

# Just Lin, Baby! 10 Lessons Jeremy Lin Can Teach Us Before We Go To Work Monday Morning



Image by Getty Images via @daylife

Lin-sanity has swept up the NBA over the last week. Now it seems like the phenomenon has gone worldwide.

Friday's 38 point performance by Harvard grad Jeremy Lin for the New York Knicks against the LA Lakers was his greatest performance yet as a starter, since he burst on to the scene and propelled the team to 4 straight wins.

Lin now has over 200,000 followers on Twitter. He's got over 800,000 on Weibo – including 200,000 new ones in the 24 hour period after beating the Lakers.



Lin Gives an Assist to NBA in China

But there's more to this story than basketball. This isn't just a modern-day, real-life version of the Hoosiers movie. The Jeremy Lin story is incredibly popular because we can all see a little bit of ourselves in this man's struggles and now successes.

What can all of us learn from this young man — and how can we apply these same lessons to our own lives when we go back to work on Monday morning?

**1. Believe in yourself when no one else does.** Lin's only the 3rd graduate from Harvard to make it to the NBA. He's also one of only a handful of Asian-Americans to make it. He was sent by the Knicks to play for their D-League team 3 weeks ago in Erie, PA. He'd already been cut by two other NBA teams before joining the Knicks this year. You've got to believe in yourself, even when no one else does.

**2. Seize the opportunity when it comes up.** Lin got to start for the Knicks because they had to start him. They had too many injuries. Baron Davis was gone. The other point guards were out. Carmelo Anthony was injured.

Amare Stoudemire had to leave the team because of a family death. Lin could have squandered the opportunity and we would have never have noticed. But he made the most of it. You never know when opportunities are going to arise in life. Often, they're when you least expect them. Make the most of them. Don't fritter them away.

**3. Your family will always be there for you, so be there for them.** It wasn't until a few days ago that Lin got his contract guaranteed by the Knicks for the rest of the season. Before that, he could have been cut at any time. He had to sleep on his brother's couch on the Lower East Side to get by. His family always believed in him and picked him up when he could have gotten down on himself. That made him continue to believe. If you want your family to believe in you like that, you've got to be there for them too when they need it.

**4. Find the system that works for your style.** Lin isn't [Michael Jordan](#) or [Kobe Bryant](#). He's not a pure scorer. He's a passer and distributor – who can also score very well. It didn't work for him in Golden State or Houston – where he was before landing at the Knicks. But Mike D'Antoni's system at the Knicks has been perfect for him to show off his strengths. You've got to do your best to understand what your strengths are and then ensure that you're in a system (a job or organization or industry) that is a good fit for those strengths. Otherwise, people overlook the talents you bring to the table.

**5. Don't overlook talent that might exist around you today on your team.** You probably manage people at your own company today. Are you sure you don't have a Jeremy Lin living among you now? How do you know that "Mike" couldn't do amazing things if you gave him a new project to run with? How do you know "Sarah" isn't the right person to take the open job in London that you've been talking over with your colleagues? We put people around us in boxes. He's from Harvard. He's Asian-American. Not sure he can play. How many assumptions have you made about talent around you? Don't be like the General Managers in Golden State and Houston, and let talent slip through your fingers. With all their money, scouts, and testing, they didn't have a clue what they had in their hands. Do you know what your people (or even yourself) is really capable of? Take off the blinders of assumptions you wear when you look at the world.

**6. People will love you for being an original, not trying to be someone else.** You've got to be you. You can't be some 2nd rate copy of Michael Jordan. There will never be another Michael Jordan. Just be Jeremy Lin — yourself. Whatever that is. That doesn't mean you don't work hard — it just means you find what you're good at and do it. Fans will love you for being you, just like they love Jeremy Lin. Judy Garland said it best:

*"Always be a first-rate version of yourself, instead of a second-rate version of somebody else."*

**7. Stay humble.** If you one day are lucky enough to have newspapers want to put you on the cover in order to sell more, don't let it get to your head. It's been remarkable watching how humble Lin remains through all this media frenzy. It makes his teammates and fans love him that much more.

**8. When you make others around you look good, they will love you forever.** I didn't know how good Tyson Chandler was, until I saw him playing with Jeremy Lin. Lin has set Chandler up many times over the last week for easy dunks because he drew the defense and then passed the ball. That's partly why the Knicks are playing so well. They are all working harder to share the ball with others. And it's beautiful to watch. And when the media swarms Lin, he tells them how good his teammates are. Do the same with your peers and reports.

**9. Never forget about the importance of luck or fate in life.** Some people believe in God, some in destiny, some in luck. Whatever you believe in, be grateful for it.

**10. Work your butt off.** Lin couldn't have seized his opportunity if he hadn't worked like crazy for years perfecting his skills. There are no short cuts to hard work. Success is a by product of that. If you've got a Tiger Mom who's always pushed you to work hard, great. If not, let your conscience be your own Tiger Mom! Get up early, stay up late. Nobody gave Lin any free passes. Why should you get any? You can only control what you control and that means you've got to work harder than anyone else you know.

I hope the Lin-sanity continues. And I hope we all can apply these lessons to our own work and family life.

There's a great line from a [New York Times](#) article on Lin and his faith which is worth it for all of us to remember:

*"suffering produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us."*