I did a google search and typed in 2 words: parents and sports. The outcome: in .43 seconds I got 591…million results! Do you think there’s interest? Do you think there’s issues? Do you think we might be just a little obsessed? I typed in Life and Death and got 30 million fewer!

We are crazy about sports! It’s the number one discretionary activity we do. You are engaged in this presentation because you are in the flow of this river of sports. This every changing and hard to navigate river.

It is our desire at 3dimensional Coaching to help align the sails of the two most important groups of people in the athlete’s life: coaches and parent/guardians. This requires understanding because understanding is the basis of care. We believe there are a couple things foundationally we need to understand. From there we can build beautiful, life-giving experiences, but we’ve gotta get the foundation right.

Foundationally we need to understand the primary purpose of sport, and we need to understand our individual roles.

Once we understand these things all of us will have a greater opportunity to thrive instead of surviving or even being a casualty of a good thing gone wrong.

Sport is a gift but if we don’t understand the purpose of the gift it is inevitable that we will misuse, abuse, confuse and potentially even destroy it, suffering great damage along the way.

What is the purpose of this gift of sport? Circle of Sport finds its home in a larger circle, the circle of play. What’s the purpose of play? Why do we play? Eminent Child Psychologist Jean Piaget states succinctly that play is always done for the pleasure of the activity. We play because its fun! Why is it fun? Because play is one of the very few activities that engage our whole being , our body, our mind and our spirit. It is marked by…Let me say that again… (3:08)

What does it take to capture the imagination of a 4 year old?...

Play (unstructured…) to Games (structured…) to Sports (…spice of competition) Need to come with a couple warnings. The first is we need to make sure that the spice of sport doesn’t become the purpose…Here’s what I mean…

Second warning: We need to stop taking this adult model of competition that we don’t handle well, and put handles on it, walk it over and drop it on our kids because we are doing great harm as we do that. Our kids don’t want to compete, they want to play, ask them. Did I want my kids to compete? …

It will happen for our kids like it happened to us. One day Johnny will want to know how fast he can make that on-side run. Molly will want to compete to see who can make the most free throws. But when we impose our adult imagination rushing to more competition earlier to make champions out of our children we do vandalism to our children’s imaginations and harm in all three dimensions.

75% of kids in America stop competing by the time they get to high school and far and away the number 1 reason is “because it’s not fun anymore.”

Keep joy and wonder that captures imagination and effort Primary.

Now to align the sails of coaches and parents

Our main purpose of 3Dimensional Coaching is to guide coaches in the journey to discover and craft in writing their transformational purpose in coaching and then create a 3dimensional strategy to fulfill their transformational purpose. This is what the 3 dimensions look like.

(show pyramid in it’s whole and quickly explain)

That’s the coaches role. Parents, what’s your role? In a sentence your role is to love your child unconditionally and steward their development in all 3 dimensions. You don’t do the coaches job. However, you do have responsibilities in all 3 dimensions.

How about the first dimension? What are some of your responsibilities?

Nutrition, Rest/sleep. Physical monitoring for growth and/or recovery. Getting them to/from practice.

What’s your responsibility in the 2nd dimension? Mentally? Maybe the greatest 2nd dimension gift you can give your son, daughter, student, athlete is a right mindset.

Mindset is defined as a mental attitude that will determine how you interpret and respond to situations.

Dr. Carol Dweck in her book Mindset has identified 2 distinct categories; growth and fixed.

One of the great recent discoveries in neuroscience shows that the brain is very malleable and that we can change our own ability to think and to perform.

Every word and action can send a message. It tells children/athletes how to think about themselves. It can be a fixed-mindset message that says: You have permanent traits and I’m judging them. Or it can be a growth-mindset message that says: You are a developing person and I am interested in your development. The key element here is what you praise/critique and how you praise/critique.

The clearest finding the researchers have ever seen: Praising children’s intelligence harms their motivation and it harms their performance. In otherwords telling kids they’re gifted, smart, talented makes them brittle in the face of difficulties.

Research clearly shows these effects of mindset. In one study of Dweck & Mueller (replicated in several different ways) they had children do a set of puzzles and then they praised the kids. To some of the kids they said, “Wow, that’s a really good score, you must be smart at this.” That’s fixed mindset praise because it portrays intelligence or ability as a fixed quality. To the other group of kids they said, “Wow, that’s a really good score. You must have tried really hard.” That’s growth mindset praise because it focuses on the process. Then they asked the kids, “What kind of puzzle would you like to do next? An easy one, or a hard one?” The majority of the kids who received the fixed mindset praise chose the easy puzzle, while the great majority, 90% of those who received the growth mindset praise chose to challenge themselves. Then the researchers gave the hard puzzle to all of the kids because they were interested in seeing what confronting difficulty would do to their performance. When the kids later went back to the easier problems that they started with the kids with the fixed mindset praise actually did significantly worse than they had originally, while the growth mindset praise did better. To top it off, at the very end kids were asked to report their scores. The kids who receive the fixed mindset praise lied about their scores over 3 times more often than those who received the growth mindset praise. They did not have another way to cope with their failure. The difference between these two groups, one short little sentence. Dr. Dweck sadly noted, *“We took ordinary students and made them into liars simply by telling them they were smart.”*

Yes children love praise. And they especially love to be praised for their intelligence and talent. It really does give them a boost – but only for the moment. The minute they hit a snag, their confidence goes out the window and their motivation hits rock bottom. If success means they’re smart, then failure means they’re dumb. That’s the fixed mindset.

Does this mean we can’t praise our children enthusiastically when they do something great? Not at all. It just means that we should keep away from a certain kind of praise – praise that judges their intelligence or talent. Or praise that implies that we’re proud of them for their intelligence or talent rather than for the work they put in. You can praise them as much as we want for the growth-oriented process – what the accomplished through practice, study, persistence and good strategies. And we can ask them about their work in a way that admires their efforts and choices.

(Walk through Mindset diagram)

No parent, no coach thinks, “I wonder what I can do today to undermine my athletes, subvert their effort, turn them off to learning, and limit their achievement.” They think “I want to do whatever I can to help them be successful.” Yet many of the things we do boomerang.

Fixed: You have permanent traits and I am judging them

Growth: You are a developing person and I’m interested in your development.

A fixed mindset makes other people Judges instead of allies. (my note: this is why this generation is hard to coach. This is why stars won’t listen.)

If you want to give your children a great gift teach them to love challenges, be intrigued by mistakes, enjoy effort, and keep on learning.

At level 1 and 2 you as parents play an important role. In the realm of sports it’s a supporting actor role. At Level 3 you are now in the leading role.

Spirit

The role of the spirit is to choose what we will value and ascribe worth to. What are you intentionally doing to steward the spiritual development of your son/ daughter? Stewarding the process of their value and worth and what they value and ascribe worth? What intention are you bringing? If you don’t bring intention to the process other intentions will shape it. If value is a level 3 function, what does with world of sport value most? Winning! Results trump process. When results trump process the ends justify the means. This is tied directly into the process that helps form character: the essential nature of who we are.

One of the unquestioned sports culture beliefs is that sports builds character. Participation in sports does give opportunity to develop what we call social or performance character, essential in helping us attain our goals. Things like dedication, sacrifice, teamwork, leadership. They serve as the fuel to get us to our destination.

Here’s what we also know about sports and character: The longer kids are involved in organized competitive sport, especially team sports, the less they make good moral decisions. Attributes like honesty, justice, responsibility, kindness, mercy. The research is pretty definitive here. It doesn’t have to be like that. The environment of sports is a great place to teach and model moral attributes but you have to do it with intention.

In the writings that have formed my spirit there are two old texts that point to the formation of character and without much argument it’s greatest attribute.

(1 Cor 13 Romans 5:3ff)

A couple bullet points:

1. Don’t critique coaching/other teammates in front of your child…It is discouraging which leads on the southward direction of
2. Don’t initiate conversation on the competition with your athlete….Bruce Brown with Pro Active Coaching tells of a survey he’s done over 35years of coaching. One question he asks is “what was you worst experience/memory in sports?” The #1 answer: the car ride home after the game.
3. What do you say? “I love you and enjoy watching you play.”

You have an ally in this process in the level 3 development of the Athlete. 3Dimensional Coaching’s faith-based partner is the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. They would love to be of assistance in this journey. Click on that link if that interests you.

The adage leaders are readers applies to all of us. I want to assure you as parents that this insane race to chew up all the margin in your life, finances and time along with your children’s free play is not healthy and there’s a depth of research to confirm it. You will find a recommended list of books, articles and presentations to deepen your understanding. Don’t get caught in a current you can’t navigate. Don’t allow the competition to extend into the stands among you and other parents. Don’t tie your performance as a parent to the performance of your child. (good place to put the Rugby sign)

From someone on the other side of the journey I want to assure you that one day this is what you are going to do with the extrinsic rewards we are convinced are necessary for our games and tournaments (show picture dumping the trophies)

Remember the words of C.S. Lewis: When we keep 1st things 1st, 2nd things aren’t diminished, they are enhanced….