



# 10 COMMON CHALLENGES

A Guidebook to UNLOCK the POTENTIAL of  
**YOUNGER ATHLETES**

# Want to become a **CHAMPION?**

If you want to be the best athlete you can be, both in sports and in life, it's super important to listen to the people who care about you. Your parents, coaches, and teachers have lots of helpful advice that can help you grow.

Don't be afraid to learn new things! Ask for challenges and try hard tasks. Remember, it's okay to struggle sometimes—it's all part of getting better! Most importantly, have fun along the way.

We've spent over 35 years helping young athletes like you make great choices. You can trust us to be your friends and helpers on this exciting journey!

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



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**IMPORTANT SKILLS  
TO BE YOUR BEST**

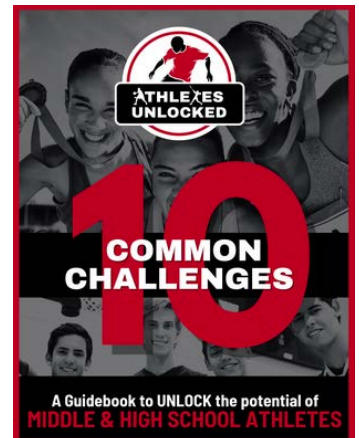
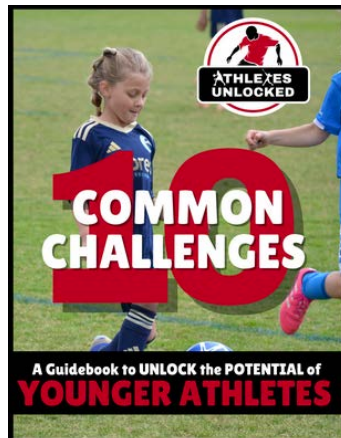


**KNOWING YOURSELF  
UNDERSTANDING OTHERS  
MANAGING YOURSELF  
PEOPLE SKILLS  
REACHING YOUR GOALS**



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

Young athletes are strong, but sometimes they need help with mental toughness. This cool guidebook shares ten tricky situations you might face and gives you awesome tips on how to think, talk, and handle challenges like a pro!



# **The** **CHALLENGES**

**Here are 10 challenges young athletes often deal with:**

- 1. Setting Goals & Achieving Them**
- 2. Handling Tough Situations**
- 3. Winning and Losing the Right Way**
- 4. Dealing with Fear**
- 5. Being a Good Leader**
- 6. Having Big Goals & Staying Realistic**
- 7. Having Unrealistic Goals for Others**
- 8. Building Great Friendships**
- 9. Competing with Respect**
- 10. Balancing Sports, School, and Fun**

**If you don't handle these challenges well, they can lead to:**

**Anger**

**Frustration**

**Sadness**

**Fear**

**Stress**

**Anxiety**

**Regret**

**Disappointment**

**Discouragement**

**Disapproval**

**Vulnerability**

**Failure**

**Dread**





# **QUICK TIPS FOR YOUNG ATHLETES**

**Stay Calm – Take a deep breath.**

**Think First – Ask: “How should I handle this?”**

**Be Honest & Kind – Speak up nicely.**

**Be Fair – Do what’s right.**

**Stay Positive – Keep smiling, even if things are tough.**

**Learn from Mistakes – Mistakes help you grow!**

**Focus on Getting Better – It’s about improving, not just winning.**

**Always think clearly and talk nicely with others!**





# **SCENARIO**



**Setting Goals &  
Achieving Them**

# SET & ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS

As a young athlete, think about your goals:

Are they what *you* really want, or are they from parents, coaches, or friends? Make sure your goals are important to you!





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

**Different levels of knowing your goals:**

**VERY AWARE – You know what you want and why.**

**LESS AWARE – You have a goal, but you're not sure why.**

**NOT VERY AWARE – You're just following what others say.**

**BARELY AWARE – You're not thinking about goals at all.**



# **THINKING ABOUT YOUR GOALS**

What goals do you have for...

**Today**

**This Week**

**This Month**

**This Year**

**Your Future**

# MAKE YOUR GOALS SMART

**S**pecific: Be clear on your exact goal!

**M**easurable: Keep tabs on your progress!

**A**chievable: Ensure your goal is realistic!

**R**elevant: Pick goals that bring you joy!

**T**ime-bound: Give your goals a deadline!





# **HOW TO REACH YOUR GOALS**

**What is your plan to achieve your goals?**

**What do I want to do?**

**Is this goal worth it?**

**What will success look like?**

**What could go wrong?**

**What's holding me back?**

**Who can help me?**

**How can I stay positive?**

**Should I keep trying even when it's tough? YES!**



# WHAT HELPS YOU SUCCEED

**Skills are things you learn; tools help you do them better.**

**Everyone faces challenges – they help you grow.**

**Stay calm and think before getting upset.**

**Failure isn't real unless you think it is – keep trying!**

**Struggling means you're learning, but don't quit.  
Giving up won't help you!**



# **SOME MORE TIPS TO HELP YOU**

**If something doesn't work, try a different way!**

**Do your best – you don't have to be perfect.**

**No shortcuts! Trying hard things makes you stronger.**

**Train your mind like your body – stay strong, be patient.**

**Take a deep breath, think, and then speak up.**

**You can do more than you realize!**







# **SCENARIO**



**Handling Tough  
Situations**

# OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

**What keeps you from achieving your goals?**

**Facing challenges during practice or with your team is normal and can foster growth. Like obstacles in a video game, these difficulties may slow you down but they also help you learn and make you stronger.**

**Enjoy the process, and stay positive. Each step, even through tough times, brings you closer to your goals.**



# **TIPS TO GET STRONGER**

**Messages to Support Your Success...**



**Expect bumps along the way.**

**Keep practicing – it helps a lot!**

**Stay strong and don't give up.**

**Keep working hard, and you can achieve!**

**Ask for help from coaches, parents, or friends.**

**Push through tough times – that's how champions are made!**

**The more you practice facing challenges, the easier it gets.**

# **THE BEST WAY TO OVERCOME**

**The best way to handle tough situations is to be assertive.  
This means staying calm, confident, and positive.**

**It can be hard to learn, but it's better than being angry or  
blaming others. Instead of giving in to fear or complaints,  
challenge yourself to find solutions and move forward  
safely.**





# **WHY I NEED TO KEEP TRYING**

When you face a challenge, think about whether you want to be a champion or someone who gives up easily.

Would you rather be weak or get stronger?  
Do you want to learn and improve, or stay stuck? Everyone can try harder, so will you work or give up?

To get through tough times, stay motivated and ask for help if you need it. Watching how others handle challenges can teach you a lot.

Remember, hard times can help you grow, so face them with great courage!



# **SCENARIO**

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**Winning & Losing  
the Right Way**

# **WINNING & LOSING LIKE A CHAMPION**

**In sports, you'll win some games and lose others, and that's totally okay!**

**Winning doesn't mean you're better than others.**

**Losing doesn't mean you're a failure. Stay humble, keep learning, and practice regularly to improve.**

**What others think doesn't define you. Only *you* decide how hard you work!**

**Don't let opinions make you feel too big or too small.**

**Believe in yourself, work hard, and keep going!**



# **TOOLS FOR CHAMPIONS**

**Young athletes can make two big mistakes: celebrating too much after winning or feeling too sad after losing. Both can stop you from getting better. Instead, focus on improving and be proud of your effort!**

**Learn from losses and remember that winning or losing doesn't define you. Watch great athletes to learn from them. Hard work is more important than just talent. Use your time wisely and stay focused.**

**The best athletes learn from everything, even mistakes. Ask for help and feedback, even if it's tough to hear. Believe in yourself, especially when things get hard. Improving takes time, so be patient!**

**Keep working hard, no matter what. Keep trying, keep learning, and never give up!**



# **4** **SCENARIO**

**Dealing  
with Fear**

# **BE BRAVE & MANAGE FEAR**

**Think about your goals:**



**Fear is normal and happens to everyone! The important thing is to tell the difference between real danger and worries that aren't true.**

**Don't let fear hold you back from doing your best!**

**Courage means continuing even when you're scared. You can't get rid of fear, but you can become braver.**

# **DONT LET YOUR FEARS FOOL YOU**

**It's okay to feel scared sometimes; everyone does! The important thing is to know if your fear is something you can handle or if it's a real danger.**

**If it's a small worry, try not to let it bother you. But if it's a real danger, stay alert and be smart!**

**Sometimes our thoughts can trick us into feeling scared for no reason. Think of those scary thoughts as challenges to face and overcome!**

**Many kids feel unsure because of things they hear or see online. These messages can make you feel really good or really bad about yourself. Remember, you don't have to believe them!**



# UNDERSTANDING YOUR FEARS

Whenever you feel threatened or afraid, ask yourself these questions to decide whether or not it's actually something to fear.

What's making me afraid?

Is this fear real or just in my head?

Am I making it seem scarier than it is?

How do I usually feel and act when scared?

Could more practice help me handle this fear?

Could more courage help me face it?

What thoughts cross my mind when I'm scared?





# HOW TO CONQUER FEAR

Practice every day to feel more confident.

Be brave, even if you're nervous.

Expect fear; it's normal!

Mistakes are okay; learn and keep going.

Take small steps to make progress.

You control your fear, not the other way around.

Keep trying and getting better.

Learning about what scares you makes it easier.

Believe in yourself and stay positive.

If others can do it, so can you!

Ask for help from people who know more.





# **SCENARIO**

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**Being a Good  
Leader**

# **BEING YOUR OWN GOOD LEADER**

**Always remember...**

It's SO important to understand that, despite having leaders or guides, you are the big boss of YOU! You own the decisions you make. You have the power to choose how you manage your life, and your choices will shape your future.

**Thoughts  
Emotions  
Desires  
Behavior  
Communication**

# **THERE ARE 4 MAIN OPTIONS**

**You have the power to decide**

Being **ASSERTIVE** means being strong and confident while being nice. Know what you want and work hard for it.

Being **PASSIVE** means not doing anything and letting things happen to you. If you don't try, you won't grow!

Being **AGGRESSIVE** means being too forceful or angry, which can cause trouble.

Being **PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE** is pretending to be nice while feeling sneaky or upset inside. It's not a good way to act.





# **TIPS TO BE THE BEST LEADER POSSIBLE**

**Cut out distractions – Focus on what matters!**

**Choose joy and peace – You control your feelings.**

**Don't blame or complain – Take action instead!**

**Know your purpose – Understand why you work hard.**

**Stay positive – Keep hope, even when it's tough!**

**Be humble – Confidence is good; arrogance isn't.**

**Trust in something bigger – Believe in possibilities!**

**Be grateful – Focus on what you have.**

**Take responsibility – You control your choices.**

**No self-pity! – Keep pushing forward!**

**Every day, you decide how to react, train, and grow.**

**Choose to be your best!**



# **SCENARIO**

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**Having Big Goals &  
Staying Realistic**

# **ARE MY GOALS REALISTIC?**

**Do you believe you can achieve?**

**Are the goals you set for yourself truly achievable?**

**Do your current objectives create challenges for you?**

**Are they leading to negative feelings?**

**Do they push you to overexert yourself  
or not put in enough effort?**

**Do you keep failing over and over?**

**Are your goals too easy?**



# ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS

Reflect on your goals.

Is the goal way too big?

Is the goal way too easy?

Can I really do this?

What can I gain by achieving this goal?

Whose goal is this?

Do I really want to make this happen?

Am I willing to work for this?

What can stop me?







# **SCENARIO**

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**Unrealistic Goals  
for Others**

# **ARE MY GOALS FOR OTHERS REALISTIC?**

**Do you expect too much or little?**

We sometimes expect others to act or talk in ways that aren't realistic. This can lead to problems for us and for people around us, and so it's a good idea to expect and be ready for other kids and adults to:

**MAKE MISTAKES**

**BE WRONG**

**BE SELFISH**

**FAIL OR LOSE**

**NOT BE PERFECT**

# **YOU HAVE THE POWER TO CHOOSE**

**Never mind the imperfections that the children and adults around you have. You can make your own choices. You have the power to determine:**

## **How to react**

**To keep a positive mindset**

**Who you'll spend time with**

**The life lessons you'll adopt**

**Your personal objectives**

**The importance of self-care**

**How to practice forgiveness, letting go**

**How to set boundaries**

**How to inspire growth in others**

# **TIPS TO GET STRONGER**

**Understand how others feel.**

**Forgive quickly and don't hold grudges.**

**Be kind, even when mistakes happen.**

**Stay mentally strong and flexible.**

**Accept that nobody is perfect.**

**Let go of negative feelings.**

**Be ready for surprises.**

**Trust those who earn it.**

**Try to be independent .**

**Be adaptable when you can.**





# **SCENARIO**

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**Building Great  
Friendships**

# WHAT IS GOOD FRIENDSHIP?

Relationships can be tricky. They can be great, but sometimes they have problems too. It's important to be a good friend and to find friends who are nice. Here are some good qualities to have and to look for:

**TRUSTWORTHY**

**KIND**

**HONEST**

**SHARING**

**HELPFUL**

**RESPECTFUL**



# **MY PART IN FRIENDSHIP**

You're only responsible for your part in your relationships with parents, coaches, teachers, friends, and others. Do and say what you can to make things easier. Here are some tips:

**BE UNDERSTANDING**

**BE POSITIVE**

**BE STRONG**

**BE FLEXIBLE**

**BE FORGIVING**

**BE FORGIVEN**

**BE SMART**

**BE MERCIFUL**



# **MY FRIENDSHIP ASSESSMENT**

How good are you at sharing these types of messages with kids and adults? Don't know some words? Look them up or ask someone to help you learn!

**ENCOURAGING**

**EMPATHETIC**

**GENTLE**

**GOOD LISTENER**

**EDUCATIONAL**

**FUN**

**LOVING**

**PLAYFUL**

**PATIENT**







# **SCENARIO**

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**Competing with  
Respect**

# WHAT IS COMPETITION?

Competing means trying to win against someone else. It's about being creative and doing your best! Some ways to win in a competition are by being...



**MORE POWERFUL**

**MORE AGILE**

**SMARTER**

**TOUGHER**

**MORE ENDURING**

**MORE VERSATILE**

**MORE FLEXIBLE**

# **RESPECTFUL COMPETITION**

**When you engage in competitive activities, keep a positive, considerate attitude toward others.**

**Play fair, be a good sport and value the efforts of all participants, no matter the outcome.**

**In a respectful competition, people support one another and celebrate wins together. They learn from losses without engaging in negative behaviors like cheating, bullying, or unsportsmanlike conduct.**

**This approach creates a healthier competitive environment, and teaches important life skills such as empathy, teamwork, and integrity.**



# 10 **SCENARIO**

**Balancing Sports,  
School, & Fun**



# WHAT IS BEING IN BALANCE?

When you're in balance, you're doing the right amount of everything in your life so you can be at your best! It's like a seesaw—when the weight is even on both sides, it stays level and fun.

Achieving this balance will make you feel happier, more energetic! It's okay if things aren't perfect all the time; just try to keep everything in harmony!



# **HOW BALANCED AM I?**

Think about how well you balance these  
important parts of your life:

**SCHOOL WORK**

**CHORES**

**FAMILY**

**FRIENDS**

**FUN & PLAY**

**REST**

**SELF-CARE**

**EXERCISE**

**SPORTS**



# **TIPS TO BE IN BETTER BALANCE**

**You have about 15 hours each day;  
avoid wasting time on trivial matters**

**Be purposeful in your actions**

**Create a plan; avoid distractions**

**Work hard, but also take time to rest**

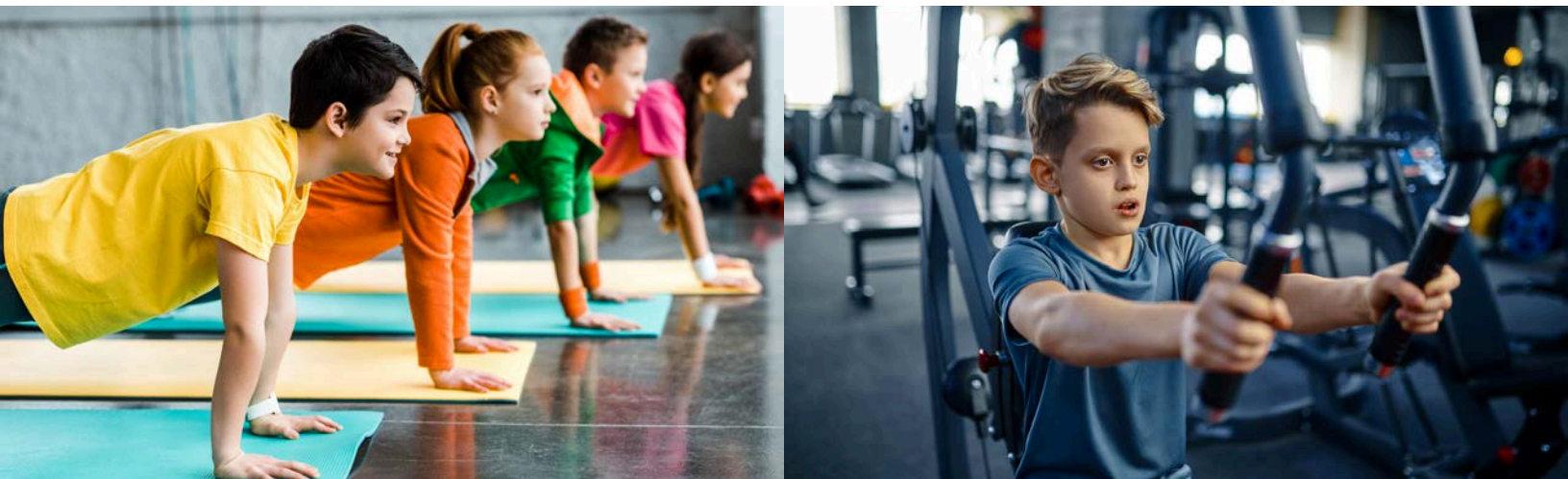
**Embrace every moment**

**Maintain a positive mindset; focus on  
constructive thoughts and actions**

**Remember, you control your attitude**

**Strive to be the best version of yourself**

**Balance is key; avoid extremes in your efforts.**





# BENEFITS

Get better at thinking in tough situations.  
Learn how to understand problems.  
Discover tips to make things better.  
Remember, you have support.  
Follow steps to tackle challenges.  
Try new strategies.  
Use tools to build important skills.  
Find what works best for you.



**EMPATHIC | EDIFYING | ENCOURAGING | EMPOWERING**



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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