

Dear Kristina!

Being selected as Woman of the Year 2010 came as a surprise to you. But if you were to search the memories of your fellow citizens or simply Google "Kristina Shmigun", perhaps you wouldn't be so astonished. Because when we see what this woman by that name has managed to accomplish, we might be forgiven for thinking she had already reached a ripe old age.

You have no doubt been told that you have been given tremendous gifts. After all you are a several-time Olympic champion, soon to be a mother several times over ... Everyone in Estonia has undoubtedly heard of you. You are a shining star in the Nordic firmament, yet you have remained an uncomplicated, congenial person. How do you do it? What do you eat?...many inquiring minds would like to know....

Perhaps the key to your success is that you are not a receiver but a giver. You give one hundred per cent on the ski course to live up to your own standards and to bring happiness to hundreds of thousands. But you also give the maximum effort in your other roles. Look at Viktoria Kris and Kristjan. You can tell a happy husband and child even with their backs turned to you. I have met you at SOS Children's Village, where you give others hope and your greatest asset -- time. You are not afraid of answers to hard, inconvenient questions. Somewhere in the depths of our memory, we still remember the times when in the course of a single day, every Estonian was initiated into the meaning of the terms A sample and B sample. You taught us courage then. You taught us that fair play still existed. You stood up unflinchingly for your rights and for what was right – and justice prevailed. It was no doubt difficult beyond description but an instructive experience. It was a valuable lesson for the entire people.

I would like to thank you, Kristina, for everything you have done!

In his address to the Sport Congress this morning, the President said the role of top athletes in society was growing. Being a role model and example is important for both children and adults. Athletes can fulfil that role, because a great athlete is also great as a person. In Asia, such

people are said to have been given seven lives to live at once.

Kristina, as you are expecting your second child and writing the first part of your autobiography, I want to say that we appreciate the fact that you are here, and are confident that the next six volumes will be just substantial, exciting and great.

Once again, congratulations and we wish you all the best!