

Be Positive

Coach Talk:

People with positive attitudes are generally more pleasant to be around and feel they have more control over what happens to them. Having a positive attitude is rooted in the belief that with effort you can learn and improve. A positive person works extremely hard and expects a good outcome as the result of great effort.

- What is something you are trying to be positive about?

Another quality of a positive person is that they get over setbacks quickly. Setbacks are never permanent or personal. Positive people know that setbacks are learning opportunities and that they just need to continue to work hard or maybe try a new technique or strategy.

- What setback have you faced lately? How are you handling that disappointment?

Story:

Now that Drew was focusing on his own improvement, he was feeling much more positive about his development as a soccer player. Maria, on the other hand, became very nervous when they were getting ready to play one of the better teams in their league. She wanted to win badly and worried that she may not play well and the team may lose. Drew shared with Maria what he learned about being brave and focusing on his own effort. They both agreed to be positive and focus on being the best they could be and not worry about the other team or the outcome of the match.

Their team had played some very good games this season and they had also had a few stinkers. Win or lose, Coach always kept a positive attitude. His rule was that you learn from your failures, so if the team didn't play well, they had an important lesson to learn. They would then take that information and use it in practice the next week to get better. Coaches need to consider the development of a team as well as the development of individual players. Many times a team that struggles early learns and works very hard. By the end of the season, they may be better than a team that had early success and didn't learn as much or work as hard. Maria was trying to keep a positive attitude, even when things didn't go her way.

- How did Coach think the players should view their setbacks and failures?

Parents' Corner:

In his book, *Learned Optimism*, Martin Seligman writes that he believes that optimism is a learnable skill, not an inborn trait. He teaches that to improve your life you need to create for yourself a better story of why good and bad things happen to you. Here are a few of his principles (1991).

- Pessimist tend to see negative events by explaining them as permanent, personal and pervasive (“the 3 P’s”).
- Optimists, on the other hand, look for specific, limited short-term explanations for bad events. As a result they are more likely to get back up and try again.
- The most fruitful time to transform pessimistic children into optimistic ones was “before puberty, but late enough in childhood so that they are capable of thinking about how they are thinking” (metacognition).