

Wrestling develops a kid's true character

Does my kid have what it takes? This is what parents want to know: do their kids have what it takes to make it in the real world?

Will they have friends? Will they get a good job? Will they rise to the challenges they are inevitably going to face? This is the universal concern of parents.

So, what exactly does it take to make it in the real world?

Many people rattle off a good education, the right friends and opportunities and some accolades. Sounds great, but those things are often outside of our direct control and don't really get to the heart of the matter.

What every kid needs are courage, hard work, discipline, resilience and humility. These are the values that transcend circumstances and develop character that can handle any challenge.

This is the promise of wrestling. Character is the natural and unavoidable outcome of the process of wrestling.

The definition of 'wrestling' is to ACT in such a way to bring SOMETHING under CONTROL. What it's actually bringing under control is YOU. Training to win in wrestling FORCES you to demonstrate self-control, make sacrifices, delay gratification, respect others, and get back up and try again.

Wrestlers realize that everything you do "on and off" the mat shows up in competition, so you better make good choices. What else does that?

Wrestling does that better than anything else I know and it's disguised as a sport, so kids can quickly accept and submit themselves to the discipline.

An important note here, these traits are NOT INNATE, they are LEARNED! It's interesting to me that wrestling is primarily practiced through our educational system, yet we position ourselves purely as a sport.

Let's get the message out that the wrestling room is where character is formed. We need teachers, principals, and parents to understand that. If they

have a troubled kid, we'll take them. I love how our coaches are on the front line, battling for our kids. Their sacrifice deserves much wider support and respect. If we change the dialog, this will come.

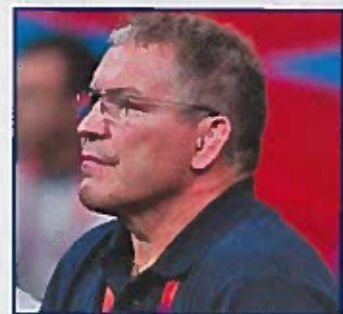
Understand that wrestling is not a cure that removes challenges from your life, but it does train you on how to respond to a challenge and get back up and take another shot when life hits you hard or when your natural response was the wrong one.

Here's the message we are promoting: "Life is hard. Wrestling prepares you for the challenge."

In the coming months, you will see more messages like this from our partnership with the U.S. Wrestling Foundation to communicate why America needs wrestling. This public outreach can help increase participation, build audience and develop the market for wrestling to benefit everyone.

These Victory Tour events will open opportunities to get media coverage and attract influencers in education, government, and other leaders looking for better ways to train kids to overcome challenges and thrive. The Tour will travel the U.S. and conclude at the World Cup in Iowa in 2018. (Please support and attend events and bring the people that you need to support your program that need to hear how wrestling is the answer for strengthening our youth.

(Steve Fraser, America's first Greco Olympic champion in 1984 and former USA National Greco coach, serves as Chief of Donor and Alumni Relations for USA Wrestling. Steve is a monthly columnist of WIN Magazine.) ■



Steve Fraser

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