

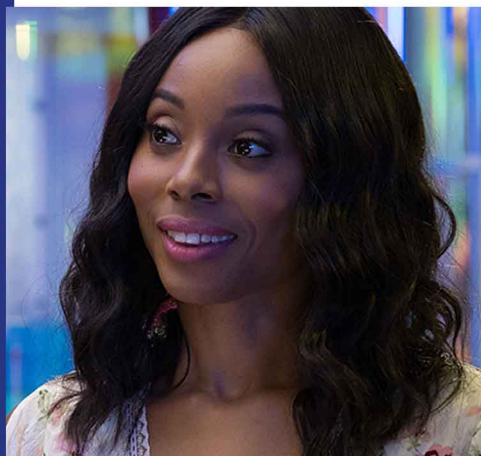
UNCLE DREW

Discussion Guide

Introduction

After draining his life savings to enter a team in the Rucker Classic street ball tournament in Harlem, Dax is dealt a series of unfortunate setbacks, including losing his team to his longtime rival. Desperate to win the tournament and the cash prize, Dax stumbles upon the man, the myth, the legend, Uncle Drew, and convinces him to return to the court one more time. The two men embark on a road trip to round up Drew's old basketball squad and prove that a group of septuagenarians can still win the big one.

Like all good comedies, *Uncle Drew* is full of humor and heart. Much of its heart consists of themes of family, friendship, humility, and the power of stories. Below are a series of conversation starters to share after watching *Uncle Drew*.





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The Family We Make

The central character of *Uncle Drew*, Dax, is chasing after something. He's pursuing a street ball championship, but his desire is for something deeper. He wants a family, to be surrounded by people that love him and who he can love in return. Abandoned at an early age and raised in the foster system, his basketball teams are the closest thing to a family that he has.

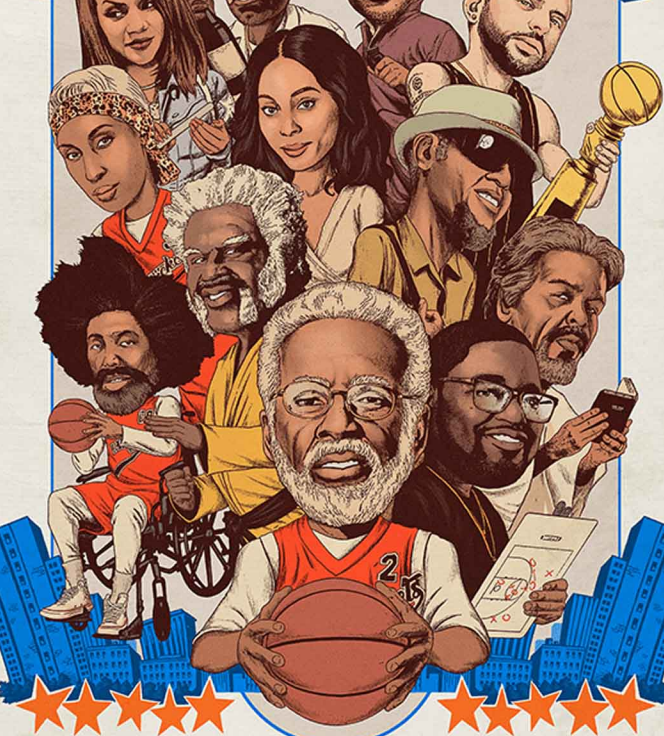
Dax's pursuit reveals a universal truth. We all crave family. Some of us are lucky enough to have hit the birth lottery, that is, we were born into loving, caring, and supportive families. Others of us, like Dax, face greater challenges in life and are forced to make a family of our own. In some cases, the families we choose can be healthier than the families into which we are born. Whether we surround ourselves with our birth families or friends that are like family, another truth remains, we can't go far in life without a good team around us.

Questions for Consideration

1. Who is your family? Are there people outside of your birth family that are closer to you than your relatives? If so, who are they and how did those relationships develop?
2. Where have you seen a team (family and friends) help turn someone's life around?

KYRIE IRVING LIL REL HOWERY SHAQUILLE O'NEAL CHRIS WEBBER REGGIE MILLER NATE ROBINSON LISA LESLIE ERICA ASH JB SMOOVE MIKE EPPS TIFFANY HADDISH NICK KROLL

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RESPECT YOUR ELDERS.

KYRIE IRVING IS
UNCLE DREW

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The Story of Our Lives

We all live by stories, whether we know it or not. Stories define our lives. When we meet someone new, we tell them a series of stories: who our parents are, where we grew up, where we went to school, what we do for work, and the list goes on. At different points in our life, one story might dominate all others: I just graduated, I just got married, a parent just died. These are all natural experiences in life; however, we can't let one story dominate our narrative. We must embrace *all* the ups and downs of life, not letting one win or loss have too much control over us.

In *Uncle Drew*, Dax's story is dominated by one event, a blocked shot in a high school basketball game. This traumatic experience blinds him to all the good in his life. In fact, until that moment, he was a really good player that other kids wanted on their teams. That blocked shot becomes his sole source of motivation to win the Rucker Park Championship (not camaraderie, the love of the game, etc.). While Dax has a chance to re-write that narrative, it's the friendships and connections with his players—and the journey they take together—that provide him with the story that will truly re-shape his life moving forward.

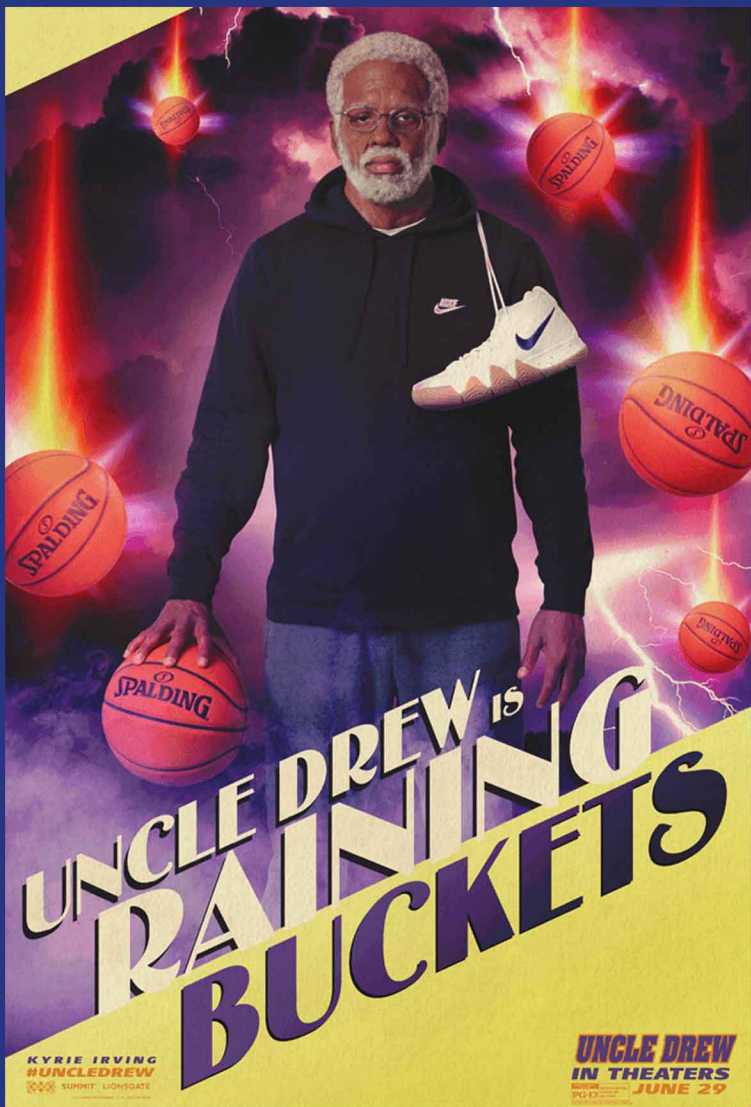
Questions for Consideration

1. What is the story—or what are the stories—of your life? Is there one event that dominates the narrative? If so, what is it and why?
2. Have you ever seen someone close to you re-write the story of their life?



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Ain't Too Proud

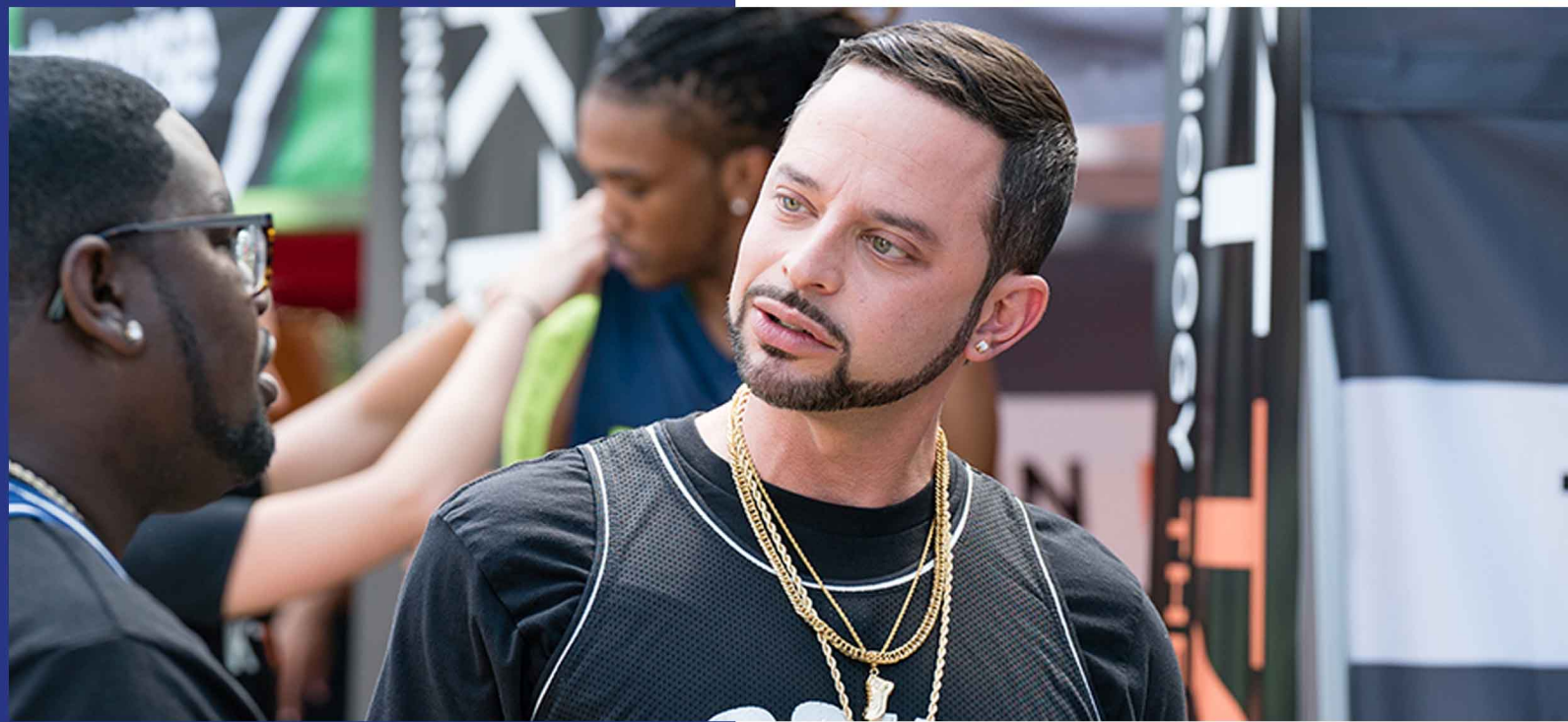
Uncle Drew walked away from a stellar street ball career and a close-knit team because he made a mistake. He traded celebrity and success for obscurity and rumors, not simply because he made that mistake, but because he was too proud to own up to it and apologize to the friend that he had hurt in the process.

We *all* mess up. We say things we don't mean. We do things we know we shouldn't. We leave undone good things we know we should do or leave unspoken kind words that could brighten someone's day. The real problem is not in the mistakes we make, but in what we often do *after* we make them. After all, to err is human. To wallow in our errors...well...that's human too.

Had Uncle Drew apologized for his mistake, who knows what level of fame he and his teammates could have reached. If we learn from our mistakes and are quick to correct or atone for them, who knows how great we can be.

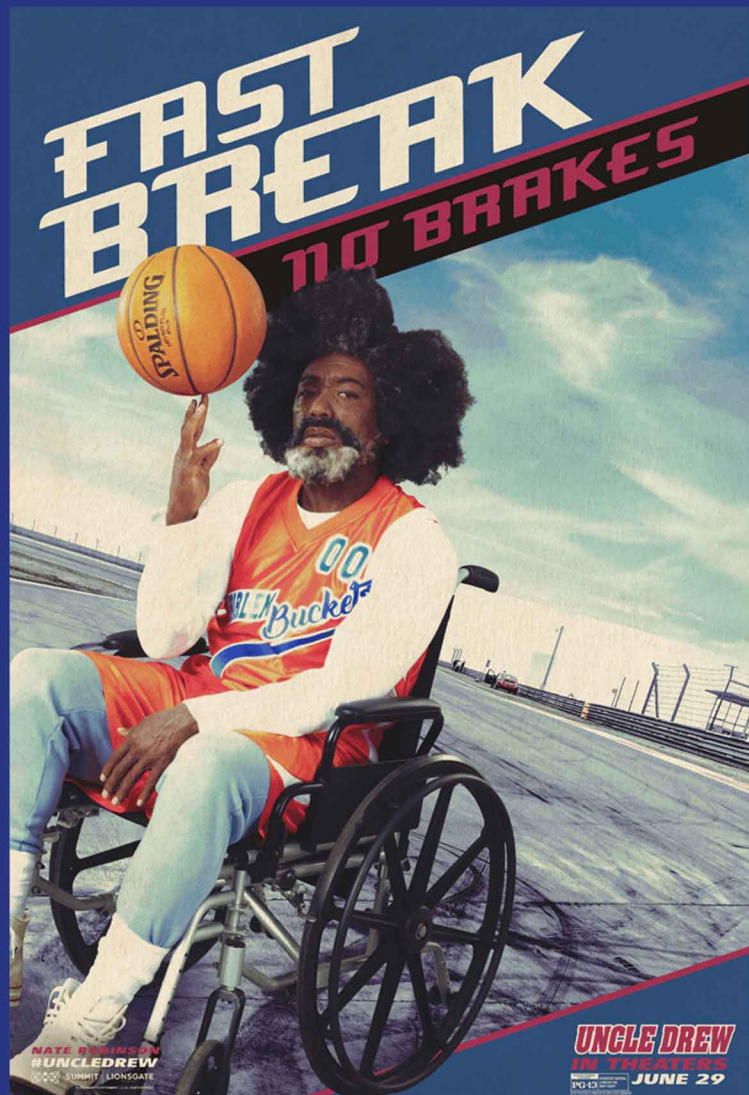
Questions for Consideration

1. Talk about a time when you made an innocent mistake much, much worse. What was the mistake, how did you make it worse, and were you able to get out of that rut?
2. Have you ever seen someone learn from a major mistake? How did their life improve from those new lessons?



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A Fine Line

When Uncle Drew finally steps back on the court, he goes head-to-head with a cocky, much younger player. His opponent has great ball handling skills, but is weaker in other areas of the game. Uncle Drew sees this, instantly calls him out on it, and exploits those weaknesses during their matchup. He tells his younger opponent, "There's a fine line between confidence and arrogance."

In our highly, social media mediated world, these are important words of wisdom. We may be genuinely talented and proud of our accomplishments and share them online for friends and family to share in our joy. Others of us might use social media to put forward a false front, to present a version of our lives that is free of conflict or failure. In either event, these can easily turn into boasting and bragging. We must be careful that our confidence does not become arrogance.

Confidence is fuel for our work, arrogance is poison. Confidence recognizes that the combination of hard work and teamwork can meet any challenge. Arrogance assumes that I can do it all, no matter what, with or without anyone's help.

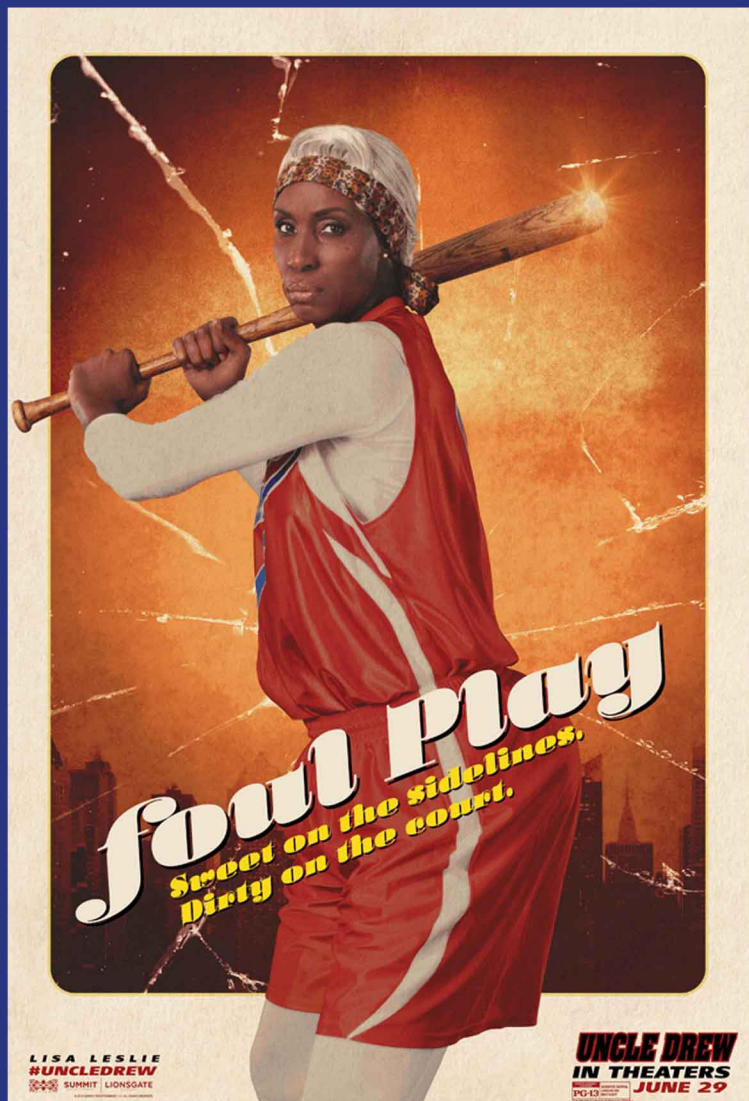
Questions for Consideration

1. Talk about a time when you felt confident, but experienced failure. What happened? What did you learn?
2. Where have you seen arrogance poison an individual or a relationship?



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We All Need Carrots

The carrot and the stick. Honey and vinegar. These age-old metaphors are often used to describe the tension between rewards and punishment and the proper source of motivation to reach a desired outcome. Do you offer the promise of a reward (the carrot) or threaten punishment for failure (the stick).

There is a tension between Dax and his elderly players. He is the victim of a "stick mentality." He is driven by fear and panic. You can see his thoughts on his face: "What happens if I don't win" or "I can't let Mookie embarrass me again." On the other hand, Uncle Drew and his teammates are motivated by the carrot. They look forward to the thrill of competition and the joy of victory. Being back on the court breathes new life into their old bones. Most of the time, the game just stresses Dax out.

At various points in our lives, we will need to rely on diverse motivations. A healthy fear of failure or consequences can be positive. However, we often need to cast carrots out before us, big and small rewards for a life well lived and a job well done.

Questions for Consideration

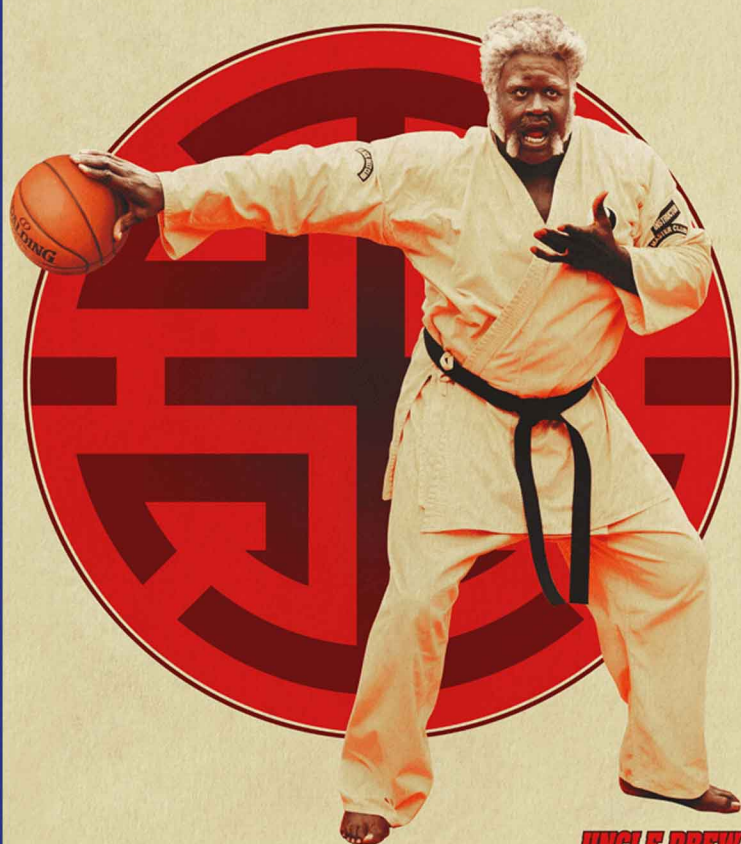
1. What are your carrots? In other words, what are the rewards for the goals you have set before you?
2. When and where have you seen others collapse under a "stick mentality" or an overwhelming fear of failure?



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DON'T MESS WITH THE MASTER OF DUNK FU



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The Power of Sports

Uncle Drew once again reveals the power of sports, but it's a double-edged sword. Sports can divide us *and* bring us together, often at the same time. It can bring out the worst in us or inspire us to be the best that we can be. We see this on full display in the film as Mookie is a caricature of all that is bad in sports like greed, poor sportsmanship, and deceitfulness. On the other hand, Uncle Drew and his teammates represent the positive aspects of sports, teamwork, friendship, and joy. We see this tension inside Dax as well: sports are a source of anxiety for him (the blocked shot), but also provide him with a surrogate family and a greater sense of purpose.

To tap into the goodness of sports, we need to remember many of the themes that we've already discussed so far, including the importance of family, humility, teamwork, and confidence over arrogance. Keeping our focus on these, we can use sports to call us to be better, both as individuals and communities.

Questions for Consideration

1. Have you ever experienced the unifying experience of sport? If so, describe the event.
2. When have you seen someone's competitive drive ruin what should have otherwise been a fun experience?