

Tom Burgdorf's
Parenting A Champion Athlete
And A Mature Young Adult

"I Don't Like Where I Am"

There is a place for "be happy with yourself all of the time." There is a place to look at your current situation and say, "I am okay." We certainly don't want to beat up ourselves all of the time. But is it okay to say "I am okay" when you aren't where you want to be? If we keep accepting unhappy situations, we will be more and more unhappy. Or we can do something about it?

My heart rate jumps to 400 when an athlete looks at me and says, "I don't like where I am right now." Or "that wasn't a lot of fun" after she blew a meet. I don't want children to accept poor performances. I don't want children to "settle" for mediocre. Do we want athletes/students to be happy after a poor performance? So, for an athlete/student to occasionally say, after a performance or event, "I am not happy right now" is exciting.

Do we want to raise these kids with "be happy all of the time," or "no matter what, everything is fine?" No, it isn't. That is fake. Working two months for a test or a competition and then doing less than what the child expected of herself SHOULD bring some temporary disappointment, frustration, and a desire to make changes. Maybe even temporary sadness. Perhaps even a temporary loss of confidence. The key - temporary, temporary, temporary.

I get a kick out of some parents who have an athlete having a great season, then has a poor competition, and suddenly the world is about to end. This happens in sports. Temporary, temporary, temporary. A time for adjustment. A time for "if you don't like how you feel right now after falling off beam nine times, we can do some things about it." Complaining doesn't help. Blaming others doesn't help. Get up and let's get to work!

Do we want children who want more? Do we want children to want to improve? Do we want children asking the adults in their life, "how can I go farther, help me." There is no need for a session or two on a professional's couch for this child. No need for some antidepressant drugs, just some adults in their life to help guide them.

Unhappiness can mean "I am not satisfied." Unhappiness can mean "I want more." Can unhappiness be a motivator? Can unhappiness be the kick in the pants we ALL need once in a while? Don't be alarmed when your child is temporarily unhappy with herself. Get excited. Use this, as an educational moment, to help her learn and move forward.

I wish I had an unhappy child/athlete in front of me right now who could use a little motivation.

Tom Burgdorf

National Clinician

Youth Sports Coach 40+

US Army Veteran/Drill Sergeant

For more articles for Staff, Team Parents, and Team Athletes:

Visit www.gymnetsports.net. You can also follow Tom on Facebook.

For comments on the above article: e-mail tom@gymnetsports.com.