

# A Parent's Game Plan: "Give the Gift of Optimism"



## GROWING CHAMPIONS FOR LIFE



Parents easily recognize the negative thinking of their children, but don't know how to redirect such unproductive thoughts. Most likely your child has not realized that we actually make a **choice** between optimism and pessimism...between positive thoughts and negative thoughts. Your child has formed a habit of choosing either a pessimistic or an optimistic way of thinking. Pessimists tend to

believe the bad things that happen will affect everything in life and are due to being dumb or lacking coordination; in other words, it's a permanent condition and it's **who** they are. Optimists tend to believe the bad things that happen are temporary blips on the screen-of-life and are due to the mistakes they make, but it's **not** who they are. They know that circumstances can be changed next time around and they're determined to make an adjustment in the future.

Experiments show that pessimists tend to give up more quickly, and optimists tend to do better in school and in sports.

Your child has developed an explanatory style used to explain the bad things that happen at practice or in a game.

### **Pessimists are more likely to say:**

• "I'm so dumb."                      "I always make mistakes like that."

### **Optimists are more likely to say:**

• "I wasn't thinking on that one."              "I'm just having an off day."

The big news is that pessimists can learn to be optimists! The technique for this skill involves teaching our kids to argue with themselves.

When your daughter hears her brain say something like "I'm such a bad player", teach her to immediately dispute that belief and argue back by reminding her brain of the times she's made excellent plays. If your son hears his brain say, "I always blow it", teach him to stand up for himself by pointing out the evidence that proves it's not true. "I made a great play last game!" Sometimes your child's brain falls into a bad habit of creating false information. If someone else said these things your child would list the reasons why they're wrong. In the same way your child needs to correct the brain about the lies it tells.

## **Put it to Practice**

Teach your child the skills of non-negative thinking and you will soon have a more optimistic child. The benefits are huge!

### **Ask your child to consider these truths:**

- We have 60,000 thoughts per day.
- Some thoughts come from our brain without our permission.
- We can choose to immediately correct or replace a thought.
- You are not your brain; it's a tool you've been given to control.
- You are not the mistakes you make.
- Optimistic people have learned to view mistakes as temporary circumstances.