To Push or Not to Push
A Parent’s Dilemma

With David Benzel,
America’s Sport Family Coach

www.growingchampionsforlife.com
Today’s Objectives:

• To describe the by-products of parental push;

• To distinguish between toxic Pressurized Push and true Optimal Push.

• To discover the most effective long-term strategies for your child based on his or her appetite.
The Fundamentals

• The opinion that matters most to your children is what they think you think of them.

• Unconditional love and a standard of excellence must be taught in concert. The first is unearned and the second is earned.
What is the Purpose of Parenting?

Why do we exist?

To protect our children from harm?

To make our kids champions?

To insure they are marketable in the workplace?

To make them loveable so they’ll attract a mate?
What is the Purpose of Parenting?
Why do we exist?

To serve our highest purpose…

Raise children who can:
1. Lead independent lives;
2. Maintain loving relationships;
3. Enjoy a sense of competence;

“The Price of Privilege” by Madeline Levine
Nine Negative Parent Behaviors

- Exhibit an outcome orientation
- Are critical, negative and overbearing
- Apply pressure to win or perform
- Make sport too serious
- Are over-involved and controlling
- Compare child to other athletes
- Distract child during competitions
- Restrict player’s social life
- Too much sport talk

Top Consequences of Negative Interactions between Parents & Players

- Increased pressure on child
- Development of athlete inhibited
- Lack of motivation to perform
- Distracted during practice

- Deterioration of parent-child relationship; fun and closeness are replaced with guilt and resentment.

What does Andre’ Agassi’s story say to you?
The Four Styles of Parenting

- **TIGER**
  - Command & Control

- **HERO**
  - Accept & Challenge

- **SUPPLIER**
  - Tolerate & Endure

- **HELICOPTER**
  - Hover & Protect

High Concern for Self-esteem vs. Low Concern for Performance
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Concern for Self-esteem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TIGER Message</strong></td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;You are how you perform… and therefore a project&quot;</td>
<td></td>
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<td><strong>HERO Message</strong></td>
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<td>&quot;You are a beautiful creation… and therefore valuable and full of potential.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SUPPLIER Message</strong></td>
<td>Low</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;You are a circumstance… and therefore a problem.&quot;</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HELICOPTER Message</strong></td>
<td>Low</td>
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<td>&quot;You are what others say you are… and therefore at risk of being hurt.&quot;</td>
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“Who Do You Think You Are?”

**TIGER Message**
“You are how you perform…and therefore a project.”

**HERO Message**
“You are a beautiful creation…and therefore valuable and full of potential.”

**SUPPLIER Message**
“You are a circumstance…and therefore a problem.”

**HELICOPTER Message**
“You are what others say you are…and therefore at risk of being hurt.”

Here’s what I’m going to do TO you

Good luck, you’re on your own.

“How good do you want to be at this?”

Here’s what I’m going to do FOR you.

 Concern for Self-esteem

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The Trouble with Expectations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parental Expectations</th>
<th>Child’s Interpretation</th>
<th>A Better Message</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“You shouldn’t get a bad grade.”</td>
<td>“If I get a bad grade I must be stupid.”</td>
<td>Study hard to learn new materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“You should learn your kip by June.”</td>
<td>“If I don’t learn it by June I’m really a loser.”</td>
<td>Practice your skills consistently to make progress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“You should be Level 6 next season.”</td>
<td>“If I’m not Level 6 by next season I must lack talent.”</td>
<td>Do the necessary work move up a level regardless of how long it takes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is Your Sport Parent Approach?

Is your child Pressured, Supported, or Optimized?

Pressured
Tiger Mentality

Supported
Hero Mentality minus the Push

Optimized
Hero Mentality

Optimized Push only works when done right. The long-term outcome is very different from Pressured Push.
Two Styles of “Push” by Parents

“I am not sure you can get a great player without at least one crazy pushy parent.”

- Sport parent

Pressured
Control used by parent
Nagging about effort or time
Conflicts over strategies
Critical of child’s performance

=’s Lower Trust

Optimized
Choices given to athlete
Challenged to reach goals
Collaboration on decisions
Support for child’s vision

=’s Higher Trust
The Middle Option - To Support Without Pressuring or Pushing

Supported

Provide opportunities, transportation, & equipment;
Listen to concerns & triumphs without evaluating or comparing;
Encourage effort & progress more than talents and gifts;
Enjoy performances by attending and cheering, but not over-analyzing.

=s's Acceptance
**My Personal Commitment Worksheet**

Choose the course of action most appropriate for your child and plan your strategy for creating the most positive environment to match that choice.

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**Optimal Support**

What opportunities could you provide that fit your child’s interests and gifts?

In what situations could you listen more and evaluate less?

What words of encouragement could you give regardless of the performance delivered?

How could you show your child that you enjoy watching him or her, win or lose?

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**Optimal Push**

What choices could you offer to your child that would give him/her a sense of control over training issues?

In what way could you encourage your child’s goal setting so as to inspire him/her to stretch to new levels?

What discussions need to take place so your child feels involved in decision making about competition strategy?

In what situations do you need to show your complete confidence in his/her overall success story as a person?
“Five Powerful Strategies for Sport Parent Success” (A parent’s pocket-size guide for $4.99)

“5 Powerful Strategies for Athletic Success” (A young athlete’s pocket-size guide for $4.99)

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