

# Self-transformation

Business



My success as a dancer has been almost entirely based on the teachers and peers that I have had.

Different people that have taught me have influenced my personality and the way that I work. Competition and friendships with the people that surrounded me continuously pushed me through my boundaries and caused different aspects of my dancing to improve, or sometimes, get worse. My personal character developed through the experiences that I had with other people. Throughout an individual's life, his or her personality and morals change constantly, and the way he or she acts is influenced by the people and events around him or her. Mark Schultz, a famous wrestler, wrote in his book, *Foxcatcher*, about the events of his life that lead to his brother's murder.

Although the book was primarily focused on this tragedy, throughout the book, Schultz writes about all of the different people that he had worked with over the years. Dave Schultz (Mark's brother), Chris Horpel, Hideyuki Nagashima, and John du Pont were among the most influential in Mark's life. Mark's success as a wrestler and an individual in general were directly formed from his competitors and mentors. Since the very beginning of Mark's wrestling history, his brother, Dave Schultz, was right beside Mark, pushing him to become better. In addition to this, Dave was seen as the better wrestler according to the public for most of his life, which caused Mark to work extremely hard to live up to his brother's legacy.

As Mark remembered his past, he also recounted the relationship that he had with his brother. He states, " Dave protected me, he set an example for me,

and he suffered alongside me.” (7) Mark looked back upon the things that Dave taught him, and said, “ That’s another thing I learned from Dave – take your losses hard.” (77) Mark clearly looked up to his brother and was therefore quick to change his personality so that he was similar to his older sibling. He was constantly seeking advice from Dave and was encouraged to improve himself in order to impress Dave. However, it was not just Mark’s personality that changed.

Mark also learned many of his wrestling techniques from his brother, who was known as a wrestling prodigy. While Mark was training with his brother he recalled, “ Dave would take me down what seemed like fifty times a day, and I’d never take him down.” (61) Mark also reflected on a move that his brother invented and stated, “ For months afterward, I would ask Dave to get me in that headlock again.” (92) Mark constantly attempted to absorb his brother’s techniques in order to become a better wrestler. He studied Dave’s moves and practiced wrestling Dave at any time that he could.

Having Dave in his life caused Mark to be a successful wrestler and a better person. Although Dave influenced Mark as a competitor, during this time period, Mark was being changed under the training of Chris Horpel. He worked with Horpel at several times throughout his life, and gained a new skill each time they collaborated. Mark talked about when he was training with Horpel and was offended because, “ Chris made some remark that ended with his calling me a has-been.” (127) This caused Mark to develop an unstoppable work ethic that pushed him through many difficult situations that he would face later in his career.

It helped him to develop a tough skin that would set him above his other competitors. Chris berated Mark constantly, and Mark mentioned, “ Finally, Chris Horpel could no longer remind me that my brother was a world champ and I wasn’t.” (155) Mark became angry over statements like these, and was pressured to study his brother’s wrestling techniques even closer than he had before. His wrestling ability continued to flourish while being compared to his brother. Mark reflected on his experiences with Chris, which varied from extremely friendly encounters to harsh fights. He made the statement, “ There hasn’t been anyone in my life who has helped me and hurt me as much as Chris did.

” (158) Mark recognized the fact that people are easily influenced by others. This made him more self-aware of his actions as well as changing the way he perceived others. He could now see that individuals sometimes would be a beneficial and detrimental force, which would help him deal with later problematic mentors. Chris Horpel prompted a change in Mark’s personality and choices, which were then enforced by Hideyuki Nagashima. Mark faced Nagashima in the 1984 Los Angeles Summer Olympics.

He won this match and became an Olympic gold medalist. Before he went on, Mark considered Nagashima as an opponent; “ I had watched him in one match and honestly, wasn’t impressed.” (144) During the match, Mark stated, “ Nagashima put me in a tough spot only once, when he attempted a headlock that slipped off.” (145) In the aftermath, Mark reflected on why it had been so easy for him to win the match. He said, “ And on our sport’s biggest stage, carrying the overbearing burdens of the expectations of the once-every-four-years US wrestling audience, I had kept the lousy Mark

Schultz from popping up from wherever he had been showing himself without warning.” (147) Throughout this entire event, Mark’s confidence in his abilities was rising.

He kept himself positive and focused, and was therefore set up for victory before he even set foot onto the mat. This technique that he learned helped him immensely because it taught him that even if he were to go up against a difficult opponent, he still has a chance of winning. Facing Nagashima set the example for Mark that would stay with him for the rest of his career.

Learning how to be confident and strong benefitted his wrestling skills as well as his character. Mark’s showdown with Nagashima taught him a valuable life lesson that he used while working for John du Pont.

Mark did not have a positive relationship with du Pont. In fact, Mark resented du Pont as he worked for him, well before he murdered Mark’s brother. Mark described du Pont in a resentful way; “ John du Pont became rich simply by being born.” (49) Although Mark was jealous of du Pont’s lifestyle, he accepted John even though he knew that there was something wrong about him. The techniques that Mark had used throughout his entire life to see the best in people were being reinforced because he had not been proven wrong by anyone before. Mark talked more about John and said, “ Du Pont and guns were a dangerous combination long before the months leading up to when he murdered Dave.

” (56) Mark used his intuition to realize that du Pont was not a sane person. Therefore, he used caution around John in order to preserve his mental state. Mark soon began to analyze John’s characteristics, and stated, “ John wanted

to be the head coach, but he didn't want to have to do all the head coach's work." (186) Mark became an extremely good judge of character through his prior experiences. This helped him throughout his entire life, even after his wrestling career was over.

His relationships and interactions with others were permanently benefited by his ability to see through people. Although du Pont did not directly change Mark's personality, he reinforced the values that Mark had learned earlier in his life, giving Mark reassurance that he was acting the proper way. Mark's success as a wrestler was directly influenced by the people he competed with and the people he was mentored by. In addition to this, his personality traits improved and he developed a better character. Wrestling with his brother Dave made him competitive and strong.

Training under Chris Horpel gave him a thick skin and an relentless drive. These traits were set in stone when Mark faced Hideyuki Nagashima in the 1984 Olympics. Finally, Mark used his skills to stand up to John du Pont and deal with his madness. Although Mark Schultz's tale of wrestling was a proper example of character development, wrestling is not the only sport in which an individual undergoes a change. All sports and most activities shape the people who do them.

The teachers and peers that surround an individual in an activity change them permanently. In my case, the people that I dance with have made me stronger and more competitive. My teachers have given me a strong will and incredible passion. Whether it is wrestling, dancing, or something in

between, an individual will never walk away from their mentors and peers the same person that they were in the beginning.