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Introduction

“To be successful, the first thing to do is fall in love with your work,” this a quote from Sister Mary Laretta, and a quote that I have heard many times throughout the past four years as I study and prepare myself for a career in public relations. Furthermore, I have always been told that if you love what you do, you will never have to work a day I your life. These two quotes are quotes that I have tried to live by and quotes that I truly believe will help me to be successful in any career.

When deciding who I wanted to conduct my interview with, I knew that I wanted to interview someone who displayed undeniable passion for their career, someone who inspired me to love what I do and to make the world a better place. Although I am not sure I will ever find myself in a similar career, I hope that whichever career I choose, I can approach it the same way that Sarah Wernert approaches her career as a personal trainer, fitness model and NPC figure competitor.

I had the privilege of meeting Sarah Wernert a little over a year ago when Slippery Rock’s Body Building club invited Sarah to come and help myself and fellow competitors with posing before our bodybuilding competition. I was immediately drawn to Sarah’s warmth, kindness and willingness to help. Sarah had a certain energy about her, a positive glow that elated her face as she explained her own fitness journey and how she has been able to help others along the way.

In the months following my bodybuilding competition, just shortly after first meeting each other, Sarah truly saved my life. Prior to competing, I had severe body image issues, and I often resorted to drastic unhealthy methods to try and lose weight and find happiness with my body. However, once I got into bodybuilding, all of that seemed to stop. I had finally found a healthy lifestyle and was happy with my body, that is, until after my first competition. In the

months following my first competition, I found myself spiraling downwards once again, becoming so obsessive with my weight and ultimately falling into a depression. One day, when I could not take it anymore, I picked up the phone and called Sarah, asking for her help. Without hesitation, Sarah spent the next few hours with me, calming me down and ultimately giving me a plan to help me be healthy and most importantly, happy again. I have worked with Sarah ever since, she is my personal trainer, role model and friend.

Sarah's Story

As an overweight child, Sarah's parents started encouraging her to get involved with extracurricular activities such as cheerleading and basketball. Furthering her love for sports, Sarah then went on to play college volleyball and other intramural sports at California University of Pennsylvania. After graduating college and while working at a local gym, Sarah began to miss the life of athleticism and competing, and that is when her boss recommended she try bodybuilding competitions.

“At that point, I wasn't sure I wanted to put on a bikini and heels to show how athletic I was,” Wernert said.

After the initial success of competing in the NPC Bodybuilding division, Sarah began training clients at the young age of twenty while working at the gym. Although Sarah never imaged life as a fitness model and personal trainer, she admits that it was something that just kept evolving.

“I never set out to be a fitness model, never had an agency, I never really looked for work. One good thing happened after another for me. The same is true now with my business. I was training clients at a gym, ladies admired my physique and wanted my help,” Wernert explained.

Currently, Sarah has been personal training for thirteen years and has trained hundreds of clients through various programs such as personal training sessions, online training, nutritional guidance, competitor coaching, competitor posing, contest preparation work and Female Intensive Training (F.I.T.) camps which Sarah conducts approximately once every six weeks.

Although Sarah is best known for both her personal and professional fitness career, she also works full-time with the postal service. Something that has always inspired me about Sarah is how she is able to balance both that full time job and with the full time job of personal training. Despite her overloaded schedule, Sarah always gives each client 110% and approaches everyday with contagious enthusiasm and passion. Although I have had the privilege of getting to know Sarah over the past year, I have always wondered how she was able to manage both aspects of her life so well. It is inspiring to me to see her put so much energy, time and heart into both of her careers. Sarah accredits her success with both professions to a balanced schedule, and by learning to not spread herself too thin.

“It has definitely been an evolution. It is sometimes difficult, especially when I have multiple women who want trained,” Wernert said, “I also have to consider my own training days, it is important to practice what I preach.”

With Sarah’s busy schedule, she admits that although online training is more time efficient, her heart truly lies with personal training, because she enjoys getting to know her clients and seeing their results.

Client Relations

Due to the nature of Sarah's career, I was genuinely interested in how she handles her client relations. As a future public relations professional, the relationships that I have or am able to build will be the key to my success or the reason for the demise of my career.

Sarah explained that some of her biggest challenges that she faces with personal training is trying to remember not to take it too personal, which is hard for someone like Sarah who truly invests her heart and soul to her work. When a client is unhappy, Sarah explains that is really is a challenge for her to let it go, and not let it affect or discourage her. Although Sarah said she always encourages her clients to stick to the original plan and the results will come, if the clients are unable to stick to the plan, Sarah tries to find them a different route to help them be successful. Despite her efforts, Sarah admits that a few clients will inevitably be unhappy with her services, and at that point, Sarah tries not to let that affect her or her next client.

“When something like that happens, it makes me not want to help people, It makes me just want to train myself because it is personal. However, I have realized that I cannot please everyone all the time. I cannot let it affect me and not give as much to the next client just because one client was unhappy,” Wernert said.

On the contrary, Sarah does her best to make her clients feel appreciated and rewards her clients when they are successful through small tokens of her appreciation such as small gifts like gift cards, fitness shirts and various health products. Sarah explained that these items are simply a little token of her appreciation for the fact that her clients are in her life.

“They make my life better too; it is not always me helping them. I enjoy having their feedback and most of my clients become very good friends of mine,” Wernert elucidated.

Conclusion

Above all, Sarah explains that the real accomplishment she has in life is being able to help people. What most fail to realize, Sarah explained, is that good personal trainers become fitness counselors. Personal training is more than people needing to lose weight, a lot of times there are deeper issues involved, and people need someone to talk to, to express their feelings to. Sarah ended the interview by explaining that her true passion in life is helping people, and I can personally testify to the fact that Sarah's training and counseling does save lives, one of which was my own.

As my career in public relations begins, I hope to carry the passion and happiness that Sarah has instilled in me and so many others. Her dedication to her clients and this lifestyle has genuinely inspired me and I am forever grateful for the life lessons she has taught me throughout the past year. Sarah Wernert has shown me the type of woman and professional I aspire to be.