"I was born in England, we moved to New Zealand when I was a baby, and for us it was an amazing thing to come to a country where there is all the bush walks and beaches and fantastic things like that that you just don’t have in London. My parents used to make it a weekly thing, we’d go out for a bush walk or a walk on the beach, and it was always a long way. I would always get tired and have to struggle through getting back to the car – it was fun too, but within that I developed the character of push through when it gets hard.

I couldn’t ride a two-wheeler until I was 11. I just couldn’t do it! I actually had to rent my older brother’s bike - he charged me 20 cents for 15 minutes to practice on it, but I wanted to learn. I thought that skating would be fun. I assumed that if I went to something like a roller skating place everybody could do it and I would be the only one who couldn’t and I would make a fool of myself. I didn’t want to go there. I was 14 when my younger brother Andrew, informed me that the skating rink was safe and that there weren’t too many people there and most of them couldn’t skate. That’s a sad thing really in society that we should be like that, but we are, you get laughed at if you can’t do things. Anyway he told me it was safe, so we went roller skating!

I remember getting a B for Phys. Ed at High School when I was 14, but I had a strength, I was aerobically fit, and skating worked for me. The first time that I went along to ice skating – I could do it, it was fun! It was an exciting thing to conquer, and I fell over and hit my head on the ice and went to hospital for something to conquer, and I fell over and hit my head on the ice and went to hospital for the first time. I’d never seen any thing so fast – it was incredible. I purchased a pair of speed skates and eventually I was tapped on the shoulder and advised by Andrew Philp, ‘we’ve been watching you and the national champs are coming up, and do you want to go and race?’

So I went down to those nationals in Invercargill and I was successful. Everything else was a small step forward, you kind of go from there to a bit better, to a bit better, to a bit better, to a bit better, to world championships, to Olympics. Train more, you’ll get better! I adopted that policy and applied it very much. Somebody had said cycling was good training, so I took that to the extreme and decided that lots of cycling would be good training, and that’s how come I get good at cycling.

Of all the sports events I did, the World Short Track Speed Skating Champs, 1993 in China was the highlight beyond anything else by a long way. We got it right, all the way through, every aspect. It was with friends - and it was a world record too.”

XVI OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES
ALBERTVILLE, FRANCE, 1992

“It was the fantasy thing, like when you read the books on the Olympic Games, you kind of study them all school and they are pictures of spiky mountains, and you have your first time. I’d never seen any head on the ice and went to hospital for the first time and I was 14 when my younger brother Andrew, informed me that the skating rink was safe and that there weren’t too many people there and most of them couldn’t skate. That’s a sad thing really in society that we should be like that, but we are, you get laughed at if you can’t do things. Anyway he told me it was safe,”

Chris Nicholson - Olympian

Message to Youth
Pride in Participation

Although I didn’t get my Olympic Gold Medal, I came close enough! I can now see that as being something of huge value to have done my very best at something and excelled at it. There’s a mentality in New Zealand that says competing is all that counts. Unless you’re tried your hardest you will not get the satisfaction of success. But in the end it’s your value as a person that has to underline it all.”

Chris Nicholson - Olympian