



Heart Strings



A newsletter for parents and teachers building a community of social responsible children and youth.

Volume II:6.7.07

By Parenting Coach and Best Selling Author, Deb Landry

In this Issue:

How to be an Effective Coach, and How to handle the Difficult Coach

Summer Time Safety Tips

Summer Reading, *Character Under Attack*

A Special offer on June 7th only from Russell Shippee, author of *Our Journey Is Our Work*

Welcome Back!

As summer arrives, it is time for baseball, summer camps and fun in the sun activities. In this issue we will be looking at family summer safety, baseball coaching and parenting tips. I dedicate this newsletter to Coach Joe Johnson, a special ed teacher from Saco Middle School in Saco, Maine. Thank you for your superb coaching skills, you have made a difference in the lives of our children.

Raising resilient youth must begin with self esteem, self confidence, and teaching them how to trust in themselves and precisely communicate. The best way to do this of course is by example.

You will see in my articles that I will always refer to the basics of good character. Be honest, respectful, fair, understanding and be a good listener. Here's my opinion and that of some experts on coaching whether it is baseball, being a team player or a positive parent:

As a coach, teacher and parent, I am continually challenged with questions, problems and promising solutions. I am a true believer that all things be equal for all involved especially if children are the focus. Unfortunately life isn't always reasonable so it is vital that we help our

Feel Free to Forward our Newsletter to Parents and Teacher

children to blend into a world that is not always fair. For instance, as a drama coach, students and parents occasionally get upset with some of my decisions. I find that listening, understanding and communicating with them with facts and kindness is my best solution. Being a teacher often includes educating the parents also, or at least informing them of your coaching/teaching styles, boundaries and expectations in advance. One key thing that works for me is holding an informational time during or before any enrollment class. Parents and students get to hear and are given an outline of the expectation. This cuts down on any misunderstandings, questions, defuses potential problems and it works. If parents don't attend, and there will be several, mail the handouts and make a phone call. This is where the team building begins.

Resources used in all our youth programs come from *America's Promise* and the development assets set by the *Search Institute*, independent nonprofit organizations whose missions are to provide leadership, knowledge, and resources to promote healthy children, youth, and communities.

At the heart of the institute's missions are the **Five Promises** and the **40 Developmental Assets**, which are positive experiences and personal qualities that young people need to grow up healthy, caring, and responsible. To view the assets by age, and see the promises visit:

<http://www.search-institute.org/assets/assetlists.html>

www.americaspromise.org

WHAT IT TAKE TO BE AN EFFECTIVE COACH

Here are my pick for the Top 10 rules of being a fair coach and leader.

You Have To Like Kids

Here's the key: you have to like being with kids. Your primary reason for coaching should be to watch and help young people grow and develop into positive adults. It is human nature to want to win, but if winning is the only thing that counts, you'll never get that deep feeling of pride and satisfaction that comes from watching your students succeed at life.

You have to be in coaching for the right reasons. You must enjoy, respect and want to teach them proper values. These values include discipline, work/play ethics, conquering fear and tension, pride in their self and teammates, obtaining reachable goals, and most importantly, the burning desire to accomplish those goals. If you are going through the motions, then you shouldn't be coaching.

Enthusiasm

If we could bottle enthusiasm and sell it, we would be the richest people in the world. Enthusiasm is a must in coaching. The thought of working with a team should truly motivate you and get you excited about what they are doing. Going back to the first premise of being a good coach, caring and liking kids, it would be a complete contradiction if you were not enthusiastic about teaching them how to be a team. Don't let one member stray from the team; you are as strong as your weakest link.

Patience

The gift of patience as we know is a virtue! The ability to go over things time and time again, never losing your enthusiasm is an absolute for a great coach.

Every great athlete had a mentor, a friend who had the patience to teach him the

fundamentals of the game. One of the greatest joys of coaching is to see the least talented suddenly blossom, and all because you never gave up on them or you were the one who gave them a chance.

Persistence

Patience and persistence are certainly a marriage made in heaven. It is difficult to differentiate between these two virtues, and they truly go hand in hand in the coaching profession.

Sincere-Concern

We get back to a coach's most important virtue: Caring. You must be sincerely concerned about your athletes first as human beings and secondly about their physical abilities. If it's the other way around, it won't work and resentment will be the end product of your relationship. Being truly concerned, to **listen** as well as teach, is not an easy virtue to acquire.

Be-Fair

Being fair goes along with sincerity and concern. Everyone wants a fair chance to show what he or she can do. They want and need the opportunity! Each day the coach has to evaluate his personnel. Each team member must be reviewed and analyzed. Great coaches have the gift of being able to evaluate the team quickly and get them into the proper position and in the proper pecking order.

But even great coaches get fooled when a player comes out of nowhere to make a great contribution to the team. An excellent attribute of many coaches is that they will spend as much time as possible with the "second stringers" and **make them feel their worth to the team.**

Integrity-Respect

Never compromise on rules. Rules are exactly that, rules! Let me take you back to the first paragraph. Rules will assist you with your communication. Unfortunately we sometimes forget to convey what they are. Never compromise on right or wrong.

It is black and white, not a gray area. Don't run around in circles, justify, and clearly state your intentions.

Be an offensive coach. Do not become defensive with your team or parents. This shows your leadership qualities to be able to stand back, evaluate the situation and offer solutions in a respectful kind way. To get respect, you first have to give it. When the team respects you, problems will solve themselves or may not arise at all.

Coaches Are Human Beings Too!

You are going to get angry and perhaps show it. You might get so emotional that you become defensive. You are going to make mistakes. If you offend someone, **apologize** as soon as possible, especially when you offend (or if it is taken that way) one of your players. They are like family, YOUR team. Admitting your mistakes also teaches the team to stand up for themselves and acknowledge their shortcomings. We all have them!

Communication

Communicate openly with your team about potential problems. Let them know that you choose not to discuss strategy or playing time with their parents and **WHY**.

If parents call or write, let them know immediately of your policy. Answer their questions, directly and kindly. Treat your players the way you would want your child or yourself treated. Make fairness to players and parents priority. Remember, the youth in your program will be your player for just a couple of years; they will always be their parent's child.

BE-APPROACHABLE

Youth may find it embarrassing, or even intimidating, to talk to their coach about being benched or any other concern that may arise. This is a great time to build a respectful relationship with this team player. Remember you are the adult and they are looking to you for guidance. Encourage them to come to you with any question and approach the issue in a positive way. This approach opens the door for the coach to talk honestly. It also tells the coach that this child is serious about

their performance and wants to do a good job.

Resources tips on coaching are from one of college baseball's legendary coaches Gordie Gillespie's common sense approach to dealing with your players, parents, and staff.

DIFFICULT COACHES

Many of us have run across the "difficult" youth baseball coach. The most common and frustrating coach is the parent who coaches, not for the love of the game but so they can secure a full time spot for their own child. This is not good for the team or the child of the coach. The child needs to learn to share with the rest of the team and the coach must be fair to each player. My suggestion for a solution is to have your child communicate his concerns to the coach in a kind, factual way. Help him learn to use his communication skills and listen. If the coach becomes defensive, then you have your answer, the situation will probably not change. **If your child's attempt to talk to his coach is unsuccessful, or he's still sitting out more than other kids and is distressed about the situation, it might be time for you to speak to the coach or the league representative.** Monitor the coach's treatment of your child carefully. Their healthy growth is your responsibility. This is more likely to happen outside of school where you can openly discuss the situations with the athletic director or the coach not emotionally involved. **Volunteer coaches mean well, but they don't always do well.** If they tell you they are working hard and always trying, volunteer to alleviate some of their "stress".

If you want some additional expert's advice on how to deal with coaching issues, click on the link below for a great article about how to deal with "**The Difficult Coach**" by **Author and Sports Psychologist RICK WOLFF**. Mr. Wolff has written widely on the subject of sports psychology and kids, including his 1993 book, ***Good Sports: A Concerned Parent's Guide to Little League and other Competitive Youth Sports***. Wolff played minor league baseball with the Detroit Tigers and has served as the psychological coach for the Cleveland

Indians baseball team. He has two favorite books of mine on parenting and coaching, the book listed above and ***Coaching for Dummies***. In fact you can buy them used on Amazon.com for as little as \$.01, rob the piggy bank and get these great books.

http://www.hsbaseballweb.com/dealing_with_coaches.htm

Summer Time Safety

Safety is job one. Whether in the home, workplace and especially for parents, a little information can go a long way. Here is an article on summer safety especially for our subscribers. Enjoy

<http://www.brysontaylorpublishing.com/bonusgift.html>

Character Under Attack By Carl Sommer

While visiting a local school, I took a break in the teachers lounge. On the table was a small book that caught my eye. I couldn't put the book down. I was so impressed I had to contact the author. Which I am happy to say was a wonderful find! Author Carl Sommer is an incredible man. This award winner author has published several books on character building.

Bryson Taylor Publishing will soon be distributing his collection but this book is available as a free download. It's a must read for everyone. Send it to your friends and teaching staff.



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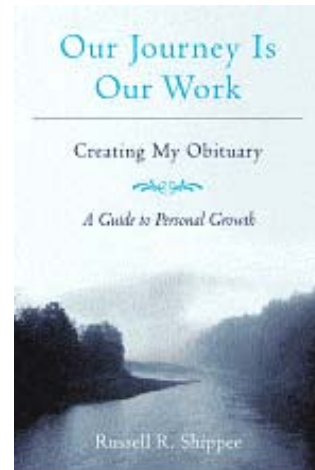
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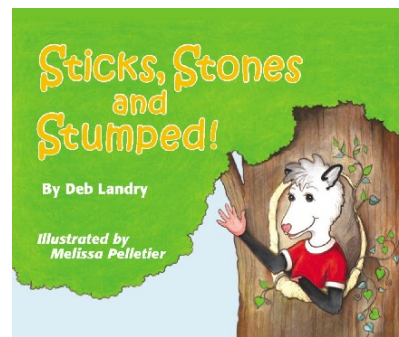
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Keep our schools and children SAFE!

Deb Landry is a devoted youth advocate, businesswoman and an award winning author of the best selling children's book ***Sticks Stones and Stumped***. Co-founder of Bryson Taylor Inc and Crossroads Youth Center , Deb consults, lectures, teaches and writes about character education and social awareness issues. See the website for more information on school visits, lectures and programs.

Do you have a subject you would like us to report on or have a related article you would like published in our newsletter? Submit your articles or ideas to:

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