

**Having Heart**  
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Dallas Malloy recently boxed on the big screen in the opening sequence of *Jerry Maguire*. In the movie, Tom Cruise plays a big-time, big-money sports promoter. Dallas plays herself: An up-and-coming comet of the sports world who flashes before the audience momentarily and then disappears.

Four years ago at the age of 16, she made amateur boxing history when she fought in, and won by unanimous decision, the first officially sanctioned amateur bout between females. In a sense, she was an unlikely choice for making history. A talented musician since early childhood, she fell for boxing in 1992 and pursued it with a passion.

“I wanted a match just like any other boxer,” she says. But she soon discovered that the official amateur boxing rule book restricted sanctioned events to males only. She wrote the American Civil Liberties Union for help. Her assigned attorney, Suzanne Thomas, won the landmark case in a Seattle courtroom in 1993.

And so she got her chance for a match. Moments before the opening bell rang, her coach and boxing mentor, James Ferguson, gave her his final encouragement with tears in his eyes: “You have no idea what’s inside if you just dig deep.”

Dallas knew in her heart what he meant: “It’s hard to explain, but I know when you’re working out you push yourself as hard as you can and then go a little further — there’s no limit to what you have inside of you,” she says. “That’s the heart of the boxer — you never give up.”

It was the one thing from the world of boxing that stuck with her after the media attention surrounding her win had begun to subside. That’s when she found herself up against an even more challenging opponent: alcoholism and drug addiction.

“As an alcoholic, you tend to trade one obsession for another. As my love — obsession — for boxing faded, it coincided with my increased drinking,” she says. “I took a serious interest in acting, which focused me for a while, but I continued on a downward slope. Then when I discovered cocaine, I lost all ambition.”

Last January, she sought help in dealing with this “obsessive-compulsive hell.” She renews her commitment to recovery every day, and it begins with loving herself. “I have always craved love, but no human can give that love you really desire,” she says. “If I have contentment and peace, self-love, then I will not be seeking for something out there to fulfill that need.”

At 20, she already has made history. Still, she explains with an aura of genuine humility and joy, her quest has only just begun: “The best thing I can do is to help myself and then, perhaps, through my example, others can see that the potential for spirituality and growth are limitless.”

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