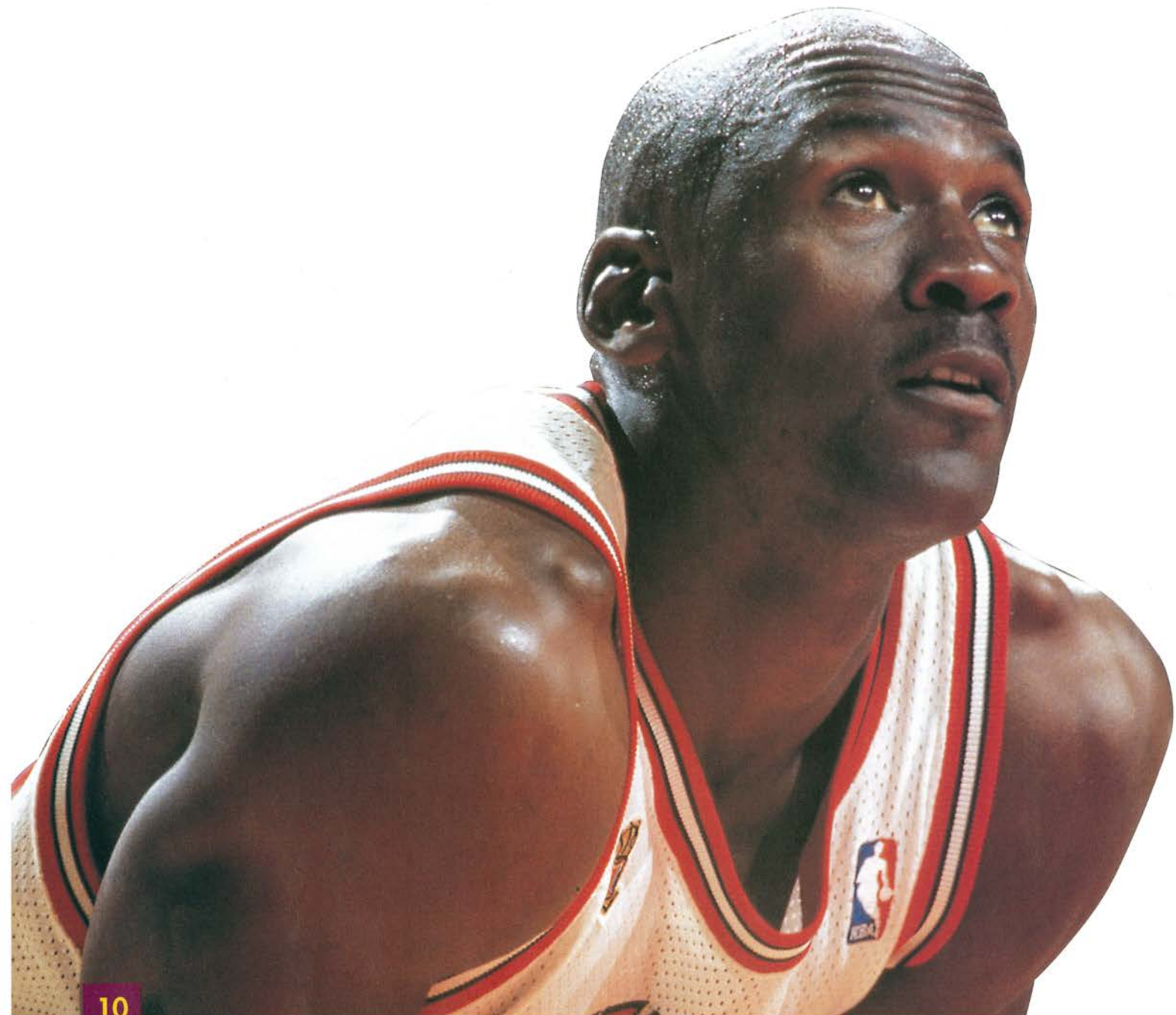


# michael jordan

**on being your best**



# Fear is an illusion

"I never looked at the consequences of missing a big shot."

Why? because when you think about the consequences you think of a negative result.

If I'm going to jump in a pool of water, even though I can't swim, I'm thinking about being able to swim at least enough to survive. I'm not jumping in thinking to myself, "I think I can swim, but maybe I'll drown." If I'm jumping into any situation, I'm thinking I'm going to be successful. I'm not thinking about what happens if I fail.

But I can see how some people get frozen by that fear of failure. They get it from peers or from just thinking about the possibility of a negative result. They might be afraid of looking bad or being embarrassed. That's not good enough for me.

I realised that if I was going to achieve anything in life I had to be aggressive. I had to get out there and go for it. I don't believe you can achieve anything by being passive. I know fear is an obstacle for some people, but it's an illusion to me.

Once I'm there, I'm not thinking about anything except what I'm trying to accomplish. Any fear is an illusion. You think something is standing in your way, but nothing is really there. What *is* there is an opportunity to do your best and gain some success.

If it turns out my best isn't good enough, then at least I'll never be able to look back and say I was too afraid to try. Maybe I just wasn't good enough. There's nothing wrong with that and nothing to be afraid of either. Failure always made me try harder the next time.

That's why my advice is to "think positive" and find fuel in any failure. Sometimes failure actually just gets you closer to where you want to be. If I'm trying to fix a car, every time I try something that doesn't work, I'm getting closer to finding the answer. The greatest inventions in the world had hundreds of failures before the answers were found.

I think fear sometimes comes from a lack of focus or concentration, especially in sports. If I had stood at the free-throw line and thought about 10 million people watching me on the other side of the camera lens, I couldn't have made anything.

So I mentally tried to put myself in a familiar place. I thought about all those times I shot free throws in practice and went through the same motion, the same technique that I had used thousands of times. You forget about the outcome. You know you're doing the right thing. So you relax and perform. After that you can't control anything anyway. It's out of your hands so don't worry about it.

*Excerpt from Michael Jordan's  
"I can't accept not trying"  
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