

Faraz Sayyed
SBA Personal Statement

My parents moved from Pakistan to Arkansas in 1999 when I was born. I am a first generation American and lived a very different life than the rest of my classmates growing up. Pakistani parents are all about their children doing well in school and being the smartest person in the room. While my friends were out playing catch with their fathers in the summer, I was getting new workbooks to prepare for the next school year. Although I listened to my parents by studying and doing all my work, I was still very rebellious. I enjoyed running around and playing games much more than sitting down and learning about math.

In high school, I joined the wrestling team without telling my parents and quickly picked up the sport. I became the captain of my wrestling team my sophomore year until I graduated. My parents found out very soon that I was wrestling, and to my surprise, allowed me to stay. My parents did make me promise to get all A's, otherwise I could not continue wrestling. The word spread around the Pakistani community very quickly that I was wrestling. Soon after, a lot of Pakistani parents were asking me to help their children join the wrestling team. I realized that a lot of first-generation Americans are not able to try different things because it can be foreign to their parents, who are not as comfortable learning new traditions. Pakistani children tend not to try a lot of athletic ventures because their parents are usually so focused on their studies.

During my senior year I became a state champion wrestler and the word spread very fast. After I graduated, there were a record number of Pakistani people who joined my high schools wrestling team. To this day there are a lot of people from my community who are very active in all sorts of sports, and I feel I contributed to a tiny piece of it. Throughout my wrestling career I never realized I was representing a group of people, specifically my people. I decided to go against the norm and pursue something that seemed foreign to my culture, and it ended up benefitting me as well as others who came after me.