

GROWING CHAMPIONS FOR LIFE

Positive Strategies for Helping Kids Win at Life and Sports

What Your Child Needs to Succeed Regardless of Talent

By David Benzel

There's an illusion being promoted in our American sports culture that what kids need to be successful is the best equipment, the best facilities, the best coaches, the best program, and if possible, the best climate. In addition, kids need victories and the accompanying hardware – medals, ribbons, and trophies. I would like to propose that while all those things are nice to have, they are **wants**, not **needs**.

Why do we have so many young unhappy and unsatisfied athletes who have all the things mentioned above? Why do we have so many adult athletes who win at sports but lose at life? Let's be clear: your child doesn't *need* a trophy.

However, there are some things your child absolutely needs in order to enjoy a life well-lived – even now as a child or teenager. I believe we can teach our children to thrive now, rather than create the impression that success is only something that they will experience later if they work hard now.

It's more likely that what our children really **need** is overall well-being, peace of mind and spirit. They need and deserve it now. I'm suggesting that the answer to the anxiety, depression, and dissatisfaction visible in our kids can be overcome if we focus on the right things.

The research of Martin Seligman uncovered an interesting list of key ingredients found in people who report higher levels of happiness and well-being. Here are five items that can be shared and discussed with your children. You can read more in his book *Flourish*.

Positive Emotions

Choosing more positive emotional responses to the things that happen in life. Creating more positive emotional moments for yourself and for those around you. Maintaining a more optimistic outlook on life and the surrounding circumstances.

Accomplishment

Setting and achieving worthwhile goals. Demonstrating mastery over one's environment in situations within one's control. Choosing a target and working to achieve it, especially those that have benefits for yourself and/or others.

Engagement

Having an activity that is so intrinsically fulfilling that you lose yourself in it. To be engaged in something to the point of losing track of time due to the enjoyment of the task itself.

Relationships

The presence of long-lasting deep relationships. To care for others and know you are cared for. Extending grace for mistakes and experiencing forgiveness.

Meaningfulness

To use one's strengths in the service of something you consider more important than yourself. Sacrificing time, energy, and resources on behalf of a cause greater than self-serving personal interests.

It's so tempting to manipulate the circumstances in our child's life in an effort to either **make** them happy, or to increase the chances of success indicated by good grades and gold medals. In truth, the kind of people who experience genuine success – a life well-lived – have learned how to experience the five elements listed above. Teach your children how to create their own happiness, peace of mind and spirit, by focusing on these pivotal factors and watch all the other pieces fall into place as a result.

[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