

Eleven Rings: The Soul of Success Study Guide

Eleven Rings: The Soul of Success by Phil Jackson

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Summary

In his book “Eleven Rings: The Soul of Success” former basketball coach and player Phil Jackson writes about the road he has traveled to coach two different National Basketball Association (NBA) teams to win a total of eleven championship rings. In his work, he describes the processes he used to help his players grow and mature into team members who could make magic on the basketball court. Jackson additionally writes about his early years in basketball as well as the impact growing up in a strict religious family had on his spirituality. In his autobiographical book, Jackson details his struggle to come to terms with his own spiritual beliefs as well as the importance of his spirituality on his basketball career.

Jackson begins his story during the celebration following the L.A. Lakers’ 2009 championship game. He says the team members are winners not only because they beat all of the other teams, but also because they underwent such a huge transformation to become a team that could beat the other teams. In order for the players to win their championship, Jackson says they needed to form a bond of love to interconnect them all. The ring is a symbol he uses often to describe the way a proper team should work, with all members part of a circle of love. In basketball, this ring is also a symbol of power and status, he says.

In about the first quarter of Jackson’s book, he writes about the influences that have affected the way he coaches basketball. These include his former coaches, his parents’ rigid spirituality, and his research into Buddhism and Native American traditions. He goes on to incorporate the things he’s learned in his search for his own form of spirituality, like mindfulness meditation, into his coaching techniques. Jackson additionally decides to make use of the triangle offense, a form of playing that he believes helps his players be more empowered and team oriented on the court.

The remainder of Jackson’s book details his work with both the Chicago Bulls and the L.A. Lakers. He describes the atmosphere of the team as a whole, relationships between individual players and the techniques he puts into action to help his players rise above themselves and be true team players. His crowning glory seems not only to be beating Red Auerbach for the most championships won but also the work he did in bringing the Lakers from a team that didn’t even make the playoffs in 2004 to one that won the championship four years later.



The Circle of Love and The Jackson Eleven

Summary

In his novel “Eleven Rings: The Soul of Success” Phil Jackson writes about the road he has traveled to coach two different National Basketball Association (NBA) teams to win a total of eleven championship rings. In his work, he describes the processes he used to help his players grow and mature into team members who could make magic on the basketball court. Jackson additionally writes about his early years in basketball as well as the impact of growing up in a strict religious family on his spirituality. In his autobiographical book, Jackson details his struggle to come to terms with his own spiritual beliefs as well as the importance of his spirituality on his basketball career.

In his chapter “The Circle of Love,” Jackson begins his book by describing a victory celebration for the transformation made by Lakers players to win the 2009 NBA championship. He writes about the Lakers’ symbol, the ring, which he equates to a circle of love. He ends his chapter by explaining that he plans to devote his book to describing how the Lakers transformed from a team that did not even make the playoffs a few years earlier to one that bonded together to win the championship.

In the chapter “The Jackson Eleven,” Jackson shares the basic principles of leadership that he has created in the course of his years as a coach. These include: leading from the inside out; benching the ego; letting each player discover his own identity; and turning the mundane into the sacred. In his other principles, Jackson insists that the road to freedom is a beautiful system. He also indicates that one breath equals one mind as he writes about how he taught his players to participate in mindfulness meditation before games to help them focus. Additionally, Jackson notes that he’s learned the key to success is compassion. He indicates compassion is a way to break down barriers between people.

In other of his leadership principals, Jackson writes that he teaches his players to keep an eye on their spirit instead of the scoreboard. In his ninth principle, Jackson says good leaders must know when to pull out the big sticks. He indicates he would often put his players through interesting and different practices and situations in order to keep the players on their toes. Jackson additionally states that he has learned sometimes he must do nothing and that sometimes he must forget the idea of winning in order to be a good coach.

Analysis

In these first two chapters, Jackson lays out the idea that he believes is most important for any team. He believes the players must be bound together in a circle of love. The



symbol he chooses to illustrate this idea is the basketball championship ring. He compares the relationship he believes must exist between members of a basketball team as similar to those between members of a platoon of soldiers fighting in battle together. Although this analogy seems to border on a lack of respect for what soldiers in battle do, Jackson realizes this and notes that he does not mean any disrespect by comparing a team of basketball players to soldiers.

Jackson addresses the way basketball players have been trained by media and dreams of popularity to be ego driven and self centered instead of focused on team unity. He writes about using a book on tribal leadership to describe where a team falls on a scale of team performance.

In his second chapter, Jackson focuses on sharing the eleven principals that he believes has made him a great leader. It is in these principals that Jackson talks about the system of playing he adopted for his players, the triangle offense. He believes this system of playing helps to both free and empower the players. In this chapter he also introduces the idea of mindfulness meditation, a practice he has taken from Zen Buddhism to help his players to unify their thoughts before a game.

Vocabulary

ecstatic, zaniness, phobic, alchemy, analogy, egoistic, transcendent, demoralized, apathetic, inordinate, mollify, pervades, mundane, provocative



Red and The Quest

Summary

The chapter “Red” is dedicated to Red Holzman, the coach of the Knicks when Jackson joined that team in 1967. In the chapter, Jackson calls Holzman his mentor. He describes the unstructured mess he believed the NBA was when he first joined the team. He compares one of the first professional games he watched to his own college team’s games at the University of North Dakota. While the university team had a system to its play, Jackson indicates NBA play seemed undisciplined and sloppy, there was even physical fighting on the court at times.

Jackson refers to Holzman as the man who taught him the most about leadership, then details his basketball experience up to joining the NBA team. He then describes the changes in the Knicks, including the addition of Holzman as the coach, right around the time when Jackson joined the team. He describes Holzman’s leadership style of being one of simplicity. He stressed “seeing” the ball or being aware of where the ball was and what was happening on the floor. He additionally encouraged his players to “hit the open man” where players were to get the ball to the person best able to make a shot instead of being a solo act. As he writes about his former coach, Jackson states the man turned over a great deal of the offense to his players. He also indicates Holzman’s most unique gift was his ability to get the players to work together toward a common goal.

The Knicks are restructured after another fight on the court. Jackson describes the new players — Bill Bradley and Cazzie Russell — and the strengths they brought to the game. At this point in his career, Jackson had to sit out from basketball for a year and a half to have spinal fusion surgery. While on the injured list for a year, Jackson had the opportunity to travel with the team as Holzman’s assistant coach. During this time Jackson learns to see the game as a strategic problem. He also credits Holzman with teaching him the importance of pregame rituals. Although the Knicks won the championship in the 1969-70 season, Jackson indicates he didn’t feel as if he pulled his share of the weight and was ready to get back on the floor.

In the chapter “The Quest” Jackson begins by talking about the suffocating, limiting regulations put on him and his brothers by their religious parents. He says he used basketball as a way to escape the rules as it took him away from home and church most weekends. He goes on to talk a little about his childhood and the strange illnesses he had until he felt a sort of power overtake him. After this, he notes he was rarely sick. It is in college that Jackson first begins to question the religious teaching his parents have given him. He studies psychology, religion and philosophy, hoping to find a spiritual medium that seems right to him.

A Christian neighbor encourages Jackson to search out his own spiritual path instead of focusing on what his parents taught him. It is during this time that Jackson becomes



fascinated with the practice of meditation. It is Jackson's own brother who introduces him to Zen Buddhism and meditation. The two begin sitting zazen together with a group. Jackson includes instructions on how to meditate.

In the remainder of the chapter Jackson discusses the way that Holzman changed up the Knicks for the 1971-72 season, moving out Cazzie Russell, Mike Riordan and Dave Stallworth in favor of Jerry Lucas, Earl Monroe, and Dean Meminger. Jackson explains he fit right into this newly energized team. He then describes a game against the Celtics in the 1973 playoffs when the Celtics general manager Red Auerbach tried to give his team an edge by degrading the Knicks with bad locker rooms and uncomfortable conditions. Jackson describes how the tactics backfired on Auerbach as the bad treatment inspired the Knicks to beat the Celtics. Jackson writes the team went on to beat the Lakers, giving him the first championship ring he felt he could call his own.

Jackson said the following season was his best, but the team chemistry was changing with several key players on the injured list. They are beaten by the Celtics this year. The loss is painful. Two players have announced their retirement while three other players moved on after the season was over. Jackson plays as a starter the next season, but notices more and more new players only want to show off their skills instead of melding into a team. In 1976, the Knicks fall short of the playoffs. A year later Holzman steps down as coach, Jackson writes, and is replaced by Willis Reed.

In the 1977-78 season Jackson is moved to the New Jersey Nets under coach Kevin Loughery when that coach called and asked for his help with the younger players. In addition to playing, Jackson serves as assistant coach and takes over for Loughery during the 14 times he is thrown out of games by the refs. He writes that Loughery taught him how to push the envelope and get away with it. When Jackson is offered a full-time assistant coach position, Jackson dreads the move, as he believes it means his life as an NBA basketball player, and the excitement that went with it, is over.

Analysis

In these two chapters, much background information is given about Jackson. He explains how he came to be interested in Buddhism and the college experiences that helped him understand religion wasn't as narrow as his parents had led him to believe it was.

Jackson also gives his readers a glimpse into his opinion of the NBA when he first becomes involved in the association. He sees the entire program as being unorganized and undisciplined. He sees the fights that break out on the playing floor and believes that even his college team was more professional.

Jackson is, however, attracted by Red Holzman's coaching style and seems to learn much from it while playing on his team. He indicates Holzman believes in simplicity and teamwork. The principal of teamwork is one that Jackson has already indicated was of high importance for the Lakers to win the championship in 2009.



An interesting aspect of this section of the book, particularly the fourth chapter, is Jackson's initial reaction to his transition from player to coach. He doesn't seem to like the idea of being a coach when the position is first offered to him. Interestingly, it isn't the decrease in pay that seems to bother him the most, but instead the idea that he won't be in the middle of the game any longer. He does, however, enjoy helping Holzman coach as he gets to learn from the man and has the opportunity to build on his coaching style.

During these chapters a significant conflict between Red Holzman, Jackson's mentor, and Red Auerbach, the coach of the Celtics, is introduced. Holzman does not like Auerbach's

style of coaching in which he tries to intimidate the other teams. Jackson describes Holzman's pride when the Knicks beat the Celtics on the Celtics' home court despite all of Auerbach's tactics to belittle and make the team as uncomfortable as possible by doing things such as putting them in a janitor's closet instead of a real locker room.

Vocabulary

astute, putative, espouse, rapport, cohesive



Dances with Bulls and Warrior Spirit

Summary

In his chapter “Dances with Bulls” Jackson has accepted a job with the Chicago Bulls that allows him to scout teams and go to graduate school in basketball. Star players for the Bulls at this time are Michael Jordan and Scottie Pippen. Along with these players for the Bulls, Jackson additionally describes the Detroit Pistons, the Bulls’ main adversary. He additionally points out that the NBA had been transformed by Magic Johnson and Larry Bird’s charisma. The sport has become fun to watch again, he says.

As Jackson studies under Johnny Bach, he learns how to use music to rev up players, a twist on Bach’s habit of using war clips and imagery. At this point, Jackson introduces his belief that basketball is like music. He shares a list of rules compiled by a friend of jazz musician Thelonius Monk that he contends proves that music, like basketball, requires collaboration, awareness of others, and clearly defined roles. He has his players play basketball in 4/4 time, requiring them to make a move before the fourth beat. Jackson says this same way of harmonizing players can be achieved by using Tex Winter’s triangle offense. Jackson likes the triangle offense because it is reliable and because it depersonalizes criticism.

He also describes two brief encounters with Michael Jordan and writes that he let the star have plenty of space, as he knew Michael was hounded by fans everywhere he went. Jackson additionally describes his time working with Scottie Pippen. He describes how Pippen became known as the nurturer of the team while Jordan was the enforcer.

It was at a talent showcase in Chicago that Jackson is approached by Dick McGuire asking if he would be interested in coaching the Knicks. Jackson agrees. Shortly after that, however, Reinsdorf asks Jackson if he’d rather coach the Knicks or the Bulls. Jackson chooses the Bulls, saying he believes they have a better chance at winning multiple championships. In this light, Krause and Reinsdorf offer him a job coaching the Bulls. The Chicago public doesn’t seem happy with the coaching change, but Krause and Reinsdorf insist they believe Jackson can continue Rick Patino’s work with the Bulls.

In the next chapter “Warrior Spirit,” Jackson writes that he realizes in order to get the Bulls in the shape they need to be in to win a championship, they need to become a tribe. He shows the team members clips from the miniseries “The Mystic Warrior” which seems to initiate in them the desire to become a tribe. His goal, Jackson writes, is to change each team member’s focus from himself as an individual to the team as a whole. He starts by asking Michael to reduce the number of shots he takes and to give the triangle offense a try, a plan to which Michael agrees. Soon, Jackson sees the player trying to find ways to use the system to his advantage.



Meanwhile, Jackson begins creating an environment that he believes will encourage oneness. He begins restricting who can attend practices, keeping out media and even family members. He additionally begins incorporating Indian rituals into the practice such as meeting together in a circle. Here again is a reference to the ring, the universal symbol of unity. He works with the assistant coaches, making sure they present a united front to the team. Despite his hard work, the next season starts slowly for the Bulls. A humiliating defeat, however, seems to meld the players together into the tribe Jackson had hoped they would become.

Analysis

Jackson expands his coaching knowledge in this section of the book as he studies with Johnny Bach and Tex Winters. It is from Johnny that Jackson picks up the habit of playing music and video clips during practices and before games to rev up the players. From Tex, Jackson picked up the use of the triangle offense. Music becomes a key aspect of Jackson's coaching style. Jackson connects music and basketball as he writes that both require harmony among players, both require each person to have a defined purpose and each requires collaboration.

It is also in this section of the book that Jackson writes about how he has really put an effort into getting his players to develop into a tribe. He introduces both Sioux and Lakota tradition into the team's practices and games. When he uses clips from the movie *The Mystic Warrior* that features a story about the Sioux Indians, he believes it really encourages the team members to bond into the tribe that he envisions they can be. Jackson also interjects Indian tradition into the lives of the team members by beating a drum when he wants the players to congregate in what he calls the tribal room, the name he has given to the team's video room. The room is full of Indian artifacts: a bear claw necklace for wisdom and power and the middle feather of an owl for balance and harmony. Jackson comments that he's even been known to wave a sage smudge stick in the locker room to purify it after the team would lose games, another Indian tradition.

In Chapter Six, Jackson returns to the imagery of the circle. He says that one way that he encourages and has the players physically demonstrate harmony is by having them gather in a circle both before and after the game. This idea is reminiscent of Jackson's original discussion of the ring, or circle, being the ultimate symbol of basketball.

Vocabulary

melee, interminably, enamored, emulate, innate, autonomy, resonate, pragmatic, purist, totems



Hearing the Unheard and A Question of Character

Summary

In his chapter "Hearing the Unheard," Jackson discusses the decisions he made about the Bulls during the summer following their loss to the Pistons. He has decided he needs to train the team to pace themselves, like marathon runners instead of sprinters. He realizes he also needs to help the players learn how to use its defensive strategies and how to make each game meaningful in their creation of a team. The most important aspect Jackson knows he needs his team to develop is a group intelligence.

Jackson next turns his attention to the psychologist Carl Rogers, a psychiatrist who influenced Jackson's ideas about leadership. He describes Rogers' ideas that people should be allowed to be themselves instead of being forced into roles. Jackson indicates he has tried to do this with his players. First, Jackson realizes he has to have transparency to make his team members trust his leadership. He additionally has to work to keep his top players from undermining the chemistry beginning to form within the team.

It is also in this section of the novel that Jackson admits he had admiration for his father and the way that he truly cared about each of his parishioners. It is a trait that Jackson has tried to copy in his role as a coach. In order to try to determine what the players are thinking about themselves and their place on the team, Jackson often gives questionnaires along with a psychological tool called a bull's eye intended to determine how players see themselves in relation with other players.

In dealing with individual players, Jackson describes how he lets Michael have his freedom in leading the team and only gives suggestions in how to solve problems. Additionally, Jackson shifts Scottie Pippen to point guard adding to the team's collaborative work. From his own experience, Jackson realizes getting too mentally excited before a game was detrimental to good play, so he begins incorporating techniques of Zen meditation into pre-game activities to help players quiet their minds.

Jackson moves on to tell a parable where a master teaches a prince to hear the unheard, a skill that Jackson asserts is important not only for him as team coach, but also for all the team members. He next moves his focus to automatics, a set of moves the subordinate players could use if critical players were overloading coverage in one particular spot. As players became comfortable with these moves they became a better defensive team.

In one of Jackson's bad coaching decisions, he designates Horace as the team's whipping boy. Although the discipline loving player agrees to the idea, the criticism gets to him during the third quarter of a game against the 76er's when Horace breaks under



pressure after being called on a foul. Jackson indicates he learns to treat all his team members fairly and offer only constructive criticism.

Analysis

It is in these chapters that Jackson develops a pattern for his chapters that lasts through much of the rest of the book. Each chapter basically covers one season of basketball with Jackson discussing several different aspects of the team as the season progresses. He talks about some of the weaknesses and strengths of the team as a whole, then breaks out some of the main players and discusses what he feels they need to do to develop into better team players. Through the chapter, Jackson continues to critique his own team, detailing what they do right and what they do wrong on their way to the championships.

What is noteworthy about Jackson is that he not only talks about the things that he does well as a coach, but also includes descriptions of things that did not go well when he was a coach. One of these things he talks about is his decision to use Horace as a whipping boy for the team. Jackson realizes he's too hard on the player when Horace finally cracks under the pressure when he's called out on a foul. It is from this experience that Jackson realizes he needs to treat all his players fairly and make his criticism constructive.

Vocabulary

paradox, seminal, enigmatic, animosity, gregarious, egalitarian, reputedly, resonate, egregious



Bittersweet Victory and World in Flux

Summary

In his chapter “Bittersweet Victory,” Jackson tells how the trip to the Barcelona Olympics to play in the Dream Team together gave Michael a highly improved opinion of Scottie’s playing ability. This change in Michael’s opinion boosted the team even though players had thought the two going to the Olympics was a bad idea. Jackson continues to note the Western influence on his leadership style as he notes he follows John Heider’s ideas in “The Tao of Leadership” where that teacher states the leader should interfere as little as possible. He lets the players take the lead by creating a strong leadership of players in the team.

Practice length and style is the topic of the next section. His opinion of practices differs from his college coach who would make the team practice after losing a game. He wants practice to be fun and productive. Jackson has picked up an adage from Coach Al McGuire about the importance of not wasting anyone’s time. He goes on to write about the influence of Abraham Maslow and his hierarchy of needs. He uses the idea of getting out of one’s own way as a way to motivate his team.

At this point Jackson changes direction with his chapter and admits that the biggest problem he and his players faced in the 1992-93 season was boredom. Jackson struggles with ways to get his players to see their work as meaningful or “sacred” as he terms it. Jackson additionally mentions the Native American thoughts that in order for life to be sacred, it must be orderly. He tries to cultivate each player’s individuality by giving each one books he felt would have special meaning to them. Yoga and tai chi classes are also taught. He arranges for guest speakers and special trips to break the monotony of their work. He quotes Steve Kerr’s comment on the way these special trips and activities kept practices from getting boring and even bonded the players together as a team.

In the next section of this chapter, Jackson remembers how the players seem to shift into a higher gear once the playoff games start. After losses to the Knicks, reporters focus in on Michael after he was spotted gambling the night before a major loss. Alleged gambling debts on Michael’s part begin to surface, and the story won’t die but Jackson indicates the press furor doesn’t affect the team’s play.

Jackson writes about the final shot of the game that allows the Bulls to win their third championship. He indicates the triangle idea worked beautifully that night. While Jackson is happy his team is included with other talented teams that have won three championships, he wishes those who commented on that accomplishment really knew how much work the players had put into the win.

After the Bulls’ third championship, disaster strikes when Michael’s father is murdered. Although he tries to talk the player out of his decision, Michael decides to leave



basketball and play for the White Sox. He quotes Michael as saying Jackson was a great friend, not letting him make a rash decision, but at the same time understanding why he was making the decision that he did. Jackson indicates at the close of the chapter that he doesn't believe this exit from basketball will be the end of Michael's basketball story.

"World in Flux" begins with the season opener at Chicago Stadium where Jackson writes that the Bulls played their worst game ever in the history of the franchise. Although they'd lost their strongest player when Michael retired Jackson noted the core of the team remained intact so he maintained a certain amount of optimism about the season. Four players — Pete Myers, Toni, Kukoc, Steve Kerr and Bill Wennington — are signed to the team to fill the gap left by Michael.

Hoping to help his players cope with the stress of success, Jackson hires George Mumford, a sports psychologist and meditation teacher, to talk to them. Before the workshop, however, Michael announces his retirement, throwing the team into a sort of identity crisis so Mumford talks also about the dangers as well as the opportunities that come with crisis. George convinces the team they have the ability to create an even stronger identity. Jackson's choice of George to work with the team is understandable, as Jackson has voiced in previous chapters his adaption of meditation techniques and the impact of these techniques on the team. George became interested in meditation while he was recovering from an injury. Jackson describes George as having a gift for demystifying meditation and helping players to understand it easier. Where Jackson has used meditation to help his players react to each other more effectively, George believes these techniques can help players improve as individuals. Jackson explains mindfulness meditation — which he describes as bringing one's mind to focus on the present instead of bouncing back and forth between the past and present — is a technique that should be practiced all the time.

Scottie takes over Michael's locker, symbolic of taking over the team's leadership, but as one player says, he doesn't try to fill Michael's spot on the team. Coaching Toni proves to be a challenge for Jackson. He refers to a system of sign language he developed with this player, he liked more freedom than the triangle offense allowed, as being the essence of coaching. He pointed out to Toni where he was going wrong and expected responses from the player.

He describes a game in the playoffs where he has trouble with Scottie, who leaves the game, pouting after a bad play. Jackson is criticized by the media for not punishing Scottie, but he does give the players a chance to voice their disappointment in the team co-captain's behavior. Jackson indicates the men work out their problems as a team and seem to come out of the difficulties even stronger.

Although they played some good games, Jackson indicates the loss of the championship seems to make the team come apart. All of the core players on the championship team have left with the exception of Scottie, who is at odds with Krause; B.J. Armstrong and Will Perdue. Jackson notes the team seems to have lost its drive to win and be champions. Unexpectedly, Michael shows up wanting to practice with the



team as he is thinking about leaving baseball. The media makes a circus of Michael's return to basketball.

Michael returns to basketball as more of a team player, Jackson writes. The other players don't seem up to the challenge, however, and the team loses the championship again. As he tries to get a handle on the loss, Jackson writes that he comes up with a way to help his team be champions again.

Analysis

Jackson again returns to his Western influences as he practices a form of leadership with his team that he read about in the book "The Tao of Leadership." He uses this wisdom to create a strong leadership among the team players, allowing him to interfere with the players as little as possible. In his leadership of the team, Jackson additionally borrows from the Native Americans the idea that work must be orderly in order for it to be sacred, or in Jackson's need, for it to have meaning for the players to help them escape their boredom.

Michael Jordan is of major importance in these chapters as he suffers two major life changing events. First, his habit of gambling is discovered by the media, who tries to convince the public Michael and the team lost their game because Michael had been out gambling the night before. The event that really puts Michael into a tailspin is the murder of his father, to whom Michael was very close. Perhaps in a rebound from grief, Michael decides to try his hand at baseball and quits basketball. By the end of the season, however, Michael is ready to come back to basketball as Jackson had thought would happen.

Michael's decision to leave the basketball team gives Jackson the chance to share another of his favorite techniques with his team. He hires a sports psychologist and meditation teacher not only to help the team deal with the loss of its strongest player, but also to teach them the benefits of meditation.

Vocabulary

coercive, imbue, concentric, liberating, stultifying, fallibility, mundane, transcendent, ludicrous, paltry, pundits, hordes, pervasive, prophetic, constraints, rogue, punitive, homage, fixated, phalanx, sabbatical



Basketball Poetry and As the Worm Turns

Summary

Jackson's chapter "Basketball Poetry" addresses how the Bulls turned into a team that couldn't be beaten in the 1995-96 season. Using his tribal leadership perspective, Jackson says the team members were headed for a status as a level 5 team, the highest that could be achieved. He says the members were playing for the joy of the game. Jackson also credits a restructure of the backcourt as well as getting Dennis Rodman as a new power forward with helping the team to improve. Rodman is added to the team only after Jackson addresses the man's reputation for selfishness and Rodman assures him it won't be a problem for him on Jackson's court. As the other members of the team begin to get to know Dennis' real personality, Jackson points out the way Dennis plays basketball reminds him of himself.

A third breakthrough for the team is Michael's realization that he had to be more respectful of his teammates. Jackson has Michael work independently with George to help him understand that in order to gel with the team, Michael must learn each player's unique abilities and get them to use these abilities as best they could. He realizes there are players with whom he must work on a physical level, some on an emotional level and some on a verbal level.

To enforce the team's unity Jackson uses structured practices and discipline as a way to bring more harmony into the players' lives. These techniques come from his mindfulness meditation training. Dennis tries to rebel against the structure, but gives up when the other players and coach don't give him the attention he wants. Jackson says all the players are happy in their positions making the team posed to bring home another championship.

Jackson next compares his job of coaching basketball to that of a Chinese emperor who knew how to place his people in strategic locations, like spokes of a wheel, to bring out their strengths. Next, Jackson writes that the beginning of the 1995-96 season made him think he was fighting the battle of Jericho, as the walls would symbolically fall down wherever the team went. The team breaks a record by winning more than 70 games in regular season and heads into the championship expected to be the winners. He prepares his team for a rematch with Orlando by splicing "Pulp Fiction" clips in with game footage.

The Bulls overpower Orlando in the first game, which Jackson calls "anticlimactic" and they take the win in a four game sweep. There are rumors the Bulls are the greatest team ever. Jackson believes they are like the 1972-73 Knicks, the team with which Jackson got his first ring. He even believes the players' relationships in the Bulls team is



similar to that of the Knicks. Game 6 is on Father's Day, an emotionally difficult game for Michael because of his father's murder, but his teammates take up the slack.

At the conclusion of the chapter Jackson muses that although the team won many tough games that season, it was a game that they lost that stands out in his memory about the team. He says that on the night they lost 105-99 the Bulls found their heart by using the courage necessary to battle through to the end of the game despite unfavorable conditions.

The chapter "As the Worm Turns" Jackson writes about the persistence of change. He senses change among his team even before the end of the 1995-96 season. Despite the major change of players among NBA teams, the Bulls' roster stays intact. Only two players, James Edwards and Jack Haley are lost. Dennis is acting out more, a trait that Jackson believes is because of ADHD, and the team as a whole is aging. Jordan forecasts, however, that the team will be playing for the moment, as if each game were the team's last.

The team has a good start, Jackson remembers, but notes Dennis continues to act out. He is finally suspended 11 games by the NBA when he collides with a courtside photographer who he kicks in the groin. Michael and Scottie lose patience with Dennis, believing he can not change. Continuing in his interest of Native American culture, Jackson refers to Dennis as the "heyoka" or court jester of the team. He indicates most of the players liked him for that reason. Jackson indicates that while Dennis could lighten the mood, he also had a habit of drinking himself into oblivion. He handles Dennis by treating him as an adult and holding him responsible for his actions, instead of treating him like a child as other coaches have done in the past. When Dennis returns from his suspension, a team trip is planned. The day after the trip the team loses its game, but Jackson believes the act of making Dennis feel as if he were part of the team again was worth the sacrifice.

Next, Jackson details the experience Wally Blase had with Dennis as Wally was charged with "babysitting" the star while he was recuperating from an injury in Southern California while the team was involved in an East Coast road trip. Although Wally was frustrated with Dennis, his behavior and his inability to slow down, Wally ends his experience by saying that Dennis was one of the nicest people you could ever meet. Jackson indicates Dennis' moral ineptitude was excused by many just because that was who he was. Dennis is also impressive, Jackson writes, because he's become successful despite his ADHD.

Analysis

In the chapter "Basketball Poetry," Jackson seems most proud of his team for they way they played as if they were playing only for the joy of the game. In the course of all his seasons with the team, this season seems to be the one that Jackson enjoys most. There seems to be little conflict between players. It is interesting to note that Jackson writes that the game that stands out most to him that season is not one that the players



won, but one that they lost. He believes the loss was so hard on the players that it motivated them to recover.

New player Dennis Rodman seems to take a front seat in Jackson's mind during the 1995-96 and 1996-97 seasons. While Dennis is a good player, Jackson also describes the man as having the tendency to act out. During the first season he is with the team, Dennis seems to cause few problems. In the second season, Jackson writes that it appears that Dennis became bored with the team. He begins acting out more and more when he doesn't get the attention he wants. Jackson finds the best way to handle Dennis is by not giving him extra attention when he starts acting out. Jackson additionally describes Dennis as suffering from ADHD, a disorder that caused his selfishness and also his habit of becoming bored easily. What seems to impress Jackson most about Dennis is his ability to become successful despite his disorder.

Vocabulary

dogma, eccentricities, vengeance, notoriety, enigma, juggernaut, defaming, anticlimactic, tactical, poignant, impermanence, ineptitude



The Last Dance and One Breath, One Mind

Summary

In the chapter “The Last Dance,” Jackson writes about how he used Dave DeBusschere’s advice about not letting his dislike for a person get in the way of the team’s goals. In Jackson’s case the person he dislikes is Jerry Krause. Jackson is trying to negotiate a higher salary in the midst of player conflicts, including one with Scottie. Although he needs foot surgery, Scottie delays the surgery and plays a charity game to get back at Krause because Krause is threatening to sue him over the issue. Krause makes a remark to the media that players and coaches weren’t the ones to win games. Although Krause tries to correct his mistake, the Bulls players are furious. To make matters worse, Krause tells Jackson that year with the Bulls will be his last.

Although the season is hard because his players are aging and many of them know it will be their last season together, Jackson writes that the season is a magical one. Jackson writes that he is surprised by the way Dennis steps up and begins playing like an MVP. Michael and Dennis bonded over cigars, Jackson writes. When Scottie does return in January, Jackson states that the team changes for the better overnight. At the end of the regular season, Jackson meets with the team members and has them write a paragraph about what the team has meant to them.

Jackson next goes on to describe the championship finals against the Utah Jazz. They lose the first game, but win the next two, giving them the home court advantage, an advantage that the team uses to win the next two games. The Bulls, however, lose the next game. With players out sick and Scottie injured, Jackson writes the sixth game comes down to just more than 18.8 seconds in which Michael makes a winning shot despite being tired. He describes this shot as being so spectacular that it seemed scripted. He calls the winning shot Michael’s “final bow” in basketball.

Michael hosts a celebration for the team at one of his restaurants. At this point, Jackson already knows he is leaving the Bulls, so he tells Michael not to base his decision on him to stay with the Bulls or leave on him. Although he’s happy to be away from the drama associated with the team, Jackson writes that he falls back on Buddhist traditions to help him face the challenges of letting go of the team. He doesn’t realize he has another challenge facing him that will test him even more.

In the chapter “One Breath, One Mind” Jackson is on a fishing trip with his two sons when he learns from some village children he has been chosen as the coach of the Lakers. He’s been out of basketball for a year. He and his wife, June, have moved to Woodstock to work on their marriage. When June learns Phil is considering going back to coaching again, the two separate.



The Lakers have some players who are rising stars, Jackson writes in his first impressions of the team, but lack good chemistry between members. He hopes to make changes in the team similar to the ones he made in the Bulls. When he talks to the owner of the team, the man is surprised when Jackson tells him he believes the team can win as many as four championships.

Shaquille O'Neal, one of the Laker's lead players, drops by Phil's house unannounced. He shows off for gawking neighbors, jumping on a trampoline, then doing back flips off a dock. He helps Phil move a downed tree, telling his new coach he believes they will have a lot of fun. Jackson starts a relationship with Jeanie, the daughter of Laker's owner and the team's vice president of business operations.

In the next section, Phil talks about Shaq, Rice and Kobe's strengths and weaknesses as well as describing the other main players. He says the biggest weaknesses in the team are at point guard and power forward. During practices, Phil notes the players hang on his every word. He also notices, however, the players seem to have short attention spans, a problem he tries to combat with daily meditation and yoga. Phil notes also that the Lakers have many enemies as opposed to the Bulls with their single enemy, the Pistons.

Analysis

The most interesting aspect of these chapters is Jackson's transition from being the coach of the Bulls to the coach of the Lakers. He relies on techniques he has learned during his Buddhist research to help him deal with the stress of letting go of the team and leaving them. It appears that after leaving the Bulls, Jackson, or at least Jackson's wife intended for him to stay away from coaching basketball. When she learns he is thinking about taking a job with the Lakers, the two separate. From this move, it appears that coaching is more important to Jackson than repairing his marriage. In his new life in California, Jackson begins a relationship with the daughter of the Lakers' owner.

One aspect of the Bulls that Jackson indicates he will not miss is the drama he'd been dealing with recently. One incident he describes in detail is a disagreement between Jerry Krause and team member Scottie Pippen in which Krause threatens to sue Pippen if he plays in a charity game instead of having needed surgery on his foot as soon as possible. In order to anger Krause, Scottie goes ahead and plays in the game. It appears the move is some intent on Scottie's part to get back at Krause for not giving him the salary he feels he should be getting even though he's considered one of the best players in the NBA besides Michael Jordan. Jackson is unhappy with Scottie for potentially harming the team by putting off his surgery until a time so close to training camp. On the other hand, he's also unhappy with Krause because Krause refuses to raise his salary to that of other NBA coaches. Then, after a ill fated comment to the media where he indicated players and coaches were not responsible for winning games, the entire team was at odds with Krause.



When Jackson begins his work with the Lakers, he compares that team's condition with the condition the Bulls were in when he first began coaching them. He sees the team as being a collection of different players, each with an "I'm great, you're not" attitude. Shaq and Kobe are among the players he seems to believe are the best, but thinks they can all stand learning about the Buddhist belief that everyone is part of a bigger whole.

Jackson introduces Shaq by describing his surprise visit to Jackson's home. Although he's the biggest man in the NBA, Jackson catches on quite quickly that Shaq enjoys having fun. He describes how Shaq shows off for Jackson's gawking neighbors by jumping on a trampoline, then doing comical back flips off a dock.

Vocabulary

duplicitous, resonance, tirade, atrophied, foiled, nullified, nemesis, boisterous, reminisce, mundane, annihilation, whetted, palazzo, catalyze, averse, rudiments, feudal, resonate, sycophants



The Eightfold Offense and The Joy of Doing Nothing

Summary

In his chapter “The Eightfold Offense” Jackson writes of a friend, Rick Fox, who described Jackson’s coaching style as a play with three acts. He described the first act as encompassing the first twenty or so games when Jackson would observe the players on the team. In the middle games, Fox said Jackson would nurture the players. In the final games of the regular season, he said Jackson would act in a way so that the public and media’s focus would be taken off the players and put on him so the players could focus on their playing.

Kobe becomes a problem as he has trouble working with the triangle system that Jackson has implemented. He describes Kobe’s background in life and basketball. He is obsessed with surpassing Michael’s reputation as being the greatest basketball player ever. A day after a particularly bad game, Jackson talks to the team members about the selfishness of their playing. When he asks for input from the team, Shaq immediately points out Kobe’s habit of being selfish. No one speaks up in support of Kobe. There is no resolution and the next game is worse than ever. Jackson tries to encourage Shaq to become a leader for the team. He next lectures Kobe on his behavior, a lecture that seems to finally sink in with the young player.

Next, Jackson uses Buddha as the perspective from which he tries to teach his new team members about selfless playing. He teaches the players about the Noble Eightfold Path of Buddha and the way it relates to basketball. The team plays inconsistently in the post-season games, causing Jackson at one point to throw a sports drink bottle against the wall during halftime in frustration. He knows the team to beat will be the Portland Trail Blazers because they will come up against Scottie Pippen who knows how to disrupt the triangle offense. Jackson comes up with some strategies that seem to work well despite the benefits the Blazers have. They win the first game, but lose the second. The team can’t seem to recover in this second game so Jackson moves Kobe to cover Scottie. This move helps and the team wins the next two games, but loses the final two, leaving them tied with the Blazers. In the seventh game, however, the team seems to find itself in the third quarter even though they are down. In fact, it is Kobe and Shaq, whose personalities had collided so violently who work together to secure the final shot of the game.

In the championship finals, Jackson’s team faces off against the Indiana Pacers. Kobe sprains his ankle in the second game and Jackson makes him sit out the third game. Even though he’s in pain Kobe begs to be allowed to play the fourth game. He takes over when Shaq fouls out of the game, securing a win. Despite the success in that game, the Lakers lose the next game by 33 points. They fight out the following game to win the season.



Jackson is pleased by the year as he learns he is able to use the same techniques he used with the Bulls to make the Lakers a good team even though they were a group of men with entirely different personalities from the Bulls' players. Jackson is also happy to realize he's been able to adjust to life in a new town as easily and quickly as he has. He realizes meditation has helped him to deal with the stress in his life.

In his chapter "The Joy of Doing Nothing" Jackson describes the challenges of working with a team the year after the members of the team won a championship ring. Jackson says he finds the triangle offense is a way to determine the mindset of a player, especially during the first of the next season. There have also been some changes in players as the team has lost A.C. Green, Glen Rice, and John Salley. With the changes, the team seems to have lost its cohesiveness.

Meanwhile, Kobe seems to have decided to break out as a star. His flashy moves and unwillingness to pass the ball are stressing the team again. He refuses to stay with the triangle offense. Fox notices that Kobe seems to compete with himself more than other people, a trait opposite from Michael who is very much like Kobe in his desire to win at all costs.

Jackson notices Shaq is most irritated by Kobe's antics. In December a full-fledged feud has broken out between the two. Shaq asks to be traded but the request is denied. Later, an article about Kobe in ESPN "The Magazine" takes shots at both Jackson for asking Kobe to turn down his game and Shaq as Kobe is quoted saying that he trusts himself more than the rest of the team members. Shaq strikes back by saying Kobe's refusal to let him lead offense is why the team isn't winning more games. Jackson decides to stay out of the argument, believing he will only make it worse. He does ask the media to back off the story, but doesn't suppress it or try to force the two players into making up.

The other men on the team don't take sides in the squabble and by mid-February Kobe and Shaq have gotten tired of their fight. Jackson learned in retrospect that Kobe now wonders about the headaches he gave Jackson during that season. He sees where Jackson used the rift to strengthen the team.

After the All-Star games, Jackson gives Shaq a book about Buddha that Shaq seems to grasp the idea of. Kobe, however, refuses to read the book that Jackson gives him. It is not until Kobe suffers an injury and begins to realize the difficulty faced by the older players, that he learns to have compassion for them. Later in the season, however, Jackson shares an untrue rumor with the press about Kobe sabotaging his high school team so he could be the hero at the end. The rumor turns out to be untrue and Kobe threatens to sue. It takes Jackson years to earn Kobe's trust back, Jackson writes.

In his conclusion to this chapter, Jackson describes the changes that have come about in the team since the beginning of the year. Others are even beginning to notice how in control the players are as opposed to before Jackson's coaching. He describes what he calls a "key moment" in one of the Western Conference games when he is thrown out of a game. Instead of going into a tailspin, he says the players actually perform better than



ever, a sign the players have matured. Jackson admits he is glad when the season is over, as it marks the end of one of the most stressful seasons of his career. He believes, however, it is the team's troubles that have helped it to find its soul.

Analysis

Although it is Shaq who is the star of the Lakers, it is Kobe who seems to give his coach the most problems. Kobe wants to be a star and fanaticizes about being a better player than Michael Jordan. His desire to be a star makes him break out of the triangle offense and abandon his teammates. All members of the team become frustrated with Kobe for playing in such a selfish manner. Jackson talks to Kobe and even gives him books that he thinks will help him to develop as a team player, but Kobe refuses to read the books. As Jackson continues to work with Kobe and deal with him on his own level, Jackson indicates that Kobe finally seems to begin to catch onto the idea that he needs to bond with his teammates.

Another interesting aspect of this chapter comes when Jackson's team must face the team on which Scottie Pippen now plays. Jackson knows the game will be a challenge since Scottie is familiar with the triangle offense and knows its weaknesses. However, he comes up with a strategy that keeps his team on top despite Scottie's inside knowledge.

Vocabulary

chrysalis, malaise, rhetorical, spiel, strident, collaboratively, addendum, deft, versatile, impervious, amulets, ballistic, paradigm, implode, ineffable



One-Two-Three—Lakers! and The Wisdom of Anger

Summary

In his chapter “One-Two-Three—Lakers!” Jackson writes that he knew from day one the 2001-02 season wasn’t going to be easy. On a high note, Kobe and Shaq are getting along but Rick Fox has already come to him feeling deflated because he has lost the spiritual high he felt from the prior season. Jackson admits the ever-changing roster makes it hard to keep a sense of unity in the team. Additionally, Jackson indicates the team members suffer from boredom. Rick Fox tells Jackson the team members seem to want more input in the decision making than before because their egos are inflated. He indicates that in order for championship teams to remain successful is for them to keep growing instead of trying to do the same things over and over.

He mentions next Shaq’s health problems the following season. He goes into detail about Shaq’s personality, motivators and personality quirks. Kobe, meanwhile, is facing family troubles concerning his new wife. Jackson explains he and his team got through the season mostly by improvisation. They enter the playoffs tied for second and don’t wake up until the second game of the Western Conference semifinals. Shaq has added additional health problems and Jackson pushes him. While Shaq talks badly about the way Jackson is treating him to the media, he does elevate his playing.

He writes about the loathing the Sacramento fans have always had feelings against him since he joked about the place being a cow town. Kobe and Shaq build each other up for a big game, talking on the phone late one night. Then, before the final game of that series, the players meditate together. The Bulls win, which Jackson considers the championship win although not the title game which the Bulls go on the win as well. At this point, Jackson had tied his ring record with that of Red Auebach, who still won’t consider Jackson a great coach. Jackson dedicates the accomplishment to Red Holzman, Auebach’s rival.

In the chapter “The Wisdom of Anger” Jackson details the 2003-04 season during which Kobe is arrested and charged with sexual assault. In the incident, Kobe claims he had consensual sex with a 19 year old but the woman goes to the police claiming she was raped. Making matters worse for Jackson, the incident brings back memories of the way he handled his own daughter’s sexual assault. He admits the situation changes the way he thinks of Kobe and taints the following season.

Jackson indicates Kobe looking to join another basketball team, Shaq trying to get more money and a longer contract, and Jackson’s own expiring contract were all things that seemed to badly affect the season. Kobe and Shaq continue to battle against one another but this year, Kobe decides to fight back. Even though Jackson tries to give Kobe his space, Kobe becomes more and more belligerent and aggressive, directing his



anger toward Jackson. Jackson learns he has to change the way he reacts to Kobe's anger. Jackson says he's learned to dispel his anger through meditation instead of allowing it to build up inside him. He discusses the techniques that work best for him.

Jackson tries to get Kobe traded but the team owner likes Kobe and refuses to do so. The owner has a meeting with the team owner and later tells another team member that Jackson won't be coming back the following season. Jackson tries to tell Mitch and Dr. Buss that they're making a mistake by going with Kobe instead of Shaq but this seems to put into motion the suspension of contract negotiations with Jackson. Kobe replies coldly when asked about the suspension, which surprises Shaq. Jackson, however, indicates he feels free to coach his team to another ring with no pressure.

Jackson talks with Kobe in an attempt to clear the air. The player continues to cause problems. In one game, he allows the team to lose using the cover he was trying to share the ball with others but it is believed he was trying to gain ground on his negotiations. One of the players says later the members never got comfortable as a team. Jackson writes that it wasn't until the team fell behind by two games in the semifinals that they finally woke up and began playing as they had in the past. He describes the win in that third game, then goes on to describe what he calls the "magic" that took place in the fifth game when Fish makes a jumpshot to win the game in the last second.

The Lakers will face the Pistons in semifinals, a team that worries Jackson because he isn't sure how his players should approach the team. The Pistons easily win against the Lakers. After the breakdown, Jackson learns that his contract, indeed, will not be renewed. He also learns that Dr. Buss plans to trade Shaq and keep Kobe. Jackson writes that he will take a break from coaching with an overseas trip. Although he enjoyed the time with the Lakers, he knew it was time to move on.

Analysis

It is in these chapters that the reader learns what bigger challenges Jackson said were facing him when he began coaching the Lakers. Not only must Jackson deal with bickering between Kobe and Shaq, he also has to deal with a personal demon. Years past, one of Jackson's daughters was sexually assaulted. Jackson felt he did not handle the situation properly at the time, and the situation with Kobe brings back Jackson's anger. He admits that he does not handle the situation properly. He tries to give Kobe his space, a move that Kobe interprets as indifference. Later, knowing that his team owner plans to trade either Kobe or Shaq, Jackson tries to get Kobe traded. His interference does not work and instead seems to make Kobe angry. The Lakers wind up keeping Kobe and getting rid of both Shaq and Jackson. Jackson is saddened when Kobe tells the media he doesn't care that Jackson won't be returning as coach. In his writing, Jackson seems to stress the idea that Shaq was equally upset by Kobe's statement but this could be a cover for Jackson's own surprise that the player to whom he felt he was a mentor has thrown him under the bus.



Note it is also in these chapters that Jackson ties his ring record with that of Red Auerbach, the nemesis of Jackson's mentor, Red Holzman. Auerbach refuses to consider that Jackson might be as good a coach as he is, but Jackson is still proud of his record. He dedicates his win to Holzman.

Vocabulary

anarchy, jettisoned, suss, lethargy, diversionary, mulling, contemplate, vehemently, monogamous, meticulous, virulent, wunderkind, fathom, perilously, cohesive



Chop Wood, Carry Water and Destiny's Children

Summary

In the chapter "Chop Wood, Carry Water" Jackson is called back to the Lakers after the new coach Rudy Tomjanovich quits the job. Jackson won't return to L.A. as he is on a long-planned trip so he agrees to skip a year, then take over the for the 2005-06 season. When Jackson does rejoin the Lakers, he believes he will be rebuilding the team from the ground up. He checks with Kobe to be sure they can work together with the player asking only that Jackson be more discreet with the media. Jackson believes the prior year's loss was a real wake up call for Kobe.

Under the direction of the team's new VP of player personnel, Jim Buss, Jackson is encouraged to draft Andrew Bynum. He says the addition of Bynum, as well as many other young players, gives him a team he feels he needs to nurture, which is a new experience for him. With this immature team, Kobe gets to take the top spot. In this chapter, Jackson spends a good deal of time comparing lifestyles and playing styles of Kobe and Michael as he tries to decide for himself if Kobe could be the next Michael Jordan. After two seasons of struggling with the fledgling team, Kobe threatens to make a move off the team.

The new dynamic that emerges in the Lakers is the main focus of the chapter "Destiny's Children." Jackson credits the coming of age of Andrew Bynum; the influx of several young players; and the "second coming" of Derek Fisher. He goes on to describe Fisher as a leader, a selfless player and role model. He'd returned to the Lakers when his daughter was diagnosed with eye cancer so she could get better treatment. Jackson additionally indicates that Fisher was a good leadership partner for Kobe and often ran interference between Kobe and Jackson.

Jackson writes that in January Bynum injures his kneecap, putting him out of commission, but that Kobe speaks well of the player, whom he'd originally thought was too immature. This action puts an end to the speculation that Kobe might be traded. Also Pau Gasol, who adapts easily to the triangle offense, is added to the team. Jackson writes that both Lamar and Kobe's playing style changes for the better with the addition of Pau.

Early on, the team is called unbeatable but winds up losing in the playoffs. In this chapter Jackson describes humiliating losses to the Celtics and bad treatment by the fans after the lost games. He explains he believes these losses actually helped the team as they made the players focus on beating the Celtics team during the next face off. He writes the players seem ready to go with a "fire in their eyes" when they return for the 2008-09 season. The team, he says, developed a deep spiritual connection that seemed to develop and grow throughout the season.



In the playoffs the team seems to develop what Kobe terms a bipolar personality, seeming to lose spirit causing a loss, then raging back to surprising wins. Jackson says the team lost its bipolar tendencies in Game 7 in L.A. Although they'd hoped to face-off against the Celtics again, that team is beaten in the semifinals bringing the Lakers up against Orlando.

Prior to the final game, the media is already quizzing players about their thoughts on winning a ring. Jackson wants to set a different tone so he instead leads the members in five minutes of meditation, then Brian Shaw, assistant coach, tells the players they already know what they need to win the game. The team wins the championship but Jackson indicates that it is Kobe's transformation to a good leader that he believes is the high point of the season.

Analysis

Although he'd thought he was finished with the Lakers, Jackson agrees to go back to the team after the newly hired coach quits. Although it is the same team name under which Jackson coaches, he indicates it is a very different team as many of the older more experienced players are gone. Kobe winds up in the top spot as team leader, but the team is unable to progress well because of a lack of experience overall.

Interesting in this part of the book is Jackson's extended comparison and contrast of Michael Jordan and Kobe Bryant. Kobe has achieved the second highest point record in one game by scoring 81 points as compared to Michael's highest score in a game which was 69 points. Jackson begins to believe it is possible that Kobe could be basketball's next Michael Jordan caliber player. He comments that even Michael has admitted that Kobe's playing skills compare to his. Jackson notes the two players are similar in their competitive attitudes as well as their ability to play through pain. One difference Jackson notes is that Kobe seems to be competing with himself while Michael felt the need to compete with everybody in everything, not just basketball.

Vocabulary

Sabbatical, decimated, schadenfreude, regimented, limbo, harbinger, sequestered, camaraderie, provocative



Deliverance and This Game's in the Refrigerator

Summary

In the chapter "Deliverance," the Lakers finally get a chance to play the Celtics in a championship again. Jackson describes the last loss to the Celtics and the humiliation Jackson's team endured. Next, Jackson describes a little of the background between the Celtics and the Lakers. Jackson backtracks to talk about his players for the 2009-10 season. He mentions he and Kobe begin to strengthen their bond after Kobe's knee begins bothering him. Jackson eases up on Kobe during practice, a move that Kobe takes as personal concern. He writes with pride that Kobe has said that he learned the majority of what he knows about leadership from watching Jackson.

When the Lakers beat the Celtics, Jackson says the win is satisfying not only because he is able to add another ring to his collection but also because he feels the Lakers have finally put the Celtic's curse to bed.

In his final chapter "This Game's in the Refrigerator," Jackson describes the games leading up to his team's final devastating loss in the pre-championship games. He indicates he should have left the NBA before the 2010-11 season but gave in to Kobe and Fish's pleadings for him to return even though he would do so on a reduced salary. Notice that he refers to the season as "snake-bitten" indicating it was doomed for failure from the start. Jackson shares his concerns about the team's age and lack of energy as well as a rash of injuries and illnesses that have affected key team members including Kobe, forward Matt Barnes and center Theo Ratliff. Kobe's knee injury not only isolates him from the team, but also creates a vacuum in leadership, Jackson writes. Additionally, Jackson's assistant coach suggests the team try a new defensive strategy that Jackson agrees to implement even though it goes against what most of the players have learned since high school. Because Kobe gets so little practice time with the new system, he is often disconnected from what the team is doing, a downfall that Jackson indicates haunts the team.

Jackson describes telling his team about his diagnosis of prostate cancer. When he shares the news, he says he's not sure if the timing is right, but felt the team was picking up on his distraction. After three losses to the Mavericks, Jackson is surprised when his children contact him to tell him they're flying to Dallas so they can watch his final game. Jackson, however, feels his team will win the fourth game not anticipating the blow out that ensues.

Jackson describes his sense of loss at not being able to lead his team to a win and searches for reasons why the last game went so badly. He believes the team was suffering with fatigue. He also notes many of the players were dealing with personal



issues. In his wrap up Jackson describes winning at basketball as a delicate balancing act in which a coach must let go and accept reality.

Analysis

The book's climax is reached in the chapter "Deliverance." As Jackson has already described the victory celebration when the Lakers' won this championship against the Celtics, the reader already knows the game will go in favor of Jackson's team. In this chapter, however, Jackson builds on the significance of this win by describing the Lakers' long background of humiliating losses to the Celtics. He even goes to say the Lakers are cursed by the Celtics who have a history of domination spanning back to the time the team was formed. The Lakers' win against the Celtics is the high point for Jackson, Kobe and the entire team.

In his final chapter, Jackson outlines his closing season as a coach, a season in which the Lakers lost the championship. He admits he'd never thought he would end his coaching career on such a low note, but says he'd been trying so hard just to get the team through the season he hadn't really put that much thought into the ending. It is at the end of this chapter that Jackson indicates that "the soul of success is surrendering to what is." Although the quote may seem empty, Jackson admits at the end of the book there really isn't a great deal a coach can do to change a team or inspiring a team. He admits he has learned to take what his players bring to the table, and work with these strengths and weakness to turn the group of individual players into a team with a unified goal.

Vocabulary

debacle, besotted, invectives, cohesive, diminutive, ominous, tenure, sages



Important People

Kobe Bryant

Kobe Bryant is a player with the Lakers at the same time Jackson coaches the team. It is with Kobe that Jackson has the most challenges as a coach. However, it also appears that Kobe is the player who learns the most from Jackson, telling him at one point that he's realized Jackson's way of leading is like a way of life to him. Although the two had a rough relationship, Jackson could probably be considered Kobe's mentor. In a comparison of Kobe and Michael Jordan, Jackson said that Kobe was busy competing with himself while on the basketball court. In comparison, Jackson said Jordan competed with others, both on and off the court. He indicates it is Kobe's need to compete with himself that makes him so hard to coach.

Jackson describes Kobe as a resilient player with an overwhelming self-confidence. When he first coaches Kobe, the player is self-absorbed but Jackson watches as he begins to interact more with his teammates and become more of a leader. Kobe's idol is Michael Jordan. It becomes a problem when Shaq joins the team as the leader with Kobe expected to work in conjunction with Shaq. Kobe has a habit of breaking out of the triangle system and "going rogue," his selfishness irritates his teammates. It is, in fact, Shaq who points out during a team meeting that Kobe's selfishness is hurting the team. Jackson is concerned because no one comes to Kobe's defense. After discussing the problem with Kobe, Jackson indicates he believes Kobe begins to realize that he must find ways to fit in and work with the team if he really wanted to be a leader.

Kobe and Jackson's relationship is back on the rocks after Kobe is arrested and charged with sexual assault. The charges are later dropped but Jackson says his image of Kobe was tainted because of an experience he'd had with a sexual assault involving his daughter. When Kobe comes back for the season, he and Shaq begin fussing. Additionally, Jackson has been trying to give Kobe his space to deal with his pending charges, but the space seems to make Kobe angrier. He later realizes that Kobe translated the "space" Jackson was giving him as indifference.

It is proved that Jackson's relations with Kobe have gone terribly wrong when the news is released that the Lakers' won't be rehiring Jackson as the team coach. Kobe tells the press that he doesn't care that Jackson won't be returning. Both Jackson and Shaq, who was also traded off the team, are surprised by Kobe's cold and uncaring attitude after all they had put up with from the immature player. Jackson, however, is rehired as the team coach and goes on to repair his relationship with Kobe. It is with the Lakers' final championship win during Jackson's tenure as coach that he and Kobe seem to finally reconcile with one another. It was during that game, Jackson writes, that Kobe proved himself, showing the press and fans that he didn't need Shaq to be a good player.



Michael Jordan

Michael Jordan is the lead player for the Chicago Bulls when Jackson first begins working with the team. Although he knows that Jordan doesn't like the triangle offense, Jackson is surprised when Jordan agrees to give it a try. Jackson describes his relationship with Michael as close, but also says the two were formal with one another, setting up meetings to talk about the game instead of talking spontaneously.

It is during the time that Jackson coaches Michael that Michael has two major upheavals in his life. First, the media discovers Michael's gambling habit. Some try to blame Michael for the Bulls losing a game because Michael was out gambling the day before. Even more painful to the star player is the murder of his father just a few months later. It is perhaps because of this series of events that Michael decides to end his career in basketball and switch to baseball. Jackson, however, predicts to himself that Michael's basketball career is not over. His prediction comes true when Michael decides to rejoin the Bulls after only a short time in baseball.

Phil Jackson

Phil Jackson is the author of the book. He was a player for the New York Nicks, and a coach for both the Chicago Bulls and the L.A. Lakers. During his coaching career, he led his teams to a total of eleven NBA championship wins. His intent in writing the book is to describe his coaching style and the influences that helped develop his personal style. He discusses the influence his strictly religious parents had on him as well as his research and adaptation of the traditions of Zen Buddhism and Native American cultures to fit his needs on the basketball court. As the author, Jackson is important to the story because he crafts it from his own point of view. This doesn't mean the events that Jackson recalls aren't true, but they are affected by his own experiences, emotions and thoughts. For this reason, the book may be considered a biased look at his coaching as opposed to the unbiased critique that an uninvolved narrator might give.

Red Holzman

Red Holzman is Jackson's mentor and the coach of the New York Knicks when Jackson began playing for that team in 1967. Jackson calls Red the most selfless leader he has ever known. As a coach, Jackson says Red was a master of simplicity. His two simple rules were "see the ball" and "hit the open man." Jackson says Holzman believed it took a team to play basketball and would probably be appalled at how self-centered modern players have become. Holzman was most happy, Jackson says, when he was able to beat the team coached by his nemesis, Red Auerbach.



Bill Fitch

Bill Fitch is Jackson's basketball coach at the University of North Dakota. While Jackson played for Fitch for many years, he says he decided to take a different tactic from the "my way or the high way" type of coaching that Fitch relied upon. However, Jackson does like Fitch's way of teaching his players to play in a disciplined way. He later realizes that Fitch used a version of Winter's triangle offense when he taught players how to move the ball. In his book Jackson additionally notes that he liked Fitch because he was "tough, honest and always pushing me to do better."

Kevin Loughery

Kevin Loughery is the coach of the New Jersey Nets who calls Jackson to join him on the team as an assistant coach. It is this offer that gives Jackson his bridge between playing and coaching. Jackson joins the team because he wants to learn from Loughery's leadership style. Jackson indicates that Loughery had learned how to push the envelope and get away with it. During the season, before Jackson has to take over for a player who is hurt, he has the opportunity to take over coaching for Loughery when Loughery gets thrown out of games.

Red Auerbach

Red Auerbach is the head coach of the Celtics. He is the arch nemesis of Jackson's mentor, Red Holzman. Auerbach stoops to childish means to demean his basketball foes including putting them in janitors' closets as dressing rooms when they come to his home area. Holzman is extra proud to beat Auerbach and his team on their home territory after the treatment they receive at the hands of the coach. It is during one of his last games with the Lakers that Jackson surpasses Auerbach's record of championship wins, a move that he feels vindicates him.

Dennis Rodman

Dennis Rodman is added to the lineup for the Chicago Bulls as the team's power forward. Rodman has a reputation for selfishness that concerns Jackson. Jackson also believes that Rodman suffers with attention deficient hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) that makes him become bored during the second year he is with the Bulls. This boredom causes Rodman to act out, which causes problems for the team. Rodman often sports strange clothing styles, hair dyed in strange colors and an attitude.

Jerry Buss

Jerry Buss is a real estate mogul with a Ph.D. in physical chemistry. He is also the owner of the Lakers. He hires Jackson because he wants to win one more



championship. Jackson tells him he thinks he can get three more championships out of the team. Buss teases Jackson when the team wins its first championship during Jackson's first year of coaching. In the 2003-04 season, Buss decides to keep Kobe on the team and ditch Shaq even though Jackson has advised him to do the opposite. Jackson is upset when he hears it from Kobe that Buss isn't planning on hiring Jackson back for the following year. The comment makes Jackson lose trust in the team owner but he later learns that his contract negotiations have, indeed, been suspended. Jackson, however, is called back to save the team after it doesn't even make the playoffs after a year with the new coach. Buss agrees to give Jackson more input into personnel decisions and not blindside him as he had before.



Objects/Places

The Ring

In his book, Jackson talks about the ring on a variety of levels. First, the ring is a trophy given to the winners of an NBA championship. In this sense, Jackson says the ring is a symbol of power and status. On a psychological level, Jackson says the ring symbolizes a quest to find harmony, connection and wholeness. He refers to Native American culture in which the symbolism of the ring was so important that homes, villages and whole nations were built in a series of interconnected hoops or rings. In order to encourage players during games, Jackson said he would show his ring to remind them of the connection, or bond of love, between all of the players.

Triangle Offense

The triangle offense is a system taught to Jackson by Tex Winters when Jackson was studying as a graduate student. Jackson says he likes the system because it is aligned with the ideals of selflessness and mindful awareness that he has for his players. While he says some coaches are critical of the triangle, Jackson believes that type of offense empowers players and keeps all five players involved in the game instead of allowing one or two star players to do all of the work.

Mindfulness Meditation

Jackson explains that mindfulness meditation is a technique rooted in Buddhism that helps one quiet his mind and focus his attention on the present. This is one of the techniques that Jackson teaches his players to do before games in order to become more focused on the coming action.

The Tribal Room

Jackson refers to the Bulls' video room as the tribal room. The room is decorated with a variety of Indian artifacts. Many of the traditions Jackson brings into the tribal room have their roots in the traditions of the Lakota Indians.

Tall Totemlike Painting

This painting of the core players from the Bulls hangs in the foyer of Jackson's California home. He says he likes the painting because it uses pictures of the same size of each player, making none seem more important than the others. Jackson indicates he believes the painting captures the concept of the team spirit.



Staples Center

The Staples Center in Los Angeles is the home court for the Lakers. It is in this area many of the games detailed by Jackson are played.

Laker's Group Portrait

Jackson says that as a team, the Lakers had many more changeovers in team members than did the Bulls. He illustrates this by describing a portrait of the players that were with him and the team when they won all three championships. Jackson notes there are only seven players in this portrait.

2002 Championship Ring

To inspire the players in his 2008-09 season, Jackson began wearing the championship ring he'd won with the Bulls in 2002. However, Jackson notes the ring might have been a bad luck charm as he'd also worn it during two championship games in which his team lost and three playoff attempts that failed.



Themes

Leadership Influences

One of the main aspects that Jackson tries to convey in this book is the variety of influences from which he developed his own leadership style. These influences include both good and bad habits of coaches for who Jackson had played and others he just observed. He also takes leadership lessons from the Native Americans and psychology greats like Abraham Maslow. Jackson assembles the aspects of each of his favorite influences into a style of leadership that works best for him and his players.

The man whom Jackson calls his mentor is Red Holzman, the former coach of the New York Knicks. From Holzman, Jackson learned how to be a selfless leader and how to dial back his ego. Another of Jackson's former coaches who influenced his leadership style was Kevin Loughery. Jackson learns from Loughery's methods of pushing the envelope and getting away with it. Jackson, however, moves away from the "my way or the highway" type of coaching that his college coach Bill Fitch practiced.

From the Native Americans, Jackson gleans the ideas of tribal leadership and the circle of love. He explains in his book that to the Native Americans, the circle was so important and such a strong symbol of unity to them that everything they created — teepees, towns, sometimes entire nations — was formed into a circle. Jackson has his team members form a circle both before and after games to reinforce the idea that they are all interconnected. He additionally tries to grow his teams based on the principals outlined in the book *Tribal Leadership* that outlines the five different stages through which a group must develop before it can perform at its best.

From psychology, Jackson uses Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to help his players be their best. He uses Maslow's description of the way to balance one's physical, psychological and spiritual needs to help him motivate his players. He additionally notes his study of the Hierarchy of Needs taught him how to stop impeding himself from reaching his goals by being in his own way.

Search for Spirituality

Jackson's search for a form of spirituality that suits him is significant to his book as he incorporates many of the aspects of his journey into his coaching. Growing up, Jackson has been taught that spirituality is rigid by his parents, both of whom were ministers. It is in college that he first realizes there are different takes on spirituality and that he is free to choose the one that works best for him.

Jackson admits early on in his book that basketball was a good choice for him because it got him away from home on the weekends. Without basketball, Jackson said his weekends consisted of attending Sunday School as well as morning and evening church services. He and his siblings were also forced to attend Wednesday night



services, participate in daily devotionals and memorize scripture. As an adult, Jackson realizes all this commotion was just too much for him. What he wanted was a way to quiet his mind, not just fill it with stuff.

He finds the outlet he's looking for in the traditions of Zen Buddhism. He learns to sit zazen and to meditate. There are many times in the book where Jackson says he uses meditation to get him through the rough spots in his life. Jackson additionally has his players trained in meditation. Although some of the players think it's a strange approach, Jackson contends the meditation helps them to settle and focus on the upcoming game. Breathing in sync is another technique that Jackson teaches his team members in order to get them to bond before games.

Player Relations

As Jackson's coaching career develops, he nurtures relationships with the teams he coaches as a whole and as individuals alike. One aspect that he covers in his book is a detailed description of both the Bulls and the Lakers. He additionally singles out some players, like Kobe Bryant, Michael Jordan and Dennis Rodman, and talks about how he had to script methods of dealing with them as individuals based on their personalities and needs.

Perhaps the most significant of these players is Kobe Bryant not only because of the challenges Jackson faced while coaching this talented player but also because he seems to be the player that Jackson believes turned out most like him. Kobe has the desire to be a star, but is not yet mature enough to be the next Michael Jordan, as he seems to want to be. During Jackson's tenure as Kobe's coach, he tries to get the loner to bond more with his teammates and be more of a team player. Although Kobe's progress is slow in following Jackson's advice, he does begin to show progress. Jackson unwittingly spreads a rumor about Kobe to the media, then treats Kobe in a manner that Kobe translates as uncaring after the player is arrested for sexual assault. These two incidents distance the coach and player from one another but the wound begins to heal when Jackson leads the Lakers, including Kobe, to a championship win over the Celtics.

Another talented player that Jackson must learn to deal with is Michael Jordan. Though he is a bigger star than Kobe, Michael seems to give Jackson less grief than the younger man. In fact, most of Michael's problems seem to come from his team members expecting him to carry the team on his own. After the murder of his father, Michael does get a wild hair and decides to pursue a career in baseball, a career that Jackson thinks will be short lived. He is correct, as Jackson returns to basketball after just a short time.

Dennis Rodman is another challenging player that Jackson deals with during his time as a coach. Jackson indicates that most of Rodman's troubles, which include acting out and boredom, stem from a disorder known as attention deficit, hyperactivity disorder

(ADHD). While Jackson had every right to be critical of Rodman, he instead is amazed by the player's ability to be successful despite his condition.

Styles

Structure

This autobiographical book is written from the first person point of view of Phil Jackson, former coach of both the Chicago Bulls and L.A. Lakers. Jackson led these teams to a total of eleven championship wins during his time as coach. His book tells of his early years in basketball as well as the influence that his spiritually rigid family had on him. He describes the way he used influences from Zen Buddhism, Native American tradition and things he learned from coaches under which he played to develop his own style of coaching.

Jackson writes his story in chronological order, beginning with his early start in basketball as a player in high school and college. He moves on to his transition between school ball and the NBA, then goes on to describe how he made the move from player to coach. During these early chapters in the book, Jackson is also describing his own quest for a form of spirituality that suits him as he was turned off from religion by his strict parents. He writes about his research of Zen Buddhism and meditation as well as Native American traditions and the way he has incorporated these aspect of spirituality into his life and his coaching style.

As he begins his chapters in which he describes the years coaching the Bulls and the Lakers, Jackson describes the players, giving background on their lifestyles, their attitudes and their playing style. He discusses how he hopes to help each player develop into the best player they can be. Jackson additionally addresses what the entire team needs to do in order to develop into the best possible team.

Perspective

Keep in mind while reading Jackson's book that the use of the first person point of view is typical for a book of an autobiographical nature, but that it also tells the story only from Jackson's point of view. He records his experiences with the different players, coaches and administration. He does give his story a glimpse into the minds and thoughts of other people by including things they've said about circumstances he's describing. Remember, though, all in all, the book is Jackson's take on how things happened.

Tone

Jackson's tone is professional. He is telling his version of the story, and clearly trying to come across as honest, fair, and unbiased, although a complete lack of bias is impossible in a first-person perspective.



Quotes

What moves me is watching young men bond together and tap into the magic that arises when they focus — with their whole heart and soul — on something greater than themselves. Once you've experienced that, it's something you never forget.

-- Phil Jackson (Chapter 1, The Circle of Love paragraph 4)

Importance: This quote almost summarizes the gist of Jackson's book. His focus is on the ways that he has worked to help the members of the teams he has coached — the Lakers and the Bulls — mature and work together.

But what I do know is that the art of transforming a group of young, ambitious individuals into an integrated championship team is not a mechanistic process. It's a mysterious juggling act that requires not only a thorough knowledge of the time-honored laws of the game but also an open heart, a clear mind, and a deep curiosity about the ways of the human spirit.

-- Phil Jackson (Chapter 1, The Circle of Love paragraph 38)

Importance: In this quote, Jackson says the process of building a team is not a mechanical process, but instead one that differs from team to team.

I also discovered that when I had the players sit in silence, breathing together in sync, it helped align them on a nonverbal level far more effectively than words. One breath equals one mind.

-- Phil Jackson (Chapter 2, The Jackson Eleven paragraph 27)

Importance: In this section of the novel Jackson begins to explain the way that he uses meditation and synchronized breathing to help the players bond together.

I've always felt that there is a strong connection between music and basketball. The game is inherently rhythmic in nature and requires the same kind of selfless, nonverbal communication you find in the best jazz combos.

-- Phil Jackson (Chapter 5, Dances with Bulls paragraph 15)

Importance: In this quote, Jackson describes his belief that the rhythm of basketball is similar to that of music.

I had to devise a multifaceted program that included the triangle offense but also incorporated the lessons I had learned over the years about bonding people together and awakening the spirit.

-- Phil Jackson (Chapter 6, Warrior Spirit paragraph 8)

Importance: Jackson describes what he has determined is the best way to try to bond the members of the Bulls into a productive team.



As a coach, I tried to convey to each player that I cared for him as a person, not just as a basketball factotem.

-- Phil Jackson (Chapter 7, Hearing the Unheard paragraph 12)

Importance: Jackson shares another focus of his coaching, showing each of his team members they are important as a person, not just what they can do for the team.

And that takes discipline, a healthy balance between work and play, and nourishment of mind, body, and spirit within the context of community — values deeply rooted in my own being, as well as my objectives for the teams I've coached.

-- Phil Jackson (Chapter 9, Bittersweet Victory paragraph 18)

Importance: Jackson describes the number of things that must convene successfully in order for the players in a team to develop discipline, a major objective that Jackson believes should be a goal in one's life.

We had absolutely everything in place that we needed to fulfill our destiny — talent, leadership, attitude, and unity of purpose.

-- Phil Jackson (Chapter 11, Basketball Poetry paragraph 46)

Importance: Jackson sums up the different attributes that came together to make the 1995-96 Bulls a different kind of championship team.

Obviously, basketball isn't an individual sport. To achieve greatness, you must rely on the good offices of others.

-- Phil Jackson (Chapter 15, The Eightfold Offense paragraph 12)

Importance: Jackson includes this statement in his comments when describing Kobe and his tendencies to be selfish and a ball hog. He knows Kobe must move past this personality flaw if he hopes to become as successful as he claims he does.

By default the role of orchestrator on the Lakers fell to Kobe, but he wasn't interested in becoming Shaq's Pippen. He wanted to create shots for himself.

-- Phil Jackson (Chapter 16, The Joy of Doing Nothing paragraph 10)

Importance: Because of Kobe's position in the team, Jackson indicates that he should be the floor leader but Kobe does not want to be the one to help Shaq become a star, he wants to become a star himself.

If the second season felt like a soap opera at times, the third was reminiscent of Oblomov, the Russian novel about a young man who lacks willpower and spends most of his time lying in bed.

-- Phil Jackson (Chapter 17, One-Two-Three—Lakers! paragraph 6)

Importance: Though Jackson doesn't infuse a great deal of humor in his description of his time as a coach, this quote, in which he compares one of his seasons as Lakers



head coach to a soap opera and the other to a Russian novel, is one of more humorous statements he includes.

When we left I had no idea that in a few days Eagle would make headlines and embroil me in a nightmare of pain and misinformation.

-- Phil Jackson (Chapter 18, The Wisdom of Anger paragraph 3)

Importance: Jackson uses this quote to introduce the effect his reaction to the sexual assault charge against Kobe would have on his relationship with that player.

As I've mentioned, one of the keys to our approach is to give players the freedom to find their own destiny within the team structure.

-- Phil Jackson (Chapter 20, Destiny's Children paragraph 6)

Importance: This strategy is actually one that Jackson mentions quite often as he struggles to help guide his players into successful teams.

This was our moment of triumph, a moment of total reconciliation that had been seven long years in coming.

-- Phil Jackson (Chapter 20, Destiny's Children paragraph 72)

Importance: Jackson indicates that it was after the Lakers won its championship in 2008-09 that he and Kobe were finally able to completely reconcile with one another after all of their past differences.

To be honest, I hadn't given much thought to how I wanted my career to end or what I was going to do next. I was just trying to stay in the moment and get through the next game.

-- Phil Jackson (Chapter 22, This Game's in the Refrigerator paragraph 36)

Importance: As Jackson's last season as a coach ends in a loss, he admits he hadn't really considered how he wanted his time as a coach to end, he'd simply been trying to find ways to get his players through the next game.



Topics for Discussion

Topic for Discussion 1

How might it have affected Jackson if he had not been injured and for this reason given the opportunity to serve as Holzman's assistant coach?

Topic for Discussion 2

Discuss one of Jackson's principles of leadership that you find particularly interesting. Why do you think that principle worked so well? Do you believe it could help you in a position of leadership?

Topic for Discussion 3

Discuss the role of religion in Jackson's life. How has it made him who he is?

Topic for Discussion 4

Choose one of the basketball players whom Jackson has coached during his career. In what ways does he believe he helped this player to be more of a team player?

Topic for Discussion 5

Consider Jackson's idea that a team must be unified in order to play good basketball. How does he create unity in his teams? What factors make this unity most difficult?

Topic for Discussion 6

Discuss Jackson's transition from a player to a coach. How does this come about? What is Jackson's initial reaction?

Topic for Discussion 7

Discuss Jackson's decision to rejoin the Lakers as coach even after he was treated so badly. What do you think of his decision to return to the team?



Topic for Discussion 8

Consider Jackson's book as a whole. Do you think that his portrayal of his coaching was biased or was it unbiased? Does he do well at including his weaknesses as well as his strengths?

Topic for Discussion 9

Discuss Jackson's use of the triangle offense. Why was it a good technique? Were there any downfalls?