

Relentless: Dreams, Goals and Aspirations

Anthony Ianni
Michigan State University
B.A. Sociology

Autism Advocate
National Motivational Speaker
Author

A little bit about myself!

- Diagnosed with Autism(PDD-NOS) AT
4 YEARS OLD
 - Diagnosis was in 1993. A time period where Autism wasn't known very well and there was no path for guidance or resources

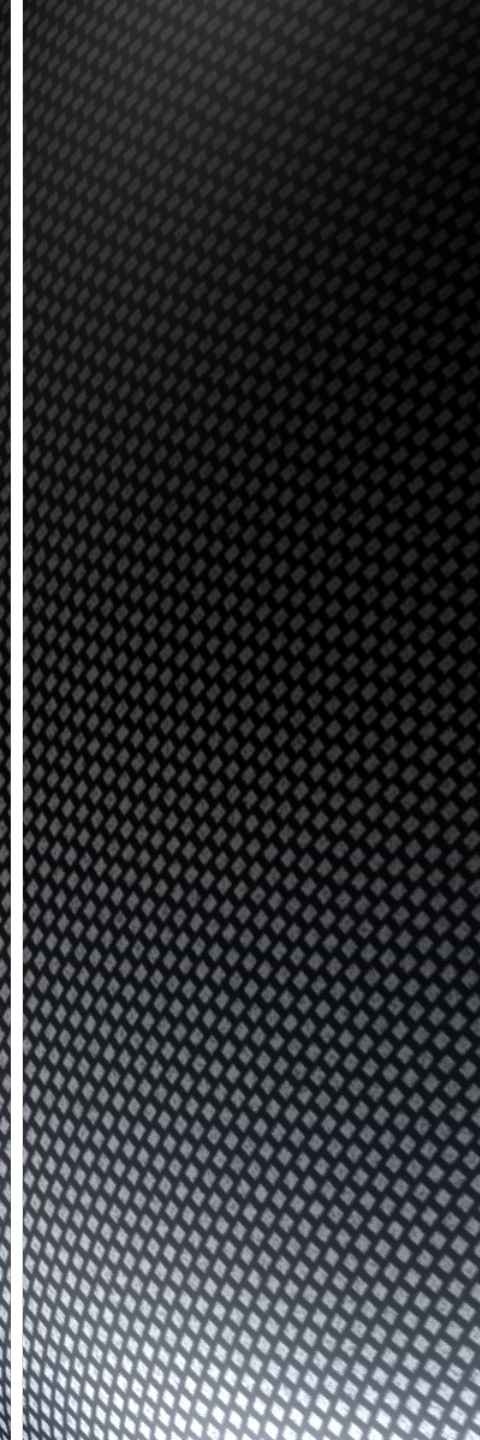
My Future Fate according to Doctors and Professionals

- Would barley graduate from High School
- Never graduate or attend college
- Wouldn't be an athlete
- I would likely end up in a group institution with other individuals like myself

The Results.....



- Graduated from Okemos High School in 2007
- Earned a Full Basketball Scholarship at Grand Valley State University
- After things didn't work out for me at GVSU, I decided to transfer to fulfill my life long dream

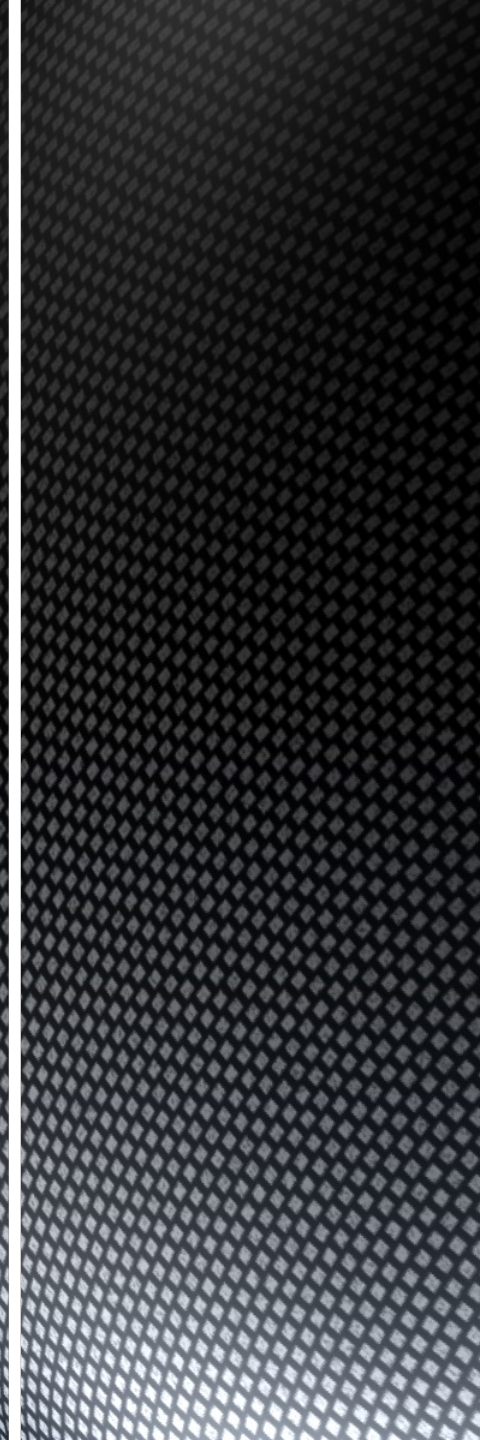


MICHIGAN STATE SPARTANS!!!!

Go Green!!!



I'M THE FIRST DIVISION 1
COLLEGE BASKETBALL PLAYER
IN NCAA HISTORY WITH AN
AUTISM DIAGNOSIS



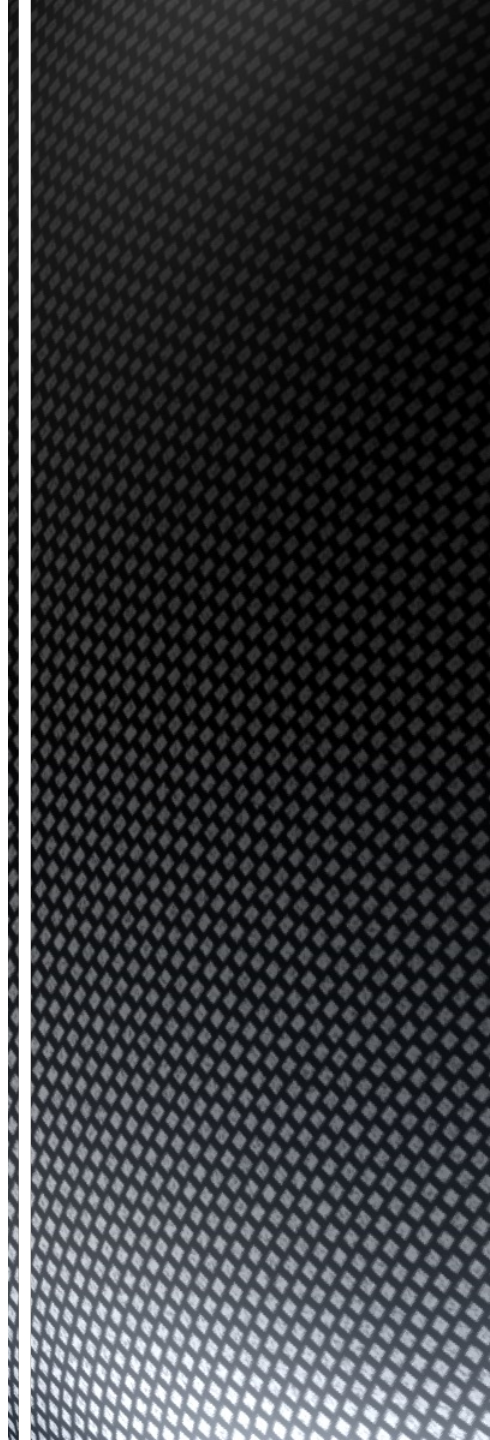


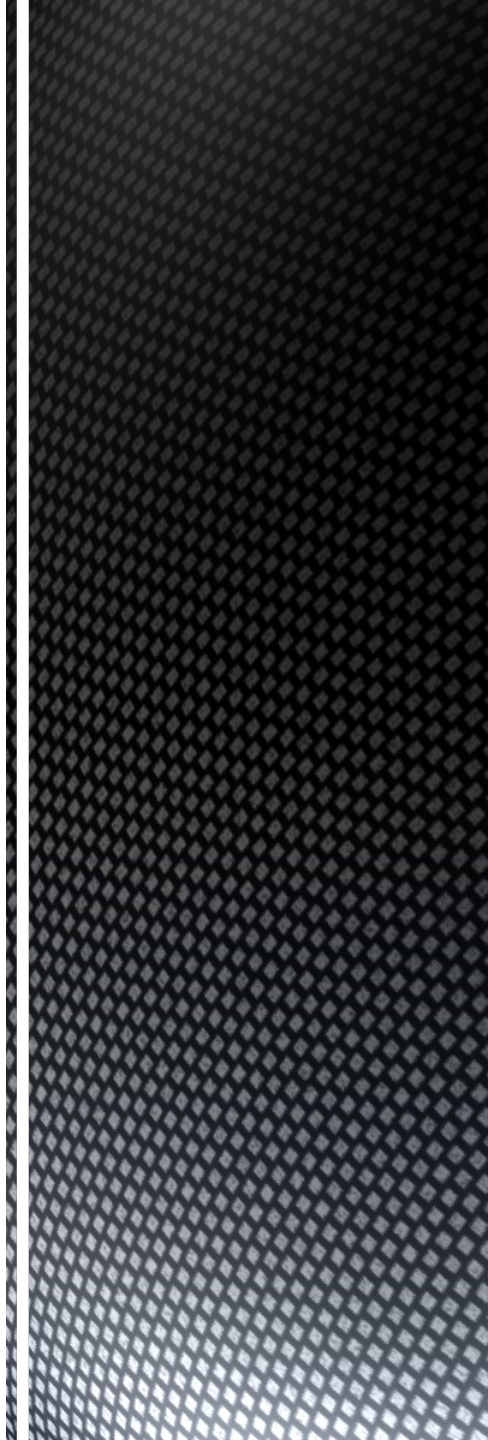
How did I transition in life with autism???

3 Keys to be Successful in Life

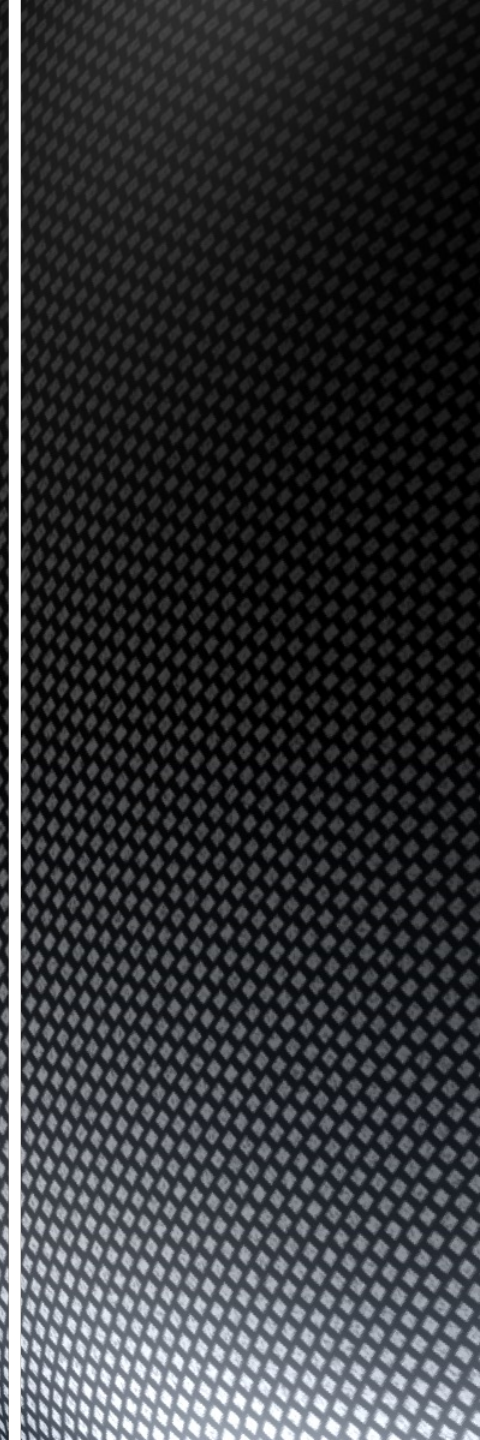


What are your Why's in life??????

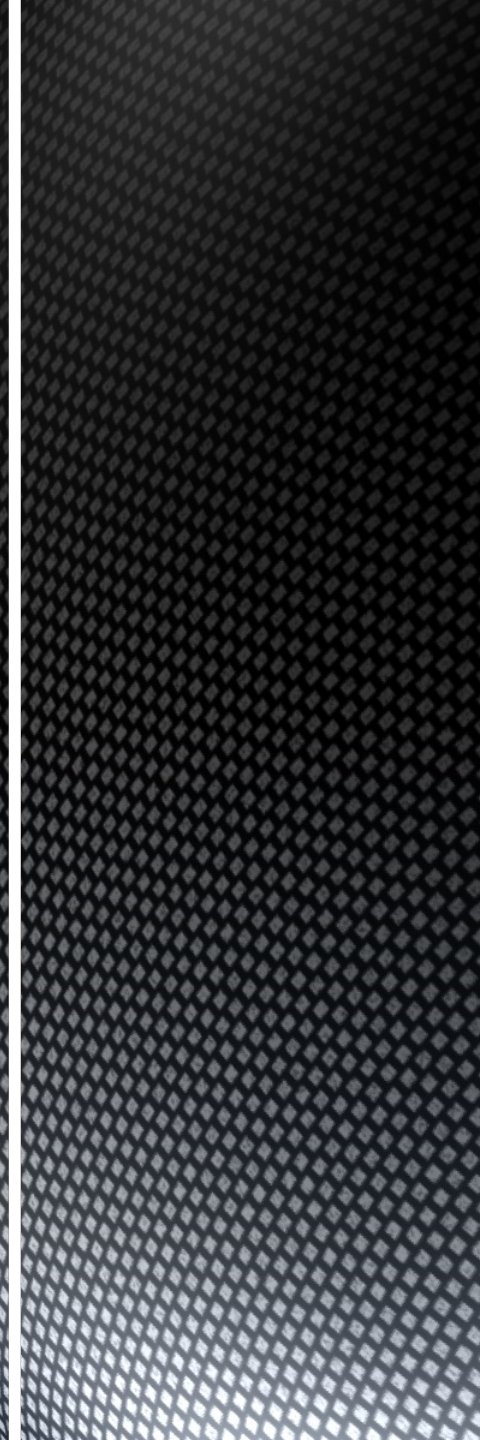




“The harder you work, the more you earn!”
-Greg Ianni



Cherish every moment, everyday
with your friends!



A green rectangular sign with rounded corners, tilted upwards from left to right. The word "Support" is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font across the center of the sign. The sign is supported by two grey poles. The background is a bright blue sky with a few wispy white clouds and a bright sun flare in the upper right corner.

Support

Family!



What did my parents do for me to assure a smooth transition in schools???

- They spent a great deal of energy finding the right pre-school environment when we moved to Michigan in summer 1993. I was in a center-based pre-school in Athens Ohio and that certainly did not give very good results for him to be successful.
- We landed in a Developmental Pre-school Lab in Haslett Michigan that had a very traditional agenda each day so that he knew his routine and had fewer meltdowns because of transition time from one activity to another.

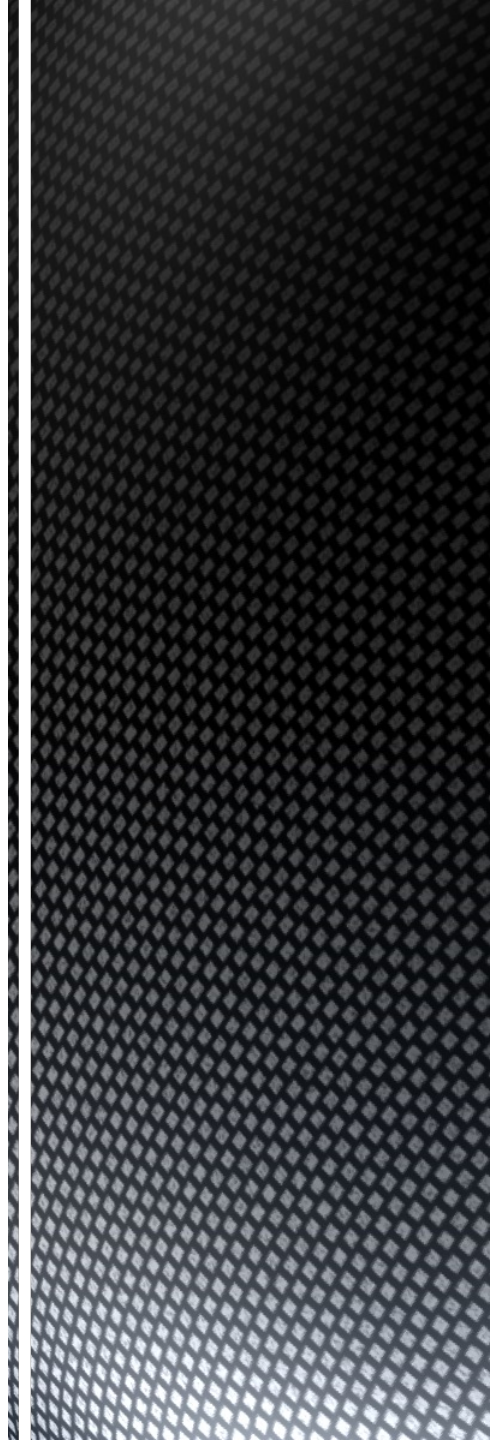
- When we transitioned to kindergarten in the Okemos Public Schools, we were able to meet prior to the start of school to put a team together to get Anthony tested to see what services he would receive through the school system. This is when we had the initial IEP that the consultants would let us know that he would not be an athlete, not graduate from high school and could be placed in a group home.
- Near the end of the school year, each grade, my parents and teacher transitioned me to the next grade with my next teacher and with my desk in the place that I would be seated at the start of the next school year. My parapro would take me to the next grade every day for a visit and a period of time so I could acclimate myself to the space and teacher that I would be assigned to in the fall. Every teacher in grades K-12 was hand-picked by the teacher consultant and my Mom and the school principal, based on the classroom management philosophy of that teacher.
- The great thing about a three-year re-evaluation IEP was that it fell on his transition years or prior (Regular IEP'S were every year).

- My parents decided at my three year IEP moving to 6th grade, (new building grades 6-8; Elementary was K-5 grades) that I would not be retaining my one on one parapro. I would be assigned a special education teacher consultant resource teacher and her room would be my safe place if I needed a “time out”. The hardest part for our students is that they are trying to hard all day long to be neurotypical that sometimes they need a place where they can just be neurodiversity and chill out safely!

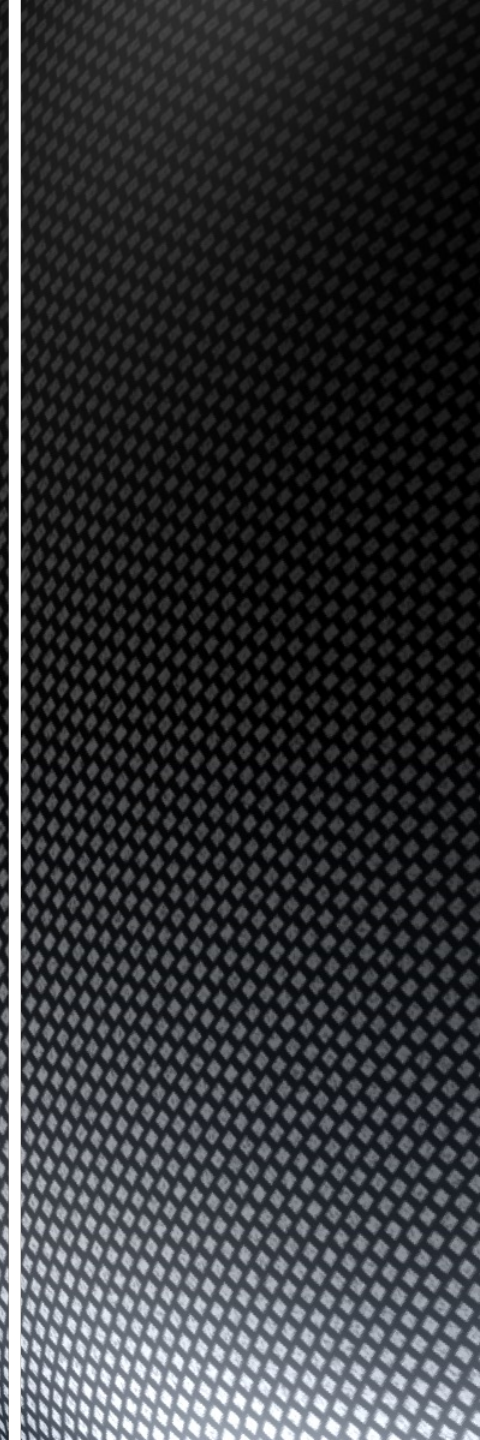
- • The transition to High School provided some incredibly difficult social situations. The high school was a merging of two large middle schools and Anthony struggled with the language and social piece of high school. I had an amazing resource teacher consultant (Mrs. Shafer) that provided me with the confidence to thrive at OHS.

- • The final transition meeting in high school was to take my IEP and work it in to a 504 document which is what colleges and universities accept as the legal working document of students with disabilities. We also met with the academic support team at Grand Valley and Michigan State to talk about the plan for my transition in to those universities. The Director of each Disability Center was incredibly cooperative and that made the transition so much easier.

NO REGRETS IN LIFE!!!



Teachers!!!



QUESTION



My Autism

- I'm very Black and White
- I have a difficult time understanding nouns, verbs, idioms, jokes and sarcasm
- Had a difficult time with Loud Noises. Sports Environments were too much of an overload for me. I could barely attend MSU football & basketball games as a young kid because of the crowd noise, buzzer and PA Announcer in the stadiums/arenas
- Fire Drills and Tornado Drills in School

How did I overcome these overloads?

- My Teachers
- They followed my IEP Plans every year
- If something worked, they stuck to it
- If something didn't work, they would work with my family to see what would.
- It takes a team effort!!

Some plans used from my IEP!

- Giving me a heads up on Fire drill Days
- Timeouts/Breaks in the Hallway during if I ever got stressed or felt an outburst coming
- Test Accommodations
 - Extended Time on my Test
 - Reader
 - Took my test in a separate room

Speech Therapy

- Twice a week from Kindergarten to Junior Year
- Helped me by playing competitive Games during my K-5 Years
 - Candyland
 - Mousetrap
 - Trouble
 - Jumanji
 - Chutes & Ladders
- Rules: After you roll the dice, you can't move your game piece until you've gotten the right noun, verb, or idiom question right
- When I got older it was more worksheets and memory cards rather than board games

Coping Mechanisms

- Go to the gym and shoot hoops for over 2 hours.
- Go for a walk in my neighborhood
- Go workout/lift weights
- Listen to different kinds of music.
- Sit in silence in my room
- Sit outside and listen to the sounds around me

Relax And Take it Easy!



Teachers will always continue to teach!

- The biggest thing to overcome with transition, is teaching the student to advocate for themselves. We can help them, but in the end, they know their struggles and know when they need to ask for help.

“Utilize your resources! If you use every resource offered or given to you, you will graduate college in 4-5 years”

-Dr. Damon Arnold

Academic Advisor

Louisiana State University





COACH



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-SA](#)



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-SA](#)

How my Coaches help me transition!

- Walk through drills and plays with me
 - Stand off to the side with my coach & watch the drill take place, then partake in the drill
 - We repeated this same process with plays and play calls too.
- They encouraged me to never stop asking questions if I was ever confused with something
- They got to know me and what made me click and what didn't.
- It took a lot of time, effort, and energy on both their part and mine to make it work

Who is Tom Izzo??



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND](#)

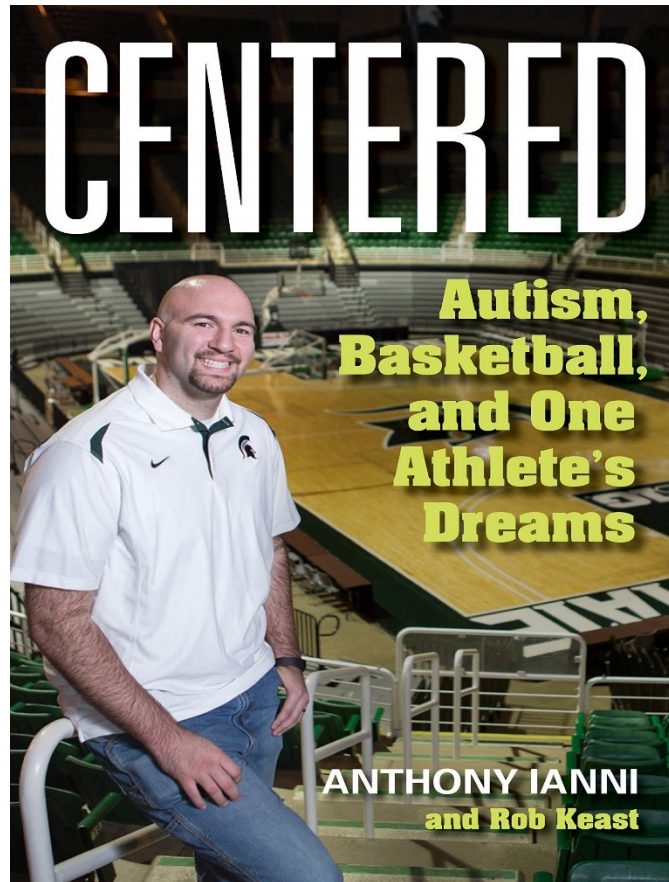
My Relationship with Coach Izzo



“Just because you have Autism, doesn’t mean I’m going to treat you any differently.”



Centered: Autism, Basketball and One Athlete's Dreams



Available on Amazon, iupress.com,
Goodreads, Barnes & Noble, and Schuler
Books

Merchandise



Available at nudgeprinting.com

Be Relentless in Life!!!

4.41.

“At the end of the day, we don’t dream our lives. At the end of the day.....WE LIVE THEM!

-Anthony Ianni



- Please don't hesitate to ask me any kind of question.
- NO QUESTION IS TOO PERSONAL!