



The Matheny Manifesto: A Young Manager's Old-School Views on Success in Sports and Life

Mike Matheny, Jerry B. Jenkins

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“Nothing worth doing right is easy.”

–Mike Matheny

Mike Matheny was just forty-one, without professional managerial experience and looking for a next step after a successful career as a Major League catcher, when he succeeded the legendary Tony La Russa as manager of the St. Louis Cardinals in 2012. While Matheny has enjoyed immediate success, leading the Cards to the postseason three times in his first three years, people have noticed something else about his life, something not measured in day-to-day results. Instead, it's based on a frankly worded letter he wrote to the parents of a Little League team he coached, a cry for change that became an Internet sensation and eventually a “manifesto.”

The tough-love philosophy Matheny expressed in the letter contained his throwback beliefs that authority should be respected, discipline and hard work rewarded, spiritual faith cultivated, family made a priority, and humility considered a virtue. In *The Matheny Manifesto*, he builds on his original letter by first diagnosing the problem at the heart of youth sports—hint: it starts with parents and coaches—and then by offering a hopeful path forward. Along the way, he uses stories from his small-town childhood as well as his career as a player, coach, and manager to explore eight keys to success: leadership, confidence, teamwork, faith, class, character, toughness, and humility.

From “The Coach Is Always Right, Even When He’s Wrong” to “Let Your Catcher Call the Game,” Matheny’s old-school advice might not always be popular or politically correct, but it works. His entertaining and deeply inspirational book will not only resonate with parents, coaches, and athletes, it will also be a powerful reminder, from one of the most successful new managers in the game, of what sports can teach us all about winning on the field and in life.

The Matheny Manifesto: A Young Manager's Old-School Views on Success in Sports and Life Details

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Lisa B. says

My Thoughts

Disclosure: I was born and raised a STL Cardinal baseball fan. I live my life and will die as a STL Cardinal baseball fan. Some might argue that this would bias me to give a favorable review of a book written by the current manager of the STL Cardinals baseball team. Duly noted.

I liked Mike Matheny when he was the catcher for the Cardinals. I was sad when he left the team. I, like many others, was a bit surprised when he was hired to be manager since he had no prior experience as a manager at the major league level. I think this book is evidence of why he does so well in this position. The message that he outlines in the book for coaching young baseball players seems to be the way he handles adult players. There are many interesting examples of successes and failures, along with the thought process behind his decision making.

You don't have to be a baseball fan or even a lover of sports to be able to learn something from this book. It was very well written and has lessons that can be used in everyday life.

My thanks to Crown Publishing, via Netgalley, for allowing me to read this in exchange for an unbiased review.

Quela says

I've been reading this book off and on between other books and absolutely loved it! Granted I love baseball and anything Cardinals, but I'd recommend this to any coach and to anyone who has kids in youth sports. Matheny talks about how kids and parents should act. How principles in sports relate to life. How to win and lose with class! A lot of things in here that I think people need to be reminded in this day and age, including myself. Great read!

Matt Schirano says

The whole time I felt like I was listening to Clint Eastwood from Gran Torino tell me why everyone younger than him is an idiot and why the world is horrible because no one lives the way he thinks they should. He also simultaneously claims to not push his faith on other people, while explaining how he pushed his faith on other people. I was ambivalent to Mike Matheny before reading this book, now I don't like him.

Kathleen says

The big problem with this book is that the content doesn't justify book-length treatment. There's just not

enough there.

Mike Matheny has been the manager of the St. Louis Cardinals since 2012. Before that, he was a catcher for the Cardinals and a few other major-league teams. This book exists because of a letter Matheny wrote to the parents when he was coaching a youth baseball team between his playing days and the time he started managing the Cardinals.

The letter itself is great. It's to the point and explains how he expects players but primarily the parents on his team to act. He wants no cheering and no second-guessing. And that letter is the reason this book came into existence -- though Matheny's success with the Cardinals undoubtedly pushed it along as well.

The rest of the book bogs down in Matheny's biography. It hits the worst place when he gets into his religious testimony, which is presented shallowly and without much passion. There are also pages of John Wooden quotes, strung together. The best parts are when he talks about baseball and parenting.

Laurie Prim says

I love baseball. I like the Cardinals, who we see play a lot during spring training in Jupiter. I like Mike Matheny, a well-liked, respected, successful manager and former catcher, and the best looking guy in the MLB (wait, did I write that out loud?). I sort of liked this book.

I initially picked it up because of all of the above, and also because it hinted at parents taking a step back from their involvement in little league baseball, and just letting the coaches and kids do their thing, a concept that resonates with me. I can't tell you how often I find myself wanting to tell someone, "Your kid's not going to the majors. Can you just chill and let them play, and enjoy the game? Let me enjoy the game?"

To be fair, in our league, a lot of the blame goes not only to the parents, but the dysfunctional coaches and administrators of the league themselves, so we're kind of screwed either way. Still, if Mike Matheny has some thoughts on the best ways to both step back and move forward, I knew it would be helpful for my husband (the best looking guy in Little League!) and me, and more importantly, good for our son.

I love the major theme of the book, which is to be focused a lot less on trying to raise major leaguers or college scholarshipers, and more focused on raising good people. If a college or major league career comes out of it, bonus, and in fact, this philosophy probably gives kids a better chance at that bonus.

What I did not like about the book is that all the credit for the values and virtues of leading a good baseball life as well as a good life in general—integrity, leadership, teamwork, confidence, humility, toughness, honesty, class—goes to God and Christianity, instead of just plain old boring humanity. And when that happens, there is always, always an underlying hum of self-righteousness, even as the writer or speaker insists there isn't: Look at humble ol' me, giving all the credit of all my wonderfulness to my creator. So virtuous.

But this is Mike Matheny's book, and rightly, he doesn't apologize for his personal beliefs and processes. While I will never be a major league catcher or manager (damn!), if I want a secular book about raising little leaguers to be good people, I'm sure there are others out there, or I should write my own.

In fact, I think I will.

Here it is. It's a lot shorter, which Matheny's could have been too.

The Prim Proclamation by Laurie Prim

Play hard.

Play fair.

Be respectful. Of everyone: teammates, coaches, opponents, umpires. Of baseball.

Be nice.

Don't have pissing contests.

You're not as good or as bad as you think you are, nor is anyone else.

Lead by example.

Encourage and lift up others.

Be a good sport.

Never stop learning and improving.

Have fun.

See? Not Christian. Just Human.

Let's Go Marlins!

And Cardinals.

- See more at: [http://laurieprim.com/index.php/2016/...](http://laurieprim.com/index.php/2016/)

Erin says

I was intrigued the moment I heard about Mike Matheny's new book, which is subtitled "A Young Manager's Old-School Views On Success In Sports And Life." Not only am I a St. Louis Cardinals fan, I'm also a teacher who is very much interested in helping every young person in my path grow up to be a man or woman of character and faith. I found "The Matheny Manifesto" to be a wonderful and engaging read, for which some credit must go to co-author Jerry B. Jenkins, and it's one that I would heartily recommend to baseball fans, coaches, parents, and anyone looking to impact the next generation in a positive way.

The book's title came from a letter Matheny wrote to a group of parents who asked him to coach their sons in a youth league after Matheny's professional career as a catcher came to an end. Before he would accept the job, Matheny wanted to outline exactly what his goals and intentions were for the parents and the team, just in case his old-school values would make them want to rescind the coaching offer in the first place.

Somewhat to his surprise, the parents did get on board and nicknamed his letter "The Matheny Manifesto." Thus began a character-building youth sports program in the St. Louis area, and the unconventional training and results were soon gaining a good reputation around the area.

I enjoyed the way Matheny wove his own life story through the pages. He talked about his upbringing with hard-working parents and competitive brothers, his own experience in various youth leagues, his college years, the ups and downs of a professional career, how he dealt with the injuries that finally forced his retirement, and his utter surprise at even being considered for the managerial position when the St. Louis Cardinals called him for an interview in 2012. His personal Christian faith is a recurring theme, even sharing his salvation testimony and spelling out the Romans Road. This is a man who is not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ!

I wanted to stand up and cheer every time Matheny spoke of the impact that teachers and coaches should be consciously aware of having over their young people. As he states on page 53, "We've been given the rare privilege and heavy responsibility of influencing young people on a daily basis, for better or for worse, for the rest of their lives." He expounds further on page 74: "...Our own kids and the kids we teach and coach [are] looking for someone to stand up for what is right and make a difference in their lives." I don't know about you, but I want to be that positive difference!

Matheny's passion for living and playing the right way comes through loud and clear as he highlights his keys to success, which are leadership, confidence, teamwork, faith, class, character, toughness, and humility. If I had to pick a favorite among those, I would probably pick the one on character. I really enjoyed all of them, but that one stood out to me.

There's so much more I could say, but my recommendation would be that if this book interests you at all, you should to find a way to read it. I don't think you'll be disappointed!

I received my copy of this book from the publisher in exchange for this honest review. All opinions are my own.

This review originated at <http://reviewsbyerin.livejournal.com>

Carol says

As a catcher for the St. Louis Cardinals from 2000 to 2004, Mike Matheny was always one of my favorite baseball players, but after reading his inspirational book, I now have an even greater respect for him as a person and Manager.

His approach to teaching youngsters having **only** their best interests in mind, **and** overcoming adversity in his own life made for an entertaining and enlightening read.

Yep, as a fan of the game, I will *still* get mad at him for leaving a pitcher in too long....but am *so proud* to have him as our head honcho!

A die-hard St. Louis Cardinal fan.

Mark Mitchell says

This book is a must-read for any youth-sports coach, parent of a child playing organized sports -- and will likely be useful to many young athletes. Matheny's love for sports and for children comes through strongly, even as he is frankly critical of the hyper-competitive, me-first attitude of some parents. He shares his own experiences in baseball, from youth baseball through the Major Leagues, including his devastating concussions, and the mistakes he thinks he made along the way. Matheny also shares his story as a youth baseball coach, and the approach he took to make the team about the children, rather than their parents. This book isn't a baseball-technique (or even a coaching-technique book); instead it's about the appropriate mindset for competitive sports. While acknowledging that some kids will be more talented, or harder-

working than others, Matheny emphasizes the aspects of character and emotional intelligence that are important for both parents and their children.

Rhonda Coale says

Full disclosure here! I am a lifelong Cardinals fan and a huge fan of Mike Matheny as a player and as the current manager of the Cardinals. That said, now I know why. He is just a good person--a good ballplayer, a good manager, and a good man. He really nails it by telling what is exactly wrong with youth sports today--the parents, the pressure, and the "winning is everything" mentality, and explains what can be done to change it. His humility is refreshing--he talks about the value of making mistakes and being humble. This book is written memoir-style, very plain, conversational and easy to read. His overall message is be a good person--be honest, humble, responsible, authentic, true to your beliefs, respectful of and helpful to others--and the "winning" and success in your life will take care of itself. Even if you're not a Matheny/Cardinals/baseball fan, this book has some fantastic messages that you can apply to your life, no matter what.

Jen says

I can't give this a high enough rating. Every coach, player and parent should read this.

Harley says

I bought this book because I have been a life-long St. Louis Cardinal fan. Mike Matheny took over as the manager of the Cardinals in 2012 with almost no experience managing professionally. Mike was a catcher in the major leagues for 13 years until a concussion ended his playing days. Five of his best playing years was with the St. Louis Cardinals during 2000 - 2004 seasons.

I knew very little about Matheny until I picked up this book. He was born in West Virginia and raised near Columbus, Ohio. He was drafted out of high school by the Toronto Bluejays but chose to attend college at the University of Michigan. He was drafted a second time by the Milwaukee Brewers where he spent the first 5 years of his professional career.

After Mike's playing career ended and he was searching for what to do with the rest of his life, he was asked to coach a Little League team. Before he accepted the position, he wrote a five page letter to the parents spelling out how he would manage and what he expected from them. Mike was not happy with the way youth sports was being played and would only manage if parents would let the coaches coach.

Someone posted Mike's letter on the internet and it went viral and gave him his 15 minutes of fame. He successfully created several Little League teams that behaved differently than other teams. The focus was on building character not winning.

I recommend this book to anyone who loves baseball as well as any parent who has a child in sports. What Matheny has to say may surprise you and even challenge your thinking. The book, co-written with Jerry Jenkins, is a fast read.

Laura Hoffman Brauman says

This was a very interesting read -- even if it is way outside my wheelhouse. A friend recommended it to me because she thought I would be interested in his perspective on youth sports -- and she was right. Lots of good stuff to think about in here as a parent.

Hilary says

What an unexpected book! I wanted to read it because I'm going to meet Mike Matheny tomorrow night. I had no idea what it was even about when I started. I am totally blown away by him and this book. I wish every parent who has or may have children playing sports would read this book, as well as every coach out there. I have always been so turned off by the way parents act in sports that I prayed I would end up with a child who wasn't athletic. I now see that avoidance isn't the answer to the problem of youth sports. Thank you thank you thank you for this book and inspiring me to want to make a difference in the world and raise my kids to make a difference in whatever hobby or profession they choose. Mike Matheny for president!! BUT REALLY!

QuinM says

The Matheny Manifesto is a autobiography book written Mike Matheny. The Matheny Manifesto is 217 pages. The book is about Mike Matheny and his coaching experiences. The story takes place in St.Louis, Missouri. The plot of the story is based on the story of Mike Matheny and him while coaching his son and the St.Louis Cardinal. His main goal was to teach his team no matter kids or adults that it will take discipline and hard work to get better.

I would recommend this book to any sports players who want to learn how to become better. My favorite part of the book was when Mike Matheny told his players "Even when the coach is wrong he is right". It was my favorite part because he teaches his players that you always need to respect your leader or coach. My least favorite part of the book was when Mike Matheny had to leave his sons team to go coach the St.Louis Cardinals. It was my least favorite part because he had started becoming a great impact on his sons team and he had to leave it behind. If I could change anything in the book I would change Mike Matheny leaving his sons team for the St.Louis Cardinals so early because I thought it was interesting what he was teaching the little leaguers because I am one. These were some of the reasons why I thought The Matheny Manifesto was a great book.

Tim says

Great book teaching some solid life principles from a humble guy. The afterword from Bob Costas is especially poignant. The writing quality starts to decline a bit as the book enters its final couple of chapters, but still some fantastic life lessons for anyone. If you have kids that are going to be (or are currently) in youth sports, there is great perspective from both the coach and the parents.

"My Christian Faith guides my life and while I have never been one to force it down someone's throat, I also think it's cowardly and hypocritical to shy away from what I believe. Page 14-15

Nothing worth doing right is easy. Page 22

The coach is always right, even when he is wrong.

Don't push your kids to commit to a single sport too early.

John wooden quotes:

Be quick but don't hurry

The more concerned we become over the things that we can't control, the less we do with the things that we can control. P96

Be slow to correct and quick to commend. P99

The person who responds to an ugly comment with a graceful one shows class.

The person who can calm another's anger with a soft whisper exhibits class.

The person who passes up an opportunity to draw attention to himself, or displays empathy but refusing to put someone else down shows class."

P165
