

10 Questions

The NBA legend's new book is 32 Ways to Be a Champion in Business. Magic Johnson will now take your questions

What is the most important business lesson you've learned?

Chris Aultman
BELLEVUE, WASH.

Always make your business about the customer and never about yourself. I learned that when I invested in a sports-paraphernalia store. I was also the buyer, so I bought everything I liked and didn't buy anything that the customers liked. I ended up losing a lot of money because of that.

If current NBA players were to issue their own IPOs, whose stock would you invest in?

Lucas Lu
WATERLOO, ONT.

Probably LeBron James'. He's very, very successful on and off the court. His brand is huge. And right now, off the court, LeBron is performing probably better than anybody, so I'm definitely going to go with the No. 1 brand.

Do you think you would be the same successful person had you not contracted HIV and retired from basketball early?

Steven Barrios,
LOS ANGELES

It has made no difference in my being successful. My having HIV has no bearing on my business. HIV is about educating people about it, raising the awareness level. That's what I do every single day.

How is it that you're still alive?

Ferdinand M. Parin,
MANILA

Great question. Well, taking my meds and working out every day. Having a positive attitude. And early detection--we caught it early on and jumped on the medicine right away. That's why we're always encouraging young people to go get tested. Because the earlier you find out anything--it's not just HIV and AIDS, it's cancer, whatever it is--those doctors can jump on it right away and help save your life.

Do you do anything different from what is usually recommended for HIV patients?

Connie Roder
SHOREWOOD, ILL.

No, I don't do anything different. I think it's important that you get a regimen that is good for you. Seek out your doctor and see what's best for you, and stay on that. Also, again, you've got to get yourself some exercise. And then just as important as the drugs is your mind-set and your attitude.

What are your plans for the future?

David Seok,
AUCKLAND

To continue to do what I do--grow my businesses. Our equity fund is at about \$500 million. I want to take it to \$10 billion one day. I think that there are always goals for me to try to achieve, and I'm going to work toward those goals.

How can the black community capitalize on role models such as Barack Obama and yourself?

Jason Robinson
MIDDLETOWN, CONN.

I think you've gotta look at President-elect Obama and say, Wow, if he can go from being this kid from Hawaii to the highest office in the land, then kids should say, I want to be like President Obama, and I'm going to focus on my education, because now I know I can definitely be the President. That's how you gotta look at it. Every kid, every minority kid can be so successful if they focus on their education.

What do you feel is your greatest achievement?

Charmaine Robinson
OKLAHOMA CITY

Putting over 40,000 minorities to work, without a doubt. Bringing back Harlem and South Central; those communities had been down, and now they're thriving, based on the businesses that I brought. There will always be players winning championships. But there won't be people who can make a difference in somebody else's life.

What was the best one-on-one game you've ever had?

Adam Speakman,
BOSTON

On the playground. Those were legendary back in the day. We didn't have uniforms. It was just shirts and skins, and we just went at it all day in the 90° heat. It wasn't about money. It wasn't about fame. It was just your love and passion for the game. Those were guys that nobody would ever know, but those were the best one-on-one games I ever had in my life.

What would have happened if Larry Bird had played for the Lakers and you were a Celtic?

Albert McKeon,
NASHUA, N.H.

The Celtics would've won [Laughs].

PHOTO (COLOR): It's Magic in 09

[Time International \(Atlantic Edition\)](#). 12/1/2008, Vol. 172 Issue 22, p4-4. 1p.

Document Type:

Interview

Subject Terms:

*[BASKETBALL](#) players

*[HIV-positive persons](#)

Company/Entity:

[NATIONAL Basketball Association](#) **DUNS Number:** [075255729](#)

People:

[JOHNSON, Earvin, 1959- -- Interviews](#)

Abstract: This article presents questions and answers from readers to former National Basketball Association (NBA) player Magic Johnson, including how Johnson copes with having HIV, what his plans are for the future, and what he believes to be his greatest achievement.