

The Discipline Coach

If you're thinking discipline is keeping them in check, sorting them out, showing them what's good for them, because it's for their own good, because it's what the youth of today are so sorely lacking ... you've got the wrong book

The Discipline Coach

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Foreword

How often do you start sentences – or hear others start sentences – with the words ‘Not my ...’? Sentences like, not my fault, not my problem, not my responsibility, not my job ...?

And how often do you look around and wish things were different?

I realised way back in my first ever ‘proper’ job that there were two sorts of people in the world of work. There were DDMs and DMDs. DDMs were the Don’t Do: Moans. They didn’t like what was going on but they never did anything about it. Apart from moaning. In my third ever ‘proper’ job I soon discovered that this is what staffrooms were for.

DMDs didn’t like it either but, rather than sitting around berating the world and all who lived in it for not being good enough, they found ways of getting on and making it better. Making it different. Making a difference. These were life’s Don’t Moan: Dos. These are very special people and should be cherished.

Making a difference, however, is hard work. It means nipping all those ‘Not my ...’ sentences in the bud. It’s not about what isn’t my fault, problem, responsibility or job, but all about doing everything I need to in order to bring the world kicking and screaming in line with all that it can be. It means not sitting around making myself feel good because I am surrounded by others who have the same complaints, mitherings, whinges and excuses I have. It means applying myself to making myself better each day in order to make things better each day.

And that takes discipline.

Jim Roberson has discipline. He is an enigma. He is a force of nature. He is, in the words of so many of the young people whose lives he has helped transform, a ‘f@*#%ing legend’! And he is very much the sort of person who, as his fellow Americans like to say, ‘walks the talk’.

I have known Jim for many years now, ever since we first met when I was doing an INSET session at the school where he was based, a school in one of the rougher parts of Portsmouth on England's south coast. At this school, Jim was 'The Discipline Coach'. Not in a 'Do your work or we'll send for Mr Roberson and he'll sort you out!' sort of way. Quite the opposite. Discipline isn't something, in Jim's world, we do to others. Disciplining someone just teaches them that they didn't work hard enough at not getting caught. That it's OK to be naughty until someone stops you and if no one stops you then just carry on. That the reason you haven't got that nice pair of trainers is because life is crap. And the reason for that is everyone else.

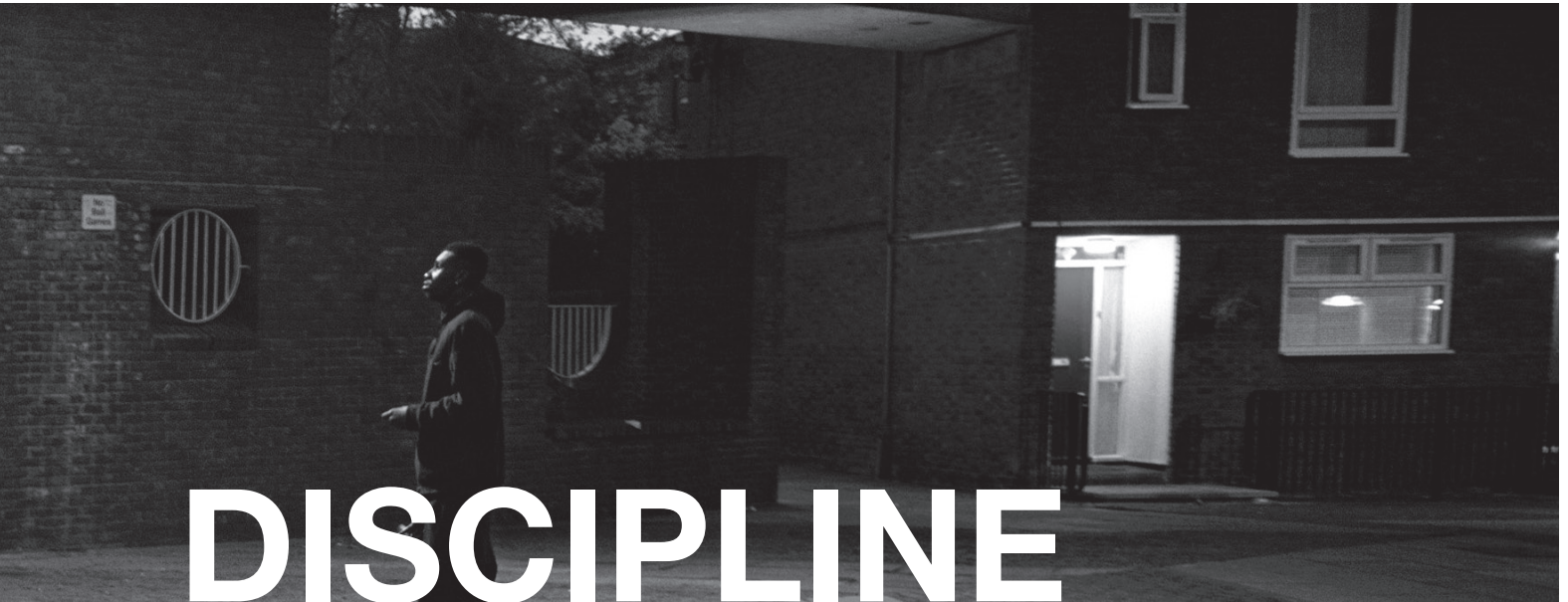
Jim's approach, rather, is not about what we do to others but what we do for ourselves. Over the years, I have seen Jim transform the lives of many, many young people, whether it's helping them focus on doing better in their studies, staying on the straight and narrow at school, playing that sport that much better, getting out of crime, contributing more as a member of the family, as a member of a community, getting a job, aiming higher, going further. He has helped turn around the lives of so many people and at the core of this is his philosophy of discipline. It is this philosophy that we have tried to distil into this book. And do it in a way that captures Jim's spirit, his voice and his relentless energy. To do this we have had to create a very special sort of book. Different from all the other 'books for teachers' that fill the shelves, often unread. It's not a 'How to' book or a 'Top Ten Tips' guide for busy teachers. It's actually a philosophy book with an autobiography wrapped up inside it for good measure.

What we want is for you to read it and enjoy it. And that in doing so, it will give you the reassurance to be even better at what you do. That it will offer you new insights to bring to bear on the young people whose lives you can touch. That it will help you see how much more we can all do for those young people. And that the biggest thing we can do for them is to remind them how much they can do for themselves. If they have the discipline to do so.

Ian Gilbert
Craig-Cefn-Parc
July 2012



Let's get some
things straight.

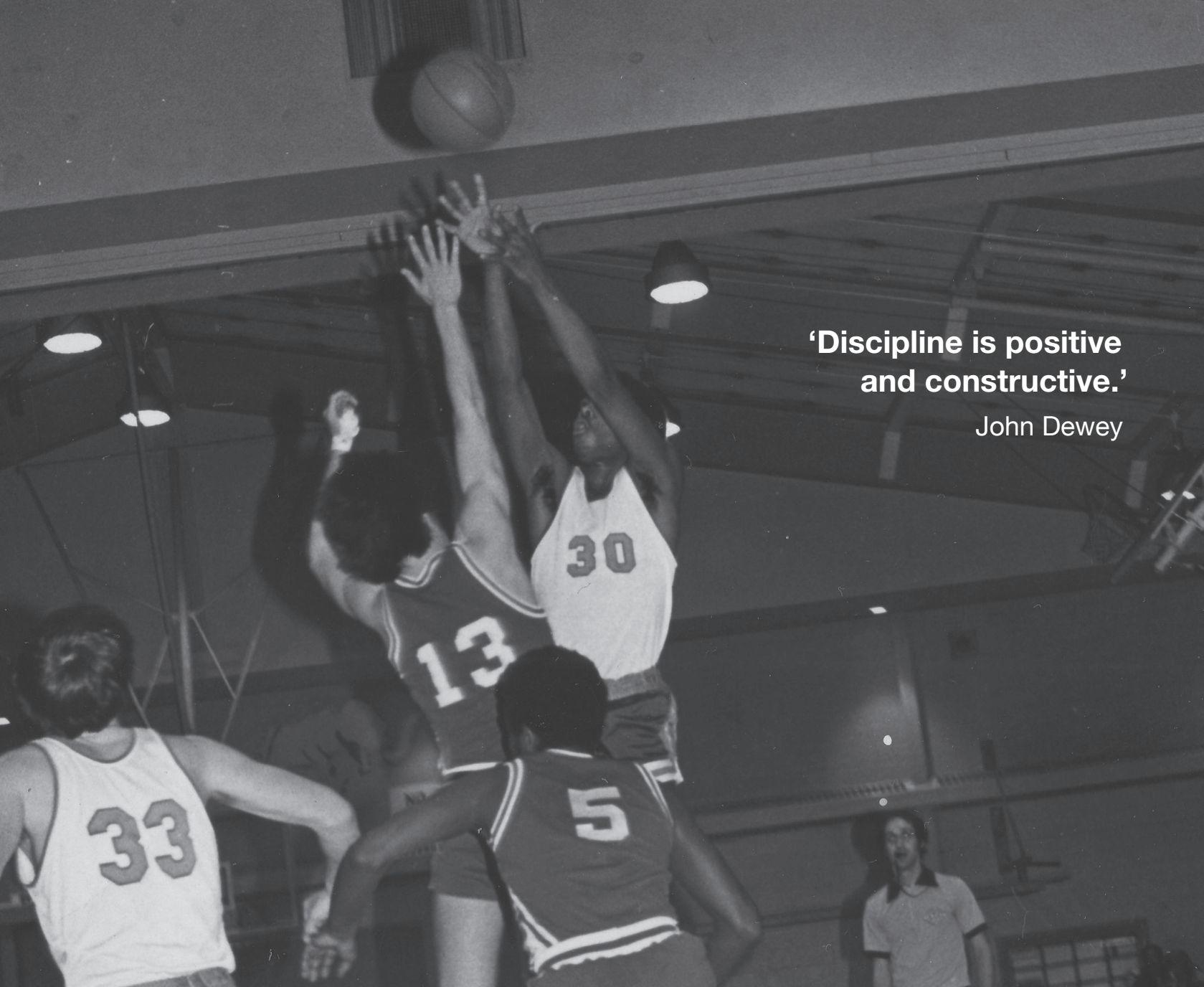


DISCIPLINE

The sort of discipline I'm talking about may not be the sort of discipline you're thinking about.

If you're thinking discipline is to keep them in check, to sort them out, to show them what's good for them, because it's for their own good, because it's what the youth of today are so sorely lacking ...

... then you're reading
the wrong book.



**'Discipline is positive
and constructive.'**

John Dewey

**And then
do it
that way**

all the time.





But that takes discipline.

**And to do
it that way all
the time.**

Discipline

(and this one makes my blood boil)

**is not about the
B*-Word**

***Behavior (or behaviour – makes no odds. It's still the B-word)**

And it all boils down to three words:

**Respect
Accountability
Preparation**



*Why do we exclude young people from schools?
Or even classrooms?
Do we think that by missing lessons they will catch up?
I have never kicked a kid out of one of my lessons.
Never. Nor should you. Be creative.

Every time they're messing around,
acting dis-respectfully,
as they will from time to time*

And you wade in
Shouting
Threatening
Stressing


*They're kids. It's what they do.

Finally, there's another old friend: *preparation*.

Preparation doesn't mean simply being 'up for it'. It's about having a plan.

After all, you know what they say:

**'Failing to plan is
planning to fail.'**



When I'm working with young people I show them a picture of the University of Michigan football stadium. It is known as 'The Big House' and it seats 109,901 people.

Then I ask the big question:

If you were playing a game in front of over 100,000 people do you think you would plan what you intend to do?

Too right you would!

Preparation is key.

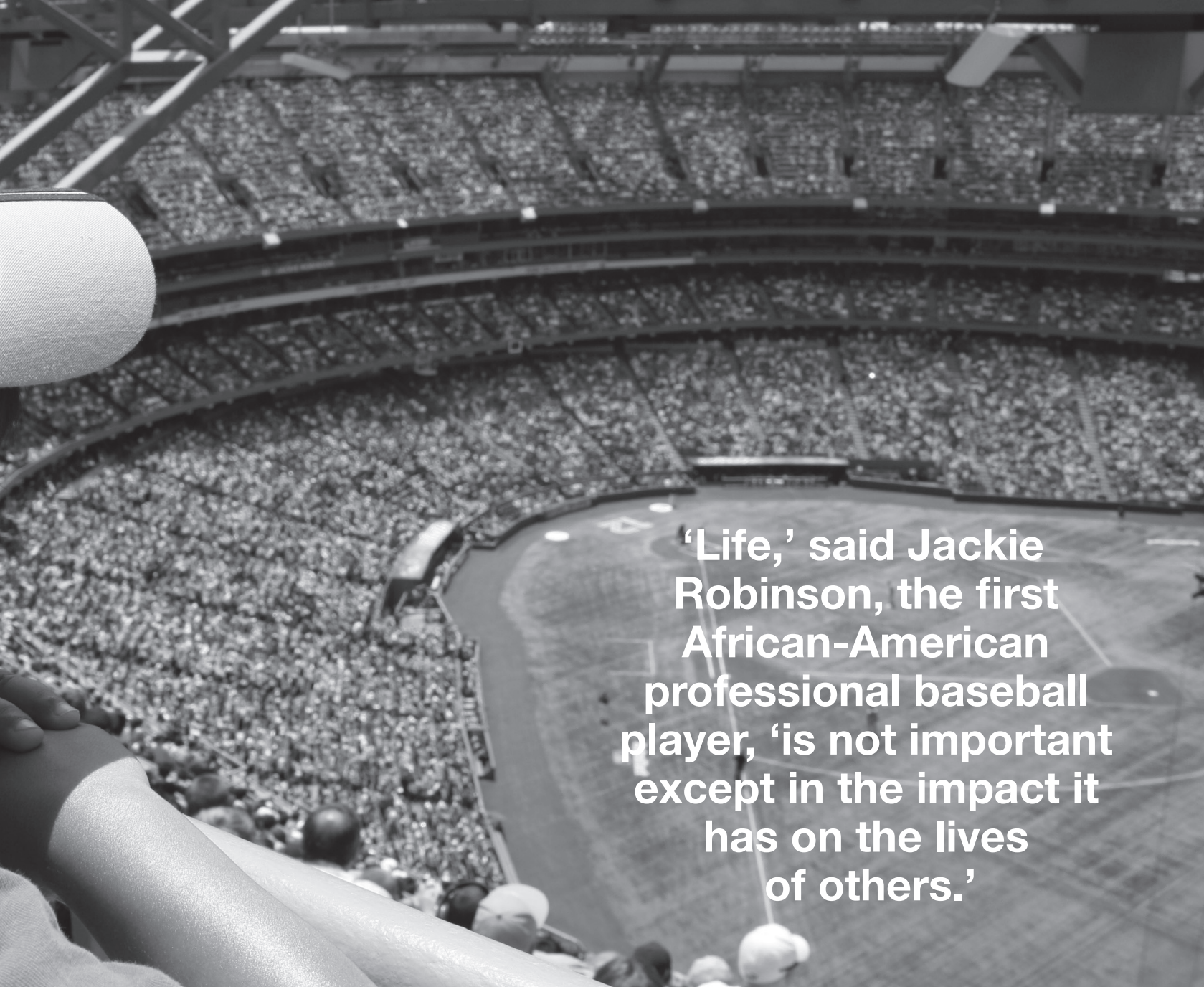
I want students to rely on preparation not motivation.

Now take your Discipline Action
Plan and stick it where you can
see it
every day.

That way
you can focus on what you want,
what you are prepared to do to
achieve it,
what you will feel like having
achieved it
and what you need to do in order
to
achieve it.

Then go out
and achieve it.





‘Life,’ said Jackie Robinson, the first African-American professional baseball player, ‘is not important except in the impact it has on the lives of others.’





Is your school a
Theatre of Dreams?



JPL

I'm less like a friend and
more like a parent.

And I'm less like a president and
more like a general.

And I'm less like a rider and
more like a driver.

And I'm less like a problem and
more like a solution.

And I'm less like a mechanic and
more like an engineer.

And I'm less like an oyster and
more like an eagle.

And I'm less like a caretaker and
more like an architect.

I am **The Discipline Coach.**

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