

Part-2: Daniel Robertson Interview Continued...

Remember, in Part-1 of D-Rob's interview, we discussed deep mental aspects to the game, like:

- How to Get Out of Your own Way & Make Adjustments,
- What's Your Perspective on Dealing with Failure? What Does that Look like to You?
- To You, What Does Motivation and Inspiration Look Like? What's the Difference?

Let's jump into Part-2 to our conversation...

Joey Myers ADJUSTMENTS: Right. You mentioned adjustments, making adjustments. So there's been a couple of big ones for you. One that we're all kind of taking part in. Number one for you in the transition from, like you said, going from a player who's put a very distinguished career. And I got to see a game in person when you guys came to town. And I got to see kind of your journey this last season before 2019.

What were some of the major maybe that one or two major adjustments that you had to make either mindset or training style?

Joey Myers And I got to see the evolution and, you know, talking with you kind of through it. It was kind of interesting to listen. And then your transition, so going from that 2019 kind of into the twenty nineteen season, and then the transition and into being an educator and then now kind of this corona virus thing. So in in the spirit of making adjustments and you can go into it, you can take either one as an example or all of them just kind of personal or baseball. What were some of the major maybe that one or two major adjustments that you had to make either mindset or training style or whatever?

Daniel Robertson I think going into the transition of 2019. It kind of started as a maybe in 2017 when someone told me that I hit too many ground balls. And I think that's when it brought some attention to me that, hey, I need to make an adjustment to stay in the game. But those were all things I think I put on a pedestal so much as, you know, all I wanted to do was make an opening day roster and I wanted to hear my name called on opening day.

Daniel Robertson I made adjustments in my effort, sort of say I didn't really I don't think sometimes I understood the adjustments that you have to make in your own game because, you know, we all learn at our own speed. You know, so the knowledge of I need to make an adjustment from the type of player that I was before. It wasn't about making an adjustment to become a different type of player or going from a line drive guy to an occasional home run guy, but with more, you know, a higher batting average and a higher slugging percentage.

Daniel Robertson That wasn't what the target was. The target was I needed to make an adjustment because my game was lacking. I was falling behind of other players. So I needed to figure out A.) Where it went wrong. Mentally, physically and be, OK now how can I attack it? What resources I can use. And I think, I didn't know where to turn because everyone has all the answers, and I think you're experiencing that. Everyone and if you reach out to them can give you their 10 minutes. They can give you their 10 minute spiel for their 10 minute ad... You know, in five minutes or less, they can give you their elevator pitch.

Daniel Robertson And then all of a sudden... I believe in you. I believe. You know, I believe in the hitter's performance. Joey, let's have dinner. I want to you know; I believe in what you got. Oh, sweet. This book is awesome. I think it's great because it all makes sense in the very beginning. And once you start to apply it and once you start to learn that it's not a this is the end all be all. I'll try this. Feel this out. Some of it's not going to work. Some of it's going to work. And then you and I create a relationship. But it was built on trust because when something didn't work, I could tell you, hey, I don't see this working at high level speeds or when I do this on a machine, I get you know, I get crushed and you're like, okay, we'll scratch that. Let's try something else.

Joey Myers Right.

Daniel Robertson Most people don't do that. Most people either buy their product. To the end and they stand by it or just tell you, oh, well, then, you know, you weren't good enough to do it anyway. Move on to the next one. So that's kind of the period that I went through and I had to go through those things until I think I went up down side to side through all the channels. I went, I found Curt Nelson. And when I found you and I started to apply these things into my game and I started to learn what movements promote better movements?

Daniel Robertson And then now I started to learn how my body moved and how it succeeded in those certain realms. And I valued that pass fail, that positive negative effect. That if I do this right, there's a possibility that this is done right. I do this bad, there's a possibility that this is done bad. Well, when I see that I do this bad and I look at Miguel Cabrera, that's when he does it bad. OK. When I do this good. When I'm trying to hammer the nails, you know, when I'm some great cue that I still use to this day about hammering a nail. But the nail isn't straight into the wall. The nail is actually the pitch plane that it's coming on, and stretch the nail a little longer. So if you were to beat it into a wall, you'd have to beat it... You'd have to stay on that nail for a much longer period of time. So you didn't bend the nail.

Joey Myers Right.

Daniel Robertson Those are things that I've learned that I never thought of before. I think when I took it into the season of this past year, that's why I was able to have such a monster year, because it was the first time that I had been playing again or I was one hundred and full belief that everything that I'm doing and that I know is right.

Daniel Robertson Because I'm doing it when I'm having success. It's elite success. It's not a roll over in the 6th hole. It's adjustability. It's hitting all pitches. It's hitting 3-1 breaking balls. It's hitting 3-0 homers. It's doing things that the best in the game are doing. Yeah, I'm not in the big leagues, but I couldn't control that, but I'm doing these things better than I ever did before. And that's when I realized I had made an adjustment.

Daniel Robertson And all that time that it took and all the failure and all the self-doubt and all the self-pity and all the negative energy and all the poor me, I'm not that big leagues anymore. All of that went away because I was confident in what I was doing again. And I think transitioning into now coaching... When I took the number one thing that I valued as a coach. And I think all coaches should value is the moment you stop understanding how difficult this game is, the moment you're done as a coach.

Daniel Robertson Because the second that you forget how hard this game is, we're not talking about making excuses. We're not talking about giving the kids an out. We're talking about if that kid's got a plus slider and my kid chases it a few times. You have to have the balls as a coach to say that kids just got a really freaking good slider. And now my kids need to get better at hitting sliders, you know, because that kid's slider was better than my kids today. And you have to be able to say that. You have to be able to say that, you know, that guy gets a scholarship too, you know, that guy trains all day too. That guy, practices positive self-talk too. That guy, meditates too. That guy, values adjustments too.

Daniel Robertson You know, that guy's not... This isn't a world where my better is better than your better just because I say it's better. It's not like that. That's not how life works. That's not how it works when you want to play and you want to swim in the same waters as the best in the game. When you want to swim in the same pool as the best in the game. Those guys do everything that you do and better. You have to continue to find what gives you a little bit of separator that helps you belong. That's what you have to do.

Daniel Robertson And to me, that's what I've done... Moving into the coaching realm and now dealing with the Corona virus. It is what it is. You know, you have to... I think you have to find a way. I think what a beautiful time that everyone can sit back and reflect maybe how we've been treating the world, how we've been treating each other, how we've been treating our own craft and how we've been treating ourselves. Because being in isolation and your ideas...

Now as a coach or educator, how are you dealing with the COVID-19 lockdown?

Joey Myers To your context, you're up in Washington. You guys went on a lockdown just like we did in California pretty quick. Now, you guys got the National Guard like we do, got activated. So just to give people context out there.

Daniel Robertson Yeah, exactly. And so now you're starting you know, when I sit and reflect on these things that I've never had time because life didn't give me time to sit around and have time. You know, we all pray for more time and it's like, holy cow, I got more time than I know what to do with now. But that's all that is, is this is life is just a grand experience. And I think it's so valuable now that when you were young and your teacher that you had in third grade said you're going to be great at whatever you put your mind to because it shows flashes. I think I showed flashes as a student when I was younger in some sort of project that I actually really enjoyed and I really liked. And then I got a A-plus on it. And she goes, oh, my gosh, this was great. You. And then, you know, you get you got kids, you got a parent teacher conference where the teacher goes, oh, your son or your daughter is so good when they put their mind to something.

Daniel Robertson And then I can't help but think well dang, how good am I at something that I don't put my mind to? Oh, wait a minute. I'm not. That's why I get an F or a D in this class, when I look back at my transcripts, having to go back to school now, when you're an undergrad coach, you get the luxury of being a coach and taking classes. So you get twice the work. You know what I mean? But now you've got to look at things... You've got to look at the beast in the face of how do you get a D in this class or how do you get an F in this class? Oh, wait, because I didn't care because it didn't interest me. I didn't find any value in it.

Daniel Robertson Well, let's apply it to baseball. Well, I don't find any value in a rollover ball off a machine to the second... To the shortstop. I don't find any value in getting jammed so bad when it's cold and I'm facing this machine that I don't want to be facing. There's no value in that. So my thumbs hurt. Cool. Why did I choose to do this anyway? This is the stupidest drill in the world. Why am I doing this vs. what I want to? And I started lighting the machine up and then I get into the game and now hitting off a person that provides rhythm and arm action. And I can dance with them a little bit more. Now, why am I better... Because I was better when I started facing the machine, I was better when I turned my mind from this has no value to all of this has value because that's what learning provides.

Daniel Robertson So I find, you know, the conversation that we've been having, the ability to answer your question. It all centers back to what are you willing to do to learn? Because if you're getting your crap pushed in and you just quit or you're that parent, that's, you know, the travel ball era. Oh, my son is not good enough to play on your team. Cool. I got money. I'll start my own travel ball team. And guess what? My son's going to be starting shortstop. What did you just do for your son? What did you just teach him? What did we just teach all these players that weren't good enough to make a team? So they got on another team and we made them feel like they were good enough to be on that team.

Daniel Robertson But what if we just kept the main thing? The main thing and it was all about being the best on that team. Are you good enough to start on this team? That's the first question. And if you are, you're going to teach yourself something. If you're not, how you respond from that... If you show up to a major university and you got to go play JUCO ball because you got cut. Are you going to wallow in your self-pity about not being good enough to come to the university or are you going to say you're right? Thank you. I'm not good enough to be here. I need to make an adjustment because my game's not good enough. I'm going to go to this JUCO. I'm going to be the starter. And then I'm going to come back here and show you that I was good in the beginning. My game wasn't good enough then. But guess what? It's good enough now. Believe it.

Joey Myers Yeah. I mean, I love talking with somebody like yourself again, this experience and then going through it and playing for as long as you did. And you learn a lot on the failure side of things. And I love this concept of adjustment. And you mentioned something probably about five minutes ago talking about having being okay with making an adjustment.

Joey Myers And we just this last weekend, we got just a smaller group of hitters that are okay with meeting just as long as they don't come sick, I don't come sick. We're all kind of in it together. Small groups like between 2 and 4 hitters in a group. We do the Lysol thing and the whole shebang.

Joey Myers But one of the hitters, we were doing some live stuff. He's a junior in high school and he was actually having a really good year. I've only been working with him for probably about maybe half a year. So he's got a good before and after last year versus this is having a great year. And we were talking about in the cage, he popped one up. We were doing a three-swing round. Popped one up. And so the next pitch, I threw it and didn't give any instructions for how he was going to respond to that. And then he popped another one up. Actually, I did aid him in a response, I said, after you pop the first one up, I said, OK, I want you to hit me a big fat chopper. And so I threw him the second pitch and he pops it up again. And I said, you didn't go all in on that chopper, did you? And he's like, no.

Joey Myers And I said so that I can guarantee you because his dad sent me a video of when he was playing when they were playing, of him popping it up a couple of times in a row. And I told him, I said, here's what you have to do. You have to be okay with sacrificing an at-bat to get an adjustment. So you have to be okay with second at-bat of the game. First at-bat you pop up. Second at-bat you come up and you have to be OK, all in, one hundred percent with hitting a chopper. Most likely you're going to hit a liner if you're all in. Most likely. But if you hit the chopper, you're okay with that. And you get thrown out, right? If you're lucky, maybe you get it between a player over a player or something.

Joey Myers But you have to be okay with getting out. So starting the game off 0-for-2, sacrificing an at-bat to get the chopper, to get that feel so that the next two at-bats you now have the feel for the line drives and that you possibly could go to for four with maybe a line drive single double. So you could still salvage that game and hit .500 with possibly a double by sacrificing just one at-bat. But you have to be all in like what you're talking about, I love, which I can't remember what exactly was what you said, but it was something to the effect of, you have to be all in.

About being “all-in” and willing to sacrifice a swing or an at-bat to make an adjustment

Daniel Robertson You have to. Because when you start talking about adjustments, adjustments, or I learned it from Johnny Gomes. And the thing about my experience in my career was something that I never kind of looked back on was how many people had influenced my career and the evolution of Daniel Robertson and the baseball player. How it had nothing to do with me. It had to do with everyone that I ever came in contact with, for better or for worse.

Joey Myers Helping to keep you on the right path.

Daniel Robertson Yes, for better or for worse. And every single person that I came in contact with that maybe, you know, I shouldn't have come in contact with, but I did. And, you know, going in and training at exos trying to get the best workout experience I could. And then coming out of that experience with a friendship with Johnny Gomes and imploring all the knowledge that he was able to learn in his 13, 14 years and his unbelievable and his ability to hammer Left-Handed pitching. Being able to pick his brain on those things. And he's the one that told me it's an at-bat. All it is, is a race to adjustment. And it's a race.

Daniel Robertson So if there's a 60-yard dash, if that's the race, it's me and the pitcher, one on one step for step until someone decides to take the lead. And to me, it has nothing to do with when someone decides to take the lead. All a race is when someone gives up. All the races is is when someone comes... When you lose a race, you've come to grips that you're not as fast as the other person because you notice that you're slower. Or you get used... Your max speed isn't fast enough to run with someone else's max speed. So their effort is better than yours.

Daniel Robertson So as a hitter, all I'm doing is I'm foregoing my ability, the rest of my AB to make an adjustment. That's when you lose. When you absolutely blew my thumbs up and my back got exploded. One of two things in that moment happen. The first one. Gosh dang it. How the heck did I get beat? How did I let this guy jam me so bad, blah, blah, blah. Well, first of all, if you got jammed that bad, chances are you swung at a pitch that

was either on the white line or on the black. Not a pitch you can drive anyway. Sorry. When you start getting up to the big leagues and you start facing ninety-three to ninety-five or ninety-five to ninety-eight or 90 to 100, those pitches in those zones are sawdust anyway. You don't even swing at them.

Daniel Robertson So it's not about you. It's about you adjusting in that moment. If you get jammed, all that tells you is you need to get the head out or that's not a pitch you could hit. And if you can come to the conclusion of one of those two things, which you're in the big leagues, you have video. So A.) you already know that you need to get the head out. But B.) If you get to go underneath the tunnel and look to see where that pitch was and location, it tells you, hey, I don't need to swing at that pitch. So now I've already made an adjustment, that pitch is the ball. So I'm supposed to lay off it.

Daniel Robertson So now you've made an adjustment going into your next at bat. You're making adjustments all throughout the game, but without any failure... How are you supposed to know when you're supposed to make an adjustment? How did you know that you took your eyes off the baseball when you were getting ready to field it at shortstop and then took a bad hop, and smoked you in the chin. Versus being upset that you couldn't believe you missed that ball or go into the pouty place. You realize that you took your eyes off the baseball and that was just you taking the baseball off the chin was a reminder that you need to keep your eyes on the baseball period adjustment made.

Daniel Robertson If there's no there's no reason to start pouting. So when you're all in on the learning, every single game that you play in teaches you something. Even the 5-for-5 day, where you couldn't get out... Teaches you what life is like when you're at your best. And the 0-for-5, with 5 punch outs teaches you what life is like when you're at your worst. So you're just trying to learn. That's all you're trying to do. You're constantly downloading and saving files in your brain and then hoping to access them later.

Daniel Robertson If you're giving yourself a chance. If you're understanding how to learn, if you're understanding how to focus. If you're not understanding how to commit. If you're understanding and paying attention to the things that it takes to be better at the game. Because baseball is just a game. You and I can play rigorous games of Monopoly. We can have a different way of who's being the banker of how I pay you five hundred dollars, whether I owe you five one hundreds or ten fifties. Doesn't matter? None of that matters. It matters if I get the most properties and we can add that to any game. Chess, checkers, monopoly. Sorry. The Game of life. Sudoku. Sudoku. It doesn't matter, it all has games. It all has a strategy.

Daniel Robertson Baseball is a game with strategy. You can either accept that or you can believe that baseball is a game that's made up with the right launch angle, the perfect attack angle, the perfect pitch plane, the perfect RPM's on your fastball, how much your spin rate is, how fast you can swing the bat, how you know how open your front foot is when you land, how you're supposed to hold the bat, how you're supposed to do this. How are you supposed to do that? Endless amounts. You and I can go on all freakin day.

Daniel Robertson But if you buy into that, you're not going to be any good at baseball. You buy into the fact that baseball is a game and you try to learn the strategy as fast as you can. That person is going to be the best baseball player we ever saw. Because they know the strategy. They spend it. They spend all the time working on it. They spend time hitting breaking balls. They spend time taking breaking balls. They spend time hitting off a

machine that's unhittable. And they just sit there and wear it. They let the machine completely kick the crap out of them. And they just wear it.

Daniel Robertson Because at some point they know their hands are going to get faster and faster. They're going to get faster. They're going to make an adjustment. The hand-eye is going to... The faster you turn the machine, the better your hand I gets. If you can stand swinging and missing for a little while. If you can stand fouling the ball up to the cage for a little while. If you can stand hitting the ball to right field for a little while. All that stuff takes time. It takes time. It takes time. I don't know how much time. You know, I have no idea. It could take you one rep...it could take you 50 reps. It could take you a week. It could take you a year. Just like I don't know if it takes you five reps that you're supposed to lift five reps, or you're supposed to lift 10 or you're supposed to 20. I don't know. I got no idea. But I know you got to do something. And you have to be willing to fail. Period.

Joey Myers Speaking of failure and adjustments, I've been just dying to get your opinion on the latest Astros scandal. What are your thoughts on how everything is kind of how the actual scandal itself, how the commissioner's dealt with it? Anything. What are your thoughts on that?

To be continued in the last part, Part-3... 😊