



JIM HARSHAW.net

You Can't Get Pinned When You're on Top

Wrestling with Greatness Podcast

Action Plan Episode #21

with Steven Biondolillo

Steven Biondolillo is the founder and president of Biondolillo Associates. Recognized for coining the term "signature event," Biondolillo is the nation's leading developer of branded, large-scale special-event fundraising programs.

Additionally, Steven has developed what is widely regarded to be the nation's premiere training program in the field of special-event fundraising, and has trained over 13,000 nonprofit staff and volunteers. Since 1984, fundraisers developed by Biondolillo Associates have raised over \$1.2 billion.

Until 1982, Steven was an elite freestyle wrestler and medalist in national and international competition, including the World Maccabiah Games, the Canadian University National Championships, the New York Athletic Club International Tournament and the Quebec Open. He was selected to represent both the United States and Canada in international dual-meet competition. From 1992-1997, Steven served on the coaching staff of Boston College's. In 2013, he was inducted into the National Wrestling Hall of Fame as an "Outstanding American" from Massachusetts. Steven's op-ed pieces on amateur sports and child welfare have appeared in numerous publications, including The Wall Street Journal, Chicago Tribune, Atlanta Constitution, Miami Herald, Boston Herald, Boston Globe, Philadelphia Inquirer, Union Leader, and Amateur Wrestling News, and the second edition of his book, Macaroni and Cheese Manifesto, was published in 2013.

Read Steven's powerful story, *The Gift of Adversity*:

<http://biondolillo.com/team-building/the-gift-of-adversity>

The three gifts of life:

1. You're a gift to the world in that you are just here.
2. The gift of adversity. "Life is a series of challenges that you wrestle with. Your character is shaped by how you deal with each of these."
3. The gift of community. While wrestling is an individual sport, it's your coaches and teammates who help you learn the lessons and develop capabilities and learn to succeed in life.

What lessons have you learned in wrestling that have impacted your life and career?

1. Rigidity: Maybe a kinder word might be discipline but wrestlers tend to stick to a plan and execute despite challenges. A wrestler adheres to a plan for success in a rigid way. No shortcuts.
2. The ability to confront people and challenges: In business, confrontation happens. There are many interactions that aren't pleasant but require the ability to deal with confrontation successfully.
3. Stamina: The ability to stick with something. We're living in a time of instant gratification but this is not how great things are built. They are built with long hard work over many years.

Success habits:

Steven reads something from great or classical literature every day. Here's why. Those writers were "swinging for the fences." They were not writing something that would just last their own lifetime. They were competing with history. They were writing something truly great that would last for centuries. Learning from that type of mindset drives one to be great himself.

Further, you always have time to read a 14-line poem everyday.

Action item for the next 24 hours to get ahead in life:

Take an inventory of your brain. "You become what you think." so we must be mindful of what we think about. If you want that Olympic medal it must be the governing thought in your mind. If it is, then all of the decisions that must be made in the interim will be made as it relates to training and coaches and travel and recovery. What are your governing images in your mind now?

Advice to his 25 year old self:

Get a mentor who can help you both professionally and personally.

Book recommendations:

- [*The Power Broker*](#) by Robert Caro
- [*Finnegan's Wake*](#) by James Joyce
- [*Macaroni and Cheese Manifesto \(2nd Edition\)*](#) by Steven Biondolillo

<http://www.Biondolillo.com>

