

WHAT SPORT PARENT ARE YOU?

BY DAVID BENZEL

Parenting behaviors communicate so many important messages to children. Many of these messages answer crucial questions for a child about his or her identity. As your children wonder "Who am I?" They interpret the answer from the messages you send with the demeanor of your actions and the selection of your words.

It could be said that parents come in four flavors, depending on what they value most. The most common and significant difference exists between those parents who value and demonstrate a concern for a child's performance, and those who

value and demonstrate a concern for a child's self-esteem. These preferences exist on a continuum from low to high and there are the four possibilities. What kind are you?

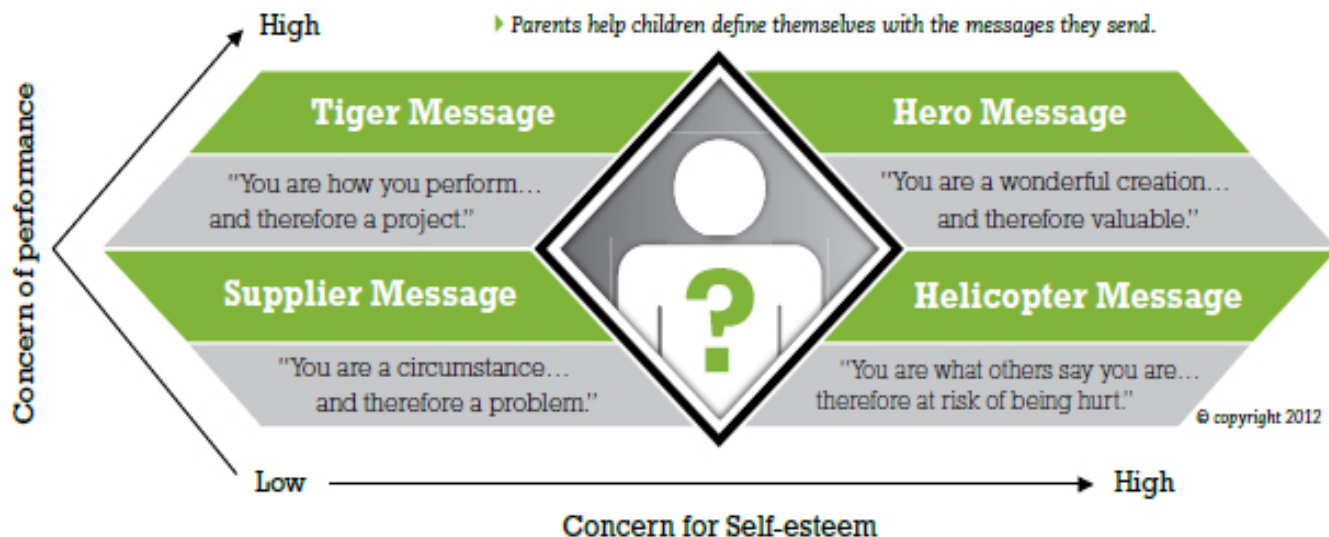
TIGER PARENT

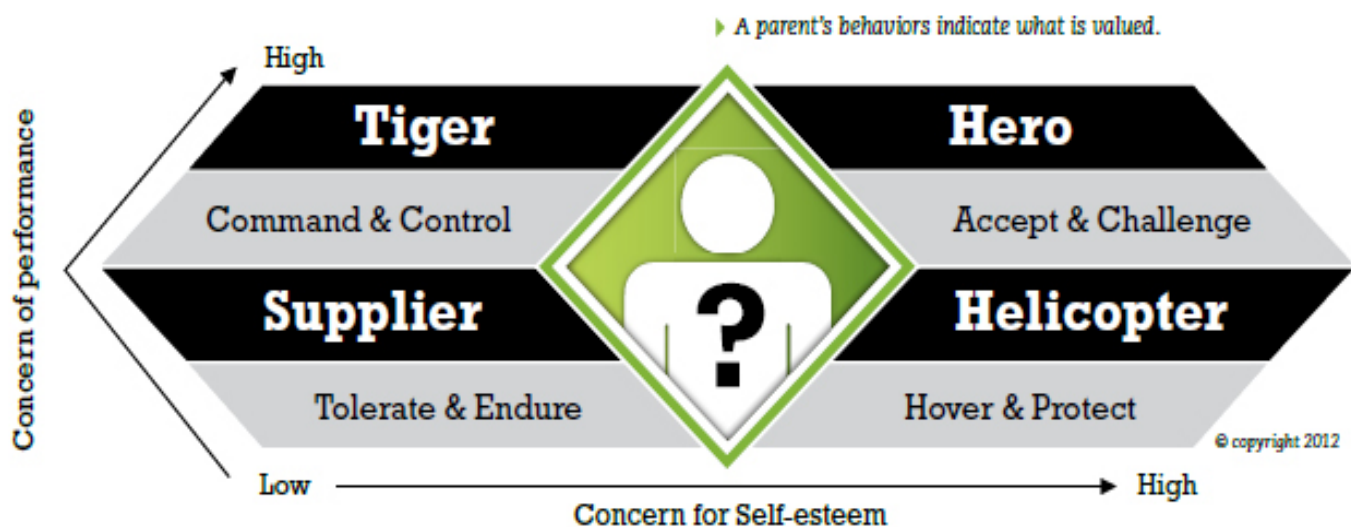
Parents who are primarily concerned with performance (high grades, sport victories, music recital placements, drama reviews, etc.) Behave in a way that sends the message: "You are how you perform." A heavy emphasis on what you do and how well you do it signals to a child that you're more valuable on the days you

perform well than on the days you don't. A child in this environment assumes that love is received in direct proportion to performance achieved.

HELICOPTER PARENT

Parents who are primarily concerned with self-esteem (a judgment of self-worth and worthiness) behave in ways that send the message: "You are what others say you are." These children receive a heavy bombardment of praise and adoration disconnected from performance and regardless of effort or improvement. A child in this environment becomes





dependent on the opinion of others and can have an inflated sense of self worth.

SUPPLIER PARENT

Believe it or not, some parents are not concerned about their child's self-esteem or their performance. These parents are more self-absorbed and view parenting as an assignment that has more to do with supplying the basic needs of food, shelter, and educational opportunities so the child can go do his thing. The message is "You are a circumstance for me to manage."

A child in this environment is generally starving for meaningful attention.

HERO PARENT

The final option is a unique intersection of a parent's concern about performance and an equal concern about self-esteem.

The Hero Parent views performance as an outcome of competency, which will come naturally when a child chooses to work hard (effort). High levels of self-esteem are a by-product of appropriate praise earned from making great efforts! The underlying message in this environment is in the form of a statement followed by a question. Statement: "You are valuable and blessed with many gifts." Question: "Where will you use your gifts and how good do you want to be at that?"

SUMMARY

The Hero Parent stands out through a purposeful blending of teaching the value of hard work without controlling it, and praising effort/improvement rather than a child's talent or gifts. The emotional connection that grows between parent

and child is the outcome of total acceptance and four specific behaviors.

- ▲ Choices given within age appropriate boundaries
- ▲ Challenges offered that stimulate stretching and growing
- ▲ Collaboration used for decision making
- ▲ Constant support for a child's vision and progress toward a goal

When coupled with unconditional love and a living testimony from parents, our children are pre-wired to experience both success and a love for themselves that makes them a blessing to the next generation as well. Please visit growingchampionsforlife.com to learn more. ▶

David Benzel is the Founder of [Growing Champions for Life](http://growingchampionsforlife.com), an organization dedicated to providing parents and coaches with positive strategies for helping kids win at life and at sports. Go to growingchampionsforlife.com to learn more.

