

The A,B,C's of Growth

A is for ATTITUDE - There is only one attitude to have in basketball and that is the willingness to learn and improve at all time.

B is for BALANCE - A player must have physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual balance to become a great player.

C is for COMMITMENT, CONSISTENCY, and CONCENTRATION - Commitment leads to consistency which is based on one's ability to concentrate on critical points of learning a skill and to concentrate on execution at crucial times in practice and games.

D is for DETERMINATION - When the going gets tough, the tough get going. Every great player has had their share of difficult times and hurdles to overcome, but what makes them different from those that fail is their determination to be better.

E is for ENJOYMENT - Basketball is a game, and games are meant to be enjoyed. You must bring energy, electricity, and excitement to the gym and to your team. Moods are multipliable, good or bad. Make playing the game an enjoyment to everyone around you. Be contagious in a positive way.

F is for FAITH - There are many things and events that occur in this world that we cannot explain and provide us with doubts. It is my opinion that we must then have faith in the fundamental love of God, and that there is always something positive that comes out of even life's most difficult and unexplainable events.

G is for GOALS - People who do not have goals wander through life looking for direction. You should have a goal each day, week, year, and even lifetime goals. Goals give us a yardstick by which to more fairly judge progress from our own self-perspective. Worthwhile goals are seldom achieved quickly, but by reaching goals we succeed in greater ways than by having no goals. Remember small steps and goals lead to giant leaps. Use the smaller short-term goals to direct you to long-term goals.

H is for HELP - In life and on the basketball floor you will gain little by serving only yourself. The little you do gain, cannot possibly make up for what you will lose if those teammates around you will not back you up when you are struggling. Treat your coaches and teammates like you want to be treated. You cannot be successful in life or on the court strictly by playing one on one. When you help others you get help in return, it is a fundamental need in a team sport such as basketball, but a more fundamental law of life.

I is for INTELLIGENCE - The only dumb player I have ever met was the one who didn't want to learn more about becoming a better player. Intelligence doesn't guarantee success but it sure helps. Just remember that learned intelligence doesn't always equate to court wisdom. You need both to be a great player.

J is for JUDGMENT - The great players have the ability to make just the right judgments on the court at the critical time. Judgment knows the more prudent of two paths in the road even if the road you take looks like it has a steep hill at the onset.

K is for KNOWLEDGE - Knowledge and wisdom together give us judgment. You can never learn too much as a player. Great players have a wealth of knowledge about the game and go the mental library often.

L is for LIMITATIONS - You must know your mental and physical limitations as a player, and work each day to eliminate one. However, you must never accept them as personal limits. Great players never accept the level they are presently at as a player or person, or limit where they can reach, regardless of what others say.

M is for MUSIC - A famous writer once said, "don't die with the music still in you". Learn how you are special and unique as a person and player and play that music. In other words, strive to fulfil your full potential with the gifts you have been given, and play that music.

N is for NOTICE - Notice and be aware of the sacrifices and help you get from people around you. All of your teammates, coaches, athletic trainers, managers, fans, etc can help you succeed OR fail. Respect and appreciate the people around and behind you. I believe everyone you meet can contribute to the success of the team in some way.

O is for OPPORTUNITY - Branch Rickey, the famous Brooklyn and Los Angeles Dodger owner, once said "Luck is where opportunity meets preparation". Always be prepared, and keep looking for opportunity, because they are a successful combination. Successful players do not necessarily get more opportunities than less successful players they just keep their eyes open, are more able to recognize them when they appear, and seize the moment.

P is for PREPARATION - Great players always prepare. You will be confronted situations you will not always be able to anticipate, but the player who is prepared will more likely handle adversity successfully. Preparation is perfect practice when no one else is looking or no one else cares.

Q is for QUICKNESS - Be quick, act quick, think, quick, with poise, for basketball is a game that demands quickness and reaction.

R is for RESPECT - You must always respect the knowledge and effort of your team mates and coaches. I believe that to get respect you must first earn it by your daily actions and efforts. Secondly, you must just as importantly give it to others. Never judge another unless you have worn their shoes.

S is for STRENGTH - To achieve greatness you must display both physical and mental strength. This is done only by hard work, and cannot be reached by taking short cuts. Muscle fibres grow only when effort is exerted on them. A short cut is usually the quickest way to someplace you do not want to be. Strength gives you stamina to excel beyond the average ability for extended periods of time. Great players have it and can sustain it.

T is for TOGETHERNESS and TIME - Basketball is a team game and you can only achieve success at the highest levels through teamwork and togetherness. The team that plays as individuals will always fail against the team that players together. Time is something you must give yourself. Each person needs time to grow, because a house is only as strong as it's foundation. A well-laid foundation takes time to build. Build a house of stone not sand.

U is for UNDERSTANDING - Make sure you understand what is expected of you as a player. If you don't know, you should ask, and then execute it. The basis of all learning is understanding (or discovery) and application of this knowledge to life or game problems. If you fail to learn, and you don't ask, you have wasted your time and effort.

V is for VICTORY - Victory doesn't always go to the best players, but it usually goes to the best "team".

W is for WILL - If there's a will, there is a way. Great player get more motivated if they are told something cannot be done or accomplished. They will find a way to achieve and reach goals. Will is the gas to your engine. Without it you will eventually end up standing still.

X is for the X-FACTOR - There will always be an unknown to your efforts and in games. Something we can never plan for or be sure will occur and will appear suddenly by surprise when we least expect it. We must accept circumstances we have no control over in life, as part of life. A piece of music played by the same note is not very interesting. Great players find a way to adapt to X-FACTORS as they occur and use them to their advantage. If you get lemons, make lemonade.

Y is for YES - The three most important words a player will ever say is "YES I CAN" do it.

Z is for ZZZZZZZ's - Get the proper amount of rest. You can never perform to your physical and mental peak if you don't take care of your body and mind. Sleep may be the most important tool you have for success that is most overlooked. Take care of yourself.

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