



THE PRINCIPLES OF
PERSEVERANCE

LANCE

ALLRED

The Five Principles of Perseverance-

By Lance Allred

Being the first legally deaf player in NBA history, with 80% hearing loss, I have many people asking me: “How did you do it? How did you achieve your ‘unattainable’ goal of playing in the NBA?”

I know they wish that I had a magic wand to share with them. But I do not. What I have are *Five Principles of Perseverance*, (*Seven*, really, but I keep two to myself for now) and I will share them with you.

1- Accountability

Accountability was first exemplified to me through the actions of my mother. And there is no better way to teach someone than through action.

The reason why I am hearing impaired is because I was born in my grandmother’s bedroom in a polygamous commune with no regard for RH incompatibility. My mother was a negative blood type and my father a positive, which is not a big issue anymore in our modern day world of health and medicine. Yet, it almost killed me.

I was nearly dead and saved by a small town resident from Johns Hopkins, who specialized in RH, because he was an RH baby himself. After two weeks in an incubator, undergoing several complete blood changes, I was still alive with no scientific explanation. My bilirubin titer count was 45. At 35, most babies are dead.

I should have been dead, and the doctor told my parents as much when he released me from the hospital, saying he didn’t dare publish this in the *Journal of American Medicine*, because he knew no one would believe him.

The only reason why I am alive today, is simply because I chose to be. Remember this concept of “choice” as we will address it further down. I chose. The doctor was prophetic when he warned my parents to be on the watch for signs

of hearing loss among other severe symptoms.

When I was 20 months old, as an aftermath of the RH factor, I was diagnosed with 70-80% hearing loss.

My mother could have felt shame and guilt and blamed herself, or even been angry with the leaders in our commune who gave poor medical advice. But instead, she chose accountability. All she could do to ameliorate her lack of follow through as a parent was to own up to it in her actions by having me fitted with hearing aides when I was 20 months old and at the same time enrolled in speech therapy until I was 15 years old. There were no amenities to learn sign language in this part of Montana as I was the only deaf kid within a 100 miles.

I resented my mother for many years for making me go to speech therapy, because it was a constant reminder that I was not normal. I just wanted to be normal.

Being a leader is lonely. You are never going to fit in- But that is not your path.

My mother never backed down. That was her atoning and taking accountability for her initial shortcoming as a parent. She owned her part. She could have felt guilt and blamed others, but how would that have helped or empowered me to be a leader of my own life? How would that have been accountable? People of other deaf kids through the years have asked my mom through defeat and exasperation, "How did you get Lance to go to speech therapy? How did you get him to wear his hearing aides?"

To which my mother replied, "It wasn't an option."

My mother held herself accountable, the best way she knew how. And because of it, I have been able to function in the great wide world, and now am paid for my skills as a great communicator. It is all because of her.

When I began playing basketball at the age of 14, I wasn't very good, and people were already telling me that I would never be able to play collegiately because my hearing wasn't good enough. People have been putting limitations on me all of my life. I guess I just never cared to listen, I couldn't hear them anyways.

With that being said, I made a promise to myself:

If I was going to play basketball, I was never going to use my hearing as an excuse if something “bad,” or disadvantageous occurred. I was so committed to that promise that through the years, when I misheard a play, because a coach was so stubborn and refused to use hand-signals, I would never ever say, “I didn’t hear the call.”

I would simply say, “Sorry Coach, I forgot the play.”

I was never going to prove people right with my excuses. When I own my shortcomings, I can then fully take credit for my success, and every success is that much sweeter and gives you that much reward for persevering.

2- Integrity

I define integrity through a question I ask myself everyday:

Lance, are you the same person in every room that you walk into? Are you the same person no matter who is in the room, if they have money or not? Do you treat everyone the same?

Through childhood experiences and playing for many coaches that changed faces when the media cameras were on as opposed to a very different face when the locker room doors were closed, I have learned that integrity is maybe the greatest Achilles Heel of most who want to be in leadership positions.

Yet, it should be the easiest.

No man can serve two masters, especially if those two masters reside within the same psyche!

When you function from a place of integrity, you cannot fail. This is a promise I give to everyone. I cannot say where you will land, but when you are in your authentic space, genuine in your integrity, it is that much easier every morning to lace your shoes up one more time.

Integrity is the daily choice to remain consistent in who you are, no matter who is watching, despite the never-ending temptations of immediate short-term gain.

3- Compassion

“Compassion Protects You” -Lance Allred

At the age of five, in our little polygamous commune, I had a Sunday school impress upon me that God had made me deaf as a form of punishment. Now, I was only 5 years old, and 5 year olds tend to absorb all the information around them and do the best to call those puzzle pieces “reality.” I never actually asked my parents if this was true, because I already felt guilty and furthermore feared them actually saying, “yes.”

I had a warped perception of God and my self-worth as a little boy. I had this story in my head that I had to atone for some past sin that I had no recollection of. And so whatever ill –treatment that came my way as a boy, I sort of rationalized that I deserved it.

When my father moved us out of Pinesdale, MT and down to Salt Lake City, UT, where the main headquarters of the Allred group resided, I was in shellshock. I went from being one of 500 kids in a united polygamous commune to being a loner at school in the big, bad secular world.

As a first grader in my new elementary school, I was one of the biggest kids in the entire school, talked funny with my speech impediment and had giant hearing aides, and also... I was a polygamist kid, as the Allred name was still very synonymous in the 80’s with polygamy. And mainstream Mormons (LDS) did not like that. I was a huge target of bullying and became very introverted and depressed. Kids would taunt me all the time, and often play with my hearing aides and throw them in the shrubs or over the fence during recess. I had a huge victim complex. Again, I “deserved” it. This was my trial in life, I reasoned. I had a huge victim complex and walked around all day like Winnie’s pal, Eor.

It wasn’t until my 6th grade, that I finally learned the power of compassion and how it protects us. People make the mistake of thinking compassion makes us a doormat, but it actually protects you as it gets you outside of your head- It does not allow you to internalize or personalize the attacks of others. Towering over others, I

finally began to look my tormentors in the eyes with compassion, trying to understand,

Why they wanted to come at me?

Why they needed to make me feel less than?

What must their home lives be like that they would have to take it out on me: maybe their dad abused them, maybe their parents ignored them?

I didn't know but I tried to understand, and eventually, they grew bored with me. And they went away. Too many victims of bullying stay in that victim mode, and seek validation from others to make them feel better: they are bullied online and then want/need others to validate them online as well. It is insecurity perpetuating itself. People wouldn't be victims if they weren't getting some sort of reward out of it, in some shape or form. Reality perpetuates itself. If you are victim you will, at least subconsciously, continue to find experience to support that narrative.

Compassion protects as you it gets you outside of your own internal stories.

Self-absorbed people tend to be the greatest victims!

Get out of your own head, and don't make it about you, and you will be surprised at how easy it is to continue, fighting and swinging, taking just one more step after the other.

Do you notice how we tend to mirror each other in all of our actions and judgments? We project our own pain onto others, thinking they need to feel the same, because we become so lost and lonely in our self-absorbed minds and stories that we tell ourselves.

A story is merely that, a story. Yet we tend to hold on to the stories of the past, no matter how badly that hot coal burns in our hand, because we believe it is a merit badge, a symbol of who we are and what we have "endured." We all play the victim cards in our minds from time to time. And when we are in victim mode, we are merely playing a role in the story within our minds.

4- Discomfort

How uncomfortable are you willing to be to get what you want out of life?

Everyone wants success and the American dream, but few are willing to pay the price for it: hard work, uncertainty, risk, setbacks, disappointment.

I was willing to toil in the NBA Minor leagues, making \$900 dollars a month, in debt, living off of ramen noodles, playing through great stress and discomfort, to chase my dream. Would you?

Perfection is not pretty. Success is not pretty. We look at successful people and we tend to think “they have it all together.” But they do not. Successful people struggle and yet, they continually push themselves beyond their comfort zones. They have a high threshold for discomfort, judgment from others and uncertainty.

Do you?

We are so afraid of judgment from other people if we fail while chasing our dreams? Why?

Let’s learn to be leaders of our own lives...

5- Be A Leader Of Your Own Life

We humans have this irrational fear of failure.

Why?

Because we are afraid of what other people will think of us. It is that simple.

But who are you chasing your dreams for? Yourself, or them?

Be bold. Always, be bold.

Failure is growth. Failure means you are stepping outside of your comfort zone.

We were not born to be caged within our comfort zones.

To me, the only definition of failure, is mediocrity. Are you settling within your bubble, within your comfort zone? Professionally and personally?

If you are, then you are not living. You are not being a leader of your own life.

Leadership is a hot word right now and everyone has different takes on it.

For me, with my experiences playing all around the world, being a team

captain on most of those teams, I have learned that the essence of Leadership, is Perseverance.

And the essence of Perseverance is Grit.

And the essence of Grit?

Choice.

Do I choose to pick myself up, one more time? Time and time again?

Let's talk about choice.

Every goal I have written down in my life has come true. I have placed them above my light switch, where I read them three times every time I touch the switch. But I write them like this:

"I, Lance Allred, *Choose* to be the first deaf player in NBA History.

I, Lance Allred, *choose* to be a best selling author.

I, Lance Allred, *choose* to be one of the greatest communicators in the world."

I empower myself with the accountability of choice.

I take full ownership, through choice, of my success and my failures. I am a victim to no one. I choose my fate. I write the script for my life.

I choose to get up, one more time. Time and time again.

It is my choice.

It has always been my choice.

Just as it is yours: Do you choose to get up, one more time?

Lance Allred is the First Deaf Player in NBA History, TEDx Star, Keynote Motivational Speaker and Best Selling Author

www.lanceallred41.com

Follow Lance on Twitter and Instagram! @lanceallred41