

Fill the Emotional Tank

Have you ever heard of the home field advantage? How often do you think a team wins on its home field? It turns out that a team wins at home a lot more than when they are away. One reason for this is the emotional support of the fans. It tends to lift our emotions and make us play better.

We want to be able to play our best all of the time. To play our best we have to keep our "Emotional Tanks" full. What is an emotional tank? Well, it is like a gas tank in a car. When it is full, we run well, but when it is empty, we can't go very far.

Why is it important that we keep each other's tanks full? If our emotional tank is empty, we become negative, and we give up easier. If our tanks are full, however, we are optimistic and are able to handle difficult situations. As the coach, I will do my best to help fill your emotional tanks. To have a really great season, I need your help.

Think about when you miss a pass to a teammate or a shot on goal. What would someone say to make you feel worse? "Nice job (sarcastically)," "You stink!" See, that was easy. We call that draining the emotional tank. When you criticize or insult your teammates, you make them feel worse. That's why we call it draining the emotional tank. I will try not to drain your emotional tank, but sometimes I will have to correct you to help you learn the game. I will try to do this in a way that keeps your emotional tank full.

What would someone say to make you feel better after you missed a shot. ("Get the next one," "Shake it off!") We call that filling the emotional tank. Here are some ways to fill the emotional tank:

- Tell your teammate when you see him do something well, or when you see him giving his maximum effort, even if he does not make the play.
- Tell him when you see him improving. This will make him want to continue trying hard to improve even more.
- Listen to your teammates. If your teammate has an idea he wants to share, you can fill his tank by listening to what he has to say. No one wants to be ignored.

I promise to do all of these things. Also, I want you to do tank-filling activities with each other.

Here is a great way that you can help me. It is called the Buddy System. Once in a while at practice, I'll ask you to pair up with a buddy. It might be a different buddy every time. I want you to look for the things that your buddy is doing well. Remember, though, you have to be truthful, or else it won't mean anything. Also, try to tell your buddies exactly what they did right. If your buddy makes a nice pass, say "Good pass! Nice speed and accuracy."

Do you think it is important to say more positives than negatives? How many more positives should you say? I am going to try to shoot for five positives for every negative. I don't want you to worry about the exact number of positives you say, just remember, be as positive as you can.

So, right now, pair up with someone else, and he will be your buddy for today's practice. Later in the practice, I am going to have each one of you report back to the team on what your buddy said to you to fill your tank.

This season is going to be an especially great season if we support each other and keep our emotional tanks full. With full emotional tanks, we will be off to the races, and there is no limit to what we can accomplish.

Now, who can tell me some ways to fill each other's emotional tanks?