

BONUS TOP TIP:

Be a goldfish, not an elephant.

There is no greater feeling than watching your child succeed. And nothing more heart-wrenching than watching them to do the opposite. The hard part for parents is to allow the child/youth to process the disappointments, and not to try and “fix it” or “make it better” immediately.

Parents can help their young athletes deal with disappointment by (a) giving them time to process it, (b) followed by letting go of it, and (c) reminding them that sport is just sport. Equally, parents can help youth athletes to deal with disappointment by reminding them that performance outcomes do not equal love, self-worth, or value as a person.



“Hey Sam, come here a sec. You know what the happiest animal on earth is? It’s a goldfish. You know why? It’s got a 10-second memory. Be a goldfish, Sam.”

(Ted Lasso, Season 1, Episode 2)

SCIENCE FACT:

Contrary to Ted Lasso’s famous saying, “be a goldfish”, Oxford university researchers have found that goldfish are not so dumb at all and do have a memory longer than 3-10 seconds and have the ability to navigate their surroundings.

Nevertheless, the IDEA behind “be a goldfish” is a great one – it is important to learn to let go of mistakes and disappointments rather than hang on to them for years like an elephant, and, as Dory famously stated – just keep swimming, just keep swimming (Dory, 2003).

Just keep swimming... just keep swimming...

