



Chasity Melvin – Winning Makes Everything Better



She's an admitted small-town girl, but Chasity Melvin dreamed her way to the bright lights of prime time. It wasn't until the bright lights finally went out that the superstar faced her biggest obstacle "life", but winners just seem to know how to win. And for Chasity Melvin, "winning makes everything better."

Chasity's early life was much like that of any small-town kid. Born to hard working parents living in Roseboro, NC, Melvin dreamed of a life way beyond the small streets and backyards of a small town in Sampson County. At age 11, Melvin picked up a basketball, what made her dreams come true was that she never put that basketball back down.

In fact, little 11-year-old Chasity Melvin, playing ball on a hard-packed dirt court, told her mother that she was going to play professional basketball, even though there was no professional women's basketball league at the time. While it would be another decade before the WNBA played its first games, reality wasn't enough to stand in young Melvin's way.

Melvin credits her early success to her parents for encouraging her to dream big dreams. "My parents are very loving, hardworking and supportive. They are the wind beneath my wings."

"I have old school parents," adds Melvin, "The kind that are your parents, not your friends, so I have a high level of respect for them. They made many sacrifices and had a strong will to make sure that I would be successful in life. My parents raised me to believe that I could do anything that I put my mind to, and that education was extremely important."

"My siblings and I were competitive growing up, working on my grandmother's farm cropping tobacco or going to pick blueberries, or fighting over the Nintendo. I battled my sister Danielle for years playing basketball on the dirt court outside my house. I grew up fighting to play with my boy cousins on that same court. I remember my grandmother making them let me play with them. They helped me develop my patent half hook shot that was my go to move in college and the pros."

"I have two sisters, Danielle Koonce and Jimmelle Melvin, and two brothers Adam Melvin and Alejandro Ellis," says Melvin. "My oldest brother Alejandro led the way for all of us. He was the first to attend college at North Carolina Central University and obtain his degree. I remember going to visit him at school and thinking this is like the TV Show 'A Different World' but in real life. That is when I realized the quote I had up on my wall was true 'See it, Believe it and Achieve it'."

It was those early formative years, encouraged by her parents and challenged by siblings and cousins, that would form the springboard for her dreams. "My drive came from my undeniable belief in myself, my love for the game of basketball and my passion to compete. My ambition came from focusing on my dream, knowing that I would have to work hard, make positive choices and control what I could control and pray and let God take care of the rest."

And just as her family was the springboard of her dreams, faith would be the bedrock her dreams would be built upon. "Faith has played a big role in my life," says Melvin, "because it gave me a steadfast foundation and something that I could lean on when my parents, family and friends weren't around."

She explains, "Once I started playing professionally and

traveling alone all over the world, my faith sustained me in a variety of ways. From saving me from going down a negative path when the pain and defeat from different failures overwhelmed me, to finding comfort for my soul in some of my darkest moments. It also gave me a strong sense of self and balance. Many people think I'm always happy but I really have a great sense of joy and peace that comes from my faith in God. Also, my relationship with my spiritual ideal, Jesus, gives me a superhuman power and a sense of spirituality that I often can't explain."

Chasity Melvin has made her dreams come true. Hard work, honing her skills, blood, sweat and tears are all a part of that dream; but the reason we dream is really for the memories. When asked, Melvin says she has two "equally memorable" events that made all the hard work worth the effort.

"The 1st is scoring 37 points and winning the 1A state championship with my sister's Danielle and Jimmelle at Lakewood High School," says Melvin. "The support from the entire town and community was unbelievable. This was the first experience in which I learned that sports can truly bring everyone together, even if for a moment. I'll never forget how excited we were getting that police escort to Chapel Hill, and my principal at the time, the late Mr. John Blanton, didn't care that we were the girls team. He made sure we had 1st class treatment. He showed us the utmost respect and I will always remember how proud and excited everyone across Sampson County was for us."

"The 2nd is being a part of the late, Hall of Fame, Coach Kay Yow and NC State women's basketball's 1st ever Final Four appearance in Kansas City in 1998. I scored 37 points in the semifinal game and broke the current record at that time by Sheryl Swoopes."

Chasity Melvin could have played college ball anywhere she wanted, but the small-town girl chose to stay close to home, close family and friends. At NC State, Melvin would meet another person that would impact her dreams; her beloved late mentor, coach and friend Kay Yow.

While at N.C State, Chasity Melvin improved each season, culminating in a senior campaign that led to over 2000 points and 2000 rebounds. Her senior season secured her Kodak All American honors.

After college Melvin was drafted as a 1st round pick in the first women's pro league the ABL by the Philadelphia Rage and shortly thereafter the Cleveland Rockers of the WNBA.

Chasity played in the WNBA for 12 seasons with stops at the Cleveland Rockers, Chicago Sky, and Washington Mystics receiving All-Star honors. She would also play internationally for 14 years in Spain, Russia, Poland, South Korea, Italy, Israel, Turkey, and China; amassing 5 championships throughout the world. She solidified her athletic prowess as one of the few females to play in all three professional basketball leagues and win multiple championships abroad in Europe.

There is no doubt, Chasity Melvin proved to be the best at the high school level, the college level, and even professionally. She lived the dream, forcing her way to the top. But all dreams end, and for Melvin, that proved to be when winning would matter the most.

"The most difficult obstacle that I've had to overcome," says Melvin, "happened after my career was over. It was the challenge of overcoming fear."

She goes on to explain, "I struggled with the challenge of overcoming the fear of who and what I was outside of basketball. And what I would do next after I retired at 38 years of age. It challenged my faith and overall confidence in myself. Basketball was all I had ever known for 14 years, 18 if you include college."

"When I played, I didn't feel like there were any obstacles," says Melvin. "I'm sure I had some but I didn't look at them in that way because of the belief I had in my abilities. I had absolute no fear during my basketball career."

"I've been alone on planes in the remote areas of Russia and China with no fear or worries, but something happened when basketball was over. For the first time, I heard the small, negative voices and fear. I met face-to-face with them and made the mistake of listening to them which made me become stagnant in life."

"I truly believe it was something I had to experience to help me fulfill my ultimate purpose in life. Basketball was just a small part of my story, and learning to overcome fear and enter different arenas outside of that was very challenging for me, but it's also given me a better understanding of those struggling to reach their goals and dreams."

Now that her playing days are done, coaching and mentoring young girls and empowering women are her passion. Chasity Melvin desires to help others learn how important self-confidence, along with balance and positive order, are to becoming and staying successful in your career, post career and life in general.

Chasity has traveled to Africa for a Hoops 4 Hope initiative and traveled to Colombia as a sports ambassador for Health and Wellness. She uses her own creative talent and communications degree to produce her own "True Sports

Talk Radio Show" online. Chasity has also authored a book titled "At the End of The Day". A must read and the ultimate blueprint for those seeking success, inspiration and an undeniable faith in reaching their goals.

She currently resides in Raleigh, North Carolina with her poodle, Reddington. Chasity is Director of Communication at the Kay Yow Cancer Fund, a nonprofit started by her late coach Kay Yow and does independent basketball analyst work on ESPN3.

Living her dreams, Melvin has learned lessons along the way that she now shares with others, "I would encourage all young adults to be your own person, have a strong faith, believe in yourself not only when it's easy but when it's hard, and keep believing in yourself when no one else does. Find something to do that your passionate about and go after it with everything. Also, remember that you can't dream big enough."

"To all the young girls out there," Melvin states, "it will get better. You can get through this, but you must learn to love yourself exactly the way God created you."

She shares, "I was made fun of heavily in middle school and they were my hardest years. Not fitting in, being tall and chubby, wearing glasses, and always wanting to play basketball with the boys. It wasn't easy but when I looked in the mirror I convinced myself of the person that I would become. I affirmed to myself daily that I was going to be something special."

"You're going to have tough moments but you will get through it. Trust me I know things aren't always fair, and your feelings matter. Just always remember and affirm to yourself daily that you will get through it and it will get better."

As for herself, Chasity Melvin has no regrets. "I don't have any regrets because I look back and I did the very best that I knew how. Of course, I wanted to have the career storybook ending of winning a championship and going to Disney World, and the way my career ended with me being released stung for a long time, but recently I've realized that there would have never been a right time because I loved the game that much. For me there is nothing that compares to that feeling of playing the game of basketball."

"My biggest motivator in life, besides my parents, is winning. That rewarding feeling you have after reaching your goals and dreams. I love to win. Winning makes everything better!"

As a final thought, Chasity Melvin says, "I would like to remind everyone to keep the faith, fight the good fight, and always choose love and light!"

Chasity Melvin's book, "At The End of the Day" can be found at: www.amazon.com/At-End-Day-Devotional-Memoir/dp/1530458501.

In this inspiring, intensely personal and earnest memoir Chasity Melvin "reflects" on her round-the-world journey and how her faith sustained her. From a near death bus crash in China to the dislocation of her eye ball during a game her story is riveting and will leave you with a new appreciation for the power of pertinacity. "At the End of the Day" includes her favorite scripture verses, personal anecdotes and life tips that provide readers seeking success, a perfect blueprint and inspiration to reach their dreams.

