

Mr. Invisible

That's not what I call him...it what he chooses to call himself.

What kind of parent, who says he really loves his kid, would chose to become invisible, particularly at sports events. To make it all that more significant, what if the kid is a star? What if he's one of the best if not THE best on the team? As I might have mentioned, I have 5 great kids, [12 grandchildren] and one of the most meaningful things my kids have commented on is that at almost all of their sporting events they could look up and see me in the stands.

When "Dad" called me he described a scenario, that as a caring parent, was very troubling. His kid had been benched by his coach and how painful it was. I identified with his anger and his emotion. I would have been furious.

So here's the story. Oh...by the way...he wants to remain invisible.... so in this story names will be changed to protect the guilty. This also provides quite a role reversal for the Confidential Sounding Board. Usually the people we work with, whether in sports, business or entertainment, want US to remain invisible. "Dad", however, is more than happy to talk about his invisibility and that we "kind of" forced him into it.

"Coach is benching my kid, can I bring him to you? A friend handed me this black card & said to call" [Dad by phone]

Me, " Does he want to come?" ...yup ..."Done"

For what we offer to work an individual has to WANT the outcome. It can be someone's suggestion but in the end they have to say...it's for me

Long story short we meet, clearly this is not about his sport. He had two options and as any sharp kid of 16, he chose both. Improve his mind game, focus, concentration, on field performance but he also wanted to change the present coach situation, get back in the game and he knew that the responsibility was his to make happen.

Dad & Mom thought it was theirs ...kid knew it was his, all he needed was a strategy.

This is interestingly a great age for a kid to learn about personalities, politics and how to play the game of life. He fought it a bit but realized that this was not only about him but also about the coach, what he wanted, what he had at stake, where his next job would be, who he had to influence, what the media was saying about him and what the alumni were saying about him etc.

So...from 1000', with no emotion, we could clearly see that he had to play the coach's game when he was playing for the coach and his game when he was playing for someone else. He had to realize that defying the coaches instructions would not pay off for the rest of this year and the following year.

The coach had another problem, when people asked "Dad" why his son wasn't playing and the team was losing he replied "Coach must have a reason"

The key ending of this meeting was me wishing Dad & Mom good luck with the meeting they had set with administration...you guessed it...the kid didn't know and asked on the spot to cancel the meeting.

Dan, at a loss, said "So what do I do" "Honestly" I said " shut up and become invisible" "Sit so far up in the stands that you nose bleeds and enter and leave by the back door". Stay away from the coach.

I took a risk...he laughed...the kid took them to the playoffs...everyone wins.

The kid, as he was working this out[about 2 months] put me on speed dial & called BEFORE something happened.



Here are some excerpts from a recent letter from “Mr. Invisible “

Hello Dan!

My Kid transformed his relationship with his coach. I continue to follow your advise...I am Mr. Invisible! Unfortunately, the coach continues to try to motivate his players using fear and control. For example, the coach pulled my kid [he used his kids name...come on give the guy a break] aside right before he got on the bus to go to a major game, and he said to him...'Take good shots or you will be benched.'

My son shared with me that he played scared because he let what the coach said affect his play. I asked him if he ever lets an opposing player get in his head, the way he let the coach get in his head...'No' he said that he never does. He said that he can bring the same mental toughness to what his coach says or doesn't say. Breakthrough! Kid now sees that SELF-confidence is something that no one, other than himself, can take away. Its all good...there is nothing wrong!!!!

And so “Mr. Invisible” and as it turns out “Mrs. Invisible make a quantum leap in allowing their kid to learn some valuable lessons about life, personalities, and dealing effectively with people as he heads off to college.

Great lessons, learned early.