

"I always tell people I am close to how pro baseball has taught me a lot about life. What it means to be a pro.

For anyone who wants to know, this is what it means to be a professional baseball player: My job was on the line every single day. That taught me work ethic.

If we weren't good enough, we didn't play. And if we didn't play, we didn't get promoted. That taught me competitiveness.

People would get released or demoted literally every week, and we'd have to see the look on their faces as they cleaned out their locker in front of the whole team, as their dream came to an end. That taught me compassion.

When we failed or performed poorly, we did it with a spotlight on us in front of hundreds and thousands of people, with no excuses to hide behind and no one to blame but ourselves. And then the next day, we're right back in front of that same disappointed crowd, but we couldn't let that affect us at all. That taught me mental toughness.

I was on the road for about 7-8 months out of the year, missing out on family, friends, holidays and relationships. That taught me sacrifice.

There were times when we would outperform our competition, do noticeably better than them, go above and beyond what was expected of us... and still receive no recognition or promotion. Whether it be because of the person's name, or who they know. That taught me that life isn't always fair.

And on the opposite end of the spectrum, I have seen people less talented than others train extremely hard and just plain outwork/outhustle their competition, and then get recognized and promoted above the more talented player because of it. That taught me that hard work beats talent when talent fails to work hard.

If I was late, I was fined, fired, or left behind. That taught me to be punctual.

When you live, travel, work and hang out with the same people everyday, you become close to them and form a bond. You become family. And then in a few months, the season ends and they are gone and you may never see them again. That taught me the value of friendship.

When I saw, heard and felt the love, respect and admiration from the fans, old and young... that taught me humility.

I got to listen to the National Anthem (hundreds of times each year) before my job starts each night. That taught me pride.

But to think others sacrificed their lives so I could chase a dream and play a game. That taught me perspective. I try to never take the little things for granted.

I have a masters degree in Real Life. It has to be lived. You can't teach it. I have failed in a season, more than most fail in a lifetime and still wanted more. Because that's how baseball players are wired.

You do what you've gotta do, no matter what.

The looks alone on all the little kids' faces when they see you approaching them, like they think you are Derek Jeter and whatever you say to them is gospel. That you could change and

influence a child's day/week/month/year or even life by the way you treat them in the next few seconds or the next few words you say to them. And that's when I realized that even though I was the one playing the game, and I was the one who all the kids looked up to and came to see, it really wasn't about me, at all. And that taught me my favorite lesson...selflessness."