

## **Foreword**

### **Matthew Severns**

The single greatest influence in my life has been my dad. So many of the things that I do now as an adult have traces of him, and his mark on my life will always be on me. Growing up, I took for granted what a great father-figure God blessed me with, but as I grow older and look back on those moments and experiences that shaped who I am, I recognize and appreciate his influence along the way.

Baseball was and still is a big part of my relationship with my dad. As a young player in little league, his encouragement and positive attitude kept me interested in the game and helped me to deal with the ups and downs that young boys go through as they learn to deal with the failures and successes of athletics. Baseball provided an avenue for us to bond while I was growing up; it was something we could easily talk about during those awkward years when a teenage son can be about the most difficult species on earth to communicate with, and it is a love that we both share and appreciate today.

I'll never forget the day before I left for college where I was going to play baseball. My school would be too far for him to see all of my games as he had my whole life up to that point. We went to my high school batting cage so he could throw me one last round of batting practice. I remember thinking how much I was going to miss this lefty who could throw such great strikes. And when we finished, we hugged each other and cried: it was my dad's way of sending me off after eighteen years together.

This book is about baseball, but it is more than that. It is about giving young boys and men the tools they need to grow up and be men and fathers themselves. The coaches of our children should not take lightly the responsibility given to them. Coaching is the opportunity to

be a leader, a caretaker, and often a parent to kids who need one. Children can walk around with so many burdens put on them by circumstances at home or peer pressures at school. A coach should provide an atmosphere of growth and development, not fear and intimidation. I think this book addresses what is most important when it comes to coaching young children and it is not protecting the win/loss record, but protecting the hearts and spirits of future coaches, parents, and leaders.

I'm so fortunate to have had such a great teacher in life and coach on the baseball field as I did in my dad. When my own son was born two years ago, I felt ready to be a father and I felt like a man. It was the culmination of years of training and teaching from my best friend and the best coach I've ever had. While fatherhood can be a scary and daunting task, I am confident in the lessons I was taught. And some day when I'm coaching my own children and the children of others, I will remember to pass along the principles and thoughts written down on these pages because I am living proof of the results.