

# Back in the Game

## Former WNBA Coach Now Motivates A Different Crowd

By Trudi Lacey



**On December 12, 2006, when the WNBA Charlotte Sting folded, I faced a crossroads. I had to choose to step into my personal power and outside of my comfort zone, or continue on the familiar path that I had been on for the past 20 years of coaching basketball.**

I had to ask myself “Who am I without the WNBA brand, the coaching title or basketball as the primary focus in my life?” I had to take a look within and search my soul to find the courage to rebuild my life. What I found was an intrinsic force and resolve that I did not know lived in me. Simultaneously, I had to face the doubts, fears and limited beliefs I had about myself.

No question about it, it is a frightening place to be. In the days and months following, I continued to fight doubt, disbelief, heartbreak, and

disappointment, and not just from the loss of my career. A few months after the Sting folded, my brother (from my extended family) died of a massive heart attack while jogging. Then, a 10-year friendship abruptly ended, and other friends vanished into thin air once the glamour of the WNBA was gone. To top it off, I wrecked my dream car! I asked myself “What is this here to teach me?” I had experienced enough hurt, heartache and disappointment. I needed a break!

What I know for sure now is that I make my own breaks. I am responsible for my life and my happiness, and I can have a heart of gratitude, no matter what the circumstances are. What a breakthrough moment for me when I discovered this.

### **You’ve Fallen, and You Can Get Up**

Of all the things I know, I know this best. No matter what is going on around you, no matter who has given up on you, no matter how many times you hear no, just keep moving toward your integrity. This is your highest vision of self. Nobody knows you like you know you. You must put one foot in front of the other and just continue, even when you don’t feel like it.

When you fall (and you WILL fall), fall forward. As Winston Churchill said, “If you are going through hell, keep going.” And so I did.

I knew I wanted to show up differently by adding value to others, impacting them in a way that they would live and lead a life of purpose. But in order to do that, I had to transform my own life. It never occurred to me to do anything else but get past my fears and run my company: LifeCoachDesigns.

There’s a Zen saying that says “Leap and the net will appear.” Of course I didn’t leap – I was pushed – but nevertheless, I had a new vision that got me up every morning.

As I moved out of my comfort zone of WNBA coach and into a new role of coaching CEO's, I had to call forth great courage to step into my own authentic power. To get my game back, I had to build trust with myself and others. I did this by adopting four principles I call the Positivity Principles:

### **Take a Personal Inventory**

Unclutter your life. Make space for what matters most to you. What is your life calling? What do you really want in your life? What is your definition of success? What is the vision of your future? I took a look at every area of my life; family, friends, money, career, personal development, spiritual growth and health; and rated each area one to 10 (10 being the highest). I took a closer look at the two areas with the lowest scores and concentrated on how I could shift those two areas most effectively, allowing me to live more fully.

### **Plant Seeds In Fertile Soil**

Review all of the relationships in your life. Are there toxic relationships in your life that are literally draining the water out of your harvest? Depriving oxygen to the flowers of your soul? Are there people who are stomping on the integrity of your garden? If so, set boundaries in these relationships or eliminate them and make space for those who will inspire you.

### **Live the Law of Process**

Simplify your life. One of the best things I have done for myself is to simplify my life and live in balance. I go canoeing with my niece. I go to a movie once a month. I sip tea or wine on my deck. I take my dog for walks on the nature trails near my home. I laugh more often (and I cry more often, too). And I attend yoga classes twice a week. What I have learned and now serves me well is to be in the process of life. Don't skip over anything, even the messy places. In the muddy water of life is where the stretch comes. Many times, I have been so busy with past regrets or so focused on getting to the next level, I have not taken the time to enjoy my life. As I raised my level of self-awareness, I began to make the right choices for me. As I aligned myself with

**There's a Zen saying that  
says "Leap and the net will appear."  
Of course I didn't leap – I was pushed –  
but nevertheless, I had a new vision  
that got me up every morning.**

those right choices, my confidence returned. By devoting more attention, energy and focus to what matters most in your life, you begin to make the choices that resonate with the life you desire.

### **Collect Evidence of Abundance**

Create a detailed life game plan. What does playing a bigger game mean to you? Assess your strengths and skill set. Give of your time, volunteer for a cause you are passionate about, tap into your network, research your dream, save for a rainy day. But most important, begin to collect the evidence of abundance that is already present in your life. As you live with a heart of gratitude and clear intention, the wisdom of the universe will open doors for you.

Former award-winning UCLA basketball coach John Wooden said "Don't let what you don't know get in the way of what you do." I've turned to that philosophy every day in transforming my life. Just like an athlete or coach preparing for a big game, I prepare, prepare, and prepare some more. I play to my strengths, by developing an innovative, strategic game plan. This arms me with the ability to make adjustments if I need to, and then play all out, expecting to win.

It's been a climb since that day in December 2006 when life made a choice for me, and I began making better choices for myself. Since then, I've learned that there is life after basketball – an abundant one. Life is about living in full expression, creating the life you want and trusting your intuitive wisdom to lead you to the summit.

My journey has just begun.

This article appeared in the March-May 2008 issue of the Women's issue of *Pride Magazine*. Copyrighted 2008 by PRIDE Communications Inc., 312 W. Trade St., Suite 702, Charlotte, NC 28202, 704-375-9553.