

# CHARACTER EDUCATION



RAVENSWORTH LOCATION: 703-321-0300

Ravenworth Shopping Center - 5236 Port Royal Road - Springfield, VA 22151

FAIRFAX STATION LOCATION: 703-272-7700

Fairfax Station Square - 5624 Ox Rd Ste E - Fairfax Station, VA 22039

[WWW.RVTKD.COM](http://WWW.RVTKD.COM)

# Benefits of Martial Arts Training

## Short Term Benefits

There are a few short-term benefits to martial arts training; however, most of the noticeable benefits take time to set in. Some benefits that you may notice right away are; improved energy, noticeable gains in flexibility, strength and endurance, and a knowledge of basic self-defense skills.

However, students who have trained for a short period should be careful not to develop a false sense of ability in self-defense.

## Long Term Benefits

There's a saying that goes something like this; "practice for a day, lose it in a day, practice for a year, keep it for a year." Meaning that the longer someone works at something, the longer it takes the skill/benefit to disappear. All of the short-term benefits will continue to improve but many new ones will start to show.

Goal setting becomes very easy through skills, tips and belts (a step-by-step plan to achieve a long term goal).

Courtesy/Respect (bowing, saying "yes sir/maam," etc.) should be becoming second-nature.

Perseverance (not giving up when things get tough) is something that comes into play at some point and a student will learn to keep working when things get "tough."

Learning to focus on the task at hand and staying calm under pressure happen when students have to test their skills in front of instructors.

Stress relief as each class is a way to "let off the steam" of everyday life.

Self-Defense skills (it takes time to learn to perform techniques correctly and smoothly as if the move is second nature and requires no conscious thought).

Self Discipline improves because students are taught to sit straight, not talk at times and stand still when need be. This leads to learning how to control themselves in other ways.

Great overall health for the mind body and spirit so that students quality of life improves in all areas.

# Your Role as a Parent

Congratulations on enrolling your child in our prestigious program! We are dedicated to helping your child be the best that he or she can be while preparing your child for the world. We appreciate the opportunity to work with the most precious thing in your life....your child.

Here are some important tips that will help your child get the most out of our program

- Make sure your child attends class regularly. Children adjust to consistency. If taking class becomes an option and not a priority, they will not adjust as well. If your child is going to miss a class for any reason, try and make it up as soon as possible.
- Watch your child participate often. Your child wants to make you proud. The best way they can show you how well they are doing is for you to see for yourself
- Monitor your child's progress. While earning a tip every week is not always possible (no matter how hard someone works) it should still be happening regularly, especially if their attendance and effort is good. You may want to encourage your child to try for a tip (they may be nervous and just need some extra encouragement from you), or consult an instructor if they are having trouble completing the requirements (often times students make things harder on themselves by focusing on the wrong things). Talking with an instructor helps keep everyone on the same page.
- Invite family, friends and teachers to your child's belt promotion. This is a big event for your child in his or her martial arts training that only comes around every 2 – 3 months. For your child, 2 – 3 months is a long time. Make it a big event and your child's confidence will grow!
- Try to set up training time at home. Using a punching bag or hand target, doing stretches & exercises, using curriculum DVD's, anything extra will make you better
- The best thing you can do for your child's progress is to take class yourself. Not only will it help in their understanding of the skills but it's a great bonding experience.
- We highly recommend you read the sheets your child receives with them to help them really understand the message.

# Why you should be referring everyone you know

The highest honor you can show your dojang and instructor is to refer new people to us (you think that highly that you would want those you care about to experience all that we have to offer)

If you feel that this has changed your life for the better then you should not want to keep it a secret and something that only "you" get to do.

Think about it like this, if everyone learned the patience, self-control, self-discipline, fitness..... aspects of Taekwondo, how different would the world be? Would there be as much conflict, obesity, laziness.....?

Taekwondo could change the world, but not if it's a secret.

So if you feel that we do everything we can to make this program a success, we ask that you "shout from the rooftops" about us.

## How to be a good student

There are many ways to be a "good" student, but the most important ones have nothing to do with skill. Attitude, Effort, Consistency (in attendance), Punctuality, Perseverance and a desire to constantly improve are the main things we look for from students.

Showing a great attitude is not always easy, but says a lot about your character.

Great effort (working hard) shows that you care about yourself because you know that is the only way you will accomplish anything.

Consistency in attendance is the only way to consistently improve. If you take time off from class you are taking time off from getting better.

Punctuality is a good habit for all situations, and shows respect for everyone's time (including your own)

Perseverance is the only way to achieve Black Belt Excellence. No one will achieve this level with out having to persevere through some rough times.

Constantly improve your skill in Taekwondo through extra practice at home before and after class, improve flexibility by stretching, working on your strength by doing extra exercise, have a plan for learning skills step by step.

# What “is” Black Belt Club?

The “Black Belt Club” or BBC is a membership level for when you have decided that earning Black Belt is your goal.

Whether this happens after 3, 6, 12 months or at Gold Belt, Green Belt..... does not matter. We have options that will help take you to your projected Black Belt graduation date or beyond.

Just as with anything else in life, the more you do it, the better you become. Being a BBC member allows you to train an extra time per week. If you train 2 times per week (without missing any classes) after 1 year you will have taken 104 classes, with 3 classes per week you will have taken 156 classes (52 extra classes or at 2 classes per week, 6 months of extra training), think about how much farther ahead you’ll be and how much easier things will be.

As well, you also have the option of participating in a specialty class (Sparring Team or Black Belt Training). This class will help you develop even more skill on top of what you are already getting in your weekly classes. With graduation fees included and all the extra classes, it is a great value. For all we offer you we ask that you make the commitment to attend throughout no matter what.

You will see the quote “THIS IS A BLACK BELT SCHOOL” posted in the dojang. What this means is that we train students to be Black Belts here. We don’t train students to be Green, Blue, Red Belts, those belts are fine, but that is not our goal. When a student attends academic school they are attending with the intention of graduating. We are a school too and after a certain point of “trying it out” we want you to make the decision to train for Black Belt and nothing less. The instructors goal is to help each and every student achieve this level of success and each class students are helped take another step forward. Black Belt Club is not necessary to achieve the rank of Black Belt, but it certainly helps.

# Champions have confidence!

The key to developing confidence is preparation.

In the Martial Arts, the more you practice and train, the more confident you become in your skills. The more confident you are, the better you feel and the better you perform.

**Champions have confidence, and that gives them greater strength and fortitude to take aggressive action towards all of their dreams and goals.**

Quite often, when you gain confidence in one area of life, it shows up in other areas as well.

This is why so many of our Junior Black Belt Champions are also academic achievers as well.

A child that is given the gift of confidence will achieve excellence in all areas of their life. Athletics, academics and otherwise.

In the same regard, adults that become Black Belt Champions, often excel in the dojang, in their professional and personal lives as well. It's very common that a student training for Black Belt begins to see peak results in every other area of life.

If a person lacks confidence, they will be "frozen" in fear.

To achieve outstanding results, you must take great actions. To take great action, you must have the courage and confidence that you can and will succeed.

Most find that Martial Arts training sharpens their mind, body and spirit.

**If you want to increase your confidence in any aspect of your life, then you must increase your practice and preparation.**

Study hard, train hard and prepare yourself for greatness!

**Goal** - the purpose toward which an endeavor is directed; an objective

## THE PURSUIT OF GOALS

Learning to set and achieve goals is a life skill that ranges from simple tasks to life changing events, from a matter of hours, to years in the making.

When a student steps through the door to engage in martial arts, they have a goal. For one reason or another, they are *inspired* to learn more. Something about it peaked their interest and has kept them coming back to further grow their knowledge and skills.

ASK YOURSELF:

*What inspired you to learn more about martial arts?*

*What was your goal when you started?*

*What do you believe you have achieved so far?*

*What new goals have you set for yourself?*

“We all have dreams. But in order to make dreams come into reality, it takes an awful lot of determination, dedication, self-discipline, and effort.” Jesse Owens

## SETTING GOALS

When setting goals be sure to make them “SMART” Specific Measurable Achievable Realistic Time specific

Realistic and achievable. It is one thing to fantasize and dream about “one day” achieving a certain special goal, but if it is simply too far out of reach, you only set yourself up for failure.

Instead, choose goals that are well within reach and serve as milestones for the ultimate “big” objective. By being realistic, you give yourself a better chance to live up to expectations.

Measurable – It is always good to take note of your starting point when setting a goal, so you can measure your progress as you approach the finish line. For example, distance runners track their “minutes per mile” progress as they prepare for long distance events.

*“Milestone; Significant accomplishment; intermediate goal”*

## THE IMPORTANCE OF MILESTONES

Close your eyes and imagine the following scenario

You are standing at the bottom of a long ladder. Your goal is to make it to the top so you can get to the tree house. It is a long way and you're not sure if you can make it. You think about not even trying.

You decide to take it one-step at a time and give yourself a pat on the back for each one you manage to climb up. You keep your head down and focused on these little milestones.

With each step, you experience a boost in confidence and you find yourself well over half way. You look up and see that your goal is near.

Finally, with a sense of pride and accomplishment, you reach the top.

“The person who makes a success of living is the one who sees his goal steadily and aims for it unswervingly. That is dedication.” Cecil B. De Mille

## ACHIEVING YOUR GOALS – WHAT NOW?

Achieving a goal marks the completion of an objective, the reward ranging from gifts and/or ceremonies to recognition among peers and a pat on the back from a favorite coach or teacher.

Stop and savor the feeling of accomplishment before moving onto the next bigger and better thing. This does not mean “bragging” to your friends, but quietly acknowledging what you have found yourself capable of doing.

This is also the time to reflect on how this goal fits into the ‘big picture’. Is this the end goal, or is it a stepping-stone to bring you to the next level? Even young students can learn to translate dreams into reality by setting bite size goals that lead them to their final destination.

Learning to set realistic goals by making a plan for achieving them and ‘working up the ladder’ with focus and dedication is such an important life skill.

Take Charge of Your Future!



# What is Self-Defense? (part I)

Self Defense is not just kicking and punching, although this is what comes to mind for most people when asked about self-defense. A true martial artist will do whatever it takes to avoid a physical confrontation, and if they do well with the following, they will probably never have to “fight” to be safe

## Different types of self-defense

**Physical** – Of course this includes all of the blocking, kicking, punching, etc., but it also includes many other things. Your posture is very important, if you stand up straight you look stronger and are less likely to be “singled out” as weak by a bully. As well, posture will help improve your Taekwondo techniques. A strong voice will also keep you safe as you don’t appear or sound weak/scared. Fitness, all of the exercises, stretches and improved health will keep you “safe” from illness, obesity and make you appear stronger and thus less likely to be bothered. Think of the animal kingdom, the lion doesn’t go after the strongest/fastest, it goes after the slowest/weakest animal.

\*\*\*Special Note - Parents you must go over what you would like child to do in self-defense situations (do you want them to fight back, just block, etc) as this will help children be more confident of what to do in a pressure situation.

**Mental** – This means “using your head” to stay out of trouble. There are situations, areas, people to stay away from. If you involve yourself with “trouble” you will soon find “trouble.” Be aware of your surroundings, knowing who and what is where. Adults, for example should be extra aware of their surroundings when walking through a parking garage at night.

**Emotional** – who among us has not ever said or done something we normally wouldn’t have when we were upset. Often times we tend to escalate things by letting our emotions get the better of us instead of using our head and de-escalating. It is important to learn to control our emotions, often times a “smart” remark is all it takes to put someone else over the edge. Also, think of it like this, if someone else makes you “that” angry, who’s really in control of things now? Them, or you?

**Financial** – There are different sayings about money, one person says “money is the root of all evil.” Another saying (which is probably a little bit more on point) is “the lack of money is the root of all evil.” Money does not have to be the center of your world, but if you don’t understand how it works you can have a real “tough” time. Parents; teach your children about money, spending, value of things, savings, investments, if you don’t know then it’s the perfect opportunity for you to learn. Some suggestions for reading on this topic (Rich dad poor dad by Robert Kiyosaki, The Millionaire next door by Thomas J Stanley, Any of the “dummy” books)

**Property** – while not all of this has to do with the “self” some of it does, and some of it is just common sense that we sometimes overlook. Lock your doors (home, car, etc), it’s a simple preventive measure. If you have an alarm for your house, turn it on. Keep records of what you own and put your name on things.

# Qualities of Black Belt Excellence

## What is Black Belt Excellence?

It doesn't necessarily mean someone is a Black Belt, just someone striving to be their best.

1 – Be happy but not satisfied – in other words constant, never ending improvement

Wherever a student might be; an intermediate rank, an advanced rank, someone who has been training for 25 years, should they be happy with their skill level and where they're at? Absolutely, without a doubt. Should they be satisfied with where they're at? Absolutely not! That's the difference, someone with Black Belt excellence is always striving to become a little bit better in one area or another. This is the number one quality of a student with black belt excellence.

2 – To compare yourself not with others, but with your own potential.

So what often happens on the martial arts mat is that a student will look over and see someone kicking higher than them, that has more flexibility than them and all of a sudden they don't feel like they're worthy of their belt or they get depressed because they're not progressing as fast as the person next to them. Or, someone pushes too hard to try and keep up with the person next to them and ends of getting hurt, or on the flip side they have more natural talent than the person next to them and so they don't try near as hard because "look at how much better I am than everyone around me." So what we try and stress is for students to compare themselves to their own potential and not everyone else around them, and this way we get a much more realistic goal. This way there isn't a ranking of "he is the best in the class and she is the second best and so on..." But that there is healthy competition for everyone to work towards a common goal. And the instructors do their best to learn about every student so that we can help each student reach their individual potential.

3 – To keep emotions in balance.

There's a saying that goes, "lose your control of your emotions in a fight and your opponent has an ally." However, every emotion is important and has a place. There's a place for fear, there's a place for anger, there's a place for being excited but what's important is that you're able to control your emotions. When you see someone that loses their temper, instead of thinking, "wow, that guy is bad, he lost his temper," look at that as a sign of weakness. As it was once said "Who is a mighty person? One who can control their emotions." It is important to learn to channel that anger, that fear and use it to make you better at whatever it is you're doing.

#### 4 – Developing Self Discipline

Someone who has self-discipline is someone who knows what they're supposed to do and does it. Discipline is like a muscle, the more you develop it, the more you use it and the easier it gets. Students develop self-discipline by learning skills in class and replacing old habits with new habits. As they move up in belts they learn how to do things better and it becomes very apparent that their "new" habits are really helping out. Anyone that is successful, regardless of the field, self-discipline is what got them there. Take for example a doctor that has 12 years of college education and a "junkie" on the street. The difference is that one understands instant gratification and the other understands long-term benefits. The doctor was able to put off a lot of things along the way in lieu of something great down the road whereas the junkie is only concerned with the next five minutes. Self-discipline is the quality of a champion.

#### 5 – When life hands you lemons, make lemonade.

"Everything happens for a purpose and it serves you" (Tony Robbins). Is that true or not, who knows. But what it teaches us is that when difficult situations come up, you will ask yourself empowering questions and automatically concentrate on solutions to the problem instead of the challenges. Always be solution oriented. So instead of asking the question "Why does this always happen to me?" Ask the question "How can I benefit from this?" If that is your attitude, you'll always come up swinging

# Dependability

*when others can count on you, you are a dependable person*

Children count on adults being dependable, but children have to learn how to be dependable from examples. Some qualities of being dependable are; being on time, doing your best, pitching in when others need help, and doing what you say you will do.

Can you depend on your instructor to be in class, ready to greet you with the lesson ready? How does this make you feel? Would class be different if the instructor came in late and didn't know what they were going to do? Would you want to come to class?

## PEOPLE DEPEND ON YOU TO BE ON TIME

"People can depend on you when you have a reputation for being on time."  
Natalie Rimmer

Everyone is late occasionally, but no one wants a reputation for being late all the time.

Think of a time when you were excited and couldn't wait to go somewhere or to do something (maybe your first martial arts class). How would you feel if the person taking you arrived late?

If someone is always late for things that are important to you, it should help you understand why you should be dependable about being on time so others won't feel the same way.

## SELF-RESPECT LEADS TO SELF-DISCIPLINE

"The more I help others to succeed, the more I succeed." Ray Kroc

Respect is a traditional tenet of the martial arts and that includes self-respect. When you respect yourself, you want what is best for you. This means making certain you do things that are good for you (self-respect) even when you don't feel like it (self-discipline).

Have you ever come to class when you may not have felt like coming? Maybe you were doing something fun, and didn't want to leave even though you would have fun at class. We've all felt that way at times, but it is self-discipline that moves us to do what is right for us.

## DOING THE RIGHT THING, EVEN WHEN IT'S DIFFICULT

"You make the world a better place by making yourself a better person."  
Scott Sorrell

Remember that one of the most important ways to show how dependable you are is doing what you say you will. This sounds easy, but can be very difficult.

If you told your mom you would clean your room on Saturday, but a friend called and invited you to see the newest movie, which would you do?

If five friends said they would come to your party and only one or two showed up, how would you feel?

You told your instructor you would help at a special class but a friend called you up that morning and invited you to a fun party, which would you go to?

These are difficult choices, even for adults. When someone depends on us, they are counting on us to do what we say we will.

# Confidence (Part 1)

"It is not the mountain we conquer but ourselves." Edmund Hillary

## COMMUNICATE WITH CONFIDENCE

I want you to do an experiment; I want you to do a Kiop! (Taekwondo yell) Please first make sure that it is an appropriate place and time to do so. Make sure you really kiop and don't just say it. Now do it again, but this time put the palm of your hand two or three inches from your mouth. Did you feel a burst of air when you yelled?

Why do you think yelling helps when you are struggling to do something difficult like breaking a board or striking a pad? Many times when a person is nervous, they hold their breath or don't breathe deeply. Yelling actually gives about a 20% increase in power output. Having the confidence to yell also helps when something bad happens. Some people who are attacked or are in an emergency situation lose the ability to yell for help. By using those "yelling muscles," you have a better chance of yelling for help if you ever need to. Remember, only yell when it's appropriate.

"Whatever you say, say it with conviction." Mark Twain

## SOFTER CONFIDENCE

Yelling with confidence is one thing, but how do we speak at a normal volume with confidence, like when we introduce ourselves or have to read aloud in school? Practice is what helps many of us get over the shaky, quiet voice that lacks confidence. If you have to read a book report at school (or give a presentation at work), practice it in front of a mirror so you will feel prepared and confident.

It is natural to be nervous and appear less confident when meeting new people but you can conquer it. To keep from becoming overly nervous, you should practice introducing yourself to others. It may feel silly, but when the time comes to do it for real, your confidence will be noticeable.

"Confidence is preparation. Everything else is beyond your control." Richard Kline

## BODY LANGUAGE

Martial artists are lucky, because we begin showing more confidence as soon as we learn to tie our white belt. We've talked about how our voice shows we are confident, but our body language also shows confidence.

How can you "look" confident? (Stand straight, relax shoulders, eye contact, etc)

"Men harm others by their deeds, themselves by their thoughts." Augustus William

## BELIEVE YOU ARE CONFIDENT

We've discussed looking and sounding confident, but to really look and sound confident, you have to feel confident inside. Sure, we all get nervous in new situations, but we can look and sound confident by feeling confident inside. By telling yourself that you can do something or that you can face the challenge, you project confidence you might not realize you have.

You practice your martial arts every week so when it's time for your belt graduation, you might be nervous, but you are ready to go out there and show everyone you can do it. First, you have to convince yourself you can do it. That helps you show your confidence.

Oliver Wendell Holmes, a famous writer from the 1800s, once attended a meeting in which he was the shortest man present. "Dr. Holmes," quipped a friend, "I should think you'd feel rather small among us big fellows." "I do," retorted Holmes, "I feel like a dime among a lot of pennies." Now that is showing confidence in oneself.

## How to improve your child's confidence

– as parents remember that you shape it more than anyone. So be patient but reasonable. What that means is that when your child tries something, if the first response is "nope" or "wrong" or anything to that effect you may have just "killed" their confidence and they will not want to make another attempt. And be reasonable about the expectations of what your child is attempting. People of all ages (kids and adults) build confidence through small successes at first and then move on to more challenging endeavors, just like you can't go from white to black belt in one jump.

- let children do things for themselves (start wherever they're at and add on). Meaning that if your child is dressing themselves but can't tie their shoes, well that's the next step. If they're having trouble with reading, don't rush them through, help them when they really need it (so they don't lose all motivation) but allow them to "do" most of the work and they'll "feel" like they can.

- be supportive and help "guide" them. What you say will matter a lot to your child, even if you aren't an "expert" on the subject in question. Motivation will keep someone working; motivation to continue is the key.

# Self-Discipline

training and controlling of oneself and one's conduct, usually for personal improvement.

## PRINCIPLES OF SELF-DISCIPLINE

"In reading the lives of great men, I found that the first victory they won was over themselves.... Self-discipline with all of them came first." Harry S. Truman

Self-discipline is a fundamental life skill; the importance of which we try to impress upon children of all ages. It plays a key role in learning how to successfully manage responsibilities at home, school, the community and helps prepare youngsters for the road ahead.

*Ask yourself - When were some times that you have had to use this skill?*

## SELF-DISCIPLINE AND FOCUS

"Thinking about your words and actions, and then making choices that are right for you and others." Worldofteaching.com

Throughout life, your ability to be self-disciplined will be challenged. There are many distractions in life and it is easy to stray off course if you lack the ability to focus on things that are important to you.

When you find yourself in a situation which challenges you, focus on your end goal and let that help you prioritize how you manage your time and resources. With self-discipline, practice makes perfect!

## SELF-CONTROL AND OVERCOMING TEMPTATION

"The foundation of self-discipline is the ability to control one's thoughts, actions, attitudes and feelings." Worldofteaching.com

A major aspect of self-discipline involves self-control and the ability to resist temptation (the desire to have or do something that you know you should avoid). For young and old, this is very difficult and an area that many struggle with.

*Ask yourself - Think about the last time you gave into temptation, how did you feel about that decision?*



Imagine something that you desperately want for your birthday. But it is months away and you want that special something soon. You realize you do have the ability to make it happen. You make a promise to yourself to earn extra money and add it to your savings. Two months later, you've almost saved enough to buy it, but your friends try to persuade you to spend the money on something else. What to do? What does this tell you about your ability to resist temptation? Will your decision make you feel disappointed or proud?

## TOOLS TO HELP YOU SUCCEED

The Greek philosopher Plato was once asked, "What man is most fit to govern a town?" Plato's reply: "He that can well govern himself."

Exercising good self-discipline is about having a great attitude about self-improvement. Self-discipline is not negatively limiting yourself, but it is positively managing your life. Self-discipline is about focusing on something beyond your selfish desires to achieve great goals.

Focus in on your goals. Learn to push distractions out of your mind.

Resist Temptation and situations that are going to lead you into temptation. Think about ways you can and will respond in those situations.

Make a plan to keep yourself accountable. Ask your parents, teachers, coworkers or friends to help you out when you need extra encouragement.

Trust and have faith in your willpower! Success is sweet when you have been challenged, yet have persevered to the end!

Self-discipline is fundamental to understanding and practicing martial arts.

# Commitment

A promise or pledge to do

## COMMITMENT; Myself

Kids – what are your “grown up” goals and what commitments will you need to make to reach those goals?

How is your involvement in martial arts a commitment to yourself?

What does it take to be committed to a healthy life-style?

## COMMITMENT; Family & Friends

“The quality of a person’s life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence, regardless of their chosen field or endeavor.” Vincent Lombardi

Identify some commitments to your family and friends. How will these help your whole family and friends?

Commitment can be hard, especially regarding peer pressure. It is said that nothing worthwhile is ever easy.

Commitment signifies love and respect; it means others can depend on you to do the right thing regardless of social pressures.

## COMMITMENT TO ACTION IN YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

“Unless commitment is made, there are only promises and hopes.....but no plans.” Peter Drucker (US writer, educator, management consultant)

What are some activities for the greater good of your community?

Think about how you can make a positive difference in your school, workplace or neighborhood.

Think about things you take for granted that are actually the result of someone’s commitment to making a difference.

Commitments can start out small – but have a powerful impact. For example, getting involved with neighborhood clean-ups or a local charity.

## THE BIGGER PICTURE – OUR GLOBAL COMMUNITY

“Our common destiny rests on the willingness of people to set aside narrow self-interests and to cooperate with other cultures, races, nations, and religions for the well-being of all life.” Foundation for Global Community

How do stories in the news make you feel?

You can make a difference.

Actions that lead to positive change

The environment – Make a promise to the three R’s: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. Set an example for family, friends and neighbors.

Cultures and Languages – Plan to learn more about cultures and languages around the world.

# Patience with learning Techniques

All techniques take a while

Your first horse-stance punch is a lot different than your 1000<sup>th</sup> and that punch is a lot different than your 10,000<sup>th</sup> and so on, techniques will continue to evolve and improve with continued practice.

A common mistake with students is their mindset of "I think I'm doing it correctly so now I'm ready for something new," not realizing that "learning how to do a technique" is not actually "practicing that technique," you can only "practice a technique" once you've learned how to do it correctly." If that went way over your head, go back to the beginning when I talked about horse-stance punching.

As techniques become more difficult, you will find that it takes longer and longer to just learn to do it correctly. Of course there are always those techniques that will come quickly because you can do it naturally and other techniques that will take even longer because they don't come naturally. Also remember that there will always be things that you can't do as well as others, you can work hard to get better, but it is important to have the correct mindset about this. If you "beat yourself up" about not being as good at something you will just be miserable and miss the whole point of martial arts which is self-improvement, not perfection.

As the saying goes "anything worth doing is worth doing poorly at first."

Front kicks aren't that special because most people can do them without much practice (although a great front kick takes some time). So be patient and enjoy the "fun" of overcoming obstacles. Once you do, you will build confidence and go into your next endeavor with a better mindset. After a while this "effect" snowballs and you are unstoppable (if you want to be)

# Pride

a feeling of self-respect and personal worth or a satisfaction with your (or another's) achievements (as in parental pride)

What are some events of achievements that have made you feel proud?

An ongoing commitment to improving martial arts skill is an example of something to be proud of. It is an example of hard work and dedication and can reward students with satisfaction and a sense of pride.

Your hard work and good attitude as a student make your instructors proud!

## PRIDE AND MODESTY

"Be modest! It is the kind of pride least likely to offend." Jules Renard

It is important to feel good about yourself and what you can do, but having too much pride can become a problem.

We want to show modesty (having a limited and not overly high opinion of oneself; being somewhat shy about your skills and achievements; not boastful)

Feeling proud about your abilities and your accomplishments makes you feel special and also gives you a positive attitude toward learning and trying new things.

Avoid bragging to others how good you are, this can make you look selfish. The best way to feel proud is to *feel it on the inside* – in your heart

## PRIDE IN THOSE AROUND YOU

"Fortunately, my parents always encouraged me to be grateful that I was healthy, and stand up and be proud and carry myself with dignity." Susan Anton

What can you do to make your parents or family proud?

Who is someone you are proud of and what it is that makes you feel this way?

Are you proud of others the same way you are proud of yourself and your accomplishments?

Thinking about pride and being proud from a new perspective can help you understand why you sometimes see things differently than those around you.

## PRIDE IN TEAMWORK

“Sports for me is when a guy walks off and you really can’t tell whether he won or lost, when he carries himself with pride either way.” Jim Courier

How might team pride differ from the kind of pride you feel in yourself as an individual?

Sometimes even if someone didn’t perform to their best ability, their sense of team pride was the stronger emotion. What does that say about the importance of being a team player?

Think about situations where you experienced team pride, win or lose. What do you remember most about it?

“The most important thing I know about the spirit of sport.... It instills in us the ability to recognize and appreciate the talents of others as well as the gifts we have been given and the ability to work with others as a team. It also allows us to face the challenge of competition, learn from our successes and failures, altogether making us true champions in life.” Dr. Dot Richardson

# Generosity

Generosity means sharing what you have. To be truly generous, however, you must do more than give money or objects that have little or no value for you. You must give of yourself and your time, which are often more precious, and with no expectation of being compensated. True generosity is sharing what is meaningful or has value, without expecting any thanks or consideration, in return.

In the martial arts, there are many ways to be generous. Offer your time to assist another student with his or her training. Don't expect any help in return, however. Help to defend those who are unable to defend themselves. Coordinate fund-raisers to help underprivileged people in your community. Entertain seniors at retirement centers with marital arts demonstrations. You get the idea right?

Are you a generous person? Ask yourself the following questions to measure your generosity.

- Would you share your lunch with a friend if he or she didn't have one?
- Would you volunteer to baby sit for a friend without being paid?
- Would you help a family member or friend with a project, without expecting anything in return?
- Would you lend your jacket to a younger person, even though you are cold?
- Would you spend time with an elderly family member instead of a day with your friends?

If you answered, "Yes," to all of these questions, then you are a very generous individual. Many people probably like you, and you have great relationships with your friends and family. You are a truly generous person and you make society a better place to live.

There are many ways to show your generosity. Be generous with your time, money, possessions and even talent. The most important thing to remember is that our society needs everyone to be more generous. If every one of us added just one more generous act of kindness each day, then we would feel great for sharing, and those we help would enjoy life more.

# Responsibility

There are many different things going on in life, but for children, school is near the top. This is why we require a "B" average in school for children/teens who are testing for Black Belt.

There are priorities in everyone's life and responsibilities that go along with each one. The higher the priority, the more important the responsibility that goes along with it.

Children – family, school, religion, pets are probably top priorities (in no particular order), then follows Taekwondo, sports, friends, video games, etc

Adults – same list but probably a little different

If your priorities are in order and you keep up with your responsibilities, you should be doing pretty well

"It is not only what we do that we are held responsible, but also for what we do not do."  
John Baptiste Moliere

Translation for Adults;

You have obligations to your family, your friends and your co-workers much the same as anyone. You are responsible for many tasks and responsibilities in different roles and environments. Uncompleted tasks are also your responsibility. A work assignment is a responsibility, and when you complete it, you have fulfilled your responsibility; however, if it is late, then you really didn't fulfill your obligation, and you'll have to answer to the boss. If you forget to thank your spouse for a kind deed and he or she feels you are ungrateful, then that situation is your responsibility. Tasks and responsibilities are often more than just what is obvious. It may be difficult, but remember, you are also responsible for the consequences of your actions, not just the actions.

Translation for Kids

You have many responsibilities. You must finish your homework on time. You must listen to your teachers and study hard in school. You listen to your parents. You must do your chores each week. As a future Black Belt, you must practice kicks and punches. Others will trust and rely on you. You are responsible for what you do not do. Don't do your homework and you may have to stay after school. Don't do your chores and you may have to sit in your room. Don't help a friend being bullied and you may lose him as a friend. Be a responsible martial artist. Before you act, remind yourself you are also responsible for what you don't do.

Questions for kids

- 1 – Do your parents think you are responsible?
- 2 – What are two chores at home that are your responsibility?



“Ninety-nine percent of all failures come from people who have a habit of making excuses.” George Washington Carver

#### Translation for Adults

Successful people share many common traits. They are confident. They are skilled leaders. They also take responsibility for their actions-without making excuses. There may be reasons why their actions are unsuccessful, but they don't excuse their failures or “pass the buck.” They know the “buck” stops with them. You must also be willing to have the “buck” stop with you, when you are responsible. Though it may be initially challenging, taking responsibility for your actions always pay in the end. Once you accept the consequences of your actions, you can fix them. Every excuse just takes you further from a solution. Every time you accept responsibility for a mistake or unsuccessful consequences, you are one step closer to experiencing Black Belt excellence.

#### Translation for Kids

You and everyone make mistakes. Making a mistake is a lesson to be learned. You must learn to be responsible for your actions and mistakes. It is easy to make an excuse. You received a bad grade on a test, so you blame your teacher. You don't win first place at the Taekwondo tournament, so the judges hate you. You'll never succeed or become better, if you blame others. When you are responsible, you can be a better student and martial artist. Did you receive a bad grade in school? Study harder next time. Didn't win first place at the Taekwondo tournament? Practice more and ask for help. When you take responsibility, you are starting to have a Black Belt attitude.

#### Questions

- 1 – How did taking responsibility for an action help you become a better person?
- 2 – Explain how one of your friend's actions is an example of being responsible?

“Responsibilities gravitate to the person who can shoulder them.” Tom Stoppard

#### Translation for Adults

The idea of “being responsible” or “accepting responsibility” often has a negative connotation. In reality, it is quite the opposite. To achieve great success, you must be willing to take on great responsibility. Arguably, one of the most rewarding experiences is parenthood. By no means is that an easy task! It requires a tremendous amount of work and dedication. It is also tremendously gratifying. Ask any parent, and they will certainly agree that it is an amazing experience-and responsibility. Many of your greatest opportunities will also be your greatest challenges. You must be willing to step forward, and accept them!

### Translation for Kids

Some people don't want to be responsible. They think it is too much work. They think life is easier without responsibilities. They are wrong. You want to be a great person. You want to be a Black Belt. You must be responsible. Come to class every week. Practice every day. Study and do your homework on time. You will be a great student, too. The most successful people in the world are responsible. They want the hard work. They want to test their self-discipline. That is why they succeed. Don't avoid your responsibilities. Step forward, and meet them head-on.

### Questions

1 – What are your responsibilities, if you expect to be a great student or employee?

2 – What are your responsibilities, if you expect to be a great Black Belt?

"Responsibility's like a string we can only see the middle of. Both ends are out of sight."  
William McFee

### Translation for Adults

The two ends of responsibility that can't be seen are really two choices; Deny responsibility and regress, or accept responsibility and grow to your full potential. As with any tough decision, though, you will not see the results of your choice until time has passed. It may be easy not to accept your faults and mistakes today. After a month or two, or a year, however, the ramifications could be great. Your results and reward could also be great, if you accept responsibility, whether you admit a mistake or work harder.

### Translation for Kids

You have two choices for every responsibility in your life. Don't be responsible. Blame others. Never become the great person you want to be. The second choice is to accept responsibility. Do the hard work. Become the best person you can be. You may not know the results of your choice until later. You can blame your brother or sister for breaking a lamp, so you're not blamed. Remember, they may not want to help you later, when you need help, because you blamed them. Try always to make the right choice. You may be in trouble, but always accept responsibility for your actions. Your honesty and willingness to grow and become a better person will always be your reward.

### Questions

1 – What are the positive results of taking responsibility?

2 – What can you learn from a famous person who took responsibility for his or her actions?

# Thankfulness

is described as “showing gratitude and appreciation for gifts and benefits received.” There are many ways we can show that we are thankful for things that we are fortunate enough to receive.

Ways you can show you are thankful;

Words - such as saying “Thank You” or writing a thank you card

Touch - such as a hug to a grandparent or a cool handshake to a friend

Body Language - such as showing gratitude with a joyful expression or jumping up and down with glee!

Remember that sometimes even the smallest gesture can warm the hearts of both the giver and the receiver.

Giving/expressing thanks should become a habit and sometimes requires extra effort. Parents, grandparents, and teachers often help us develop these habits through subtle reminders, such as “Now what do you say to Aunt Betty?”, or they might help you write your thank you cards following a birthday.

“There is more hunger for love and appreciation in this world than for bread.” Mother Teresa

It is important to focus on things in life that we are thankful for and not to focus on all the things we don't have.

Think about the everyday things to be thankful for (things that are often overlooked!), such as: shelter, food, water, good education, loving homes, etc (if any of these were lacking they would be a much bigger concern for you than having the latest electronic item)

Hunger Fact; One out of every eight children under the age of twelve in the U.S. goes to bed hungry every night. When was the last time you went to bed hungry? Makes you thankful for your food, doesn't it?

Think about people and areas of the world that are less fortunate. How does that make you more thankful for the simple things in life?

## BUILDING A TRADITION OF THANKSGIVING

"You simply will not be the same person two months from now after consciously giving thanks each day for the abundance that exists in your life. And you will have set in motion an ancient spiritual law: the more you have and are grateful for, the more will be given you." Sarah Ban Breathnach

Think about the value of giving of yourself versus giving material gifts.

Some examples are (for kids):

- Helping a sibling clean their room
- Sending a family member a handmade card to tell them you love them
- Surprising mom or dad by cleaning out the dishwasher
- Turning off the TV to spend time with a pet

## BEING A THANKFUL PERSON

"Let us be grateful to people who make us happy; they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom." Marcel Proust

How has your deeper understanding of what it means to be thankful changed your attitude?

It's not about what you do, but how you do it. Children are wonderful about taking time to make beautiful crafts and to give with love and care.

Not only is it good manners to express thanks, but it's also a reflection of your character. When you make the effort to show your appreciation, people will take notice and look forward to giving again and again!

# Etiquette

“Etiquette means behaving yourself a little better than is absolutely essential.” Will Cuppy

Most children have been taught basic manners like saying thank you and please, but that is just the beginning. More advanced etiquette is about not making embarrassing social blunders and making others feel comfortable.

A martial arts school is like being in a different culture because of the different etiquette used.

Some examples;

What is the first thing you do when you enter the school to show respect? **Bow**

What do you say if you urgently need something, but the instructor is talking with someone else? **Excuse me**

Whenever you respond to an instructor, what should you always end with? **Sir or Ma’am**

When you ask for something, what do you say? **Please**

When you are given something, what do you say? **Thank you**

If you are introduced to a new instructor, what do you say? **It’s nice to meet you, Sir or Ma’am**

## ENCOURAGING EXAMPLES

“The way to develop the best that is in a man is by appreciation and encouragement.” Charles Schwab

## TAKING TURNS

“Taking turns is the first step in learning to get along with our friends.” Unknown

Martial arts has so many fun and exciting activities, kids can hardly wait for their turn, but it is an important lesson for people of all ages to learn.

## TREAT OTHERS THE WAY YOU WANT TO BE TREATED

"Treat everyone with politeness, even those who are rude to you – not because they are nice, but because you are." Unknown

Martial arts instructors love to work with students because of how great they are. Everyone looks at the instructor, is quiet when they give directions and is respectful by saying yes sir/ma'am.

Do you like being put down, insulted or teased? Of course not.

Martial arts is about respect and building confidence in ourselves and others. If a classmate was having trouble with a roundhouse kick what would you say? A put-down or an encouraging word? What would you want to hear in that situation?

Martial arts should train students to become better people. One thing that any student can do regardless of rank or age is to show respect and have a great attitude.

# Martial Arts Circle of Life

## Start

### Hurting

(Martial Arts training teaches us how to hurt others or prevent someone from hurting us, in other words self defense)

### Healing

(Martial Arts then helps heal our body, our mind and our emotions)

### Harmonizing

(Martial Arts then helps us become more in-tune with everything around us)

### Human Potential

(Martial Arts training then enhances what we are capable of in almost any way you can think of)

### Human Service

(Martial Arts then helps us learn to serve others once we have taken care of ourselves)

### Higher Purpose

(Martial Arts then allows us to see the bigger picture, that it is not about recognition or accolades, it is not about "us" it is about "it")

### Heritage

(What are we leaving behind? The final stage is when we are continually making a difference for our family and community)

## End

# HONOR

“Always demanding the best of oneself, living with honor, devoting one’s talents and gifts to the benefits of others – these are the measures of success that endure when material things have passed away.” Henry Ford

Honor has many different meanings and forms.

Honor is described as principled uprightness of character, personal integrity, having a good name, reputation

Honor and integrity are fundamental to martial arts.

What does it mean to be an honorable person?

How does learning and developing of honorable behavior not only build character, but also helps in making good decisions in difficult situations?

“There is no respect for others without humility in one’s self.” Henri Frederic Amiel

## HONOR YOUR PARENTS (GRANDPARENTS AND OTHERS IN YOUR IMMEDIATE FAMILY CIRCLE)

By showing respect for parents’ authority and wishes, you are honoring your parents.

What happens when you don’t honor your parents and/or caretakers?

Even if you don’t always agree, it is important to learn to set aside pride and your own wishes in order to show respect for authority. Behaving in an honorable manner doesn’t always mean getting your own way.

Consistently honoring one’s parents and caretakers is often a very challenging undertaking for most children and adolescents (and adults for that matter!).

Strive towards honorable and respectful behavior even if you don’t get it right all the time. Your efforts will earn *you* respect!

“Honor your commitments with integrity” Les Brown



## HONOR IN ACCOMPLISHMENT

When you have acted honorable in the past, did it make you feel proud? How did other people respond?

Another way to look at honor is to see it as a symbol of accomplishment, or special recognition for unusual academic achievement, for example; "he graduated with honors", or "he was honored for his work in literature".

How can you strive to achieve honors in school, sports, and so on?

Think about how having a positive attitude makes a difference in your ability to learn,

Kids - a good example of working to achieve honors is a Summer Reading Challenge. Everyone is given the same opportunity to reach the target, but only those who are inspired to do and learn more actually achieve the goal. Those who made the effort receive recognition, or an honor, for their dedicated work.

"All the great things are simple, and many can be expressed in a single word; freedom, justice, honor, duty, mercy, hope." Winston Churchill

## HONOR AND RECOGNITION OF THE GOOD AROUND US

There is yet another way to describe honor; a great privilege; as in *"he was honored to serve his country"*, or *"it was an honor for her to represent her country at the Olympics"*

Have you been in a position of honor like those described above?

Use your imagination and think about how you can see yourself in the future; for example, honoring their school, sports club, family, state, country and so on.

To honor someone or something does not always have to be a major event. A good example is a birthday. The idea behind these celebrations is to honor a person's life, the fellowship they bring to those around them and what they have accomplished. You can even honor your teacher by surprising him/her with a note of appreciation.

Honor is very much an attitude. It is sincere and comes from the heart.

Behaving honorably and with integrity will earn respect and create opportunities in life.

# PATIENCE

Being calm when facing challenges; not acting hasty or impulsive

“Everything comes gradually and at its appointed hour” Ovid

## BELT TESTING TEACHES PATIENCE

Children are not famous for displaying patience. However, as they leave their preschool years behind them, patience is the quality they will need to succeed in school, sports and peer socialization.

A martial arts school is an excellent place to learn patience. Each belt level requires another level of training and skills that need to be mastered before becoming eligible to test again. Some students will move at a faster pace until they hit a skill that will require more time for them to master.

Think of a time when you have had to take more time to get the hang of something and how well did you do showing patience?

## PATIENCE YIELDS REWARDS

“Patience is the ability to idle your motor when you feel like stripping your gears”  
Barbara Johnson

Any time there is something good or fun, the wait is difficult.

Think about times when it has been difficult to wait, e.g., holidays, parties, starting games. You were showing patience, even though you might not have wanted to.

## HAVE PATIENCE WITH YOURSELF

“Have patience with all things, but chiefly have patience with yourself.”  
St. Francis de Sales

Certain personalities have difficulty being patient with themselves. Children in today’s fast-paced environment increasingly suffer from meltdowns because they haven’t been taught to delay their own gratification. This makes it harder for them to cope when the challenges of school, and life in general, hit them.

Think about how creative and patient the inventor Thomas Edison was. He would think of an idea and play with it until it was perfect. When asked if he was disappointed with needing 1000 tries to get the light bulb right, he replied, “Not at all. I now know 999 ways it doesn’t work.” He used patience to develop 1093 inventions for patents, including the phonograph.

“Only those who have the patience to do simple things perfectly will acquire the skill to do difficult things easily.” Johann Friedrich von Schiller

Not even Jesse Owens (or Usain Bolt) learned to run before he walked. Most of us master walking before learning to run, we learn our ABC's before learning to read, and we learn a roundhouse kick before a back hook kick. Many of the skills we will acquire in life have learning prerequisites. With all of the benchmark tests required from preschool forward, children are expected to learn more and at a faster pace than ever before. However, when children feel behind or slow they lose patience with themselves.

Think of accomplishments that you don't even think about now, such as walking, talking, running, etc.

Think about how some of the younger students or siblings are finding those exact skills difficult and challenging. Now, think about what you are learning right now, but are having difficulties mastering, e.g., certain martial arts skills, math.....

Remember that the challenges you are facing will appear easier in the future by using patience and determination, just like the tasks that are now easy for you

# Do it to honor your Parents & Instructors

You have been a student with us for a while and I'm sure that Martial Arts has been a very positive influence on your life. Well I wanted to share a personal story with you to show you the impact that Martial Arts has had on me.

Every summer as a kid I would visit my Grandparents farm in Iowa. When I was old enough, I started helping with the field work, chores, milking cows..... They even paid me a little bit (they would've paid another boy my age to do it anyway so might as well keep it in the family right?). Well after one summer of working for about a month when I was 14, I came back to the dojang and my instructor asked how my summer was and what I'd been up to. I told him and he was upset that I took money from my family. He said that you don't help family for money, you help because they are your family. I felt bad, not for taking the money, I worked real hard for the "little" I received. But because I felt I had let my instructor down.

Well, the next summer I went out and did my month of work and refused to let them pay me and couldn't wait to tell my instructor. I told him that I did what he said, he smiled, said "good", patted me on the back and it was one of the proudest moments of my life because I felt I had truly honored my instructor and family at that point.

What can you do to honor your family and or instructor?

# Indomitable Spirit

your soul, life force, mind and dedication which  
is incapable of being overcome or subdued.

“Indomitable Spirit is the spark that gives life.” Tennessee Williams

## INDOMITABLE SPIRIT CAN INSPIRE OTHERS

Indomitable Spirit can sometimes be a complicated concept.

Example story – I went for a jog last week and found myself exhausted and ready to quit for the day around mile two. Then I came upon a man running with two prosthetic legs. As I passed him, he smiled and commented on what a beautiful day it was. I smiled and waved back and reconsidered my urge to end my workout early. How inspiring to see someone so dedicated under what could be a frustrating circumstance. He had every reason to quit running, but he obviously takes nothing for granted – he was the embodiment of indomitable spirit. Who was I to complain?

## WHY AM I LEARNING MARTIAL ARTS?

“Indomitable spirit is your companion on your Black Belt Journey.”

Even if you have not yet faced martial art challenges, sooner or later you will. Your training will bring you face to face with some of your limitations. (We all have some!) The limitations in your personal journey may be the physical limits of your strength, endurance, flexibility, or coordination. An injury may force you to slow down, modify your techniques, or skip a class or two.

Your challenges may also be mental obstacles that cause you to be impatient with your lack of improvement, frustration at your inability to master a form, or even boredom from the seemingly endless repetition.

You’ll face these challenges in real life too! (Examples: stress at work or school, strained friendships, chores and all the other things that make up our lives)

In the course of your training, the challenges you encounter in the class and in life will frustrate you again and again. They may cause you to question why you press on. The key to getting past the challenges in your training is to train with indomitable spirit! Indomitable spirit is a combination of inner strength and commitment. It’s what keeps the last-place marathon runner going until they cross the finish line, long after the crowds have gone home. Indomitable spirit is confidence and a winning attitude. Indomitable spirit is infinite patience. Keep this in mind in class today, this week, and throughout your journey to Black Belt!

## INDOMITABLE SPIRIT, A "CAN DO" ATTITUDE

"Clear your mind of can't." Samuel Johnson

In a world where our youth have grown up in a video game culture, it is easy to fall into the mindset of "If I fail, I will just ask to try again and start over."

Well, in real life situations there is no reset or start over button. You can not always afford a mistake!

Indomitable Spirit means that you are so committed to something that "failure is not an option"

Are you this passionate about each tip/belt test or each test at work/school?

Think of some things in life (inside and outside of the school) where you only have "one chance," where failure is not an option. Some examples (First Impression, Skydiving.....)

Approach every task this week with a "can-do" attitude to build your indomitable spirit!

## INDOMITABLE SPIRIT IS MORE THAN YOU THINK

"You never really lose until you quit trying." Mike Ditka

Remember that:

Indomitable Spirit can inspire others. Remember others who are less fortunate than you are in some way. Any challenge you face can be overcome. You know that others less equipped than you have been able to overcome these challenges. Use this as inspiration to press on!

Indomitable Spirit is critical to your black belt journey. You must find your inner strength and commitment to overcome all challenges in martial arts and in life to achieve your goals.

Failure is not an option. Indomitable Spirit means that you will never give up. You should approach each belt test, math test, and each task assigned by your parents, spouse or boss with relentless commitment. This is the "can-do" attitude that embodies indomitable spirit.

# Good Manners

showing correct social skills such as  
consideration, tact, respect or courtesy

"Anyone can be polite to a king. It takes a gentleman to be polite to a beggar."  
Unknown

## SHOW EVERYONE YOUR GOOD MANNERS

Most children are born people pleasers. They want to be liked by adults and from the age of three are capable of learning manners. Where better to learn manners than the martial arts school? After all, the first classes usually teach "Yes, sir!" and "No, ma'am!" As the students advance, so do the manners, e.g., bowing to an opponent, thanking instructors and referees.

How do you show good manners at the dojang?

Do you use these manners outside of the dojang as well?

Who do you show these good manners to?

Do you show good manners to friends or other people you meet?

## OTHERS LIKE TO BE WITH WELL-MANNERED PEOPLE

"I seek constantly to improve my manners and graces, for they are the sugar to which all are attracted." Og Mandino

Do people react differently towards you when you use good manners?

Think of someone (any age) who is rude and what makes them rude.

## MEAN IT WHEN YOU SHOW GOOD MANNERS

"Good manners have much to do with the emotions. To make them ring true, one must feel them, not merely exhibit them." Amy Vanderbilt

Good manners may feel strange at first (like bowing did at first), but with practice will feel natural.

## YOUR MANNERS SHOW PEOPLE WHAT YOU ARE REALLY LIKE

"A man's manners are a mirror in which he shows his portrait." Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The first thing everyone notices about someone is their physical appearance. However, usually within a short time, we notice much more about that person. There are many ways to describe a person, but that many of them aren't physical things like brown eyes and red hair. However, it is these non-physical words that we remember the most about people and use to describe them.

How would someone describe you?

It's not just enough to say polite things or do something courteous, your "tone" will tell the real tale of how you feel. Also, maintaining eye contact is another form of good manners

Remember that manners and respect go hand in hand. Good manners towards your parents or caretakers would be to do what they asked the 1<sup>st</sup> time, and not after they have to nag you about it.



# Courage

"You must do the thing you think you cannot do." Eleanor Roosevelt

## Translation for Adults

For adults, courage is often a tough quality to master. As you grow older, you sometimes allow preconceived notions to be obstacles to what you are able to do, stifling your courage. When events scare you or you react to challenges with fear, it is easy to do nothing and fail to move forward. You would not be a martial artist or a future Black Belt, however, if you did not already have some courage. You have already taken the first step to make yourself a better person. That took courage! Remind yourself that you've been courageous in the past, so when you're worried, dig deep, and "do the thing you think you cannot do."

## Translation for Kids

Only you will stop you from having courage. A task or chore will seem impossible if you allow yourself to think you can't do it. You might think it is impossible to do because you're embarrassed or you think you are too young or too old. Whatever the reason, it prevents you from being great. The journey to your Black Belt will be difficult and challenging. You must have courage and perseverance to reach that goal. As you grow older, that same courage will help you overcome other challenges, outside of martial arts. Remember, you can do what you think you cannot do. Show everyone you have the courage and you will succeed.

## Questions (answer to yourself)

1 – Who is someone you consider to be courageous?

2 – What has he or she done to show their courage?

"Courage is not limited to the battlefield or the Indianapolis 500 or bravely catching a thief in your house. The real tests of courage are much quieter. They are the inner tests, like remaining faithful when nobody's looking, like enduring pain when the room is empty, like standing alone when you're misunderstood."

Charles Swindoll

## Translation for Adults

The word "courage" often describes the most heroic examples of police officers, firefighters and the men and women who are soldiers. They rightly deserve to be described as courageous, most of the time; however, everyday acts of courage are equally important. You demonstrate your courage when you take responsibility for a wrong action, apologize to a loved one or ask for a raise at work. Just as the firefighter must have the courage to enter a burning building or a police officer to quell a riot, your life requires moments of courage too. Look to these leaders in your community as examples of courage that will inspire you to be courageous during your everyday activities and challenges.

### Translation for Kids

Think of a brave person with courage. You probably thought of a police officer or a soldier who fights for your country. Those are just two of many right answers. There are many times everyday when you can be courageous. Defending a friend from a bully is an act of courage. Raising your hand to answer a question during class is being courageous. You and the firefighter and soldier all have courage; it is just different courage. Learn how to have courage from the brave leaders in your community. Their examples will help you be courageous everyday.

### Questions

1 – Is it courageous or cowardly to turn someone in for doing something wrong and why?

2 – Did you ever have the courage to turn someone in for doing something wrong?

“Come to the edge,” he said.

They said, “We are afraid.”

“Come to the edge,” he said.

They came. He pushed them,

And they flew....”

Guillaume Apollinaire

### Translation for Adults

Fear is one of the greatest inhibitors, solely because it prevents you from taking a risk. Those who invest in the stock market, for instance, must decide to be conservative or bold with their investments, knowing the greater the risk, the greater the potential return. This also applies to everyday life. You want to be careful all the time, but be willing to take some risk occasionally. Some risk is required to gain worthy goals and rewards. A “leap into the unknown” is also an opportunity to grow, expand your horizons and discover new possibilities. It is a risk you must take, if you want to fly.

### Translation for Kids

You may become scared if someone asks you, “Take a chance.” That is because most of us think of taking a chance as a bad choice. That is not always right. Sometimes, taking a chance allows you to grow. The end of a football game is a great example. There are 30 seconds left in the game. The team with the ball has a choice: Either to kick a field goal to tie the game or try to score a touchdown to win the game. Either choice is risky. Scoring a touchdown offers a greater reward. Sometimes you must be willing to take a chance to score a touchdown or win a competition. Only then will you be able to grow and fly to new opportunities.

### Questions

1 – What do you think is real courage?

2 – Did you ever take a chance or do something risky that resulted in a positive reward? What did you learn?

“Courage is not the lack of fear. It is acting in spite of it.” Mark Twain

#### Translation for Adults

You know fear will often stop you from taking action. It is still okay to be afraid. Having courage does not mean that you are never scared. Many soldiers are afraid before battle. They have real courage and are able to rise above their fear. They use fear, as a catalyst to drive them forward, and so must you, to become great. You may be terrified, but the task or action must be done. With one decision, you'll overcome your fear, demonstrate courage and reach an important goal. You will learn to accept fear and rise above it. You can then call yourself a courageous person.

#### Translation for Kids

Even the bravest people are afraid. Many soldiers will tell you that they were afraid before battle. Being afraid is OK. Learn to use your fear, like the soldier, to drive you toward your goals. Don't stop doing what must be done. People who have real courage also have fear. They feel great because they rose above their fear. They also showed their courage and they reached their goals. When you have Black Belt courage, you use fear as a tool to make yourself better.

#### Questions

- 1 – Why is it all right to be afraid?
- 2 – How can fear help you to grow?

# Faith in your instructor

I often find myself asking students “do you think I want what is best for you?” and they of course answer “yes.” Then as a student you should not worry about what I am asking you to do or what I am asking of you. This is a hard concept, do whatever the instructor asks and not question their decision? But it is of the utmost importance. You will not attain your highest level of potential in martial arts without it.

I would like to share a story of mine from a long, long time ago. When I was a student, you made the jump from Red belt to Black Belt, no steps (tips/belts) in-between. At that time as well there were 35 self-defense techniques that needed to be memorized and 10 forms (Kibon Hyung, Taeguk 1 – 8 and Koryo). The minimum time to train from Red to Black was 6 months (although most took much longer than this) and here I was ready to test in 2 months time since earning Red Belt. I thought “man, I can’t wait, I’ve been busting my tail to get ready and am going to get my Black Belt.” Well, my Master had other plans, he informed me that I would not be testing with the upcoming Black Belt group in April, but that I would have to wait until the following one in June. How unfair, I know all my techniques, I’m in great shape, I’ve got nothing else to do to get ready. Ultimately, it was not what I the student thought, it was what my instructor thought. And after I agreed to wait (although still not happy about it) I saw what the lesson was that he was trying to teach me. Who knows more about martial arts, me? (the Red belt student who had been studying for a few years), I know a lot I thought, I’ve been doing this for a while, who is he to tell me I’m not ready. And then I remembered “Oh yeah, he’s been doing this for his whole life,” I know nothing compared to him.

If you respect the instructor, you must have faith in them. If you do not have that faith or respect, then the relationship needs to end because neither one of you can take it any further than it has already gone.

So next time the instructor asks you to do something you don’t initially think you can do, remember that if we didn’t think you could do it we wouldn’t ask you to try.

# 3 traits of a true Martial Artist strong in body, mind and conduct

A true martial artist knows that you are “incomplete” if you do not develop into a well rounded person.

First – you must be strong in body. Your body is the vehicle that you travel in and allows or holds you back from things. The healthier your body is; the more energy you’ll have, the better you’ll sleep, and the clearer your mind will be. And let’s not forget that your technique will get a lot better.

Second – you must be strong in mind. If you are not sharp in your mind, you will miss opportunities, get less respect and possibly be taken advantage of. Your mind is a muscle that should always be developed and it is important to remember that it will usually be with you much longer than your strength will be.

Third – you must have proper conduct. You can be strong and smart, but if you’re a “jerk” no one will care. Carry yourself with dignity but always humbly. Use the best etiquette/manners possible to show that you have respect. No matter how strong/weak or smart/dumb you are, you can always conduct yourself properly.

# Wisdom

"I don't think much of a man who is not wiser today than he was yesterday."  
Abraham Lincoln

## Translation for Adults

To acquire wisdom requires constant learning and the pursuit of knowledge. Knowledge can be achieved in many ways, but one of the best is your experience. To paraphrase the old saying, "If you fail to learn from past mistakes, you will certainly repeat them." Your past experiences contain a stockpile of wisdom that will be very useful in the future. It may be painful to recall the past, especially if you've made mistakes, but it is also the only way to grow. Review your past actions and experiences during the next week and take a "wisdom" inventory of what you can learn and how that knowledge will help you grow and succeed.

## Translation for Kids

Wisdom is more than just "smarts". It is your effort to learn new ideas everyday. You can learn in school. You can learn from TV programs. You can also learn from your past. The life you've experienced and the actions you've taken will teach you much. If you've made mistakes in the past, then you can learn to avoid making the same mistakes again. That is real wisdom! If you do things different than when you made past mistakes, then you've learned to make the right decisions. Review your past choices before you make a new decision. You'll be more in control of your future. Grow with wisdom and you will succeed.

## Questions

1 – Have you learned from your past actions, especially mistakes?

"Knowledge is the process of piling up facts; wisdom lies in their simplification."  
Martin Fischer

## Translation for Adults

It's one thing to acquire much knowledge and information. It's another thing to use that knowledge and information effectively. You absorb knowledge, regularly, from books, magazines, newspapers, television, the Internet, your interactions with others and throughout the course of everyday life. Wisdom is knowing how to use what you've learned. It's the ability to apply all you've learned to your life. It is a never-ending process of sifting through all that information and knowledge, discarding what is worthless and finding what is really useful. During the next couple of days, start to analyze the recent knowledge and information you've acquired to find those gems of wisdom that can make your life better.

### Translation for Kids

You will acquire more knowledge and information, as you grow older and continue your education. You will learn facts and ideas in your language, math, history and science classes. Someday, you may attend college and learn even more knowledge. The benefit of wisdom is using that knowledge, wisely. Review everything you learn to learn how to use it. Someday, you may have to defend yourself. You would not have time to use every self-defense technique you've learned. You must learn how to pick the exact knowledge you need to defend yourself, quickly. Wisdom is also separating your knowledge into usable pieces. You can then apply those pieces to specific situations. You'll make the right decisions. You'll do the right thing. You will be wise!

### Questions

- 1 – What specific knowledge have you learned in school that helps you in everyday life?
- 2 – What have you learned as a martial artist that helps you in everyday life?

“Good people are good because they've come to wisdom through failure. We get very little wisdom from success, you know.” William Saroyan

### Translation for Adults

The greatest lessons in life are the results of your disappointments. Once you begin to learn from those disappointments, you are gaining wisdom. If you want to be really considered wise, then you will learn not only from your mistakes, but also the mistakes of others. Today's failure may very well lead to tomorrow's victory, if you recognize those failures and take a positive attitude to learn from them. Don't dwell on past mistakes, failures and disappointments because you can't change them. What you can change is you and your future. Use your energies to make today and tomorrow better because you're wiser today.

### Translation for Kids

Life is often filled with disappointments. Life doesn't always treat you right. You may feel bad or that you are a failure. Don't be upset or negative. Forget what went wrong because you can't change it. You can learn how to be right the next time. You practiced real hard for a big game or a school test. Maybe you didn't do well. Your mistakes or failure can teach you to practice differently or work harder for the next test. Failing to pass a tip test could teach you to come to class more often. There is always a good lesson to learn from every situation. Great Black Belts with the right attitude always try to learn those lessons.

### Questions

- 1 – Think of a mistake you made in the past. How did that mistake teach you a valuable lesson?
- 2 – Is it possible to learn from other people's mistakes?

“The doors of wisdom are never shut.” Benjamin Franklin

#### Translation for Adults

The pursuit of wisdom is a continual process; it does not stop at a certain age because there is always more to learn. The greatest martial artists will tell you that the longer they train, the more they must learn and master. Life is very much the same. Do not be close-minded. Close the doors of wisdom and you'll deny yourself all the opportunities that life has to offer. Remember, you can learn from anyone: a young child, a bothersome co-worker, an unfriendly neighbor and the villain in a story. Keep your eyes and mind open, so you take advantage of every opportunity to obtain more wisdom. You'll never have enough!

#### Translation for Kids

You must learn everyday of your life. There is always more knowledge. There is always more wisdom that will help you grow and realize your dreams. Don't assume you know everything about a topic in school just because you've heard the teacher present that topic before. Listen to your younger brother or sister when they want to explain what they've learned in school. You already passed that grade, but that doesn't mean you learned everything. If you're wise, then you'll learn from what your brother or sister is saying. You must also have the right attitude to become wiser. When you close your mind, you stop growing. Just because you're older and earn excellent grades in school, doesn't mean you can stop learning. Knowledge is all around you. Look for it and learn from it whenever possible.

#### Questions

1 – What have you learned from another person, even though you thought they had nothing to teach you?

2 – Why is it important to always continue learning?



# BLACK BELT CLUB LETTERS

# CONFIDENCE PART II

“Self-confidence is the first requisite to great undertakings.” Samuel Johnson

## Translation for Adults

Nothing significant occurs in your life without confidence. Even the most insignificant and mundane tasks of your daily life require an unconscious confidence to do them. To accomplish new tasks and goals, you must first “know” that they are possible. There would be no reason to make plans or put them into action unless you first convinced yourself that those plans would guide you to your goals. Without that conviction, you might be tempted to stop, if the journey to your goal doesn’t go as planned. Have confidence in your ability to reach a goal. Your confidence will drive and motivate you to work hard, even though the challenges are great.

## Translation for Kids

Life is challenging without confidence. You must have confidence in your ability to reach every goal and finish every task. You must already have confidence because you tried martial arts. Many people fear martial arts training. They think it might be too hard. They think they will look stupid. You had the confidence to come to your first class. Your confidence makes a great life possible. You need it to reach any goal. Remember, you can do it, whatever “it” may be. Work hard, even when life is a struggle. You will succeed because confidence is your partner.

## Questions

- 1 – Name a goal you reached that required confidence in your abilities?
- 2 – How can past successes make your confidence stronger?

“If you hear a voice within you say “you cannot paint,” then by all means paint, and that voice will be silenced.” Vincent Van Gogh

## Translation for Adults

Whenever that little voice in your head says, “Can’t,” resist with the focus and discipline of a martial artist. Most of your goals, dreams and aspirations are possible, although that voice tries to convince you otherwise. Ultimately, you make the decision to be an “I can’t” or an “I can” and an “I did.” Many middle-aged single mothers who returned to college to complete their degrees initially thought it was impossible. They found the confidence in themselves, however, to sidestep their doubt, focus on their goal and reap the rewards. Continue to develop your confidence, so regardless of how loud the voice may become, your confidence and accomplishments will silence it.

### Translation for Kids

Sometimes, you are the greatest obstacle to your goals. That little voice in your head tells you it can't be done. Use your martial arts focus and discipline to silence that voice. Focus your confidence on your goal or task. You will achieve it. You can master a really cool jumping back hook kick. Tell yourself "I can," and then jump and kick with confidence. You can be a straight "A" student. Tell yourself, "I am smart enough to reach that goal." Listen to your voice of confidence. It will guide you to your goals.

### Question

1 – What goal did you accomplish that, at first, you thought was impossible? And how did it make you feel when you were successful?

"Confidence comes not from always being right, but from not fearing to be wrong." Peter T. McIntyre

### Translation for Adults

From earliest childhood, you learned to fear being wrong. That fear is so ingrained, in fact, that most adults even fear the possibility of being wrong. Fear, of course, is the great inhibitor. It creates a false mindset that convinces us to avoid tasks or goals, unless they are guaranteed successes. Fear freezes our confidence and causes inaction. Being wrong or failing is acceptable when it is the result of working hard, with confidence. Don't fear being wrong, instead, fear losing your confidence because nothing is possible without it. Any great undertaking that requires planning, hard work and many actions include the risk of failure. Without that risk, your great undertakings are probably not worth doing. Keep your edge! Remain confident, even if you may be wrong!

### Translation for Kids

Being wrong is not a good feeling. You might think that you were stupid. You might think you are not a good person. The fear of being wrong can stop you from reaching your goals. That is when being wrong is OK. Overcome your fear with confidence. Accept new challenges. Try a more advanced math class in school. Spend more time practicing your martial arts. Learn that difficult move your instructor taught you. Always challenge yourself, even if you're not right. Forget your fear and do something great. You may not be rewarded immediately, but keep trying. Remember your Black Belt spirit!

### Questions

1 – Name a task or goal that was a real challenge?

2 – Were you worried and fearful of being wrong? How did you conquer your fear?

**“Nobody can make you feel inferior without your consent.” Eleanor Roosevelt**

#### **Translation for Adults**

You have the abilities to achieve many goals and experience great success. The opinions of the people in your life can inhibit your drive to success, just as the fear of being wrong. Someone’s opinion of your potential for failure or success is only relevant if you let it be. If you “consent” to his or her opinion that you are inferior, then that will be the basis of your decision to do nothing. You will never know the joy of a challenge and the rewards of conquering it. Once again, you can’t move forward because you are more concerned about what others will think. There are circumstances when you should heed the caution of your friends, but, in the end, you must listen to and decide for yourself. The courage and confidence to try something new come from within, not from the opinions of those who think you will be unsuccessful.

#### **Translation for Kids**

You can be a great success. You can be very smart. Some people may still think you don’t have the abilities to achieve your goals. They have a right to their opinions. You are in control of you. Have the confidence that you can achieve your goals. The people who say that you can’t are not the same as the people that tell you to be careful. Always listen to a friend or family member’s advice. They want you to succeed. They also want you to be ready for challenges. Their advice could help you achieve your goals. Remember, you have the confidence for any challenge. Focus on your confidence and your abilities to accomplish a great task, and you will.

#### **Questions**

**1 – Should you allow other people’s opinions to prevent you from working toward you goals?**

**2 – When should you listen to other people’s advice?**

# Enthusiasm

Great excitement for or interest in a subject or cause.

A source or cause of great excitement or interest.

## ENTHUSIASM LEADS TO SUCCESS

“Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.” Ralph Waldo Emerson

Enthusiasm can be instrumental in your success both inside and outside the martial arts school. Enthusiasm directly impacts your attitude when it comes to attacking your goals.

What are one or two goals you would like to accomplish in Taekwondo over the next six months?

How will your enthusiasm affect the outcome?

What about goals at home, work or school?

## ENTHUSIASM UPLIFTS OTHERS

“Enthusiasm is the yeast that raises the dough.” Paul J. Meyer

Have you ever eaten a sandwich? Have you ever watched the bread for your sandwich as it's being made?

The key ingredients in bread are flour, water, and YEAST.

Under the right conditions, a master baker can make the best bread by properly mixing the right combinations of flour, water, yeast and other flavorful ingredients. But no matter how talented the baker is, the bread will NOT rise without yeast. If the bread does not rise, it's not bread – it's basically just a cracker.

Are you the kind of person who adds YEAST to the situations you find yourself in? Enthusiasm adds a much needed yeast to any martial arts class, family gathering, or even to your chores.

Approach all you do this next week with Enthusiasm!

## ENTHUSIASM IS CONTAGIOUS

"Enthusiasm glows, radiates, permeates and immediately captures everyone's interest."  
Paul J. Meyer

Contagious – tending to spread from person to person

The word "contagious" is most often associated negatively with germs or being sick.

It's possible that good things, totally unrelated to germs, can also be contagious – like enthusiasm.

When was the last time you were around someone with a big sense of humor or with a very happy attitude? Do you feel happier and more at ease with this kind of person? Is their humor or attitude "contagious"? Enthusiasm can also be contagious and it's a quality that others love to be around.

Find ways to be "contagiously enthusiastic" this week.

## ENTHUSIASM CAN CHANGE THE WORLD

"Enthusiasm moves the world." Arthur James Balfour

# Teamwork

## TEAM = Together Everyone Achieves More

Being part of a team can help motivate you as an individual. Practicing your martial arts at home is important, but when you come to class, being part of the team in class motivates you to work harder. Being part of a team challenges you to try new techniques. When a group of people get together with similar goals, the results are multiplied

How can you apply teamwork outside of your martial arts class?

### FAMILY

“Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.” Henry Ford

Being a part of a family is being a part of a team. Your family is there whether you succeed or fail. It is important that you live up to your responsibilities at school/work and at home. Working together as a family sets the foundation for success in all other aspects of life

What is something you can do this week with your family that involves team work?

### DEVELOPING A GOOD TEAM

“Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results.” Andrew Carnegie

3 most important factors of a team; Communication, team balance and leadership.

If the group is not communicating, the goal will never be accomplished.

Team balance is having a group with a mix of skills necessary to accomplish the goal at hand.

A leader is important, because without one the group can become “splintered” in the goal-accomplishing process.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF A TEAM MEMBER

"It is amazing how much you can accomplish when it doesn't matter who gets the credit." Unknown

### Characteristics of a good team member;

Enthusiasm

Honesty

Sharing Responsibilities

Sharing Knowledge

Asking Questions

Fulfilling Duties

Respecting Others' Opinions

Helping Others Achieve Their Goals



# Education

Activities that impart knowledge or skill; an instructive or enlightening experience

“Learning is a treasure that will follow its owner everywhere.” Chinese Proverb

Education is a process of learning – if we open our minds, we can learn something new from everything we see and do.

Regardless of our age, we should always be looking for opportunities to learn. Being educated is not a goal, it is a journey. Enjoy the ride!

## EDUCATION AND LEARNING – FORMING GOOD HABITS EARLY

“It is easier to prevent bad habits than to break them.” Benjamin Franklin

Think about your study habits, are your habits helping you get the best education? How can your habits improve to help you meet your goals?

Successful education requires you to WANT to learn. Subjects that are interesting get full attention and maximum efforts. Have you ever noticed that uninteresting subjects get minimum efforts in order to pass? Create habits that work for you and help keep you motivated to complete the task at hand.

One way to develop a good habit is to buddy up with someone to help you stay on course. Examples include; creating an after school study group or building in an extra martial arts practice session to perfect areas that require more attention.

## LEARNING WITH AN OPEN MIND

“It is what we think we know already that often prevents us from learning.”  
Claude Bernard

What does it mean to you to have an open mind? Having a closed mind can represent a negative attitude and waste an opportunity to learn.

Sometimes we get into a predictable pattern of learning and simply accept facts “because someone said so”. By asking questions we can stimulate our brains in a whole new way.

To open your mind, try some of these activities; listen to different kinds of music, visit an art gallery or science exhibit, read about subjects not taught in school and so on. The key is to have an open mind and embrace the power to learn!

## EDUCATION – SHAPING YOUR FUTURE

Being a good student doesn't mean you have to know it all. The best education sometimes comes from making mistakes and learning how to get it right the next time.

Keeping an open mind and actively seeking new opportunities to learn keeps our brains stimulated. How we respond to those opportunities and choices will shape our characters, and, ultimately, our future.

Remember that we also have much to learn from each other. Each individual has something special and unique to offer. Always seek the uniqueness in yourself and in others.

Improve yourself/Never stop growing (mentally, physically, financially, emotionally, spiritually)

Use people who've accomplished great things as inspiration, read about them and learn how they got to where they were.

A few sayings that go with not only education, but self improvement in general;

"A plant is either growing or dying"

"If you're green you're growing, if you're ripe, you're rotting"

"Be happy, not satisfied"

"You owe it to yourself, family, friends to become the best person you can"

# Attitude

“The greatest discovery of any generation is that a human being can alter his life by altering his attitude.” William James

## Translation for Adults

One of your greatest powers as a human being is to change your life for either better or worse during every stage of your adult life. In fact, you can start to make that change right now, today, if you decide to alter your attitude. Regardless of how you define success and happiness, you must have the right attitude to achieve your goals. You control your attitude either to foster growth and opportunity or create chaos and uncertainty. Only you can make those adjustments of attitude that will lead toward a future of your choosing.

## Translation for Kids

You have a great power; the power to change your attitude. When you have the right attitude, you make the right decisions. The right attitude helps you succeed in school and advance in your training. A Black Belt attitude is also a great partner when life is tough and you're faced with many challenges. You'll learn a Black Belt attitude when you listen to your parents, your instructor and the other teachers and leaders in your life. Learn to control your life with discipline, confidence and the right attitude.

## Questions

1 – What do you think Black Belt attitude is?

2 – Did your Black Belt attitude ever help you make a right decision and what was that decision?

3 – Did your Black Belt attitude ever help you succeed at school or do a chore better?

“We tend to live up to our expectations.” Earl Nightingale

## Translation for Adults

No doubt, you've experienced that moment when you thought you were unable to rise to a challenge or have the confidence to take advantage of a new opportunity. Momentarily, you felt overwhelmed or defeated before you even started. Often, the first challenge you must overcome is changing your mindset to a positive attitude. Sweep away those negative expectations immediately and replace them with positive expectations of success. Realistically, you may not be able to do everything, but your attitude will continue to drive you within reach of your goals.

### Translation for Kids

What do you want to be when you're an adult? A doctor, an actor, maybe a police officer? You're able to achieve any goal, IF you have high expectations for yourself. That means you must always do your best. You must have a Black Belt attitude. You must always believe that you are able to do any job and reach any goal. If you want straight A's in school or earn your Black Belt, but you do not believe you have the ability and drive, then you never will. You will only reach your full potential and be your best when you believe in yourself.

### Questions

1 – Why is it important to believe in yourself?

2 – Do you think it helps to have others in your life, such as your parents and teachers, who also believe in you?

“It's not your aptitude, but your attitude, that determines your altitude.”  
Zig Ziglar

### Translation for Adults

Your aptitude-knowledge, competence and your abilities-is essential to your success in a career or life. Competence and abilities are not enough, however, to reach your goals; you must also have the right attitude, the Black Belt attitude. The highest point you reach in your career or life will be no higher than your attitude. When your attitude soars, so do your goals and your opportunities to reach them. Once you combine your aptitude with your Black Belt attitude, you will soar as high as you want.

### Translation for Kids

You had to have knowledge or ability before you could do your Taekwondo drills correctly, play a game or ride a bike. That is aptitude or what you know. You need aptitude to be successful. You also need the correct attitude. You may know all the kicks, punches and forms, but if you have a poor attitude, then you will probably never practice. You will never be an awesome Black Belt. Your poor attitude will keep you on the ground. To reach your highest goals at the highest altitude, you must have the right mix of the correct attitude and aptitude.

### Questions

1 – Why does having a good attitude help you reach a high altitude or your highest goals?

2 – What is more important: to have aptitude or attitude?

**“Between the optimist and the pessimist the difference droll, the optimist sees the donut and the pessimist see the hole” Unknown**

#### **Translation for Adults**

**The optimist sees the donut instead of the hole because he is looking for the best in life. To say that an optimist is someone that must always pretend that everything is great would be incorrect. A true optimist makes the most of what life has to offer, the donut, and learns from the experience. Learning is the key; however, for without the lessons of experience, you will never see the donut or have the attitude to take advantage of the opportunities to succeed.**

#### **Translation for Kids**

**An optimist sees the good in life, the donut. A pessimist sees the bad, a hole and no donut. You must have the attitude of the optimist to succeed in school, your training and everything you do. Don't think that every experience in your life will be good. You must always look for the good and learn from your experiences and see the good, the donut. You will be on your way to achieving Black Belt excellence.**

#### **Questions**

**1 – Why is it more valuable to have the attitude of the optimist?**

# What is Self-Defense?

Traditionally, self-defense, in the context of how we have viewed it in the martial arts world, has almost always had something to do with the martial techniques of defense and offense. If you took a "course in self-defense," it would include blocking techniques and defense from grabs, holds, and possibly tactics to apply if an assailant were on top of you. You would learn how to punch properly and use your elbows for striking. You might be coached on effective striking targets and strategies for staying safe in potentially dangerous or even life-threatening situations.

While all of these are part of self-defense, they are, in the big picture view, a very small part. Most people will never need-or have the opportunity-to use their martial arts skills to "defend themselves" from a violent attack. Take me for example (Tom Callos), I have been studying the martial arts for 37 years and I have never been attacked by someone who sincerely wanted to do me harm.

Self-defense, in its truest and most authentic form, has little or nothing to do with punches, blocks, kicks and throws. It has little to do with anything "martial."

Heart disease is America's #1 killer, taking one life every 33 seconds. At least 61,800,000 people in this country suffer from some form of heart disease; that is one in every five people. Almost one out of every 2.5 deaths results from cardiovascular disease.

Cancer causes one death every 56 seconds. Approximately 90,000 people in America alone will die this year in a hospital from a medical error or a lethal infection; that is one person every six minutes. One American is killed by a drunk driver every 31 minutes; another drowns every 159 minutes.

These statistics are eye opening, but they don't address some of the reasons we really need self-defense, the things that really hurt us-as bad or worse than any of the fatal concerns above. The list of reasons why we need to defend ourselves in today's world is long, so the following are just examples:

The inability to distinguish between food that makes us healthy, alert and vibrant and the food that makes us fat, unhealthy and prone to heart disease.

The inability to solve our conflicts in a way that creates peace, harmony and mutual benefit

The inability to manage money

The inability to find a positive outcome in most all situations, to think positively and to expect positive outcomes

The inability to set meaningful, fulfilling, challenging, but obtainable goals in our lives and to work at them consistently

The inability to open our hearts to family, friends and other people in need-when they so desperately need it

The inability to distinguish between what we truly need in our lives, what brings us true and long-lasting joy, and those things we don't need at all, but simply desire as a result of clever advertising.

Yes, more people are hurt by their diet, by their lack of confidence, by their attitude and thinking, and by their habits of consumption-than by heart disease, cancer and auto accidents combined. It's a slow hurt too, as having a bad attitude and/or a negative outlook doesn't just hurt once, but again and again.

# The Tortoise and the Hare, Part II

We all know the story of the tortoise and the hare, with the moral being “slow and steady wins the race.” However, the story doesn’t end there. The hare realizes that he’d lost the race only because he had been overconfident, careless and lax. There’s no way the tortoise should have beaten him, so he challenged the tortoise to another race. This time, the hare went all out and ran without stopping from start to finish and won by several miles. The moral – “Fast and consistent will always beat the slow and steady. It’s good to be slow and steady; but it’s better to be fast and reliable.

The tortoise realized that there was no way it could beat the hare in a race the way it was currently formatted. The tortoise challenged the hare to another race, but on a slightly different route. The hare took off and ran at top speed until he came to a broad river. The hare sat there wondering what to do. In the meantime, the tortoise trundled along, got into the river, swam to the opposite bank, continued walking and finished the race. The moral – “First identify your core competency and then change the playing field to suit your core competency.”

By this time, the hare and the tortoise had become pretty good friends, and they discussed how the last race could have been run much better. So they decided to run the last race again, but as a team. This time the hare carried the tortoise to the riverbank. There, the tortoise took over and swam across with the hare on his back. Then the hare carried the tortoise, and they reached the finish line together. They both felt a greater sense of satisfaction than they’d felt earlier.

The moral – “It’s good to be individually brilliant and to have strong core competencies; but unless you’re able to work in a team and harness each other’s core competencies, you’ll always perform below par because there will always be situations at which you’ll do poorly and someone else will do well.”

Note that neither the hare nor the tortoise gave up after failures. The hare decided to work harder and put in more effort after his failure. The tortoise changed his strategy because he was already working as hard as he could.



# A True Leader

“A true leader has the confidence to stand alone, the courage to make tough decisions, and the compassion to listen to the needs of others. He does not set out to be a leader, but becomes one by the quality of his actions and the integrity of his intent. In the end, leaders are much like eagles....they don't flock, you find them one at a time.”  
Who wrote these profound words? They come from a high school student's final exam on leadership.

Leaders know that there are always two choices to make; the easy way and the more difficult. The reward for taking the easy path is that it's easy. The more difficult path requires hard work and dedication, which will make you a better person both mentally and skillfully. When workers see a leader working hard, it increases their respect and makes them want to work harder too. Leaders motivate others.

People find themselves working harder when they know they get something out of it. When people hear a few motivating and encouraging words, they respond by working harder. Leaders are usually the ones who ignore their own accomplishments to commend others for theirs. Leaders keep everybody's spirits high as they work harder and harder. The number one thing that a leader does is to avoid making people feel guilty or to look down on them. As a noble person once said, “There are high spots in all of our lives, and most of them come through encouragement from someone else.”

When one person works hard, it makes others work harder. Fierce dedication shows others that success comes through hard work. Encouragement and support makes others feel good about themselves and gives them something else to work towards. These are all very significant traits that a leader must possess. Don't wait around for things to happen, make this world what you really want it to be by being a leader.