

★ THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ★ MONEYBALL

COGNITIVE BIAS, EXPERT INTUITION,
AND THE COURAGE TO CHALLENGE
CONVENTIONAL WISDOM

★ DISCUSSION GUIDE ★

OBP	SLG	OPS	WAR
.393	.451	.844	4.2
.385	.506	.891	3.8
.378	.475	.853	3.1
.370	.444	.814	2.7
.361	.430	.792	2.3

gut feeling
experience
it's a look

“The lesson isn't that numbers are perfect and people are useless. It's that our judgments need to be tested, not just trusted.”
— BILLY BEANE

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1 THE FALLIBILITY OF EXPERT INTUITION



The scouts are experienced professionals, yet their judgments are consistently wrong in predictable ways.

Where in your life do you rely on “experience” or “gut feeling” that might be leading you astray?

2 COGNITIVE BIASES AT WORK



The scouts show biases like anchoring, stereotyping, availability, and confirmation bias.

Which cognitive biases do you notice in yourself most often? Can you think of a recent example?

3 DATA AS A CORRECTIVE LENS



Beane uses data to find value that others overlook.

How can you use more objective evidence in your own decisions—even in areas that feel “people-based” or “messy”?

4 CHALLENGING THE ESTABLISHED WISDOM



Beane faces resistance because his ideas threaten the status quo.

What has been hard for you to challenge, even when you believed there was a better way?

5 RISK, FAILURE & PERSISTENCE



Change involves risk. Not every move works—but learning beats staying stuck.

How do you handle setbacks when you're trying something different? What helps you keep going?

6 PEOPLE BEYOND THE NUMBERS



The best decisions balance data with empathy, context, and trust.

How do you honor both the numbers and the human story in your own decisions?

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- ★ Where do I tend to overvalue experience or tradition?
- ★ What data (or feedback) might challenge my assumptions?
- ★ What's one decision I'll approach differently this week?

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Pick a decision your group is facing (big or small).
Look at it through two lenses:



1 Intuition Lens:
What would we do based on experience or gut feeling?



2 Data Lens:
What facts, feedback, or evidence should we consider?



3 Wise Blend:
What's the most informed next step we can take?

Share your insights and what surprised you.

★ TAKEAWAY

Great decisions aren't about choosing between people or data—they're about combining open minds, humility, and evidence. Question. Test. Learn. Then act with courage.



The goal isn't to be right all the time. It's to get better over time.
— BILLY BEANE



DR. MICHAEL ZAKALIK, PSY.D.
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Understanding minds.



Strengthening connections.