

# I Want My Kid to Win, Really, I Do!

GOLDIE GROSSBAUM



His eyes were gleaming.

"I entered the raffle for the i-pad! I can't wait to win!"

I tried to share my nine-year-old's naive enthusiasm, but it wasn't working.

*Uh oh, I don't want him to be disappointed when he doesn't win. What are the chances of winning anyway? I better help him realize he might not win.*

"You think you'll win?" I ask casually.

"Of course I'll win. I just don't know if I'll keep it, or sell it. If I sell it, there's so many things I can do with the money!" And he starts listing the endless options of what he can buy. I'm already seeing the disappointment when he doesn't win, and it's too painful.

*What was that article I read about helping kids deal with disappointment... 5 Things Every Parent Must Know To Help Their Child Succeed... right, I better start now.*

"Well, you know, a lot of people entered the raffle. It doesn't necessarily mean you'll win."

I see the gleam leaving his eyes...

*Oh no, I've taken away his enthusiasm, help!*

*What was it that I read the other day in that other parenting article... Building Enthusiasm Is Building the Future, right, help them build their enthusiasm.*

"Well, don't worry, you still have a good

chance at winning, I'm sure you can win. It's definitely possible!"

The gleam is back; he's making his wish list of all the apps he'll download.

*Uh oh, but he might not win. And even if he does, he certainly is not downloading whatever app he wants... not every app on there is made for kids!*

*What was it I read in that other parenting article... What Every Mom Needs to Know About Their Child's Independence... Right, give independence but keep your authority.*

"Y'know, even if you win, you can't just download every app you want. We'd have to discuss it before you download it." A look of disappointment crosses my son's face.

*Now I've taken away his confidence! That didn't go right; he needs to feel a sense of control! What was that article I read the other week... right, Don't Make the Control Mistake, give your child a chance to experience some autonomy, let him feel like he has some control so he can make better choices.*

"Oh, of course, you can make some choices. Don't worry, you'll be able to choose some of the apps." Phew, I see the relief wash over his face. Now he's back to the different selling options. If he can sell it for double the price, he can really make a lot of profit...

*Oh no, what was it I read in that other*

*parenting article, The Five Rules for Preparing Your Child for the Real World. Right, kids need to understand that there's acceptable and unacceptable; you can't just name your price or do something outrageous. I better stop him before he gets hit hard with disappointment in the real world. And so I try again.*

"Well, you might want to sell it, but who says someone will buy it? And if the price is too high, no one will be interested..." The disappointment is back, I can see it on his face. The enthusiasm is nowhere to be seen.

*Grrr, I've ruined it again! This is not working out like any of those brilliant articles! Why do those things always work like a charm on paper, and in real life, the conversations just don't work like that?*

I'm ready to start in again, another recent article coming to mind...

And then I stop. My head is spinning, and I have a feeling my son feels the same.

*What am I doing? Who says I need to answer everything?*

*Forget the millions of articles and just listen. All he wants is for you to listen!*

I take a deep breath. I'm determined to get it right.

"So you'd be really happy if you won?"

And just like that, his enthusiasm, naiveté, excitement and entrepreneurship are back.

He's talking a mile a minute. I can see his little mind spinning with new ideas, new hopes, new dreams.

I breathe a sigh of relief.

*I almost ruined it.*

He'll learn. He'll learn disappointment and achievement. He'll learn winning and losing.

And sometimes I know it'll be painful for me to witness, but I will do the one thing those many articles forget to emphasize.

I will listen.

Keep my mouth closed, and just listen.

Isn't that the best gift I can give him? ■

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*Goldie Grossbaum and her husband, Rabbi Yossi, direct Chabad of Folsom, California, with the help of their children. To read more of Goldie's musings, visit [littleyellownotepad.com](http://littleyellownotepad.com).*