

## Success Lessons From Baseball - Enthusiasm and Excitement Can Make The Difference

I remember, about 35 years ago, reading two books by Frank Bettger, the baseball player, about how enthusiasm made all the difference in his life. His books made a difference in my life at the time and are still well worth reading and re-reading.

Probably the most famous of his books is "How I raised myself from failure to success in selling". Frank died in 1981 but his books and priceless ideas live on.

In 1907, he played baseball for Johnstown in Pennsylvania for \$175 dollars a month. He was young and ambitious but was fired for being lazy. He was not really lazy but had been trying to control his nervousness by being laid back.

His manager told him: "Whatever you do after you leave here, for heaven's sake, wake yourself up and put some life and enthusiasm into your work."

Frank went to Chester, Pennsylvania where he played baseball for only \$25 a month. Frank commented: "Well, I couldn't feel very enthusiastic on that kind of money but I began to act enthusiastic."

After a few days he was given a trial at New Haven, Connecticut. No one knew him in that league so he decided to establish a reputation for enthusiasm. Once established, he would be forced to live up to his own reputation:

"From the minute I appeared on the field I acted like a man electrified. I acted as though I were alive with a million batteries."

Frank threw the ball hard and fast around the diamond and ran like a madman to score for his team. All this was on a hot day when the thermometer was 100 degrees. The act he was putting on worked like magic.

His nervousness now worked for him by fueling his energy. His enthusiasm affected the other players on the field and they, too, became enthusiastic. He felt better during the game and after it than ever before.

Next day, the New Haven newspaper wrote: "This new player, Bettger, has a barrel of enthusiasm. He inspired our boys. They not only won the game but looked better than any time this season."

The papers began calling him "Pep" Bettger, the life of the team. Enthusiasm increased his income in ten days from \$25 a month to \$185 a month. This was a 700% increase.

Bettger insists that he earned the income not for his ability which was the same as before but for his enthusiasm alone. He could not catch or hit better than before. Two years later he was playing 3rd base for the St Louis Cardinals.

Another two years later, he injured his arm and was forced out of baseball. Two years after this, he ended up selling life insurance. He was a miserable failure at this until he went to a public speaking course run by the great Dale Carnegie. Carnegie, like his first manager, told him to be more enthusiastic.

Carnegie then went on to give a talk on enthusiasm to his class. He became so excited that he threw a chair against a wall and broke one of its legs. All this reminded Frank of his early experiences in the baseball world.

"That night, I decided to stay in the insurance business and put the same enthusiasm into selling that I had put into baseball."

During his first sales pitch after this decision, he became so excited that he pounded his fist. He could hardly believe it when his customer listened intently and then bought the insurance policy. He does not equate enthusiasm with fist pounding but "if fist pounding is what you need to arouse yourself inside, then I am overwhelmingly for it. I know this: When I force myself to act enthusiastic I soon feel enthusiastic."

Frank went on to become a great salesman and a man who has inspired many other salesmen and ordinary citizens to live their lives with enthusiasm.

A salesman who is enthusiastic can outsell a non enthusiastic salesman who has much greater knowledge. The enthusiastic person is like a magnet. He or she attracts and inspires others to do what they thought was beyond them.

You can acquire enthusiasm simply and quickly by forcing yourself to act enthusiastically. It also helps to re-read your favourite inspiring passages daily.

Frank, himself, was inspired by a great quote from Walter Chrysler. When Chrysler was asked to give the secret of success, he listed qualities such as 'ability, capacity, and energy' but added that the real secret was 'enthusiasm.'

"Yes, more than enthusiasm," said Chrysler, "I would say 'excitement'. I like to see men get excited. When they get excited, they get customers excited and we get business."

Enthusiasm can make a huge difference. We could all benefit by being enthusiastic about something that we currently find boring. We could be amazed at how excited we become and how skilful we become. We could also notice that the fire of our enthusiasm soon spreads to other people.

We could end up in the 'major leagues' of whatever we become enthusiastic about and we could have more friends, more fun and more money!

### About the Author

John Watson is an award winning teacher and fifth degree black belt martial arts instructor. He has recently written several books about achieving your goals and dreams. They can be found on his website along with some other books which are well worth reading not only once but many times. [www.motivationtoday.com](http://www.motivationtoday.com)

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