

# Values and Barriers



George Springer,  
Houston Astros

Read how Astros superstar **George Springer** conquered a stutter to find his voice.

**C**enter fielder and power hitter George Springer definitely makes baseball look easy (he was named the 2017 World Series Most Valuable Player!). Despite his athletic skills, the Houston Astros player had to overcome a major barrier as a child. He had a severe stutter that made him so self-conscious, he was afraid to speak in class. Today he's committed to helping kids who stutter by talking openly about his own experiences.

## How did having a stutter as a kid make you feel?

When I was at school, having a stutter meant that I didn't want to participate in class. It was tough because I felt I knew the answers, but I just didn't want to participate.

## When did you start to overcome your stutter?

I transferred from a large high school to a smaller school where I was forced to be active and wasn't able to hide behind a class of 30 or 35 kids. I had to participate and say the answers, no matter what. On top of it, I was fortunate enough to be around people who didn't think anything of it. They judged me for who I was—not for what made me different.

**“If you work toward a common goal no matter what...that is what sports is about and what life is about.”**

## Why is Jackie Robinson an important role model for you?

Jackie Robinson is the model for courage, strength...I could go on. He endured pain and suffering but was able to overcome it and engage in a time when you weren't encouraged to do that. He not only broke the color barrier but he started a movement in America to get things going in the right direction and make everyone equal.

## Which of Jackie Robinson's values do you use as a professional baseball player, or in other areas of your life?

*Persistence* defines me. If you work toward a common goal no matter what, getting through things, obstacles—whatever it may be—that is what sports is about and what life is about. ♦

## KEY TERMS

> **VALUE** A belief that is important to you and helps to guide your life

> **BARRIER** A challenge or obstacle that makes it difficult for you to move forward

## JACKIE ROBINSON'S NINE VALUES



### CITIZENSHIP

Making a contribution that improves the lives of others

### COMMITMENT

Making a promise and following through on it

### COURAGE

Doing what you know is the right thing even when it is hard to do

### DETERMINATION

Staying focused on a plan even though the path to its end may be difficult

### EXCELLENCE

Doing the best that you possibly can

### INTEGRITY

Sticking to your values, regardless of what others think you should do

### JUSTICE

Treating all people fairly, no matter who they are

### PERSISTENCE

Working toward a goal and continuing to move forward even though you face obstacles or barriers

### TEAMWORK

Working with other people toward a common goal

Cut out your own Jackie Robinson's Nine Values bookmark.

