

WAYS TO EMPOWER YOUR CHILD FOR CLUB VOLLEYBALL SUCCESS AND BEYOND

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The Person in the Arena

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better.

The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again,

because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds, who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions, who spends himself in a worthy cause;

Who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high -achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly..."

Brain Structure and Function

Neocortex

Higher-order thinking

Self-control
Determining goals
Understand motivations
Good decision-making
Positive coaching
“We” relationships
Empathy/compassion
Values/purpose that matters
Wider perspective
Present-focused
Safety/security

Cool down : cortex ‘on-line’ cools the amygdala
Parents, coaches, teachers as ‘auxiliary pre-frontal cortex’

Cannot think clearly,
learn or concentrate

Limbic brain Emotions

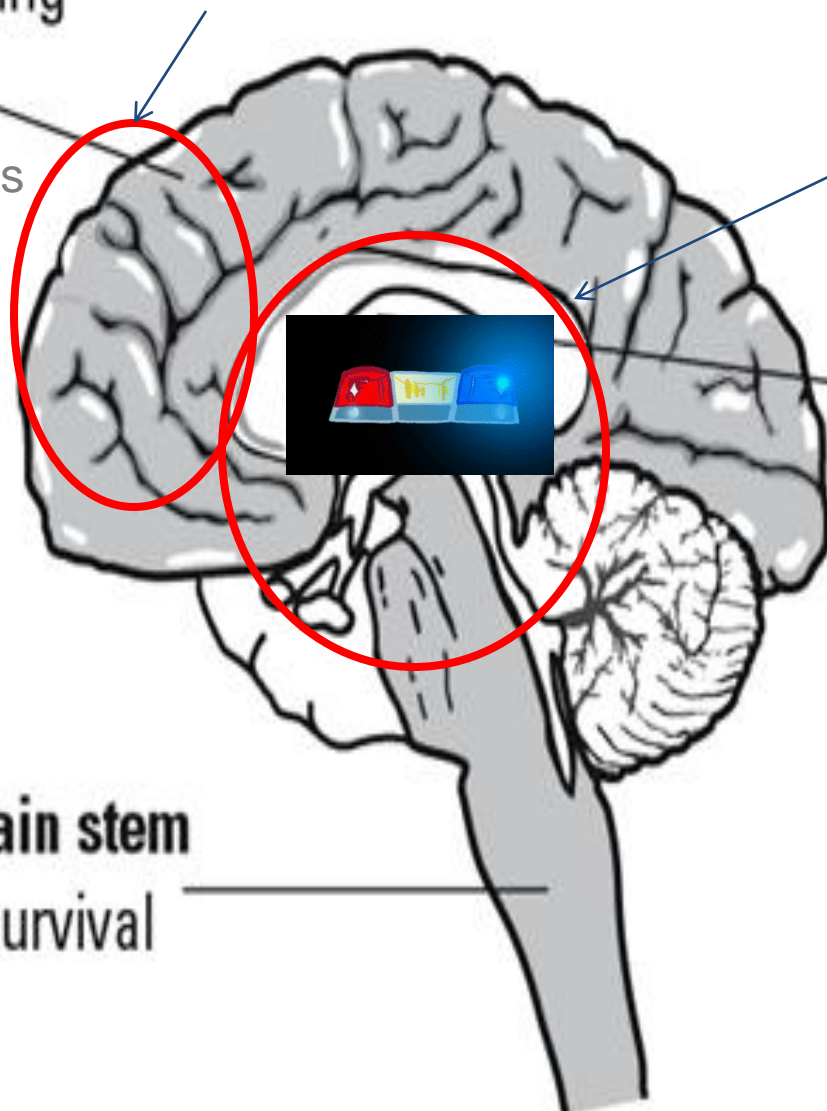
1) Amygdala
Fear-based, threat detector; uncertainty
Avoids danger ; seeks safety

Instant gratification
Automatic emotional response

2) Nucleus accumbens:
pleasure-seeking,
reward system,
dopamine, motivation.

Brain stem

Survival



½ empty or ½ full?

1) Negativity bias in the Brain

- Brains are adept at learning bad lessons from bad experiences.
- Also relatively bad at learning good lessons from good experiences.
- Brain continually scans for bad news.[Velcro for (-) and sieve for +]
- Negative states and experiences are assimilated into our neural structure, learning faster from pain than pleasure.
- Often learning bad things about people is easier to remember than positive things.
- Negative feedback sticks faster and more memorably than positive feedback. (Hanson, 2014)



Shifting away from negativity bias

- Recognize your tendencies in mental states.
- A desire to feel or act differently.
- A desire to understand others and self better.
- “Install” or take in internally useful and positive experiences (thought, perception, emotion, motive, action) into the brain – sustain for as long as possible, at least 5-10 seconds; intensity the positive.
- Turn positive experiences into positive and enduring long-term traits.
- Build resilience of inner strength, attitudes perspectives, positive emotions, capacity.
- Positive traits come from positive states; reduce/replace negative
- Positive growth occurs by having these experiences.
- Becomes tools for self-regulation, self-esteem, attachment, positive mood

(Hanson, 2014)

Positive Neurologic Development Occurs in Healthy Relationships

- Positive emotional states in the parent/child relationship are the basis of secure attachment.
- Attachment and bonding occurs in the moment to moment in sync interactions between parent and child.
- Relational ruptures wound and social engagement heals
- This the basis for and foundation of mental health and resilience.

(Paulson, 2013)

Top 10 Resilience-building Traits

- 1) Be optimistic.
- 2) Develop cognitive flexibility – “go with the flow.”
- 3) Be clear and consistent about values and beliefs.
- 4) Be altruistic.
- 5) Find a resilient role model in a mentor or a heroic figure.
- 6) Learn to be comfortable with facing your fears.
- 7) Develop active coping skills.
- 8) Establish and maintain a supportive social network.
- 9) Keep fit.
- 10) Have a sense of humor and laugh frequently.

Neuroplasticity

“Neurons that fire together wire together” – Positive experiences more frequently and more intensely (“up the dose”) for positive effect on brain; takes time and practice.

- Look for the positive experiences each day.
- Stay with these experiences longer.
- Positive rewiring of the brain-- building new neural pathways, new connections, deeper and wider pathways of healthy integration.
- Distance from thoughts, emotions, external events & emotional reaction to them.

2) Accept failure as necessary for achieving success and developing resilience



“What of all the entrepreneurs that fail? Well, many do, particularly the successful ones; often several times. And if you ask them the secret of their success, they'll tell you it's all that they learned in their struggles along the way; yes, it's what they learned from failing. Like an athlete in competition or a scholar in pursuit of the truth, experience is the greatest teacher.” – Ronald Reagan

Failure as a Teaching Tool

- “The Gift of Struggle” – John Kessel USA Volleyball website article
- Athletics allows your child to learn from struggling and making mistakes without a lot at risk. If you watch them play you will watch your child struggle.
- It is a safe place to take chances and fail safely; a great setting for the child to be encouraged to advocate for herself and resolve conflicts with peers or coaches on her own.
- You must get acquainted with your own failure – if not it will be a source of great struggle.
- Builds perseverance and resilience.

3) There Will be Disappointment

- Skills in handling your own and your child's disappointment levels.
- What is that experience like to watch your child struggle in this sport? Are there any similarities in areas in which you struggled or struggle currently?
- What disappointments have you experienced with your daughter this season?

Recovery from Disappointment

- Imagine goals or accomplishments, successes being met in the future.
- Recognize the small components of a larger process and plan.
- Imagine yourself tolerating the difficult experience and everything turning out okay.
- Assess your expectations.

Coach's Expectations:

Viewed as bridge/ally or impediment?

What do they want?

- Goals – college volleyball
- Motivation
- Issues – Have they been identified?
Where in system is the breakdown?
Can they be resolved or well-managed?

Athlete's

Expectations:

What do they want?

Have they been clearly expressed?

Parents'

Expectations:

What do they want?

Are these realistic?

Consistent with athlete's?

River of Disappointment

Communicating with your Teenager – What is your norm?

Do you Respond?

- Listen
- Empathize, understand
- Ask questions; get more information
- Let her express herself
- Discuss
- Recognize your experience as separate from hers

What message do I want my daughter to get from my behaviors and the way I speak to others?

Or React?

- Knee jerk reaction
- “Freak out” – anger, blame
- “Disasterize”
- Fight – hostility, blame, argue
- Flight – avoid, withdraw in fear
- Freeze – immobilized with fear
- Intense emotion
- Overwhelmed by her emotions
- Your past experiences are mixed in with your current one or another’s past or current

Imagining Your Child's Perspective – Let your child initiate conversation if she wants

1. “I wish you would say this to me about playing volleyball (or when riding home from practice) _____ instead of saying things like this _____.”
2. “I wish you would behave like this _____ when I’m practicing/competing and not like this _____.”
3. Share your early sports experiences with your child and confirm that you know your experience is different from theirs.

Motivation – 3 critical elements

1) Autonomy - You feel in charge of choices

- Level predicts energy put into pursuing a goal
- Studies on control vs. self-direction: acting under duress is taxing; pursuing a self-endorsed task is energizing

2) Value – consistent with your beliefs; does it have purpose or meaning?

3) Competence - devoting more time (practice) leads to improved skill and gained sense of mastery.

- Effort (not innate skill) fosters excellence and desire to keep learning
- 10,000 hour theory for becoming the expert – builds brain's neuronal connections

(Yuhas, 2012)

How are you with your child when she becomes emotional?

Other-awareness: How do you distinguish her feelings or experiences?

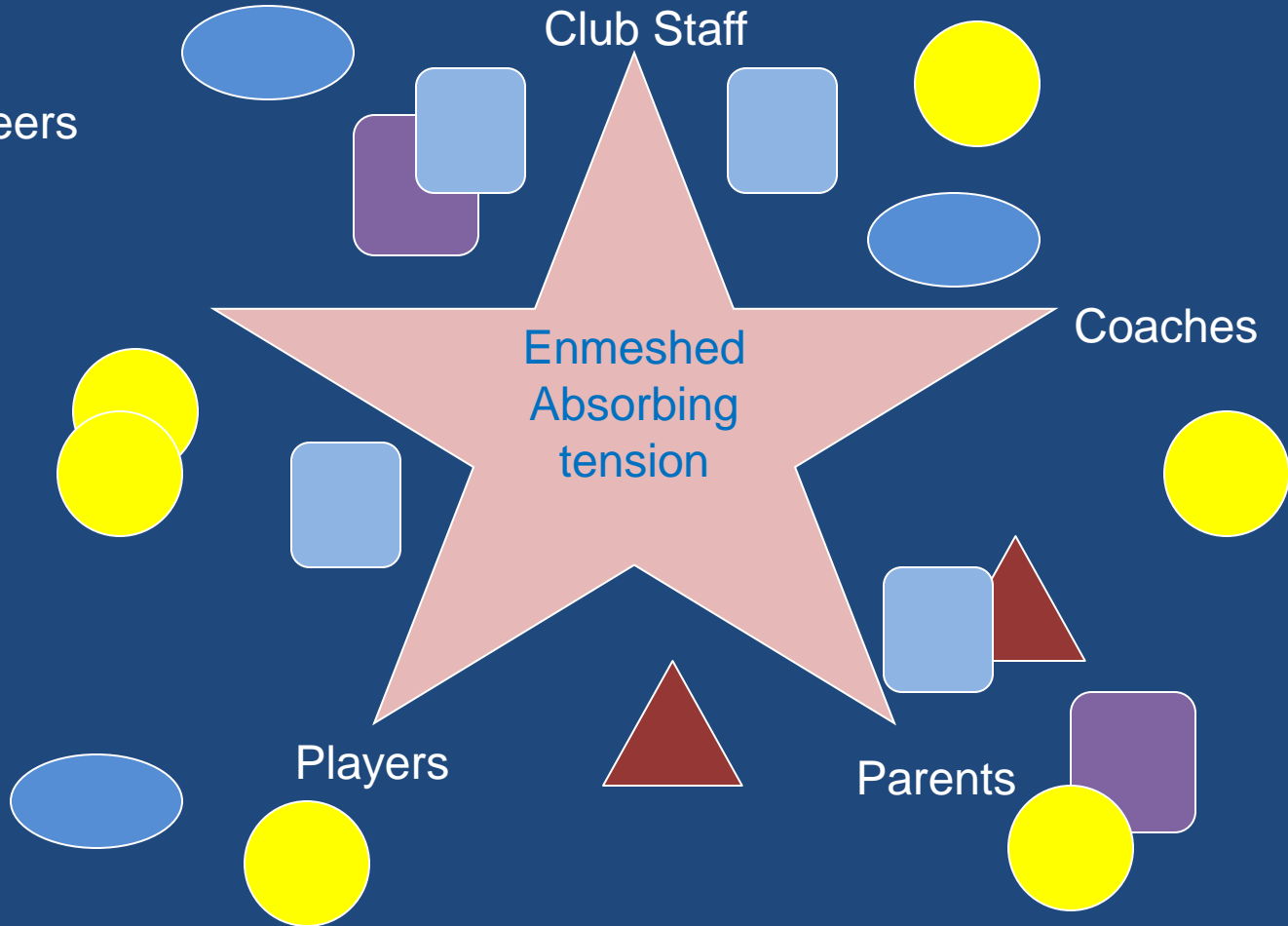
- Happiness
- Surprise
- Disappointment
- Fear
- Sadness
- Anger
- Shame

4) Respect your child's club volleyball experience as being different than yours

- Differentiation – how to balance tendency for being individual (independent, autonomous) vs. being together in relationships creates tension; ultimate separation from family.
- Systems perform at optimal levels (integration achieved) when roles are differentiated/specialized and then linked (family, school, sports team, workplace, community). Greater differentiation is associated with more ability to tolerate stress.
- Tensions increase when roles and experiences are blended or absorbed (enmeshed, undifferentiated).

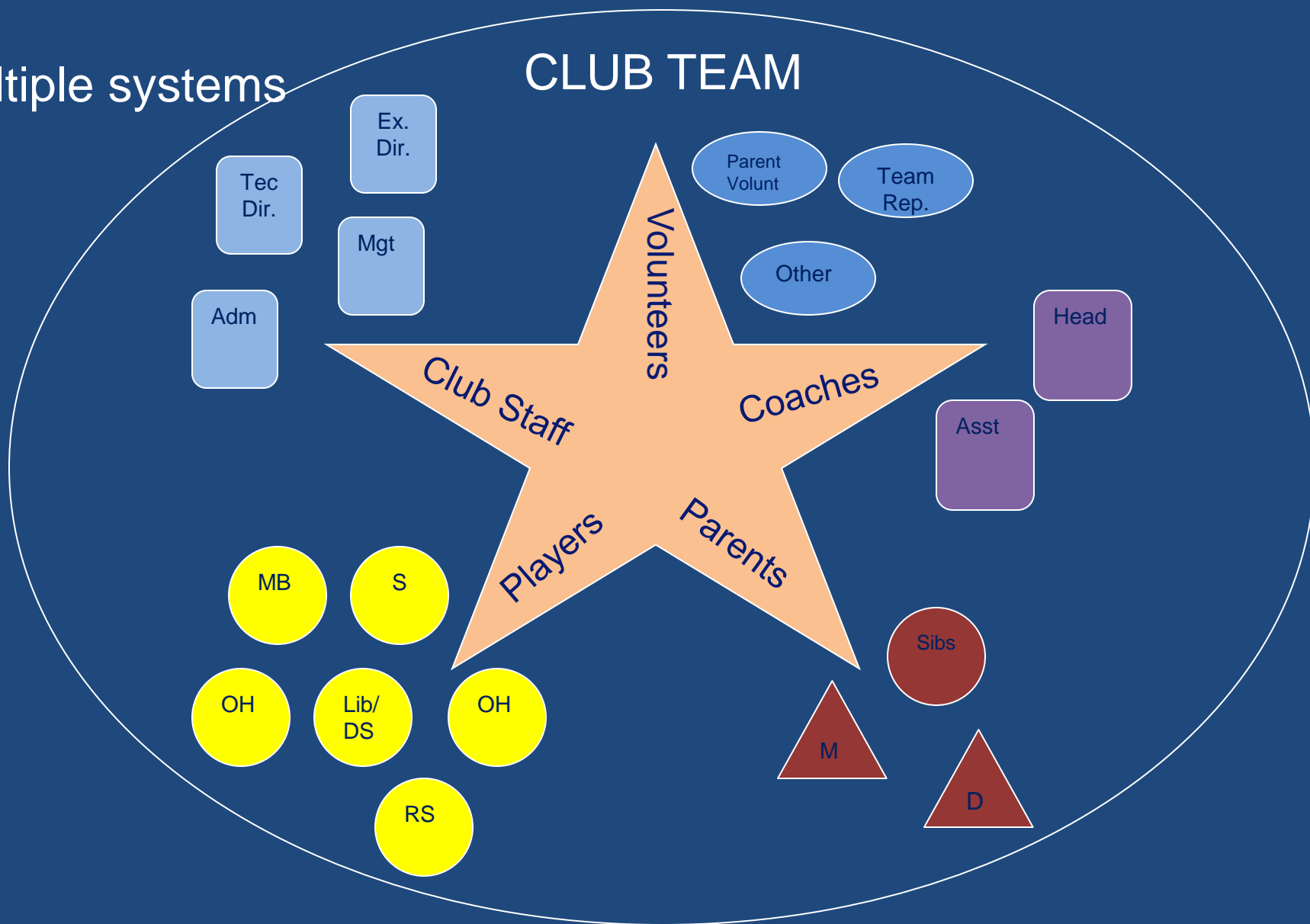
Non-integrated System

undifferentiated, non-linked



Integrated Roles – differentiated and linked

Multiple systems



Boundaries

Thoughts
Feelings
Judgments
Fears
Hopes
Beliefs

Likes
Dislikes
Opinions

Images
Experiences
Memories
Values

Abilities
Interests

Emotions
Body
sensations
Sensory
Experiences

Realize I am a separate person (emotions, thoughts, behaviors) from you and respect both
Know my role and responsibilities as separate from yours
Appropriate accountability, responsibility

Boundaries

- Lack of firm limit-setting is one of the main contributors to dysfunctional teenage behavior.
- Adolescents need limits for safety, responsibility, and to feel cared about.
- Before age 25 the prefrontal cortex in the brain is not fully developed, thus inconsistent judgment and poor self-control is common.

(Levine, 2006)

4) Consider that parenting is not about your child; it's really about you

- The way to most positively impact your children's lives is to model the ability to maintain and regain self-control as a parent.
- Intentionally striving to be the best parent possible requires self-knowledge and focused attention.
- It's all about the relationship, starting with you:

Rules – Relationship = Rebellion

(Runkel, 2005)

The way we
talk to our
children
becomes their
inner voice.

PEGGY O'MARA

“The Bully Too Close to Home”

Huffington Post 1-21-14 by Rachel May Stafford

Calling all the shots was a mean voice in my head. My internal drill sergeant was continually pushing me to make everything sound better, look better and taste better. My body, my house and my achievements were never good enough. Holding myself to such unattainable standards weighed heavily on my soul and my inner turmoil eventually spilled out at people I loved the most.

Sadly, there was one person in particular who bore the brunt of my discontent: my first-born daughter.

She could not make a mess without me shaking my head in disappointment.

She could not forget her homework, her jacket or her lunchbox without me making a big deal about it.

She could not spill,

stain,

break,

or misplace

without being made to feel like she'd made the worst mistake in the world.

Although it pains me to write this, I remember sighing heavily in annoyance when she fell down and hurt herself because it threw me off my "master schedule." My daughter was not allowed to be a child who learned by trying and yes, sometimes failing.

The truth hurts, but the truth heals ... and brings me closer to the person and parent I want to be.

Every time I came down hard on my daughter, I justified my behavior by telling myself I was doing it to help her -- help her become more responsible, capable, efficient and prepared for the real world.

I told myself I was building her up.

But in reality, I was tearing her down.

I vividly remember the day my mother was visiting from out-of-town. The children were playing alone in the basement. My younger daughter began crying hysterically. I ran downstairs fearing she was seriously hurt.

The first question out of my mouth was directed at my older daughter. "What did you do?" I asked angrily.

My child didn't bother to explain that her little sister had slipped on the library book that was sitting on the bottom step. There really was no point. My beautiful child with humongous brown eyes that once held so much optimism looked defeated. Silent tears of a broken spirit slid down her face. My daughter knew it didn't matter what she said, she'd still be wrong; it would still be her fault.

And there was my mother standing beside her, a silent witness to the whole ugly scene.

As my older daughter ran off to the sanctity of her bedroom, an unexpected question came out of my mouth. "You think I am too hard on her, don't you?" I snapped.

My mom, who'd experienced her own difficult parenting moments and struggles, held no judgment in her eyes, only sadness. Her simple response of "yes" only confirmed what I knew in my heart.

“The Bully Too Close to Home”

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I desperately wanted things to be different too. It was time to stop being so hard on my child; it was time to stop being so hard on myself. I prayed I could stand up to the inner bully. I knew I needed an easy first step. I decided to use one simple word: STOP.

Within the hour, I had a chance to try it. The first critical thought that popped into my head arose as I was preparing to leave the house. I looked at my reflection and thought, *"You look fat. You can't go out looking like that."*

"Stop!" I assertively thought to myself, shutting down any further criticisms. Then I quickly turned away from the mirror and recited these words: *"Only love today. Only love today."*

I used the same strategy when interacting with my child a few minutes later. Before any harsh words came out of my mouth about the way she was sloppily packing her bag of things, I cut off my inner critic by saying, *"Stop! Only love today."* Then I swallowed the hurtful words and relaxed my disapproving face.

Within mere days of using the "stop" technique, I noticed a change. With a more positive thought process, it was easier to let go of the need to control, dictate and criticize. In response, my daughter began taking more chances and began revealing her true passions. She started movie making and website design on the computer. She made doll furniture and clothing to sell in the neighborhood. She began baking new recipes without any help. Nothing she did was perfect. Nor was it mess-free or mistake-free, but the moment I said something positive, I saw her blossom a little more. That is when I began to clearly see beyond the mistakes and messes to what was truly important.

I began noticing my child's inner beauty rather than looking for perfection on the outside.

I began paying more attention to the person she was rather than the successes she achieved.

I began letting her be who she was meant to be instead of some idealistic version I had in my head.

When I stopped being a bully to my child and myself, opportunities for growth and connection opened up.

5) Don't go NUTS!

Identify your stressors and their impact

1. **N**ovelty – anything new; change
2. **U**npredictability, uncertainty – creates more work for brain to keep focus
3. **T**hreat, Danger – 0-10 scale
4. **S**ense of Loss of Control – control the controllables
 - Stress is harmful for attention, executive brain functions, learning and memory.
 - Your adolescent pushes all these buttons.
 - College recruiters and unpredictability

6) Recognize Signs of Depression

- Withdrawing from others, isolating; carelessness about physical appearance
- Hostility, anger, uncooperativeness, irritability, crying, outbursts
- Excessive negativity
- Boredom (“I don’t care”)
- Deterioration in relationships with family members and/or peers
- Marked changes in school attendance and academic performance
- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities
- Excessive feelings of worthlessness, guilt, sadness
- Changes in eating and sleeping patterns
- Difficulty focusing, concentrating
- Extreme sensitivity to rejection or failure
- Reckless or risky behaviors (cutting, alcohol/drug abuse, promiscuity)
- Increased physical ailments or complaints
- Suicidal thoughts/plans/attempts

(Beck, 1996)

7) Recognize External Signs of Anxiety

- Uncharacteristic confusion
- Poor concentration, poor memory
- Low energy or motivation
- Depression
- Irritability, angry outbursts
- Flushed face
- Inability to relax, restlessness
- Trembling hands, shakiness, jitters
- Difficulty breathing
- Stuttering
- Sleep disturbance
- Behavior problems

(Beck, 1990)

What positive role did she play in it? What did she do well?

Celebrate/honor her gifts and contributions on the team.

**on your daughter's positive contributions
and character qualities**

USA Volleyball Links for Parents

<http://www.teamusa.org/USA-Volleyball/Grassroots/Parents>

Bill of Rights for Parents when joining a USAV club

Source: <http://www.teamusa.org/USA-Volleyball/Grassroots/Parents>

1. be treated with dignity and respect
2. share in the leadership and decision making of your athlete
3. approach the leadership of the club organization with which you are involved
4. cheer for your child in a positive manner
5. verify your coaches/team qualifications
6. ask questions and receive answers
7. ensure that the adults involved with your child are positive role models
8. talk to parents, other players and/or other clubs
9. have your child tryout without discrimination
10. request a clear disclosure of financial obligations
11. have a written clubs statement of philosophy
12. be informed about your child's role on the team
13. have your child tryout out for more than one club and be allowed time to make a decision as specified by the tryout policy
14. the knowledge of the time, travel and financial commitment of your involvement with the club/team.
15. knowledge of how many spots are available before tryouts begin
16. remove your child from an event/practice if you feel it is unsafe for your child to continue without repercussions
17. know that all club affiliated staff are members of the NCVA and background checked.
18. ask your club director if they adhere to all State and Federal business requirements and laws

We rely on all the club PARENTS!

P is for praising, which your child needs often.

A is for accepting, so hard edges will soften.

R is for recognizing your child's many talents.

E is for encouraging a good healthy balance.

N is for nurturing, to help your child grow.

T is for teaching, then letting go.

S is for smiling at the growth and the glow.

Source: <http://www.teamusa.org/USA-Volleyball/Grassroots/Parents>

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