

Conversation with 34 year old Native American male, New Mexico (Transcription)

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FM: One of the things you mentioned, that you were coaching little league. Did you have more than one team last year, or one team, or what?

I: Yeah, I started these guys off. In fact, all these elementary

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I: kids, when they were just little guys yet, one time they came to me and they asked me if I was interested. That was about three boys from here and I told them, well, I had just moved to the housing area, they asked me, so I told them yeah, I'd like to if you guys are willing to help me out. So, so we did. We started out with a bat and one ball and a torn glove and I went to Albuquerque, I went just about all over to those big companies, looking for a sponsor, and finally we came to Duke City. And I ask if they could sponsor us, and, well, right away he said yeah, he said, well I told him, he asked me first if this was a team that was already playing. I told him no, I'm just starting up a new team and I'd like a name for them and a sponsor, you know, because we'd like to buy equipment. So they said all right, so, so they bought up over four hundred dollars worth of equipment. So, so we've been doing pretty good, it's been four years that I've coached these guys and most

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of these guys right now, they're playing for semi-pros and they're in the newspaper and my boys were the tops they got awards for the best player, the best hitter, the best pitching and they had on there from Duke City. So that kinda made me feel good, you know.

FW: I didn't know, you've got boys?

I: Of my own?

FW: Yeah.

I: Well, I've got some stepkids, uh-huh, but they're all grown, they're all going to college, university, Highlands, Arizona State and that's, that's

FN: Were they on that first team you started?

I: No, well, they were already too old. See the little league is only, only runs from, from nine to twelve, and they had already, they had already been over twelve. So I really didn't have them play for

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I: me, or anything like that. Yeah, so, we've been doing pretty good. We went all the way to State, in fact, we were the only Laguna team, from Laguna, to go all the way in to State. We played District, we won District, and then we went on to State this year and we took the number one trophy from Laguna, too. So we've got sportsmanship three years in a row. And in fact they've, just within four years I think, we got about ten trophies now.

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FW: Well, that's really good.

I: So that's pretty good. And a lot of these boys, you know, they didn't know nothing about baseball. They said they couldn't do it, so I trained them myself. I'm the only one that, I'm the only manager and coach. Nobody helps me out, so, and now these guys are pretty good, in semi-pros. I guess I taught them.

FW: Now which boys would you say did the best last season?

I: You want the names?

FW: Yeah. ()

I: Tim (), and Brian Valencia, and what's that () boy's name, Norman and his brother Squeak, and Matt Valencia, and let's see, Monty Curtis, and let's see, who's the other guy, I think those about the only oness Alvin Hershey.

FW" Some of those guys, you'd say are really good in schoolwork and some arent; right?

I: Umhmm.

FW: Now what would you say, you've learned from working with those boys? ... Where do you think they're going?

I: You mean..

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FW: And what should we do as teachers.

I: Well, I think, if they, just like, just like say my boys, some of these guys really they come to me, they say, well, I've never played baseball or I don't know how to go about this, or, you know

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I: what I should do. So really, you know, if you got patience with them, you can sit down and give them the basic, training and just tell them well it goes like, actually show them just how to do it and then after you think well, just like I always ask them, well, what I told you now, the way I showed you, do you think you can do it? And most of them will say, we can try. I told them well that's about all you can do is try, you know, and if there's a mistake that you make, always ask me, because if you don't when you get into real games, you might make a mistake that's gonna cost the whole team to lose a game, you know. So I usually just kinda, kinda break them in, you know, in my own words and really, get out there and tell them well it's done like this and you know, like that. And most of the guys, they really listen and they go out there and in fact they do it better than what I showed them. As long as, you know, as long as they try, or if you try your best with the kids. I think it takes a lot of patience. That's what everybody tells me, I don't see how you can do it. It takes a lot of patience to teach somebody, you know. Just like training a elephant or something else to do tricks in the circus. But at least with the kids, they understand more. The only way, I guess, really they can learn something is by listening and by, you know, by actually doing it, or by showing these guys, just about how this thing goes, like say in reading and if a kid comes and says, well I don't know how to read. I think it's, if you've got the patience, you can sit down and you know, read and explain to him and I think he'll catch on because, in

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sports, it's pretty hard, too. It's just like going to school because really sports, they don't know what sport is until they get up there, you know, actually, actually participate. That's that's when they really you know, get it, and now, as they went

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I: along, they're way up there. They names were in the newspapers. The same way with the school. I mean, if they learn, they oughta just keep going higher and higher, you know. It takes a lot of patience to work with kids, but I think I've got the patience. And it takes a lot of, a lot of your time, too, so. It really don't matter, as long as, you know, as long as you don't lose your temper or start yelling at them cause yelling at them won't learn, they won't learn, you know. All they're gonna say is get mad and well why should I learn, why should I do this, because he's yelling at me, you know. So I think it's, talking to a kid like that, especially elementary kids when they're still starting, I think it's, I think it's really a best time to teach them, when they're small, you know. That way when they get a little bit older, they're gonna know just what they've been taught, when they were young, just like some of these boys, they came around. They come around, they say well thank you, you know, for teaching me baseball and all that. They're doing pretty good. And well what I usually tell them too, I usually look at their grades. I tell them, I tell them I'm gonna look at your grades and see if you guys are, if you guys aren't doing good in school, well you guys, you guys aren't gonna play this game, you know, It's mostly, it relates to the school, too, you know. How they, how their grades are and all that because, I mean, just like, well, a lot of the parents, they say well, they may my boy's really doing his homework because you told him if they don't make a good grade, they're not gonna play in the game. I say that's right I said, because it really, you know, I hate to, I hate to get somebody off and not and have them get a F or D or something in school and yet come out here and play baseball. I have to see, you know that these guys get up there because. Mostly in baseball, there's lot of, there's lot of, well, it includes math and, you know, all

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I: that, so. I usually do that to them and boy they really get down to working. A lot of, most of them have good grades and (), so the parents appreciate I guess getting those kids off of their hands too and I try to keep them off, you know, try to keep them away from trouble, getting into mischief and all that, you know. It's a good, it's a good sports for these little kids, if they can only be interested in it.

FW: What do you think we could do here at the school, you know, cause, like in most courses, in most classes ... What do you think needs to be done in this academic program?

I: You mean, how they should, how they should improve in their

FW: Yeah. Yeah, I don't feel the kids learned as much from the school as they could... I just wondered if you had any ideas on that.

I: Well, not really. Well, if a child is really interested in playing sports and he's gotta do his school, his schoolwork, I mean, I think a teacher should just come right out and tell him, well, if you're gonna be, if you're gonna be playing basketball, baseball or whatever they got here, right here at the school, I think they should tell them well it takes a good, you have to have good grades before you can, before I can send you over there or before I can, I can recommend you to this, to your coach or somebody like that, you know. Because really, every place, every place, like high school, like when I went to high school, you have to have good grades before you could play in any sports, like basketball and baseball and football. And I think that's what elementary should do, too, like they've got a basketball team here because they just let, simply let the kids go and say well go on you

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can play, you know. But they forget about their school work and really I think the coaching staff here should look into their grades to see who's got a good grade and that way

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I: you know maybe they can get down on their school work and bring their grades back up. I think they should, they shouldn't let them play in any sports unless, unless if their, if their, if their grades are up high, you know. Because if you let them just go and play, well they're gonna say, well, let's forget about the school work. I'm more interested in you know basketball. So this way if they can do that, he'll be interested in his school work plus his basketball or whatever they've got here. I think that, I don't know if that's a good idea but that's the way I feel

FW: That's what the school is starting to do now. ... What kind of games did you play when you were growing up?

I: When I was going to elementary, this old elementary down here, I played little league and one of our bus driver was our coach, but like I said, that's where I learned my, how to work with these kids, cause we used to have to have good grades or else we couldn't play. Before, before season started, baseball, they used to, well we had a strict principal and he would check out on our grades to see we're up there. If not, we couldn't play at all and it kinda made some of us feel bad. So we really had to get down to business and get out schoolwork up at least to a A, B. Anything less than. less than B we couldn't play. So I played little league when I was, when I was still going elementary down here at this old day school.

FW: Did you play any after that when you got older or

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I: Yeah, I played basketball and I played football, I went to school at Albuquerque Indian school. Then I went up to, I went up, we, they moved us to Santa Fe Indian school, because, I don't know what the situation was at the Indian school but we all got transferred, So I participated in football and basketball. But baseball, I didn't, just those two sports.

FW: Do you remember your first day at school, what that would have

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FW: been like?

I: Oh, when I first started?

FW: Yeah, very first day.

I: Yeah, well, I hate to say this, but I cried. Because everybody looked, looked like strangers, you know, The teachers I didn't know and when, you don't know nobody anyway, you feel like a stranger and well when you're, when you're small, you know, and I didn't want to go to school, I used to run away from school. And they used to go after me and bring me back and they used to sit me down and talk to me. So I finally got used to it. It was all right after that, but sometimes, you know, sometimes teachers would really get on you because you didn't do your, you didn't do your homework or whatever they give you. They kinda, that really kinda makes a, makes you feel bad because you know, I think a teacher has to have more respect, show respect for the little ones and be much patient,

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and that way, he'll, he's gonna be willing to learn. It's all in sports in school, same thing, I guess.

FW: Did you feel that teachers were so stern or you know so mad at you that you didn't learn sometimes? Just cause you didn't want to cause they were being so mean to you?

I: Well, as a child, when I was going to school, if a teacher, I mean, I felt like this and I know some of these kids, some of these kids feel that same way too, when a teacher gets on you just because you can't learn something or you can't remember something, then you feel well what's the use of doing it. You know, because, and then you're afraid to ask when you don't understand because if you ask you gonna say, well, if I ask this she's gonna come right back and tell me off, you know. So it's no use asking so that's where, that's where I think the bad grades come in. Cause the kids are afraid, once they're yelled at,

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I: then they're afraid to ask and but, but I think it's best that, if you don't understand nothing, always, there's, you can always ask and they can show you whether it's two, three times and I don't think a teacher should get mad or anything because some of us are slow learners and, yeah, some are smart, they can catch on, but there's lot of us that you know, don't catch on just right, like when they tell you. So I don't think the teacher should get mad, cause that's the way I felt. Lot of us felt that way, you know. Even in high school, you know, when we went, some of the teachers wouldn't understand. They'll jump all over you and then you're afraid to ask again. That's where the bad grades really come in.

(Stopped here, C-11 to M6)