

Excerpt from article by Rod Murrow who was a cross country runner but also had to balance school work.

He was upset he couldn't run in the snow because after school it was too late and dark on the icy roads.

His dad offered to drive his truck behind him, so he could run in the headlights.

They repeated this ritual throughout the years.

His father passed years later and he had to give his eulogy. As he thought about what to say he realized what his dad was doing all those years ago.

"The first thing I realized was something that dad didn't do. He didn't tell me I had to run. He didn't tell me that if I didn't run I was going to get my butt kicked by my competitors. He didn't say he was going to be disappointed in me if I didn't run. All he did was remove a barrier to me being able to run that I couldn't eliminate myself. Everything else was up to me."

"The second things dad did was- both literally and figuratively- light the way from behind. I realized it was a metaphor for how we as both coaches or parents need to approach our kids. It is easy to fall into the trap of wanting to blaze the trail in front of them."

When we remove the obstacles we make the kid or athletes success about us. It calls more attention to what we did for the them than what they did for themselves.

Think about it like this: If a coach or parent is lighting the way from the front, the coach or parent is the first thing people see, with the kid being second, obscured behind them. But if the coach or parent lights the way from behind, the kid is the first thing someone would see, and that is as it should be.

It is an easy and seductive trap to fall into and it is usually done with good intentions.

Dad knew where he could do me the most good, and that was from behind. But my back was all he had, nothing more, nothing less.