Flexin’

The Power of Positive Thinking

June 1, 2009 By Kate Ferguson

Alonzo Mourning loves kids. They respond to him. The retired NBA champtalks 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 hadto have a kidney transplant at age 9. His new kidney worked for ninedays. Then his body rejected it. Zach stopped eating. He wasdisappointed about his body rejecting the kidney. Nothing anyone saidcould make Zach eat. Then, through a friend of a friend, Zach’s storyreached Mourning’s ears.

The basketball star set it up so Zach and his dad could visit him at agame. A doctor accompanied them—just in case. The two met outside thevisitors’ 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 formidablerivals—even one turned teammate then a good friend, Shaquille O’Neal.Along the way, he’s also made other NBA friends, like Dwyane Wade, withwhom he hosts this year’s Summer Groove, July 8 to 12, in Florida’sMiami-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 ofprograms that assist children and their families. The Honey ShineMentoring Program, a major part of AM Charities, empowers young girlsas 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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