

# GROWING CHAMPIONS FOR LIFE

*Positive Strategies for Helping Kids Win at Life and Sports*

## 5 Parenting Decisions that Expose Your Core Values

By David Benzel

James Burke was the CEO of Johnson & Johnson in the 1980s during Tylenol's biggest crisis to date. When contaminated Tylenol made it on to the shelves of stores in Chicago, Burke insisted on pulling his product from every shelf in America to ensure the safety of the public. This led to high praise and increased levels of trust for Johnson & Johnson because the leader did the right thing, in spite of the expense.

We all have a built-in "compass" that offers direction for decision-making. Just as a mechanical compass shows magnetic north, your internal compass reveals your True North Values. These values should be considered whenever you lead family choices. There are five crucial parenting choices observed by your children every day. Are your choices in alignment with your True North Values?

### 1. Setting the mood

The **mood** you choose to display when you arise each morning to meet and greet your children is the first behavior noticed. Parents often underestimate the significance of these moments, but children tend to take a "reading" from a parent's mood and internalize it. It's quite natural for children to make assumptions about the family's health and future based on the climate created by the mood of the parent. The mood of the parent becomes the mood of the family and ripples throughout the family like electricity.

### 2. Response to Challenges

Your demeanor when reacting to family **challenges** is another indication of your commitment to True North. A calm tone in your voice says, "I'm confident we can handle this situation," whereas panic in your voice says, "I'm threatened by this and you should be, too." When a crisis or challenge hits your family, all eyes will look to you for a reaction. When situations seem under attack, be sure to reflect a calm resolve that says, "I believe in you and our ability to solve this issue." Be sure to send that message when the seas are rough as well as during smooth sailing.

### 3. Initiating Change

Your choice in how you initiate **change** within the family is critical to the success of that change. While change is inevitable, and creating change is part of your job description, the choices you make regarding how and when will say volumes about your True North. Your style of delivery about any change telegraphs the level of empathy you have for your children who must adjust quickly to the change. Share your understanding of the discomfort this change will create.

### 4. Reacting to Behaviors

How you choose to react to appropriate **behaviors** and inappropriate behaviors indicates your belief about your children. Are you able to separate the doer from the deed? When behavior does not meet agreed upon standards, is compassionate correction readily available, or only punishment? When it comes to praise, children watch for consistency. Do you praise effort or only results? This process will appear fair if your True North Values include a clear definition of what excellent behavior looks like.

### 5. Treatment of Coaches

Nothing speaks louder to children than how their parents treat **coaches**. How you react to your coach shows everyone how it should be done. Your values in terms of respect, self-control, responses to winning and losing are obvious to your children as they watch you react to both the good coaches and the struggling coaches.

Parents with high credibility are the ones who have strong convictions about what they value. They are admired because their beliefs are very clear, and their actions are consistent with those beliefs. Demonstrate to your children that you not only know True North, but you intend to practice and honor it – even when it's not the easiest thing to do.

[CLICK HERE](#) to ask David Benzel a question about this topic:

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