How Confidence is Lost And Found

GROWING CHAMPIONS® FOR LIFE

Your child's swagger is based on specific beliefs. You can help build self-confidence if you're reinforcing real progress. All praise should be specific, pointing out a behavior you truly believe is worthy of reinforcing. It's important not to make up stuff.

Don't dilute it by adding something like "But so-and-so could have been better" at the end of your praise. Include praise for signs of self-confidence in any area of your athlete's life…not just within sports. Be genuine with your words and tone of voice. Avoid "You are…" statements, but talk about specific behaviors instead.

Examples:

"You looked very sure of yourself during the second half of the game today."

"I liked the way you approached that situation…you took a great angle to the ball.

"Your conditioning workouts are paying off. You played strong at the end of the game."

Exercise:

Explain that we are at our best when we focus on our finest qualities. Have your athlete build a personal list of strengths on a piece of paper under the heading **"Who I Am".** The list should include every possible quality, skill, or talent that contributes to a good performance that they know is already true about them. It might be helpful if you share your own list of strengths.   What truths do you believe about you?

When the list is complete, turn the paper over and create the **"Who I'm Afraid I Am"** list. Explain that this is a list of lies that we allow in our head based on what we fear, but not based on fact. Our worst performances come from dwelling on these items before and during a competition. Share some of the lies you have overcome during your life as an illustration that everyone must make a choice about which list they read from everyday.

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Discussion Guide for Parent and Athlete

1 Ask your athlete to name 3 athletes in his/her sport who are excellent performers and greatly admired.

2 Help your athlete build a list of what you think this superstar believes about themselves. Be specific.