

## Frank Allocco

There I sat, an 8 year old girl, wearing a pair of gym shorts and a T-shirt that probably looked like it was owned by my brother, in a gym filled with about 200 other players. I was very insecure about the fact that I was a total tomboy, but ever since the first speech I heard Coach Frank Allocco say, I realized that what really mattered was my attitude, not my very attractive bowl hair cut. Although the first day of camp didn't go too well, I never knew the life lessons I would learn in the next week. Passion, attitude, and experiences are things that Coach Allocco has taught me that will stay with me for the rest of my life.

Frank Allocco, an elderly man with extremely gray hair, has been in love with basketball ever since he was a kid. He went to Notre Dame University in college, and he is currently the head coach of the De La Salle boys Varsity basketball team. Every summer for 9 weeks he coaches basketball camps, called "Excel" for hundreds of kids and helps them improve every aspect of their game. Ball skills, posting up, shooting techniques, defensive slides.... You name it, he teaches it.

One of Coach Allocco's favorite sayings is: "The biggest room in the world is the room for improvement," and it has been stuck in my mind ever since the words first came out of his mouth. One story he told at his basketball camp was about when he was a teenager. He was really good friends with his basketball teammates, so they were all planning to go to the school dance together. Little did his teammates know, young Frank wasn't going to go to the dance at all. He told them that he would meet them in the front of the school at 7:10 sharp. At about the time that his friends were arriving in front of their school, Allocco snuck behind to the blacktop to work on his jump shot. That way, he figured, while his team was on the dance floor, he was improving his game. This made me think about how he was really willing and determined to get better and it had obviously paid off; he was one of the best players on his team. On the court he was focused and worked hard, and off the court he was always trying to find ways to improve and help others improve, too. Even today, it amazes me just to

watch him, because you can just see how much love and passion he has for this simple game.

It's funny how a person you barely know can affect your perspective on life. I mean, I only see this man one week in a whole year, and here I am, writing my speech about him. One specific scrimmage I remember at Allocco's camp was last year. A boy on my team was extremely talented and played the game with confidence. In fact, he felt so good about himself that when he passed the ball to a teammate and that person got it stolen from them or didn't catch the ball, he got down on that person and rudely asked them how they couldn't catch it. His bad attitude rubbed off on the other teammates and we all played with no passion at all because we felt like we weren't good enough for him.

Coach Allocco witnessed this whole thing, and he felt that he should address the issue. That day towards the end of camp, he spoke truly from his heart, telling all the players that attitude is everything. I could just feel the inspiration spread throughout the room. The next day at camp, Miles started out the game by leading our team with a cheer. The game began and it was like he was a whole different player. If someone made a basket, he gave them a high five. If someone made a mistake, he patted them on the back and told them to keep working hard. And it really did make all the difference. We had fun and played as a team, all thanks to a little inspiration and a contagious good attitude.

All in all, Coach Frank Allocco has really made a difference in my life, and in the lives of many others as well. He has helped me to become a better player, and that has inspired me to always be willing to improve in basketball and in all areas of life by always giving 110%. He has taught me the value of a good attitude, and the affect that it has on other people. He has also taught me to be passionate about whatever I chose to do in life. I feel like knowing Frank Allocco has changed who I am as a person and has really made a difference in my life.