

Taekwondo: a list of important skills for success



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My TaeKwonDo journey has been a test of practice – both in the martial art and in life. As I prepare to test for my first degree black belt, I can most definitely say I have grown in both. To be more specific, I've learn to practice perseverance, self control, and indomitable spirit. Some of these attributes I have named are in the Five Tenets of TaeKwonDo (courtesy, integrity, perseverance, self-control, and indomitable spirit), but I named three of these because when I think back over the past five years of practice, all working towards one goal, my black belt test, these words stand out to me.

If someone has ever wondered why perseverance is such an important aspect of TaeKwonDo, here's why: it is hard work. It never stops being challenging. The more I have trained, the more belts I collected, the harder practice becomes. There is never a dull moment in TaeKwonDo practice because I am always trying to better myself in form. That's the beauty of martial arts and one of the reasons I love it so much. At one point in time, when I had achieved my red belt, I considered quitting TaeKwonDo. My perseverance had worn thin. That's when my instructors and masters persevered for me, encouraging me to continue. Because of their commitment to perseverance, they were able to challenge me to persevere. Sticking to it, I have found a new appreciation for my TaeKwonDo club and skills and I am grateful for all the people who motivated me to carry on.

Self-control is another important attribute I have gained through TaeKwonDo. Throughout my childhood, my brother, Grant, and I would tackle and wrestle one another all the time. One of us would “ accidentally” lightly push the other one and before you know it, we would be on the ground playfully “ killing” each other. Grant, being seven years older than me, and obviously

stronger, would always win. Then I began TaeKwonDo and before I knew it, I earned my blue belt. Although I had learned to punch correctly and kick a little higher, I still had much to learn and many other skills to achieve. Back to my story with my brother... I had just gotten home from the Spirit Night where I received my blue belt, and I came in with my new belt around my waist. Grant was home and after telling him I had passed, he tackled me. Big surprise. I struggled to actually fight him off of me, but it was no use and I was forced to say the word, “uncle.” As he helped me up, he said something along the lines of, “How are you a blue belt, but still can’t even have the strength to beat me?” These words made me wonder, but also drove me to train and practice harder. And through practicing, I realized the holes in his statement. Because the more I learned about sparring, one-steps, forms, and all-in-all about self-defense, I understood that strength was not at all the way I would defeat an opponent who is stronger than me. I realized it didn’t matter how hard I was mindlessly throwing around my limbs because the only way to win a fight was through self-control. I realized the necessity of self-control to interpret the attacker’s next move and to evaluate how to cleanly counter attack. Through learning to replace physical strength with self-control because of my TaeKwonDo lessons, I have become better disciplined in the art of defense which I have put into practice in a recent encounter with my brother. A couple months ago, Grant came home for a short period of time and, to get straight to the point, he punched me. I countered with a quick low-high roundhouse kick which took him by surprise and we continued to fight. However, while he was just jabbing me and trying to trip me, I used self-control to stay focused and on my feet. In the end, we ended on the ground once more, but instead of him holding me down, I had

him in a firm chokehold until he surrendered. Moral of the story: Self-control is key and siblings are violent.

Finally, an indomitable spirit, is something I am happy to have been taught and will continue to learn. I have to admit, I looked up the definition on Google and it states, “ their strength comes from within”. Personally, through attending TaeKwonDo, I have seen this definition of the word in full, live action. I have seen young children who have little physical strength achieve amazing goals because of their courage, perseverance, endurance, self-control, and mindset because of having an indomitable spirit. I have have seen it in my own TaeKwonDo experience. TaeKwonDo has taught me that failure is just a stepping stone to success by helping me learn from my mistakes. My instructors and masters encourage me to have confidence, creating in me an indomitable spirit. Every time I fell down while doing wheel kick, I got up again to later break boards in half with ease using that very kick, and every time I backed down on a sparring round, I later came back with more power and techniques in my head than before. Every time I felt like I wasn't prepared, I could act with confidence and train harder the next time. The list goes on. Having been taught to have an indomitable spirit inside of my TaeKwonDo Club has influenced me to act better outside of a classroom. To have an attitude of confidence no matter the situation is such an important element to gain. I am truly appreciative to my TaeKwonDo club for that attitude.

Perseverance, self-control, and an indomitable spirit are three major character strengths I have gained from my practice in TaeKwonDo. This is, in part, what it means to me to be a black belt. Just as my instructors have

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helped me to attain my goal of testing for my First Degree Black Belt, I will be honored to be in a leadership position to help other TaeKwonDo participants to attain their goals as well.