

From: [David Kraemer](#)
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Subject: FW: One Person's Response to Communal Fear 5.26.20
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From: Morris Allen <mojo210al@icloud.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 26, 2020 9:24 AM
To: MOJO210AL <MOJO210AL@aol.com>
Subject: One Person's Response to Communal Fear 5.26.20

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Yesterday was a baseball kind of day. As you know, baseball remains my favorite sport for it captures the individual/group dichotomy so perfectly. The Twins had a day off (both on the schedule and in actuality). However, I awoke to the cheers from the Metrodome as Dan Gladden was circling the bases after his grand slam homerun in the First Game of the 1987 World Series. That 4th inning 7-run explosion culminated in that blast. WCCO had decided to give its announcers the day off—and replayed the winning Twins games from the '87 and '91 World Series. As I showered later in the afternoon after a long walk in the hot sun, I listened to the 6th game of the 1991 World Series, though I was out of the bathroom before Kirby Puckett's game winning shot that preceded the best baseball game ever pitched in the 7th and final World Series game that Twins would play up to the present. And to top the day off, I went to bed shortly after watching my all-time favorite baseball movie, "A League of Their Own" shown on the MLB Network. (Am sure MLB is saying something like "how the mighty have fallen"—even though I would watch that scene where an African American woman fan throws a ball with heat ack to Kit highlighting the segregation that marked that league and baseball until Jackie Robinson). But the best baseball scene in that movie is the one with Marla Hooch, Jimmy Duggan and Dottie Hinson. Hooch, who was supposed to be the best hitter on the team, is at the plate. Duggan, in one of his managerial drunken stupors, is inattentive to the game at hand. Dottie, the catcher who called the plays, flashes the bunt sign to Hooch. Suddenly, as if he realizes he is in charge, Duggan contradicts that signal and demands that Hooch hit away. The scene concludes with Hooch hitting a hard-hit ball into the outfield and transforms Dugan into the manager he would become.

There are many things to talk about concerning that movie—but for me on this Memorial Day weekend, it was that scene that captures the world in which we are living. When I was growing up, the sacrifice bunt was a sacred call to be made. Even the name itself suggested something that is alien to the culture in which we are living today. Our last real exposure to Major League baseball featured the "la Bomba Squad"—the 2019 Twins who broke the all-time season home run record. Gone are the days when fans are willing to spend way too much to watch a batter sacrificed from first to second by a ball player who is making way more than is understandable. Gone are the days when my father(zl) coached my "Little Chiefs" team in Lincoln, Nebraska and encouraged me to learn the art of bunting—because I was never going to really hit it out of the infield anyway. Gone

are the days when “small ball” will beat “long-ball teams.” And sadly, not just in baseball but in the society in which we are living today, sacrificing oneself for the good of the team is not something folks are eager to do—or even called upon to do. If anyone wanted to see how true that was, one only had to look at social media or watch the news of peoples’ behavior this past weekend.

For a long 11 weeks, many of us have been hunkered down in our homes, engaging at best with others via technological platform that allowed some closer social interaction than the phone. Clearly, for many people they sacrificed plenty during those weeks—including the potential loss of their livelihoods even as they protected their lives. For many others, however, particularly the folks who congregated on the boardwalks in the east and the pools in the Ozarks, the idea that they should remain “socially distant” or engage in behavior for the sake of others’ health was as foreign as a sacrifice bunt by Nelson Cruz. While many of us grew up still with the notion that you can’t have it all and certainly you can’t have it all on your timetable, the idea of waiting and of sacrificing for bigger goals down the line was a given. I remember when Bud Sweet(zl) told me the shul wouldn’t help with a down payment for a home because he thought it best that Phyllis and I buy something we could afford on our own. I never had the chance to thank him for that reminder of the importance of sacrifice and the opportunity for independence it provided when we needed it most. I think in part, having been raised by parents who themselves were called upon to sacrifice(against their wills) as a result of the depression and (and not against their wills) during WW2, their children grew up at a time when the sacrifice bunt was still a big part of the game. Rod Carew could hit for average, he could at times even “touch ‘em all”, but he also was a fantastic bunter and one who could excite the fans with a well-placed bunt between the pitcher and third. Watching scenes from the Ozarks over the weekend, I realized that none of them had my parents or the Bud’s and Betty’s as parents. And though I would like to believe that we did, maybe we weren’t the parents to have instilled self-sacrifice as much as we thought we had. And maybe and just maybe- that scene between Duggan and Hinson and Hooch(three classic baseball names) is a reminder that we are always going to be caught between conflicting signals and in the end—we are going to have to decide for ourselves whether to take one for the team or swing away for the fences. Morris

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