

A BOOK FOR EVERY BALLPLAYER

AND THE PARENTS WHO DRIVE THEM



TEN AT-BATS. THREE HITS. **SEVEN OUTS.**

THE OTHER SEVEN.

*What the greatest players who ever lived do with failure,
and how you can do it too.*

COACH JORDAN

D1 ALL-AMERICAN · 6 YEARS PRO · TRIPLE-A



MINDSET WITH JORDAN

THE OTHER *Seven.*

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This book is about mental skills for competition. It's coaching, not therapy or medical advice. If your child is struggling with anxiety, depression or anything that goes beyond the game, please talk to your pediatrician or a licensed professional.

mindsetwithjordan.com

THE LINEUP

NINE INNINGS.

Pre

Before the first pitch. How to read this book.

1st

The math of failure. What seven out of ten really means.

2nd

Pressure and the body. Why your heart pounds, and what to do with it.

3rd

The voice in your head. What you say to yourself between pitches.

4th

Between pitches. Routines, and letting go of the last one.

5th

Where confidence comes from. It isn't a mood.

6th

Focus. What elite eyes really do.

7th

Slumps and streaks. The luck in every box score.

8th

The long game. Late bloomers and the paths that get there.

9th

The people around you. For parents, mostly.

XI

Extra innings. Why it has to be a little every day.

EVERY INNING HAS

The story. A real moment from a great player. **The film.** What the research found, in plain words. **Myth vs. data.** Something baseball believes that the evidence doesn't back up. **Clubhouse voices.** Short, verified quotes. **Try it tonight.** One five-minute rep before bed. **For parents.** One page for the grown-ups.

BEFORE THE FIRST PITCH

READ THIS *first.*

If you play baseball long enough, you're going to make a lot of outs. Thousands of them. I did. Every great hitter who ever lived did too.

I played D1 at Pepperdine, got drafted in the 25th round, and played six years of professional baseball, all the way to Triple-A. Along the way I had hitting coaches, throwing programs, strength coaches and video of every swing I ever took. But nobody ever sat me down and taught me what to do with the outs. I figured it out the hard way, mostly by doing it wrong first.

Here's the thing nobody says out loud: in this game, failing is normal. A hitter who gets a hit three times out of ten is doing great. That means the other seven times, he walks back to the dugout. What he does on that walk, and in the next thirty seconds, and the next at-bat, is a skill. You can get better at it the same way you get better at hitting a curveball.

That's what this book is about. The other seven.

How this book works

It's laid out like a ballgame. Nine innings, plus extras. You can read it straight through, or one inning a night, or one a week. Every inning ends with something called **Try it tonight:** one small thing to do before bed. Don't skip those. Reading about the mental game is like reading about a swing. It only gets better when you actually do it.

Everything in here is real. Every player story happened, and every study is listed in the back. Some things baseball people say all the time turn out to be wrong. I'll show you which ones.

FOR PARENTS

This book is written to the player, at any age, from Little League to college and beyond. Every inning ends with a page for you. The best thing you can do is ask, "What did you read about tonight?" and then listen.

Let's play ball, 



THE FIRST INNING

THE MATH OF *failure.*

*The best hitters in the world make an out most of the time.
Here's what that really looks like, and why it's the whole point.*

THE STORY

THE STRIKEOUT *king*.

When Babe Ruth played his last game in 1935, he owned the most famous record in sports: 714 home runs. Nobody else was close. Lou Gehrig was second with 378.

Ruth owned another record too, one people don't talk about as much. He had struck out 1,330 times, more than anyone who had ever played. And it wasn't close either. He was more than 500 strikeouts ahead of the next guy.¹

Read that again. The greatest home run hitter of his time was also the greatest strikeout hitter of his time. He led the league in strikeouts five different seasons. The same swing that sent balls over the fence sent him back to the dugout over and over again.

Ruth isn't the only one. The all-time strikeout leader is Reggie Jackson, a Hall of Famer they called Mr. October because he played his best in the World Series. Reggie struck out 2,597 times in his career. He had 2,584 hits. That's right: a Hall of Famer struck out more times than he got a hit.²

The home run king was also the strikeout king. That's not a weird fact. That's baseball.

What "seven out of ten" really means

You've probably heard it before: a great hitter fails seven times out of ten. Let's look at the real numbers, because they're even more surprising than that.

In 2024, the whole league, every big leaguer put together, hit .243. That means the average major league hitter got a hit in about 24 out of every 100 at-bats. The other 76 ended without a hit.³

Here's the part that blows people's minds. In 2024, big league hitters struck out 41,197 times. They got 39,823 hits. There were more strikeouts in the major leagues than hits. And in 2025 it happened again: 40,645 strikeouts, 40,138 hits.³

THE FILM · MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL, 2024 AND 2025

.243

The batting average of the entire major leagues in 2024. In 2025 it was .245.

41,197

Strikeouts in the majors in 2024, compared with 39,823 hits.

22%

About one of every five trips to the plate in the big leagues ends in a strikeout.

Source: Baseball-Reference league totals.³

These are the best players on the planet. Grown men who have been hitting since they were four, who have coaches, video, nutritionists and batting cages in the stadium. And they make an out most of the time.

So when you go 0-for-3 on a Saturday, you're not broken. You're playing baseball.

Even the greatest hitter ever

Ted Williams is on most lists of the greatest hitters who ever lived. In 1941 he hit .406. Nobody in the big leagues has hit .400 for a season since.

Here's what that season really looked like. Ted Williams had 456 at-bats that year. He went without a hit in 271 of them. In the last .400 season anyone has ever had, he made an out in about six of every ten at-bats.⁴

Williams knew it better than anyone. In his 1969 book, he wrote that a .300 hitter goes through life knowing he "will fail at his job seven out of ten times."⁵

But look at what else he did that year. He walked 147 times. When you count walks, he reached base more than half the time he came to the plate. He was great at something a batting average doesn't even count: not swinging at bad pitches. Remember that. The things that make you great aren't always the things that show up in the box score.

THE STORY CONTINUES

THEY ALMOST *didn't make it.*

Every great player has a story about failing. Not a little bit. A lot. Here are a few of the real ones, told the way they actually happened.

Derek Jeter's 56 errors

Derek Jeter is one of the best shortstops who ever played. Five World Series rings. Over 3,000 hits. The Hall of Fame.

In 1993, he was a 19-year-old in Class A ball in Greensboro, North Carolina. He hit .295 that year, which is good. He also made 56 errors at shortstop, the most of any player in the history of that league. A teammate said he looked like a right fielder trying to play shortstop.⁶

The year before, in his first season of pro ball, he hit .202. It got so close to .200 that his manager took him out of the last game of the season so he wouldn't fall below it.⁶

So what did Jeter do? He didn't quit, and he didn't pretend it wasn't happening. He spent the whole offseason working on his defense with a coach named Brian Butterfield. The next year he hit .344 across three levels and cut his errors to 25. A year after that, he was in the big leagues.⁶

The 1,390th pick

In 1988, the Dodgers drafted a catcher in the 62nd round. He was the 1,390th player taken in the whole draft. The draft doesn't even go that many rounds anymore. His name was Mike Piazza. He hit .308 with 427 home runs and went into the Hall of Fame in 2016.⁷

Walked 55 times

Albert Pujols wasn't drafted out of high school. One reason: teams barely saw him swing. As a senior, he was walked in 55 of his 88 trips to the plate. He went to a community college, hit .461, and was drafted in the 13th round, the 402nd pick. He finished his career with 703 home runs and three MVP awards.⁸

Too short

When José Altuve was 16, he went to a tryout at the Houston Astros' academy in Venezuela. The Astros decided he was too short and sent him home with the other players. He came back the next day anyway. They let him stay, and eventually signed him for \$15,000. He's listed at 5'6", and he has said even that's about an inch generous. He won the 2017 American League MVP and three batting titles.⁹

The varsity list

You've probably heard that Michael Jordan got cut from his high school team. Here's what really happened. As a sophomore, he tried out for varsity and didn't make it. A taller friend of his, Leroy Smith, who was 6'7", got the one spot for a sophomore. Jordan played JV.¹⁰

He wasn't really "cut." But it hurt, and he never forgot it. Years later, in a famous Nike commercial, Jordan said he'd missed more than 9,000 shots and lost almost 300 games in his career. The ad ended with this:

"I've failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed."

MICHAEL JORDAN · NIKE, 1997¹¹

THE FILM

WHAT FAILURE FEELS LIKE, *and why.*

If failing is so normal, why does it feel so terrible?

Researchers have actually asked young athletes this. In one study, scientists interviewed elite athletes between 14 and 17 years old about what scared them about failing. It mostly wasn't the loss itself. It was what the loss might mean about them: feeling worse about who they are, feeling like all the work was for nothing, and how bad it feels in the moment.¹²

That's the trap. A strikeout is a thing that happened. But it's easy to turn it into a thing about *you*. "I struck out" turns into "I'm not good," which turns into "I'm not good enough to be on this team."

Look at the players in this inning. Babe Ruth struck out more than anyone alive. He didn't decide it meant he wasn't a hitter. Jeter made 56 errors. He didn't decide he wasn't a shortstop. He decided he had work to do.

"I struck out" is a fact. "I'm not good enough" is a story. You get to choose which one you carry back to the dugout.

The people around you matter

One more study is worth knowing about. Researchers followed 165 kids on summer swim teams for a whole season. The kids whose coaches blamed them and tried to control everything started blaming themselves more, and their fear of failing went up. The kids whose coaches were warm and supportive felt more in control, and their fear of failing went down over the season.¹³

That was swimming, not baseball, and it shows a connection, not proof of cause. But it makes sense. The way the grown-ups around you react to mistakes can become the way you talk to yourself about them. There's a page about this for your parents at the end of this inning.

MYTH VS. DATA

The myth: "If you just believe you can get better, you will."

The data: You've probably heard about "growth mindset," the idea that ability can grow with work. It's a good idea and it's true that skills grow with practice. But when researchers looked at hundreds of studies, believing it was only a little connected to how students actually did. One big review of 63 studies found the short programs that teach it had almost no effect on grades on average. A large national study found a small boost for students who were struggling.^{14,15,16}

The lesson: believing you can get better is a fine start. It doesn't do the work. What changes you is what you do after the out.

WHAT THE BEST DO

A SHORT MEMORY FOR *failure*.

So if failure is guaranteed, what do great players actually do with it?

They don't pretend it didn't happen. Jeter knew he had 56 errors. Altuve knew the Astros thought he was too small. They looked at it honestly. Then they did something about it.

Bob Rotella has worked with some of the best golfers in the world for decades. He puts it in one sentence:

"You need a long-term memory of your successes and a short-term memory of your failures."

BOB ROTELLA · SPORT PSYCHOLOGIST¹⁷

That doesn't mean you forget everything. It means you learn the lesson and drop the feeling. After a strikeout, ask yourself one thing: *Is there anything I want to do differently next time?* Maybe it's "I chased a pitch in the dirt." Great. That's the lesson. Now the at-bat is over, and the feeling doesn't get to come with you to the next one.

Flush it

A lot of teams use something called a mistake ritual. It's a quick move that tells your brain "that's done." The Positive Coaching Alliance, a group that trains youth coaches, teaches a few of them: pretending to flush a toilet, brushing a mistake off your shoulder, or wiping two fingers across your forehead like you're wiping off sweat and saying "no sweat."¹⁸

To be honest with you: I couldn't find a study that tested mistake rituals directly. It's a coaching tool, not a proven science fact. But it lines up with what we know about staying in the present, and it's simple. A ritual you practice gives you something to *do* in the moment, instead of just standing there feeling bad. You'll build a better one in the 4th inning.

The grade for what you do

Harvey Dorfman was one of the most famous mental coaches in baseball history. He worked with big leaguers for decades. He said this about the game:

"It's not like in school, where you get high grades for what you know. In baseball, you get high grades for what you do."

HARVEY DORFMAN · MENTAL SKILLS COACH¹⁹

Knowing that failure is normal won't help much if you only know it. You have to practice what you do after you fail, the same way you practice ground balls. That's what the rest of this book is for.

CLUBHOUSE VOICES

"It isn't a question of being perfect. It's a question of knowing your imperfections and correcting them."

HARVEY DORFMAN¹⁹

"I didn't play really good in this playoff, but that was everything I had."

JOSÉ ALTUVE, ON THE 2015 PLAYOFFS⁹

TRY IT TONIGHT · 5 MINUTES

Your real average

Grab a notebook. A real one, not your phone.

1. Write down your batting average from this season, or your best guess. Next to it, write **.243**. That's what the whole major leagues hit in 2024.
2. Write: **Reggie Jackson: 2,597 strikeouts. 2,584 hits. Hall of Fame.**
3. Think about your last out. Write one sentence: "The lesson from that at-bat was _____. " If there wasn't one, write "Nothing. Good at-bat, bad result." That counts.
4. Then write one more line: "Next at-bat, I'm going to _____. " One thing. Keep it simple.

That's it. Lesson in, feeling out. You just practiced a short memory.

BOX SCORE · THE 1ST INNING

- The best hitters in the world make an out most of the time. In 2024 and 2025, big leaguers struck out more than they got hits.
- The home run king was also the strikeout king. Failing and greatness go together.
- Almost every great player has a real story about failing: 56 errors, 62nd round, too short, didn't make varsity.
- "I struck out" is a fact. "I'm not good enough" is a story you don't have to carry.
- Learn the lesson, drop the feeling. Short memory for failure, long memory for success.

FOR PARENTS · THE 1ST INNING

THE RIDE HOME STARTS *here.*

Your kid is going to fail a lot. That's not a problem to solve. It's the sport. What you can shape is what failure *means* in your house.

What the research suggests. In the swim study in this inning, kids who felt blamed and controlled by adults blamed themselves more, and their fear of failure grew. Kids who felt supported grew less afraid over the season.¹³ A separate study of 388 athletes found that feeling pressure from parents was linked to a stronger fear of shame and embarrassment after failing.²⁰ Both studies show connections, not proof, but the direction is clear enough to act on.

Try this:

- After a bad game, wait. Let them bring it up. If they don't, that's fine.
- Swap "What happened on that error?" for "What did you see on that pitch?" or simply "I love watching you play."
- Talk about your own mistakes out loud, and what you're going to do next time. Kids learn the script by hearing it.
- When they tell you about an out, separate the fact from the story: "Okay, you struck out. That's one at-bat. What's the lesson?"

Skip: fixing their swing in the car, comparing them to teammates, and sighing. They hear the sigh louder than anything you say.

END OF THE FREE SAMPLE

EIGHT MORE *innings.*

Pressure and the body. The voice in your head. Between pitches. Confidence. Focus. Slumps and streaks. The long game. The people around you. Plus extra innings.

THE FULL BOOK · [MINDSETWITHJORDAN.COM/THE-OTHER-SEVEN](https://mindsetwithjordan.com/the-other-seven)