

We have started a new series of Character corner articles: “Action Plans to Get the Most Out of Twirling”. Each month our Character corner column will present an “action plan” - an idea for parents and coaches to use to help their twirler build character through their participation in twirling.

Last month’s column was Role Modeling for Twirlers. This month, we offer an action plan for PARENTS and COACHES

Action Plan #5—Role Modeling—(for Adults)

“Don’t worry that children never listen to you. Worry that they are always watching you.”

-Robert Fulghum, American author (b.1937)

Have you ever noticed an instructor or parents involved in a heated discussion with other adults at a competition?

Have you ever seen adults at a competition gossiping about another group, another twirler, another organization, or perhaps another teacher?

Have you ever witnessed an instructor or parent who does not agree with a result and is being very vocal about it?

Have you ever thought about who is watching in the above situations? As adults in the twirling world, we have many opportunities to be role models. Following are specific examples of how we can be role models for our twirlers:

- Always be aware that our twirlers are watching us and listening to us. Keep your tone respectful, especially when dealing with difficult situations.
- At the next competition, have each of your team members (or your daughter) meet one new person from another team—and at the next team practice, have each of them tell their new “friend’s” name and what team he/she is from.
- Schedule a performance for your group (or your daughter/son) at a senior center or a community event or a charity fundraiser “just because”. It shows twirlers how to use their talent for others’ benefit.
- As a coach, make a point of having your group sit respectfully and watch while another group is performing, rather than move in and out of the gym or up and down the bleachers during a performance. And applaud when the performance is done. Courtesy (or lack of) is often copied.
- Smile and greet the people you are passing! You’ll be amazed how many smiles you’ll get in return.

At a recent competition in Portage, PA, the bleachers were filled to capacity with spectators for the group competition. All the spectators watched all of the groups and applauded enthusiastically—even for their competitors and for groups with performers who were obviously very new. The atmosphere was supportive and encouraging, and at the end, the pleasure of all the performers (even those who didn’t receive a first place) was obvious. Isn’t a positive twirling experience what it’s all about?