

A Parent's Game Plan: "What Do You Really Want?"



GROWING CHAMPIONS FOR LIFE



Have you ever had one of those “AHA” moments when you finally see things more clearly than before, and you wonder how you missed the mark by so far? As I look back over the youth sport careers of my two children and how they’ve matured, I realized they weren’t the only ones who needed some growing up. From the very beginning of “T-Ball” and “Tumbling Tots” gymnastics my list of wants were probably pretty typical, but not necessarily healthy. Here’s what I would have

listed if someone said, “What do you want from your kids in sports?”

I Want My Child:

- To play well;
- To improve quickly;
- To win;
- To impress others;
- To receive recognition;
- To move up;
- To be a STAR!

To give me a Return On my Investment! One day I realized that everything on this list was based on my aspirations, and worst of all, my ego. It was all about ME! This list was based entirely on what would make me feel satisfied. It required nothing of me, and everything from my kids. No wonder my kids felt pressured.

Then one day I changed the question. Here it is:

“What do I want that doesn’t require my children to change one bit?” This question called me to consider my highest purpose as a parent. Why am I really here, and therefore what do I want that serves my highest purpose?

Here’s my new list. **I Want:**

- To enjoy watching my child compete;
- To share my child’s experiences;
- To be an example of good character;
- To be accepting of my child’s performances;
- To be loving of my child, no matter the score;
- To be a positive encourager;
- To be a trusted advisor & mentor

The cool thing is that I can have all those things, because my attitude and my behavior are within my control. As sport parents we have a choice to make. We can either be held hostage by our egos, or be a host to our highest purpose. Which do you choose?

Put it to Practice

The trouble with wanting something that requires others to change is that often our expectations will not be met. This is quickly followed by our disappointment and our criticalness. But when we restrict our wants to the things within our control we can take the necessary steps to experience what we want. First, take control of your personal attitudes and behaviors towards your children as they learn new skills. Remember, your children’s number one fear, deep down inside, is disappointing you.

To improve the chances of your child playing at his or her best, demonstrate that your joy comes from watching and witnessing the miracle of their athleticism, at whatever level that happens to be. They don’t have to change in any way for you to enjoy their participation in sports.