



From left to right:  
Marvelous Curry, Zoey Curry,  
Mr. Olympia 2019 Brandon Curry,  
Zion Curry, IFBB Pro Brandy  
Leaver and Maximous Curry

# DON'T STOP BELIEVING

*2019's Mr. Olympia Brandon Curry and his wife IFBB Pro Brandy Leaver open up about their family, careers and how important it is to BELIEVE in yourself*

Written by Rachel Payne | Photos by Kaylee Hamby, Ever After Photography





## Believe You Can, Believe in Faith, and Believe in Family

From an early age, Brandon Curry looked to role models who influenced his training and goals, from Superman and Rocky on the big screen, to legends and champions like Lee Haney and Franco Columbo. He has had the great fortune to interact with some of these people in person and learn life lessons. On the other hand, his wife Brandy's greatest influence was her mom and the things she said or how she handled what life presented her with. Together, their belief in what they could accomplish together, the faith they had and still have that this is their path, and Brandy's belief in him combined with a strategic plan and whole-heartedly supporting him at home has made them a winning team. Winning the 2019 Olympia title has afforded them many new opportunities but it has also brought even greater clarity to the role model he is and will continue to be for his own children as well as the positive impact he can make in the community - where he lives, where he trains, where he travels, and through social media.



### Early Years

Almost 20 years ago Brandon and Brandy had just met. They were young and at that time just friends. "A group of us were looking at the Christmas lights and Brandon did a back-flip off a chair. When his shirt flipped up exposing his abs and all this muscle, I said, 'you should be a bodybuilder when we grow up'." And that's exactly what happened, for both of them! They continued to keep in touch, but had their own lives and pursued their own goals, each becoming professional bodybuilders. Still they shared future dreams like, "Wouldn't it be cool if we were both on a magazine cover, or what if you could do this or if you did that." Both of them signing sponsorship deals with Weider and reconnecting was a foreshadowing to the direction their lives would take.



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"Early on, the sport of bodybuilding was a foundational journey while I was searching for what life after college was going to be, and simultaneously being introduced to professional bodybuilding on a larger scale. At the 2006 Olympia when I witnessed Jay Cutler win the Olympia title I felt that the impossible can happen, and in that moment I discovered a purpose to being on that stage and knew that one day I could be a contender. For me, it was a confirmation that this was the path for me." Brandy continued saying, "In 2008, we eloped. Shortly thereafter our family began to grow. With one girl and three boys, I reassessed my role, took all of my experience from competing, and all I have learned and been exposed to and applied it to being a support system for Brandon."



### Adversity

With the success and prestige of being a professional athlete, comes the expectations of living up to your potential. "In 2014, I lost some sponsorships and for a while I was uncertain about being able to provide for my family and continuing in the sport." Brandy says, "It was hard to watch him go through that struggle." In another example, "In the sport of bodybuilding you are always trying to find the balance of competition and improvements. In 2016, we began contemplating the idea of change to Brandon's training program. He had experimented with his diet and competed in nine shows. He paid the price with a decline in his physique and we knew it was time for a change."

### The Turning Point

"We were aware of teams that trained overseas and over a late night conversation we even talked about what if... the seed was planted and then at the Olympia he met one of the coaches from The Kuwait Camel Crew. Two weeks later at the Kuwait Pro he met with the coaches and Oxygen Gym owner, Bader Boodai and was given a shot on the team." For those who don't know, being a part of this team means a lot is provided for you. Food, supplements, accommodations etc. is all there waiting after each workout so you will







have no worries about anything. It enables the athlete to focus with tunnel vision when it comes to working out so they can be their best and maximize their potential. For Brandy, there was no question, this was the next step. Brandon hesitated only, so he could figure out the best way to tell the kids, and how he would still interact with them from a nine hour ahead time difference. “We tell them that daddy has to go away for a while, and that I need them to be as helpful as they can be to their mother. It’s a necessary process and understanding that they’ve had to adapt to. People will ask, at this elite level, how do you find balance? There’s no such thing. Just being there creates an imbalance. But I stay connected, of course, and FaceTime works really well. My schedule is set to coordinate with my ability to communicate back home. It’s unusual but we make it work given the time difference. I get asked all the time, ‘What’s it like to train overseas, at an elite level of intensity, how is it different from training in the states?’ It’s a hungry environment and I am there to get what I need to get done. Deprivation from things you enjoy and love is a motivating factor. You zero in, like being thirsty. Then you tell yourself you can be hydrated once again. It’s motivating.”

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### Lessons Learned

“In terms of training, one of the main things I’ve learned is that more suffering does not equate to more results. When I’m in Kuwait, it’s more calibrating. Still intense, but the goal is not to kill you or even push the limits but rather to get into a daily rhythm and make your body cooperate. Sometimes that means fine tuning things. None of my preparations have been exactly alike because my body is always starting from a new starting point. Having someone there who can see you through that process and has the eyes and talent to see it has been an invaluable benefit. I am also fortunate in that one of my greatest strengths is patience!”

During this time Brandy also learned a few things. “I grew up in an environment where family is everything. They share, support, and spend time together almost daily. For

the first eight years of our marriage Brandon and I were together with the kids every day. When he went away to train, there were times I really did need help and it took time for me to create, find, and surround myself with this awesome networking community of families that I trust and we share and support each other. I am grateful that one of my strengths is perseverance. I am a little more analytical. Rather than being quick to react or respond, it’s a process for me. Once I have my head and my heart in check, I feel I can trust my perspective to find truth in each situation so it becomes a motivating factor.”

“In 2018, we made a plan to win the Mr. Olympia title and we kicked it off with the win at the Arnold Classic. We created the narrative and approached it with a positive attitude knowing we could challenge the champion and ultimately challenge for the title. After the 2018 Olympia, I told Brandon, you can do it next year. I believed it. For me, I mapped out the next steps that would maximize Brandon’s potential, his time away training, traveling, and at home, while I managed things at home. We were confident in our plan, executed it, and came out with the win!”

### Mr. Olympia

Brandon proudly states, “One of the greatest things about being successful in achieving the goal of winning the Mr. Olympia title is what it has shown my kids.” Brandy says, “He’s their hero. Since winning, Brandon has gone to all of their sports teams, and high schools and talked to the kids. Our kids listen to each speech and they are so proud and they learn from him each time. It makes them believe in their own abilities in whatever they choose to do. In addition they see their dad is not just reaching and teaching them but also helping these other young men around them. It’s given the kids a whole new respect for their dad to see other peoples’ response and respect towards him.”

### Faith & The Future

“I learned to develop a relationship with God. It’s a process that took time but I understood that I needed leadership in order to live the life that is my purpose. As a teenager, I found I would take advantage or manipulate people and things to suit my needs. But I felt guilty about it and didn’t want to be that person. I asked for God’s help and leadership. God showed me what the future could hold and as time went by and I was seeing these things come to pass, it increased my faith and helped me understand the impact this relationship could have on me. Learning the things He wanted me to know wasn’t easy but brought a lot of growth, development, understanding, and preparedness so I could see what God’s purpose for me is. Now I walk with God everyday and try to do the right things and live right. As Mr. Olympia and a role model, my purpose is to show others how God’s help and guidance can help them use their talents to become

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strong leaders. I feel that I have a responsibility to continue to discover the ways to fulfill His plan for me. It’s how I view people, opportunities and how I look at life.” Brandy added, “When I was young, I didn’t understand the life struggles I experienced leading up to my marriage and then I saw the purpose. If life had been different, I don’t know that I would have been strong enough or patient enough or forgiving enough at times. I choose to live my life depending on God; it’s the essence of who I am.”

“Through social media I have a responsibility as a business to market and represent companies and be an ambassador of the sport of bodybuilding and a lifestyle of health and fitness everywhere I go,” says Brandon. “But I feel that I can influence and inspire people in a positive way. I can use it as a vehicle to help others understand their purpose. In my opinion, I believe you can be whatever you want to be, I believe hard work gets results but taking it to another level, when you know your purpose, you have the confidence and faith that you would not otherwise have to carry you through the journey. My message is to make sure everyone really understands they have a God-given purpose and He will show you how to find it and how to use your talents. That’s what my walk is all about.”

“In the immediate future, I am focused on defending my title. We are invested in a new fitness facility called Carbon Culture the first of which will open in Franklin, TN, and the Curry family will grow by one in late summer. I’m looking forward to continuing to evolve with the sport, the community, and my family.”

### Words of Advice

“Bodybuilding is a reflection of life and a journey of self-discovery. Take an honest assessment of yourself, identify your strengths and weaknesses, understand what needs to be done and make a plan to improve, and work towards those goals. I have a team of people that support and encourage me, from coach to manager and wife, to friends and fans, they help me stay positive and motivated. We are always evolving. Use the honest assessment tool in all aspects of your life so you can keep moving forward and avoid the pitfalls that will lead you to nowhere.”

### Legacy of Understanding Responsibility

“I want my legacy to empower young men to understand that this world can be tricky and there is a lot of distractions so you have to make wise choices. You have to gain understanding to avoid the obstacles. You have to be focused and you have to discover who you are and where you are so you can move in the direction you want to be. To do this, you need to seek help. Seek council by developing a relationship with God and ask Him for guidance and leadership in discovering your God-given purpose.” ■