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Learning.

FEATURE ARTICLE

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Failure is key.

Every baseball player, no matter their age or ability, has one thing in common. They know how to fail. The highest batting average in the MLB this past season went to Trea Turner, the second basemen for the Los Angeles Dodgers. He finished his season with an imposing .328 BA. That means Trea Turner, the most consistent batter in the MLB this past season, failed in nearly 70% of his at-bats.

I think this is a powerful reminder for all of us. Failure is not a bad thing. It's an inevitable part of learning and improving. In any endeavor, we will experience failure, as surely as a professional baseball player will record an out while chasing the batting title.

Having spent the majority of my childhood (and collegiate career) playing baseball, there are 3 key lessons I've taken with me from the diamond into my professional career:

1. Failure is guaranteed.

Do dogs bark? Is water wet? Does a 1-legged duck swim in a circle? No matter how hard we try, some failure is inevitable. Human beings are far from perfect, and those of us who are willing to accept this fact can learn from our failures and use them to our advantage. Failing is really just learning how not to do something.

2. Perfection is unattainable.

This may be the single strongest lesson instilled in every ball player. Baseball is a game of sporadic opportunity. Every pitch, every situation, is 100% unique and not a single athlete in the history of sports has ever been perfect. While striving for perfection is a valuable training tool, it's important to keep our expectations more realistic come game time.

3. How you respond means everything.

Recognizing the inevitability of failure is the first step in responding to it. Whether you're an athlete or a business professional, how you respond to failure is your differentiator. Addressing our shortcomings in a mature and quantitative way is how we turn failures into true learning opportunities.

I challenge you to start facing your failures with optimism, not disappointment. Nobody has ever changed the world without pushing the envelope and failing from time to time. Next time you make that mistake at work, just remember, you're batting .900 in your job and that blows Trea Turner out of the water.

An opportunity to get better.

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