

GROWING CHAMPIONS FOR LIFE

Positive Strategies for Helping Kids Win at Life and Sports

Mastering the 5 Cornerstones of Athletic Improvement Part IV

By David Benzel

The Growing Champions for Life philosophy was built from the idea that the youth sports experience is most effective in meeting its true objectives when coaches, parents, and administrators create the most positive learning environment possible for today's youth. Lessons in self-control, humility and character have the potential to help child athletes discover their guiding principles and apply those lessons to live a values-driven life.

To guide athletes along the journey, we created five cornerstones for athletic improvement that address fundamental issues of sport AND life. Mastering these five skills will yield improved performance in sports, AND personal maturity for making good decisions in life.



This month we'll tackle the fourth cornerstone, "**Manage Your Thoughts**", and then move on to last on next month.

Cornerstone #4 – Manage Your Thoughts

You are not your mind. Your brain is capable of spitting out 60,000 thoughts a day with lightning fast speed, but that's not who you are. Thoughts come to you faster than you can choose them sometimes, and that means some of them do not actually serve you well. For that reason you must

learn to manage your thoughts. This requires you to become “the observer” of your thoughts so that you can choose thoughts that are in your best interest, and ignore thoughts that don’t serve your highest purpose in life.

The strength and authenticity of the Five Cornerstones is that they require self-discovery and self-direction. Your answers to three questions will guide you through the process of launching Cornerstone #4. Each question purposefully urges you “to wonder” until your answer comes from within.

1. I wonder how I can train myself to say “no thank you” when my mind produces negative or judgmental thoughts?
2. I wonder how I can choose positive thoughts about myself when I don’t perform at my best, or win?
3. I wonder how I can handle the mental distractions that bombard me and get in the way of proper execution of my skills?

As you “wonder” about these questions the real you will answer each one in a genuine way. Give the process as much time as it takes and allow yourself permission to refine and adjust your answers over several days, until it feels just right. Notice your thoughts in a non-judgmental way and practice replacing less productive thoughts with more positive and uplifting thoughts. Accept the fact that you are the author of your thoughts.

Once the questions are answered you’re ready to manage your thoughts which will mean your emotions are also within your control. This consists of four steps:

1. Choose your moods by first choosing your thoughts
2. Practice self-acceptance and become less judgmental
3. Replace negative thoughts by choosing positive self-talk
4. Dwell on progress made and tasks completed

Start the process today...no need to wait! Land on the fourth cornerstone with determination to enjoy the benefits of Managing Your Thoughts.

[CLICK HERE](#) to ask David Benzel a question about this topic:

<http://www.growingchampionsforlife.com/coachdavid>

David Benzel is the Founder and Executive Director of [Growing Champions for Life, Inc.](#), which provides parents and coaches with practical tools & positive strategies for helping athletes reach their full potential while enjoying the youth sport experience. David is also the author of *"From Chump to Champ - How Individuals Go From Good to Great"* www.growingchampionsforlife.com