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AN INTRODUCTION TO

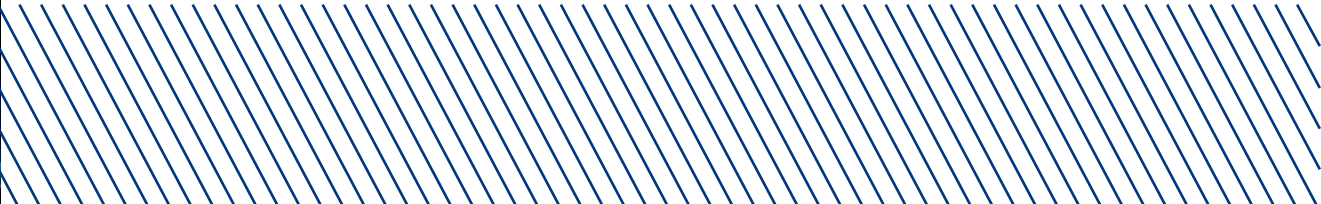
HIGH PERFORMANCE PARENTING

BY IMG ACADEMY



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INTRODUCTION

WELCOME TO HIGH PERFORMANCE PARENTING!

At IMG Academy, we know you play a powerful role in helping your student-athlete succeed. Success on the field or court stems from the amazing support you provide behind the scenes. We get that being a sport-parent has its exciting moments and its challenges, but we want you to know you're not alone.

Let this guide, designed by our experts, be your trusted resource. Think of us as your team for this journey. Here's what you'll find inside:

- **Self-assessment tools:** Uncover your strengths and areas to boost your sport-parent skills.
- **Solutions for common challenges:** We'll share our best strategies for navigating those tricky moments.
- **Ways to elevate your game:** Take your sport parenting to the next level and make this journey the best it can be.



WHAT IS HIGH PERFORMANCE PARENTING?

You're way more than just a spectator - you're a vital part of your student-athlete's success. High Performance Parenting is about learning the best ways to find that perfect balance between supporting and pushing them reach their full potential. Remember:

- **Your investment matters:** The time you put into developing your sport-parent skills will pay off in your child's experience.



HOW CAN I...

BEST TRANSITION INTO THE "PARENT OF AN ATHLETE" ROLE?

Whether you're a seasoned sport-parent or just getting started, we're here to help you. To help make the transition smooth, remember:

- **You'll play many roles:** You're their biggest fan, their support on the sidelines, and the shoulder to lean on away from the game.
- **It's a learning process:** You and your student-athlete will keep growing as their commitment to their sport changes.
- **Your role will change:** The kind of help they need will evolve as they become more experienced.

We get it – everyone wants to help their athlete shine, but sometimes it's tough to know just how. There will be ups and downs, but it's all part of the process. High Performance Parenting isn't about following a strict rulebook. It's about learning what works best for your unique family.





COME BACK TO THIS GUIDE WHEN YOU FIND YOURSELF THINKING:

MODULE 1

"I want different things for my child in their sport than they do." **PAGE 7**

MODULE 2

"My child seems stuck and loses their motivation." **PAGE 11**

MODULE 3

"I can't hide my frustration when my child has a tough game." **PAGE 15**

MODULE 4

"My child gets really down after a loss." **PAGE 19**

MODULE 5

"It feels like the only thing we talk about is sports and competition." **PAGE 23**

MODULE 1

WINNING AS A SPORT-PARENT: *ALIGNING GOALS WITH YOUR CHILD*

INTRODUCTION

Sometimes, it might feel like you and your young athlete are playing for different teams. The best way to bridge that gap? Understanding each other's goals and motivations. When everyone's working towards the same thing, it makes your athlete's journey smoother and more fulfilling. Mismatched goals can lead to well-meaning advice that misses the mark. But by understanding what drives each other, you can turn your support into a powerful tailwind for their success.

► In this module, we'll share tips for discussing goals with your child and finding that common ground to turn your encouragement into their greatest advantage.



DO'S & DON'TS

FOR PARENTS

- ✓ **Reflect:** Ask yourself why you want your child in sports. What benefits do you hope they'll gain from the experience?
- ✓ **Ask and listen:** Talk to your athlete. Ask why they love their sport and pay close attention to their answers.

DO

FOR ATHLETES

- ✓ **Think it through:** What gets you excited about practice or game days?
- ✓ **Share your why:** Telling your parents (and others) about your love for the game is super important. You could even try writing your reasons down to remember them.



FOR PARENTS

- ✗ **Don't underestimate the power of shared goals:** This might seem simple, but it's a game-changer.
- ✗ **Don't assume you know best:** Everyone's motivations are unique. Take time to understand your child's perspective.



FOR ATHLETES

- ✗ **Don't worry about changing goals:** As you grow and gain more experience, what you love about your sport might shift – that's totally normal.
- ✗ **Don't play just to please others:** Find the fun in what you do, and your passion will shine through.

DON'T

DISCOVERING WHAT DRIVES YOU:



PARENTS

Rank the following reasons for encouraging your child to participate in sport (1 being most important, 10 being least):

- Making parents/coaches proud
- Have fun
- Develop athletic skills and improving
- Awards and honors
- Expectations of others
- Winning
- Going to college
- Making friends and being part of a team
- Fostering life skills like resiliency
- Building confidence

ATHLETES

Rank the following reasons for playing your sport (1 being most important, 10 being least):

- Making parents/coaches proud
- Have fun
- Develop athletic skills and improving
- Awards and honors
- Expectations of others
- Winning
- Going to college
- Making friends and being part of a team
- Fostering life skills like resiliency
- Building confidence

TIME TO REFLECT:

PARENT, ASK YOURSELVES:

- How aligned are your goals with your athlete's goals?
- Am I supporting what my child finds meaningful about their sport?
- How can I adjust my encouragement to match their goals?
- Can I find new ways to challenge them?



MODULE

2

BUILDING A “CAN-DO” ATTITUDE: *HOW TO HELP YOUR ATHLETE THRIVE*

INTRODUCTION

Every athlete experiences setbacks – it's how they respond that matters. You can help your child cultivate a mindset that embraces challenges and sees them as stepping stones to greatness. When kids believe in their ability to improve, they tackle challenges with energy and become unstoppable.

► **In this module, we'll share tips for celebrating hard work and smart practice, making those bumpy moments easier to bounce back from, and finding the power in feedback. Let's also look at how the words we use can help build a "can-do" attitude in our young athletes.**

DO'S & DON'TS

FOR PARENTS

- ✓ **Focus on the journey:** Praise your child's effort, strategizing, and ability to adapt. These are things they can control.
- ✓ **Cheer on the effort, not just the outcome:** "I loved how focused you were today!" is way more powerful than just asking if they won.

FOR ATHLETES

- ✓ **Welcome feedback:** Your coaches are on your team. Their advice helps you get even better.
- ✓ **Lessons from challenges:** When something's tough, ask yourself, "What can I learn from this?" That paves the way to improvement.

DO



FOR PARENTS

- ✗ **Don't just say "Do your best":** That can sound like pressure to be perfect. Instead, try "I know you'll give it your all."
- ✗ **Avoid labels like "talented" or "natural":** They downplay hard work. Focus on things your child can control, like their attitude and how much they practice.

FOR ATHLETES

- ✗ **Don't compare yourself to others:** Focus on what you do well, and how you can borrow strengths from teammates to level-up your own game.
- ✗ **Don't obsess over results:** Things you can't control will just distract you. Put your energy into what you can do to improve.



DON'T

QUICK MINDSET CHECK-UP

Guess if these statements build a growth mindset or a fixed mindset:

STATEMENT 1

"I love seeing you try new things."

GROWTH MINDSET – OR – FIXED MINDSET

STATEMENT 2

"Did you win?"

GROWTH MINDSET – OR – FIXED MINDSET

STATEMENT 3

"What did you learn today?"

GROWTH MINDSET – OR – FIXED MINDSET

ANSWERS

STATEMENT 1:

Growth, This encourages your child to take-in challenges and develop in new ways.

STATEMENT 2:

Fixed, Focusing on the outcome reinforces things your child can't control, leading them to be more concerned with how things turn out rather than the process.

STATEMENT 3:

Growth, Asking your child about what they learned reinforces that learning, mistakes, and corrections are a normal part of the process.

See how focusing on what they learned helps them get better?



TIME TO REFLECT:

PARENT, ASK YOURSELVES:

- Are my conversations with my athlete helping them believe they can always improve?
- How can I adjust my postgame chats to be more about the process of growth?
- Does your athlete know what you love most about watching them compete?



MODULE 3

DON'T BE THAT PARENT:

SUPPORTING FROM THE SIDELINE

INTRODUCTION

We know cheering for your child can be a mix of pride and nerves. It's natural for emotions to run high, but how you handle those feelings makes a huge difference for your young athlete. Let's make those sidelines a place where your positive energy powers their growth.

- ▶ **In this module, we'll cover the power of positive words and body language, and a few things to avoid so that every game day is a good experience for both of you.**

DO'S & DON'TS

FOR PARENTS

- ✓ **Focus on the effort:** Phrases like "Way to hustle!" or "Love that teamwork!" highlight what your child can control.
- ✓ **Smile and stay mindful:** Relaxed body language shows your athlete that you're their fan no matter what. Arms down, head high.

DO



FOR PARENTS

- ✗ **Avoid negativity:** Harsh comments about your child, teammates, refs, or other parents bring everyone down.
- ✗ **Don't underestimate body language:** Crossed arms or disappointed looks can be more discouraging than words.

DON'T

BODY LANGUAGE CHECK-IN

Can you spot the positive and not-so-positive sideline body language?



ARMS CROSSED IN FRONT

POSITIVE — OR — NOT-SO-POSITIVE



HAND TO THE FOREHEAD

POSITIVE — OR — NOT-SO-POSITIVE



HANDS BEHIND BACK

POSITIVE — OR — NOT-SO-POSITIVE



ANSWERS

ARMS CROSSED IN FRONT:

NOT-SO-POSITIVE. This can signal that you're displeased or closed off.

HAND TO THE FOREHEAD:

NOT-SO-POSITIVE. This one might make your child think you're upset with their play. Let's stay focused on the action.

HANDS BEHIND BACK:

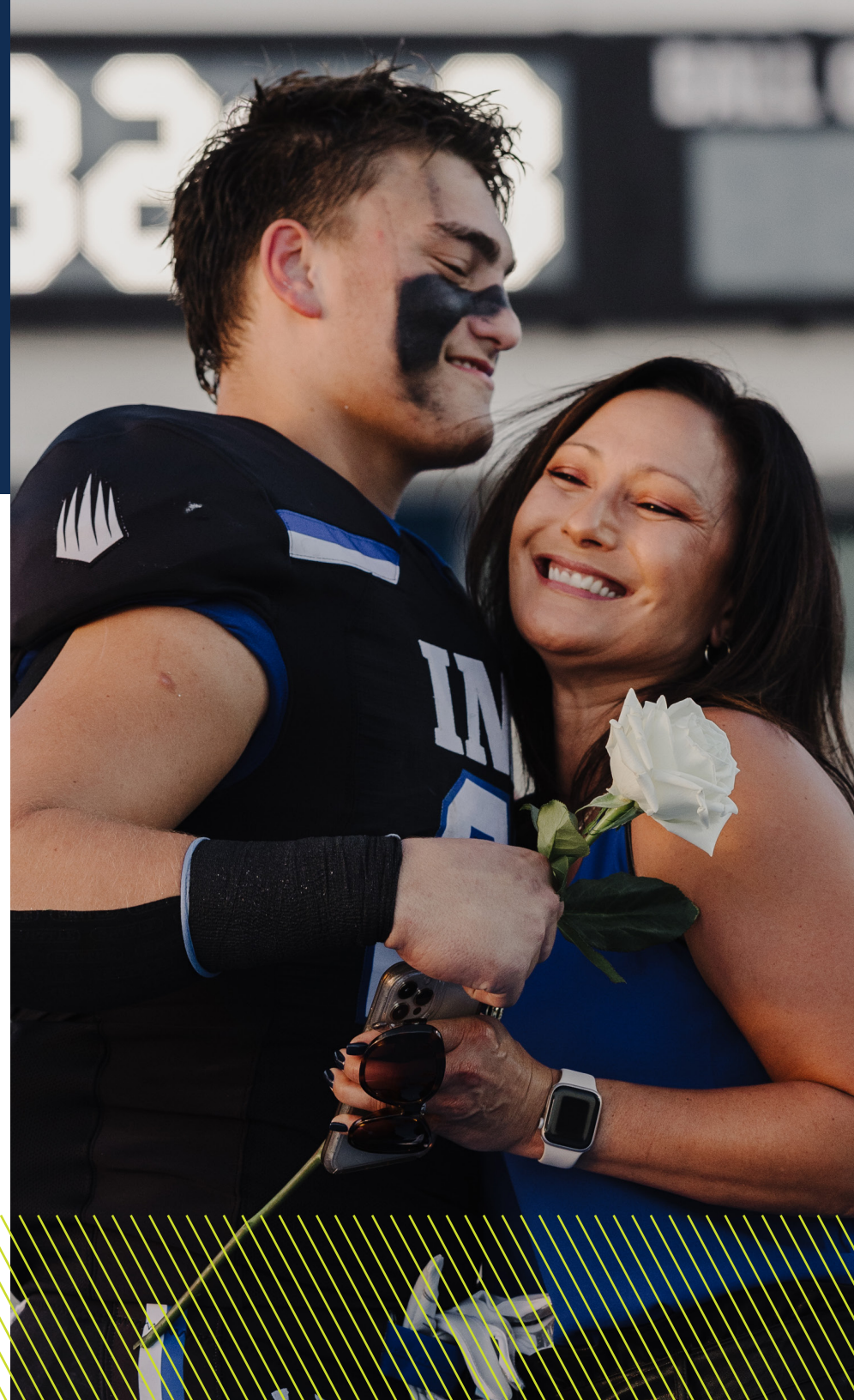
POSITIVE. A good choice. This shows you're at ease and engaged in how things are going.

Remember: Your sideline presence is as important as what you say. Think of yourself as an encouragement coach, not a critic. Your positivity is way more powerful than you think.

TIME TO REFLECT:

PARENT, ASK YOURSELVES:

- Do my words and reactions during the game highlight my child's effort and sportsmanship, or do I get caught up in the score or their mistakes?
- Am I naturally relaxed and encouraging from the sidelines, or could I work on looking less anxious or stressed?
- Do I regularly express how proud I am of who they are as an athlete, regardless of the game's outcome?



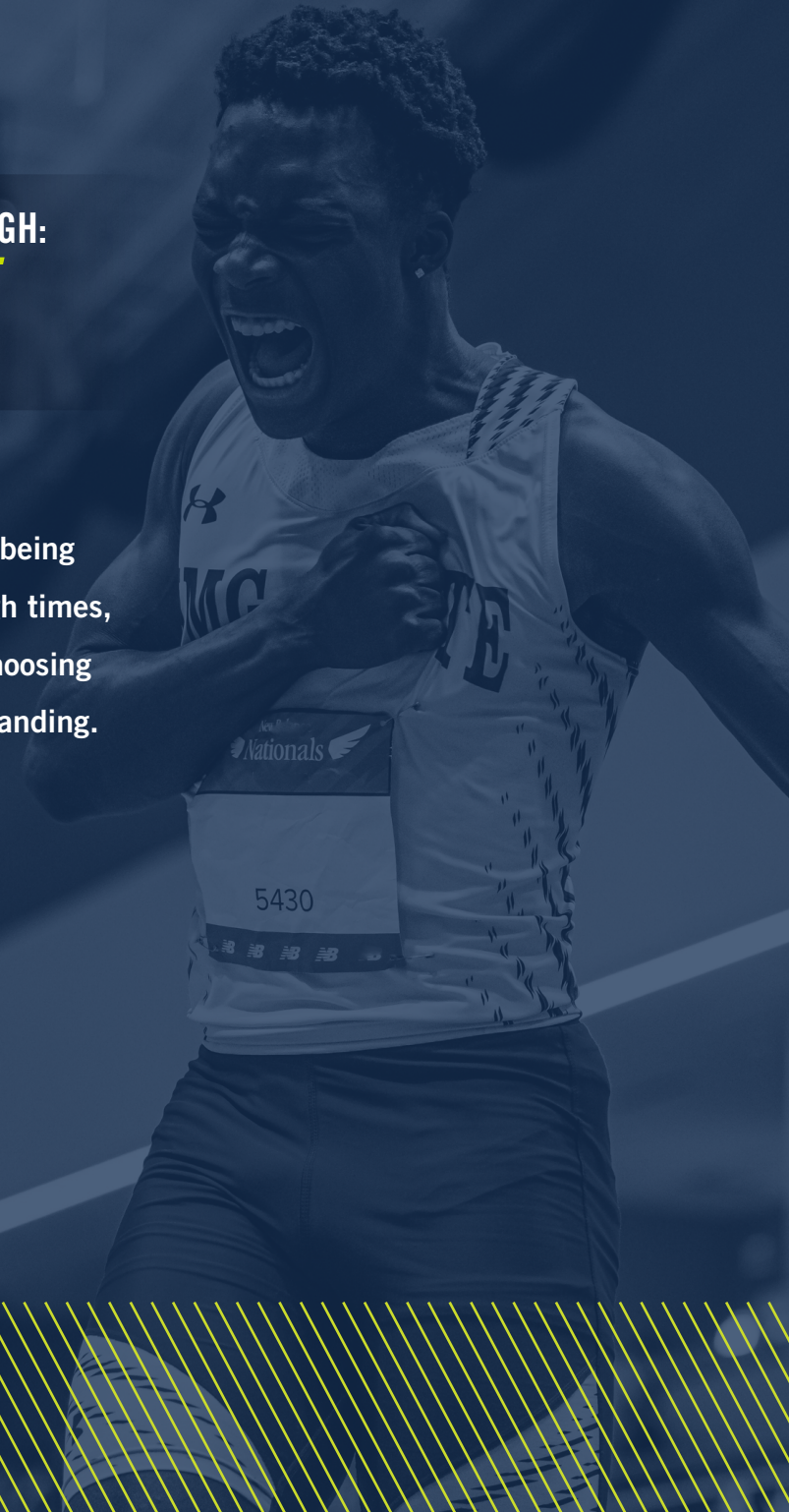
MODULE 4

OFFERING SUPPORT WHEN THINGS GET TOUGH: ***BUILDING AN UNSTOPPABLE MINDSET***

INTRODUCTION

We all know how hard it is to watch your child struggle, whether it's a tough loss, a performance slump, or an injury. Finding the right words to help them through those moments can be tricky, but taking a moment to reflect can help you connect with your athlete and offer more of what they need.

- ▶ **In this module, we'll share tips for being present with your child during tough times, knowing when to step back, and choosing words that uplift and show understanding.**



DO'S & DON'TS

FOR PARENTS

- ✓ **Take a breath. You're likely feeling upset, too.** Calming down allows you to approach the situation with clarity and compassion.
- ✓ **Give them space:** Your athlete might need a little time to collect their thoughts and emotions before talking.
- ✓ **Know when to step aside:** Sometimes a teammate or coach might be better placed to help your child regain their footing.

DO



FOR PARENTS

- ✗ **Rush to fix things:** It's natural to want to solve a problem, but your child might learn more by working through it over time.
- ✗ **Assume you have all the answers:** Focus on being a listening ear and offering encouragement rather than advice.
- ✗ **Force a conversation:** Let your child know you're there when they're ready. Sometimes just being present is the biggest comfort.

DON'T

WHICH COMMENTS ADD VALUE

Read these statements and decide if they're helpful or not-so-helpful:



STATEMENT 1

"This loss makes me sad too. Let's both take a minute before we talk."

HELPFUL – OR – NOT-SO-HELPFUL

STATEMENT 2

"I know exactly how to fix this. Let me tell you what to do."

HELPFUL – OR – NOT-SO-HELPFUL

STATEMENT 3

"We need to deal with this right now, I don't want you dwelling on it."

HELPFUL – OR – NOT-SO-HELPFUL

ANSWERS

STATEMENT 1:

Helpful, you often have emotional responses to your child's performance, and being aware of those feelings can help you prepare yourself for a conversation.

STATEMENT 2:

Not-so-helpful, you may want to provide fixes for difficult situations, but there are others who can potentially provide that insight, such as a coach or a teammate. You might ask yourself, "Does this need to be said by me?"

STATEMENT 3:

Not-so-helpful, It is important to first consider how your child is feeling and if this is the right time to have that conversation. You might ask yourself, "Does this need to be said by me right now?"

See how focusing on understanding your child's feelings and offering space shows fosters the strongest connection?

Remember: Your presence and genuine care mean the world to your athlete. Sometimes just being there for them is the best thing you can do.

TIME TO REFLECT:

PARENT, ASK YOURSELVES:

- Am I giving my child space and time to process their emotions?
- Do I focus on understanding my child's feelings instead of offering immediate solutions or advice?
- Could a coach or teammate be a better source of support or guidance in this particular situation?



MODULE

5

THE CAR RIDE HOME: *TALKING TO YOUR KIDS ABOUT THE GAME*

INTRODUCTION

Those postgame chats can be loaded, right? They're a chance to help your athlete grow, but also let them know just how much you love watching them play. Let's look at ways to make those conversations helpful and positive for both of you.

▶ In this module, we'll outline tips for how to make the most of these moments, as well as practice how to demonstrate your support for your child during the process.



DO'S & DON'TS

FOR PARENTS

- ✓ **Ask before diving in:** A simple "Do you feel like talking about the game?" shows respect for your child's feelings.
- ✓ **Be an awesome listener:** Ask questions, and reflect back on what you hear. Sometimes hearing their thoughts out loud is all your athlete needs to move forward.

DO

FOR ATHLETES

- ✓ **Start with what went well:** Focusing on positives builds confidence and makes it easier to tackle the tougher stuff later.
- ✓ **Let your parents know what you need:** It's okay to say, "I'm not up for talking now, but maybe later." Your parents want what's best for you.



FOR PARENTS

- ✗ **Assume they're ready to talk immediately:** Your athlete might need space to process their emotions.
- ✗ **Become the instant coach.** Rushing to fix problems can prevent your child from learning. Listen first.



DON'T

FOR ATHLETES

- ✗ **Compare yourself to others:** Focus on what you can improve. Your teammates' strengths can be your inspiration.
- ✗ **Avoid the tough conversations:** While it's okay to ask for a little time, talking things out helps you grow.

UNDERSTANDING ACTIVE LISTENING:

Active listening is about showing your child that you hear them and understand their feelings. It creates a safe space to unpack the experience and learn.

Parent: *How was the game?*

Athlete: *Fine. We won...but I didn't score. The other team wasn't that good.*

Let's break down some common responses and identify which are more effective than others:



PARENT RESPONSE 1

"So, your team won, but it sounds like you feel like you didn't contribute enough."

IS THIS AN EXAMPLE OF ACTIVE LISTENING? YES – OR – NO

PARENT RESPONSE 2

"So, you made some good passes? And what makes you say that the other team wasn't that good?"

IS THIS AN EXAMPLE OF ACTIVE LISTENING? YES – OR – NO

PARENT RESPONSE 3

"I'm sure you did fine. You'll do better next time!"

IS THIS AN EXAMPLE OF ACTIVE LISTENING? YES – OR – NO

ANSWERS

PARENT RESPONSE 1:

YES, this is active listening. You're reflecting on what your child is feeling, showing you hear what's beneath the "fine."

PARENT RESPONSE 2:

YES, this is active too. You're asking questions to dig deeper, helping your athlete process and express their thoughts.

PARENT RESPONSE 3:

NO, this isn't quite there. While well-intentioned, it minimizes the real emotion. Your child might feel shut down. Instead, try phrases that validate their feelings:

- Sounds like that was a mixed bag of a win, huh?"
- It can be tough when you don't score, even if your team wins."
- I can understand feeling disappointed about that part of your game."

Remember: Every day is a chance for growth - on and off the field. These postgame chats are a great way to build that growth mindset together.

TIME TO REFLECT:

PARENT, ASK YOURSELVES:

- Am I truly hearing what lies behind their words? Do I pay attention to my child's tone and body language as much as what they say about the game?
- Do I validate their feelings and acknowledge they are real?
- Am I asking open-ended questions that encourage them to express their thoughts and feelings, or am I rushing to give my own opinions?





CONGRATULATIONS

You've finished the High Performance Parenting Guide – a huge step in investing in your athlete's journey. We believe a parent's involvement is key to an athlete's success, and the tools you've learned here will help you both reach new heights.

STAY CONNECTED!

For more mental performance tips for you and your student-athletes:

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