

FRANK: Overcoming Adversity and Rebounding from Workplace Bullying

When Frank's career and confidence were destroyed by a false accusation, he had to rebuild his personal brand, image, and professional narrative to rediscover the love of the game.

The Context

When Frank got the chance to coach men's basketball at a prestigious college, he was overjoyed. Two years in, his team was doing well, but he had to cut a few players, angering several students and parents who protested that he was picking favorites. Backlash evolved into allegations that his coaching style was antagonistic and inappropriate. Frank was put under investigation and sent to take classes for anger management. Ultimately, the allegations were dismissed, and university administration reassured him that if he stayed quiet, they would support him and clear his name. After enduring four years of negative press in the college paper, workplace bullying by colleagues, and undermining behavior from his coaching staff, Frank resigned from his position and left college athletics altogether.

The Problem

Leaving a field he had once cherished, Frank was left with a tarnished reputation, shattered self-confidence, and an uncertain career path. He had to constantly remind himself he'd done nothing to deserve this.

Even though many players and supporters had championed his coaching acumen and the charges against him were dismissed twice, the workplace mobbing he had endured had taken a toll on Frank's health, family, and professional outlook. He felt tense and discouraged. Moreover, he suffered from a fractured brand online; whenever anyone Googled his name, the results all pointed to the unfavorable media attention surrounding his tenure at the university.

The Solution

Lida's proposed strategy to rebuild Frank's outlook, confidence, and reputation was twofold. First, they would tackle the inner critic plaguing Frank and reignite his drive to pursue his goals. Second, Lida would focus on repairing his online reputation on social media. Together, this two-pronged approach would restore Frank's ability to envision and pursue his goals and open new pathways to rebuild his future.

The Process

Lida and Frank discussed what the next chapter could look like and what his goals and aspirations were. Frank spoke about coaching, mentoring, and his passion for inspiring young adults.

To work through his inner personal critic and deal with the external public perception, Frank completed a rigorous and emotional coaching regimen in which he worked on separating fact from gossip—reminding himself that he had done nothing wrong and quieting his regrets over allowing the administration to silence him.

Next, Frank and Lida focused on online reputation repair through social media. Frank had no online presence to counteract the negative press littering the internet besides a dormant LinkedIn profile. To enable Frank to reach the young adults he wanted to work with, he and Lida set up an Instagram account. Using a carefully crafted approach, he started building a personal. He retooled his LinkedIn profile to more effectively communicate his true values of servant leadership and mentorship of young adults and athletes.

He began blogging, interacting with like-minded leaders, and posting personal messages about servant leadership, resiliency, and sportsmanship. Students and parents who had revered him as a coach and professionals who were inspired by his message began reaching out to him again.

As Frank started pushing down the negative online searches, he continued to explore, articulate, and act in accordance with his personal values, which reignited his spirit and his love of coaching.

The Results

When another coaching job opened up at a nearby university, Frank was ready to return to a career that had once burned him. He no longer felt downtrodden and abandoned; now, he was able to effectively tell his story from a place of competency and passion. Frank returned to coaching at a new position, where his work has been value-driven and encouraging.

Frank continues to blog and use Instagram to build his brand. He now stands tall and proud and looks forward to making a lasting impact in the lives of college athletes for the rest of his career.