

IN THE
CLASSROOM

BY DAVE KOVAR

"I HAVE ALWAYS DONE MY BEST WORK WHEN I'VE BEEN SURROUNDED BY COACHES AND MENTORS THAT HAVE HELPED TO POINT ME IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION AND GUIDED ME THROUGH THE INEVITABLE TURBULENT TIMES."

I Have Done My Best Work When...

Iwould like to think that I'm a relatively intelligent and motivated person, and I'm pretty proud of what my company has been able to accomplish since I first opened my doors back in 1978. With that said, any success that I have had is due to the people in my life.

I have always done my best work when I've been surrounded by coaches and mentors that have helped to point me in the right direction and guided me through the inevitable turbulent times. My parents, of course, would be at the top of my list. They were always (and still are) great role models and confidants.

But there have been many others that have helped me along the way. Here's a list of standouts:

Mrs. Austin. My 6th-grade teacher, who told me I have good comprehension and really pushed me to read more. Her constant encouragement kept me focused on doing my best all school-year long, which really helped prepare me for middle school.

Betty Staley. My high-school class sponsor, who wouldn't settle for mediocrity, kindly demanding more out of me than I had planned on giving. Whenever I would try to hand in a lackluster assignment (which I think was most of the time), she would refuse to accept it. She'd look me in the eye and say, "David, you can do better than this. Try again."

As much as I hated hearing her say that, I knew she was right and, consequently, I would usually rise to the occasion.

Bruce Juchnik. My first martial arts teacher, who saw some potential in me and really pushed me to realize it. Not one for false praise, he rarely gave me positive feedback. So, when he did, I soaked up every word and then pushed myself to do more.

Jhoon Rhee. An amazing martial arts role model, who helped me to see the potential of operating a martial arts school. I had no clue of what was possible with my school until Grandmaster Rhee started showing me the way.

Tim Kovar. My older brother and business partner for 20 years, who kept me on task and helped me point my energy in the right direction. Tim really helped me to see the importance of structure and planning. Without his influence, I would probably still be "wingin' it" most of the time.

Nick Cokinos. The late founder of EFC [Educational Funding Company], who would never settle for anything less than my best and always found a way to get it out of me. He really helped me to see the positive impact that our profession could have on the world.

John Corcoran. The *MASuccess* editor and martial arts author who helped me to craft my writing style and encouraged me to become an author. His ongoing patience and methodical method of critiquing my work really has helped to bring out my best.

Dave Chamberlain. My current business partner and friend, who lives, eats and breathes commitment, hard work and integrity. He really complements my randomness with consistency and strategy. He knows where my strengths are and allows me to dwell there.

My list could go on, but I think you get the idea. So, my questions for you are, "Do you currently have a coach? Do you currently have a mentor? Do you currently answer to someone who demands you to be at your best and keeps you on task?"

If you have to think too long to answer, perhaps it's time to start looking. When you find the right person, the upside will be pretty amazing and your life will change forever. 🙌