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Friday, June 12, 2015 | 8:32 PM

## WNBA Hall of Famer Lisa Leslie On Transitioning from the Basketball Court to the Boardroom

Christen A. Johnson

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WNBA legend Lisa Leslie watched her mother balance femininity in a rugged job as a truck driver. Lisa learned that she could be and do anything she imagined—so long as she prepared. Her never-give-in mentality has earned her four Olympic gold medals, numerous MVP titles, and countless wins. This Hall of Famer-to-be has successfully taken her talents from the court to the boardroom. Check out how this basketball icon is using her mother's early lessons to slam-

dunk in the business world.

**Full Name:** Lisa Leslie

**Age:** 42

**Title and company:** President & Owner, Lisa L. Enterprises; Sports Broadcaster and Analyst

**Location:** Los Angeles, CA

**Hometown:** Compton, CA

**Connect:**

**Twitter handle:** [@LisaLeslie](#)

**Instagram handle:** [@LisaLeslie](#)

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**The gig:** I'm a wife and mother, as well as a businesswoman and entrepreneur. I recently teamed up with Boston Market to celebrate the first National Rotisserie Chicken Day in June. The campaign is all about "taking a side against fried" in order to make healthier choices. I'm really excited that I can connect with other working moms who, like me, are trying to make nutritious choices for their families.

**Her journey:** When I was 7 years old, I used to sign my name all over the house. My mom would always ask what I was doing, and I would tell her, "One day I'm going to give out autographs." I played in the

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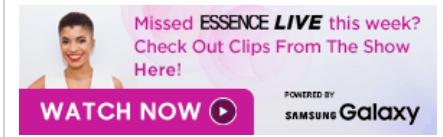
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WNBA for 12 years, but I've always been that person who thought, basketball is just one of the many things I can do. I'm always thinking about what I am going to do next. I went back to school to get my Masters, and it helped me learn how to own and operate my own brand. Being in business has translated well from the court. You use some of the same attributes of being a leader, getting people to work together, and time management.

**Her inspiration:** My mom is my #1 role model. She had a masculine job, driving an 18-wheeler truck, but always had her nails polished and a tube of lipstick tucked in her bra. She showed me that you can be and do anything you want, just work hard at it and maintain your femininity. Basketball wise, it was James Worthy. I wanted to be like him with the team depending on me. I didn't get a chance to see a lot of women play when I was initially starting out.

**Leaving a legacy:** On June 13th I will be inducted into the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame, and in September, I will go into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame. It never dawned on me that I would ever be celebrated and revered in these places. I'm very humbled and honored. I feel like so many people helped me to get here.

**Her boss tip:** It always comes down to competence and making sure you are knowledgeable about whatever it is you want to be. You have to educate yourself and find out who's doing the job you want. Find mentors to connect with, even if you don't know them, and reach out. You'd be surprised at how flattered people will be, and the time they will find to help you. Don't be afraid to write down your goals and go after it. I used to say, somebody's got to be the best, so why not me?

**The smartest advice she's ever received:** It would have to be "The 7 P's" that my mom told my sisters and me when we were younger. They are: Proper Prior Preparation Prevents Piss Poor Performance. It means that you have to prepare for what you want to be successful in. It takes about 10,000 hours to become good at anything, and you have to put in the time and work. There have been moments when I've been on stage, and feeling like I'm blanking out, and I knew it was because I wasn't prepared. But when I'm knowledgeable and well versed in something, I can speak confidently on it.

**Her biggest career accomplishment:** My life is sort of in two folds. My basketball career accomplishment would definitely be winning my first Gold Medal with my wonderful teammates at the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta, Georgia. That's my favorite sports moment. Beyond the court, it would probably be having successfully transitioned from basketball to business.

**Her childhood dream:** My initial goal was to be on the news. I wanted to be a weather reporter. I think that was my first exposure to people on television.

**Her secret superpower:** I am mentally stronger than the average bear. It's been my mental toughness that has really helped me to persevere in so many aspects of life. Everyone is capable of being mentally tough, but not everyone has it. Me though? I'm always like, no; I'm never giving up.

**How she relaxes:** Having date night with my husband is probably one of my favorite times. He and I spend so much time with our two young children throughout the week, with homework, cooking and playing games and sports. I also have two older stepdaughters. We are renewing our vows in June for our 10-year anniversary! Time flies when you're having fun.

**Her tech must-haves:** I have to have my Instagram. I'm all about my Pinterest too; it helps me figure out what outfit I'm going to wear. I also really like Spotify and WordFued.

**Her beauty bag:** Absolutely anything made by Bobbi Brown. I also need to have my apple cider vinegar because it helps my skin stay glowy. Ruby Woo by MAC is my favorite lipstick by them.

**Her power accessory:** My jean shirt. Anything with a denim shirt can work. I can throw on that red lipstick, a hat, or a skirt. It's a wardrobe staple.

**Her theme song:** "Run the World (Girls)" by Beyoncé.

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