



3 Voices of Fear & 1 Question for Courage

It's been said that, "Courage doesn't mean you don't get afraid. Courage means you don't let fear stop you."

The person who said it is a young girl who looked a monster shark in the face as it bit off her arm. The courage she chooses every day is inspiring. Let's take a peek into the life of Bethany Hamilton and see what we can learn about courage.

Bethany Hamilton had every reason to never step foot into the ocean again. Yet this 13-year-old amateur surfer went back to surfing just ONE month after the attack by a 14-foot tiger shark. And now, more than 15 years later she's an elite pro-surfer, motivational speaker, wife, and mom.

Her courage is so undeniable BECAUSE it's the opposite of what we would all expect from such a life-changing event. Now, I don't know exactly HOW she has been able to summon such courage, but I'm sure she's NOT been listening to 3 common voices that plague most athletes. I'm talking about the voices of: Common sense, Naysayers, and Personal doubts.

Here's what I mean: It would have made perfect sense to everyone if she chose to never get on another surfboard...It's just common sense, right? Why tempt fate a 2nd time? Just pick a nice dry-land sport and never look back.

For that matter, common sense should have told Michael Jordan that at 5'11 in his sophomore year of HS, he probably would be better off pursuing a sport where height didn't matter. Thankfully, he didn't listen to common sense either.

There were plenty of Naysayers in Bethany's world, -- people who never expected her to reach the pro-surfing world. How could she possibly balance on her board with an asymmetrical body? And that's IF she could even paddle fast enough to catch a wave. Likewise, Michael Phelps suffered from ADHD as a child and was even medicated for it. Like Bethany, he probably didn't give too much credence to the naysayers in his life.

Next, if common sense, or the naysayers, don't kill your courage, you'll still have to face Personal Doubts. Every time Bethany looked in a mirror, or caught a glimpse of her shadow, she'd be reminded of her severe handicap. It was unavoidable. Yet she obviously did not spend a lot of time listening to the doubts that would plague her mind.

Did you know that in 2011, Venus William's was diagnosed with an autoimmune condition that causes fatigue and joint pain. That wouldn't make a pro tennis player feel very good about her future. Yet Venus returned to tennis with a modified diet and customized training program. She didn't focus on normal personal doubts, but rather on a path to overcome her condition.

In sports and in life, we all face challenges that create fear. Courage comes when we ignore the 3 negative voices and instead ask the ONE question that will give us control of the outcome, "Now, what am I going to do about it?"





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Discussion Guide for Parent and Athlete

1

Which of the 3 voices of fear plague your athlete the most:
Common Sense?
Naysayers?
Personal Doubts?
Why?

2

Choose a fear from the types above and use this question to find new courage:
“So, what am I going to do about it?”