



POWERFUL WORDS

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

DEAR DR. ROBYN

Young students: “No matter if we win or lose, we use kind words and follow rules.”

Older students/teens/adults: Showing respect for the rules, the participants & the spirit of competition.

Dear Dr. Robyn,

We have been a family that has loved competition for a long time. As my children have become more and more competitive, they’ve seen the good and the bad. The teams they have been on have sometimes showed great sportsmanship and others, well, not so much. As we ramp up to the next competitive season, as you’ve said, this is a good time to take inventory of our actions and thoughts. How can we help our kids reflect on their sportsmanship on and off the field?

Melissa M; Boston, MA

Dear Melissa M.,

Yes; this is the perfect time to reflect on our thoughts and actions as they relate to other people, activities and ourselves.

We can ask ourselves; Are we proud of how we’ve handled ourselves in various competitive and collaborative circumstances over the last year? What would we change, if anything? As we step back and take inventory, how can we become more informed and better equipped to show character in the future?

So, how can we proceed?

(1) Take cues from other esteemed athletes: While the Olympics has been postponed, some of our most decorated athletes have been celebrated in the news for how they are helping others in need. For example, moguls skier, Hannah Soar, and swimmer, Michael Phelps are

raising money for COVID-19 relief efforts. Ask your kids, what can they do during their “off season” time to help others during their time of need?

(2) Look back and reflect: Along the same lines, Olympians are being remembered for what they’ve done to help others in the past-- while in competition. Remember when American runner, Abbey D’Agostino, tripped over New Zealander Nikki Hamblin during the women’s 5,000-meter at the Olympic Games Rio 2016 and then they helped each other to the finish line? They both received the International Fair Play Committee’s Fair Play awards. Ask your kids; what are some specific examples of positive sportsmanship that they remember seeing or showing during competition?

(3) Internalize who you are and who you want to be: One of the

strongest declarations of who you are comes after the words; “I am” and “We are.” Have your children take time to consider who they are and how they want to be seen on and off “the field” or “the mat.” What words come to mind? What actions go along with these words? How does the team want to be defined when competing, practicing, hosting & interacting with others?

Use this time to reflect wisely!

