

# Why I Wrestle

by Davey Blake - Head Wrestling Coach, McDaniel College - 01/08/08

I wrestle because it's hard. It challenges every aspect of my life. Wrestling makes me physically and mentally tough. Wrestling makes me humble. Wrestling makes me self-confident. Wrestling makes me realize that no matter what the score, no matter what the obstacle, no matter how tough situations may get, my perseverance and desire to compete in these situations always gives me a "pinner's chance" to succeed. Wrestling has also showed me that it is okay when I don't.

The physical demands that wrestler's have to place upon themselves are unparalleled. Wrestlers must train for muscular strength, muscular endurance, cardiovascular endurance, balance, and flexibility, all to be executed at one time in a hunched over stance. Wrestling trains me to control my body, to optimize leverage, and to not only to take advantage of an opponent's weakness, but to also use his own strengths against him. Wrestling taught me to eat properly and that the type of fuel I put into my body had a direct result in my physical performance. Wrestling taught me to be physically tough, and that there was a difference between being hurt and being injured. Wrestling taught me the importance of rehabilitation and taking preventive measures to help deter injury.

Wrestling has given me social independence. I do not have to follow the crowd. I do not have to succumb to peer pressure. Wrestling has given me the self-confidence to believe in myself, and not to rely too heavily on other people. Wrestling has allowed me to respect the accomplishments of all people, whether it be athletically, academically, or in their careers. This is because I can appreciate the hard work and dedication it took to achieve the results.

Wrestling has made me mentally strong. Wrestling has taught me how to be tougher than the drill, tougher than the practice, and ultimately, tougher than anything the day can throw at me. Wrestling has taught me that I can overcome my fears and chase my dreams. Wrestling has taught me to compete for what it is I really want, to set goals and go after them. Wrestling has taught me that it is okay to fail, as long as I gave every ounce of energy I had.

Most importantly, wrestling has given me the ability to transcend all of these skills and apply them to my everyday life. I realize that wrestling is just a sport, just a game. I also realize that this game has made me the person that I am today. I am grateful to the sport of wrestling, to my coaches, to my teammates, and to the athlete's that I coach today. Without them, there is no telling what I may have become. I hope that everyone involved in the sport of wrestling, from the parents to the coaches to the athletes, truly appreciates and respects all that this sport can do to shape a person's life.

## Footnote

I wrote this because we are now in the heart of the season and it sometimes becomes difficult to understand why we put ourselves through some of the crazy things we do for the sport of wrestling. I hope that this inspires you to reflect on what it is the sport of wrestling has to offer for you specifically. We focus so intensely on the short term, that we sometimes forget to keep our long range goals in focus. Good luck to everyone the rest of the season.

Davey

