



STICKY SITUATIONS

A recent trend in American culture is to try to make every child feel special. The so-called *self-esteem movement* has placed great emphasis on praising children for no other reason than simply participating in an activity. This is especially apparent in youth sports, where winners and losers are sometimes replaced with participants' awards. Your 8-year-old's soccer team did not win a single game this season? No problem. Here is his trophy for participating. Your 15-year-old daughter came in 7th place in the 800 m? It's ok, she still gets a medal for her efforts.

The advocates for this trend argue that it helps to build positive self-esteem, promoting a sense of pride and acceptance. The critics say that it shields youngsters from failure, rejection, and loss, distancing them from the truth that excellence is not innate and that hard work is required to succeed. Does rewarding kids for simply participating have a hand in producing a self-obsessed, unmotivated generation? Many would argue that it does.

Perhaps instead of focusing on winning, losing, or even participating, a better focus for today's youth would be on learning the different ways of playing a game—on strategizing and attempting to maintain one's competitive edge.

The contributors to this month's cover focus understand the importance of learning different strategies, and they have no problem admitting that not every case goes according to plan. In the following articles, six fearless all-star surgeons ask mystery contestants for advice on how they would have handled cases in which the refractive correction did not go as planned.

And guess what? Each all-star selects a winning contestant.

Many times, more can be learned from losing than from winning. Hopefully all of you will learn a few valuable lessons after reading about the following sticky situations in refractive correction.

—Laura Straub, Editor-in-Chief