

Don't Give Up

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"Determination, persistence, grit... do I have those?" That's a question I once asked myself. Not giving up is just one part of sportsmanship that helps athletes on and off the court. By using perseverance, I can work to succeed in school, have a better relationship with my friends, and deal with problems outside of school. Perhaps the best example of using perseverance on the court and in life is the legacy of Coach Jim Valvano, whose words still live on: "Don't give up, don't ever give up."

I first learned about Coach Valvano when I was watching a "30 for 30" episode with my mom and brother. He was not only inspiring as a basketball coach but on his entire philosophy of life. For example, at a 46 years old Jim Valvano was diagnosed with metastatic cancer. With the short time he had left, he could've been angry at the card he had been dealt, but instead used it to inspire others and bring awareness to cancer through the V Foundation. The V Foundation uses 100% of donations for cancer research.

I've never had the same problems Coach V faced, but I have faced adversity. I have lost basketball games and failed at tryouts, and each time I reminded myself to keep working hard and try again. Getting through these things has helped me deal with problems I have had outside of sports and other activities. I've had problems with my friends and even lost people I love. These lessons have taught me to have grit and determination even when things seem impossible.

Sports and activities teach us many aspects of sportsmanship, but perseverance is one aspect that will always stick with me. Jim Valvano overcame much adversity because of his determination and grit, showing it as a coach, athlete, and person. It is because of his lessons that I am able to overcome the problems I face everyday. Everytime I have faced adversity, Jim Valvano's speech rings in my ear, "Don't give up, don't ever give up."