

Steeled by Adversity

We've been working behind the scenes at developing a new management course – the value of failure ©. Josh Bell will be one of those successes. In each of our lives we all come to thousands – perhaps millions of decision points. It's at those moments when we define what is next. I can drive faster because I want to get home sooner but that increases my risk for an accident; I can quit my diet and quit exercising because it's easier to keep enjoying those double stuffs and jelly belly's and my favorite TV show is on but my health is going to suffer; I can stop helping everyone because one individual was a jerk to me and thus that person has defined what is next for me or I can help this one person, child, co-worker, customer or stranger because at that moment it will make a difference to that one person; I can become so engrossed in social media that those comments and those narrow minded responses will dampen my spirit or I can use social media to be encouraging and positive to my friends and acquaintances; I can decide to play it safe on the sidelines or I can get actively engaged in the game, win or lose. It's your decision.

Josh Bell is currently the star of the Pittsburgh Pirates and a favorite throughout all of the major leagues. He's a gifted athlete, a standout amongst hundreds of exceptional athletes, one might say he's shaping up to have one of the best years of anyone in the majors. It's a nice place to be and he certainly deserves the accolades. But it's so easy in our instant gratification lives to overlook what it took to really get there. Just last year Josh was being speared in the media as a poor selection by Clint Hurdle and the rest of the coaches and owners. At some point in that time Josh came to a decision point. Maybe I am not as good as I think I am or..... I can stop, reevaluate where I am and get some help on how to correct it. What we are witnessing now is the result of hundreds of hours of excellent coaching and guidance – and the willingness of one individual who made a personal decision – listen to the critics – from the cheap seats – or - listen to that one small voice within and know that you yourself are responsible for what happens next. He's come to simplify things, not to try too many things - just the right things. And there, buried in his process is an element of faith. He doesn't elaborate much, just that prayer is an important part of his process, its core to where he is. It's June. Let's wish Josh and the rest of this seemingly new team continued success and the commitment to understand our decisions and the value of failure.

I'm reminded of three recent events I've had the opportunity to witness where good decisions are making a difference. All have core elements - science, analytics, discipline, simplicity and process. Adelphoi Village where an organization has really discovered how to help kids at risk, many times because of circumstances beyond their control, where adults who are making a difference encourage kids with good decisions and discipline that will make small steps towards great long-term success. Provident Charter School where a public school, dedicated to helping mostly dyslexic children from grades 2 through grade 6, is teaching precious little kids that someone cares, giving them hope, and that despite some previously misunderstood perceptions of them, that there are adults besides their parents who have made a decision that they are good, important and valued. Finally, a 5 year old who was scared to play with and against other kids his own age. Scared of getting knocked down, and making a mistake. Spent a year on the sidelines, too fearful to get on the field and compete. The decision of encouragement from his parents and other parents, this year he decided that it wasn't so bad to get knocked down and that it was ok to make a mistake. Simple decisions from people who care with lasting impact for each of these kids going forward.

I'm reminded of one of my favorite commencement speeches and the value of learning through failure. Admiral William H. McRaven captures the gist of how you can make a difference – through your decisions - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pxBQLFLei70/>

I wish you well,

Dave