

The power of the Yes! - 4.5 ways to choose your attitude every day.

How much does your self-talk and your physiology impact your performance? Our 11 year old Davis qualified for the *US Kids World Golf Championship* at Pinehurst last week. It is a huge accomplishment just to qualify to attend. 1000's of kids around the world play in the local tours and very few make it to worlds. Over 40 countries were represented and he competed against the 149 best kids in his age group. *You have game if you fly in from Hong Kong or Australia!*

He played brilliantly in the practice round on a course called Talamore, playing a long 5600 yards with many elevation changes and difficult greens. It was also HOT, with a heat index of 104! I was able to caddy for him which is fun and it can be a lot of pressure on both of us. I have learned that **less is more** in terms of any coaching. Some of the dads seemed to give a lecture after each shot! We just focus on getting a good target and maintaining the *tempo* of his swing.



Davis and I warming up on the range

We got off to a tough start with a bad break on the first hole and an made a double bogey after making an easy birdie in the practice round. What is worse is it was partially my fault. I set him up too far left off the tee. A few bad holes later and the negative comments came quickly and often from Davis. With the negative words came the bad faces, slumping posture, tension and tears. Bogeys turned into triple bogeys. He beat himself up terribly. It was a common behavior with many of the kids.

If you tell yourself you suck over and over you begin to believe it. I was positive all the way and could not help turn him around. He shot his worst round of his life. Seeing your child go through that is difficult. I have never seen him fearful on the golf course. It was my toughest day as a dad. I kept wondering what I could have done differently. I wish I would have thought about a unique incentive like this in the middle of the round: I said he would earn \$100 if he did not say anything negative the rest of the way. We did it for the next two days and he loved it.

We left the course, took a shower, got lunch and went to see *Captain America* to take his mind off it. He felt better that night and I told him he has a chance to *learn a lesson for a life time*. He just learned that getting negative on the course is a losing game. Tomorrow our goal is to be the kid out of 1300+ that improves their score the most.

I remembered an article about golfer and Ryder Cup player Hunter Mahan doing the same thing in a US Open qualifier a few years ago. He played horribly in the first 18 and was "so demonstrably negative" that his mental coach Neale Smith told him simply could not continue to play with such an attitude. He insisted Hunter do a **fist pump and say YES** after each shot in the afternoon round. It worked. He stayed positive and shot a 63 to qualify for the US OPEN. He said; "**I felt like an idiot, but it made Neale's point. I had to stop beating myself up.**"

My experience says it is more important to get "into a peak state" before the shot, so I changed the **YES fist pump** before each shot and added a smile. I had him smile a lot during the round and have more fun walking the course and his time between the shots. It worked beautifully. He shot 77, improved his score by 14 strokes! One other player out of the 1300 kids in the field improved that much! The next day he had a putt for 78 on the last hole, went for it too much and 3 putted for an 80. He beat 84 of the 149 players the last two days. With a few more breaks on the putting greens, it could have been much better. Because of storms we played with the same boys and their dads the last two days and they both complemented me on how terrific Davis's attitude was on the course! **I could not have been a prouder dad.**



It was well worth blowing one round if the lesson sticks: You cannot beat yourself up on the golf course and doubt your talent and conviction. That applies off the course too.

You choose your attitude!

Many of us have experienced doubt recently. Martin Luther said, "*Nothing in the world causes so much misery as uncertainty.*" That is well said. Uncertainty about the economy, careers, cash flow, faith, children, relationships, etc. You could say that is the issue with the entire USA right now. Uncertainty creates fear and paralysis.

We choose our attitude, but we must be proactive. **Here are 3.5 things you can do right now.**

- 1.** Be very careful about what you are saying out loud and inside your head. You will move in the direction of your dominant thoughts.
- 2.** What are you reading, watching, listening to and who are you spending time with lately? Do not underestimate the impact of negative associations. Spend more time reading something inspirational, turn off the news, create playlist of songs that put you in a great mood, go out our your way to be with positive people.
- 3.** Motion creates emotion! How often are you moving your body and really getting "your sweat on?" This will help you get rid of toxins, increase your energy level and help you move with certainty!

4. Catch yourself doing things right and use the **Yes fist pump**. If you have seen me live you know exactly what I am talking about. Say yes with **energy** and **certainty** and pump your fist! You will feel more certain instantly. Use it when you need to

4.5 Have fun every day. Look for the moments when you can be more playful with your family and your co-workers. Do something fun more often, especially with your kids if possible.



Dad with Davis after the US Kids World Championship

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