

# GROWING CHAMPIONS FOR LIFE

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

## What's Working in Your Spacecraft?

By David Benzel

The year is coming to an end and it's common for athletes to take an inventory of what goals have been reached and which aspirations went unfulfilled. In the midst of that reflection it's very easy to get caught up in a negative mental spiral of what's not good, not working, weaknesses, and reasons why targets weren't hit. "If only I had..." and "Why didn't I do more..." can become the context for every memory of the past twelve months. With that line of questioning depression is sure to follow! There must be a better way to end the year.

There is, and it involves taking the exact opposite approach. During the Apollo 13 crisis, the Flight Control Manager asked his team, "What do we have on the spacecraft that works?" This kind of thinking – often called "appreciative inquiry" – is based on several fundamental principles.

- In every endeavor, something works
- What we focus on becomes our reality
- The act of asking questions influences our direction in some way
- As we move into the future we benefit more from focusing on our best from our past
- The language we use creates our reality

So in other words, the best question an athlete can ask himself as he looks to the New Year is "What am I doing that works?" The simple act of asking this question out loud stimulates the most creative parts of our brain to **appreciate** and **use** the best that lies within us. The question, "Why have I failed so much" does not take us where we want to go.

Follow this four step process to use this little best-kept secret.

1. **Appreciate** the best of what you have accomplished. List it, name it, relive it, and feel it throughout your mind, body and spirit.
2. **Imagine** what could come from that in the future as it grows, develops, and matures.
3. **Talk** about it with the most trusted people in your life's circle.
4. **Innovate** and create a new reality from this place of confidence.

As a parent, teach your child to stay away from dwelling on what's missing in his or her skill set or trophy case. Instruct your young athlete to appreciate the best that lies within them and use it as a platform for future improvement. This more positive approach helps an athlete mentally, emotionally, and even physically.

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

<http://www.growingchampionsforlife.com/coachdavid>

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