



**ATHLETES  
UNLOCKED**

# 10 COMMON CHALLENGES

A Guidebook to UNLOCK the potential of  
**MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETES**

# DO YOU WANT A **MENTAL EDGE?**



Are you an athlete wanting to enhance your performance in sports and life? Many parents and coaches may not have the time or expertise to provide all the necessary guidance. This underscores the importance of seeking advice from a trusted source with over 35 years of experience in leadership training for athletes of all ages and skill levels.

This guidebook will give you a  
**GAME-CHANGING**  
advantage in sports and life.

Having role models like parents, teachers, or coaches is crucial for clear thinking and effective communication. Learning from them helps develop decision-making skills and supports personal development.

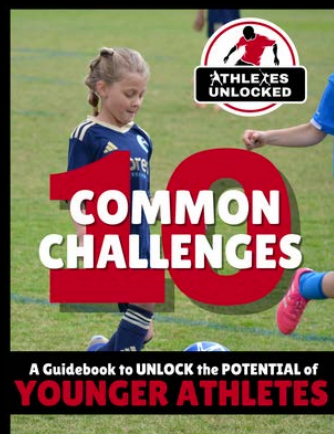


Becoming our best selves requires leadership training focusing on assisting you in better understanding and utilizing these five essential life skills to enhance your life.

**KNOWING YOURSELF**  
**UNDERSTANDING OTHERS**  
**MANAGING YOURSELF**  
**PEOPLE SKILLS**  
**REACHING YOUR GOALS**

# OUR PROGRAMS ARE TRUE GAME-CHANGERS!

**ATHLETES UNLOCKED** introduces a collection of guidebooks designed to help **PARENTS, COACHES & ATHLETES** at all levels—professional, collegiate, and youth—overcome challenges they face both in **SPORTS** and in **LIFE**.



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Many young athletes possess the physical abilities required for their sport, yet they often lack the mental fitness training needed to elevate their performance to the next level. This guidebook explores ten common challenging scenarios you may face, providing valuable insights on how to think, communicate, and respond effectively in difficult situations.



How **MOTIVATED** are you to  
**EXCEL**  
in **SPORTS** and **LIFE**?

# — THE — **CHALLENGES**

Here are 10 common scenarios young athletes tend to run into:

- Goal Setting & Accomplishment
- Responding to Adversity
- Responding to Success & Failure
- Responding to Fear
- Being a Good Leader of Yourself
- Unrealistic Ideals
- Unrealistic Expectations
- Building Good Relationships
- Competing with Character
- Balancing Life – Tasks, Study, Play & Rest

If these 10 challenging situations are not handled appropriately, they can lead to discomfort as outlined below. Failing to respond effectively may result in further complications. Therefore, it is essential to be both prepared and equipped to tackle these circumstances efficiently:

**Regret**

**Disappointment**

**Discouragement**

**Frustration**

**Anxiety**

**Anger**

**Sadness**

**Stress**

**Disapproval**

**Fearfulness**

**Vulnerability**

**Failure**

**Dread**



# **QUICK TIPS FOR YOUNG ATHLETES**

**Here are a few tips to assist you in any circumstance:**

**When faced with obstacles, respond rather than react.**

**Assess negativity thoroughly before addressing it.**

**Maintain your composure, no matter the situation.**

**Be honest and direct without hesitation.**

**Practice fairness, irrespective of others' behavior.**

**Strive to remain positive even in tough times.**

**Welcome feedback and constructive criticism without fear.**

**Value personal growth over simply winning.**

**Embrace the life lessons; don't shy away from them.**

**The goal is always to be assertive in thought and communication.**

# **SCENARIO**

**Goal Setting &  
Accomplishment**



# **SET GOOD GOALS & ACHIEVE THEM**

**As a young athlete, you're always thinking about, talking about, and working toward your goals – those things you want to achieve because you think they'll bring something positive to your life. But it's important to know where those goals come from. Are they all your very own? Or do they come from a parent? Coach? Peer? Friends? Who influenced you to have a particular goal?**

**Here's the thing about goals: some are your own, but a lot of them are probably what other people in your life expect of you. Something to think about.**



# **HOW AWARE ARE YOU OF YOUR GOALS?**

Here's another intriguing aspect to reflect on regarding your goals and motivations. There are four levels of awareness to consider:

**VERY AWARE**  
**LESS AWARE**  
**NOT VERY AWARE**  
**BARELY AWARE (IF AT ALL)**

It can be challenging to pinpoint the origins of your goals. However, there's no need to worry. Simply reflect on who established the goal, the reasons behind it, and what it aims to achieve.

# PLANNING YOUR GOALS

Reflect on your goals for today, this week, month, year, and life. Consider what you want to achieve, your motivations, and the impact on yourself and others.

Understand that many goals set by adults, like doing homework or chores, are meant to help you develop important skills for life. Instead of resisting, try to comprehend their intentions.

Plan to make your goals SMART goals.

**S**pecific

**M**easurable

**A**chievable

**R**elevant

**T**ime-Bound

# **YOUR APPROACH TO THE GOALS**

It's important to have the right goals, but it's also important to think about how you're going to reach them. When setting and analyzing your goals, the following will help you define your specific goals.

**What are you really going for?**

**Are your goals worthwhile?**

**What does success look like?**

**Think about the good and the bad.**

**What's stopping you?**

**Get help if you need it.**

**Stay positive and don't lose faith.**

**Don't quit!**

# **SCENARIO**

**Responding to  
Adversity**

# HOW TO OVERCOME OBSTACLES TO GOALS

You're gonna run into roadblocks with pretty much any goal you have. Sometimes we create them ourselves; other times they come from other people, or even from external stuff like the weather. You've got to plan for things to not always go your way.

How? By prepping, practicing and always expecting some pushback, especially for those goals that are worth achieving.

When things get tough, we usually react by fighting or avoiding the problem altogether. What we should do instead is tackle it head-on and overcome it. Easier said than done, for sure. But we're always going to push you to be as intentional as you can be.

## HAVE A GROWTH MINDSET

**Remember, tough times can be great teachers and help you grow a lot. Look for challenges so you can learn from them and then move on to harder and more complicated ones!**

# TOOLS FOR YOUNG ATHLETES

Skills refer to your ability to perform tasks, while tools assist you in achieving success. If you're unsure how to use a tool, don't hesitate to seek help from someone knowledgeable.

**Understand that obstacles are natural and often necessary.**

**Never avoid or attack; be smart and respond, not react.**

**Recognize that failure is only failure if you believe that.**

**Struggling is part of the process; giving up is not.**

**Don't be afraid to try harder or a different way.**

**Strive for excellence; perfection is not realistic.**

**Avoid shortcuts; the longer, harder path is usually better for you.**

**Build up mental strength, endurance and agility.**

**Calm down, think, then respond with assertion.**

**Find your maximum capacity; don't be afraid.**

# **3 SCENARIO**

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**Responding to  
Success & Failure**



## **STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING WINS & LOSSES**

**If you plan to compete in sports or in any aspect of life, you'll no doubt encounter moments of loss, failure, or defeat. This is completely normal. Avoid getting caught up in over-inflating or deflating your self-worth; instead, maintain humility and concentrate on self-improvement.**

**Invest time in training and practice to enhance your skills. Remember, only you should hold yourself accountable; don't let external pressures influence you.**

**Refrain from allowing anyone's opinions, including your own thoughts, to lead you to believe you're superior, or to see yourself as a victim, inferior, weak, or a failure.**

# TOOLS FOR YOUNG ATHLETES

Many young athletes tend to over-celebrate their achievements or feel defeated by their performance and results. Avoid falling into these traps. Strive to be better and embrace your uniqueness. Don't let yourself become overly inflated or deflated; it's a pitfall that hinders your progress.

**Use loss or failure as motivation to work.**

**Your value is not determined by your victories or defeats.**

**Observe what success looks like and strive to replicate it.**

**Relying solely on natural talent isn't enough; effort is essential.**

**Prioritize your time wisely and avoid distractions.**

**Elite performers leverage every experience to enhance their skills.**

**Actively seek feedback, even when it's challenging to hear.**

**Maintain resilience and have faith in your abilities.**

**Honor the process of getting better.**

**Say no to the nonsense and yes to the effort.**

# **SCENARIO**

**Responding  
to Fear**



# **STRATEGIES TO CONQUER FEARS**

**It's okay to be scared sometimes – it's natural! The key is to figure out if what's scaring you is something you can handle or if it's a real danger. Don't sweat the small stuff, but don't get too cocky if there's a real threat. Pay close attention to the thoughts that make you feel threatened. Think of them as enemies that you need to take down.**

**So many young people are struggling with their thoughts and the messages they get – whether it's on purpose or not – that tell them they're better or worse than they really are. It's easy for them to feel insecure and threatened by these messages. They could handle them a lot better if they not only had the skills and tools, but actually used them.**

# MANAGING YOUR MESSAGES

Lean into the good stuff — accurate and helpful messages are your friends. And don't let the bad stuff get to you — inaccurate and unhelpful messages are just noise. Toughen up mentally, get smarter, and don't fear messages that sting a little but ultimately make you better. It's okay to mess up, fail, lose, be selfish, or make mistakes. Just get back on track and keep pushing forward. Enjoy the struggle and keep fighting no matter what gets in your way.

Courage is the act of facing your fear even when you know it's there. You can't eliminate fear, but you can improve your courage and battle through your fears. Focus on activating your courage.





# **AFRAID? CONSIDER THESE QUESTIONS:**

**What's causing this fear?**

**What specifically is scaring me?**

**Is this fear real or just in my head?**

**Am I blowing it out of proportion?**

**How do I usually feel when I'm scared?**

**What do I usually say or do when I'm scared?**

**If I had enough skill, could I overcome this fear?**

**If I had enough courage, could I overcome this fear?**

**What thoughts run through my head when I'm scared?**

# TOOLS FOR YOUNG ATHLETES

Fear plays a role in nearly every aspect of our lives; it is a fundamental part of being human at any age. It's crucial to recognize genuine threats and manage unrealistic fears effectively and efficiently, allowing you to concentrate on simply being and doing. Don't let unnecessary fear disrupt your life. Here are some tips to help you with this:

**Practice consistently.**

**Choose to embrace courage.**

**Anticipate feelings of fear.**

**Accept that setbacks may occur.**

**Take measured, progressive steps.**

**You are in control of yourself, not the threat.**

**Keep moving forward and maintain persistence.**

**Be proactive: educate yourself about the threat.**

**Trust in your abilities, have faith, and stay optimistic.**

**Remember, if someone else has succeeded before, you can too.**

**Seek expert advice and training to understand the necessary actions.**

# **5 SCENARIO**

**Being a Good  
Leader of Yourself**



# HOW BEST TO MANAGE YOURSELF

**Self-leadership involves managing your thoughts, emotions, motivations, actions, and interactions with others. It lays the groundwork for effectively leading others, starting with yourself. Despite your youth and the constant guidance from others, remember that you are still your own leader – view it that way.**

**Also consider how you use your energy, focus, skills, and resources. Strive to be assertive rather than passive, aggressive, or passive-aggressive. If you're unfamiliar with these concepts, take the time to learn them because they're crucial for understanding leadership.**

# HERE ARE YOUR OPTIONS

Being ASSERTIVE involves harnessing your own power while maintaining a steady pace. It's not about being hostile toward yourself or others; it's about being focused, determined, and confident in your own abilities and the results you seek.

On the other hand, being PASSIVE means neglecting responsibilities, being complacent, and avoiding necessary actions. This lack of engagement prevents you from achieving your goals.

Being AGGRESSIVE entails acting with anger, hostility, and excessive force, which can harm both you and those around you. While this approach might provide temporary satisfaction, it ultimately leads to harm.

Although society often encourages aggression as a means to succeed, assertion remains the only healthy choice.

Lastly, PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVENESS is a subtle and indirect tactic that depends on shortcuts and less effective methods.

# TOOLS FOR YOUNG ATHLETES

The earlier you cultivate a mindset of ownership and responsibility —without dwelling on the actions or words of others—the more successful you will be both in sports and in life. Embracing self-acceptance is a crucial goal. Take some time to research this concept.

**Eliminate distractions.**

**Pursue peace, joy, and freedom.**

**Avoid blaming others or complaining.**

**Be intentional and have a clear purpose.**

**Maintain a positive and optimistic outlook.**

**Stay humble and focused, avoiding arrogance.**

**Place your faith in someone beyond yourself.**

**Concentrate on gratitude and personal fulfillment.**

**Choose control and take responsibility for your actions.**

**Don't feel sorry for yourself or have a victim mentality.**

# **SCENARIO**

**Unrealistic  
Ideals**



# **UNREALISTIC SELF-EXPECTATIONS**

**We all have visions of who we aspire to be and how we wish to live, but these aspirations can sometimes be vague, overly ambitious, or too limited. It's essential to establish goals that are both inspiring and achievable.**

**Do you believe you hold any unrealistic expectations about the person you want to become or the things you want to accomplish? If so, do you think that these beliefs are contributing to unnecessary stress, negativity, or challenges in your life?**

# THE ORIGIN OF THESE IDEALS

Consider where your unrealistic goals came from. Do you believe they stemmed from yourself, or perhaps from your parents, siblings, teachers, coaches, or influencers?

Can you pinpoint what led you to adopt these unrealistic ideals? What did you hope to achieve by striving for these goals?

Do these ambitions still resonate with you, or is it time to refresh, revise, or completely transform them?



# THE ORIGIN & WHAT TO DO NEXT

Is it essential to identify the sources influencing your ideals? Not always, but it can be beneficial. Understanding the motivations behind your beliefs, whether they stem from yourself or others, can provide valuable insights.

Here are some steps to help you establish realistic ideals for success.

**Recognize the unrealistic ideals.**

**Do your best to discover where these ideals originated.**

**Understand why they became ideals in the first place.**

**Reflect on what you hoped to achieve by accomplishing them.**

**Take time to grieve the loss of these ideals.**

**Establish new, improved ideals.**

**Ask for help with this if you need to.**

**Ensure these new ideals are realistic yet still challenge you.**

**Assess your progress and adjust as necessary.**

# TOOLS FOR YOUNG ATHLETES

We all need reminders—those messages that educate, uplift, and inspire us to persevere. It can be a real challenge to distinguish between your weaknesses and limitations. At times, you may need help in setting and adjusting your goals. Seek wisdom from trusted sources.

**You are valuable regardless of how you perform.**

**Focus on continuous learning and improvement.**

**Avoid self-criticism for limitations.**

**Balance personal goals with others' needs.**

**Seek feedback and correction.**

**If self-discipline is difficult, ask a trusted source for help.**

**Aim for perfection to achieve excellence.**

# **7 SCENARIO**

**Unrealistic  
Expectations**

# EXPECTING TOO MUCH FROM OTHERS



**Just as we set goals and standards for ourselves, we also have expectations for those in our circle of influence, and guess what? They have expectations of us too.**

**You're human, right? So you understand how frustrating it can be when someone anticipates your ability or willingness to do something that simply isn't possible.**

**Keep this in mind when considering your parents, coaches, siblings, friends, and others you interact with regularly. They're human too! Like you, they experience moments of weakness or selfishness, face limitations, and have their own fears.**

# EXPECTING TOO MUCH

People of all ages around you are bound to let you down; it's simply part of being human. Anticipate this reality and strive to be self-reliant for the things you can manage on your own. Use any disappointment as motivation to become better, more disciplined, and more responsible, accomplishing as much as possible in your life.

Treat anything you receive from others as a bonus. Remember, this challenge is not easy for anyone, especially someone as relatively young as you are. You may be more capable than you realize.

## WHAT CAN I DO?

You can ask others to fulfill your needs or requests and hope for the best outcome. They might rise to the occasion, or they might not. Don't be afraid to ask.

If their response is disappointing, take it in stride, seek assistance from someone else, or learn to handle it yourself, accepting that some things may simply remain undone.

# TOOLS FOR YOUNG ATHLETES

It would be ideal for everyone to share responsibility and act thoughtfully. Since they don't, we must adapt. It's important to identify reliable people and their strengths, expecting them to fulfill their roles. When they don't, we need effective management strategies. Here are my suggestions:

**Aim to genuinely think and feel as the other person does.**

**It's essential to master the art of forgiving others as soon as possible.**

**Show mercy: Refrain from punishing someone.**

**Learn to be more agile, enduring, and flexible mentally.**

**Learn to be more accepting of people's imperfections.**

**Avoid holding onto negativity and discomfort for extended periods.**

**Be proactive: Prepare for the unexpected and take initiative.**

**Learn to trust those who have proven themselves to be reliable.**

**Learn to do as much as you can on your own without help from others.**

**Strive to accomplish as much as you can on your own.**



# **SCENARIO**

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**Building Good  
Relationships**

# MASTER YOUR PART



**The sooner you focus on your contributions within relationships, the better your situation will be. It's the only aspect you can truly control. It'd be ideal if everyone chose to be a great teammate, giving their best effort at all times, but that's not always the reality.**

**You must be prepared for negativity from both yourself and others, and strive to develop the skills necessary to generate, maintain, and convey positive messaging as much as possible.**

**It's simple, but not necessarily easy.**

**Life can be challenging, and relationships play a significant role in that. They can be wonderful and bring immense joy, but they also have the potential to bring pain. Ultimately, it all hinges on the messages you send and receive. They can be true or false, uplifting or discouraging, positive or negative, healthy or unhealthy, beneficial or unhelpful.**

# YOUR PART IN RELATIONSHIPS



**Reflect on the messages you wish to convey in your relationships. Do you seek them to be educational, supportive, encouraging, affectionate, demanding, harsh, or simply enjoyable?**

**Identify your needs from others and don't hesitate to voice them. If someone is unable to meet those needs, that's perfectly okay; keep searching until you find the right people who can.**

**Evaluate what you contribute to a relationship and the typical messages you communicate. What adjustments could you make?**

**Approach relationships as opportunities to fulfill each other's needs; when you do this, everything becomes more manageable. What unique value do you bring to your relationships that others appreciate?**

**Keep in mind that nobody wants to be treated poorly, yet it can occur. Avoid expecting perfection from everyone. Aim to be understanding, forgiving, and strive to keep negativity out of your relationships.**

# TOOLS FOR YOUNG ATHLETES

Others have likely directed a considerable amount of negativity toward you throughout your life. That's tough to deal with, a difficult reality we face. Holding onto that negativity or attempting to escape or fight against it will only harm you further.

Instead, focus on learning how to process it; extract the positives and let go of the rest. This demands significant skill and sacrifice, but it is certainly worthwhile. Here are some additional tips to consider:

**Strive to communicate positive, truthful, and helpful messages.**

**Aim to receive positive, truthful, and beneficial messages.**

**Instead of avoiding negativity, confront it and release it as necessary.**

**Embrace negativity as a learning opportunity.**

**Practice forgiveness, show mercy, and learn to let go.**

**Place your trust in and invest in others who are doing their best.**

**Invest in learning what the best relationships are from the masters.**



# **SCENARIO**

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**Competing With  
Character**



# HOW DO YOU WANT TO COMPETE?

To compete in sports or in life, you're essentially in a battle to be your best or to overcome an opponent. That's just the reality.

My personal principle is to do whatever it takes to win, but always with integrity, which means adhering to the guidelines of fairness and appropriateness. This isn't always straightforward, as it demands considerable skill and self-control, and it often takes many of us time to master. However, there may be no more worthy pursuit. Start now.

**ASSERTION IS ALWAYS THE SOLUTION.  
EXPLORE AND LEARN ABOUT THIS APPROACH  
TO BEING AND DOING, AND EVERYTHING  
WILL WORK OUT FOR THE BEST.**

# TOOLS FOR YOUNG ATHLETES

Not everyone will adhere to the rules, so it's important to remain respectful and prioritize fairness and justice, especially in competitive environments and activities.

You have the power to choose the person you want to be. Remember that those who excel in every aspect of life opt to compete with integrity. It's the only true value. Here are some challenging yet achievable suggestions to support you on your journey:

**Ask leaders to clarify what good character means.**

**Inquire about ways to develop strong character.**

**Remember, your choices define your identity.**

**Success without integrity lacks true value.**

**Prioritize honesty and fairness, even in tough situations.**

**Treat others as you wish to be treated, without exceptions.**

**Seek guidance from trusted leaders when unsure about right actions.**

# **10 SCENARIO**

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**Balancing Life:  
Tasks, Activities,  
Study & Rest**

# HOW DO YOU WANT TO COMPETE?



**Every single moment of every single day, you choose to engage in tasks or activities, either independently or with others. The goal of these decisions should be to make the most informed and beneficial choices to achieve positive outcomes. This is the objective for anyone looking to maximize their potential and abilities in any area of life.**

**Why not start learning how to do this now? Don't wait! Each day that passes with poor life balance makes it increasingly difficult to change later on. Trust me, as someone who helps others untangle the imbalances created by poor decision-making over the years. Be proactive; strive for improvement.**

# POINTS TO PONDER

No matter how old you are, most days need a good balance of everything: tasks (those boring responsibilities), fun activities, studying (anytime you're focused on learning), and rest (chilling out to recover and recharge).

Sadly, lots of young people are super unbalanced – to the point where finding a good balance seems impossible. This causes a ton of problems and messes everything up.

Being unbalanced is destructive. It's crucial to figure out how to balance your day, week, year, and whole life, and do it all with confidence. Easier said than done, right?



# TOOLS FOR YOUNG ATHLETES

**It's a significant challenge for a young athlete to maintain proper life balance, especially when many adults are not modeling, teaching, guiding, or disciplining them in this regard.**

**It's certainly not an easy task. However, I recognize this difficulty, and I genuinely believe it is achievable. Because I care, I encourage you to use these tools to help navigate this journey.**

**You've got around 100 hours each week to get stuff done.**

**Remember, studying or working doesn't have to be miserable; you can still have fun.**

**Resting is intentional, so put the phone down.**

**You should be aiming to learn new things as much as possible.**

**Even if it's not your favorite thing right now, trust that work is good for you in the right balance.**

**You've got to stay active and keep moving forward, or you'll get stuck and start going backward. That's bad news for you and everyone else.**

# OUR TEAM

**We are a dedicated team of current and former athletes focused on helping individuals of all ages, skill levels, and aspirations reach their highest potential.**

**With our education, training, and experience, we possess valuable insights into what young athletes must learn and master to thrive in both sports and life.**

**Our approach is positive, optimistic, motivated, and determined, striking the right balance of support and structure to assist them in navigating challenging situations.**

**For more information on how we can create a customized training program for you, your team, coaching staff, or organization, please reach out to us.**



**[info@athletes-unlocked-365.com](mailto:info@athletes-unlocked-365.com)**

# OUR APPROACH

We tailor our leadership training to address each individual's learning needs, concentrating on current challenges and enhancing essential skills. By blending support with structure, we create an engaging and creative environment that prioritizes relationships and positive influence for everyone involved.

*WE STRIKE THE RIGHT BALANCE OF STRENGTH AND GENTLENESS  
TO COMMUNICATE THE MOST EFFECTIVE MESSAGES IN THE  
BEST WAY FOR EVERY YOUNG ATHLETE.*

Our motivation lies in providing you with the guidance, education, and training necessary to fully understand and utilize the insights we offer, enabling you to help them thrive both in life and in sports.



# OUTCOMES

**Enhanced understanding of the factors contributing to the challenges you encounter as an athlete, both in sports and in life.**

**Proven strategies, tools, and tactics to address problems, help you achieve your goals, and realize your potential.**

**An innovative system for recognizing behavioral patterns and relational dynamics.**

**A framework to perceive obstacles, negativity, and issues as opportunities for challenges, growth, and success.**

**These ten scenarios are universal and must be comprehended and mastered to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in both sports and life.**



Want even more  
**GAME-CHANGING**  
leadership training?

We provide leadership training for parents, coaches, teams, organizations, and individuals. If you believe there is more for you to gain, trust us to guide you with valuable knowledge that will enhance your mental fitness and help you reach the next level.

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