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## Mark Wahlberg Talks Briefly Feuding With Leonardo DiCaprio and Feeling Depressed

By: Omar Sanchez | 25 July 2018

The actor was among the speakers at the annual LEAP Foundation conference at UCLA.



Greg Doherty/Getty Images

From left: Dr. Bill Dorfman, Mark Wahlberg and Charlie Gallagher, executive director of the LEAP Foundation

The success of Mark Wahlberg, Academy Award-nominated actor, executive producer and businessman, didn't come without a fight — including once or twice with Leonardo DiCaprio, before the two actors starred in 1995's *Basketball Diaries*.

“He didn't want me for the part, and I didn't think he was right for the part,” Wahlberg said Tuesday in front of a group of 500 high school and college students at UCLA for the 11th annual LEAP conference. “We both had to really learn how to respect each other, and we earned it.”

While they may have had animosity toward one another before stepping on set, Wahlberg said he and DiCaprio built a bond throughout the shoot. The themes of this anecdote — respect and earning one's way to the highest level of success — is a key focus of the LEAP Foundation, a leadership program founded by dentist and the day's moderator, Dr. Bill Dorfman.

Wahlberg was invited to speak at the conference because his story of coming from inner-city Boston to Hollywood resonated with the goals of the foundation, Dorfman told *The Hollywood Reporter*. The conference also includes guest speakers including Anthony Hopkins and singer Paula Abdul later in the week.

"Sixty percent of these kids come from really poor families and they're A+ students. What we are doing is giving them an opportunity to give them the skills they need to learn to be successful in life," Dorfman said.

Over the course of his speech, Wahlberg detailed the pinnacle of his career ("I've never been more driven than I am now") and his downfalls, which included his previous arrest at the age of 16 for assault ("That was a wake-up call. I like my freedom").

One of the more important mantras for him moving up in the industry was to work twice as hard as anyone else and never lose the hunger to keep going. "It's having that 'marathon' over 'a sprint' attitude," Wahlberg said. "If it was going to take 22 years, so be it."

Before he took questions from the students, Wahlberg broke down his morning routine, which starts at 3:30 a.m. every day with a prayer and a workout soon after. During his day, the actor told *THR*, he also likes to mentor upcoming professional athletes at his home.

"I actually spent the last five days with various athletes in various stages of entertainment and athletics. We're talking about the future and what it takes to get to the next level," Wahlberg said.

He also spoke candidly about a time where he injured his arm, which caused his daily routine to alter in a way that began to make him feel depressed.

"When I was down and wasn't able to do the things I'm used to doing, I started to feel depressed — and I never feel depressed. But [the motivation] is instilled in me. I was always prepared just in case if I had to go back [to Boston], that I would be welcomed with open arms," Wahlberg said.

During the audience Q&A, he was asked by a student named Miles what kept him motivated to keep going.

As Wahlberg answered the student, he pointed out that Miles was wearing a black sweater with a big white "M" stitched across it. "I like the 'M,' Miles. I always used to wear everything with an 'M,'" he said as the crowd erupted in laughter. "People were always like, 'Why are you wearing a Michigan hat?' I would say, 'It's an 'M,' not for 'Michigan,' but it's for 'Mark.'"

Wahlberg will appear in the upcoming action-thriller *Mile 22*, which is set to bow Aug. 17.

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