

THE SECRET SAUCE OF CONFIDENCE

Setting Kids Up for a Lifetime of Success

This month, my daughter begins what will be her final season as an athlete on an organized and competitive sports team. Jessie will captain her high school varsity lacrosse team as she did her school's soccer team earlier in the year. She has no intentions of playing in college, choosing instead to focus on what will no doubt be a rigorous academic journey into biomedical engineering. I'm super proud of her! But both she and my son Jake have played competitive sports their entire lives, so it's strange to think neither of them will be on a field next year. But as I reflect on this transitional phase of their lives, I can see how much value they gained from their sports careers, especially in terms of personal confidence. And confidence, I believe, is essential for a fulfilling life.

First, I want to set the record straight about confidence, because a lot of people have the wrong idea about what confidence is, often mistaking it for cockiness or arrogance. There's a *big* difference between confidence and arrogance. Confidence is a state you earn through hard work and personal growth. It doesn't come quickly or without great effort. It's by working hard to achieve something that we learn to be confident in ourselves and recognize our self-worth. As a parent, I always wanted my kids to be confident in themselves, and sports played a huge part in helping them develop it.

I have a theory that if you can help young kids find something they are passionate about and help them to acquire the skills they need to be good at their passion, personal confidence will be the natural byproduct. Here's the thing about earned confidence, since they have earned it through toil and persistence, it's usually not fleeting. It doesn't go away after one bad game on the field or one bad grade on a test in the classroom. It persists and helps move them past temporary obstacles that life will no doubt throw their way.

My kids found their confidence in sports, but this isn't the only area a kid can develop such confidence. Imagine a young child developing a passion for art, theater, music, or academic discipline. They love what they are doing so they are willing to work hard to develop the skills their passion requires. They get better and better until they are truly good at something. Boom! They are now confident in that arena. They now understand the correlation between busting your butt on something you love and succeeding. That understanding and the confidence it brings is life altering and transferable to all areas of their life. When they're 13 or 14



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and start wondering if they're "good enough," their earned confidence in one area is going to make the challenging and confusing teen years so much easier. Maybe they had a bad day at school, but they know they're still a good artist or a talented athlete. Imagine how much easier these rough years would be for a kid who has that kind of internal confidence.

This kind of confidence can shape their whole lives. My son played baseball for most of his life, including the first two years of college and he was a very good player. Then, at the start of his junior year in college, he decided he didn't want to play anymore. He was ready to focus on other things like his studies and his career path. Throughout his life, Jake gave up a lot to play baseball as he was fully committed to getting to the next level. When he told me he wasn't going to play in college anymore, I asked him if the sacrifices he made were all worth it in retrospect. He gave me an incredulous look and stated, "Are you kidding me!? Baseball has made me who I am today. It taught me hard work and dedication. If I had to go back, I'd do it all again." What a great answer! It was a proud Dad moment for sure.

Although both of my kids have now decided that organized sports will no longer be a part of their lives, I know they have benefited greatly from a wonderful lesson that sports teach; success requires hard work. And they now have the confidence in themselves to go forward to pursue other things. My wife Liz and I got our kids into sports at a young age to keep them active and healthy. What we didn't expect was the level of confidence each would develop as a result and how important that confidence has been in their overall development. What parent doesn't want that for their kids?

-Len Spada

THE DEFINITION OF INVALUABLE

JOAN JOHNSON KEEPS THE SHOW RUNNING



If you were to look up the definition of “invaluable” in the dictionary, you’ll learn this word is an adjective that means “extremely useful; indispensable.” You’ll also see a picture of our case manager, Joan Johnson, as an example.

Before Joan joined our firm, she worked for another attorney located just across the street from us. She’d been at that firm for 15 years when the attorney

was appointed a clerk at one of the district courts. To thank Joan for her long service, that attorney made some phone calls before announcing he was closing his office. When he was ready to break the news to Joan that she was about to be out of a job, he quickly followed it up with the fact that our firm was looking to hire.

“I love helping out our clients,” said Joan when asked what’s kept her coming back into the office for so many years. “When people are down and out, I’m proud to be part of getting them a fair settlement. I enjoy what I do, and I’m not planning on leaving for years, if ever!”

Joan came to the firm with high marks, but even we weren’t prepared for how truly invaluable she would become over the following 12 years. In addition to being a case manager, Joan is our office manager in

everything but title. When Attorney Spada is away, Joan makes sure everything keeps running. From organizing the manual labor to getting a wall painted and supervising cleanup after a flood, when there’s an emergency, Joan is often responsible for single-handedly keeping the firm running.

“If this place doesn’t succeed, I don’t succeed,” Joan says. “That’s how I look at it. Attorney Spada did a big thing when his partner passed away. He kept the firm going, and he didn’t have to do that. We would have all been out of a job. I want him to know I appreciate it by giving this place my all. And it’s not just myself. All the girls here feel this way. Three of us have been here for years and years. If we can help in any way, that’s what we’re here for.”

When Joan isn’t making sure everything is running smoothly at the office, she’s hanging out with her family at home. Joan enjoys spending time with her sons, her future daughter-in-law, her two dogs, and her “fur-baby grandson,” also known as her son’s German shepherd, JJ.



REVIEW OF THE MONTH



“Amazing, professional, tough ... all you want in an attorney! We cannot say enough good things about Leonard, Joan Johnson, and the entire staff at Spada Law Group. They truly know what they’re doing, were tremendously helpful, very professional, and did not take ‘no’ for an answer. I highly recommend calling them should you ever be in the need for an attorney. Personally, we will only call them from now on.”

–Kim
Dec. 13, 2019

WORD SEARCH

E A F E M O L B M N O Q
 Q D Q L L R Z Y L B I P
 Q I N W O D I B H O E T
 L U C K Y W D M S T O M
 D U B G Y G E U B U L M
 X G Q H W L R R P O Z A
 R L H G T S E R S R S I
 V W E E P S B A S P F H
 M D I R E M I I C S K P
 M Q I I I J R N W N O B
 R N R X P H T W O R G A
 G A C Y M K H Y P I N R

ARIES
 BLOOM
 BUD
 FLOWERS
 GROWTH
 LUCKY
 MELT
 PUDDLE
 RAIN
 REBIRTH
 SPRING
 SPROUT

I Was Hit by a Drunk Driver

Is the Bar That Served Them Alcohol Liable for My Injuries?



Last year, a study using the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Fatality Analysis Reporting System found that Massachusetts is the sixth-deadliest state in the nation for drunk driving crashes. If you are injured in a car accident caused by a drunk driver, you are entitled to compensation. Unfortunately, if the victim's injuries are severe, drunk drivers rarely have adequate car insurance to provide full coverage for their injuries. This is why car accident victims need to work with experienced attorneys who are prepared to pursue dramshop cases.

In states with dramshop laws, businesses that serve alcohol to a patron who is clearly intoxicated can be held liable to anyone injured by the drunk patron. In Massachusetts, vendors are prohibited from selling or serving alcohol to an "intoxicated person." Vendors who violate this law can be held liable for negligence in a civil lawsuit. This means if you are injured by a drunk driver, the bar or restaurant who served the driver may also be liable for your injuries.

In order to pursue a successful dramshop case against a bar or restaurant in Massachusetts, you must be able to prove the following:

- The drunk driver who caused your injuries was a patron of that specific bar or restaurant.
- The bar or restaurant served the drunk driver alcohol.
- The drunk driver was intoxicated when served the alcohol.
- At the time when the alcohol was served, the bar or restaurant was aware or "reasonably should have known" that the drunk driver was intoxicated.
- The drunk driver operated a motor vehicle while intoxicated.
- The bar or restaurant should have reasonably foreseen the drunk driver operating a motor vehicle.
- In a similar situation, a person of "ordinary prudence" — a reasonable person — would not have served the drunk driver alcohol.
- A third party's injuries as a result of the drunk driver operating a motor vehicle was within the scope of foreseeable risk.

Due to all of these conditions, dramshop cases can be very difficult to prove. They require a great deal of investigating and a skilled attorney on the case in order to reveal the full story. If you or someone you love has been injured by a drunk driver, don't leave their future up to chance. Call Spada Law Group at 617.889.5000 and get the full story.



Local Chef's Corner

Vegan Cauliflower PIZZA CRUST

Bring some new flavors to your pizza night with this dairy-free, egg-free cauliflower pizza crust. Vegan pizza has never tasted so good!

INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/2 lb. frozen cauliflower rice
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 3 tbsp ground flax seeds
- 1/2 tsp garlic powder
- 1/2 cup almond flour
- 1/2 tsp dried oregano

DIRECTIONS

1. Heat oven to 400 F.
2. Thaw frozen cauliflower rice and place it on a thin dish towel. Use your hands to squeeze out all excess moisture from cauliflower.
3. Transfer drained cauliflower to a large bowl and mix in ground flax seeds, almond flour, salt, garlic powder, and oregano.
4. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Use your hands to press dough onto the baking sheet, creating a thin, flat shape about 14 inches in diameter.
5. Bake the crust for 45 minutes, checking after 30 minutes to make sure it's not burning. Once the crust is golden brown, carefully remove from the oven, flip the entire crust over on the baking sheet, and bake for another 10 minutes.
6. Once the crust is cooked, remove from the oven and let cool slightly before adding your favorite pizza toppings. Cook for another 5–10 minutes and serve warm.

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Kishi Station

TAMA, THE CALICO

THE FIRST FELINE STATIONMASTER IN ALL OF JAPAN

During the mid-2000s, the Kishi Train Station in Japan began to deteriorate. By 2006, Kishi Station was left completely unstaffed because of low ridership and financial problems. However, one last resident still remained after everyone else was long gone: a black, white, and tan cat named Tama.

Tama first appeared at the station as a young cat in the late 1990s. She lived near the train station and would visit commuters daily to receive affection and the occasional treat. But, as it turned out, her continued visits to Kishi Station would end up playing a much bigger role for the station.

The same year it became unstaffed, residents living near the station asked the president of the Wakayama Electric Railway, Mitsunobu Kojima, to revive the station because the cat's survival depended on it. It turns out Tama's original owner had asked the railway workers to care for her before he moved away — he couldn't bear to take her from the station she loved to visit so much.

So, Kojima decided to go meet Tama. He liked her immediately and adopted her. A year later, Tama was officially named the Stationmaster of Kishi Station, the first cat stationmaster in Japan. To complete her look, Kojima gave her a small conductor hat to wear as she greeted commuters from her window perch inside the ticket gates.



As an official stationmaster, Tama became well known all across Japan and throughout the world. She appeared in the media and on promotional materials that soon brought much-needed foot traffic to Kishi Station. Thousands of tourists came rushing to Kishi to see Tama for themselves, ride the Tamaden carriage, and pick up Tama merchandise inside the station.

Tama brought joy to all commuters for the next several years before passing away in 2015. Nearly 3,000 people attended her funeral, and her legacy lives on. Tama's successors continue as stationmasters: Nitama, who serves as Kishi stationmaster, and assistant Yontama at Idakiso, five stations away.

Tama's friendly and loving nature impacted many people around her, and she will always be affectionately known as the cat who saved the Japanese train station.