

1) Describe one person in your life who has served as a mentor for you and the impact that person has had on your life:

My mentor: [REDACTED]

While I was in the Military, I was given the best advice that any man has ever given me. First, a bit of background. I was stationed in California. This was my first duty station in the fleet, I was 20 years old, and had just gotten back from our first deployment. I thought I was invincible, and could do whatever I wanted. For anyone that has ever been in the military, you could guess what this is a fast track for. I loved the Marine Corps, and at the time I planned on making this a career (full 20 years). Up to this point, I had made mistakes that could be career ending, but somehow had gotten away with everything. While I did not get into trouble, my leaders knew I was screwing off they just were never able to pin anything on me. Until I got too big for my britches.

What I got nailed on was something very simple, mixed with something, that while not technically was legal, people usually looked the other way. I was 15 minutes late (simple thing), and it was found out that I had been drinking (underage). Typically, this is a slap on the wrist, you get yelled at, you get screwed with A LOT, and then in a few days everything goes away. If I hadn't been a complete screw up, this is probably what would have happened. Because of my checkered past, I got slammed. I lost 21 days of pay and was restricted to quarters. All well within the penalties under the UCMJ. This can be career ending. I was crushed. My platoon commander, [REDACTED], pulled me aside soon after. He helped me see what it was that I was too blind to see, and gave me the best advice that I was ever given. To summarize, he said that we are not defined by our mistakes, but in how we act after we have made them. To be honest, this didn't sink in. In fact it took some time before it really did. I understood what he had said, just not the gravity of it. I was able to overcome and was able to reenlist a couple times.

It wasn't until a few years after that incident that it fully sank in. This advice applies to every situation. We are all human, we all make mistakes, some greater than others. This is not what makes us who we are. It is in how we respond to those mistakes. In how we respond to adversity. In how we respond to success. Just because we have a great year, we should not sit back on our haunches and coast. We should continually strive to become better. Once this had fully sunk in to my dense skull, I became a better person. I became a better husband, and a better father to my children. I have become a better employee. I have become a better citizen.

2) How will the scholarship help you and/or your company? Why should SIMA award you the Alan Steiman Symposium Scholarship?

Honestly, this is a hard question to answer. The obvious help is in a monetary matter. Not understanding what it is to attend this symposium, it is incredibly hard to justify the cost of attending. In fact, if my company and I had not attended other industry symposiums I doubt there would be consideration for it. I do believe that there is a wealth of knowledge to gain at this event as well as an opportunity to network with likeminded individuals. Over the past couple of years that we have been building our snow and ice management team, we have been put off by quite a few characters and challenges that if not for internal drives, would have permanently sidelined our operation. I believe attending the symposium will help us overcome future hurdles as well as provide proper resources for us to reach out to in the future.

3) What is your single favorite thing about managing snow and ice?

I think that most people would say that the money is the greatest thing about snow and ice removal. This might be because I have not met the right people. While the money is an obvious benefit, and also the prime reason

my wife doesn't give me a lot of grief about the long hours, this is not my primary driver to why I like this work. I enjoy the mental challenges that snow and ice removal present. Having to stay always on the ready for the ever-changing environment that the weather throws at us, is the single greatest thrill I get from managing snow and ice.

4) Please include a description of who you are in the snow and ice industry (# of clients, # of employees, how long you have been in the snow business, etc.):

I am the Business operations manager of [REDACTED]. We got into the industry four years ago. It started as a support to help our company get through the winter. We are in the tree, lawn, and landscaping industry. Typically the winters are tough. Our professionalism caught the eye of one of our tree customers that needed help with snow. For the next three years we were sub-contractors for a DOD facility. Last year we won our own DOD contract. This pushed us to want to perform at a level that they had never seen. Being industry leaders with our tree side (in business since 2003), we knew there had to be certifications and material out there that could help us. After a bit of research we found SIMA. SIMA reminds us of our tree association TCIA. We knew that this was the next step to take. We employ roughly 8 full time employees that work in the snow and ice industry. We sub-contract anywhere from 10 to 30 individuals, some with equipment and some without.

Being able to attend the symposium would help me, and my company, become better trained company that can help move the industry forward. As well as become a better contractor for our customer.

Thank you for the opportunity to be able to apply for this scholarship.