

IN A PERFECT WORLD

by Cedric Jackson

K through 12 consumes a sizable chunk of your life; each milestone also puts you one step closer to becoming the medical professional, attorney at-law, vocalist, business mogul, award-winning actor, professional athlete, fashion model, multi-platinum rapper, decorated military leader, or whatever it might be you're destined to become. All you've ever dreamed about is knocking down clutch 3-pointers in big games, crushing towering homeruns to straight-away centerfield, being the strategic leader in a top organizations boardroom meetings, or watching all of your well paid, happy employees admire the hanging framed first dollar your thriving, successful business ever earned. Growing pains come and go and yet you remain focused and determined to turn your dreams into reality, in part by tuning out that other voice, the "naysayer". You know the one; the voice that screeches negativity or seems less supportive of you and your desire to chase after your dream with reckless abandon. They tell you "don't quit your day job;" at least have back-up plans. The relative or friend, maybe a classmate, who's always talking at you about what you can't do; how you'll never achieve your goals. But how is it that a loved one can be so pessimistic and not support whatever you decide you want to do in life? How can a friend who supposedly cares about you suddenly trample all over your dreams? And how can you waiver in what you believe in your heart and soul you were meant to become since you were too young to remember? How does the saying go; if you want it bad enough, you have to be willing to sacrifice and do whatever it takes.

Never give up, no matter what; in principle that all sounds wonderful. *Never give up, no matter what.* And if you do give up, does that mean you didn't work hard enough; you didn't want it bad enough? The reality is most dreams are time sensitive; meaning you only have a relatively small window of opportunity in which to try and make it come true. That's not to suggest that anyone should shortchange themselves or their dreams. But if you haven't broken into most professional sports by age 30, chances are it just wasn't meant to be. And that dream you had going to New York and taking the catwalk by storm, during fashion week but now you're over 25, and you've yet to strut your stuff in any notable fashion show. How about a 35 year old still pursuing his teenage ambitions of becoming a rapper? There's always that backup plan, something to fall back on in the event your dreams don't quite work out the way you imagined, mortification so to speak. What stands out in my mine is what I heard a very successful young person say "I didn't want to end-up being that 65 year old guy who says if I had only...when I was young; you need to work toward your goals with immediate urgency and realize you need to live in the now and do today.

With few exceptions you can pretty much decide to strive for your doctorate, become a lawyer or business type at any age, even in the later years; but wouldn't it be so much nicer and liberating to have all the struggles, class schedules and course assignments all behind you?