

Foreword by LeBron James

It's hard to believe now, but I was close to the same age my son is today when I first met Coach Dru.

As a young kid in Akron, Ohio, I was like a lot of other kids. I wanted to play basketball and hang out with my friends. So when Coach Dru asked me to play on his team, at the time it was all about basketball. But looking back on it, I now know there was something far greater at work that made me walk into that dusty Salvation Army gym in Akron. Because as much as I wanted to learn and play basketball, what I needed at that point in my life was someone who could show me more than just the X's and O's. Coach Dru taught me about life.

Being raised by a single mom, I knew it was important that I had a male presence in my life—men I could look up to and go to for direction. Prior to meeting Coach Dru, Frank Walker gave me that guidance. When Coach Dru came along, my support system grew, and I related to him on a different level—he knew what it meant to be poor, a feeling I was already too familiar with as a ten-year-old. Most importantly, he knew how to transcend his circumstances, and he wanted to share that knowledge with us too.

That's why I'm so excited for this book. I know firsthand how well these principles work. They worked for me and my brothers—Dru, Sian, Willie, and Romeo—growing up in Akron. My brothers and I were no different from other kids all over the world. We all had dreams. For too many kids, those dreams feel unreachable. But for us, they never did. Because Coach Dru showed us that no matter what sort of obstacles we faced, we could make our dreams a reality.

There are a lot of principles in this book that have become cornerstones of my own philosophy on life. But the principle that has probably impacted me the most is *to always have the heart of a servant*. That's something I learned from Coach Dru, and in many ways it was at the heart of my decision to return to Northeast Ohio as a basketball player.

On the court, the goal will always be to win a title. But off the court, the more important goal remains to shape the lives of young people in the community in the same way that Coach Dru shaped mine. And if I can do that, even just a little bit, then I will have accomplished something that means so much more to me than any championship.

LeBron James, August 2014