

Search input field with a 'Go' button

# Room for Debate

WORLD U.S. N.Y. / REGIONAL BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY SCIENCE HEALTH SPORTS OPINION ARTS STYLE TRAVEL JOBS REAL ESTATE AUTOS

« Room for Debate Home

Facebook

Twitter

## Your Competitive Drive Vs. Your Child's

Judi Brown Clarke, a silver medalist in the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, is the director of diversity at the *Beacon Center for the Study of Evolution in Action*.

August 2, 2012

There can be a fine line between supporting your child's athletic opportunities and actively driving the process.

What matters is that your child finds joy in a good effort and realizes the importance of ethical principles.

As an Olympic silver medalist, former professional coach and parent of children in sports, I am very conscious of where that line is, and where I am in respect to that line. I have to constantly ensure I am not projecting my intense competitive drive onto my children, and that I am letting them develop and mature their own motivations.

I often see sports-minded parents limiting their children's opportunities to have unorganized playtime. As soon as their child displays a potential of talent, the child is immediately placed in a structured team and becomes overly programmed. There is beauty in watching a child develop a love for sports and building skills and character in ways that create invaluable tools for life.

Competition provides a wonderful imitation of life, but unfortunately involves high levels of scrutiny, and important consequences. Children that learn effective coping skills, like resilience and tenacity, can navigate life's challenges.


The best way to inspire and support a child's Olympic ambitions is to ensure they find the joy of a quality effort, and the importance of being a good example and respecting ethical principles.

*Join Room for Debate on Facebook and follow updates on [twitter.com/roomfordebate](https://twitter.com/roomfordebate).*

Topics: Sports, children, olympics, parenting

### 14 Comments

Share your thoughts.

ALL	READER PICKS	Newest <a href="#">Write a Comment</a>
	<p><b>Jonathan Ferrier</b> New Zealand</p> <p>For me this is a huge issue in our society. For example NZ soccer has put a bold, plan in place (the brainchild of John Herdman) called the Whole of Football Plan which encompasses 4 corners of player development in a balanced way comprising Technical, Mental, Physical and Social/Emotional focuses, is player centered in its approach to coaching kids rather than the traditional coach centered focus, mostly win at all cost. There is resistance by some clubs to this plan. I have witnessed the consequence of win at all costs where clubs at some levels endorse a win at all cost approach by allowing a coaching style that includes abuse of junior level children and parents within the player environment. While it is not easy as most clubs rely on voluntary parent coaching, clubs must facilitate a change by providing better training and support either internally or through the governing</p>	

bodies. Club administrators and some parents clearly prefer the glow of success rather than the well being of the players. This is a snapshot of sport in general and as always is a combination of adult ego, money, commercially driven interest and media.

Is it an underlying motive to serve a hidden agenda of either living through the child or from the child's not seeing his or her innate perfection without performance? Or is it for the sheer joy of self actualization and bonding for the players. Can be a fine line that is increasingly moving down the sport food chain age.

---

[READ MORE COMMENTS](#)

---