

I started Tae Kwon Do when I was 13 years old, in the beginning I only went to have fun and learn lots of cool moves.

In the first few days it was very overwhelming, but with a lot of hard work it got easier and more interesting. I remember being really nervous, if I hadn't had my dad and little brother with me I would probably have never stayed. It also helped to have Mr. Meek and Mr. Strade to be my first teachers. Thinking about it they are a perfect team of patients and discipline.

One of the things I had to learn was the tenets of Tae Kwon Do, and that I had to apply them to my life not just in Tae Kwon Do but outside the class setting.

The first one is Courtesy it means to respect your friends, family, and higher sonority, even when they do not deserve it. If you make an effort to be courteous to people you are being an example to others.

Integrity is more than just being honest it's a standard of moral honesty that governs our conduct. It means to be the same through and through inside and outside.

Perseverance to set a goal and not stop until you have reached it. If you do anything half way

you will not have the luxury of enjoying all the great things that'll come with reaching the goal. The best part about this tenet is that once you reached your goal you can set a new one even higher. My goal is to become a black belt. Someday I would like to teach children self-defense.

Self-Control this one is very important in the world we live. It means to restrain yourself and not to go in to excess. If you don't have control when you are sparring with your partner you can end up hurting your friend or yourself in the process.

The last one is Indomitable Spirit. It means that you cannot be overcome. No matter what anyone says they cannot bring you down and tell you what you can or *can't* do.

Before I started Tae Kwon Do I was really shy so I never went up to people that I didn't know and talked. I didn't feel confident in my abilities to communicate with people. When I started understanding the tenets and putting them into practice in my life it has been easier to step out of my comfort zone and interact with people.

Tae Kwon Do has been an amazing experience for me. It has brought me closer to my dad and little brother and has given me a whole new

family. The levels in Tae Kwon Do is very much like a family unit. You start as a white belt the baby of the group then as you grow through all the colors learning and developing the skills you need. Then when you reach brown you are just like a teenager, thinking you know everything and that you can go out on your own. Really you haven't scratched the surface of learning about life. When you get to black you are officially an adult having more responsibility with helping the newer members of the family, under the helpful hand of your parents the masters.

I cannot see my life without this family, it has been an awesome journey with all of them. Through the good and the bad they will stand beside you and help you, thank you Tae Kwon Do family for helping me grow and become the best I can be. "com sam ni da"

By Elizabeth Jackson