



## **Theo Fleury**

What are the chances that Theoren Fleury would even make the NHL let alone be a dominating force in hockey? His father was an alcoholic and his mother was addicted to prescription pain killers. A young Theo was in essence raised by the small community of Russell, Manitoba. Theo also battled with Crohn's disease, an intestinal disorder and a serious blade laceration to his biceps when he was a teen nearly cost him the use of one of his arms. Now put all this in a package no larger than 5'6", have him play for convicted sexual predator Graham James and then project him as a NHL superstar.

But inside of Theo beat the heart of a lion who had a gigantic will to succeed. He was signed by the Calgary Flames and debuted part way through the 1988-89 season averaging almost a point per game and leading the Flames to the Stanley Cup. In his first full season with the Flames he scored 31 goals and raised that total to 51 goals in his second year to go with 104 points. He continued to produce and averaged 36 goals per season over the next decade with the Flames. Theo was a fan favourite in Calgary as well as a team leader and captain. Not only was he supremely talented but he could play with a frightening ferocity.

As Theo approached free agency, Calgary traded him to the Colorado Avalanche knowing that they couldn't afford him. He then signed with the New York Rangers where he thrived until entering the NHL's substance abuse program for alcoholism. Theo came back renewed and won a gold medal for Canada at the Salt Lake City Olympics. After New York, Theo signed with the Chicago Blackhawks and again re-entered the league's health program.

In 2009, Theo penned his autobiography, *Playing With Fire*, which quickly rocketed to the top of the best-seller list in Canada. He openly spoke of the trials and mistakes he made in his life and the book made headlines. Importantly, Theo wrote of the steps he has taken, and continues to take, to get his life back in order. The book is a must-read for both hockey fans and those who gain inspiration from others who have overcome all odds.

A man who had the odds stacked against him scored more than 400 career goals and 1,000 points. Theo now has his life under control and is a great keynote speaker to address your organization.

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