

FOREWORD

Jon Peters and I share a lot of similarities.

Like Jon, I became obsessed with playing baseball at a young age. From the time I was seven, I would grab a baseball and glove, head outside, and throw pitch after pitch against a brick wall. In my mind, with each throw I was pitching to the greatest batters in the major leagues—and I was striking them all out.

Someday, I told myself, I'm going to play professional baseball. That was my dream.

I worked hard, kept focused, and pursued that dream with everything I had. I had a killer slider—and I trusted in it to help me strike out batter after batter. For years, I lived that dream of playing baseball. Surgeries didn't stop me, other players didn't stop me; I was on goal and loving every minute of it.

But like everything else, my trusty slider ran its course. The career, the dream, even my own confidence eventually fell short.

Jon Peters knew the thrill of living a dream—and the pain of losing one. The trust he had in baseball—and in his case, his fast ball—only took him so far. When that let him down—as so many dreams eventually do—he came face to face with the truth of what life is really about.

Jon made some decisions that many people make when faced with the death of a dream—those decisions only brought more pain. Until one day, he cried out, “Uncle, God!”—“I give up!”—and he surrendered his life. And in that surrender, he found a dream and a life more fulfilling than he could have ever possibly imagined.

I understand the need for surrender. In 1995 I too found Someone to trust who would never let me down. Although pursuing and living my dream was wonderful, trusting and living for Jesus was far more important, meaningful, and fulfilling than putting on a uniform.

In the book you’re holding, Jon gets real and vulnerable about being on top of the world and how great it felt to live a dream. Yet in the midst of it, he felt alone and insecure. He reveals the worst moments and the seeming hopelessness that accompanied him. But he also shares the healing, hope, and ultimate victory he discovered.

Of all Jon’s record-breaking accomplishments, and of all mine as well, we can both say nothing beats putting our dreams into the hands of a God who creates dreams and whom we can trust completely.

Your dream may be to play in the major leagues and to have your name entered in the National Baseball Hall of Fame. Or it may not be. It may be to hike Mount Everest, start your own company, or be the best parent you can be. Your dream is unique to you.

Whether you’re living it out right now and feel on top of your game, or perhaps you pursued it and lost it, this book is for you.

Whatever your dream is, one day you’ll discover, just as Jon and I did, that trusting in that dream alone will let you down. You’ll find that just when you think you can do life on your own, you’ll fail. That’s when God met me; that’s when God met Jon. And that’s when God will meet you too. In that moment will be the best time to look up and trust the God who created you and loves you unconditionally. The God of second chances. The ultimate Giver of dreams.

What is your dream? Where do you put your hope? Let Jon's story and the lessons he's learned encourage and motivate you as you pursue what brings you passion. And most of all, let his story remind you that neither dream successes—or failures—define you. That true happiness comes through trusting in and pursuing God's dreams for you.

—*John Smoltz*