

Hello from Canada! My name is Erika Polidori and I am a softball player for the Canadian Women's Softball Team. I have been a member of the team since 2013 and the most exciting moment in my softball career was going to the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo where our team won the bronze medal. Are any of you softball fans? Did you watch any of the games? We played Japan and lost 1-0 in extra innings. It was a very exciting but heartbreaking game. We went on to play in the Bronze Medal Game, where we defeated Mexico 3-2 and earned the Bronze Medal! This was Canada's first Olympic medal in the sport of softball so it was an honour to make history with my teammates and coaches.

I have had a long journey in softball. I played softball in university. I wanted to play a sport I loved while completing my degree. I received a degree in nursing. My education came first and it still is very important as it is the foundation for my future. While I was in university I was chosen to play for the National Team. From the first day with the program, it has been an honour to represent my country and play against the best competition in the world.

I have been able to travel around the world playing softball. I love visiting new countries and learning about their culture and their people. My favourite country I have visited is Japan! Everyone I have met in Japan is so kind, thoughtful, and friendly. I have found that the Japanese culture takes pride in everything they do and everyone is very respectful. I have enjoyed exploring your country and meeting people from Japan. I can't wait to visit again.

Over the years with the Canadian National Team, I have learned a lot. I would love to share with you some of the lessons I have learned from sport; lessons I can take into other aspects of my life. I have learned how to manage my time so I can accomplish goals. I have learned that setting goals is important but creating a plan for how you are going to achieve the goal is more important. I have learned that there will be obstacles in your way and challenges for you to overcome but overcoming challenges makes the experience worth it. I have learned that relying on motivation isn't enough – my motivation comes and goes. Instead, having daily routines and habits is more valuable than motivation. I have learned that sometimes I will fail – softball and baseball are games of failure! Getting a hit 3/10 times means you are successful. Choosing to learn from your failures to improve the next time is what sets people apart. If you are not failing, you are not learning. The best of the best fail a lot more than others.

I have learned that life is too short to not do the things you love and to do them with everything you have!! I have learned to have FUN doing the things you love. More than anything, I have learned that it is about the journey and not the destination. And above all, it is about the people you share the journey with. The people you make memories with and the experiences you share together. I am very proud of my Olympic Bronze Medal but I value my relationships and experiences much more. I appreciate where sport has taken me and the people who have helped me achieve my dreams. Best of luck in all your endeavours in sport and in life! Pursue what you love and know that you can be successful.

Erika Polidori