

A Father's Letter to His Son

Son,

You had a tough time on the mat today and the ride home was pretty quiet. I admit I was very disappointed but I later came to realize that I shouldn't be and that it is all part of the journey you are taking.

When I watch you on the mat I worry that you are doing battle while unprepared and that I have failed in your preparation. As a father that is my greatest fear, that you are unprepared to face the challenges that will come before you. I want you to be prepared for your match, but I've come to realize that it is the matches themselves that, in the long run, win or lose, the things that ARE preparing you.

I think that the greatest benefit from wrestling is learning to face challenges and to demand the most from yourself. You learn to fight when you think there is no more fight left within you. You learn to get up after you've fallen, time and time again. You learn about sacrifice and about pain. You learn to endure and to overcome. This is what I want for you, not because I wrestled, but because these lessons are the true gifts of this sport. So, those losses today were actually part of this gift, and an important part of the journey.

My dream for you is to not just win championships and fill your room with medals. My dream for you is much greater and I hope you get much more from wrestling. I hope you learn to strive for greatness even if you fail in the attempt. I hope you learn to get up one more time when you think you can't get up any longer. I hope you learn to not only face your fears, but to stare them down.

Wrestling isn't about winning. It is about the desire to win. It isn't about success, but rather the determination to succeed. I want you to succeed as a wrestler, not to win state championships, but I want you to be a successful wrestler so you learn to be all that you can. This sport can help teach you that, if you let it. I look forward to the seasons of our future as you go through these lessons and I'll be in your corner for each and every one of them. I love you.

Dad

This is an excerpt from a wrestling book called, "Last Chances" by Allen Takata.