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COMMENTARY

A Personal Reflection of a Textbook Mentor: Dr. Jack Taunton

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Abstract

The journey of graduate school involves undulating successes and setbacks. For every successful research project, publication, and graduation, there is a strong supportive group guiding the student. This article highlights the significant role that Dr. Jack Taunton had in the professional and academic development of one of his trainees. **Health & Fitness Journal of Canada 2020;13(4):35-36.**

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Introduction

I am grateful to be asked to contribute to this special series, not only because I think Jack and Cheryl will gain deserved recognition for their efforts, but because it allowed me to reflect on some of the many memories I have with Dr. Jack Taunton. In some ways, this reflection is easy to write given the unwavering support that Jack offered me during my PhD and professional career. However, amongst these thoughts and praises, there is a challenge to find the words to truly share how much I appreciate Jack and the influence he has had on my professional development.

When I was first hired in March 2013 at Fortius Sport and Health, I remember meeting Jack and instantly feeling that he was a special person. Over the coming days, my feelings were confirmed as I quickly realized that on top of being a special person, Jack was an extraordinary practitioner with enormous accolades in the field of sports medicine. It took me by

surprise and still provides a laugh when I think about the way Jack would introduce me to people that would come into our facility. Based on how he described me, you would think that our roles were reversed and that I accomplished all he had in life. That is one of the most special parts to Jack, he sees greatness in everyone he meets and goes to great lengths to help others achieve their goals.

Without Jack, I am confident that I would have not had the amazing PhD opportunity that I did, and I am equally confident that I would not have the same result. Jack was always there for me during the turbulent process of professional growth and personal discovery that is inevitable in earning a PhD. During my studies, I was also fortunate to work with the Team Canada Men's National Field Hockey team. During discussion, Jack would reflect on his time with the team so proudly and I quickly realized that I was not just working for a team, but for a legacy of great practitioners

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and scientists that worked before me. As much as I wanted to help the team achieve success, it meant so much to me to ensure I was carrying on the legacy that Jack has fostered years before. I always looked forward to Jack's check-ins on the team, hearing the stories he had from his work, and once again the ongoing support.

Following my PhD, Jack supported me in earning a position as a Postdoctoral Fellow at Queen's University. In order to complete the application, I required letters of support from previous supervisor's familiar with my research and academic ability. With a tight turnaround time, I reached out to Jack to write one of these letters. His reply perfectly demonstrated the care, compassion, and dedication to others on their path to success. Jack's email informed me that although he had a big surgery coming up on Monday, to send over the information as his Tuesday was left open to recover. He could try to write it if he was feeling okay. Although I suggested he take the time to recover and not dedicate that time to my letter, I was appreciative of his generosity and commitment to my goals.

Dr. Taunton, on a personal note, I hope after reading this you know how much I respect you and aim to model myself after your way of mentoring. I want you to know that you have changed my professional path as much as anyone I have met. I am grateful to have met you and I am privileged for our on-going communications.

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Author's Qualifications

The author's qualifications are as follows: Nicholas Held, MHK, PhD, NSCA-CSCS, R.Kin .