

Flexin'

The Power of Positive Thinking

June 1, 2009 By [Kate Ferguson](#)

Alonzo Mourning loves kids. They respond to him. The retired NBA champ talks about one such kid, Zach, in his book *Resilience: Faith, Focus, Triumph*. Below is a brief summary of his story.

In and out of hospitals since the age of three weeks, Zach finally had to have a kidney transplant at age 9. His new kidney worked for nine days. Then his body rejected it. Zach stopped eating. He was disappointed about his body rejecting the kidney. Nothing anyone said could make Zach eat. Then, through a friend of a friend, Zach's story reached Mourning's ears.

The basketball star set it up so Zach and his dad could visit him at a game. A doctor accompanied them—just in case. The two met outside the visitors' locker room. Mourning, also a kidney transplant survivor, knelt next to Zach's wheelchair. He flexed one of his big biceps.

"You want some of these, you've got to start eating," he told Zach. "I had a transplant too, and look at me."

After the two talked, took pictures, signed autographs and exchanged phone numbers, someone wheeled the kid courtside.

Then Zach asked his dad for a hot dog, then nachos—a large order.

Back at the hospital, Zach continued the feasting. He started eating and smiling and thinking positive.

That's what Mourning kept telling Zach's dad: You've got to think positive.

For more inspiring stories about Mourning's experiences with kidney disease, check out *Resilience* (Ballantine Books).

*During an impressive career, Alonzo Mourning has outpowered, outmaneuvered and outpaced formidable rivals—even one turned teammate then a good friend, Shaquille O'Neal. Along the way, he's also made other NBA friends, like Dwyane Wade, with whom he hosts this year's Summer Groove, July 8 to 12, in Florida's Miami-Dade and Broward counties. (Check out [zsg.com](#) for more

information.) Proceeds from the event benefit Wade's World Foundation and Alonzo Mourning Charities, amcharities.org. Mourning's foundation has raised more than \$7 million for a variety of programs that assist children and their families. The Honey Shine Mentoring Program, a major part of AM Charities, empowers young girls as they move into womanhood and is run by Mourning's wife, Tracy.

[Click here](#) for our video interview with Alonzo Mourning.

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