



# MY FATHER'S GAME

Meet the man who first taught me how to swing, throw, and love the game of baseball. This chapter explores how his passion for the sport became the foundation of our father-son bond.

What made baseball stick for me—and what made it grow into something far bigger than a game—was the way my father shared it. He didn't just tell stories about the Dodgers or the games he had played as a kid. He lived those stories, and he invited me in, slowly, patiently, with every throw, every word, and every quiet encouragement. I could see it in the way he explained the rules when I was learning to throw and catch. He had a patience I still admire, a quiet dedication to helping me understand the nuances of the game. And through it all, he showed me that baseball was about more than skill. It was about love, commitment, and the joy of being part of something bigger than yourself. He took the game very seriously, but enjoyed it at the same time.

My earliest memories of baseball with my father weren't about stadiums or professional games—they were about small, intimate lessons played out in the backyard or on the stoop in front of our house. I remember the first time he handed me a baseball and glove. The leather was stiff, the seams raised under my fingers, and I had no idea how to hold it properly. He adjusted my grip and gently showed me the correct way to throw. "Keep your elbow up," he said, "and follow through. Watch the ball all the way into your glove." He would stand next to me in the field in my early days, insisting I use two hands to field a ball. I would get my knees dirty knocking down the ball with my chest. It wasn't a lecture. It was an invitation—an opportunity to learn alongside someone who loved the game as much as I was beginning to.

When I missed a catch, which happened often at first, he didn't sigh or scold. He jogged over, picked up the ball, and tossed it back to me with a steady smile. "Try again," he said. And I did, over and over. Each small success—finally catching a ball, finally making a decent throw—was celebrated, quietly but fully, with a nod, a word of praise, a shared smile. It was in these moments that I began to understand something fundamental: baseball was never just about the game. It was about the people you shared it with.

As I got older, the lessons deepened. He showed me the difference between a fastball and a curveball, explained why a pitcher's delivery could change the rhythm of a game, and talked about strategy as if it were a secret language. He would not let me pitch until I was in my teens, telling me it was better to let my arm develop. I listened eagerly, sometimes interrupting with questions, other times just soaking it all in. Watching

him, I began to understand the game not just as a set of rules or a pastime, but as a rhythm, a conversation, a narrative in motion. And in learning the game, I was also learning from him—his patience, his dedication, his way of valuing effort over results.

Even before I realized it, the lessons my father had learned as a boy became lessons for me. His passion for baseball shaped the way I approached playing, collecting, and even thinking about life. Whether we were sitting together watching a game on TV, debating which players were the best, or heading into the back yard to toss a ball back and forth, those early lessons stayed with me. Baseball became our language—a way to communicate, to bond, and to create memories that would last far longer than any season.

By the time I opened my first pack of Topps cards in the car on the way to a Little League game, my father had already laid the foundation. He didn't just introduce me to the hobby; he introduced me to a world filled with stories, emotions, and shared experiences. Each card I collected, each game I played, each memory I made—it all started with him and the love of the game that he passed on to me.

Reflecting on those moments now, I realize they weren't just about baseball. They were about connection, trust, and the simple joy of being together. Those moments created a bond that would carry through childhood, teenage years, and even adulthood—long after the games ended and long after the first pack of cards was opened.

Continue reading *Cards From My Father* to step into the full story of a game, a collection, and a bond that shaped a lifetime.

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