

My name is Jeff Ball. I'm a certified orthotist and a certified prosthetist. Um, sometimes I call myself a male prosthetist, but that is frowned upon by most people. They don't get that joke.

So as an orthotist, I make and design custom braces for pretty much all the body parts except the teeth. So, I brace everything but teeth. So I brace toes, fingers, wrists, knees, hips, backs, necks and even heads.

I do cradle to grave. So I see babies as young as two or three weeks old and adults all the way into their late nineties.

I also do prosthetics. So I make artificial limbs, for people who have lost their limbs or who are born without limbs. So that would be more accurately called a limb deficiency.

### **How long have you worked at Lethbridge Orthotic-Prosthetic Services for?**

I started July 4th, 2000. I was hired right out of school out of university, out of the University of Calgary, with one course left to go on my degree. I finished that at U of L. It was engineering dynamics, was my last class. So my last course was done at the U of L. I was 25 years old and that was my first real job, I'd say.

About two years that I've been a partner with Tracy. Of course, I bought out Armand, who was the original founder of the company. And so, yeah, so I was here for about 18 years before I bought my half of the company.

### **Why did you choose this career?**

I was always interested in medicine, and biology, and science. That was always kind of what I was interested in school, but I was particularly drawn to medicine. I think because of the the idea of healing, of helping a human being overcome illness or

disability. That was always kind of, I think, the... the... what, the philosophical heart of the matter, right?

I chose this over other medical fields because, quite simply, I didn't want the lifestyle of a doctor. You know, I wanted something a little bit more scheduled. Not - I didn't want to be in E.R. rooms at midnight, on Sunday evenings. So I wanted a lifestyle that would support my big family. I have seven kids, so didn't plan on that, but that's how life turned out.

And so it, the lifestyle matched the lifestyle I wanted. It's also an interesting mix of shop class, biology, and accounting, I would say. So, I own my own business. It's a medically oriented business, and so I get to play doctor and then go through the back door, put on my smock, and use power tools. So, it's kind of like being a doctor and a carpenter at the same time.

### **What is your favourite part of your job?**

The favourite part of my job is probably the kids. Little kids, is probably my favourite part. Kids are, they're not nearly as cranky as guys my age. They're fun to work with. You get to grow with them and watch them grow, progress. I've had some kids from the time they were babies. And you get to see them every year, at least, you know, and up to the age of eighteen. And that's kind of cool.

It's also kind of neat to see kids who graduate, and I get to say goodbye to them too. You know, a lot of times I see kids who, who are born with illnesses that will never go away. Like I said, I get to know them and in some ways that's wonderful, but also it's it could be somewhat tragic too.

So there are times when I get to see kids only for a little bit and so to say goodbye to a child is almost as cool as growing up with them. So, but, it's an easy - the kids - yeah, that's definitely the best part.

## **What are some fun facts about yourself?**

I actually believe that I am, I was born in the Shire in the year of Middle Earth 673. So I do enjoy, like hobbits, a peaceful, quiet life. I do enjoy gardening. I like, I think that's in my blood, born and raised in Raymond. And so there's nothing like, an English cucumber that I grew myself. Or spicy Italian tomato sauce, that I make with Roma tomatoes from my own growing. So I find it, it's one of my hobbies. I like to connect with Earth, and I like to make my own food.

I do have seven children. I've been married twice. My first wife, Bethany, passed away from cancer seventeen years ago and so between, uh, my first two children with my first wife. I remarried and my second wife, Natalie, had two children, and so we've raised together we have his, hers, and ours. We have seven children, plus, we've kind of adopted a couple of nieces and nephews along the way. So his, hers, ours, somebody else's. They're mostly, more than half of them have gone now. So it's just me and the three littles, and, of course, my wife. So, big family.

I did live in Japan for a couple of years, where I learned to speak Japanese. I went back last year, to the convention in Kobe. When I was there the first time, when I was just a young man at age 20, there was a big earthquake there. And then when I went back this time there was a giant typhoon. So I think they won't let me back in the country anymore. Every time I go back, there's a natural disaster. So they probably, that's what they call me when I cross the border as I enter, "Oh, here he comes again.". Anyway, yes, I love, I love, I love Japan, so.