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# BELIEF

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*“He who says he can and he who says he can’t are both usually right.”*

~ **Confucius**

*“If you don’t have confidence, you’ll always find a way not to win.”*

~ **Carl Lewis**

*“A bird sitting on a tree is never afraid of the branch breaking, because her trust is not on the branch but on her own wings. Believe in yourself.”*

~ **Unknown**

*“If you believe it will work out, you’ll see opportunities. If you believe it won’t, you will see obstacles.”*

~ **Wayne Dyer**

*“You have to believe in yourself when no one else does.”*

~ **Serena Williams**

From 2011-2014, the Houston “Lastros” (as many mockingly called the Astros) averaged 104 losses per year out of the 162 games they would play each year. They were a laughingstock among Major League Baseball fans. Not only were they the worse team but they also had the lowest payroll, so they weren’t seen as much of a threat anytime soon. Their stadium was eerily empty most games and those that did attend seemed to enjoy booing more than cheering their hometown team.

After a few years of struggle, those “Lastros”

whom no one believed in started to gel. They started to believe in themselves. They started to develop. They started to win – and win big! They made *Sports Illustrated* look smart as they fulfilled the magazine’s 2014 cover predicted that they would be the 2017 World Series Champions. From worst to first in only three short years. One of the greatest underdog stories. How did they do it?

It was a team of executives alongside many players and coaches all believing that their time to shine and their opportunity would one day come. They believed they needed a growing period, they needed to create a different atmosphere, and then they could create a highly competitive program. They were completely reorganizing the roster and the way the program ran, in essence, starting over.

They weren’t an organization that believed they were perfect or believed they were incapable of making mistakes but rather, Sports Illustrated said, “their goal was to make marginally more correct decisions than their competitors”. They just believed in giving their best effort. 1

When things go wrong for us as competitors, it’s easy for us to believe what everyone else says. It is easy to turn our backs on everything we know and instantly doubt. It is easy to believe people who have no idea what we have gone through to get where we are today. We must continue to believe, because of everything that we have invested in our game and our success. We are investing in ourself. We must believe in ourself.

It’s easy to encounter a setback and immediately turn on your teammates or coaches, but

successful players keep believing. When times get tough, that's when the true leaders come out and that's when quitters do what they do best – quit. Adversity reveals what we truly believe about ourselves and those around us. It's a true test of our character. Never stop believing in what we are capable of.

Tom Brady is also a great example of belief. Brady was on the football team at the University of Michigan where he sat on the bench for two years and didn't play until his junior year. He was a solid college player but was not a top prospect as evidenced by the fact he was drafted in the NFL in the sixth round as the 199<sup>th</sup> pick. He only played in one game his first season for the New England Patriots. He was originally the fourth string quarterback and then a few unfortunate events led him to be the backup.

With an unfortunate injury to the starting quarterback in only the second game of his second season, Brady got his chance to shine, took advantage of it and never looked back as he became arguably the greatest quarterback in NFL history.

Brady, just like the Astros, believed in what he was capable of. He knew that it did not matter what anyone else said and he knew that their doubt and skepticism was irrelevant. He believed that his chance would come, and boy, did it. Imagine if he would have quit or transferred when he was sitting at the University of Michigan?

Underdog stories are created, most often, by people believing in the impossible or improbable. The so-called underdogs are just people believing

that they can accomplish more than what others think. They make themselves unstoppable. They create their own luck. There is a long-time quote that says, “Luck is just when preparation meets opportunity.” We can’t get lucky if you don’t believe that we can. Underdogs are so hungry for success that they keep working hard to make sure it happens.

Success isn’t built in a day. It takes time and it takes belief. Champions believe in themselves. It does not matter what their circumstances are and it does not matter what others have to say. Champions continue to believe in themselves, even when no one else does.