**Ballet Belle Webinar- Helping Your Dancer Overcome Rejection**

**August 2nd, 2018**

\*The following are notes taken from a free webinar presented by Ballet Belle founder Sonja specifically intended for parents of dancers. For more information visit [www.myballetbelle.com\*](http://www.myballetbelle.com*)

**Four Keys to Overcoming Rejection**

1. **Build his or her self-worth apart from his or her performance.**

-If a dancer places their value solely on their performance, they will feel constantly unworthy due to daily fluctuations in technique, focus, and success (all of which are normal in the life of a dancer).

-Parents are the most powerful voice in a child’s life- parents shape the inner voice of a child.

 a) Verbally affirm your dancer

 -It takes five-ten positive comments to offset one negative comment.

 b) Reassure your dancer when they mess up

 - Feeling safe, capable, empowered, and loved offsets shame

 c) Encourage your dancer to try non-performance activities

- Allow your dancer to try non-dance activities, specifically activities not based on daily performance capabilities.

 d) Model positive self-talk and self-worth in your own life

 - “Do I value and love myself?”

 - “Do I model that everyone around me is inherently valuable ?”

 **2) Level-set his or her expectations.**

- Ballet has a set of “acceptable standards” (expectations for insteps, flexibility, hyperextension, etc. that are expected to be successful in the field) that can negatively impact dancers, making them think in black/white or idealistic ways.

a) Ask your dancer “What are you thinking and why?”

 b) Listen to their answer, and point out unreasonable or unfair thought patterns

- Examine all factors- ex. “Maybe the dancer that got accepted to that program has been dancing longer than you/hasn’t had a recent injury/has a connection to the program you do not”, etc.

 c) Teach them that a lesser goal isn’t a lesser one.

- Value of a goal isn’t on outward perception, but on internal value gained by your dancer. Ex- Choosing a summer dance program at a smaller school closer to home will benefit you in a different, but equally valuable way, as a bigger program further away.

d) Remind them that rejection is pervasive and common in life- everyone experiences this- even famous dancers, their teachers, and their friends.

e) Remind them that rejection is not final.

- The final word in the experience goes to the dancer in how they handle it, not the experience itself. Experiences do not define people, people define people.

 f) Remind them that rejection isn’t personal.

- Rejection isn’t always based on talent or ability- sometimes it’s as petty as a director disliking a dancer’s hair color or leotard. There’s no way to know!

**3) Celebrate his/her effort over the outcome.**

- An overemphasis on “talent” or “natural ability” is detrimental to learning and to persistence. Using phrases like “I admire your dedication” as opposed to phrases like “You’re so talented” let children persevere in the face of adversity.

- Praise the specific process your dancer employed leading up to and during the event- it encourages motivation and confidence in the actions that lead to success.

 a) Cheer your dancer on as they prepare

 b) Comment on their focus and strategy in the process

 c) Highlight each and every small victory along the way

 d) Call out what they’re learning along the way

 e) Acknowledge the risk they’re taking in putting themselves out there despite

 the possibility of rejection

**4) Teach him or her that rejection equals opportunity.**

a) Encourage your dancer to process the experience of rejection however they need to- feeling the negative emotions allows them to eventually feel the positives.

b) Sync with your dancer- listen to their feelings, positive and negative, and validate what they’re feeling.

 - Try not to minimize feelings of disappointment or grief.

c) When they’re ready, look for the wins.

 - “What did you do well? How did you grow?”

d) Stress the “art of failure”

- Failure is a necessary and normal part of learning, and handling it is part of the learning process.

 e) Get them amped to start again!

 - Rejection gives them a fresh start to try again.

 - They will be better prepared from this experience for the next attempt.