



COMPETITION

Why do I want my child to compete?

The Beaumont School of Highland Dance is a competitive school. We encourage our students to take part in competitions and challenge themselves to continually improve and reap the personal rewards that come with healthy competition. Plan vacation, visit family, or just weekend get-a-ways around a competition.

Although it is not mandatory, the majority of our students are competitive dancers. Some compete only in local competitions while others choose to travel throughout Alberta and Canada. Many out-of-town competitions become an annual event for some families and these trips are always a highlight for the dancers and their families.

Competition is an excellent way for your children to reap the rewards of their hard work. It builds self-esteem and character as well as lasting friendships.

My personal belief is that competition is nothing less than beautiful. It's important, valuable, and a critical element of our society. Every child, during the course of her lifetime, must compete at home for attention, in school for grades, on the playground for friends, in the work place for advancement, etc. Why then don't we teach our kids better, more empowering philosophies and beliefs about competing?

One reason is that we haven't been taught very empowering attitudes about competing ourselves. Very few of us have been fortunate enough to experience that unique coach or leader who can outline and instill a positive philosophy about competition.

The mantra that we want our students to learn is this: Forget about winning and losing. Of course you are going to strive to win every competition. But give us your best effort and try to perform the dance techniques that we have been teaching you during a competition. If you try your best, in our minds, you won — whether you got a medal or not. If you happen to win... super... on to the next competition. If you happen to lose, bow respectfully and come off the stage — without crying.

This philosophy does two things. It encourages kids to focus on something within their control—their own personal performance—and helps them ignore things outside their control—the judges, the stage, or the competition. It also simplifies expectations and makes it easier for kids to be successful.

Competition is about testing yourself and helping your opponent test himself. Competition isn't about winning. Winning comes as a result of your preparation, your skill level, a little luck, and your attitude.

Highland competition is tough and challenging: physically and mentally. It's important to remember, however, that no one ever developed any real confidence without first having overcome a significant personal challenge — such as a fear of competition or failure.

By teaching our children more empowering beliefs about competition, we can help them enjoy and benefit from the competitive process. By keeping the bar high and working with them to develop the skills needed to get over that bar, we can help them become more self-reliant, mentally tough, and self-confident.

-Carmen Munawych