

Don't make it easy on your kid



When it comes to creating a space for them to thrive, we don't just want them to grow by succeeding on an easy path.

We want to encourage them to experience and work through the challenge so that they are better able to handle tough moments in the future. Making it through struggles, with the support of coaches and parents, is a great way for athletes to build autonomy and confidence in their abilities. As a coach you know this is important, and you also know that it can be hard to do.

Research into building athlete resilience shows that coaches play a significant role. When conditions are right (a highly challenging and highly supportive space), magic can happen. Here's a few other ways that coaches can create a safe environment for athletes to struggle:

- **Spend time on the relationship**
- **Be intentional about how you respond**
- **Check in on athletes emotions**
- **Know the person behind the performer**
- **Create space for open conversation**
- **Ask questions and value honest feedback**
- **Acknowledge your own imperfections**
- **Recognize your role (and the impact) of power**
- **Normalize the topic of risk and failure**
- **Model the behaviours you want to see**

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“It was helpful for my coach and parent to have a good relationship, so I could have a conversation with both... my coach talk[ed] to my parents about how to communicate with me.”

Brittany Marchand, Former LPGA member
and Team Canada alumna

SCORECARD

What is your approach to connecting with parents and sharing your intentions and how you handle specific situations?

Fill them in on your plans

Share why you have your athlete practicing the things they are. What is the lesson? What are you trying to get the athlete to think about/focus on?

Learn about the athlete

Find out from the parent what things are hard for the athlete to manage. Learn about how they tend to respond if things aren't going well and how to support them in moving on. It's important to ask the same questions to the athlete.

Debrief hard moments

Review with athlete (with or without parent) about the struggles an athlete has experienced. How are they responding to it, what is hard about it, what went well outside of that, what can they learn, what habits can they develop around managing hard things?

Get the parents on your team

Share how you create a facilitative environment (high levels of challenge and support). How can they support you in that? What message is important for them to reinforce with their athlete at home?

These conversations are ongoing- plan a time to follow-up, work through differences in opinions and discuss again. As athletes develop in golf and life the answers to the above questions will likely change. Consider how you can build this into your regular yearly training plan.

FOLLOW THROUGH

What are the opportunities you create for an athlete to be daring and work through tough moments? How do you support them in that? What skills do you want them to use? How do you teach those skills? What conversations do you need to have with the athlete and their parents to create space to make this possible (i.e., how can you get their buy-in and say it in a way that helps them understand the benefit)?