



STARTING THE CONVERSATION

HOW TO TALK TO YOUR DAUGHTER ABOUT
MENTAL PERFORMANCE COACHING

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**MENTALLY
STRONGHER**

First, an important truth

Mental performance coaching is not about fixing your daughter.

It is about supporting her.

How this conversation is introduced matters more than most parents realize.

Many athletes hear “mental training” and immediately assume:

- I must be doing something wrong
- I am not mentally tough enough
- My parents are disappointed

This guide helps you position mental performance coaching as growth, preparation, and support, not correction.

Step 2: Lead with curiosity, not concern

Avoid opening the conversation with what you think she needs to fix.
Instead of:

- “You get too nervous.”
- “You overthink everything.”
- “You lose confidence after mistakes.”

Try:

- “How does the mental side of your sport feel right now?”
- “What feels hardest during games?”
- “When does your confidence feel steady, and when does it feel less reliable?”

Curiosity invites honesty.

Concern often triggers defensiveness.

Step 3: Normalize mental training

Mental performance coaching is training, not therapy and not punishment.
You might say:

- “Just like you train your body, you can train your mind.”
- “Mental skills are learned skills.”
- “Every serious athlete works on the mental side, whether they talk about it or not.”

This helps remove the idea that mental training is only for athletes who are struggling.



What college and professional athletes use

At the college and professional levels, mental performance coaches and sports psychologists are commonly part of an athlete's support team.

Many elite athletes use mental training to:

- Handle pressure in high-stakes moments
- Reset quickly after mistakes
- Stay confident over long seasons
- Perform consistently when expectations are high

At higher levels, physical skill is often similar across athletes. What separates players is how well they manage pressure, focus, confidence, and emotional control.

Mental performance coaching is not about fixing a problem.

It is about preparing athletes for the mental demands of competition.

Giving your daughter access to these tools early simply introduces skills that many college and professional athletes already rely on.

Step 4: Separate performance from identity

Many female athletes tie their performance directly to their self-worth.

Be clear and explicit:

- Mental performance coaching is not about changing who she is.
- It is about helping her handle pressure, mistakes, and expectations more effectively.

Helpful language:

- “This isn’t about fixing you.”
- “Your value doesn’t change based on how you play.”
- “This is support, not judgment.”

This reassurance matters more than most parents realize.

Step 5: Taking her game to the next level

Mental performance coaching can also be framed as growth, not support for struggle.

This framing works best when your daughter:

- Is motivated
- Wants more consistency
- Feels capable but not always in control mentally
- Is curious about improving how she handles pressure

The key is how “next level” is defined.

Avoid tying it to:

Stats
Playing time
Rankings
Scholarships

Instead, define “next level” as:

Resetting faster after mistakes
Staying mentally steady from
game to game
Trusting herself in pressure
moments
Leading herself and others more
consistently

You might say:

- “Your skills are there. This is about strengthening the mental side so it matches.”
- “At higher levels, what separates athletes is how they handle pressure.”
- “This is about making the game feel more controllable mentally.”

This communicates belief, not dissatisfaction.

Step 6: Give her autonomy and choice

Mental performance coaching works best when the athlete feels ownership.

Use language like:

- “This is something you could try.”
- “You get to decide how much you want to engage.”
- “If it feels helpful, we continue. If not, we reassess.”

Choice builds buy-in.

Pressure creates resistance.

Step 7: Use simple, supportive language

You do not need perfect wording. You need genuine intent.

Examples:

- “I see how hard you work, and I want to support you.”
- “This is about helping the game feel lighter mentally.”
- “You deserve tools for the mental side just like the physical side.”
- “This is an investment in you, not a reaction to anything you did wrong.”

Step 8: Let the conversation breathe

This does not need to be one big conversation.

You can:

- Introduce the idea
- Give her time to think
- Revisit it later

Listening matters more than convincing.



Final reminder for parents

Your daughter already carries pressure.

Mental performance coaching should:

- Reduce mental load
- Build confidence
- Teach her how to respond to pressure rather than fear it

When introduced well, it becomes a tool for growth and support, not another expectation.



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