

Wrestling with Humility

Modesty. Humbleness. A lack of vanity. These are common interpretations of the word *Humility*. Many claim that humility is sorely lacking in our increasingly neurotic society. My view asserts that it is one of the most significant attributes to be gained from the sport of wrestling. I have been a wrestler and a coach for over 20 years. In that time I have come to recognize three types of wrestlers that each exhibit a unique type of humility. Here they are.

The Seekers

This type of wrestler wants to try a sport, be part of a team, and get involved in something bigger than himself. Perhaps, he tried out for the basketball team and got cut. Maybe, in the past he tried other sports and had a bad coach, teammate, or experience that turned him off, but now once again feels the pull to competition. Or, he has never been involved in athletics and, through some crazy notion, takes the risk of joining a sport for the very first time.

These wrestlers all have something in common. The memory of a past or present humiliation does not deter them. Rather than being the end of their story, it inspires them to forge on and begin a new chapter. They shun sadness and self-pity and recognize there is some athletic potential inside that can be developed into something unexpected. This humility is a gift that will help them discover new opportunities despite hardships.

The Teammates

This type of wrestler knows he isn't the best on the team at his weight class. He has some talent, athletic ability, and passion, but there is always someone else at his weight class that edges him out and claims the varsity spot. However, he is at practice everyday, taking his lumps while enduring the exhausting workouts and mental fatigue.

These wrestlers often form the most enduring bonds with their teammates. Their humility accounts for the champions on any team. These wrestlers provide the constant challenges and refining preparation their fellow teammates need in order to achieve their goals. What better example of generous humility than to toil away to help another attain a glory they will never personally experience?

The Elites

This last type of wrestler has probably been involved in the sport for most of his life. His range of experiences run the gamut from grueling practices, sacrificing meals, and last second defeats to the relief of making weight, scraping out close victories, and standing on the medal podium. He is well acquainted with the satisfaction of having his hand raised.

But, no one really knows about them. They grind away in obscurity, overshadowed by the football players, the basketball team, and other core athletes in the community. It is their rare humility that pushes aside the need for public recognition and fuels a determination to persevere in this relative anonymity. These wrestlers compete with a love for the sport and a vision of inspiring a select few future wrestlers.

My imperfect knowledge of wrestling and the humility it develops has instilled within me a quiet sense of pride. This inextinguishable satisfaction compliments my humility. It provides the single greatest driving force that inspires me to pass on my passion for this ancient sport. Wrestlers, I challenge you to [live out your pride](#) through this [gift of humility](#).