

- And he would tell us we're in a game where he knew a bunch of college recruits was and he'll make me handle the ball, hey, bring the ball up. Bring the ball up? and he's like, yeah, bring the ball up. And he gave me anxiety and I was like, oh my God, I gotta bring the ball up, but I knew I could do it and it made me push through that.

- Hey, y'all, Dhani Jones here, with Stand Together. Check out this extended conversation with Kevin Garnett where he talks about how he first learned about hard work, a life changing move to Chicago and looking at things outside the box. First and foremost, I just wanna just welcome you To Believe in People, NBA champion, Olympic gold medalist. I know you love hearing this, right? He's a father and actor, MVP all-star player. You know, I wanna understand and acknowledge the people that have supported you along the way. And I think that's what To Believe in People is ultimately about, okay.

- I come from a very hard-working family. My mom was a single mother who worked graveyard shifts. So we learned early on what hard work was. Being a Jehovah Witness has a bunch of barriers has a bunch of do's and don'ts. So, with the combination of finding a passion for basketball was, didn't sit well with a lot of people at first. A lot of my basketball days, I was hiding the fact that I was playing basketball. It was just me and the rim and the ball and whatever my imagination took me. And I used to just get lost in that. I only got better because of the people that I surrounded myself with, along with my own vision and work ethic. But that doesn't happen if the right people are not in place to actually make that happen. But basketball is a team sport and I've never wanted to shine alone in it. And I felt like that if we are all successful, then we all shine. And the group exists as a mighty fist and I've always seen it like that.

- So who has been a part of that mighty fist in your life and who were some of the people that believed in you along the way?

- I got in trouble in school in South Carolina and my mom thought it'd be better for me to transfer, to get out of the norm. And I have befriended a coach that would later on be like a mentor to me. Next thing you know, he was on a plane going to Chicago and I was in Chicago. Wolf, William Nelson, they call the wolf and the neighborhood because he grew up in the neighborhood and he had kind of like this bigger mouth that it kind of looked, or shaped like a wolf, you understand?

- Yeah. He was a dope person. He was from the neighborhood and he believed in playing ball in the neighborhood. He didn't care where it was. And for some reason he sees something in all of us and all of us went on to be and to do different things, and to be successful in our own right. But I don't know what Wolf sees, I don't know. He's crazy.

- And so Wolf was one that took you from high school and basically

allowed you to realize this new elevated way of playing. So then 1995 hits and you're the first NBA player drafted out of high school in 20 years. I'd imagine you had a little bit of a target on your back. How did you fit in and you know, how did you grow and adapt?

- I was still a kid and I had energy and I had a vast imagination. I had vision and I knew what I wanted. I had a great teacher, Kevin McHale, coming to the Timberwolves, on my first year, who pushed everything about the game. You wanna be a great player, I'ma push you to be this great player that you say you wanna be. And he would throw, like, little nuances. Like, you can do more, you know, you should push yourself to do more. You know, you just saying that and giving yourself that narrative because you're the four and the four posters up, and you said pigs, you, no. He looks at things outside the box and he's a believer. He's such a believer that you believe in yourself after you, after he's believed in you.

- At Stand Together, we know that a deep belief in people has the power to change the world by unleashing every person's unique gifts. Check out the rest of Believe In People series at StandTogether.org/BelieveInPeople