

Crisis Management-Lessons from a Ten Year Old

By Dr. Maura Cullen

Years ago I attended my ten-year old niece's soccer game. Going to these games is usually an opportunity to have some social time with family and enjoy the outdoors. But today, Erin's team is in the championship and we are fully engaged as we watch the game.

There is under one minute left in the overtime period with the score deadlocked at zero. As the opposing team marches down the field, Erin takes up her position on defense. There is very little time remaining and one of the opposing players kicks the ball desperately towards the goal. Erin races over to make one of her trademark defensive plays and inadvertently deflects the ball into her own net. The horn sounds and the other team wins 1-0. Everyone is stunned, but none more than Erin. As she stood in front of the net where the ball now lies she begins to cry. This continued most of the way home and into the night. Everyone was trying to console her, to let her know that it wasn't her fault. But even at ten years old I think it was clear to her that they lost the game because of her mistake. And no matter how much ice cream she ate nothing was going to change that fact. Letting her teammates down is a lot to handle for a little kid.

The next day her nine year old brother Tim returned from a sleep over and asked Erin how she made out at her soccer game. With a big smile on her face, Erin replied by saying, "I scored the winning goal!"

Imagine, at the tender age of ten, Erin learned a lesson that few adults can admit to having learned. She was able to keep things in perspective and not take herself too seriously. After all, it's just a game.

It would serve us all well to keep things in perspective. What seems like a crisis in the moment is usually forgotten within days. Just take a deep breath and keep your wits about you. When there is a true crisis, people will always follow the person who is calm and confident. Be that leader.

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