

BEYOND THE COLLEGIATE EXPERIENCE

with **Claire Reitmann-Grout**

When I pitched for Towson University we believed in a few superstitions. Words like “rain” or “no hitter” could not be said in the dugout, but we also believed in what we called Softball Karma. Our vision of softball karma is that if you are a good person, playing by the team’s rules and by the rules of the game when you were a lower classman on the team, you would be granted an amazing senior season. Putting in hours of selfless work for your team as you came up the ranks would lead to a senior year of accomplishing your softball career goals and essentially living your dreams.

My teammates and I believed in this karma, and I am sure the girls at Towson still do.

Last year my friend Emily Gould was a senior on the Towson softball team. Since Emily was a freshman she was an outstanding teammate and I always admired how much she was respected by the other players. She was voted captain her junior and senior years. Not only did people like Emily and she was a good person to her teammates, she also worked hard too. Emily always seemed to be the batter who was up in clutch situations. Two years in a row, her sophomore and junior years, she was the last batter to come in our last game of the seasons. With runners on base and

Softball Karma - or - Hard Work?

two outs in both of those games, she didn’t get the winning hit, even though all of us knew she was the one at the plate we believed in. I can’t even imagine the feeling of let down Emily felt. Being “the one” and then not producing.

By Emily’s senior year she had dedicated endless hours to the batting cage and her swing was perfected. When it was time for games, she was ready. She didn’t need to feel pressure because she had already felt it. In Emily’s senior year she hit two game winning grand slams and Towson University went farther in the CAA conference tournament than the school had in four years.

Softball Karma for Emily Gould.

I recently read a book by Malcolm Gladwell called Outliers. In his book, Gladwell says that to be an expert at something, you have to have 10,000 hours of experience and practice under your belt. His statement all of a sudden reminded me of my idea of softball karma. Of course, loyal college senior softball players should have the best seasons. At this point in their lives they have put in the most hours of hard work on their teams.

Seniors are comfortable and confident. 10,000 hours of practice and they are expert softball players.

OK so, I know that softball karma isn’t the only thing that helps people win games. Hard work and dedication is the most important quality of a seasoned athlete. But, I think it is also important to believe in something, whether it is karma, Bob the Softball God, or yourself. It helps you get through the tough situations with a little less struggle and strong bonding with your teammates around you who also believe.

Bob the Softball God was good to me my senior year and a few of my friends who are still on the Towson team are due for their amazing senior years in the upcoming months. I can’t wait to see how their softball karma is paid forward.



Emily Gould