

Faith



Life Actually By Kari Kampakis Tips for tryouts: Confidence, courage and community

It’s that time of year again: when girls and guys across the country are gearing up for tryout season and getting physically and mentally prepared.

And while I can’t help anyone with physical preparations, I can offer a few thoughts for the mental part. Here are three words to keep in mind:

- Confidence
- Courage
- Community

Confidence is feeling good about yourself and your abilities. It’s that sense that you are capable of rising to meet a challenge.

To build confidence, you must try. You must put yourself out there and accept the risk of failure. While it’s certainly safer to not try — and simply sit on the sidelines as other people take risks — that won’t build confidence. If anything, it’ll stir up jealousy as other people succeed with their attempts.

Confidence grows when you face your fears and come out stronger on the other side. It comes from setting goals, working hard to reach your goals, pushing through self-doubt and surprising yourself by learning new skills beyond your comfort zone.

Confidence plays a huge role in your performance during tryouts. When you believe in yourself it shows.

It also gives you a special dynamic that helps you to stand out in a crowd. So rather than imagine the worst, picture yourself at your best. Remember how hard you’ve worked, and think about the times when you accomplished a new milestone that made you stop and think, “Wow, I can’t believe I just did that! I’ve come a long way since I started.”

Courage is facing your fears even when you’re scared. It’s stepping out to take a chance despite not knowing what the outcome will be.

My parents always encouraged me and my siblings to be courageous with tryouts. They believed the experience itself could teach us valuable life skills that we’d need. Before any big event, my father would tell me, “Just do your very best, and leave the results to God.”

For me, that took the pressure off. It kept me focused on what I could control instead of the final outcome.

I agree that tryouts are never a waste. Whether you make the cut or not, you still gain important skills — like learning to

perform under pressure — that can be beneficial later when you interview for jobs, give a speech or do something else that requires your best presentation possible even if you’re nervous or scared.

Tryouts are really a chance to practice being brave. Every small act of courage leads to bigger acts of courage, and that may really pay off down the road.

Community is looking beyond yourself to connect with other people. It’s understanding how much stronger you are together than you could ever be alone.

Competition naturally breeds comparisons. And when you try out for a team, it’s natural to rank yourself against others and feel better or worse as a result.

Either way, however, comparison isn’t helpful, and what it ultimately does is create division and isolation instead of unity and support.

It’s better — and more fun — to approach tryouts with a sense of solidarity and understand how the goal for everyone is to perform at their personal best.

The best part of chasing a dream or making a team are the friendships you develop along the way and by adopting a team mindset early, you cultivate a culture

where people may actually encourage and motivate each other.

In short, trying out for a team can be exciting and nerve-wracking. It can stretch you in new directions and push you to the brink.

Whatever happens, God has a plan for you, and the activities and passions you enjoy today are just a small part of that plan and a prelude to much bigger events that will manifest with time.

So be confident, show courage and embrace community. Have faith in yourself and the dreams in your heart, knowing that as long as you do your personal best, you can leave the results to God.

Kari Kubiszyn Kampakis is a Birmingham area mom of four girls, columnist and blogger for The Huffington Post. She has written two books for teen and tween girls, “LIKED: Whose Approval Are You Living For?” and “10 Ultimate Truths Girls Should Know,” that are available online and everywhere books are sold. You can join Kari’s Facebook community at “Kari Kampakis, Writer,” visit her blog at kari-kampakis.com or contact her at kari@karikampakis.com.

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