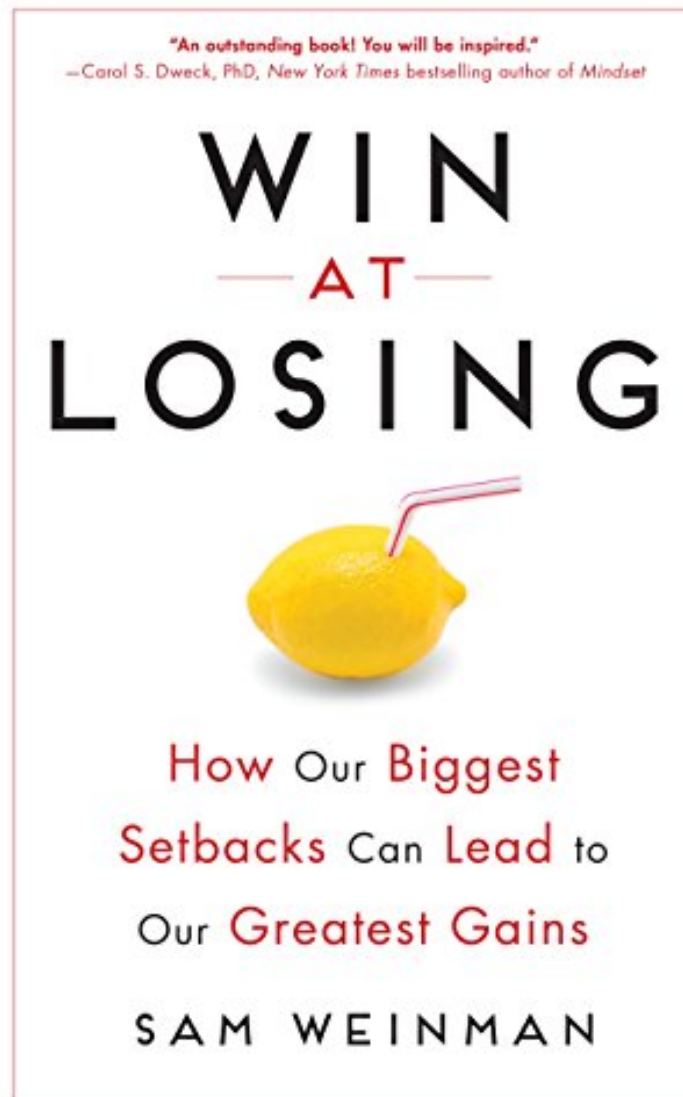


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Win at Losing: How Our Biggest Setbacks Can Lead to Our Greatest Gains

Sam Weinman

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Sam Weinman : Win at Losing: How Our Biggest Setbacks Can Lead to Our Greatest Gains before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Win at Losing: How Our Biggest Setbacks Can Lead to Our Greatest Gains:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great life lessons with real world examplesBy CustomerSam Weinman's book is a great read for pre-teens, teens and adults alike. He uses real world examples of sport stars,

celebrities and others who have learned from and prospered after major setbacks. In today's world where kids are rewarded for just showing up, "Win at Losing" does a fantastic job of showing how resilience after being knocked down, is an extremely valuable trait that will serve you over and over again. The book goes one step further in showing how multiple losses can be the necessary steps to a winning result. Truly a great book. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. What an insightful and inspirational book! Our family listened ...By G. Michael Weiksner
What an insightful and inspirational book! Our family listened to the audio version on a long car ride. We are all working on our growth mind set and I find myself looking at my losses in a whole new light. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Very inspirational
By Hannah Davies
I really enjoyed the stories shared and was inspired by them. I could relate to some of them. The author writes in an interesting and personal manner. The only reason I gave it 4 stars instead of 5 is due to a few instances of crude language.

An engaging, inspiring exploration of the surprising value of setbacks—and how we can use them to succeed As an award-winning sports journalist, Sam Weinman has long studied the ripple effects of losing. But as a father of two competitive boys, he struggled to convince them that failing—whether losing a hockey game or bombing a math test—can actually be a critical part of success. So he sought out the perspectives of men and women who have turned significant setbacks into meaningful comebacks—and sometimes even new careers—to illustrate how we can not only overcome defeat but grow stronger from the experience. Blending firsthand interviews and advice from professional athletes, business executives, politicians, and Hollywood stars with expert analysis from leading psychologists and coaches, *Win at Losing* reveals how renowned figures—from Emmy Award-winning actress Susan Lucci to golfer Greg Norman and politician Michael Dukakis—have prevailed and even triumphed in the aftermath of loss, humiliation, and rejection. In showcasing the ways our most difficult moments can be turned into powerful growth opportunities, this lively and moving guide asks readers to redefine what constitutes success and failure, and offers an essential blueprint for harnessing the power of setbacks to achieve what we want in life. From the Hardcover edition.

"Instructive reading for anyone who wonders how to cope with defeat—at work, at sports, at life . . . Reading the stories from the other side of famous defeats, as well as the psychological benefits of those defeats, is incredibly useful." —Chicago Tribune
"The clear, conversational, and self-aware writing creates an enjoyable read with a worthy takeaway." —Booklist
"An outstanding book! In riveting chapters, Weinman portrays spectacular failures that helped people grow instead of crushing them. You will be inspired."
—Carol S. Dweck, PhD, New York Times bestselling author of *Mindset*
"We always hear and read a great deal about winning and the joy of success. *Win at Losing* is all about the other side of winning and the truth that no one wins without losing many times. Learning from losing is a big part of success. This is a wonderful read."
—Bob Rotella, PhD, bestselling author of *Golf Is Not a Game of Perfect*
"Because we live in a country where our most admired citizens are labeled 'winners,' we often fail to appreciate the tremendous value of defeat. Well, thank goodness for Sam Weinman, whose ode to dropping the ball, missing the shot, failing to rise to the occasion is a beautiful—and important—reminder that second place often trumps first. A blissful read."
—Jeff Pearlman, bestselling author of *The Bad Guys Won*
"Readers (especially sports fans) will enjoy this thought-provoking analysis of beneficial losses."
—Publishers Weekly
"Sam Weinman took on a fascinating challenge when he decided to look into how people deal with loss—not just in sports, but in many walks of life. His reporting is thorough and insightful, allowing the reader a view of how those who are the best at what they do, deal—and grow from—defeat."
—John Feinstein, bestselling author of *A Season on the Brink*
"What's the thread that unites the highest performers in sports, business, and life? They've all faced failure and defeat . . . and emerged stronger for the experience. Sam Weinman takes readers on an entertaining journey that shows how getting knocked down is part of all of our lives, and how each of us can grow and learn from the experience."
—Mark McClusky, bestselling author of *Faster, Higher, Stronger*
"Sam Weinman will have to do his own 'winning from losing' in some other forum, because his book is terrific. And, although its genesis was in sports, it's really about how to be a better, happier, and more self-aware person."
—David Owen, staff writer, *The New York Times*
About the Author
SAM WEINMAN is the digital editor of *Golf Digest*. Prior to that, he was a senior writer for *The Journal News* in Westchester County, New York, where he was honored with multiple national writing awards for his coverage of the PGA Tour and the National Hockey League. His work has also appeared in *USA Today*, *Golf World*, *Yahoo! Sports*, *ESPN the Magazine*, and *Sports Illustrated*. A graduate of the University of New Hampshire, he lives with his wife and two sons in Rye, New York, where he coaches youth sports teams. To learn more, check out his website, www.SamWeinman.com
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The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.
—OLIVER GOLDSMITH
The most important sporting event I ever attended was a kids' tennis match on an August afternoon. This might seem odd coming from a sportswriter who has covered World Series and Stanley Cup Finals and dozens of major golf championships. But none of those

events involved my kid. And none led me down this curious road of talking to everyone from professional athletes to CEOs to presidential candidates about their most crushing defeats. That's the road that led me here. But first there was a tennis match on a quiet late-summer day. There was no press. There were only a handful of spectators. And the only real drama came at the end when my oldest son essentially lost it. I should explain: Charlie is a pretty good tennis player. Approaching eleven, he has everything down—the two-handed backhand, the open-stance forehand, the emphatic little grunt with every stroke. Charlie couldn't tell you the reason one grunts when playing tennis. But he knows that Rafael Nadal grunts, so the conversation ends there. This is how it usually works with him. About a year ago, Charlie talked us into getting him a blue Nike headband like the one Nadal wears, and now whenever he misplaces it, he reacts as if he's missing a kidney. I'll ask before a match, tearing frantically through the house. I can't play without my headband. Over the course of that summer, as Charlie would punctuate forehand winners with Nadal uppercuts, the other kids around the tennis court took to calling him Rafa. Charlie ate it up—so much, in fact, that if in mixed company I dared to call him anything else, I might as well have announced he still wet the bed. Rafa, correct me. Right, I'd say. Sorry. When it came time for our club's junior tournament, Charlie progressed through the early portion of the ten-and-under bracket with enough ease that he began thinking ahead to the final. We both did, actually, although outwardly I was saying all the right things: Respect your opponent; one match at a time; it's important to just have fun. In the semifinal, when he matched up against a timid, freckly kid named Jake, Charlie bounced onto the court confidently, perhaps thinking that if he wrapped up the win with enough time to spare, he could sneak in a swim cap and a candy bar before dinner. Seated on the deck overlooking the tennis courts, my wife, Lisa, and I made small talk with Jake's mom and feigned indifference through the first part of the match. Oh, are they keeping score? How cute! We anticipated a short match. But as play unfolded, nothing went right. Charlie placed backhands into the corner, and Jake hunted them down, sometimes even passing Charlie with a winner of his own. Serving, never a strength for my son, was now an ordeal, with Charlie at one point forfeiting an entire game by sending eight consecutive balls into the net. On the deck, Lisa continued to indulge Jake's mom in conversation, but I couldn't hear them anymore. I was entranced. As I watched my son, I could see his anxiety level rise—the hurried tosses, the twitchy fiddling with his racket, the occasional look heavenward when he sailed another shot long, as if God had suddenly taken interest in a ten-year-old's tennis match and was siding squarely with Jake. By the final game, Charlie was flat-footed and waving passively at the ball. On the final point his forehand bounced before the net and onto Jake's side, and Jake briefly weighed whether he should play it. It didn't matter; the match was over in twenty minutes. Charlie lost. When Jake approached the net with his hand extended, Charlie shuffled forward to weakly reciprocate, looking past his opponent the whole time. Then he tore off his headband, flung his racket at my feet as I approached, and ran toward the parking lot. Charlie! I hissed in a sort of scream-whisper, the same type of urgent yet polite tone you might use to ask someone to fetch you a roll of toilet paper. Come back! Charlie turned toward me, his face streaked with tears. I'm never playing tennis again! he said. That's it! That's it? I said. Yours, re retiring? Will there be a press conference? Stop, Dad, he said. It's not funny. It went on like that for a little while, Charlie swearing off tennis, me summoning some of my best material. Though I still hadn't talked him out of retirement, I eventually convinced him to gather his racket and head to the car while I went to find Lisa, who had said good-bye to Jake and his mom and was now waiting for me under the awning by the tennis court. Lisa and I have been married for fifteen years and have been friends since the fifth grade. She knows all my looks, and I know most of hers, and as I walked toward her, she offered a faint smile in the vein. Then she finally spoke. My God, she said. Hers, you. So this book began with a tennis match. In watching Charlie unravel over something so insignificant, I started to think about how learning to lose is an acquired skill, like juggling or parallel parking. It contradicts our most basic nature because everything in our DNA has taught us to want to win and hate to lose. After all, at one point in our history, winning was about more than tennis matches. It was about securing food and shelter and not letting the neighborhood pack of wolves make off with one of your kids. You've heard that Vince Lombardi line: Winning isn't everything. It's the only thing. The context was football, but for a great portion of human existence, it could have been describing the simple struggle to survive. Now, though, we lose and usually live to tell about it. We lose in sports, and we lose in our careers, and we lose out on that house with the perfect backyard we were certain we were going to get. Some of us are losing our hair, although we'd prefer not to talk about that. Over the course of any given year, we probably lose a thousand different ways, and as painful and inconvenient as those losses might be, we still have a say in how we handle them. We too often overlook that last part. This is a truth we've come to appreciate not only as a father of two sports-mad boys but also as someone who's had his own frequent dalliances with failure. My wife's contention that Charlie in the teary aftermath of his tennis match is a miniature version of me is true, but only to an extent. I still struggle with losing in its various

forms: in men's league hockey games, in golf matches for five dollars, and as an editor when I see the competition come up with a story we don't have. My authority in writing this book does not stem from the graceful and admirable ways I've lost in my life but rather the opposite. I've thrown my racket and slammed my fist on my desk, and on one occasion I slung my varsity jacket into a puddle of mud after a bad pass cost my high school hockey team our season. Once, stuck in a newspaper job, I was awaiting word about a plum job I was on the short list for getting. It was my birthday, and Lisa and I were headed out the door for dinner. When the email came that the job went to someone else, I sat down at our kitchen table and cried. The difference now is I also see that losing can serve in ways winning never can. Losing has taught me and toughened me and forced me to address the very shortcomings that got me in trouble in the first place. That bad pass I made at the end of my junior year in high school inspired me to get stronger and fitter, and it led to a senior year in which I emerged a different player. That plum job I didn't get was inspiration to develop the skills that led to an even better opportunity later. Looking outside myself, I've also come to realize that the people I'm most impressed by are not the ones who appear to float through life but those whose weaknesses and failures are exposed in all sorts of undignified ways and yet they emerge stronger as a result: golfers who've blown tournaments, politicians who've botched elections, the bookstore owner who has struggled to pay his bills for decades and has only recently begun to turn a profit. What I've found is that the people who've approached their failures honestly and constructively are often able to point to tangible benefits of those losses. The impact of this can be profound: The more we can embrace the upside of losing, the healthier our perspective toward whatever is in front of us, the less encumbered we are by fear. Although my interest in how we handle losing began with a personal challenge, I saw it as a challenge that permeated every segment of our society. And it was in recognizing the thread between my family's modest struggles and the bigger, bolder stories that exist elsewhere that I decided to dive in headfirst. I sought out Olympians and politicians, entertainers and Internet startup CEOs. Their versions of losing vary—lost games, failed political campaigns, businesses and careers dissolved in flames—and may seem unrelated at first glance. But there are similarities as well, and it was upon consulting a wide swath of experts that I learned there is not only an art to losing but a great deal of science, too. I saw there is a way to not only tolerate setbacks but also use them as a foundation for future success—to win, if you will, at losing. I'd love to tell you I contemplated all this while driving away from the tennis courts that day, but more likely I was thinking about dinner and whether I needed to stop for beer. But the image of Charlie's frustration lingered. I had taught my son a forehand and a backhand, and he knew exactly where to stand when receiving at 30. Yet there was still much for both of us to learn about coping with the swirling emotions that come with defeat. No one sets out to be a good loser, in the same way that no one sets out to be an ex-husband. I used to think of losing as one would curing a hangover or avoiding prosecution: If you've achieved a level of proficiency at it, you probably ought to consider what that says. You may recall Super Bowl 50, when the Denver Broncos upset the Carolina Panthers, and Carolina's star quarterback, Cam Newton, was so despondent he walked out of his postgame press conference. The next day he explained his reasoning, "Show me a good loser and I'll show you a loser." I've come to abhor that sentiment to the point that I now think being a good loser is exactly what we should aspire to be. Being a good loser does not denote some hapless resignation. It implies perspective and resilience and the quiet confidence that the world will not crumble around you just because of a fleeting setback. There are all kinds of stories about athletes whose abundant desire to win carried over to the most mundane tasks. At airports, Michael Jordan would bet his teammates whose bag would shoot out of the carousel first. Jordan was said to revel in winning, less because he needed to prove his baggage claim prowess and more because, like Cam Newton, he didn't want any more experience with losing than he absolutely needed. Trivial as it sounds, Jordan was doing himself a disservice. There is in fact merit to this sort of experience, and he should know. As a high school sophomore, Jordan was famously cut from the varsity basketball team, and he channeled that disappointment into a competitive fire that burned for decades. Later, when his Chicago Bulls stumbled in the playoffs each spring against the more experienced Detroit Pistons, Jordan used the lessons from those losses to help transform the Bulls into a dynasty. The Bulls would win six NBA championships over the next eight years, and Jordan, who also won an NCAA title and two Olympic gold medals, would become known as the consummate winner in basketball, if not all of sports. But success brought complications as well, many of which persisted into retirement. Jordan became so obsessed with winning and so uneasy with losing that he struggled to find a comparable outlet now that he had hit middle age and was incapable of replicating the same level of success he had as a player. The writer Wright Thompson had rare access to Jordan and his inner circle for a 2014 profile in *ESPN the Magazine*, and he depicted the basketball legend in the years following his retirement as unfulfilled and restless. "There's no way to measure these things, but there's a strong case to be made that Jordan is the most intense competitor on the planet. He's in the conversation, at the very least, and now he has been reduced to grasping for outlets for this competitive rage," Thompson writes in "Michael Jordan Has Not Left the Building." "His self-esteem has always been, as he says, 'tied directly to the game.' Without it, he feels adrift. 'Who am I? What am I doing?'" By Thompson's account, Jordan's model was unsustainable. Beyond deriving outsized satisfaction from the

games he won, he had so distanced himself from the sensation of failure that he had no road map for how to react when his post-Bulls career proved rocky. To Dr. Jerry Brodli, a noted family psychologist in Greenwich, Connecticut, this Jordan was an extreme version of the teenager who thinks he can do no wrong and then struggles mightily once he does. "It's like this golden kid who develops an inflated sense of self," Brodli says. "Ultimately, these are the kids who have a really hard time when whatever makes them special is taken away." In his celebrated commencement address at Kenyon College in 2005, the late author David Foster Wallace detailed the perils of placing unhealthy value in something as tenuous as money, beauty, or glory. "Worship power, you will end up feeling weak and afraid, and you will need ever more power over others to numb you to your own fear," Wallace said. "The point isn't that you should strive for mediocrity, and heaven help me if my argument is based on the pitfalls of becoming a multimillionaire icon. But both Brodli and Wallace arrive at the same place: uninterrupted success is a fantasy. The absence of certain humbling elements in our lives makes us more vulnerable in the long run. From there it stands to reason that losing is something not only that we should tolerate but also that we need.