

Role Models of Excellence

By John Leonard, ASCA

A few weeks ago, a parent asked me what traits I looked for in a swimming coach when my children were swimming....(more than a few years ago, I might add). I found that to be a valid and important question. Here's my answer (s).

First, the coach is going to spend more time with my son than I am. Therefore, if my son "grows up" to be like the coach, **I want the coach to be a role model of excellence.** Here are the things I think go into that "role modeling".

#1. Truthfulness. You can be wrong. You can't be dishonest.

#2. Fairness. I don't expect everyone to be treated the same because everyone is different. But I do expect treatment of the child commensurate with the commitment of the child to the sport and team.

#3. A commitment to teaching. Both swimming skills and life skills. We're put on earth to help one another. I want the coach to teach my son that.

#4. Hard work – In our family we believe in the importance of hard work, and that hard work is its own intrinsic reward. It's not just Hard work= Success, it's that hard work is rewarding all by itself.

#5. Achievement – Goal setting is important. Working towards the goal is even more important.

#6. Resilience – We all get "knocked down" by life (and sport). Getting back up every time and going back at it with no sulking is vital. We grow by defeats and our response to them, not by the "victories" in life. Cheap victories are expensive in the long run.

#7. Respect. For others work, others achievements, others effort. Learn that achievement is difficult and should be respected in every field.

#8. Respect, part two. – All human work has dignity and deserves respect. The guy collecting garbage from in front of your house in the hot south Florida sun has a heck of a hard job. Call him "sir", mean it, and when you can, help him lift a can or two.

#9. Learning to be a learner (lifelong variety) is important to your development.

#10. Love and respect your elders. We ALL stand on the shoulders of someone and we don't get to land on the mountain top by helicopter and think/pretend we climbed up there. Do your own climbing and respect those who gave you legs to do so. GRATEFULNESS is a wonderful quality in a person.

That's on the top of my list. What's on yours? I want my sons coach to be all teacher.

I was lucky to have more than one. So is your child.

All the Best, John Leonard