**This I Believe Example 1**

**Finding Out What’s Under Second Base**

Lex Urban - Silver Spring, Maryland

My belief was formed eighteen years ago as a five-year-old kid during my first of many seasons of Little League baseball. My friend Patrick was on second base when I came up to bat. I sent a line drive out to left field and after admiring my hit for a while (that momentary pause that drives coaches and parents nuts), I took off running in the direction of first base. Patrick, however, had yet to start running. In fact, he hadn’t even left second base. Instead of running for third, Patrick had picked up the base to explore what was underneath. Apparently the mystery that had plagued kids for centuries—what could possibly be hiding underneath second base—needed to be solved immediately. The fact that it was the second inning of our first tee ball game was of no consequence.

What followed were howls of laughter from many kids and even a few adults. Of course, there were a few dads who pulled on their belt, spit to the side, and commented about kids needing to keep their head in the game and focus, but for the most part it was the funniest thing anyone had seen in a while. I don’t remember if we won the game, if I made it to second base, or if Patrick took it with him as he advanced to third. What I do remember, and what has become a core philosophy of mine, is that I should always take the time to find out what’s underneath second base.

Looking underneath second base is about living for the moment. It’s not caring if others think what I’m doing is stupid or foolish. It is about being honest with myself and doing what makes me happy and not bowing to outside pressures. It is a reminder that I should look beneath the surface of things, and more importantly, people. Everyone has a story—a series of significant and insignificant life experiences that precede each moment of their lives. I am more patient and understanding because I realize that the story may be a painful and stressful one.

After college graduation I did not get a high paying job on Wall Street like many of my classmates did. I decided to dedicate a year to full-time community service as an AmeriCorps volunteer at City Year—Washington, DC. I tutored kids of all ages in math and reading. I saw first-hand the impact of painful and stressful experiences. A hardened exterior usually hid a much softer individual on the inside. A kid who told me off on the first day later expressed sadness that he didn’t get to see me over the Thanksgiving break. I saw the power of giving my time to help others. It has truly been the most memorable experience of my life thus far.

No longer a five-year-old without a care in the world, I have been introduced to the adult concepts of planning, responsibility and maturity. No one can deny the importance of the future, but no one can guarantee its presence, either. I try not to get so wrapped up in planning for the future that I forget to enjoy what’s right in front of me. Taking time to look underneath second base reminds me that it’s the journey and not the destination that counts.

Looking under second base reminds me to take the time to appreciate things. It reminds me that the daily grind and the hustle and bustle of a fast-paced world is a voluntary activity. I can choose how I live my life. I choose to always take the time to find out what’s under second base.

*Lex Urban is the former captain of the two-time national champion Williams College men’s tennis team. Urban performed a year of full-time community service and civic leadership as an AmeriCorps member of City Year in Washington, DC. Raised in Connecticut, Urban now lives in Washington, DC, where he practices law.*