

Harlem Globetrotter's Mannie Jackson explains Mandela Concept

by Mannie Jackson

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I have been blessed to have developed wealth and power within a country and region where people who looked and talked like me were rarely accepted, always marginalized, and as a rule treated unfairly. I successfully worked and operated for many years inside the power structure. while being marginalized in a world of some of the country's most powerful leaders, politicians and builders. I concluded that while I may have in fact, at times, been in over my head and comfort zone, I was never indifferent and emerged as a passionate leader with a top performance record. I worked as a leader in hi tech, sports,

acquisition and mergers, research, and I served on the Board of several Fortune 500 companies. I was a former President of the Executive Leadership Council (committed to advancing the role of Black executives), Chairman of the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame, and founder of the University of Illinois' academic enrichment program I-LEAP. My reputation was that of a frequently disruptive team leader for the cause of change and performance status. I studied and learned the value of always staying on task and being tenacious when pursuing a mission.

I've traveled to thousands of cities in America and over 100 countries outside the USA. I know first-hand our country has a vast majority of positive, caring and kind people. I've explored first hand this belief watching people in good and bad organizations. My leadership role model, however, was not from this country. When acquiring companies, I would always pay as much attention to a leader's behavior quotient, as I would their Balance sheets. For me, the difficulty in government, business and sports is getting enough people to wake up and not be indifferent to the growing cost of marginal leadership, particularly on the Humanities level. When I briefly served as interim chairperson of a company in South Africa I spoke to and consulted with Nelson Mandela for nearly three years – he believed in democracy when supported by strong unbiased education systems, he believed in Democracy when media integrity was an absolute and he believed in capitalism except for the notion of “winner take all.” In the year 1998 President Nelson Mandela replaced my High School coach Joe Lucco as my leadership role model.