

**A STUDY OF PERCEPTIONS OF FENCING**

**BY EXPERTS, FENCERS, & PARENTS**

**REGARDING THE CORRELATION OF**

**FENCING TRAINING AND**

**ATTAINING THE QUALITIES OF SUCCESS**

by **DAN BERLINER**

**To all who lent a hand, thank you.**

To all of the experts who took the time to fill out and return the Elite Fencing Survey, it would not have happened, had you not given me your honest and thoughtful answers.

To all of the parents who were willing to assess their children, for better or for worse, may your children continue to grow and mature and be successful in all their endeavors.

To all of the recreational — youth fencers who took long hard looks at themselves and recognized change in themselves for good or bad, may you always be able to look into the mirror and see yourself, who you are now and who you may become.

A special thanks to Dr. Marvin Fine for his knowledge of scientific procedure, his ability to help me find my way when I was lost in the project, and of course, for his friendship and support, through to the end.

Lastly, thanks to my Dad, who toiled the long hours with me and kept me rewriting until I did it right.

Sincerely,

Dan Berliner

**“suc-cess”** — a process of the way one conducts their life, embodying attitudes and beliefs about oneself, their life pursuits and their ways of relating to others.

-DB, MB, MF

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## Preface

When Dan took on this Thesis Project I felt it was an endeavor beyond the ability of an eighth grade student to fathom, let alone actually complete, and I was not shy in voicing my opinion to him in this regard. Dan was unwavering in his desire to undertake the work, and he drafted the Elite Fencing Survey. Enlisting the aid of his many friends within the upper echelons of the fencing community, he asked, pleaded, cajoled, and badgered each and every one of them until many of them bent to his will and completed this Survey. Done! Surveys completed and Dan was ready to write. NO, not quite, not even close. Through many discussions with me and others, he came to the realization that he had just broken the ice.

Sure, he had lots of information saying his thesis statement was valid, but he had no actual information that showed that even though the thesis statement was valid, would it prove true when put to the test of live subjects. From this need to validate, came Part 2 of “the Project”, the Parent Fencing Survey.

Once again, he hit the fencing community for help. This time Dan pleaded with the parents of almost every fencer that he could get to listen, and to his delight, got many of them to complete the Parent Fencing Survey. He got the answers he knew he would, and positive backup to the Elite Fencing survey, but still more was needed, and his next child, the Recreational – Youth Fencing Survey was born.

For this survey, Dan not only hit up youth and adult recreational fencers who could actually read to answer the survey, he got the parents and anyone who could read, to ask the young ones the questions and explain the words so they too could assess themselves for Dan’s selfish needs, and his final paper. Once again, the information came in and it supported the original positive ideal. Great!!

A mountain of positive information was now on the table in front of him and also the biggest problem of all; how do I make anything useful from this pile of stuff? So he correlated information, and then....writer’s block, nothing useful coming out.

After quite a few days, weeks, and more of no real progress in putting the correlated information into any useful perspective, let alone into a thesis, a dear friend and psychology professor, and a fencer to boot, came to his aid.

After looking over the information he told Dan the following. The information was not collected properly, the proper protocol was not followed, and too much of the information was ambiguous, and unclear. Wonderful! Dan was not overwhelmed with this new input, and I stepped in.

Speaking out of school and out of my depth, the Professor, Dan and I began the hard work of pulling the useful information out of the sea of data. Over the course of many hours, as Dan and I looked on, shocked, the Professor trashed and threw out the bulk of his hard work, again and again saying that question after question and answer after answer was alas, unusable. He mumbled and cursed, and over and over again, chided us over not using proper scientific procedure or standard doctoral protocol and then helped Dan to formulate nine pertinent research questions, diamonds in the rough, and they would become the basis for his thesis. The Professor then packed Dan up, and sent him home, with a new found lust for completion and the ability to answer the questions.

Through a lot of thought, and arguments with me about properly and clearly written answers, he did, in fact, answer them all. GREAT! Now what? And back to the professor he went.

Of course the Professor again reminded Dan that this was by no means acceptable as a college thesis, and proceeded to tell Dan how to put it together and finish, and he did, quite nicely, I might add. On the pages that follow is, what this father thinks, a great work. Diligently completed and successfully proving what Dan always knew to be true, that fencing DOES promote and teach the qualities of successful people.

Congratulations Dan. Cheers, to a job well done.

With love,

Dad

## Introduction

“Fencing - An elegant, prestigious and traditional sport which reflects the success qualities that are important to contemporary people who seek a challenge to both body and mind through a competitive blend of patience and determination, discipline and competitiveness. Part of a Healthy Lifestyle / Exercise for the Mind and Body” (Canadian Fencing Federation credo)

## THESIS STATEMENT

**“Training as a fencer teaches a person a number of characteristics associated with the qualities of successful people.”**

Success, what is it? Is success the attainment of wealth, position and power, honors, or the like?<sup>1</sup> Is it the favorable or prosperous termination of attempts or endeavors?<sup>2</sup> Or is it being happy in your life, having fun and doing what you want? Could the word success be indefinable? Maybe it just depends on what you consider to be successful. Essentially, success is in the eye of the beholder. Or could it have a different definition for each obstacle that a person needs to overcome in every day life. It could be any one, or all of these things.

This thesis will attempt to prove that the qualities we use to be successful in fencing are the same as in life. You need to be honorable, dedicated, persevering, intelligent, and able to think on your feet. In

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<sup>1</sup> Webster’s Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language – pg 1419

<sup>2</sup> ibid

fencing you need to use a blend of all these things at once to become a successful fencer, as these qualities are imperative at all times on the fencing strip. In life, these aspects apply in business, schoolwork, and day-to-day life, and will help you to achieve greater success in all of them. This information will be collected, and correlated from all levels and aspects of the fencing world. High level coaches, elite athletes (former and current), high level officials, competitive and recreational fencers (adult and youth), and the parents of youth fencers will be polled. All of the necessary information regarding this study will be revealed through surveys designed to extract the needed data from each of the different types of people surveyed. The coaches, officials, and elite athletes will all work off of one survey as will the recreational adult and youth fencers. The parent surveys are designed specifically for them as well.

## History of Fencing

When most American people think of fencing, they think of swashbuckling with Errol Flynn in the 1930's and 40's, or chopping off heads with broadswords as if they were Christopher Lambert in the Highlander movies. They do not think of fencing as a competitive sport. They also do not think of it as being an Olympic sport.

Fencing is a sport of honor, integrity and finesse, using a strong blend of intelligence and physicality. It is the only sport that requires one to have a solid athletic ability and a great strategic mind all at the same time. The sport of fencing could be compared to a physical kind of chess, due to these factors.

The roots of modern fencing belong to the countries of Eastern and Central Europe including Poland, Hungary, Romania, Italy, and France. These were the first countries that really started to grasp and dominate the sport of fencing. Ancient fencing began in Egypt, over 5000 years ago. The Egyptians treated it as a sport, not a hobby. Centuries later, during the European Middle Ages, there was jousting, and sword fighting in a ring. Some of modern fencing has evolved from 16-17<sup>th</sup> century rapier (epee) and dagger sword fighting. The rapier and daggers were not used for sport. They were carried around by the rich, and when two people got into an altercation, they declared a time and a place where they could duel... to first blood. "First blood" means til one of the combatants is bleeding from an attack by their opponent. At that point, honor and the matter at hand were considered settled. The duel was over.

By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, jousting and all other different types of sword fighting for honor was declared illegal by most governments and you could be thrown in jail for assault or manslaughter if you were to joust or duel. Then in the very late 19<sup>th</sup> century, 1896 to be exact, the first Olympics, which included the sport of fencing, took place. The disciplines of fencing that were included in the 1<sup>st</sup> Olympics were Men's Sabre, Men's Epee, and Men's Foil.

By 1924 the sport of Women's Foil Fencing was added to the list of events in the Olympics. It was the first major women's event in the history of swordplay as a sport. By the year 1936, Women's Epee had also become part of the bunch, but with it came a new twist, that changed Epee as they knew it... it became electric, both the men's and women's event. Then in 1956, foil also became electric for the first time in its history. Then finally, in 1988, Sabre fencing became the final one of the disciplines to become electrified. In 1998, Women's Sabre fencing was introduced to the sport in the World Championships.<sup>3</sup> Now in the new millennium, this summer's Olympic Games will announce the sport of Women's Sabre to the list of games to be played in Athens. After this Olympics goes in the record books, every possible fencing discipline will have competed in the Olympic Games. The only discipline that is not included is wheelchair fencing, but it is part of the Special Olympic Games. Wheelchair fencing isn't defined by men or women or age, due to the fact that there are not, as of yet, enough competitors in this sport.

Modern or Olympic style fencing and classical fencing have many differences that set them apart. The term classical fencing means more in the style of when people actually fought with swords, as in duels and battle, for their lives, so to speak. Classical fencers fight in a style that mimics actual battle, in the

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<sup>3</sup> My Coach, Alex Jeffrey, was the Head Coach of the Country, Canada, whose Women's sabreuse, Donna Saworski, Won the Championship!

sense that all action has to relate directly to what would happen if real sharps were used, and also with great technical clarity.

Even Olympic style fencing has changed greatly over the years. Before electric fencing became the standard, five officials were needed to judge a fencing match. A head referee and four corner judges. Due to the amount of scrutiny, all actions had to be much clearer and more precise, mortal or deadly strokes, so to speak, unlike today where the setting off the scoring machine is the standard of receiving a touch. Additionally, with the use of electronically determined touches, the sport got progressively faster.

Most people believe that the object of fencing is to hit the other fencer and that is all. In reality, there is much more than that. It requires a vast understanding of strategy and tactics, due to the fact that you must think 3 to 4 steps ahead of what you are doing as well as know exactly what your opponent is thinking and attempting to do. It is also important to understand that you will need to conserve your energy as best you can, because the farther in the day you get, the opponents will be getting progressively tougher to beat, so if you don't have all your energy it will be a much harder to fight and win against someone as good, if not better than you. And within this arena, there are three different weapons with totally different sets of rules and objectives.

In Foil, the target area is the main torso, no arms, head or legs. Your weapon must be used in a thrusting or stabbing motion, scoring only by depressing the retractable tip of your blade against your opponents valid target area while obeying the rules of attack and defense. It was originally a practice weapon that combined the necessities of how to fight with a sword in both battle and in a duel.

In Epee, the target area is the entire body, including toes and fingertips, everything. This weapon also requires a thrusting or stabbing motion into your opponents valid target area, scoring only by depressing

the retractable tip of your blade against your opponent. The rules of attack and defense are not followed with this weapon. The Epee is the direct descendant of the dueling swords of Europe.

Lastly, we have the Sabre, which broke the mold from both other weapons. With this weapon, instead of being required to stab your opponent, the preferred action is to cut with the supposed sharp edge of the blade across your opponents valid target area which is arms, head and main torso to the break in the hips as if you were sitting on a horse (basically at your waist). Sabre is significantly faster than both Foil and Epee in every way.

In all three weapons, you are required to wear knickers and long socks that cover your entire calf, an underarm protector on your sword (forward) arm, a practice jacket over that, and glove/gauntlet combination on your sword hand. In both Foil and Sabre, due to specific target areas as opposed to the entire body, you must wear a metal jacket called a lamé so only hitting those areas will set off the electronic scoring machine.

The shapes of the weapons handles, guards and blades differ also. The Foil has a 35.43 inch (90 cm) blade and uses a pistol shaped or long thin grip/handle to hold it and the guard is shaped like a small plate or saucer. The Epee is the heaviest of the three, also with a 35.43 inch (90 cm) blade and also uses either a pistol shaped or long thin grip/handle. The guard is shaped like a soup bowl that cups your hand. The Sabre uses a 34.67 inch (88 cm) blade and uses a shorter thicker grip and the guard is shaped like a flattened bell then curved around your hand from blade to back of grip.

For every tournament in every weapon, the method of play is the same. First a preliminary round, called the pool round, consisting of all entered fencers split into equal groups of five to nine people, normally six or seven, every one in each group or pool fencing every other member of that pool to five touches scored

in each match. After that preliminary round, you are ranked or seeded according to how well you fenced in the preliminary round. The following round is called the Direct Elimination round or DE round. In this round, once you lose, your day is over. In these DE matches, each match goes to fifteen touches scored. The method of fencing is the people who did the best fence the people who did the worst; ultimately back to the best fencers facing off for the gold medal.

### Relevancy of Elite Fencing Survey

The Elite Fencing Survey looked at some of the highest possible achievers in the sport of fencing within their respective areas of expertise, and their inputs regarding success qualities from those viewpoints. Elite athletes (including national team), Ivy League College and elite athlete coaches, national and international referees, former Olympians and national team members, experts in the weaponry and machines of fencing, organizers of national and international competition and experts regarding the rules and regulations of the sport were surveyed to this end. From these people, can be gained, the insight of a lifelong involvement in the sport of fencing and the insight of people who have achieved success in their endeavors. These correlations will also be looking at the how people involved in one aspect of fencing can have a totally different opinion from someone involved in another aspect of fencing and both, at the same time can put up a strong and believable argument and both be correct.

# ELITE FENCING SURVEY

**Fencing** - An elegant, prestigious and traditional sport which reflects the success qualities that are important to contemporary people who seek a challenge to both body and mind through an effective blend of patience and determination, discipline and competitiveness.

**Part of a Healthy Lifestyle / Exercise for the Mind and Body**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ YRS FENCING \_\_\_\_\_

ACHIEVEMENTS \_\_\_\_\_

AFFILIATIONS \_\_\_\_\_ CREDENTIALS \_\_\_\_\_

1. DO YOU FIND STUDYING FENCING RELEVANT TO ACHIEVING GOALS IN OTHER ASPECTS OF LIFE?  
YES / NO. PLEASE EXPLAIN.
2. DO YOU FIND THE SKILLS NECESSARY TO BE A SUCCESSFUL Fencer APPLICABLE TO PERSERVERANCE IN LIFE?  
YES / NO. PLEASE EXPLAIN.
3. DO YOU FIND THE TACTICS OF FENCING NECESSARY TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN BUSINESS? YES / NO. PLEASE EXPLAIN.
4. IN YOUR EXPERIENCES IN FENCING, WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE MAKE GOOD FENCERS?  
A.ATHLETIC B.INTELLIGENT C.DEDICATED D.PERSEVERANCE E.ALL OF ABOVE
5. WHAT IS MORE IMPORTANT TO BE A SUCCESSFUL FENCER, THE PHYSICAL ASPECTS OF THE SPORT OR THE MENTAL ASPECTS OR BOTH.  
PLEASE EXPLAIN.
6. WHEN YOU WERE ALL SAID AND DONE WITH YOUR FENCING CAREER, WHAT ASPECT OF THE SPORT WAS MOST TAXING ON YOU, THE PHYSICAL OR MENTAL PART? PLEASE EXPLAIN.
7. WHAT AFFECTS MENTAL FENCING DEVELOPMENT MOST, A GOOD COACH OR NATURAL ABILITY?  
PLEASE EXPLAIN.
8. NAME THE BEST FENCER YOU HAVE EVER SEEN FENCE AND STATE FIVE WORDS THAT BEST DESCRIBE THAT FENCER.

\_\_\_\_\_ 1.\_\_\_\_ 2.\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_ 4.\_\_\_\_ 5.\_\_\_\_

9. NAME THE BEST COACH YOU HAVE EVER MET AND STATE FIVE WORDS THAT BEST DESCRIBE THAT COACH.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1.\_\_\_\_ 2.\_\_\_\_ 3.\_\_\_\_ 4.\_\_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_\_
10. DO YOU NEED TO BE A GOOD FENCER TO BE A GOOD COACH?  
YES / NO. PLEASE EXPLAIN.
11. WHAT ASPECTS OF LIFE ARE APPLICABLE TO FENCING?  
PLEASE EXPLAIN
12. DO OTHER SPORTS REQUIRE THE TYPE OF INTELLIGENCE THAT FENCING DEMANDS?  
YES / NO. PLEASE EXPLAIN
13. WILL FENCING BE ABLE TO CHANGE A PERSONS LIFE OR LIFESTYLE TO SOME DEGREE?  
YES / NO. PLEASE EXPLAIN
14. CAN FENCING DEVELOP SELF-ESTEEM AND CONFIDENCE IN A PERSON?  
YES / NO. PLEASE EXPLAIN
15. DOES THE LENGTH OF THE FENCING SEASON CHANGE THE WAY YOU NEED TO TRAIN?  
YES NO. PLEASE EXPLAIN

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND EFFORT

### Relevancy of the Parent Fencing Survey

The Parent Fencing Survey was given to the parents of children that had been fencing for longer than three months, and mainly children fencing more than six months, with the children being between the ages of six and eighteen years of age. Observations of the changes seen by parents from when their children began fencing until the present will also be observed. Some of the things that will be asked of the parents will be to state how their child has changed with regards to patience, resolve, honor, coordination, social skills, persistence, determination and many other attributes that are important to a well rounded ideal of success. This information will be found through a questionnaire and a word association chart asking the parents to rate the changes observed in their child's behavioral attitudes. This survey hopes to gain an insight on how fencing is able to change children in many more positive ways than would appear to be possible through sport.

# PARENT FENCING SURVEY

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Child(ren) names \_\_\_\_\_

Years Child(ren) fencing \_\_\_\_\_ Number of children fencing \_\_\_\_\_

- 
1. What kind of grades does your child(ren) that fence(S) get in school?
  2. Do you believe fencing has changed any of these grades.  
a. for better    b. for worse    PLEASE EXPLAIN.
  3. Why do you believe fencing has changed your child(rens) grades?  
Please explain.
  4. Did you notice fencing changing your child(ren) in any other ways besides fencing?  
Please explain.
  5. About how long did it take you from when your child(ren) first started to fence until you noticed the changes in your child(ren)?  
Please explain.
  6. State the changes you saw your child(ren) were experiencing do to fencing.  
Please explain.
  7. Were the changes, if any very dramatic or not really noticeable compared to before?  
Please explain.
  8. What were some of the reasons you had your child(ren) start the sport of fencing?  
Please explain.
  9. Did fencing change your child(ren)'s lifestyle more, or just the way they went about doing things?  
Please explain.
  10. Did you notice any changes in your child(ren)'s physical abilities?
-

11. Has (have) your child(ren) ever applied any of the things they have learned in fencing in activities of everyday life?

Please explain.

12. Does your child(ren) play team sports, if so what ones?

13. Do your child(ren) play the team sports competitively or for recreation?

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND EFFORT**

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## PARENT SURVEY SUCCESS QUALITY ATTRIBUTE CHART

	WORSE	SAME	SLIGHTLY BETTER	MODERATELY BETTER	MUCH BETTER
PATIENCE					
DILIGENCE					
GRACE					
POISE					
FOCUS					
PERSEVERANCE					
SPORTSMANSHIP					
PERSISTENCE					
ATHLETICISM					
WORK HABITS					
EFFORT					
ANGER					
ASSERTIVENESS					
MORALS					
ATTENTION SPAN					
ETHICS					
DETERMINATION					
HONOR					
BEHAVIOR					
MOTOR SKILLS					
REACTION TIME					
SOCIAL SKILLS					
COORDINATION					
PERCEPTION					
RESOLVE					
ACCURACY					
ADAPTABILITY					
ADVENTURE					
ADVANCEMENT					
TENACITY					

ACCOMMODATION					
ACCOMPLISHMENT					
ADEPTNESS					
ADEQUACY					
ADVERSITY					
ANGUISH					
AGREEABLENESS					
RESOURCEFULNESS					
RESILIENCY					
VITALITY					
SPONTANEITY					
STEADFASTNESS					
SELF CONFIDENCE					
SELF CONTROL					
SELF SUFFICIENCY					
SELF-ASSUREDNESS					
AGILITY					
QUICK DECISION MAKING					

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND EFFORT**

### **Relevancy of the Recreational-Youth Fencing Survey**

The Recreational-Youth Fencing Survey looked at almost the exact same things that were observed in the Parent Fencing Survey except this survey will ask the fencers themselves what benefits their involvement in fencing has gained for them regarding their overall success qualities in life. It will be looked at from the viewpoint of the fencer's thoughts regarding themselves and how they view the changes they have made since they began fencing. Regarding the children completing the survey, an attempt will be made to gauge the similarities and differences between what the parents have seen in their children as opposed to what the children have seen in themselves. In the Recreational-Youth Fencing Survey, the questionnaire section of the survey, many of the questions are more defined and specific, looking for more detailed answers.

## RECREATIONAL — YOUTH FENCING SURVEY

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ AGE: \_\_\_\_\_

YEARS FENCING: \_\_\_\_\_ WEAPON: \_\_\_\_\_ USFA RATING: \_\_\_\_\_

### SURVEY:

1. What were your average grades before you began fencing?  
a. A'S b. B's c. C's d. A's & B's e. B's & C's f. A's, B's & C's g. B's, C's & D's
2. Have your grades changed since you began fencing? Are they...  
a. the SAME b. BETTER c. WORSE Explain?
3. Have your work habits improved since you began fencing?  
a. YES b. NO Explain?
4. Did you play any other sports before you began fencing?  
a. YES b. NO
5. What type of sports did you play?  
a. INDIVIDUAL b. TEAM
6. Which sports did you play?  
Please list.
7. Did you play these sports  
a. RECREATIONALLY b. COMPETITIVELY
8. Did you play in any organized teams or leagues?  
a. YES b. NO If YES, what sports?  
NOTE: Please mark recreational with "R" and competitive with "C"
9. What were the reasons you began fencing?  
Please Explain.
10. Has fencing changed the way you do at things in your life?  
a. YES b. NO Please Explain.
11. Has fencing changed your perspective on life?  
a. YES b. NO Please Explain.



24. When you are fencing, with a referee and no electric, do you find that others acknowledge being hit, when asked by the referee?

- a. ALWAYS    b. MOSTLY    c. SOMETIMES    d. NEVER    COMMENTS

25. Do you feel HONOR and HONESTY and SPORTSMANSHIP are important in the following examples?

- |             |        |       |
|-------------|--------|-------|
| a. FENCING  | a. YES | b. NO |
| b. LIFE?    | a. YES | b. NO |
| c. SPORTS   | a. YES | b. NO |
| d. SCHOOL   | a. YES | b. NO |
| e. BUSINESS | a. YES | b. NO |
| f. FAMILY   | a. YES | b. NO |
| g. FRIENDS  | a. YES | b. NO |

26. Do you find HONOR, HONESTY and GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP in the people you meet in the following examples?

- |                  |        |       |
|------------------|--------|-------|
| a. FENCING       | a. YES | b. NO |
| b. FAMILY        | a. YES | b. NO |
| c. TEACHERS      | a. YES | b. NO |
| d. COACHES       | a. YES | b. NO |
| e. SCHOOL        | a. YES | b. NO |
| f. FRIENDS       | a. YES | b. NO |
| g. ON THE STREET | a. YES | b. NO |

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND EFFORT

## RECREATIONAL-YOUTH FENCING SUCCESS QUALITY ATTRIBUTE CHART

PLEASE RATE THE FOLLOWING BEHAVIORAL, ITELLECTUAL AND PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES SINCE YOU HAVE BEGUN FENCING. REMEMBER RATE THE CHANGE FROM BEFORE FENCING TO NOW.

	WORSE	SAME	SLIGHTLY BETTER	MODERATELY BETTER	MUCH BETTER
ADAPTABILITY					
ADEPTNESS					
ADEQUACY					
ADVANCEMENT					
ADVENTURE					
AGILITY					
AGREEABLENESS					
ANGER					
ANGUISH					
ASSERTIVENESS					
ATHLETICISM					
ATTENTION SPAN					
BEHVIOR					
COORDINATION					
DETERMINATION					
EFFORT					
EHTICS					
FOCUS					
GRACE					
HONOR					
MORALS					
MOTOR SKILLS					
PATIENCE					
PERCEPTION					
PERSERVERANCE					

POISE					
QUICK DECISION MAKING					
REACTION TIME					
RESILINCY					
RESOLVE					
RESOURCEFULNESS					
SELF ASSUREDNESS					
SELF CONFIDENCE					
SELF CONTROL					
REACTION TIME					
RESILINCY					
RESOLVE					
RESOURCEFULNESS					
SELF ASSUREDNESS					
SELF CONFIDENCE					
SELF CONTROL					
SOCIAL SKILLS					
SPONTINAITY					
STEDFASTNESS					
TENACITY					
VITALITY					
WORK HABITS					

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND EFFORT.**

## ANALYSIS

### RESEARCH QUESTION # 1

- I. WHAT ARE THE OPINIONS OF EXPERTS IN THE FIELD OF FENCING ON THE EFFECTS OF BEING TRAINED AS A FENCER WITH REGARDS TO
  - A. GOALS IN LIFE.
  - B. PERSEVERANCE IN LIFE.
  - C. SUCCESS IN LIFE

### BASED ON QUESTION # 1, 2, 3 ELITE FENCING SURVEY

Research question number 1 was answered by a submission to a group of fencing experts, the following three questions.

1. DO YOU FIND STUDYING FENCING RELEVANT TO ACHIEVING GOALS IN OTHER ASPECTS OF LIFE?
2. DO YOU FIND THE SKILLS NECESSARY TO BE A SUCCESSFUL FENCER APPLICABLE TO PERSERVERANCE IN LIFE?
3. DO YOU FIND THE TACTICS OF FENCING NECESSARY TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN BUSINESS?

In all three questions, when totaled, there was as overwhelming number of positive responses and few negatives. The correlating answers are as follows.

- |             |        |
|-------------|--------|
| 1. YES — 26 | NO — 2 |
| 2. YES — 22 | NO — 6 |
| 3. YES — 24 | NO — 4 |

### RESEARCH QUESTION # 2

2. WHAT QUALITIES / ATTRIBUTES / CHARACTERISTICS ARE INDICATIVE OF A SUCCESSFUL HIGH LEVEL FENCER?

**BASED ON QUESTION # 8 ELITE FENCING SURVEY**

**8. NAME THE BEST FENCER YOU HAVE EVER SEEN FENCE AND STATE FIVE WORDS THAT BEST DESCRIBE THAT FENCER.**

In order to answer research question #2 regarding the attributes of a successful fencer, the 28 experts in the sport of fencing who completed the elite survey were asked to name the best fencer they have ever seen along with five words describing that fencer, contributing to his greatness.

Three people, familiar with fencing, then reviewed the descriptors given and categorized them into six different groups as follows, physical performance, mindset, competitive attitude, cognitive factors, psychological composure, and intuitiveness. Based on the number of descriptors per category, a rank order was determined as follows:

**PHYSICAL PERFORMANCE - 19**

TECHNIQUE — 4  
SKILLFUL — 1  
ATHLETIC — 6  
FAST — 4  
TIMING — 2  
FLUIDITY — 2

**MINDSET - 19**

MENTAL TOUGHNESS — 4  
DETERMINED — 3  
PERSEVERING — 2  
DEDICATED — 2  
FOCUSED — 3  
ORGANIZED — 1  
INTENSE — 2  
DISCIPLINED — 2  
CONTROLLED — 2

**COMPETITIVE ATTITUDE - 12**

FEARLESS — 1  
POISED — 6  
CONFIDENT — 4

**RESEARCH QUESTION # 3**

**COGNITIVE FACTORS - 12**

INTELLEIGENCE — 5  
GOOD MEMORY — 1  
CLEVER — 2  
TACTICAL — 4

**INTUITIVENESS - 10**

CREATIVITY — 3  
INTUITIVE — 1  
PERCEPTIVE — 1  
QUICK DECISION MAKING — 1  
TALENT — 4

**PSYCHOLOGICAL COMPOSURE - 7**

MOTIVATED— 1  
ATTITUDE — 1  
PATIENCE — 1  
RELAXED — 1  
RESOURCEFUL — 1  
ADAPTABLE — 1  
FLEXIBLE — 1  
FIGHTER — 1

3. WHAT ARE THE BELIEFS FROM PARENTS REGARDING THEIR CHILDREN'S PHYSICAL / EMOTIONAL / INTELLECTUAL / SOCIAL GROWTH USING A PREDEFINED SET OF SUCCESS QUALITIES SINCE THE ONSET OF THEIR CHILDREN'S FENCING TRAINING?

**BASED ON THE SUCCESS QUALITY ATTRIBUTE CHART ATTACHED TO THE PARENT FENCING SURVEY**

**Key:**

	WORSE	SAME	SLIGHTLY	MODERATELY	MUCH
ACCURACY	0	6	3	6	2
ADAPTABILITY	1	3	7	3	2
ADEPTNESS	0	5	6	3	3
ADEQUACY	0	8	2	1	4
AGILITY	0	0	7	7	4
AGREEABLENESS	0	10	3	3	1
ASSERTIVENESS	0	6	6	2	1
ATHLETICISM	0	1	5	5	3
ATTENTION SPAN	0	7	5	4	1
COORDINATION	0	4	5	5	2
DETERMINATION	0	6	6	3	2
DILIGENCE	0	6	5	5	1
EFFORT	0	4	5	5	3
FOCUS	0	3	5	5	4
HONOR	0	10	2	2	2
MOTOR SKILLS	0	3	4	5	4
PATIENCE	2	4	5	5	1
PERSEVERANCE	0	2	5	5	5
PERSISTENCE	0	2	4	5	4
POISE	0	5	6	2	4
QUICK DECISION MAKING	1	4	7	1	3
REACTION TIME	0	1	3	5	2
RESILIENCY	0	5	8	2	3
RESOLVE	0	3	7	3	2
RESOURCEFULNESS	0	6	7	2	2
SELF CONFIDENCE	0	4	5	3	5
SELF CONTROL	1	5	4	3	4
SELF SUFFICIENCY	0	4	5	5	2
SELF-ASSUREDNESS	0	3	3	5	6
SOCIAL SKILLS	0	4	5	5	4
SPONTINAITY	1	5	6	4	1
SPORTSMANSHIP	0	4	4	4	5
STEADFASTNESS	0	5	7	4	1
TENACITY	0	7	8	1	1
VITALITY	0	6	4	3	4
WORK HABITS	0	5	5	4	1

**ATTRIBUTE**

## **WORSE/SAME/BETTER**

### **PHYSICAL PERFORMANCE**

AGILITY 0/0/18  
ATHLETICISM 0/1/13  
COORDINATION 0/4/12  
MOTOR SKILLS 0/3/13

### **MINDSET**

AGREEABLENESS 0/10/7  
ASSERTIVENESS 0/6/9  
DETERMINATION 0/6/11  
DILIGENCE 0/6/11  
FOCUS 0/3/14  
STEADFASTNESS 0/5/12  
TENACITY 0/7/10  
WORK HABITS 0/5/10  
PERSEVERANCE 0/2/15  
PERSISTENCE 0/2/13

### **COMPETITIVE ATTITUDE**

EFFORT 0/4/13  
POISE 0/5/12  
SPORTSMANSHIP 0/4/13

### **COGNITIVE FACTORS**

ADEPTNESS 0/5/12  
ATTENTION SPAN 0/7/10  
REACTION TIME 0/1/10

### **INTUITIVENESS**

QUICK DECISION MAKING 1/4/11  
SPONTANEITY 1/5/11

### **PSYCHOLOGICAL COMPOSURE**

ADEQUACY 0/8/7  
ADAPTABILITY 1/3/12  
HONOR 0/10/6  
PATIENCE 2/4/11  
RESILIENCY 0/5/13  
RESOLVE 0/3/12  
RESOURCEFULNESS 0/6/11  
SELF CONFIDENCE 0/4/13  
SELF SUFFICIENCY 0/4/12  
SELF CONTROL 1/5/11  
SELF ASSUREDNESS 1/3/14  
SOCIAL SKILLS 0/4/14

## **RESEARCH QUESTION # 4**

4. WHAT ARE THE BELIEFS FROM RECREATIONAL YOUTH OR ADULT FENCERS REGARDING THEIR OWN PHYSICAL / EMOTIONAL / INTELLECTUAL / SOCIAL GROWTH USING A PREDEFINED SET OF SUCCESS QUALITIES SINCE THE ONSET OF THEIR FENCING TRAINING?

**BASED ON THE SUCCESS QUALITY ATTRIBUTE CHART ATTACHED TO THE RECREATIONAL — YOUTH FENCING SURVEY**

**Key: ATTRIBUTE                      WORSE/SAME/BETTER**

**PHYSICAL PERFORMANCE**

	<b>WORSE</b>	<b>SAME</b>	<b>SLIGHTLY BETTER</b>	<b>MODERATELY BETTER</b>	<b>MUCH BETTER</b>
ADAPTABILITY	0	3	3	4	3
ADEPTNESS	0	4	5	3	3
ADEQUACY	0	3	5	3	3
ADVANCEMENT	0	4	5	2	2
AGILITY	0	4	3	3	3
AGREEABLENESS	0	5	3	4	1
ASSERTIVENESS	1	3	6	3	3
ATHLETICISM	0	3	6	4	2
ATTENTION SPAN	0	4	4	3	3
COORDINATION	0	5	2	3	4
DETERMINATION	0	2	4	6	4
EFFORT	0	4	5	4	2
FOCUS	0	3	3	2	5
HONOR	0	2	5	6	2
MOTOR SKILLS	0	3	3	5	3
PATIENCE	1	5	3	2	4
PERSEVERANCE	0	3	5	4	2
POISE	0	5	5	3	2
QUICK DECISION MAKING	0	3	6	3	3
REACTION TIME	0	4	3	2	4
RESILIENCY	0	4	4	2	3
RESOLVE	0	6	4	4	2
RESOURCEFULNESS	0	5	4	2	2
SELF ASSUREDNESS	0	2	5	4	3
SELF CONFIDENCE	0	2	4	6	2
SELF CONTROL	0	3	3	5	3
SOCIAL SKILLS	0	4	4	3	3
SPONTANEITY	0	6	5	2	2
STEADFASTNESS	0	3	3	6	3
TENACITY	1	3	6	2	2
VITALITY	0	3	5	3	2
WORK HABITS	0	3	6	2	5

AGILITY 0/4/9  
ATHLETICISM 0/3/12  
COORDINATION 0/5/9  
MOTOR SKILLS 0/3/11  
VITALITY 0/3/10

**MINDSET**

AGREEABLENESS 0/5/8  
ASSERTIVENESS 1/3/10  
DETERMINATION 0/2/12  
FOCUS 0/3/10  
STEADFASTNESS 0/3/10  
TENACITY 1/2/10  
WORK HABITS 0/3/10  
PERSEVERANCE 0/3/9

**COMPETITIVE ATTITUDE**

EFFORT 0/4/9  
POISE 0/5/8

**COGNITIVE FACTORS**

ADEPTNESS 0/4/9  
ATTENTION SPAN 0/2/11  
REACTION TIME 0/4/9

**INTUITIVENESS**

QUICK DECISION MAKING 0/3/10  
SPONTANEITY 0/6/7

**PSYCHOLOGICAL COMPOSURE**

ADEQUACY 0/3/9  
ADAPTABILITY 0/3/10  
HONOR 0/2/12  
PATIENCE 1/4/8  
RESILIENCY 0/4/9  
RESOLVE 0/6/7  
RESOURCEFULNESS 0/5/8  
SELF CONFIDENCE 0/2/11  
SELF CONTROL 0/3/10  
SELF ASSUREDNESS 0/2/10  
SOCIAL SKILLS 0/4/10

**RESEARCH QUESTION #5**

5. WHAT ARE THE BELIEFS OF PARENTS REGARDING HOW FENCING HAS AFFECTED THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF THEIR CHILDREN?

**BASED ON QUESTION #1, 2 PARENT FENCING SURVEY**

1. WHAT KIND OF GRADES DOES YOUR CHILD(REN) THAT FENCE(S) GET IN SCHOOL?  
(RELATE CURRENT ACADEMIC INFO JUST FOR COMPARISON)
2. DO YOU BELIEVE FENCING HAS CHANGED ANY OF THESE GRADES FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE?

BETTER — 8

WORSE — 1

SAME — 10

BREAKDOWN OF RESPONSES:

1. 4 OF 8 POSITIVE STATE AN IMPACT OF BETTER FOCUS AND CONCENTRATION
2. 2 OF 8 POSITIVE STATE AN IMPACT OF GENERALLY BETTER WORK PRODUCED
3. 2 OF 8 POSITIVE STATE AN IMPACT OF BETTER PERFORMANCE BUT LATE NIGHT TRAINING EFFECTS HOMEWORK
4. RESEARCHES NOTES — 3 OF THE 8 POSITIVE FENCE IN NATIONAL AND/OR COLLEGE CIRCUITS  
5 OF THE 8 POSITIVE FENCE TWO OR MORE EVENINGS PER WEEK  
4 OF THE 8 POSITIVE TAKE PRIVATE LESSON IN ADDITION TO 2X WEEK
5. 1 OF 2 NEGATIVE RESPONSES IS FROM A PARENT OF A NATIONAL COMPETITOR STATING A NEGATIVE IMPACT DUE TO TIME AWAY FROM SCHOOL DUE TO COMPETITIONS
6. 2<sup>ND</sup> NEGATIVE RESPONSE STATES AN IMPACT IS LESS TIME TO DO HOMEWORK

RESEARCH QUESTION #6

- 6 . WHAT ARE PARENTS BELIEFS REGARDING HOW FENCING HAS CHANGED / EFFECTED THEIR CHILD, OUTSIDE OF THEIR FENCING TRAINING?

BASED ON QUESTIONS #4, 5, 7 OF THE PARENT FENCING SURVEY

4. DID YOU NOTICE FENCING CHANGING YOUR CHILD(REN) IN ANY OTHER WAY BESIDES FENCING? PLEASE EXPLAIN.
5. ABOUT HOW LONG DID IT TAKE YOU FROM WHEN YOUR CHILD(REN) FIRST STARTED TO FENCE TILL YOU NOTICED THE CHANGES IN YOUR

CHILD(REN)? PLEASE EXPLAIN.

7 WERE THE CHANGES, IF ANY, VERY DRAMATIC OR NOT REALLY NOTICEABLE COMPARED TO BEFORE? PLEASE EXPLAIN.

4. POSITIVE — 12      NEGATIVE — 0      NONE — 4

5. POSITIVE — 14      NEGATIVE — 0      NONE — 2

POSITIVE CHANGES OCCURRED IN THE FOLLOWING TIME FRAMES:

- A. < 1 MONTH — 2
- B. 1 TO 3 MONTHS — 3
- C. 4 TO 6 MONTHS — 3
- D. 7 TO 11 MONTHS — 4
- E. > 12 MONTHS — 2

Below is the complete listing of changes:

4

1. CONVERSANT & AT EASE WITH ADULTS
2. PATIENCE, ATHLETICISM, SELF CONTROL
3. CONFIDENCE
4. CONFIDENCE & SELF CONTROL (X 2)
5. CONFIDENCE & ENTHUSIASM IN MANY THINGS
6. EXERCISE, FUN, INTER-RELATION/ TALKING WITH PARENTS, GREAT HOBBY, PROGRESS REWARDING
7. LEARNED TO THINK BEFORE ACT
8. ATHLETICISM

5.

1. 6 MONTHS
2. 3 YRS — GRADUALLY
3. FEW WEEKS
4. STEADY IMPROVEMENT OVER TIME
5. 6 MONTHS (X 2)
6. 2 WEEKS
7. THE MORE THEY FENCE THE MORE THEY BENEFIT
8. 1 YEAR AND POSITIVE
9. WITHIN ONE YEAR

6

1. NOT NOTICEABLE — DUE TO OTHER ACTIVITIES SAME RESULTS
2. NOTICEABLE — SLOW & PROGRESSIVE
3. NOT VERY NOTICEABLE EXCEPT SOCIALLY
4. GRADUAL BUT CLEAR
5. DRAMATIC
6. NOT DRAMATIC BUT BELIEVE WILL BE OVER TIME (NEW FENCER)
7. NOT DRAMATIC BUT ALWAYS POSITIVE
8. DRAMATIC DEFINITELY
9. SOMEWHAT DRAMATIC

**RESEARCH QUESTION # 7**

7. WHAT ARE RECREATIONAL FENCERS BELIEFS REGARDING THEIR PERSONAL WORK HABITS SINCE THEY BEGAN THEIR FENCING TRAINING?

**BASED ON QUESTION #3 OF RECREATIONAL - YOUTH FENCING SURVEY**

A. HAVE YOUR WORK HABITS IMPROVED SINCE YOU BEGAN FENCING?

A. YES B. NO EXPLAIN?

YES — 14 NO — 7

Below is a complete listing of the positive changes as stated by the fencers:

**POSITIVE**

1. ABLE TO COMPLETE PROJECTS FASTER WITH
2. MORE PATIENT AND FOCUSED ON WORK
3. CONCENTRATE MORE ON MY WORK
4. WORK HARDER AND DO NOT GIVE UP AT THINGS
5. MORE WILLING TO WORK HARDER
6. FINISH WORK IN MORE TIMELY FASHION
7. COMPLETE HOMEWORK BEFORE EVEN DUE
8. NOTHING EXTREME
9. EXERCISE AND FOCUS MORE
10. I WORK HARDER (X 2)
11. ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AFFECTED POSITIVELY
12. I AM MORE FOCUSED
13. YES (X 2)

**RESEARCH QUESTION # 8**

8. WHAT ARE RECREATIONAL FENCERS BELIEFS REGARDING HOW FENCING TRAINING HAS EFFECTED THE WAY THEY PROCEED WITH ACTIVITIES AND CHALLENGES THAT MUST BE DEALT WITH IN THEIR DAY TO DAY LIFE.

**BASED ON QUESTION # 10, 11 OF THE RECREATIONAL—YOUTH FENCING SURVEY**

10. HAS FENCING CHANGED THE WAY YOU DO AT THINGS IN YOUR LIFE?

A. YES B. NO PLEASE EXPLAIN?

11. HAS FENCING CHANGED YOUR PERSPECTIVE ON LIFE?

A. YES B. NO PLEASE EXPLAIN?

10. YES — 12 NO — 9

11. YES — 9 NO — 12

**RESEARCH QUESTION # 9**

9. WHAT QUALITIES DO RECREATIONAL FENCERS BELIEVE ARE NECESSARY TO BECOMING A SUCCESSFUL FENCER?

**BASED ON QUESTION # 19 OF THE RECREATIONAL – YOUTH FENCING SURVEY**

19. WHAT QUALITIES DO YOU THINK ARE IMPORTANT TO MAKE GOOD AND/OR SUCCESSFUL FENCERS ?

1. SMART – 3 / INTELLIGENCE – 4 / THINKING
2. QUICK THINKER / DECISION MAKING / ABLE TO PLAN
3. FAST / SPEED – 4 / QUICKNESS – 2 / FAST HAND / AGILITY
4. FLEXIBLE / OPEN MINDED – 2
5. AGGRESSIVE
6. DETERMINATION – 4 / WILLINESS TO PRACTICE / PERSEVERANCE / WILLPOWER / DISCIPLINE AND SELF CONTROL / WILL
7. LOVING THE SPORT – 3 / ABILITY TO HAVE FUN NO MATTER WHAT
8. ENERGETIC
9. FOCUS – 3 / ATTENTIVE
10. STAMINA / PHYSICALLY FIT – 4 / HEALTHY
11. PRACTICE – 2
12. GOOD FORM
13. PATIENCE – 3
14. PROBLEM SOLVING
15. CONFIDENCE
16. HONESTY
17. SPORTSMANSHIP
18. IMPROVISATION
19. INTELLECTUAL THINKING
20. LEARNING NEW THINGS
21. STRATEGY
22. RESPECT

### **PHYSICAL PERFORMANCE - 18**

FAST — 1  
SPEED — 4  
QUICKNESS — 2  
FAST HAND — 1  
AGILITY — 1  
ENERGETIC — 1  
STAMINA — 1  
PHYSICALLY FIT — 4  
HEALTHY — 1  
PRACTICE — 2

### **MINDSET - 11**

WILL — 1  
DETERMINATION — 4  
WILLINGNESS TO PRACTICE HARD — 1  
PERSEVERANCE — 1  
DISCIPLINE & SELF CONTROL — 1  
LOVING THE SPORT — 1  
ABILITY TO HAVE FUN NO MATTER WHAT — 1  
AGGRESSIVE — 1

### **COGNITIVE FACTORS - 11**

SMART — 4  
INTELLIGENCE — 4  
THINKING — 1  
INTELLECTUAL THINKING — 1  
STRATEGY — 1

### **PSYCHOLOGICAL COMPOSURE -7**

FLEXIBLE — 1  
OPEN MINDED — 1  
PATIENCE — 3  
HONESTY — 1  
RESPECT — 1

### **INTUITIVENESS - 5**

QUICK THINKER — 1  
DECISION MAKING — 1  
ABILITY TO PLAN — 1  
IMPROVISATION — 1  
PROBLEM SOLVING — 1

### **COMPETITIVE ATTITUDE - 3**

CONFIDENCE — 1  
SPORTSMANSHIP — 1  
WILLPOWER — 1

## Discussion

In questions number 1, 2, and 3 in the Elite Fencing Survey, experts stated that being trained as a fencer can have an overwhelmingly positive effect on attaining the qualities necessary to be successful and achieving goals in life.

Below is a sampling of the positive responses obtained from the experts regarding the issues of achieving goals and success in life and business.

In response to question 1 we find the following strong statement.

1. "Fencing promotes focus and discipline when practiced well. It teaches the value of practice and the importance of learning from experience, whether through winning or losing."

Question 2 drew these responses regarding perseverance.

1. "If you are perseverant in life to begin with, you will develop your skills to the highest levels, consequently this will help you to be a successful fencer, and visa versa."

2. "Intellect and determination are key characteristics of fencers that enable them to succeed on and off the strip."

3. "Yes, during life, you'll have your ups and downs, much like fencing. You win, you lose, but you still must try."

4. “Knowing how to train helps stay focused on the ultimate goal and by sticking with the smaller intermediate steps, realizing the bigger reward, becomes more achievable and more likely to happen. It builds the foundation for success in life.”

A respondent to question 3 reflects on the big picture,

1. “For every action, there is a reaction. Good preparation usually yields good results both in fencing and in life.”

These quotes put the fencing relationship to business in very clear fencing terms.

1. “Yes, basic strategy and tactics used in fencing are directly applicable in my business. For example, if someone is trying to negotiate a lower price for a product (attack), I have to first determine if his dispute in pricing is real (test my opponent). Then I have to decide whether I am going to stand my ground and defend my price (parry), give him the price he needs (retreat), or be offended by the attempt to negotiate (counter attack). Being able to think in this manner helps me to remove emotion from the business equation and allows me to make better business decisions.”

2. “Recognizing verbal or business “threats” and being able to deflect or neutralize them quickly without becoming emotionally involved.”

In the responses received in Elite Fencing Survey question number 8, most experts felt the actual attributes most important in becoming a successful fencer, without categorizing, were athleticism, poise, and intelligence ranking the highest, with mental toughness, technique, tactics, speed, confidence, and raw talent close behind.

When the attributes were grouped into predefined categories of success, the groupings indicated physical performance and mindset as the two categories most needed by successful fencers in order to achieve

prominence in the sport, with competitive attitude, cognitive factors, and intuitiveness, all several points behind. Last on the list was psychological composure, which received less than half of the points of our two top categories.

Research question number 3 is based on the Parent Fencing Survey Success Quality Attribute Chart which was handed out to a number of parents of fencers, with a list of 36 predetermined attributes that are characteristic of successful people. The chart indicated worse, and slightly, moderately and much better as ratings that would gauge their child's attitude changes since the onset of their fencing training. Through this Success Quality Attribute Chart, it was learned that parents believed that all the physical attributes of their children have changed for the better. The most negative seen change involved patience, but still, overall, parents believe almost 2 to 1 that their child's patience improved. Motor skills, resiliency, adaptability, tenacity and sportsmanship seemed to have the most positive responses.

The words listed in the Parent Fencing Survey Success Quality Attribute Chart were then grouped into the same predefined categories of success as used with the Elite Fencing Survey; physical performance, mindset, cognitive factors, psychological composure, competitive attitude, and intuitiveness. The great majority of parents surveyed believed changes for the better occurred in each and every one of these predefined categories. The attributes they believed have shown the most change are agility, athleticism, effort, focus, motor skills, perseverance, persistence, resiliency, self-assuredness, self confidence, social skills and sportsmanship. Each one of these attributes is that of a successful fencer and of a successful person in general. Moderate gains were seen in the attributes of coordination, self-sufficiency, patience, focus, diligence,

determination and assertiveness. Slight gains were also seen in tenacity, resourcefulness, resolve, quick decision making and reaction time.

The words listed in the Recreational — Youth Fencing Survey Success Quality Attribute Chart were grouped into these same predefined categories of success as with the Parent Fencing Survey Success Quality Attribute Chart; physical performance, cognitive factors, intuitiveness, psychological composure, mindset, and competitive attitude. The overwhelming majority of recreational - youth fencers surveyed believed changes had occurred in all of the pre-defined categories of success. The most significantly changed attributes according to the recreational — youth fencers themselves were coordination, determination, focus, patience, reaction time, social skills, and work habits, all positive. The attributes with moderate but positive changes were agreeableness, effort, honor, motor skills, self confidence, self control, and steadfastness. The attributes showing slight but still positive changes were adeptness, adequacy, assertiveness, athleticism, quick decision making, tenacity, and work habits. All of these attributes listed are needed to become a successful fencer and a successful person in general. The only negative changes received involved patience, assertiveness and tenacity, but only one negative response each.

In a comparison between the answers given by the parents in their Success Quality Attribute Chart and recreational — youth fencers in their Success Quality Attribute Chart, parents noticed positive changes in their children in nearly the same attributes as the recreational — youth fencers in theirs, to varying degrees of positive change, with the biggest difference between parents beliefs on their children's advancement and the fencers beliefs on their own advancement was with regards to the attribute of honor. Only six parents believe that their children had become more honorable since the onset of their fencing training, but twelve

recreational — youth fencers felt that they had become more honorable since the onset of their fencing training. That was the only difference in beliefs between the two.

Parent Fencing Survey questions 1 and 2 received eight positive responses. Of those eight, four parents believed their child has better focus and concentration. Two of those eight parents believed their child is producing better work on a consistent basis at school. The final two of those eight believed their child has had better overall academic performance, but late nights due to fencing, has affected homework (possibly timely completion). Note that three of the eight positive responses come from parents of competitive fencers (national level). All three of these competitive fencers, plus two additional fencers train at least twice per week in group lessons and four of those five also take one or more private lessons per week in addition to their evening's group lessons.

There were also ten parents that believed there were no changes seen in their children. Note that all of those ten fencers already have above average academics.

The two remaining responses were negative, one from the parent of a competitive fencer and one from the parent of a recreational fencer, both stating that there is less time to complete homework assignments. The researcher notes that the competitive fencer's parent stated that it was due to extensive travel and training, a seemingly valid point, and from the recreational fencer's parent, whose child fences at a maximum of one evening per week, that there may be more than fencing contributing to this situation.

Parents Fencing Survey questions number 4, 5, & 7, regarding changes outside of fencing, showed that all changes parents believe to have occurred were positive with several parents stating no changes and no parents believing that any negative changes occurred. Most changes were noticeable within the first year of fencing training, and on an average, the changes occurred between 3 to 6 months.

More specifically, the types of changes noticed by parents were in patience, confidence, athleticism, thinking before acting, self control, and becoming more conversant with adults and parents.

In the responses received regarding Recreational – Youth Fencing Survey question number 3, with regards to the work habits of the fencers themselves, recreational – youth fencers believed two to one that their work habits have improved since the onset of their fencing training. Of those stating improved status, they believe they are working harder and more willing to work hard to get things accomplished. They also notice positive changes in their level of patience, focus and in their ability to intellectually process and concentrate on the task at hand.

Some of the recreational – youth fencer statements regarding these changes:

1. 12 YRS OLD - “I WORK HARDER AT THINGS INSTEAD OF GIVING UP.”
2. 13 YRS OLD - “I AM MORE PATIENT AND FOCUSED ON THE WORK”
3. 17 YRS OLD - “YES. I AM ABLE TO COMPLETE MY WORK FASTER AND JUST AS WELL AS BEFORE.”
4. 13 YRS OLD - “YES, OFTEN I DO MY HOMEWORK AHEAD OF TIME”

When asking recreational - youth fencers their thoughts on how fencing training effects the way one proceeds with the activities and challenges that must be dealt with in day to day life, it was broken down into two areas of consideration, the first being how things are actually completed and the second being fencers perspective on how they actually complete those things.

A narrow majority of recreational fencers polled believed that fencing has had a positive effect on their abilities to complete tasks at hand, saying that they are better focused and directed with a more positive attitude towards their work and are more willing to take risks in many instances. Regarding their belief of their perspective on life changing, the opposite narrow majority stated that their perspective stayed the same.

Of those who felt their perspective had changed, the answers as to how it changed were almost identical in content to the answers in the first part of this question.

Regarding question 10:

1. "Yes, in a way I've been able to handle more difficult things with fencing in my mind, in turn I feel better about things in my life"
2. "Yes, I am not afraid to go for it, I take more chances."
3. "Yes, preparation for decision making analysis."
4. "Yes, I think more and reason better."

Regarding question 11:

1. "Yes, easier to stay on task."
2. "Yes, I feel more determined and view life as a challenge."
3. "Yes, it has given me a multi-cultural outlook."
4. "No, nothing can change my view on the world but me. So I don't believe outside influences can influence me."

When recreational fencers were asked what qualities are important to being a successful fencer, they believed that the two categories of physical performance and mindset were the most needed, followed by cognitive factors, psychological composure, intuitiveness, and competitive attitude. The actual attributes believed to be the most important in the path of becoming a successful fencer were speed, physical fitness, intelligence, and patience.

Fencing experts and recreational - youth fencers, when both were asked what qualities were important to becoming a successful fencer, interesting differences were noticed. The fencing experts answered

that technique, athleticism, speed, mental toughness, poises, confidence, intelligence, tactics and raw talent were most important. When asked virtually the same question, recreational fencers came up with these answers; speed, physical fitness, intelligence and patience. Only two attributes were stated by both the fencing experts and the recreational fencers, speed and intelligence. This shows the difference between what fencing experts believe the attributes are to being a successful fencer and what recreational fencers believe will make you a successful fencer.

Although the attributes are not exactly the same in both groups, overall, in the six predefined categories of success, both physical performance and mindset were ranked at the top of the list by both. The only major difference in the rank order of the other predefined categories was competitive attitude. The elite fencers found competitive attitude to be a major factor but recreational fencers found competitive attitude to be of the least importance in becoming a successful fencer. That may be due to the fact that these recreational fencers as a whole do not compete. Additionally, the attributes that made up the category of cognitive factors were almost identical.

## Conclusion

It has been determined, in the course of this thesis, that training in the sport of fencing may be a positive contributing factor in the development of the character traits and attributes of successful people.

The experts, through their answers, have shown three things. One being what attributes make up a successful fencer, two, that they believe there is a direct correlation between the qualities of successful fencers and success qualities in general, and three, that they believe training in fencing enhances the development of these qualities.

In an effort to demonstrate that the expert's beliefs were valid, both recreational fencers and the parents of youth fencers were surveyed. It was found that these groups overwhelmingly believe that gains were made, in relatively short periods of time, in almost all of the attributes of success that were presented to them to rate gains and losses with since the onset of fencing training.

The attributes rated by the recreational fencers and the parents of youth fencers was basically the same grouping of attributes that the fencing experts told us were in the makeup of successful fencers.

So in the end, the circle has closed and this thesis has demonstrated that our initial thesis statement is valid.

APPENDIX I

ELITE FENCING SURVEY  
WITH YES / NO ANSWERS TOTALED

**Fencing** - An elegant, prestigious and traditional sport which reflects the success qualities that are important to contemporary people who seek a challenge to both body and mind through an effective blend of patience and determination, discipline and competitiveness.

**Part of a Healthy Lifestyle / Exercise for the Mind and Body**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ YRS

FENCING \_\_\_\_\_

ACHIEVEMENTS

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AFFILIATIONS \_\_\_\_\_

CREDENTIALS \_\_\_\_\_

1. DO YOU FIND STUDYING FENCING RELEVANT TO ACHIEVING GOALS IN OTHER ASPECTS OF LIFE?  
YES / NO. PLEASE EXPLAIN.

**YES — 26**

**NO - 2**

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2. DO YOU FIND THE SKILLS NECESSARY TO BE A SUCCESSFUL Fencer APPLICABLE TO PERSEVERANCE IN LIFE? YES / NO. PLEASE EXPLAIN.

**YES — 22**

**NO - 6**

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9. DO YOU FIND THE TACTICS OF FENCING NECESSARY TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN BUSINESS? YES / NO. PLEASE EXPLAIN.

**YES -24**

**NO - 4**

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10. IN YOUR EXPERIENCES IN FENCING, WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE MAKE GOOD FENCERS?

A. ATHLETIC    B. INTELLIGENT    C. DEDICATED    D. PERSEVERANCE

**A - 4**

**B - 6**

**C - 5**

**D - 5**

E. ALL OF THE ABOVE \_\_\_\_\_ **E - 17**

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5. WHAT IS MORE IMPORTANT TO BE A SUCCESSFUL FENCER, THE PHYSICAL ASPECTS OF THE SPORT OR THE MENTAL ASPECTS OR BOTH. PLEASE EXPLAIN.

**PHYSICAL - 5 / MENTAL - 8 / BOTH - 15**

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6. WHEN YOU WERE ALL SAID AND DONE WITH YOUR FENCING CAREER, WHAT ASPECT OF THE SPORT WAS MOST TAXING ON YOU, THE PHYSICAL OR MENTAL PART? PLEASE EXPLAIN.

**\_ PHYSICAL - 9 / MENTAL - 14 / BOTH - 6 \_**

7. WHAT AFFECTS MENTAL FENCING DEVELOPMENT MOST, A GOOD COACH OR NATURAL ABILITY? PLEASE EXPLAIN.

**COACH - 15 / NATURAL - 13**

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8. NAME THE BEST FENCER YOU HAVE EVER SEEN FENCE AND STATE FIVE WORDS THAT BEST DESCRIBE THAT FENCER.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3.

4. \_\_\_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_\_\_

9. NAME THE BEST COACH YOU HAVE EVER MET AND STATE FIVE WORDS THAT BEST DESCRIBE THAT COACH.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_  
4. \_\_\_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_\_\_

10. DO YOU NEED TO BE A GOOD FENCER TO BE A GOOD COACH?  
YES / NO. PLEASE EXPLAIN.

**YES — 5**                      **NO - 23**

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11. WHAT ASPECTS OF LIFE ARE APPLICABLE TO FENCING? PLEASE EXPLAIN

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12. DO OTHER SPORTS REQUIRE THE TYPE OF INTELLIGENCE THAT FENCING DEMANDS? YES / NO. PLEASE EXPLAIN

**YES — 15**                      **NO - 13**

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13. WILL FENCING BE ABLE TO CHANGE A PERSONS LIFE OR LIFESTYLE TO SOME DEGREE? YES / NO. PLEASE EXPLAIN

**YES — 21**                      **NO - 7**

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14. CAN FENCING DEVELOP SELF-ESTEEM AND CONFIDENCE IN A PERSON?  
YES / NO. PLEASE EXPLAIN

**YES — 21**                      **NO - 8**

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15. DOES THE LENGTH OF THE FENCING SEASON CHANGE THE WAY YOU NEED TO TRAIN? YES NO. PLEASE EXPLAIN

**YES — 18**                      **NO — 10**

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND EFFORT

**APPENDIX II**

**PARENT FENCING SURVEY  
WITH YES / NO ANSWERS TOTALED**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Child(ren) names \_\_\_\_\_

Years Child(ren) fencing \_\_\_\_\_ Number of children fencing \_\_\_\_\_

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1. What kind of grades does your child(ren) that fence(S) get in school?

A's — 8    A/B — 6    A/B/C — 2    C — 1    B/C — 1    B - 1

2. Do you believe fencing has changed any of these grades.

a. for better 8    b. for worse 1    c. same 10    PLEASE EXPLAIN.

3. Why do you believe fencing has changed your child(rens) grades?

Please explain.

4. Did you notice fencing changing your child(ren) in any other ways besides fencing?

Please explain.    YES — 14    NO - 5

5. About how long did it take you from when your child(ren) first started to fence till you noticed the changes in your child(ren)?

Please explain.    IN WEEKS — 4    IN MONTHS — 10    IN YEARS - 3

6. State the changes you saw your child(ren) were experiencing do to fencing.

Please explain.

7. Were the changes, if any very dramatic or not really noticeable compared to before?

Please explain.    DRAMATIC — 11    NOT REALLY NOTICEABLE/SMALL — 5    NONE - 0

8. What were some of the reasons you had your child(ren) start the sport of fencing?

Please explain.

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9. Did fencing change your child(ren)'s lifestyle more, or just the way they went about doing things?  
Please explain. **LIFESTYLE - 1 THINGS - 2 BOTH - 6 TO SOON TO SAY - 2**
10. Did you notice any changes in your child(ren)'s physical abilities?
11. Has (have) your child(ren) ever applied any of the things they have learned in fencing in activities of everyday life?  
Please explain.
12. Does your child(ren) play team sports, if so what ones?  
**YES - 5 NO - 6 FOOTBALL, BASKETBALL, BASEBALL, SOCCER, SOFTBALL**
13. Do your child(ren) play the team sports competitively or for recreation?

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND EFFORT**

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## APPENDIX III

### RECREATIONAL — YOUTH FENCING SURVEY WITH YES / NO ANSWERS TOTALED

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ AGE: \_\_\_\_\_

YEARS FENCING: \_\_\_\_\_ WEAPON: \_\_\_\_\_ USFA RATING: \_\_\_\_\_

#### SURVEY:

6. What were your average grades before you began fencing?  
a. A'S 5 b. B's 5 c. C's 1 d. A's & B's 5 e. B's & C's 1 f. A's, B's & C's 4  
g. B's, C's & D's 0
7. Have your grades changed since you began fencing? Are they...  
a. the SAME 11 b. BETTER 8 c. WORSE 2 Explain?
8. Have your work habits improved since you began fencing?  
a. YES 13 b. NO 8 Explain?
9. Did you play any other sports before you began fencing?  
a. YES 12 b. NO 9
10. What type of sports did you play?  
a. INDIVIDUAL b. TEAM
6. Which sports did you play?  
Please list.
7. Did you play these sports  
a. RECREATIONALLY 11 b. COMPETITIVELY 10
8. Did you play in any organized teams or leagues?  
a. YES 13 b. NO 8 If YES, what sports?  
NOTE: Please mark recreational with "R" and competitive with "C"

9. What were the reasons you began fencing?  
Please Explain.
10. Has fencing changed the way you do at things in your life?  
a. YES 12                      b. NO 9                      Please Explain.
11. Has fencing changed your perspective on life?  
a. YES 11                      b. NO 10                      Please Explain.
- 12a. Do you fence in competition?  
a. YES                      b. NO                      If no, why not?
- 12b. If yes, what level of competition do you fence in?  
a. LOCAL                      monthly / every other month / few times a year  
b. REGIONAL                      monthly / every other month / 1 or 2 times yr  
c. NATIONAL                      whenever available / 1-2 times a year
13. Do you intend to fence more competitively in the future?  
a. YES 15                      b. NO 6
14. Do you think competition is important to learning fencing?  
a. YES 13                      b. NO 8                      If no, why not?
15. Do you practice other sports without playing in the games?  
a. YES 12                      b. NO 9                      If no, why not?
17. Are “fencing competition” and “playing a game” in another sport (baseball, tennis, etc)  
the same thing?  
a. YES 13                      b. NO 8                      If no, why not?
17. Do you play chess?  
a. YES 12                      b. NO 9
18. Do you play other strategy games or sports?  
a. YES 13                      b. NO 8                      Please list
19. What qualities do you think are important to make good and/or successful fencers ?
21. Do you think the qualities that help you succeed in fencing are the same qualities that help you  
succeed in ...  
a. LIFE — Explain.  
SCHOOL / BUSINESS — Explain.
21. When you are fencing, without a referee, do you acknowledge when you have been hit?  
Be honest.  
a. ALWAYS    b. MOSTLY    c. SOMETIMES    d. ONLY WHEN ASKED    e. NEVER

22. When you are fencing, without a referee, do you find that others acknowledge when they have been hit?  
Be honest.

- a.ALWAYS      b.MOSTLY      c.SOMETIMES      d.ONLY WHEN ASKED      e.NEVER COMMENTS

23. When you are fencing, with a referee and no electric, do you find that you acknowledge being hit, when asked by the referee?

- a. ALWAYS      b. MOSTLY      c. SOMETIMES      d. NEVER

24. When you are fencing, with a referee and no electric, do you find that others acknowledge being hit, when asked by the referee?

- a. ALWAYS      b. MOSTLY      c. SOMETIMES      d. NEVER      COMMENTS

25. Do you feel HONOR and HONESTY and SPORTSMANSHIP are important in the following examples?

- |             |        |    |       |   |
|-------------|--------|----|-------|---|
| a. FENCING  | a. YES | 15 | b. NO | 6 |
| b. LIFE?    | a. YES | 16 | b. NO | 5 |
| c. SPORTS   | a. YES | 17 | b. NO | 4 |
| d. SCHOOL   | a. YES | 16 | b. NO | 5 |
| e. BUSINESS | a. YES | 14 | b. NO | 7 |
| f. FAMILY   | a. YES | 16 | b. NO | 5 |
| g. FRIENDS  | a. YES | 16 | b. NO | 5 |

26. Do you find HONOR, HONESTY and GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP in the people you meet in the following examples?

- |                  |        |    |       |    |
|------------------|--------|----|-------|----|
| a. FENCING       | a. YES | 15 | b. NO | 6  |
| b. FAMILY        | a. YES | 16 | b. NO | 5  |
| c. TEACHERS      | a. YES | 12 | b. NO | 9  |
| d. COACHES       | a. YES | 14 | b. NO | 7  |
| e. SCHOOL        | a. YES | 14 | b. NO | 7  |
| f. FRIENDS       | a. YES | 17 | b. NO | 4  |
| g. ON THE STREET | a. YES | 5  | b. NO | 15 |

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND EFFORT

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- Self Prepared Elite Fencer, Official, and Coach Survey
- Self Prepared Parent Survey
- Self Prepared Recreational Fencer Survey

## FINAL NOTE TO READERS

I do hope you have enjoyed and gained knowledge from this thesis. Thank you for taking the time to read it.

If you are interested in the Essay answers given by the experts, parents, or fencers on their respective surveys, please contact me directly. That information may be available, although none of the names of the authors of those essays will be disclosed.

Sincerely,

Dan Berliner