

# NED COTEN

I grew up in a small country town in Western Australia and had a fairly typical childhood. When I look back I realise that we didn't have a lot, but I always thought I had a great upbringing. I played a lot of sport, did things with my friends and rode my bike everywhere.

A life-changing period occurred for me when I was about 14. I bought a book about the life of Arnold Schwarzenegger, the bodybuilder. I was captivated by two things: the effort & focus he put into everything he did and the goals he had to use sport as a vehicle for the next stage of his life. Even then, he knew that he wanted to become an actor and a politician. He had this vision from a very young age. I was captivated by him and read the book at least 10 times, cover to cover.

I was a good athlete and achieved a lot in sport at a young age. I was fortunate to receive a scholarship to the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) when I left high school. Once there, I saw that despite all my hard work I was no-where near the level of the other players. I had some success and learned a lot, but realised I was never going to make a lot of money playing basketball. Despite this, I continued to work very hard and used my spare time to study, meet people and plan my future.

I had the opportunity to meet a lot of very interesting and successful people. I went out of my way to ensure that I knew who they were and I keep in touch with them. I was intrigued that most of the other athletes, who were more successful than me, didn't do any of the things that I was doing. They wasted the amazing opportunities that sport presented off the court.

As I went on to a very average career as a professional athlete, it became overwhelmingly obvious that most athletes didn't use any of the unique resources available to them. They didn't plan

ahead at all and left their future to chance. I saw some amazing athletes really struggle when they retired and some, who had made a lot of money, ended up bankrupt and struggling. One has lived on the streets of Chicago for the past 20 years!

Because of the lessons and resources I've gained from sport, I've been able to create and operate a number of businesses, continue to give back to my sport and had a great life.

I'm currently working on:

Building *Emprevo*, which helps flexible workers find the work they want when they want it, while delivering better outcomes for employers;

Guiding Basketball Australia through my role as Chair of the Board;

Helping athletes transition from sport to their next successful career with *Athletes Game Plan*; and

Expanding my *self storage business* to increase capacity and level of service.

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