

Mar 12th 2005 12:58AM

The Sport of Business.

I can't go more than a week without shooting baskets. There is something about the feel of the ball coming off my hand, and the sound of the ball going through the net. It just feels good.

If I'm just standing in the gym, I can shoot pretty well. Playing in a game. Well it's not quite what it used to be. I used to have a spin move that would work for me no matter who I was playing against or what level they were at. If I could get a pick and the defender went under, I didn't have to think about it, I could hit the shot. These days, my mind knows what to do, but my body just laughs at me. Put me up against 20 year olds, and I won't embarrass myself but it's only because I know how to set a pick and hit an open, a very wide open jumper, and spend the rest of the game getting out of the way.

I love to compete. I always have. Playing basketball was just something I had to do no matter how good I was and it's something I will always do, no matter how old I get. It gives me a chance to blow off steam. It gives me a way to refocus.

But no matter how much I love to play the game or how involved and competitive I get during a Mavs game, it's only a minor release. Real competition comes from the sport of business.

In sports, you know who your opponents are. You know when you are going to play a game. You know pretty much how long the game will last. It's mentally and physically exhausting if you are at the top of the game, but it still pails at the effort required to be successful in business.

The sport of business isn't divided into games. It's not defined by practices. It doesn't have set rules that everyone plays by.

The sport of business is the ultimate competition. **It's 7x24x365xforever.**

I love the sport of business. I love the competition. I love the fire of it. It's the feeling of the clock winding down, the ball is in your hands, and if you hit the shot you win...all day, every day.

Relaxing is for the other guy. I may be sitting in front of the TV, but I'm not watching it unless I think there is something I can learn from it. I'm thinking about things I can use in my business and the TV is just there.

I could take the time to read a fiction book, but I don't. I would rather read websites, newspapers, magazines, looking for ideas and concepts that I can use. I spend time in bookstores because 1 idea from a book or magazine can make me money.

I'm not going to go to dinner with you just to chat. I'm not going to give you a call to see how you are. Unless you want to talk business. Other guys play fantasy sports. I fire the synapses to get an edge.

That's what success is all about. It's about the edge.

It's not who you know. It's not how much money you have. It's very simple. It's whether or not you have the edge and have the guts to use it.

The edge is getting so jazzed about what you do, you just spent 24 hours straight working on a project and you thought it was a couple hours.

The edge is knowing that you have to be the smartest guy in the room when you have your meeting and you are going to put in the effort to learn whatever you need to learn to get there.

The edge is knowing is knowing that when the 4 girlfriends you have had in the last couple years asked you which was more important, them or your business, you gave the right answer.

The edge is knowing that you can fail and learn from it, and just get back up and in the game.

The edge is knowing that people think your crazy, and they are right, but you don't care what they think.

The edge is knowing how to blow off steam a couple times a week, just so you can refocus on business

The edge is knowing that you are getting to your goals and treating people right along the way because as good as you can be, you are so focused that you need regular people around you to balance you and help you.

The edge is being able to call out someone on a business issue because you know you have done your homework.

The edge is recognizing when you are wrong, and working harder to make sure it doesn't happen again.

The edge is being able to drill down and identify issues and problems and solve them before anyone knows they are there.

The edge is knowing that while everyone else is talking about nonsense like the will to win, and how they know they can be successful, you are preparing yourself to compete so that you will be successful.

That's what makes business such an amazing sport. Everyone plays it. Everyone talks about how good they are or will be at it. Just a small percentage are.

Every single day someone has an idea. Every day someone talks about some business they want to start. Every day someone is out there starting a business whose entire goal is to beat the hell out of yours. How cool is that.

Every day some stranger from any where in the world that you have never met is trying to come up with a way to put you out of business. To take everything you have worked your ass off for, and take it all away. If you are in a growing industry, there could be hundreds or thousands of strangers trying to figure out ways to put you out of business. How cool is that.

The ultimate competition. Would you like to play a game called Eat Your Lunch. We are going to face off. My ability to execute on an idea vs yours. My ability to subvert your business vs your ability to keep it going. My ability to create ways to remove any reason for your business to exist vs your ability to do the same to me. My ability to know what you are going to do, before you do it. Who gets there first? Best of all, this game doesn't have a time limit. It's forever. It never ends. It's the ultimate competition.

It's the sport of business. It's not for everyone, but I love it.

I'm fortunate. I have done well enough financially that I don't have to play 24x7x365. I can and have cut back to 18x7x365. Family first now.

But in those 18 hours, you can bet I'm competing, and loving it.

But that's me. You have to figure out what works for you.