

## 10 HABITS OF COACHES, PARENTS AND ATHLETES IN STRONG AND HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

The coach-parent-athlete triad is a complicated yet important part of the development of a happy, healthy athlete. Establishing a positive partnership, rooted in trust and mutual respect, doesn't happen by accident. In fact, if there is not a deliberate effort to develop and maintain a healthy relationship between each of the parties, most certainly there will be problems ranging from misunderstandings to full blown distrust. We all can tell horror stories either experienced first hand or from the tales of others of the powder keg of explosions that can occur between a coach, parent and athlete. And while friction of some sort is inevitable in any long-term relationship, how that conflict is dealt with will determine the overall success of these critical relationships.

Here are some habits that will help create and maintain a happy and healthy triad:

1. **Respect for Individual.** Each person needs to respect the other as a person and the role of the other within the relationship.
2. **Respect for Others' Relationship.** There are three pairs of relationships within the triad: coach/athlete, coach/parent and parent/athlete. Each one of these relationships will benefit from the support of the person outside of the relationship.
3. **Talk** to each other and encourage the other two parties to handle their issues with one another openly and directly.
4. **Speak Positively** about the other person. Don't bad mouth the third party to each other. While it might feel good to "let off steam" it ultimately weakens the bond between the other two parties.
5. **Give each other the space to work out relationships with the other.** For instance, parents that try to run inference too closely between coaches and gymnasts rob the coach-gymnast relationship that can be so valuable to the development of the athlete.
6. **Assumption of Good Faith.** When things go wrong, always assume that the other party did not mean to hurt or inconvenience you. Assume that there must be a reasonable explanation for the problem.
7. **Gratitude.** Be grateful for what each of you brings to the relationship and for the role that you play in one another's lives.
8. **Appreciation.** Demonstrate that gratitude through small acts of appreciation. Smiles and saying thank you goes a long way in lubricating the friction that can occur in relationships. Never act entitled.
9. **Teamwork.** Everyone in the triad is working toward a common goal. Do not forget this. You are allies, not adversaries.
10. **Apologize.** Saying you are sorry and making amends is the best way to make sure that your relationships stay strong.