

All Opinions are Not Created Equal

by [annejosephson](#)



We are all entitled to an opinion...

But not all of our opinions are equal.

Let me be clear: as people, all of us are equal. Nevertheless, each of our opinions on all topics are not. And, while we are all entitled to our opinions that entitlement to possess them does not give our opinions equal weight.

Opinions are personal views, attitudes or evaluations. And, because opinions are not facts, they have an array of interpretation in them. They can range from one's ideas about personal preferences ("Gymnastics is more fun than ice skating." or "Steak tastes better than chicken.") to one's belief about politics, education or science.

In the first type of opinions—those of personal preference—all are equal because we all get to decide what things we like best for ourselves.

Then, there are opinions that are derived from professional expertise. Again, these are not necessarily facts, experts can disagree. However, those who have expertise have opinions related to their area of knowledge that can and should carry more weight than those who do not. For example, a doctor's opinion on how to treat a disease is more relevant than the opinion of your accountant. And, whether that trip is deductible is a decision to leave to your accountant not your doctor.

While opinions that are derived from professional expertise can vary, those who hold the credentials **and** are tasked with the responsibility to carry out the duties related to the viewpoint are the ones whose opinions should be given greater weight. So, using the above examples, the opinion of the doctor who actually has met the patient, reviewed the labs and determined a course of treatment for a patient has greater weight than a doctor who has done none of these things. And, the opinion of accountant who signs off on a client's tax return has more gravitas than an accountant who has not put his or her signature to the return.

So what does this have to do with gymnastics?

Plenty.

When a coach has an opinion about the placement of a child, the determination of which level to compete or which skills should next be taught, the coaches' position carries more weight than that of the parent or gymnast. Or even of another gymnastics coach who does not work with this particular athlete.

When a parent has an opinion about the physical, psychological or emotional well being of the child, the parents' position carries more weight than that of the coach or gymnast. Or even than that of another parent who might make a different choice with his or her parental responsibility.

When a gymnast has an opinion about the time she puts in the gym or whether to continue with the sport, the gymnast's position carries more weight than that of the coach or the parent. Or even than that of another gymnast the same age and ability as this athlete.

When a judge posts a score for your child's routine, that judge's opinion of the routine carries more weight in handing down that score than does grandma's opinion. Even if grandma knows a great deal about gymnastics judging.

Just as expertise makes the opinion of the expert more credible, with the responsibility of carrying out certain obligations comes the power to make certain choices and determinations.

So, are you entitled to your position?

Absolutely. We are all entitled to think whatever we want to think, but we should all acknowledge when the opinion of someone else carries more responsibility and is made by someone with greater expertise than do we. We are always welcome to seek a second opinion from another expert if we are unsure of the validity of the first expert opinion, but to simply decide we know better in areas in which we clearly do not is certainly foolish and can even be dangerous.

And, we also need to realize when despite having an opinion, it is not appropriate to mention it aloud because it is neither our business nor our expertise. For instance, Susy's mom's opinion on the coaches decision to move Jenny to Level 8 is not relevant.

After all, it is not a sin to have an unexpressed thought...

Unless of course you are blogger! ;)

Then again, that's just my opinion.