

OPINION: Raising our children to accept failure and the real world

By Jordis Brown

“You can be anything you want to be!” “There is no person better than anyone else!” “We are all equals!”

The truth is if you heard any of this growing up someone did you a great disservice. They are all lies.

At some point we thought we'd make the next generation great by filling their little heads with pretty words: “If you can dream it, you can achieve it!” We made it seem like anything was possible, if you wanted it bad enough. Then that child grows up to find being a rock-star astronaut is out of their reach, no matter how much they wanted it. Then depression kicks in.

The drive to find any success dwindles down to a hopeless routine to get by. How is it that such encouragement can be a bad thing? We all want the best for our children and the next generation, so shouldn't we be reinforcing it? Of course! But telling someone that “it's in the bag,” is a whole lot different then preparing them to be strong enough to accept failure. Our differences define us and what one person is able to accomplish, another may not be able to.

That is reality. Harsh, but nevertheless.

It's the end of the season and out comes a cart full of trophies. Everyone is a winner! It's a great thing to get a trophy and be told you are a winner. But that person who worked really hard and just did better is being told that that other one who slept half the time and didn't pay attention at

all is just as good.

So how is that motivating them? How is that preparing the slacker for the day someone says “You are not good enough”? How is that reinforcing the hard work by the achiever?

It isn't.

The truth is there is always someone better than someone else. Sounds horrible right? Shouldn't we raise children to believe that “No-one” is better than anyone else? I mean, that sounds darn right saintly to say that! But it is a lie.

I am better than a person who kills another person. A pedophile. A rapist. I am better than a parent who neglects or abuses their child. Now you're thinking “of course,” but wait? I thought that no one is better than anyone else? Let's expand...

My child is a better artist than yours, but your child is better at math. I am more charitable than you because I write a check for a charity as opposed to just re-posting about it on Facebook. Did that sting? You do re-post more than me though. There are better parents than others, better athletes and just better people!

Our goal is to achieve personal greatness and what we can accomplish can only be found through what we've failed at. Inflating a child's head to believe that no matter what, they can have their dream. It's really nice and sweet, but one should also make it clear that sometimes things don't work out and honestly you are just not cut out for it. Crashing and burning when reality isn't as sweet can have a hard consequence to their emotional state.

Maybe we can end the widespread depression of tomorrow, if we started preparing our children a little better for reality, today.

