

## LOSING SEASON

I wasn't much for organized sports growing up. My summers were spent at the skate park and in the winter, I played occasional pick-up hockey at the park if not out snowboarding. There was one school sport that I was somewhat invested in, Lacrosse. Our team went through coaches faster than beers were shot-gunned before games. In my four years of playing varsity lacrosse in Minnesota, we had only won just one game. Needless to say, I was accustomed to losing.

We were angsty teenage boys on the field looking to hack, hit and break the next kid. There was no strategy or plan to win. Our reputation was known around the metro, mine included. I worked at the local sports shop through high school, selling lacrosse equipment to the local schools. My manager sent me to a week-long lacrosse camp on the companies dime to promote the shop. When I arrived, I skipped practice every day with this other skateboard-hippie whose dad made him go. The rest of the students from other schools trained day and night, woke up early, lived and breathed lacrosse.

Looking back, I treated my life like I treated my lacrosse career. I was careless, unmotivated and I was hurting people. I enlisted in the Air Force with that same state of mind. I didn't care about my job and career development meant nothing. I was living for the weekends. It's simple and clear to me now. My first Air Force career in logistics was like my lacrosse team. Our leaders weren't invested, we failed all our inspections and there was no teamwork.

I grew tired of chasing the weekend. I decided to give photojournalism a chance and I quickly became like those kids from other schools because, all of a sudden I was doing something I cared about. I found myself getting up early, staying late and spending my free time learning the craft. For once, my leaders cared about me and invested in my development. I started winning literally and mentally, and most importantly I had a team that I could trust. My perspective flipped. I no longer had a job, but a paid passion.

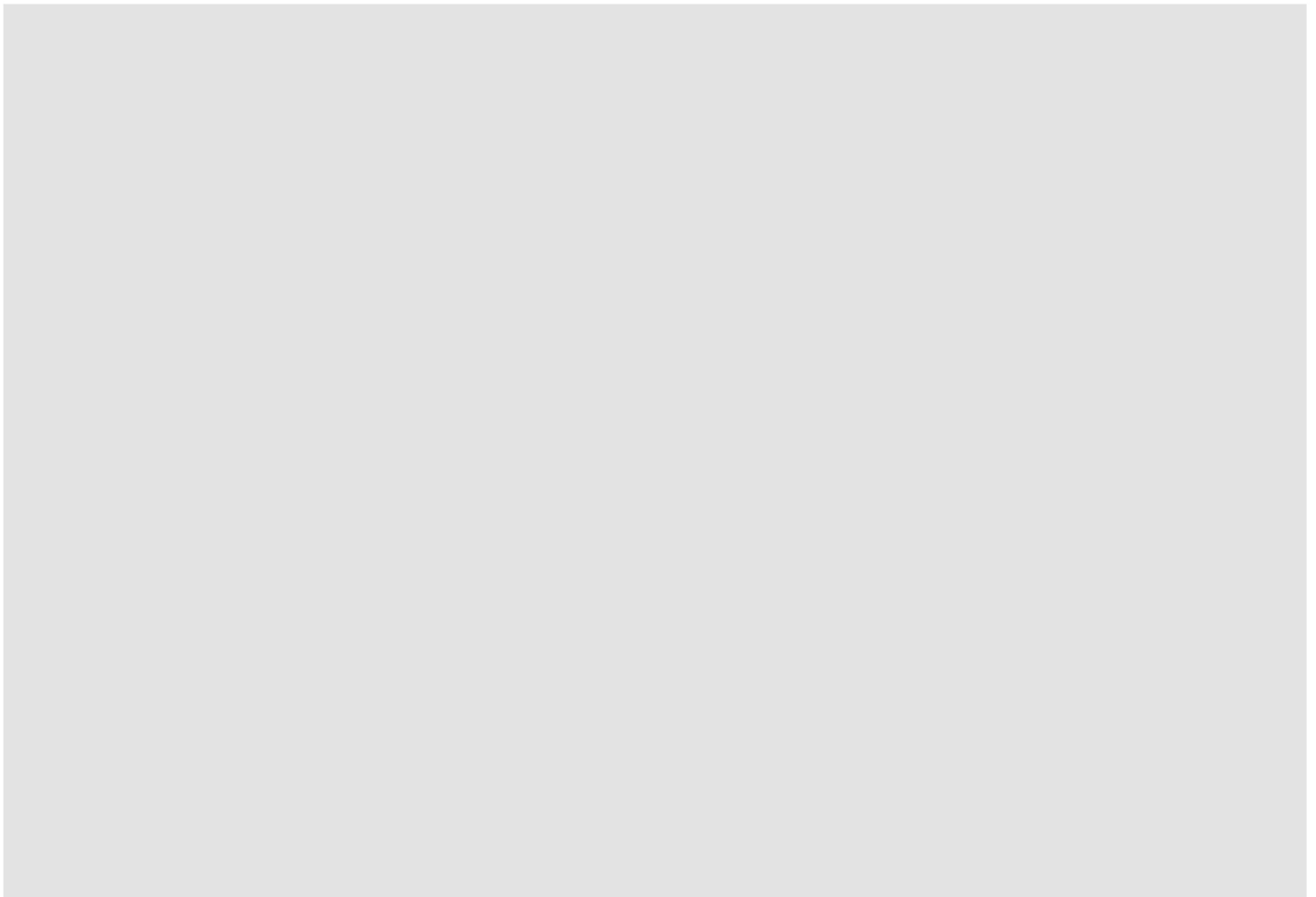
I believe it's important to experience both sides. It feels good to win but growing up losing was humbling; it broke down any sense of entitlement. I knew how to fail and I was good at it. I learned something in that season; I learned what I didn't want in life. In a way, I failed forward. I was fortunate enough to learn this at a young age, so by the time I was still in my early 20's I had vision with zero fear of failure.



## REFLECTION

1. Metaphorically, are you skipping practice? In what areas of your life are you cheating yourself? For example, it could be neglecting your health, binging on entertainment or living in fear.
2. Are you in a losing/learning season? If so, how can you flip it to your benefit? Write down a list of things you've learned from it.
3. Where do you envision yourself in the next season of life? Are you on the right track? If not, what changes can you make today to influence long-term success?

## NOTES



## SHARE

This series was inspired by the ring. Like a fighter, we depend on the people in our corner. We can only fight for so long before we need rest, healing and feedback. This series was simply written to help you fight the good fight. Whether you're lacing combat boots, sneakers or oxfords, let's favor a plan to crush the trials ahead. If you've felt empowered or inspired through these short stories, like iron sharpens iron, I encourage you to share this with your team.

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