legend Bill Walton knows and speaks from experience. Bill played on two championship teams under revered UCLA coach John Wooden. Those teams contributed to the Bruins' 88-game winning streak, still the record in men's basketball more than 40 years later. Bill was also a two-time NBA champion; with the Portland Trail Blazers and Boston Celtics. Of course, it's not possible to appreciate great teamwork unless you've seen the other side of that coin and Bill experienced that as well during his time with the San Diego/Los Angeles Clippers. After Bill's playing days ended, broadcasting offered him the perfect perch from which to watch extraordinary teams perform. Throughout his business endeavors, Bill applied the teamwork lessons he learned from sports with astonishing success. In this keynote speech, Bill talks about the essentials of teams that rock - cooperation, friendship, loyalty, sacrifice, discipline, execution, and leadership – with humorous and revealing anecdotes. As one of the most colorful characters from the sports world, Bill Walton delivers an inspiring message for teams looking to take their performance to the next level.

MY 37 SURGERIES - A JOURNEY FROM INJURY TO RECOVERY. Bill Walton has the dubious distinction of being the most-injured player in NBA history. After 37 surgeries, the basketball superstar knows a thing or two about injuries, rehabilitation, and recovery. He knows what patients go through – and what caregivers and healthcare professionals go through. He can speak to both audiences authentically. In his 14-year pro career Bill missed a total of 9½ full seasons due to injury. Even so, he was inducted into the [Basketball Hall of Fame](#) and won numerous awards and honors for his brilliant play. Imagine his impact on the game had he stayed healthy! Bill's feet, knees, and back - the foundation of his ability to perform as an athlete - let him down. His most serious surgery was to straighten his spine after spending 2½ years on the floor of his home in agonizing pain – literally unable to move and contemplating suicide. Now back in the game of life, Bill remains active on his bike – participating in several week-long charity biking events for groups like Challenged Athletes Foundation. He also speaks to audiences of patients, healthcare professionals, and those from allied fields - delivering an inspiring message about his own healing and recovery.

