

Never Give Up



President Monson shares a childhood experience that began with humiliation but ended in a great lesson.

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Like some of you, I know what it is to face disappointment and youthful humiliation. As a boy, I played team softball in elementary and junior high school. Two captains were chosen, and then they, in turn, selected the players they desired on their teams. Of course, the best players were chosen first, then second, and third. To be selected fourth or fifth was not too bad, but to be chosen last and sent to a remote position in the outfield was downright awful. I know; I was there.

How I hoped the ball would never be hit in my direction, for surely I would drop it, runners would score, and teammates would laugh.

As though it were just yesterday, I remember the very moment when all that changed in my life. The game started out as I have described: I was chosen last. I made my sorrowful way to the deep pocket of right field and watched as the other team filled the bases with runners. Two batters then went down on strikes. Suddenly, the next batter hit a mighty drive. I even heard him say, "This will be a home run." That was humiliating, since the ball was coming in my direction. Was it beyond my reach? I raced for the spot where I

thought the ball would drop, uttered a prayer while running, and stretched forth my cupped hands. I surprised myself. I caught the ball! My team won the game.

This one experience strengthened my confidence, inspired my desire to practice, and led me from that last-to-be-chosen place to become a real contributor to the team.

We can experience that burst of confidence. We can feel that pride of performance. A three-word formula will help us: *Never give up.* ●

From an October 2005 general conference address.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Why did President Monson play better after catching the ball? Was he suddenly more talented? Is there any way he might have had that same feeling without making a great catch?
2. What if you don't make a big catch when you are chosen last, or what if you finish last in a race? How can you know that you are a wonderful, worthwhile person?
3. What are the really important things in life that you should never give up on?
4. How will this story make a difference in what you do when it's your turn to choose a team?

