

Wrestling's Correlation with Future Success

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**Abstract**

With present economic difficulties, it is necessary to have an edge when attempting to achieve one's personal goals. Wrestling has repeatedly been attributed to the teaching of both lessons and characteristics that are necessary to the achievement of success, but the theory has never been scientifically tested leaving it without credibility. The researcher conducted a study where both interviews and surveys were used to collect data from those with a background in wrestling. A total of 35 people ranging from high school to Olympic wrestlers filled out the survey. Survey results were collected, transferred into bar charts, and data was then analyzed. Analysis of the data showed that those who responded to the survey attributed their success; however they define it, to be partly a resultant of the lessons and characteristics learned through wrestling. Due to the study's results the researcher was able to conclude that, as stated by many past wrestlers, there is a strong correlation between wrestling and the achievement of future success in life.

## Chapter I: Introduction

### Rationale

Wrestling has had a major impact on the human race since the “dawn of civilization” (Dellinger, 2011a, p. 1) where it has been documented in multiple ancient civilizations. Over centuries of development of the human race many wrestlers have attributed their success in life to their background in the sport of wrestling, because of the qualities it instilled in them. These learned qualities are necessary “to be successful on the mats, in school, or in the work place” (Chertow, n.d., para.2). The purpose of this study is to examine the claims of these wrestlers and to find if there is a correlation between wrestling and future success in life.

Throughout history important figures such as presidents and war leaders have been known for their wrestling skills. Abraham Lincoln was a renowned wrestler and the “champion of his county in Illinois” (Dellinger, 2011b, p. 1). The researcher believes that wrestling requires mental and physical strength and makes others more likely to support successful wrestlers, because they respect the toughness that wrestlers have acquired and see them as deserving to lead. The article “Famous People who have wrestled” lists some well-known people who have a common in wrestling. The list varies from politicians, American war heroes, and professional athletes, particularly National Football League players (“Famous people who have wrestled”, 2011). These men gained success because they exhibited qualities that are emphasized in wrestling, “focus, discipline, goal setting, determination and perseverance” (Chertow, n.d., para. 2). Ken Chertow, Olympic Wrestler, says “these lessons of life are essential to be successful...in school or in the work place you must have these characteristics, and wrestling teaches you these characteristics better than any other sport” (Chertow, n.d., para. 2).

### **Statement of the Problem**

The sport of wrestling is extremely demanding both mentally and physically. Many former wrestlers attribute their success later in life to the lessons they learned through the grueling personal demands inherent in wrestling. But is wrestling really the cause of their success? Can it be linked as the main attributing factor to learning crucial life lessons or skills needed to succeed in adult life? This question will be answered by examining the fields of sports medicine and psychology. Everyone desires success and if it was possible to link wrestling with success in later adult life, then potentially the techniques used (in wrestling) to instill these lessons could potentially be used for the gain of others. Claims that wrestling directly causes success have a lot of support, from many established professionals who have a background in wrestling. Many have theorized on the subject but to this day there has never been a study done to support this claim, leaving a vast amount of gaps in the knowledge on the subject.

### **Method**

The researcher collected data through the use of surveys and conducting interviews. Surveys were created and sent to wrestlers, wrestling coaches, and public figures with backgrounds in wrestling. Interviews were conducted with public figures such as former UNC Wrestling Coach Bill Lam, award winning novelist John Irving, and Olympic Champion Dan Gable. The survey's answers ranged from one through six depending on how much the participant agrees with the said statement. This range of scores created results that were quantitative and therefore easier for the researcher to transfer into graphs and later interpret. The survey also included free response questions, the free response answers were coded for different characteristics. Once all the data had been collected the researcher transformed the data from

each question into bar charts. Bar charts were then analyzed to determine if there is a positive or negative correlation between wrestling and success. Once the correlation was found the researcher was able to determine whether or not the hypothesis was accurate.

### **Research Questions**

The hypothesis of the researcher's study is that a correlation will be found between wrestling and future success in life. Sub-questions that had to be answered to find an answer to the hypothesis include: What is success? What are the characteristics of a successful person? What are the characteristics of a successful wrestler? How has wrestling impacted history? How has wrestling impacted individual countries? What has contemporary literature concerning the research question determined so far? How are the lessons learned in wrestling different from other sports?

### **Implications**

The implications of the researcher's results are many and each one is significant to the sport of wrestling. Survey results indicated that wrestling helped respondents achieve success in many ways. This success includes financial success and also the achievement of one's personal goals for success. The results also indicated that wrestling teaches lessons that many attributed to their success, such as: becoming a more confident person, becoming a more determined person, and learning discipline through the need to manage weight for weigh-ins. Finally the results demonstrated that wrestling not only taught these lessons but it also ingrained more thoroughly than done in any other sport.

### **Significance**

The implications of the researcher's study could be immense for the sport of wrestling and individuals in the pursuit of success. The researcher's hypothesis was supported by the results and a link was found between wrestling and success, these results could theoretically cause the sport of wrestling to become vastly more popular; allowing the sport to grow and evolve. For those passionate about the sport this would be very exciting because with increased popularity wrestling would get the national recognition that it deserves. Also, people could understand how to become more successful, which is a great benefit for all aspects of society. This discovery in turn, would improve the economy and the country in a time of economic crisis.

### **Applicability**

After all of the researcher's results were examined and the study was finished, lasting effects remain on the sport of wrestling. The strong correlation that was found between wrestling and success indicate that the sport will become more popular. Therefore, the sport will be able to evolve and grow because of the increased popularity and attention. The results also allow the population to have a better idea of what characteristics are needed to achieve success and have a better understanding of success as a whole. This knowledge allows those in pursuit of success to know better what qualities they should strive for.

## **Chapter II: Review of Literature**

With the present economic difficulties, it is necessary for one to have an edge when attempting to achieve one's personal goals. Wrestling has had a major impact on the human race since the "dawn of civilization" (Dellinger, 2011a, p. 1) where it has been documented in multiple ancient civilizations. Over centuries of development of the human race, many wrestlers attribute their success to their background in the sport of wrestling, because of the qualities it instilled in them. These learned qualities are necessary "to be successful on the mats, in school, or in the work place" (Chertow, n.d., para.2). The purpose of this study is to examine the claims of these wrestlers and examine a correlation between wrestling and future success in life.

### **Defining Success**

The idea of success differs for each individual person. Many people desire success, but what does that really mean? In the end the definition is up to the individual. Success could be monetary, having a loving family, security, fame, great sports achievements such as the NFL or NBA, or becoming knowledgeable and wise. But overall, when examined on a broad scale, the definition of success always comes down to the achievement of a personal goal set by an individual. For one to achieve success they have to deem what they want to achieve. Without setting a particular goal, they will never truly feel successful because they never had a focus or a purpose to work towards (Sasson, 2012).

Success without the achievement of a personal goal does not always mean happiness. This realization may be why so many famous actors and singers are caught in scandals or have depression issues. They have achieved fame and fortune and yet are unhappy, because they never achieved their personal goal or they feel at a loss when it comes to the direction of their

life. This lack of personal direction is why the setting of a personal goal is so critically important to the achievement of success.

### **Characteristics of a Successful Wrestler**

Achieving success is extremely difficult in the modern world. For one to have a chance at obtaining desired success, individuals must possess certain characteristics. Similar to success, in the sport of wrestling one must also learn certain characteristics to succeed. The characteristics needed for wrestling and those needed for obtaining success have a significant correlation.

Wrestling "is extremely demanding both physically and mentally" (Chertow, n.d., para. 1). With all the demands wrestling puts upon those who participate, wrestlers have certain characteristics drilled into them. These characteristics according to US Olympian Chertow are: "intensity, focus, discipline, goal setting, determination and perseverance" (n.d., para. 2). A wrestler lacking these characteristics would have little chance at becoming a successful wrestler because, from a Social Darwinist perspective, they simply do not have what it takes.

Every quality described by Chertow is crucial to an individual wrestler's success. Intensity is strength and concentration. A wrestler without intensity would not be able to push hard enough to succeed. Without intensity a wrestler who was told to drill on his own by his coach will not have the personal integrity needed to actually push himself to his goal. Focus is one's mono-directional ability to maintain all concentration on a specific objective or goal and it is crucial to success on the mat. With focus a wrestler is able to concentrate on a task and therefore able to work to the best of their ability to complete that particular task. When a wrestler has to make weight multiple times a week discipline is important. Discipline is doing what you do not necessarily want to do, when you must to succeed. A wrestler with discipline

does what is best even if it is not what they want to do, such as not eating in order to make their weight. He may be hungry and uncomfortable, but by dedicating themselves to their diet he will be able to make weight, which will allow him to wrestle, help himself improve and help his team. An important aspect of achieving success in wrestling is goal setting. Whether you are setting a goal for practice or for the national tournament, a wrestler has to have an objective in order to motivate them to succeed and grow as a wrestler. Determination and perseverance are qualities found in all great leaders and all wrestlers must have them. These qualities refer to the will to push through obstacles and keep hoping and trying despite the odds. Winston Churchill, Prime Minister of Britain during World War II, when faced with great obstacles such as the armies of Germany and Japan said: "Never, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever give up" (Churchill, 1941, p. 2). His determination and perseverance gave hope to his people and led to an Allied victory. When a wrestler is put on his back this same idea comes in to play, will he submit, take the easy way out, or keep fighting? The average wrestler would decide to give up because if they are losing, there is no way they could come back, but the great wrestler does not surrender. They stay determined and persevere, though they may not win, it can be used as a learning experience. One learns nothing from giving up, except how to give up. This lesson may explain why so many people who have had a great impact on society were wrestlers ("Famous people," 2011) because of their steadfast determination, perservance and their ability to push themselves.

These characteristics compare favorably to those characteristics necessary to achieve success in future endeavors. Though some necessary traits vary, "some traits... [are] essential to success no matter the domain" (Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly, 2007, p. 1). A quality "shared by the most prominent leaders in every field" is the quality called "grit"; grit can be defined "as perseverance and passion for long-term goals" (Duckworth et al., 2007, p.1-2). Grit

is similar to the qualities described by Chertow; grit is the ability to work with great determination toward a personal challenge or goal, despite obstacles and failures. Through interviews with many people of high net worth the distinguishing quality of high achievers was grit (Duckworth et al., 2007).

### **Wrestling's Effects on Success in other Sports**

The sport of wrestling has had a significant effect on those who take part in other sports. In fact Olympic Gold medalist Dan Gable, and arguably the best wrestler ever said, "Once you have wrestled, everything else in life is easy," because of his belief of the positive impact that wrestling had on his life (Peterson, n.d., p.1).

NFL players, in particular, are known to attribute much of their success in the sport to their background of wrestling. John Madden, a Hall of Fame football coach said, "I would have all my offensive lineman wrestle if I could" (Stoner, n.d.). Coaches share John Madden's sentiment because they know the benefits a wrestling background can have for their players. Wrestling helps football players by enforcing the concept of staying low and body positioning. A wrestler has to stay low to protect his legs from his opponent's attempts at performing various takedowns. The importance of protecting the legs has led to a focus on position (Peterson, n.d., p.1). In football, players are required to stay low in order to overcome their opponent. An offensive lineman must stay low in order to get better positioning to block the opponent (Peterson, n.d., p.1). Also, by staying low, the lineman's center of gravity is lower making his stance more secure, which makes him difficult to knock off balance. Staying low is also important for defensive players in order for them to tackle. "Football's "hit" position... [is] similar to a good wrestling stance" (Peterson, n.d., p.1). These similarities help the defensive player understand the correct stance, ultimately making them a more successful player. When a

running back carries the ball, he is taught to stay low to protect the ball. For the defensive player to tackle the running back he will have to match his position to tackle effectively. If he does not stay low will not be able to adequately wrap up the running back and has a greater chance of missing the tackle. In wrestling the participant is alone and has no team to take the blame for his mistakes. This format helps for the player to gain self-confidence and self-motivation because it is only them and their opponent, so they have to believe in themselves and take personal responsibility for their actions in order to overcome their opponent (Stoner, n.d.).

The benefits of wrestling can also be seen in baseball and soccer. Both baseball and wrestling rely on core strength. Core strength is "the strength of the large muscle groups...hips, thighs, and lower torso" (Peterson, n.d.). In wrestling, core strength is necessary to execute nearly every move effectively, since all moves are based off of the "power of the hips" says Wade Schalles (his opinion is highly respected because he is regarded as one of the best all time wrestlers and holds the world record for most pins in a career). Baseball embraces this same theory, because most of the power of a baseball player's swing comes directly from the twisting of their hips to create momentum and torque to hit the ball (Peterson, n.d.). Through wrestling, baseball player's hips and range of motion could improve allowing them to improve on their batting form and therefore become a greater asset to their team.

Soccer players benefit from wrestling because of the rigorous training it provides that improves core conditioning. A six minute wrestling match is extremely tiring on the body so stamina and core conditioning is crucial if you want to be a successful wrestler. In soccer a player is running up and down the field continuously, "AC Milan's Gennaro Gattuso was replaced in the 85th minute... he had run more than 10 kilometers (That's the equivalent of running the length of an NBA court about 350 times)" (Bialik, 2007, para. 1). With large

amounts of running, core conditioning is necessary to be a successful soccer player. Therefore, participating in wrestling enables soccer players to receive the core conditioning that they might not otherwise get in the offseason. This training would get them in shape and in the best condition for tryouts in the beginning of their soccer season. The better their fitness the more likely they are to impress at tryouts and make the team.

### **Why Wrestling?**

Wrestling is unlike any other sport; this is why participating in wrestling, not just playing sports in general, and this distinction makes a difference in one achieving success. Steve Cooper in his Forbes Magazine article said that, "nearly all athletes at an elite level have a tremendous amount of drive, [but] wrestlers in particular seem to operate at a higher level of fortitude" (Cooper, 2012, para. 7).

No other sport is like wrestling. Wrestling is a team as well as an individual sport and this brings a whole new level to the challenge. In wrestling one is only as good as the workout partner they have pushing them, but when it comes to the match it is only you on the mat. Since wrestling is an individual sport, "the athlete experiences both failure and success as an individual. As a result, the wrestler endures more physical, emotional, and psychological stress, both positive and negative, than an athlete in another sport" (Cooper, 2012, para. 11). Another aspect that differentiates wrestling from any other sport is the weight management aspect that it requires. Wrestlers have to work as hard as football players do but they cannot go home and gorge on food (Lam, 2012). In fact, "due to the weight class requirements, [wrestlers] have to maintain their focus and drive around the clock" (Cooper, 2012, para. 10), this is what truly sets wrestling apart. While those in other sports are able to eat to their hearts desires, wrestlers have

to constantly manage their weight causing them to have to cut back on food (sometimes significantly) and compete at times on empty stomachs.

The intensity of wrestling is unmatched in any other sport. Socrates himself said, "I swear it upon Zeus an outstanding runner cannot be the equal of an average wrestler" (Cooper, 2012, para. 8). Some believe that due to wrestling's short intervals it is not nearly as physically taxing as other sports which occur over a longer period of time, but this is in no way accurate. In basketball a player burns 544 calories in an hour of a game, in football a player burns 612 an hour, and in soccer you burn 680 calories an hour ("Calories Burned with Sports", n.d.). While in a mere six-minute wrestling match a wrestler on average burns about 54 calories, or 540 calories an hour ("Calories Burned Wrestling", n.d.). This intensity is what causes wrestlers to learn the attributes that help to gain success, because if they were unable to learn the attributes they would be unable to hold up against wrestling's intensity.

### **Wrestling in History**

Wrestling is a sport that has had a significant impact throughout history in some of the greatest ancient and modern civilizations, Wrestling's origins have been traced back "to the dawn of civilization...carvings and drawings estimated to be between 15,000 and 20,000 years old...illustrate wrestlers in hold and leverage positions" (Dellinger, 2011a, para. 1).

As the world grew, wrestling as a sport grew with each region developing its own variation of the sport. Though western wrestling is known for its origins in Ancient Greece, it has different variations other parts of the world. Britain has its own form of wrestling called Cumberland wrestling, a type also commonly known as the "collar and elbow" style. It gained this name because of the starting position of the wrestlers who would stand "face-to-face, each wrestler placed one hand behind his opponent's neck and the other behind his elbow" (Dellinger,

2011a, para. 11). In Switzerland, Schwingen wrestling was popular, while in Iceland, there was the unique wrestling style called Glima. This style requires the athletes to wear weighted belts and to take hold of each other's belts. They must then attempt to throw their opponent by their belt in order to score points. In Rome, they created the popular modern day form of wrestling called Greco-Roman wrestling. This style of wrestling is dominated by throws, since it is illegal for participants to touch their opponent's lower body (Dellinger, 2011a, para. 5&6).

### **Ancient Greece**

Many believe modern wrestling originated in Ancient Greece. The Greeks used wrestling as a way to train and prepare their soldiers for combat, and for general daily exercise. Before the Olympics (before 704 B.C.) wrestling was the final event in all of the Greek pentathlons. The Greeks made wrestling the final event because of the respect they held for the sport. They revered wrestling because of the necessary excellent physical and mental prowess it required.

Wrestling was always a very popular sport in Ancient Greece and continues to be held in high regard to the present day. The first Olympics held in 776 BC in Athens, wrestling was a major event and many of the matches were described by the Greek poet Homer. Homer wrote about wrestling in his epic poem *The Odyssey*, "It is good for you to know sports, for a man has no greater fame than that which he acquires with his feet or his hands" (Potter, 2012, p. 26). Homer's quote demonstrates the Greek mindset on sports and why they were so important to their culture, because of the glory and fame they brought those who succeeded in them. Also, "one of the most famous of the Greek wrestlers was the philosopher Aristocles. Due to his wrestling success, Aristocles was given the name Plato, meaning broad shoulders (Dellinger, 2011a, para. 4). Wrestling not only changed Aristocles name, but propelled him into the philosopher whose insights and ideas are still respected and studied today.

In Ancient Greece not everyone was allowed to compete as wrestlers. Potential participants were required to pass an inspection to determine whether they were qualified to compete, and whether they would compete as a man or as a boy (Potter, 2012, p. 50). The Greeks believed that to be qualified to compete as a wrestler they had “to determine whether a person was really Greek and met the qualification of good character” (Potter, 2012, p. 50). Wrestlers were also judged the hardest when it came to their conditioning, strength, and body types. Because of these reasons wrestlers were “the people of the most interest to the...trainer” (Potter, 2012, p. 150-1). The standard for a qualifying wrestler was much more exclusive, according to one of the wrestling trainers. He said wrestler must have “slender...good shoulders, well-muscled arms, strong legs [,]...good flexibility...and (be) agile” (Potter, 2012, p. 150-1). Trainers were also said to work their wrestlers harder than any of their other athletes because of the physical demands of the sport. To endure the rigorous demands of training a wrestler would have to be hardworking and determined. According to the Greeks, only those of great character were deserving of the glory of competing in wrestling. One of the most famous stories regarding these inspections is described by a Greek writer named Pausanias about a young man named Pherias. Pherias is first denied as a younger boy but grows up and qualifies and is able to win the tournament (Potter, 2012, p. 50-51). Pherias' example shows that wrestling breeds determination and perseverance, because though Pherias was small he was determined to compete, and when he did compete he was able to achieve success. He achieved success not because of his physical strength or size but because of the characteristics he gained through wrestling.

### Ancient Egypt

Many recognize the impact of wrestling in Ancient Greece culture, but wrestling was also present in Ancient Egypt, as evidenced by “the frequency with which the sport appears in Egyptian art” (Carroll, 1988, para. 3). There are many drawings in Egypt that depict scenes of wrestling but none “has depicted wrestling so completely and so technically correct [as] in the temple-tombs of Beni Hasan in middle kingdom Egypt” (Dellinger, 2011a, para. 2).



**Figure 1. Tomb 15 Beni Hasan.**

In the figure it shows Egyptian wrestlers grappling and using various different throws and hand-fighting techniques which are still used in modern wrestling. Such techniques as the arm drag, the Russian arm tie, and the duck under can be seen in this figure. These particular moves have helped many wrestlers to win Gold medals. The painting shows how advanced and evolved the sport of wrestling was in Egypt, it was important enough to their way of life to be displayed inside one of their tombs, which is a great show of respect for the sport. In the Egyptian culture burial and death is very important, and how one is buried determines how wealthy they were and it prepares them for their trials that they will experience in the afterlife.

For a painting of wrestling to be included as part of the tomb demonstrates the importance of wrestling in Ancient Egyptian society (Carroll, 1988, para. 1&2).

### **Wrestling in Iran**

In Iran, wrestling is considered the national sport. One of the more popular forms of wrestling in Iran is called *Varzesh-e Pahlavani*. This was “originally an academy of physical training and a nursery for warriors against foreign invaders” (Nekoogar, 1996, para. 1). Over the course of three thousand years the sport was transformed into a way of life that encouraged, “different components of moral, ethical, philosophical, and mystical values” (Nekoogar, 1996, para. 2) so it became so much more than just a sport. Those who took part in *Varzesh-e Pahlavani* were held to a moral standard because of their involvement in the sport, which demanded such great human values. *Pahlavani* promoted moral and ethical characteristics as “humbleness, generosity, virtuosity, charity [,]...mercy...respect for law, humanitarian conduct, bravery, and safeguarding of national traditions” (Nekoogar, n.d., para. 1). Those athletes who were the champions at the sport were known as *Pahlavans*. They were regarded as heroes and were expected to be champions of the people and providers for the weak (Nekoogar, n.d., para. 2).

### **Wrestling in America**

The sport of wrestling has had an immense impact on America from the formation of America as a nation to its development as a global power. Abraham Lincoln, who is regarded as one of America's greatest Presidents was a very skilled wrestler in his youth. It is recorded that he was actually the “wrestling champion of his county as early as 1830, at the age of 21” (Dellinger, 2011b, p. 1). Alongside Lincoln there were many other wrestling presidents such as

Andrew Jackson, Zachary Taylor, Ulysses S. Grant, Chester A. Arthur, William Howard Taft, (Dellinger, 2011b, p. 2) Calvin Coolidge, Dwight Eisenhower, Teddy Roosevelt, John Tyler, and George Washington ("Famous people who have wrestled", 2011).

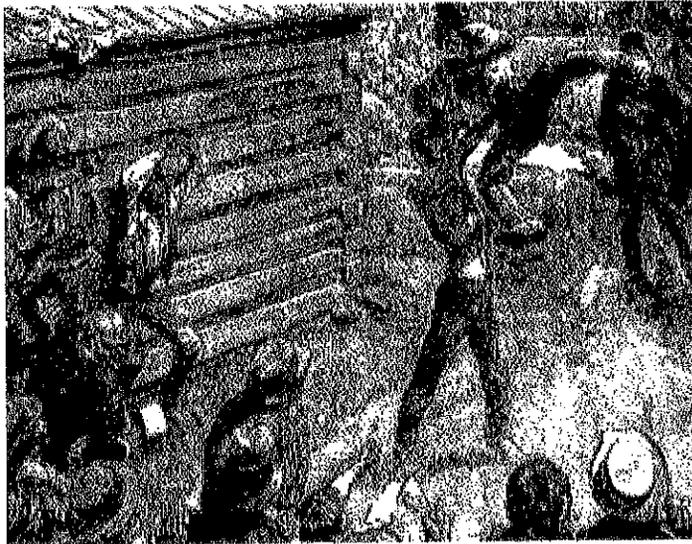
George Washington was well known for his wrestling abilities. "At 18, George Washington was the school champion at the Reverend James Maury's Academy" and "later in life, as the commander of the Continental armies, Washington, then 47, used his superior wrestling skills to defeat seven consecutive challengers" (Fleming, 1995, para. 7).

Wrestling also had an impact on President Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln was a very skilled wrestler and one of his matches in particular has been documented greatly. It is said that in 1831 Lincoln took on a man named Jack Armstrong, at the time, "Lincoln was 6' 4" and weighed 185 pounds" but Jack Armstrong though smaller than Lincoln was "strong as an ox" (Norton, n.d., para. 1-3). Norton described the match:

They did some grappling and twisting, but neither man could throw the other to the ground... Finally, Lincoln grabbed the bully by the neck, held him at arm's length, and shook him like a little boy. This aroused the Clary's Grove boys, and it suddenly appeared Lincoln might be attacked by an entire crowd of people. He backed up against the wall of Offutt's Store and offered to take them on one at a time. Jack Armstrong was impressed with Abraham Lincoln's display of courage. He looked at his friends and said, "Boys, Abe Lincoln is the best fellow that ever broke into this settlement. He shall be one of us."...Lincoln had a calming influence on the...gang of Clary's Grove boys, and his charisma had the effect of repressing their violence. (Norton, n.d., para. 4-5)

Lincoln's wrestling prowess and the characteristics he possessed as described in the above passage, such as courage and perseverance helped him earn respect in his community. He

was able to prove that he deserved respect through the display of his wrestling skill and the characteristics that can be linked to wrestling. Certainly these same characteristics of fairness, perseverance and courage contributed greatly to Lincoln's election and success as President during historically difficult times of war and repression.



**Figure 2. Abraham Lincoln throwing Jack Armstrong during their Wrestling match**

This figure displays Abraham Lincoln throwing Jack Armstrong to win the match described in the passage above. It shows Abraham Lincoln's ability to overcome obstacles not only mentally but also physically.

William Howard Taft, the heaviest president in American history, was known for his wrestling ability from a young age. Taft "As a teenager...was a robust figure...stood 6 feet-2 and weighed 225 pounds" and "loved to wrestle" (William H. Taft Biography, para. 2). Taft was not only skilled at wrestling he was also quite the intellectual, and his studies led him to attend Yale. While at Yale, Taft's father made Taft give up wrestling, but not before he won "the wrestling championship of his freshman class, then pinned the winner of the upper classes" (William H. Taft Biography, para. 2). Taft's wrestling career ended here but his success did not.

He graduated law school then went into public service. He later became the Governor of the Philippines where he ruled with fairness and equality that the Filipinos had not received by most other Americans. Soon after, Taft became Vice President for Theodore Roosevelt, and later became President himself. Though many historians believe that Taft's administration was not a successful administration, this assertion is questionable. Taft did not have the charisma of Roosevelt, but Taft "established the Bureau of Mines to clean up abuses, and another bureau to deal with child labor" (William H. Taft Biography, para. 2). Taft was determined and he worked to pass legislation that he believed was right for America. While these efforts may have made him unpopular, it does not make his administration a failure in all ways. He was able to achieve great improvements in working conditions for workers and helped small business owners succeed by breaking up trusts. The characteristics of determination and focus learned from wrestling allowed Taft to do what he believed was right even in the face of adversity.

Theodore Roosevelt's life was impacted greatly by wrestling. As a child he was very sickly and weak. This illness caused him to be teased often; to become stronger Roosevelt relied greatly on one of his favorite workouts, wrestling (Theodore Roosevelt Biography, para. 2). The "New Roosevelt" that was created through wrestling and other exercise effected Roosevelt's policies while in office. Roosevelt attacked America's problems with "his usual vigor and courage" (Theodore Roosevelt Biography, para. 9). Dennis Hastert, 20 year Congressman and 8 year Speaker of the House, credits wrestling for his extensive political career. Hastert wrestled throughout high school and college career, and afterwards he coached his high school wrestling team to the Illinois State Championships (Craig , 2011). Hastert asserts that wrestling breeds leadership through the lessons it teaches saying, "wrestling's a great opportunity," he said "it makes kids self-reliant. It kind of builds a toughness in them and we see wrestlers go out and be

great leaders. What a great legacy to pass on." To this day Hastert is, "frequently called on to speak with college officials on behalf of a wrestling program that was about to be disbanded... he believes athletes who choose to participate have a lot to gain and that's why he continues to spend time promoting it" (Craig, 2011, para. 24-36). Hastert's statements are demonstrative of the significance of wrestling's effects on those who participate.

The fact that all of these people who led the United States shared a background in wrestling is very illustrative. The importance of wrestling should not be minimized as it could have been a major factor in their development as a person and their eventual successes as president.

### **Wrestling and the Military**

Wrestling has always had a large role in the military, whether it is for military training or for soldiers to stay fit for battle mentally. In the early 200's B.C. the Chinese military used wrestling matches to prove strength both mentally and physically. Wrestling was also an important aspect in the training of the early Chinese warrior (Lewis, 1990). In the Zhou dynasty in China these matches were used for ceremonious purposes to symbolize the animalistic side of war and to display the Emperor's divine power over all of nature (Lewis, 1990).

The impact of wrestling on the American military is vast, yet has gone greatly unnoticed. Many Americans who wrestled, later on in life went into some form of the military. "Teddy" Roosevelt as a boy was very weak and sickly, so in order to toughen himself he competed in sports such as wrestling and boxing. Once he got older he joined the military and was one of the leaders of the Rough Riders at the Battle of San Juan Hill. In fact, "Teddy Roosevelt thought...wrestling would be the supreme combat method for military training" (Palmer, 2009, para. 11). Roosevelt, saw the positive impact wrestling could have on a person from his own

experiences as a wrestler. He knew that wrestling could be used in the military to instill ideals that it instilled in him, a good work ethic, toughness, and determination.

Another American wrestler and military personnel who had a great impact on America is Donald Rumsfeld. Rumsfeld was a "State Champion wrestler in Illinois...three-year starter at Princeton, [and]...he later became Secretary of Defense during George W. Bush's presidency" (Palmer, 2009, para. 12). As Secretary of Defense, Rumsfeld was responsible for the well-being of millions of American lives, and to think that his position may have been associated with his extensive background in the sport of wrestling.

### Conclusion

With the economy in the state that it is today the average family is struggling to find a way to succeed. In examining history, sports, and different cultures, a link between wrestling and success can be found. Though this link seems to be present, an in-depth study has never been done to see if there is truly a link between the two. Many wrestlers have been quoted as saying that after wrestling everything in life is easy. This sentiment sparked the researcher's curiosity to see if this statement actually holds truth. By studying the literature having to do with success, it has been concluded that success is not only financial wealth, but a personal goal achieved by an individual. To achieve success one must possess certain characteristics, which are shared when it comes to success in the sport of wrestling. History has proven to be immensely affected by wrestling; many nations developed their own form of wrestling in order to stay fit, train their military, or to create model citizens that can protect the weaker. In multiple aspects of history those who were involved in wrestling had success, whether it was Aristotle with his philosophical insights, or the Pahlavani champions viewed as heroes and protectors of the weak. Wrestling, throughout history, has required certain characteristics, and these

characteristics apply to wrestling and success today. Pahlavani wrestlers in Iran were set to a moral and ethical code, while those allowed to wrestle in Greece were required to pass a judging that determined whether they had the proper character to take part. America was greatly affected by wrestling because of the effects it had on many of America's presidents who had a great responsibility in the evolution of America. The idea of a correlation between success and wrestling is the governing to the researcher's overall thesis. This literature will be very important in supporting the researcher's claim that there is in fact a correlation between wrestling and success. The governing question can be related to sports psychology because it attempts to determine the psychological effects of taking part in the sport of wrestling.

### **Chapter III: Methodology**

America is currently experiencing a period of recession, making finding work and being able to support oneself more difficult. Many famous wrestlers have been quoted saying such things as "Once you've wrestled, everything else in life is easy is easy" (Cooper, 2012, para. 1). On the website "Wrestling and Success" many past wrestlers give their personal stories on how wrestling affected their lives and their ability to obtain success (Wrestling and Success, n.d.). The researcher wants to test this statement's validity and view if wrestling can truly have a correlation with future success in life. If a correlation could be found then the sport of wrestling would become more popular and people would gain newfound knowledge on how to achieve success in these difficult economic times. The researcher proposes studying the characteristics that are necessary to achieve success and the sport of wrestling's effects on people obtaining those characteristics. In doing so the researcher hopes to prove that there is a correlation between wrestling and future success in life. Data for the study was collected through the use of surveys and survey analysis. Surveys provided the researcher with results that were converted into bar charts

#### **Participants**

The study involved various groups of people that are associated with the sport of wrestling. The researcher planned to survey local wrestling coaches, wrestlers, athletic directors and public figures with a known background in wrestling. They are be the best participants because they themselves are either involved in wrestling or have had a significant background in wrestling. With their involvement in the sport they have more knowledge of the sport and its effects making the researcher's results more credible. Participants ranged from all ages,

ethnicities, races, and socioeconomic statuses in order to provide the best results, which best represent the diverse culture of America. Surveys were optional; therefore the study in no way violated the issue of informed consent. No reward was given for participating in the surveys except the researcher's gratitude. The participants, due to their involvement with wrestling, were motivated to help the researcher with the surveys because of their love for wrestling, rewards were not necessary.

### **Materials**

The researcher had to create the surveys that were used to collect the data; the researcher needed to have a way to get in contact with those whom the researcher intended to participate in the survey. Surveys included statements that were to be rated by the participants from one through six depending on the amount that the participant agreed with the survey's statement. The researcher's mentor was used as a source in order for the researcher to get in contact with other wrestling coaches, and people involved in the sport of wrestling in the area. The researcher's mentor proved useful for this task because he is the Academic Magnet High School's wrestling team Head Coach and therefore is well-acquainted with many coaches in the Charleston area. In sources that the researcher has found the researchers used interviews and statistics to determine their results. These methods were used in a study done by Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly; in their study they interviewed lawyers, doctors, and other "successful" job positions to see how the characteristic "grit" affected their rise to success (2007). The researcher used the tool of interviews as well, and conducted several interviews over the phone and by email with public figures previously involved in wrestling and wrestling coaches these interviews were organized by the researcher.

### Procedures

First, the researcher had to create a survey with the most essential questions that gave the most useful data for answering the research question. To do this the researcher had to conference with his mentor to make sure that the survey is using the most effective and concise questions. After doing this the researcher used these critiques to modify and revise the survey questions. Creating the survey took the researcher about two weeks to develop an expansive yet concise survey. Once the surveys had been created the researcher had to get the surveys to those whom were participating in the surveys. The researcher had to send surveys to those public figures with backgrounds in wrestling that the researcher wished to hear from. This distribution of surveys was done through the use of emailing and sending letters. Surveys were also given to the wrestlers at the researcher's school through the use of the website [surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com). Each wrestler was given a link to the site where the survey was and they each completed the survey. The timing of the surveys was somewhat limiting to the researchers thesis results because the thesis completion deadlines are before wrestling season therefore limiting the researcher's chance to get in contact with many wrestlers. Collecting the data took the researcher about a month because some of the public figures were difficult to get in contact with, such as John Irving and Dan Gable. Once the surveys were returned to the researcher the data received from the survey responses was analyzed by the researcher. Data was analyzed by the researcher through the use of bar charts created from the data found throughout the researcher's study. The bar charts were created by tallying up all of the survey's numerical results, and then plugging them into the graphs. The researcher then looked at each individual graph to see if there was a trend that validated or invalidated the researcher's hypothesis. Surveys were sent out by the researcher and due to the surveys being optional as well as without deadlines for completion by

the participants the researcher had to wait for all of these results. This collection of surveys took about a month because each participant responded at various different intervals of time. The survey results from public figures took an even longer time because of their busier lifestyles, and because much of the researchers contact with them was done through letters. Finally the researcher presented the survey results in the latter portion of this paper.

### **Evaluation**

After all of the data had been collected and the statistics had been analyzed the researcher evaluated the success of the results. The researcher was able to do this analysis by determining how well the results fit the researcher's constraints of a representation of a correlation between success and wrestling. The data collected by the researcher was determined to be valid because of the diverse range of people and ages that the researcher received data from. Also, the information came from those who are involved in the sport of wrestling, and therefore these participants had the most reliable knowledge on the sports effects because of their personal experience with wrestling.

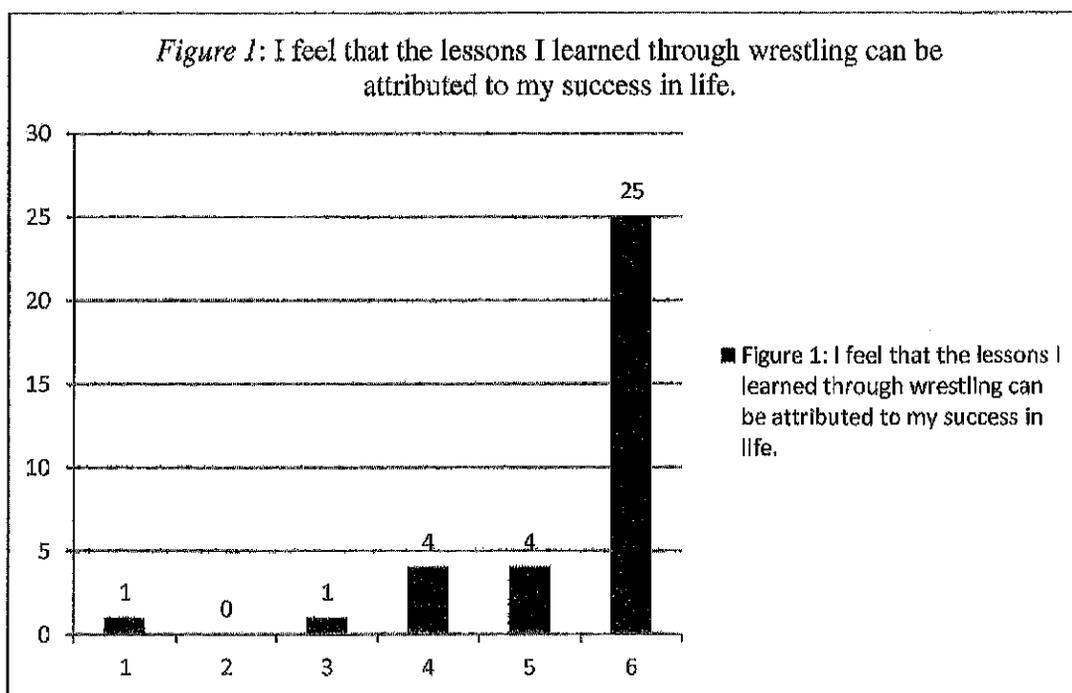
### **Conclusion**

After collecting the data the researcher believes that the data will show a positive correlation between wrestling and future success in life. These conclusions will lead to an examination of the governing question which asks whether there is a correlation between wrestling and success. If a correlation is shown the researcher's beliefs will have been confirmed and the thesis project will have been a success. Once the thesis project has been completed, whether or not the researcher's beliefs are validated, the current knowledge on the

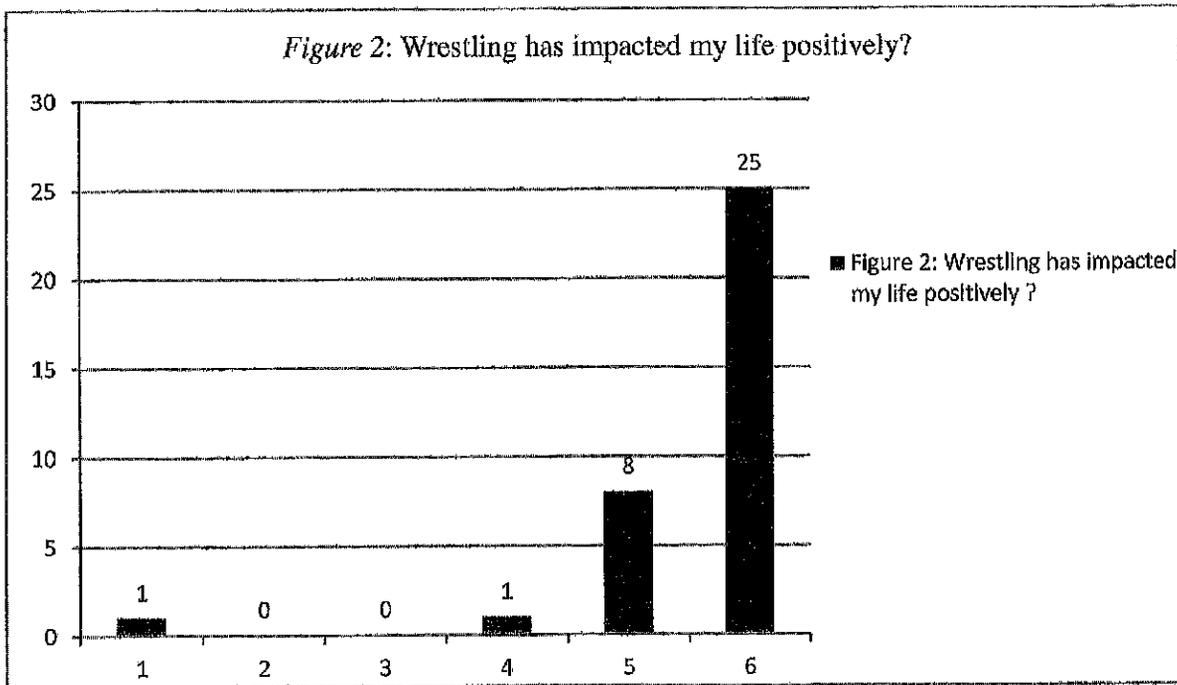
topic will have been expanded and the sport of wrestling will receive a greater amount of attention from the public eye.

### Chapter IV: Findings

In this chapter the results of the researcher's study on wrestling's correlation with future success will be presented. The results were collected through survey responses which were both qualitative and quantitative. Surveys were completed by people with a background in wrestling; some of the major sample groups include former Clemson University wrestlers, high school wrestlers, and various wrestling coaches from the High School level to the collegiate level.



*Figure 1* presents the survey findings of the first question, "I feel that the lessons I learned through wrestling can be attributed to my success in life". This figure shows a low percentage of responses at the one-through three answer choices but, increases drastically around the five to six response sections. Choice six accounts for 71.4% of the 35 responses to the first question, and the average rating is 5.43.



*Figure 2* presents the findings from question two of the survey, “Wrestling has impacted my life positively”. All of the results tend to gravitate towards the right side again between the numbers five and six. Answer choice number six was chosen the most regularly and in total answer choice six was selected 25 times. The average rating of the answers was 5.57.

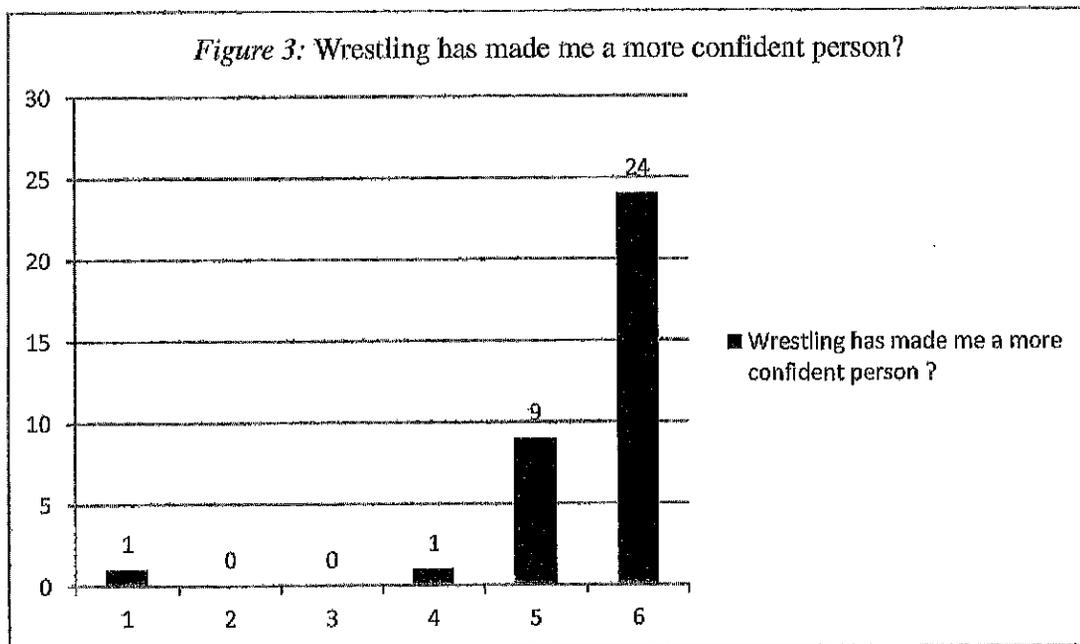


Figure 3 presents the results from question three of the survey, "Wrestling has made me a more confident person". The chart displays a large skew to the left, indicating lower percentages in the one through four area while higher percentages in the five and six areas. The average rating for this question is 5.54.

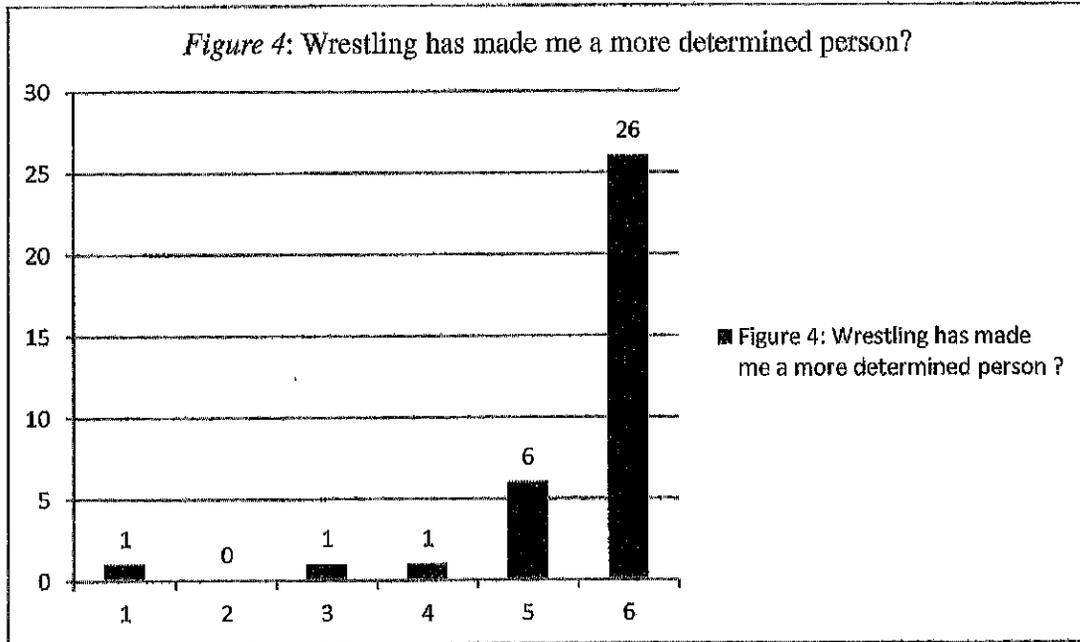
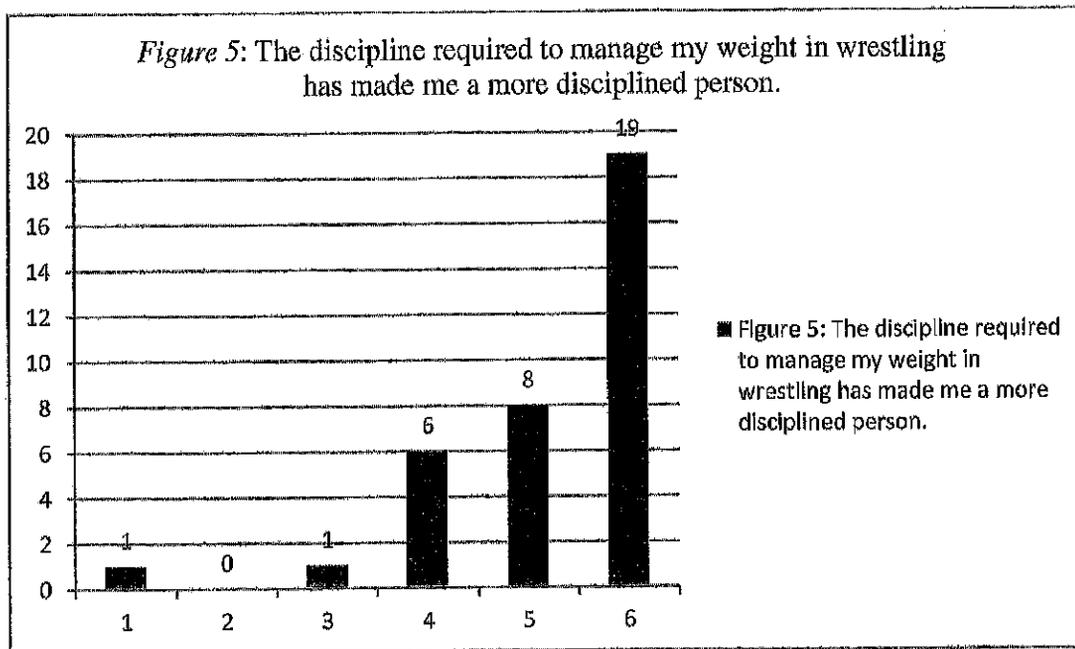


Figure 4 presents the findings from question four of the survey, "Wrestling has made me a more determined person". The chart portrays the results as skewed left with the greater percentages of scores to the right. The rating average for question number four is 5.54.



*Figure 5* presents the findings from question number five, "The discipline required to manage my weight in wrestling has made me a more disciplined person". The distribution of these findings is much more widespread than they were in the previous charts, one can especially see a change in the 4-5 area which both increased drastically. Not all wrestlers choose to or are required to lose weight in order to compete, thus it is expected that some would feel less of an impact of this experience on their personal discipline than others who did take part in cutting weight. This increase in the four and five answer choices causes a significant decrease in the numbers for answer choice number six, while six usually had 24-25 responses while for this question it was only chosen 19 times. Due to the greater spread of answer choices the rating average for question five is 5.20.

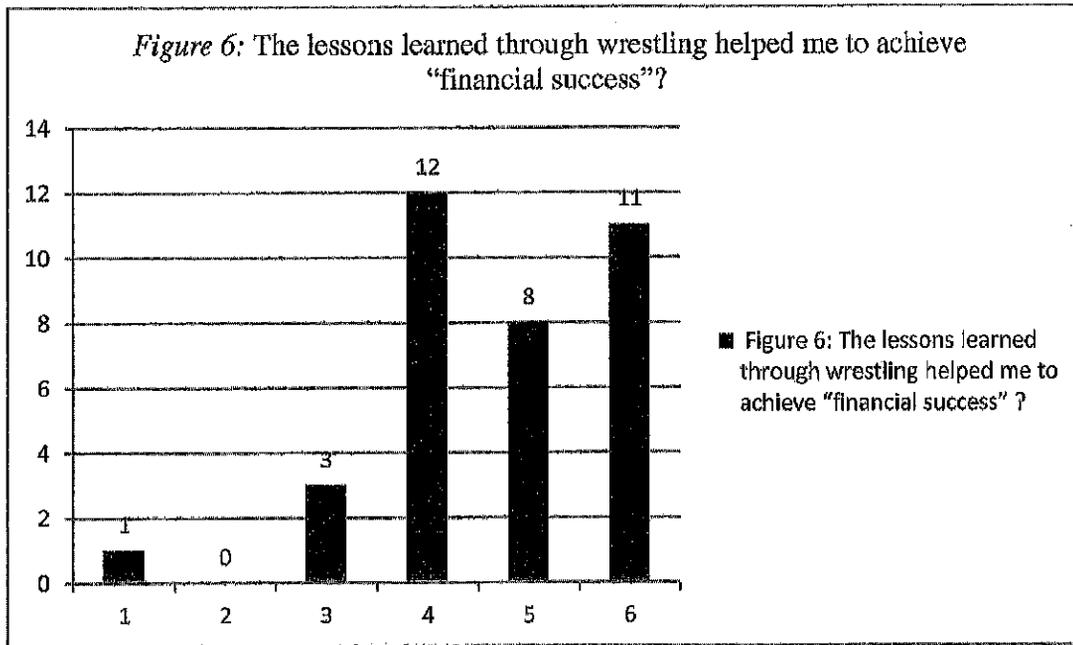


Figure 6 shows the results of survey question number six "The lessons learned through wrestling helped me to achieve "financial success"? The spread of numbers is highly concentrated towards the answer choices four, five, and six which received ratings of twelve, eight, and eleven respectfully. The difference in spread caused the rating average to decrease to 4.69.

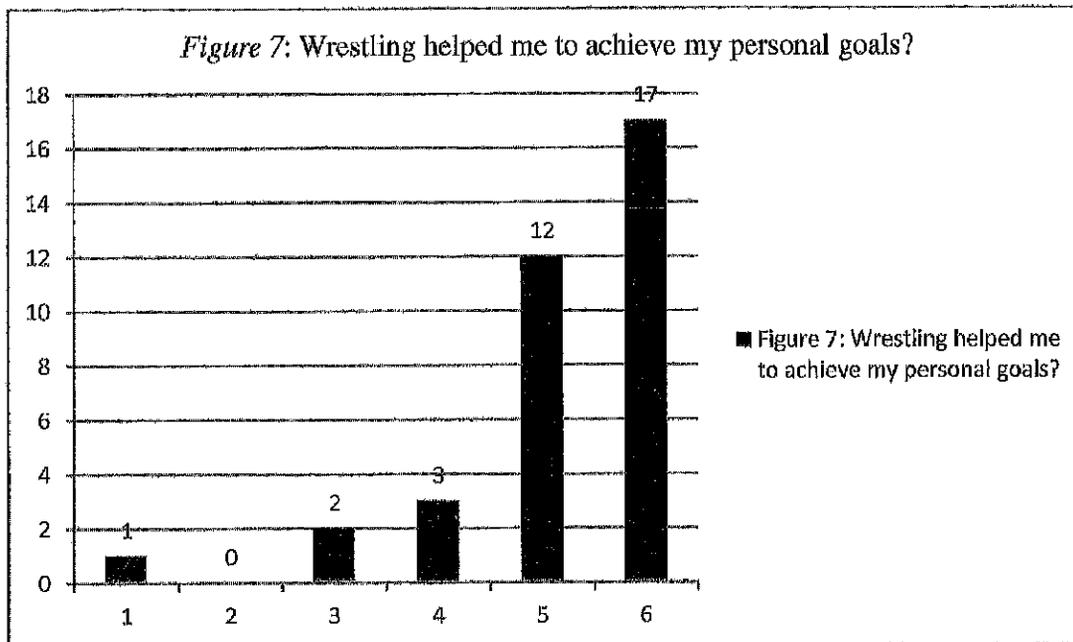


Figure 7 displays the results from question number seven, "Wrestling helped me to achieve my personal goals?" All of the higher results in this chart are concentrated around numbers five and six, while the other half of the graph has such low numbers as zero and one. Due to this alignment of data the rating average for question number seven is 5.17.

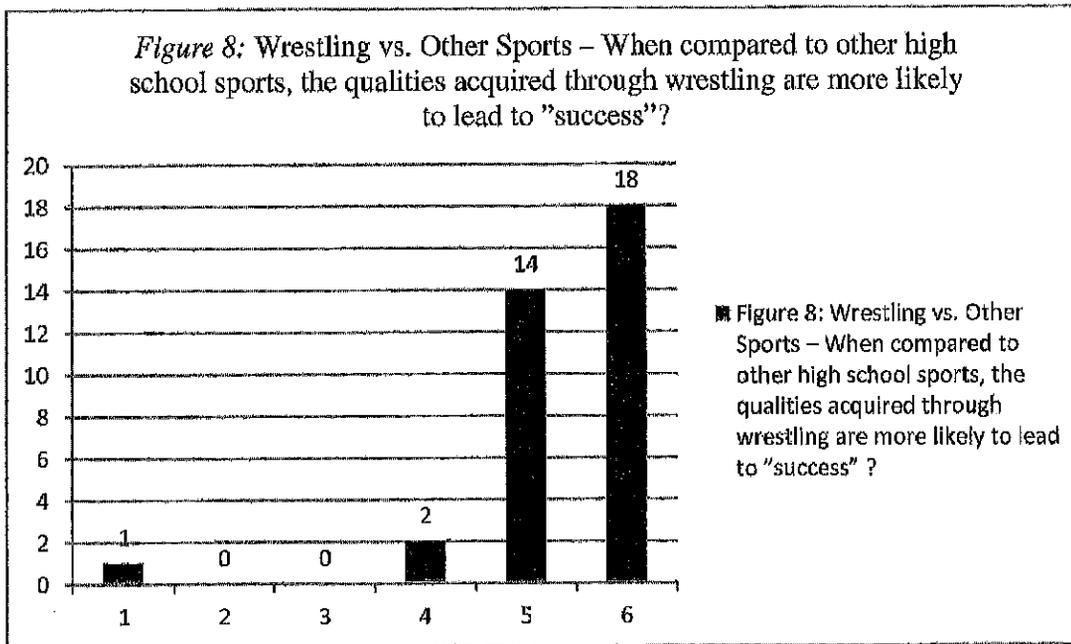
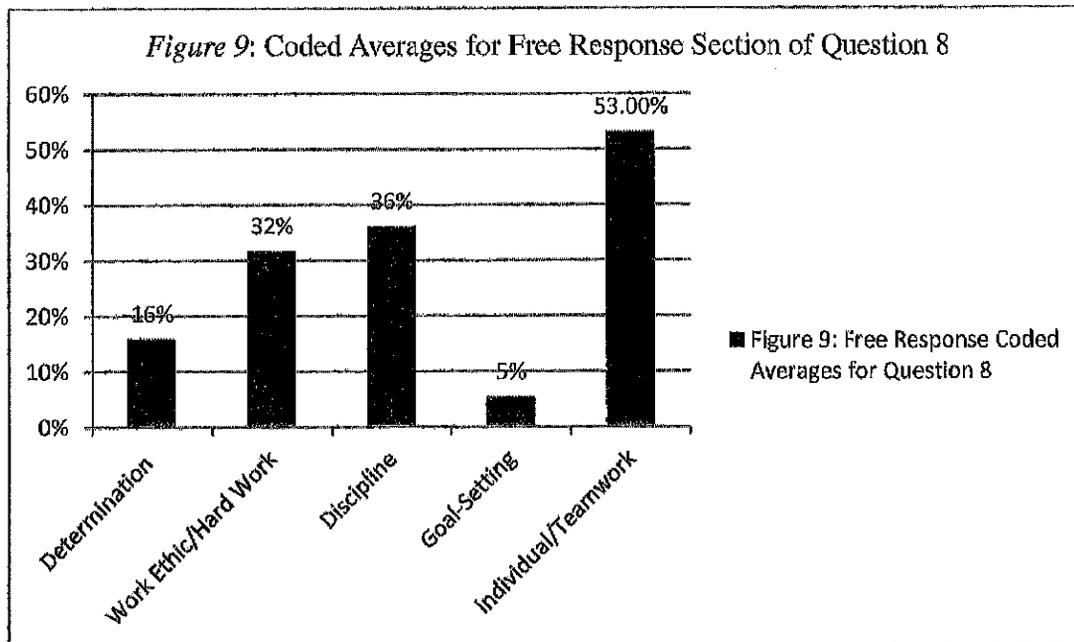
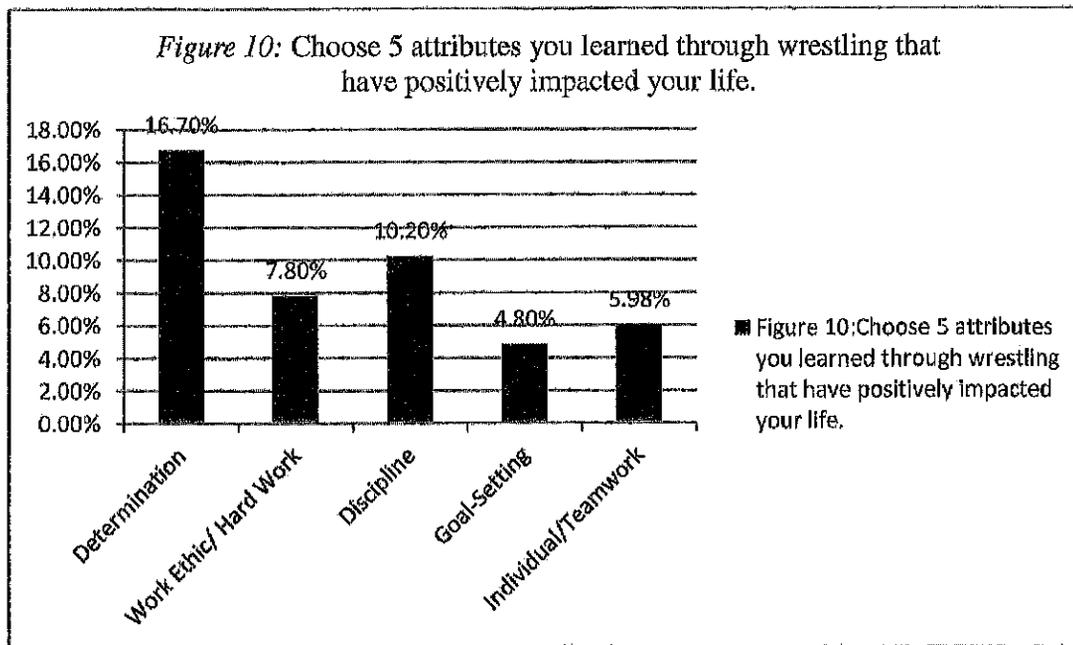


Figure 8 displays the data collected from responses to question number eight, "Wrestling vs. Other Sports – When compared to other high school sports, the qualities acquired through wrestling are more likely to lead to "success"?. This graph has a vast range of scores anywhere from one to eighteen. The rating average for question is 5.34.

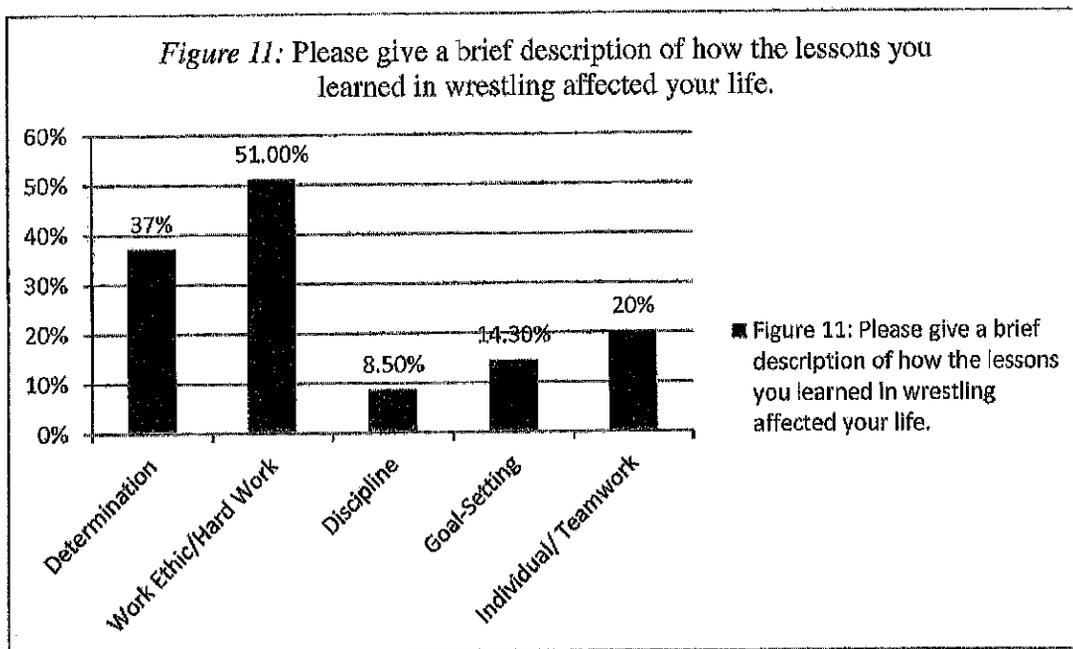


*Figure 9* portrays the coded averages for the free response portion of question number eight.

The free response category was an optional portion of the thesis and therefore only received 19 responses out of the total 35 people who completed the survey. Results from this section were coded for the following words, determination, work ethic/hard work, discipline, goal-setting, and Individual/Teamwork. When one of these terms was seen a tally was recorded and this was done for all 19 responses. The percentages shown above are the number of times each term was mentioned in an answer divided by the total number of responses to this question. The average percentage for this free response portion was 28.4 percent.



*Figure 10* displays the results from the free response survey question number nine. Results from this section were coded for the following words, determination, work ethic/hard work, discipline, goal-setting, and Individual/Teamwork. When one of these terms was seen a tally was recorded and this was done for all 35 of the survey responses to this question. To get the percentages seen above, the number of times each word appeared was divided by the sum of all the responses for this question, which added up to be 167. The average percentage for this question was 9.096 percent.



*Figure 11* portrays the results from question number ten. Results from this section were coded for the following words, determination, work ethic/hard work, discipline, goal-setting, and Individual/Teamwork. When one of these terms was seen a tally was recorded and this was done for all 35 of the survey responses to this question. The average percentage for this question was 26.16 percent.

## **Chapter V: Discussion**

Throughout this thesis paper the researcher has examined a question proposed by many wrestlers, "Does wrestling correlate to future success in life?" With data collected and analyzed the researcher can now interpret these findings and determine the extent to which wrestling correlates to future success.

### **Analysis of Raw Data**

Raw qualitative and quantitative data was collected from the survey responses. This data was transferred into bar graphs which illustrate a consistent trend. The majority of the results for each graph were concentrated around the upper portion of the graph, usually around the four, five, or six survey answer choices for the quantitative data portion of the results. There was not an as obvious trend for the qualitative data. But the qualitative data, which was coded and then put into percentages, also displayed an interesting result, all of the characteristics chosen showed high percentages. In short, these characteristics were included in a large portion of the total free response answers.

### **Limitations**

There were some limitations to the researcher's data. Due to the researcher's survey being completed only by volunteers there was a limit to the number of people who actually opted to do the survey. This reduced the sample size of the researcher's data, and because a majority of the surveys were completed by former wrestlers this was a constraint on the data, because of their bias towards the subject. Results were also limited because the subjects did not vary vastly when it came to race, sex or geographical location. Another limitation was time, because the

researcher only had a certain amount of time to collect the data, the maximum amount of data could not be collected.

### **Implications**

The implications for the survey results are vast for the sport of wrestling. The researcher will break down the implications of each survey question's responses and then make assertions about the implications of the survey results as a whole. In question one of the survey "I feel that the lessons I learned through wrestling can be attributed to my success in life" the answers were highly concentrated around the six (Highly Agree) answer response. More than ninety percent of those who responded to the survey felt that they could attribute their success in life to lessons they learned through wrestling. The implications of the data are that wrestling teaches certain lessons, and these lessons are valuable in the pursuit and the acquisition of success. For example The researcher sent Dan Gable, one of the most famous wrestlers and wrestling coaches ever, the survey and he added a free response to his answer saying wrestling "[gave] me the ability to focus and be able to stay close to detail" (Gable, 2012). Gable's quote shows how wrestling's lessons were a significant factor in his acquisition of success.

Question two of the survey is "Wrestling has impacted my life positively?" Of those who answered the question, 33 people highly agreed with the statement. These results demonstrate that wrestling has a positive impact on life, and those who wrestle feel better off than if they had not. This finding is significant it shows that respondents feel that wrestling does improve the quality of life in the long term.

Question three of the survey is "Wrestling has made me a more confident person?" The results to this question show that those who answered highly agree with this statement, and believe that wrestling has made them a more confident person. Confidence is a reoccurring

quality mentioned when speaking about the qualities needed for success. In Stephen R. Covey's book "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People" he speaks about the habit of proactivity, which entails taking responsibility for your choices and their consequences (Covey, 1989). This notion is exactly how wrestling teaches confidence. To Covey's point, in a wrestling match it is just you and your opponent this breed confidence through accountability. One cannot blame a teammate for their own failure because it is only them and their opponent. Accepting this responsibility creates a confidence which is unlike that of team sports, because you have to be confident in yourself because your defeat is only your fault.

Question four of the survey is "Wrestling has made me a more determined person?" The responses show that a high percentage of respondents agree. This result implies that wrestling makes people more determined, which is a quality that is very necessary to success. Award winning novelist John Irving replied to a letter from the researcher saying, "Your life as a wrestler is spent practicing; you drill the same moves again and again, until they become second nature...Good writing is rewriting" (Irving, 2012) John Irving expresses in this statement how the lesson of determination ingrained in him by wrestling has become very important to his career as a writer. Due to the immense amount of drilling he had to do as a wrestler, he learned how to be a more determined person, and this has helped him with his writing as a writer.

Survey question five is "The discipline required to manage my weight in wrestling has made me a more disciplined person." Again the results indicate a high level of agreement by those who responded. This correlation indicates that those who took part in wrestling believed that through managing their weight, in order to make weight for weigh-ins, they became a more disciplined person. John Irving supported the assertion of wrestling making him a more disciplined person when he said, "Wrestling and writing aren't recreational; they are disciplines"

(Irving, 2012). Here Irving states that wrestling is not something someone can simply do recreationally, it is a discipline and therefore requires one to be dedicated, and to be disciplined in their actions and pursuit of achievement. A recent article in Forbes Magazine stated, "Wrestlers, due to their weight class requirements, have to maintain their focus and drive around the clock for years at a time" (Cooper, 2012, para. 11). This statement shows how discipline is a crucial lesson that all wrestlers must learn in order to maintain their weight, and how its prominence in wrestling ingrains discipline into wrestler's minds, allowing them to carry it over into the workplace.

Survey question six is "The lessons learned through wrestling helped me to achieve "financial success"?" This question did not get as high as a concentration in the five and six answer choice as the others but still showed agreement. The researcher attributes the lowering of scores to be due to the high school wrestlers who filled out the survey. These wrestlers are, on the most part, too young to have obtained financial success, and cannot attribute wrestling to something they have yet to achieve. But the results indicated that wrestling did help to achieve financial success.

Survey question seven is "Wrestling helped me to achieve my personal goals?" Any complete definition of success cannot go without the achievement of personal goals. If one does not succeed in achieving the goals that they set for themselves then how can they possibly ever truly achieve success? The responses to question 7 show that wrestling helps to achieve personal goals, which is necessary to the achievement of success. The responses imply that achieving personal goals is made easier by wrestling and therefore achieving success in its totality is made easier through the act of wrestling. Steve Cooper states in the Forbes article "Why Wrestlers Make the Best Employees" that, "Wrestlers have the capacity to push themselves harder than

most and display an unrivaled mental toughness..." (Cooper, 2012, para. 8). The quote portrays how wrestlers have an advantage in the achieving of their personal goals, because they acquire an amazing work ethic and mental toughness.

Survey question eight is "When compared to other high school sports, the qualities acquired through wrestling are more likely to lead to success?" The responses were overwhelming concentrated around the five and six answer choices. By analyzing the data for question eight it can be implied that the qualities which wrestling teaches are more likely to lead to success than other sports. This means that those who wrestle are given an advantage in the pursuit of success, because of wrestling they learned qualities that are important to the obtaining of success, however one defines it.

The free response portions of the survey, question eight, nine, and ten, all portray the characteristics that wrestling teaches. Each question demonstrated that the characteristics of determination, work ethic, discipline, and goal-setting were used in a high percentage of the responses to these questions. Responses also touched on the individual yet team aspect that is important to wrestling. Wrestlers from all levels from high school to Olympic responded to these questions and all mentioned these qualities as ones they learned in wrestling. The results show that these qualities are ones that are thoroughly ingrained into wrestlers through the act of participating in wrestling at any level, from high school to Olympic.

The data demonstrates a vast amount of positive implications for wrestling. The data indicates that wrestling teaches many beneficial qualities such as discipline, determination, self-confidence, and work ethic. Wrestlers learn these characteristics and in doing so, have a better chance at achieving success. Whether this be financial success, or achieving one's own personal goals wrestling teaches qualities that greatly assist in obtaining success. The data collected

provides evidence that the hypothesis proposed by Dan Gable (as well as many other famous wrestlers), wrestling is correlated to future success in life, is accurate. An individual learns in wrestling to be resilient, confident, a team player as well as an individual, to set goals, to be disciplined, and to fight harder than they ever have in order to achieve their goals. These lessons are what correlates wrestling to future success in life. Wrestlers learn these lessons, and similar to their application in each wrestling match, they apply them to their life goals. This is why there are more Presidents who have wrestled than participated in any other sport, and why wrestlers make the best employees, because they participated in a sport that required them to push themselves harder than they ever have before to succeed, by removing themselves from their comfort zone, achieving success became merely another challenging match (Cooper, 2012). In closing, there is something unique and special about wrestling. That respondents from high school students to award winning novelists to Olympic Champions all took time to express the importance of the sport and the positive way it impacted their lives underscores the notion that there is a strong correlation between wrestling and success. Therefore, as America experiences an economic downturn, it is important that one examines the precursors to success. By understanding the positive impacts that wrestling has on many lives, one can begin to utilize it as a tool to help put others on the road to success.

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Joseph,

I think you should identify the traits that all wrestling champions have. Persistence, discipline and the willingness/capability to win by outworking everyone else is the largest one in my mind. With the last one, as a sport, there is no other that works harder. Sure there are swimmers, football players, basketball dribblers etc. etc. that have athletes who are willing to work hard but they only work harder than the second best athletes in their sport which is human nature. Why kill yourself when you don't have to?

Wrestler's works much harder than those from other sports, and the sport itself outworks the other sports as a whole. Consequently to excel, our champions work harder than those who achieve in the other sports. But what you'll find is our top level athletes and the other sports best of the best, none of them, or very, very few of them do great things outside of their sport. Examples; being a CEO of a Fortune 500 company, becoming a Senator, Ambassador, Astronaut or President. Those who do achieve however come from wrestling and I believe you'll find were average wrestlers with unaverage drive and intelligence. What separates those wrestlers from average basketball players, football, tennis golf etc. is the work ethic. Average wrestlers are forced to work as hard as the best from those other sports. So when it comes to winning in the game of life, a lot of people have intelligence and drive but few can compete with the wrestler when they have to roll their sleeves up and outwork the competition.

Good luck!

Wade Schalles

FYI - People who have wrestled. This might help support your case.

#### PERSONALITIES/COMEDIANS

1. William Baldwin
2. The Late John Belushi
3. The Late James Cagney
4. Tom Cruise
5. Tony Danza
6. Kirk Douglas
7. The Late Chris Farley
8. Al Franken
9. The Late Victor French
10. (TV show Highway to Heaven)
11. PeeWee Herman
12. (Paul Ruebens in HS in Florida)
13. Breck Jamison
14. (formerly of As The World Turns)
15. Harvey Keitel
16. Ashton Kutcher
17. (That 70s Show)

18. Jay Leno
  19. Mario Lopez
  20. Bill Maher
  21. Howie Mandel
  22. Jay Mohr
  23. The Late Nat Pendleton
  24. (1920s Olympic wrestler, 1930s movie actor) Tom Sullivan Mr. T.
  25. (Laurence Turead)
  26. Tab Thacker
  27. Vince Vaughn
  28. Tim Van Patten
  29. Robin Williams
- 

#### U.S. PRESIDENTS

1. Chester Arthur
2. Calvin Coolidge
3. Dwight Eisenhower
4. Ulysses S Grant
5. Andrew Jackson
6. Abraham Lincoln
7. Teddy Roosevelt
8. William Howard Taft
9. Zachary Taylor
10. John Tyler
11. George Washington

#### U.S. SENATE

1. The late John Chafee (former senator RI)
2. Lincoln Chafee (current senator RI)
3. Chuck Hagel (Nebraska)
4. John McCain (Arizona)
5. The Late Paul Wellstone (Minnesota)

#### U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

1. The Late Carl Albert (former Speaker of the House)
2. Dennis Hastert (Illinois - former Speaker of the House)
3. Brad Glass
4. Greg Ganske (Iowa)
5. Jim Leach (Iowa)
6. Jim Nussle (Iowa)

#### SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

1. Donald Rumsfeld
2. Frank Carlucci
3. WHITE HOUSE STAFF

4. Ari Fleischer
5. George Stephanopoulos

#### OTHER POLITICIANS

1. Arne Carlson (former governor of Minnesota)
2. Steven Friedman (chief economic advisor for the current Bush administration)

#### ACTORS/COMEDIANS

1. William Baldwin
2. The Late John Belushi
3. The Late James Cagney
4. Tom Cruise
5. Tony Danza
6. Kirk Douglas
7. The Late Chris Farley
8. Al Franken
9. The Late Victor French (TV show Highway to Heaven)
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16. Bill Maher
17. Howie Mandel
18. Jay Mohr
19. The Late Nat Pendleton (1920s Olympic wrestler, 1930s movie actor)
20. Tom Sullivan
21. Mr. T. (Laurence Turead)
22. Tab Thacker
23. Vince Vaughn
24. Tim Van Patten
25. Robin Williams

#### WRESTLING COMMENTATORS

1. Jeff Blatnick
2. Ken Chertow
3. Dan Gable
4. Jim Gibbons
5. Russ Hellickson
6. Ken Kraft
7. Tim Johnson

### ADVENTURERS

Don Briggs (former University of Northern Iowa assistant coach, now base camp manager at Mt. Everest)

### AMERICAN HEROES

1. Jeremy Glick (aboard United flight 93 that crashed in Pennsylvania on September 11, 2001) Charles Moose (Montgomery County, Maryland Police Chief? led investigation in Washington DC area sniper shootings October 2002)
2. Tommy Norris (Medal of Honor winner for actions in Vietnam)
3. Prisoner of war in Iraq Pfc. Patrick Miller (wrestled in HS in Park City, Kansas)

### TV NEWSCASTERS/PERSONALITIES

Geraldo Rivera

Andy Rooney

### AMERICAN HEROES (who died in service to our country in the 2003 Iraq war)

1. Marine Lance Corporal Brian E. Anderson (wrestled in HS in Durham, NC)
2. Marine Major Jay Thomas Aubin (killed in a British helicopter crash in Kuwait? wrestled in HS in Skowhegen, Maine)
3. Marine Lance Corporal Andrew Aviles (wrestled in HS in Tampa)
4. Marine Lance Corporal Brian Rory Buesing (wrestled in HS in Charlotte County, Florida) Marine Captain Travis Ford (wrestled in HS in Ogalalla, Nebraska)
5. Marine Sgt. Brian McGinnis (wrestled in HS in St. Georges, Delaware)
6. Marine Major Kevin Nave (wrestled in HS in White Lake Township, Mich.)
7. Marine Lance Corporal Patrick O'Day (wrestled in HS at Santa Rosa, California)
8. Sgt. 1st Class Randy Rehn (wrestled in HS in Longmont, Colorado)
9. Marine Corporal Randal Kent Rosaker (wrestled in HS in Alamosa, Colorado)

### ASTRONAUTS/NASA

1. Joe Allen (Astronaut)
2. Michael Collins (Astronaut)
3. Jim Voss (Astronaut)
4. Ronald Dittmore (NASA space shuttle program manager)
5. William Kerslake (NASA scientist)

### MUSICIANS

1. The Late Kurt Cobain (Nirvana)
2. Glen Danzig (wrestled as Glen Anzalone)
3. The Late Shannon Hoon (Blind Melon)
4. Maynard James Keenan (Tool)
5. Ludacris
6. The Late Layne Staley (Alice in Chains)
7. Robin Zander (Cheap Trick)
8. Garth Brooks

### AUTHORS

1. Terry Davis (Vision Quest)
2. John Irving (The World According to Garp)
3. The Late Ken Kesey (One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest)
4. Ron Kovic (Born of the Fourth of July)

### MILITARY LEADERS

1. Denny Benchoff (3-star general)
2. The Late Greg 'Pappy' Boyington
3. General Charles C. Krulak
4. Rear Admiral William J. McDaniel
5. George Patton
6. Al Rushotz
7. Retired Gen. Norman Schwartzkopf

### BUSINESS LEADERS

1. Rocky Aoki (Benihana Restaurants)
2. Scott Beck (Boston Market)
3. James Bigger (Nestle)
4. Ben Bishop (Bethlehem Steel)
5. Dan Cathy (Chick-fil-a)
6. John Filer (Aetna)
7. Stephen Friedman (Goldman Sachs)
8. Robert Hannan (Thrift Drug)
9. Henry Kravis (Kohlberg Kravis Roberts & Co.)
10. James Macalear (SMS Corp.)
11. Ron McGruder (Olive Garden)
12. Art Martori (Production Farm Management)
13. David Pottruck (Charles Schwab)
14. Edward Rust (State Farm)
15. Arthur Rutzen (Wells Fargo)
16. John Vaughan (Alco Standard)

### OLYMPIC ATHLETES IN OTHER SPORTS WHO ONCE WRESTLED

1. Mark Lenzi (Diving)
2. Sugar Ray Leonard (Boxing)
3. Jason Morris (Judo)
4. Jimmy Pedro (Judo)
5. Brian Shimer (Bobsled)
6. Jim Thorpe (Early 20th century decathlete)

### RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION FOUNDER

Joseph Smith (founder, Church of the Latter-Day Saints) (Mormon)

## SCIENCE

Dr. Norman Borlaug (Nobel Prize winner) William Kerslake (NASA scientist)

## PROFESSIONAL ATHLETES (other than NFL)

1. Brett Butler (baseball)
2. Pat Day (horse racing)
3. Kevin Harvick (NASCAR)
4. Larry Holmes (boxing)
5. Glenn Hubbard (baseball)
6. Jeremy Rose (horse racing)
7. Bill Shoemaker (horse racing)
8. Spud Webb (basketball)

## No Holds Barred (UFC/Octagon) competitors:

1. Mark Coleman
2. Randy Couture
3. Kevin Jackson
4. Kevin Randleman
5. Dan Severn
6. Ken Shamrock

## SPORTS BROADCASTING

1. The Late Roone Arledge
2. Jim Lampley
3. Bill Macatee

## SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT (pro rasslers who were amateur wrestlers)

1. Iron Sheik (Khosrow Vazin)
2. Brock Lesnar
3. Earl McCready
4. Randy Orton
5. Nat Pendleton
6. Brad Rheingans
7. Bob Roop
8. Joe Scarpello
9. Ruffy Silverstein
10. The Steiner Brothers
11. The Late Chris Taylor
12. The Late Mr. Wrestling/Tim Woods
13. Kurt Angle
14. Bob Backlund
15. George Bollas
16. Jack Brisco
17. Mike DiBiase

18. Dory Funk
19. Verne Gagne
20. Ray Gunkel
21. Dan Hodge
22. Dick Hutton
23. Bob Roop
24. Joe Scarpello
25. Ricky "The Dragon" Steamboat
26. Rick Flair
27. Terry Gerrin "Rhyno"

## Dan Gable Quotes.....

"Gold medals aren't really made of gold. They're made of sweat, determination, and a hard-to-find alloy called guts".

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"I shoot, I score. He shoots, I score".

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"Once you've wrestled, everything else in life is easy".

---

"Right out of high school I never had the fear of getting beat, which is how most people lose".

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"The 1st period is won by the best technician. The 2nd period is won by the kid in the best shape. The 3rd period is won by the kid with the biggest heart".

Joseph Kilgallen  
6079 Postell Drive  
Ravenel, SC 29470

October 15, 2012

Mr. Dan Gable

Iowa City, Iowa 52240

Dear Mr. Gable:

Good day!

My name is Joseph Kilgallen and I am a senior at Academic Magnet High School in Charleston, South Carolina.

As a requirement of our schools curriculum and graduation requirements, we are required to do a "thesis". I chose to do mine on the, "Correlation between Wrestling and Future Personal Success" due to my personal experience wrestling and also due to your quote, "Once you've wrestled everything else in life is easy".

I have read about you and, of course, seen video, and observed how much the sport of wrestling has been a part of your life and what has meant to you.

I was wondering if you would mind sharing any thoughts you have on my subject by:"

1. Responding to the questions below (I have included a self-addressed envelope)
2. Perhaps calling or emailing me sometime – email address is [jakilgallen@yahoo.com](mailto:jakilgallen@yahoo.com) or phone is 843-609-6461.
3. Completing the survey below.

### Questions

1. Why has wrestling been so important in your life and what attributes developed in wrestling has helped make you a "success"?

Because all the people close to me have been drawn to it. Mostly gives me the ability to focus & be able stay close to detail!

\* plus I don't have all the time really needed to list the many attributes — A book needed —

2. Any suggestions for direction on my thesis (particular readings, suggested other contacts, topics that should be included) if so what would they be?

Forbes Mag. (recently) - had an article on Why Weatherers make the Best Employees - Great Read!!

3. How do you personally define success in its entirety?

still working on it - because as life goes by - things change, become more affluent, & priorities change -

Also here is a link to my survey: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/3LNN7BL>

If you could complete it that would be awesome, it is really simple and takes 2 minutes, you click 1-6, 6 meaning you highly agree 1 meaning you highly disagree, and at the end where there is the free response if you could leave your name in the passage that would be greatly appreciated.

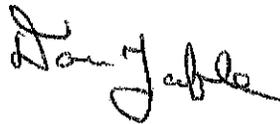
Thanks again Mr. Gable and if you are interested in receiving a copy of my thesis upon completion please advise! Thank you for your time!

Most respectfully,

  
Joseph Kilgallen

Charleston, South Carolina

Thanks For thinking of the sport!



# JOHN IRVING

100 IRVING ST.  
MOUNTAIN VIEW, VERMONT 05751

Joseph Kilgallen  
6079 Postell Dr.  
Ravenel, SC 29470

October 2, 2012

Dear Joseph:

I am John Irving's assistant, Nick Spengler. Mr. Irving is extremely busy writing a new novel and doing publicity for his most recent novel, so he does not have the time to respond to your questions at length. However, after reading your letter, he thought that you might like to see something that he recently wrote about the connection between wrestling and his success as a writer. The following appeared in the magazine *Time Out London* on May 17, 2012:

"I competed as a wrestler for twenty years; I coached the sport until I was forty-seven. Wrestling and writing are very similar to me. There's a lot of repetition, a lot of attention to small details. Your life as a wrestler is spent practicing; you drill the same moves again and again, until they become second nature—you do this often with the same sparring partner. Good writing is rewriting. Wrestling and writing aren't recreational; they are disciplines."

Mr. Irving sends his best wishes for you and your senior thesis.

Sincerely,

Nick Spengler  
Assistant to John Irving

# JOHN IRVING

P.O. BOX 757

DOVERNET, VERMONT 05251

Joseph Kilgallen  
6079 Postell Dr.  
Ravenel, SC 29470

December 3, 2012

Look, Joseph:

My assistant, Nick, showed me your recent letter, your wrestling-based persistence. I think Nick sent you a pretty good synopsis of what I always say about wrestling and its influence on my writing. There is also a YouTube clip of an advertisement I made for the NCAA Div. I Wrestling Championships a couple of years ago; it's a good video. I'm sure you can find it. And then there's my brief autobiography, "The Imaginary Girlfriend," which is published by itself and in some editions of the collection called "Trying to Save Piggy Sneed." I'm sure there are many other interviews you can find with me online in which the wrestling subject is raised—again and again.

I am persistent, too, Joseph—about not wasting my time, mainly. I got a lot of discipline from wrestling, and I have applied that to my writing habits, and to my eating and drinking habits, and to the way I live my life. I don't do phone calls with strangers; I avoid every interview I can. Your questions are overly familiar to me, and the second one—how I would define success—doesn't interest me at all. I didn't choose to become a writer or a wrestler because of success. I loved wrestling; I was an okay wrestler but I would have loved it if I had been terrible at it. I am a better writer than I was a wrestler, but I would have been a writer if I had been terrible at that, too.

I coached wrestling until I was 47. I was very technical as a coach; I am very technical as a writer. I don't take 5 minutes of my time to do anything that doesn't help my writing or my family: that is also persistent; it is a kind of tunnel vision I learned from wrestling and from other wrestlers.

For more than 20 years, I have been trying to make a feature film about the life of Dan Gable, whom I first knew in Iowa in '72; we've been friends ever since. It is not easy to get a feature film made about Gable or wrestling; wrestling is not a popular sport, but Gable and I haven't stopped trying.

I can't give you any further information about me and wrestling.

Good luck to you.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'J' followed by a large, stylized 'I' and a comma.



24 Oct 2012

JOSEPH

I WISH YOU ALL THE BEST  
ON YOUR SENIOR YEAR AT  
ACADEMIC MAGNET HIGH SCHOOL.  
I APPRAISE YOUR "THESIS" TOPIC  
AND FAMILY BELIEVE THAT SPORTS  
(WRESTLING) CAN TEACH VALUABLE  
LESSONS IN LIFE.

FOR ME, SUCCESS IN LIFE, IS  
DEFINED BY YOUR CHARACTER, NOT  
ACHIEVEMENTS. I HAVE ENCLOSED  
AN ESSAY THAT I WROTE ABOUT  
THE IMPACT OF WRESTLING IN MY  
LIFE AND A LINK TO MY VIDEO  
PRESENTATION. S/F BLEN GORRY

## Gorry BGen Thomas A

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**From:** Gorry BGen Thomas A  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 24, 2012 8:19 AM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** SURVEY  
**Signed By:** [REDACTED]

Dear Mr. Kiligallen:

In response to your letter, please open the subject link, then click the Impact and Legacy Summit button, then scroll until you come to my picture and video. The survey questions can best be answered through this short video. Please let me know if this works for the project.

My Aide is on the cc-line and can help you access the video if you need help. It was a pleasure meeting you, and I thoroughly enjoyed the Clemson Military Appreciation Game this past Saturday. Semper Fi, BGen Gorry

<http://www.wrestlingwithlife.com>

Brigadier General Thomas A Gorry  
Commanding General  
Marine Corps Installations - East /  
Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

## THE PARADOX OF WRESTLING

You will not find my name on the Wall of Champions in the wrestling room at the University of North Carolina; I was neither an Atlantic Coast Conference Champion nor an All-American wrestler. My personal accomplishments were modest: I won about half my matches, placed in a few tournaments, and earned important team points that helped our team win the conference championship my senior season. However, what I gained from my collegiate wrestling experience far-exceeded any of these tangible signs of success—wrestling taught me about myself and life.

Though my wrestling career was brief—two years in high school and four years in college—its lessons have impacted (and will continue to last) a life-time. And these lessons span both my personal and my professional life. My wrestling experience was filled with disappointments, unfulfilled goals and painful memories. At the same time, it was filled with immense pride, sincere respect and deep elation. It was through these positive and negative aspects that the true value of my wrestling experience rests. The intangible qualities of discipline, dedication, devotion, resilience and commitment that emerged during these formative years became the foundation of my life as I grew to appreciate their value in character development.

I fell in love with the sport immediately—upon my first encounter on the MAT. I was coerced into joining my high school wrestling team by the captain of our football team, but I was hooked by the fierce competition and extreme demands associated with this individual and team sport. It was a sport I tried desperately to master, as I took each loss personally, a sign of letting myself and my teammates down. Preparation for each match became as essential as the match itself, as I completely dedicated myself to the physical and mental challenges of this intense sport. I enthusiastically strove to continually improve my performance enhancing both my understanding of the sport and more importantly myself. I became aware of my strengths and weaknesses, and adopted a wrestling style that tried to maximize the former and compensate for the later. I vouched to always be in better shape than my opponent and to never quit regardless of the circumstances. I defined winning not only on the outcome of the contest but also in terms of my effort and attitude.

My membership on and contribution to the wrestling team was another aspect to my personal development and experience. Winning matches was not the only way to contribute to the team; rather, I tried to provide leadership through my hard work, perseverance and determination, and set a positive example in the face of adversity. As a non-scholarship athlete, I thoroughly appreciated and sought to make the most out of the chance to compete on a high caliber team. I was fully committed to the team and my teammates. In response, I

received a sense of belonging and earned enduring friendships that were forged through shared hardships.

Upon graduation from the University of North Carolina, I pursued a professional career in an organization founded on these same personal qualities and character traits: the United States Marines Corps. From the moment I entered military service in this legendary organization, I was expected to adhere to its core values of *Honor, Courage and Commitment*, and live by its motto of **Semper Fidelis** (Always Faithful). I chose a career that would challenge me mentally and physically, and pursued it with the same dogged determination and commitment that I had my wrestling career. I strove to be the best Marine Corps officer that I could possibly be, always mindful of my reputation, position and presence. I confronted challenges head-on, never compromising my personal integrity, moral standards or code of conduct. My reward has been advancement to assignments of increasing responsibility and acceptance in an organization imbued with a chivalrous culture and warrior spirit.

My personal life mirrors my professional career in regards to my devotion, commitment and dedication. I cherish my family and am blessed to have a loving and supportive wife and four terrific children. I remain true to my wedding vows and committed to my paternal responsibilities.

The character values that I learned through wrestling define my approach to life. They provided a framework for my personal conduct and standards of behavior, and instilled a sense of honor, integrity and fidelity in me that underscores my existence. I treasure my wrestling experience; it enabled me to develop the mental toughness, character and resilience to overcome life's demands and achieve a level of success personally and professionally.

Signed//Thomas A. Gorry, Brigadier General, United States Marine Corps