

**Ep #87: Helping Your Kids to Be Coachable
with 4D Athletes**



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host
Lisa Smith

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Welcome to *Real World Peaceful Parenting*, a podcast for parents that are tired of yelling, threatening, and punishing their kids. Join mom and master certified parent coach Lisa Smith as she gives you actionable step-by-step strategies that'll help you transform your household from chaos to cooperation. Let's dive in.

Welcome, welcome, welcome. Welcome to today's episode. Today is a big day in the Smith family. Today is my son Malcolm's first day of senior year, his last first day. Let me tell you, I can't believe it. Wow. It's so exciting for him. Honestly, a bit bittersweet for me. I really hope Malcolm has the best senior year and enjoys the work and the challenges and the journey that is in front of him. I just know oh, the lessons he will learn this year. So have an amazing year, Malcolm. Please know I love you very much.

Speaking of lessons, are you loving this podcast? I'm so glad. I'm hearing from so many of you who are finding it inspiring and helpful. If you're one of them, and you have your hand raised or you're nodding your head or tapping your fingers, would you join me in getting the word out to parents, grandparents, teachers, foster parents, co-parents, anyone influencing kids? How, you're asking? Lisa, how do I do that?

Well, there's many ways. One of them is to screenshot this episode, or your favorite episode, and share on your social. Be sure to tag me so I can follow you and comment on it and interact with you. There are so many kids out there who need their parents to hear these tips, tools, and coaching. So thank you in advance for paying it forward to all of those families. I really appreciate it.

Now, if you know me at all, you know the topic of kids in sports is one of my favorite conversations. So I'm super jacked today about our returning guests Coach Jim and Coach Jason that I'm interviewing on this week's podcast. Joining me are two amazing men, coaches, mentors, and dads.

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Jim Huber and Jason Holzer. Coach Jim and Coach Jason are founders of 4D Athletes. It's a complete online trading system for athletes to help parents and coaches develop self-confidence, motivation, and empower athletes to do their best.

Coach Jim and Coach Jason teach essential life skills through sports. They join me this week to share some tips to help you become a great sports parent. Yes, it's possible. We all need these lessons to remind us of what it takes to be a great sports parent. So listen on as Coach Jim and Coach Jason and I discuss not only how to be a great sports parent, but how to help our kids be coachable.

Hmm, coachable. I know right. Many of life's lessons can be learned through sports. This episode will show you how you can use sports to teach your kids to be coachable and good teammates. Plus, we talk about how to be a great sports parent.

As I say in the episode, I so wish I'd known Coach Jason and Coach Jim back when Malcolm was in second grade and just getting started in his sports adventure. Malcolm, David, and I would definitely have benefited from their advice and guidance. There's so much good stuff here. I know you're going to love it and find it really helpful. So enjoy.

Lisa: So welcome Coach Jim, Coach Jason. Two of my favorite coaches. So excited to have you guys here on *Real World Peaceful Parenting* to talk today about sports and a safe place to learn life skills. This comes up all the time when I'm working with my clients. We talk about what are some ways to model and teach and support our kids in life skills.

Like winning and losing competition and showing up and doing things you don't like to do like practice. Or maybe you get halfway through soccer, and you realize you don't really love it. So let's dive in and talk about why each

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of you who together have tens of tens of years of coaching, why do you think sports is a good place to learn life skills?

Coach Jason: I think Lisa, in a lot of ways it is a safe way to learn failure. It's a safe way to build teamwork. At the end of day more than likely what's gonna happen is somebody's gonna win, somebody's gonna lose. But there's going to be so many things that happen in between there that you might get tested. You might get challenged. You might have to learn how to take criticism in a positive way. You might have to show some resilience if you fail.

I think it's one of the most safest environments that it kind of gives you a training ground for life because so many things apply in sports that happen in life as well. That's why I think it can be a great platform to teach kids some things that will help them in all areas of life. Not just maybe in sports. Jimmy, I know you got some other things add to that. But that's just my initial thoughts.

Coach Jim: Yeah, I think even for myself. I'm going through having a fourth grader and a first grader entering into just recreational sports. We're not playing like full time sports and things like that. But it's amazing I have a fourth grader I had to talk to him recently. He's excited about just signing up for sports beginning season, right? He's ready to do it. Play with friends, have a good time. Well, you gotta go to practice. He doesn't want to go practice after so many times, right?

Or he had a game recently that flag football, he didn't pull a flag. He wasn't able to like run the football, whatever. He didn't want to go to practice next week. I talked to him about like listen, Caden, understand this. Sports everything's not gonna work out the way you want it like life. You've got to be able to show back up. You've got to practice, right. You've got to work at

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it. You've got to keep getting better. The opportunities will eventually come for you possibly.

So even talking to him about you're not gonna—I understand that kids a lot of times they want to quit and give up on stuff so early. We have this instant gratification, right. Micro society. But I tell my son, you signed up for it. You want to do it. You're gonna finish the season. We're gonna go to practice. You're gonna go the next game.

I tell him all the time, I don't care. You're a human being, not a human doer. I don't care if you pull the flag. I don't care if you run the football. I don't care, whatever. My care is like what's your attitude like? What kind of effort are you giving? Are you coachable? What are you as a teammate?

So, to me, I think we have an opportunity as parents too because it can be challenging sometimes to play sports where kids want things to happen a certain way and they don't. To have them have perspective to understand what this is about, and what you need to do to continue to work at it to get what you want. Really, not only in sports, but in life.

Lisa: Let me ask you did your son—I'm assuming he didn't want to go practice because he felt bad about his performance. Is that the reason to shy away from the practice?

Coach Jim: I think it's that, but also I think he saw other kids doing things that he wants to do, right. He also sees like kids in maybe positions that he wants to play, right. He wants to play those positions. But like I tried to help him understand is like not everybody can be the quarterback all the time. Right? Not everybody can be the running back.

Lisa: Yeah.

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Coach Jim: So you have to be the lineman. On a team, every role is something that's important for team have success. Right? Whatever you're doing. Had to explain to them that. Because everybody like basketball, everyone wants the ball in their hands all the time, right? You might have to screen. Right? You might have to do different things. You have to pass it to an open teammate, and maybe you don't take the shot.

Lisa: Yeah.

Coach Jim: So helping them understand there is value in what you're doing even though you see that you want to do something different than maybe what the coach is having to do.

Lisa: Yeah.

Coach Jason: My son is playing flag football as well. He had to choose though. I was like hey, soccer or flag football because he's only six. I'm like we're not doing a bunch of stuff. You're gonna focus on one thing. So it also gives him the power of choices, and I get to kind of help them understand like what are they really interested in? I was like hey, did you like soccer, or did you like football? He's like should I pick flag football as well.

Then last time I was playing catch with him, he was dropping a few passes, again because he's six, and he got frustrated. I was like, "Hey, bud. If you get frustrated, that's good because you care. But how do you get better every time that you fail?" So I think, again, it goes back to like you're gonna fail. You're gonna fail a lot, especially the beginning. But learn that resiliency piece.

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He caught a couple. He got more excited. I was like just stay with the process. Stay with the process. Keep trying. I think that's another thing that sports can teach you as well is like sometimes you just gotta keep trying and believe that you're gonna get better.

Lisa: Yes, yes. 10,000 hours in, right. That's the thought is we need to be 10,000 hours in until we're good at something, whatever it is. Tying our shoes, doing dishes, cooking, violin, sports. I do think sports gives little boys and girls a chance to get that 10,000 hours in and feel good about their effort if there's the right approach at home. So this is what I want to talk about. This is what I want to ask you to.

So we were talking about this before we hit record. My son, for those of you listening, had his first day of senior year today. So the last first day of school. As I look back on Malcolm has been playing basketball since second grade. I've had a lot of time lately to reflect on this. There's so many things we've done wrong as a family in the journey of sports. So many things. I would have given anything to have had the two of you as a resource in second grade.

It makes me teary eyed thinking about it because I feel like in our family we've made all the mistakes. So let's talk about this. I played sports. I dabbled in school. But I was not very coordinated. Not very good, overly competitive, hated losing. So, tell me this. Talk to the listener who has a first grader or kindergartener and is just getting started in sports. How do you encourage your child to be coachable? What do you do at home to support?

Fortunately for me, my kid is very coachable and always has been. But this comes up a lot. For the non-sport parent who is taking their kid, let's say, to soccer in kindergarten for the first time, what would you say to them that will help their kid grow into a coachable player over the years?

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Coach Jason: I would say the first thing would be like number one, let them know that you have their unconditional support. Like no matter what they do on the soccer. If it doesn't matter if they score a goal, it doesn't matter if they dribble off their leg out of bounds, whatever it is. That you love them the same no matter what happens.

Sometimes parents get really excited when somebody does super well. Then the kid's like oh, so if I do something well, that's when mom and dad notice me or whatever. I think it's praising their effort. But then I also think it's letting them be coached by somebody else. Like if you didn't sign up to coach and help them and be there at the practices, then take a step back and find ways to support them, encourage them by saying hey, great job, keep trying.

But let them have one voice and make sure that the coach's voice and not yours from the sideline. Because then the old saying confuse, you lose. If you confuse them, then should I listen to mom and dad because I'm supposed to my parents. I'm supposed to listen to my coach at the same time. If they're saying conflicting things, then kids end up freezing because they don't know what to do.

So that's a couple things that I would say is support them, encourage them, and then let them be coached by somebody else. Afterwards, I wouldn't even worry about the game unless they talked about it. Just let them veg for a little bit, ask them what they want to do afterwards. But I wouldn't bring up a whole bunch afterwards of the game. Just let them enjoy the experience and move on from there. Maybe go get ice cream or do something fun with their friends afterwards. Just try to make it fun for them. Because that's how you encourage sport is just basically is if it's fun.

Lisa: That's right.

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Coach Jim: I think back to what Jason's saying, you got to model the behavior. I think as parents we tell kids what to do, but then we don't model it. Like Jason said, we got parents coaching on the sidelines. No sit back. Let the coaches coach if you're not going to coach. Some of these are volunteer coaches, and parents want to coach on the sidelines. No. Let them coach.

When you're on the sidelines, don't be telling them like Jason, you need to do this. You need to do that. No, no, no. Just hey platform, cheer him on, support him. Then the other thing is on a car ride home. So like ah the coach should have done this. They should have done that. Why didn't you do this? Right? You're always questioning the coach. Don't do that. Right? Model the behavior.

So the other thing I think goes back to coachable is teaching your kids, helping them understand what is coachable? What is the definition of being coachable? Then have them understand what is it to listen? Eyes, ears, your heart. Open up your heart. Have a desire to want to learn. Then the coach is speaking to you. Right? They're trying to help you become better. Don't take it so personal.

So if you help them understand what it is to be coachable, and these coaches are trying to help them become better. You help them understand too that okay, I'm gonna support you in this. I'm not your coach. I'm gonna let them coach. I think if you do more of that and model the behavior then kids are going to be more coachable in general.

Coach Jason: Jim to piggyback off that, it goes back to Lisa's get curious, not furious. Like the next day, ask him questions like hey, what was fun about what you did yesterday? What was exciting? What did you like? Then, after they've had some time to process things, because as you mentioned Lisa before, kids take a lot of process things. They might not

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know right away like what happened if they've lost or won, and why they're feeling a certain way.

But if you give it time for them to like sleep on it, next day hey, I really liked how you tried so hard yesterday. What did you like about what you did yesterday? Getting their perspective. Because then they'll give you some insight on how much they liked what they're doing. Do they want to do more in the future? So getting curious about that experience really helps parents as well. It gives them insight on how much of an enjoyable experience isn't for him.

Coach Jim: One other thing to add on that Lisa real quick I think too is these young kids look up to the professionals, right? They look up to like say it's basketball, Steph Curry, whatever might be. Use examples. Hey, Steph Curry, right. You notice how he's coachable? See what he does with this. Because they'll see that, and they like to emulate those athletes.

The other thing I would say this as parents, like with coachable or your kids are going through challenges and difficulties. Recently, I started telling son about stories when I was growing up in sports and some things that happened for myself that I had to battle through, and I had to overcome.

I brought up also like Tom Brady. Tom Brady was at Michigan, wasn't even playing much as a quarterback. He got drafted late with the New England Patriots. Was on the bench sitting there. He just stayed the course, showed up. So I think if you give examples of athletes and you give them also your stories about your life, what you had to go through as well that they can relate to as you as their mom or dad.

Lisa: I love that. I love that. Okay, so what I want to spend a minute here doing for you listener, I want to summarize what they just said. Because I

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took notes here. Let me just tell you, this is gold right here, people. This is cold.

So what Coach Jim and Coach Jason said is first of all, our kids are hardwired for fun. If it isn't fun, they're not going to want to do it. It has to be fun. F-U-N. So remember that. Before the game, make it fun. After the game. If it's Saturday morning at 7:30 and you're stressed out and screaming your kids get ready. We have to go. Get your shin guards. You're creating a stressful environment in the morning before you even get in the car. That doesn't start it off on fun. Like you guys said, if you're talking nonstop about all the mistakes on the drive home, that's not going to be fun for them either. So you want to really focus on making it fun.

Number two, praise the effort, not the result. Oh I mean please. If you hear nothing else, please hear that. That's just the work of Carol Dweck. Growth versus fixed mindset. I don't care whether you have a violin player, a dog groomer, straight A student. Like we should all be praising the effort and not the result. I did a couple podcasts about fixed versus growth mindset. If you need to know more about that, you can look through the library of podcasts and find that about fixed versus growth mindset. So praising the effort, not the result.

Okay, this one is big number three. This one's big and hits close to home. Let them be coached by someone else. The coach is the coach. You're the support as the parent, right? I mean we were at a tournament recently. This guy just screamed at his kid the entire game. I looked over him one point, and I started laughing. He looked at me and he's like, "Why are you laughing, lady?" I go do you really think he hears you?

We were in a gym with 15 courts going at once, whistles blowing everywhere, two refs per court. So that's at least 30 whistles plus hundreds of fans. This guy is just screaming nonstop at his kid. Nonstop. Like, I just

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thought to myself why don't you just enjoy the game? You know? Because I was very aware of the summer. It's last summer AAU. Right? This is it. The last time we're going to do this. So I really made an effort this summer to just sit back and enjoy the process.

This poor guy just looked over at him like oh man, buddy. Then the funny thing is, there were like six coaches on that team on the bench. You know what I mean? There were plenty of people that tell this kid what to do. Right? All right. So let your kids be coached by someone else. That is like one of the best pieces of advice for sports parents I think there is.

Then tip number four, model the behavior you want to see. Right? If you're complaining about the coaches all the time then your kid is going to be complaining about the coaches inside their head. When they're standing there, they're going to shut down. They're not going to be able to listen. Right? So. Then listen with your heart open. Really listen. Learn the skill of listening as a player. Listen to what the coach is saying. Slow down, get out of that fight or flight, and really listen.

Then lastly, the after action review would be asking your kid, and I really love this. Hey, what did you like about yesterday? Because there's a lot of clues there. Right? You can get to know your kid. Are they competitive? Are they there for the social? Do they like the running part of soccer, but not the kicking the ball? It might give you a clue in what else. Do they like the contact? Are they afraid of the contact? Do they enjoy just the exercise? Right?

I remember when Malcolm was in kindergarten. We figured out very quickly how competitive he is because the kindergarten soccer league he played in, the score was always fun to fun. That was their rule. We get home and the neighbor would come out, this elderly lady, and she'd say, "Malcolm, how'd you do today?" Dave would say, "Well, you know the score was fun

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to fun.” Malcolm would say, “Actually, we won 14 to 11.” He would keep track in his mind, and he enjoyed that. He enjoys measuring himself against others. That really helped us understand who he is.

To this day man, he's competitive. He hates to lose. We don't fight that. We embrace that about him. He's learned to be a gracious loser when it happens. But it doesn't mean that we've tried to tamp down that competitive spirit in him because that's one of his greatest assets. Right?

So when you follow up and you ask your kids what was yesterday like for you? What did you enjoy? What did you not enjoy? I think through sports you can really get to know your kids. Right? So let's talk about this as kind of the last part. Your kids go to school. They leave you all day, and they're in the classroom. You don't really know what's going on. You don't really get to see them. You only hear about, but my kid has been doing sports every weekend since second grade pretty much. I really feel like I know him because I get to observe him in this competitive environment on the regular. So tell me your thoughts on that.

Coach Jason: Well, you have to be open to being an observer too and not like one to reply. So I think that's the key is like how do I, as a parent, what are some things I can do to stay calm, to stay present, and support them? Right.

So I think it's what we talked about before is just enjoying the process of it. Not trying to rush through things. Not trying to make it hurried. Not trying to make a certain result or a certain team or learning to accept where your child's at, but also encourage them to get better at the same time. Maybe they don't make it in a league team. Maybe they make a second team or a third team. Maybe they're right team.

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Asking them what their goals are for playing as well. Like hey, why do you want to play in the first place? I think that's the key before you even sign them up is at the end of this season, what do you want to experience, and what do you want to get from it?

If it's just more friends then don't try to get them on all these trainers and all these things to get them an elite player because you're going to be wasting your money, and they're going to hate it in the first place. So I think that's the key is like having your goals and your kids' goals aligned so that way you are on the same page on why are we doing this in the first place?

Coach Jim: Well, I think it goes back Jason to what you said. One thing is patience. Parents patience. All right. Anything that was great didn't happen overnight. I think you have to also go back and realize this is your child's experience. It's not yours. I tell my son all the time, Caden, this isn't about me. It's about you. It's your experience. I'm going to support you on it. So if after the season, you don't want to play a sport anymore, hey that's okay.

I'm a basketball coach. People ask me all the time. Is your kid going to play basketball when he gets to high school or college? He might never play basketball. He might stop in the third or fourth grade. That's okay with me.

So I also tell parents is it's their experience, not yours. Let them find what they're passionate about. Get them in different activities. Have them have fun. Once they find that passion, you can help and support them in that. Everybody's a little bit different. But I think we try to sometimes as parents press our desires, what we want our kid to become in life upon them instead of letting them become what they desire to become if that make sense.

Lisa: It's so true. I see it all the time where maybe you didn't realize your potential as a young kid, and you realize the mistakes. So now you're going

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to live through their experience, and you're going to correct and guide and direct their experience so that it's better than your experience.

I tell parents all the time our kids are their own souls who have come to Earth to have their own experience. We're just fortunate enough that they've picked us to guide them for a period of time. We don't own them. You're so right. I mean letting them have their own experience.

Jason, to your point, if your kid's number one motivation is to be with his friends on a team, right, he just loves playing with his friends. All his friends are playing in the Y league. You want him to go play in another league. It's in the face of his goal, which is to go play with his friends and just to have a good time. Right? So that can create conflict early on that isn't necessary.

Coach Jason: Well, then it goes back to their basic needs not being met of being seen, heard, and valued, right.

Lisa: Right. Exactly.

Coach Jason: So you're doing what you think is best for them and not listening to them, like what they want for themselves. So I think that's another key piece in there as well.

Lisa: Exactly. Exactly. All right. I want to leave it there because there's so much goodness here. I want this to be just an episode that parents will go back and listen to over and over and over again. Again, I think everything you all said being at the other end where my son's high school sporting experience is winding down. If I would have had this podcast when he was in second grade, we could have saved ourselves a lot of storming in our home over sports.

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So I think you gave us just so many great ideas and guidance to chew on as to coaches who've been involved in coaching young kids for many, many, many years. So I want to say thank you. Just tell us if the listener wants to learn more, wants to get more information from you all and be guided more, I know you have some opportunities. Tell them where to go to find out more about how to work with you.

Coach Jason: Yeah, 4dathletes.com is our website. We actually built out a course on how to navigate your kid through sports to kind of give you some of these tips. We actually have quite a bit more there too. So again, website is 4dathletes.com. We're on LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook as well. So those are some great spots. Again, those all handles are 4D Athletes.

Lisa: Yeah, 4D, 4D as in one, two, three, four, D as in dog. 4dathletes.com. Check out Coach Jim and Coach Jason. We'll link in the show notes over on LinkedIn. They also have a weekly podcast where they talk about sports. Their podcasts are very cool. I listen every week. I learn a lot. You guys have guided me a lot in how to think about high school sports and beyond as we're exploring options here in our family. So thank you for what you do.

Listen, if your kid is just starting out and you don't know the world of sports, and you want to be a good sport citizen. You want to be there for your children. check out 4dathletes.com. You're not going to go wrong. Okay, hope you enjoyed this until we meet again. I'm wishing you peaceful parenting.

Thank you so much for listening today. I want to personally invite you to head over to thepeacefulparent.com/welcome and sign up for my free peaceful parenting minicourse. You'll find everything you need to get started on the path to peaceful parenting just waiting for you over there at www.thepeacefulparent.com/welcome. I can't wait for you to get started.

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Thanks for listening to *Real World Peaceful Parenting*. If you want more info on how you can transform your parenting, visit thepeacefulparent.com. See you soon.