



## **Kids Need Parents, Not Glory Hounds**

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“Emergency!” was a 1970’s reality-based show which took a look at what went on in the daily lives of the fire department, hospital work and everyday life. It was fast-paced, featuring the heroics of Squad 51 of the Los Angeles County Fire Department’s paramedic program.

In one episode, a young female gymnast is in a rush to go to the Olympics. We find out it isn’t so much the young girl who is in a rush, but her obsessive father “pushing” her to extremes, in spite of the risk of injury.

During the episode, the young girl develops an inner ear infection, causing some dizziness. When navigating a balance beam, uneven parallel bars or launching oneself off a vault, dizziness is the last thing a gymnast wants.

Because of an upcoming meet, she must push through the dizziness. It becomes so great she lands in the hospital, where the staff gets to know the young girl while caring for her.

Enter the obsessive father.

The Olympic trials are approaching and the well-meaning father informs his daughter a particular girl is favored to win the event. The father knows if his daughter competes, her opportunity to make it to the Olympics is good. He wishes out loud his daughter was healthy, because it is his dream to see his daughter compete in the Olympics. The daughter knows she can beat this competitor and doesn’t want to disappoint her dad. She “decides” she is well enough and will compete in the trials against the doctor’s wishes. The risk of severe injury exists.

What just happened?

By informing the girl who was favored, and by communicating his dreams to the girl, she has been “guilted” into making a decision to try and please her dad. Any loving daughter would make the same decision.

You probably can guess what happens. While on the balance beam, the girl has an excellent routine going, but she experiences dizziness as she dismounts. She hits her head on the beam and falls awkwardly, suffers a concussion and breaks her arm and clavicle.

Because of this accident, the single-parent father realizes he is trying to live his dreams through his only child, and indirectly placed her in a dangerous situation.

Nowadays, a father pushes his young boy to become the next Roger Federer by sending him off with a coach for 8 hours of practice three days a month. A mother “encourages” her daughter to be in gymnastics and figure skating so she will reap public glory when her daughter makes it to the Olympics in one of the two sports.

Regardless of family size, let’s remember what our kids really need.

Our kids need us to be parents who act like parents and do what’s best for our kids, not what’s best for us.

They need a loving situation in which they will be accepted whether they accomplish great things or not.