

THE 8-SECOND RESET

He rakes in the cage and disappears in the game. The at bat did not beat him. **The eight seconds after it did.** When something goes wrong, the body dumps adrenaline, the breathing goes shallow, the vision narrows. Nobody outgrows that feeling. The good ones just have something to do with it. Here is the something.

THE RESET. FOUR STEPS, ABOUT SIX SECONDS.

A physical trigger comes first on purpose: when he is rattled he will not remember an idea, but his body will remember a movement.

1 TOUCH

One physical trigger, the same one every time, forever. Tap the plate twice. Pull the back of the glove. Adjust the top of the batting glove. **This is the switch. It tells the body the last pitch is closed.**

2 BREATHE

One breath. In through the nose for four counts, out through the mouth for six. **The long exhale is the part that works.** A longer out-breath than in-breath is the fastest reliable way a person slows his own heart rate down.

3 NAME IT

One short sentence, what happened, no story attached. Not "I am terrible." Not "I am fine." Say the fact: "Rolled over a slider." "Under it." "Bad throw." **Naming it closes the file the brain keeps replaying.**

4 ONE JOB

Say the next single job out loud, in a handful of words. "Ball up in the zone." "Two outs, play is at first." **One job. Not three. Not a swing thought plus a plan plus a reminder.**

TOUCH. BREATHE. NAME IT. ONE JOB.

THE PRE-PITCH. WHERE THE CAGE SHOWS UP IN THE GAME.

Six jobs is zero jobs. The routine gives him exactly one. Same four steps, every single pitch.

STEP OUT. Physically leave the box. A boundary, not a stall.

RESET. Touch, breathe, name it if something just happened.

DECIDE. Pick the one job for this pitch: a zone, a location, a plan.

STEP IN. Once the foot is in, the deciding is over. Now he only sees it.

OUTSIDE THE LINE YOU THINK. INSIDE THE LINE YOU SEE.

That is the whole cage-to-game gap. The cage swing is free because there is nothing to decide. Give him his deciding outside the box and the in-box job becomes the one he already owns in the cage: track the ball, react. Thinking mechanics with two strikes? Step out, start the routine over. He is allowed.

10*

Train it before he needs it. Run the Reset ten times in practice today, on purpose, after ordinary pitches when nothing went wrong. A routine he only runs when he is scared is a panic button, not a routine. You practice a swing before you need it. Same rule.