

# **My Teaching Philosophy**

## **Master Peggy Slatten**

My Tae Kwon Do birthday is September 8th, 1993, but my training actually started in 1986 when I enrolled my son James in a Jung's Tae Kwon Do class under the instruction of Mr. Dennis Meggers. James was a super active six year old who needed a constructive way to use up his excessive energy. I watched from the side lines for many years learning many aspects of Tae Kwon Do. I was amazed at how Mr. Meggers molded my son into a little martial artist. Tests were conducted in Des Moines at Eric Heintz Black Belt Academy. Watching Master Heintz, Master Bair, and all the Senior Black Belts was such an inspiration. It was a special treat when Grand Master Jung would come for part of the testing day. The respect shown to Grand Master Jung was incredible. The tenants of Tae Kwon Do were displayed constantly at class and at test.

My husband joined our son and they both made it to high brown belt but ended up quitting due to other commitments. When I decided to join Tae Kwon Do class in September 8th, 1993, I was needing to relieve my stress level and get back in shape. I knew I needed what I had seen in all those Tae Kwon Do students and Black Belt instructors. My instructor was Mr. Mike Folgate. He took over the Bethany Branch when Mr. Meggers moved away. Unfortunately

he only came to class part time. His farming kept him busy and many times we would end up with no instructor. Dr. Hall was a 2nd Degree Black Belt and came when he could but he was on call at the hospital most of the time. Some of beginning classes were led by young green belts. It was then I vowed if I became an instructor I would try to make sure there would be a Black belt instructor at all the classes.

Dr. Hall took over the school in the Fall of 1994. The dojang was moved to the basement of his office. He built the dojang so he could come to class as much as possible although his medical practice was still keeping him extremely busy. Mr. Gary Hall, his brother, was helping instruct when Dr. Hall couldn't be there. Dr. Hall was my instructor when I was working to get my black belt. He dedicated many hours of his time to make sure I was ready to take my black belt test. His mentoring has been the foundation for the way I teach my Tae Kwon Do students. My teaching philosophy is to teach traditional Tae Kwon Do as it was taught to me.

Dr. Hall and I have worked together for many years as a team teaching the Bethany Missouri Branch of Two Rivers Martial Arts. We each bring something a little different into class just from the different perspective of male vs. female. (palgwe)

I set several goals when I started Tae Kwon Do. The first goal was to be the first female black belt from the Missouri Branch which I achieved. My goal of testing for 5th Dan before I turned 60 is happening today. I have set many goals, some I have accomplished and some I have not. When I pass this test, I will set new goals. I always have a goal of doing every form I know at least 100 times a year.

As Grand Master Jung says, "Everyone needs to have a love for Tae Kwon Do". I have that love for Tae Kwon Do in my heart. I have a passion for the art and love doing the forms more than any other part of class. I enjoy passing this on to all my students.

Teaching can be very challenging as well as rewarding. Each student that walks into our school has a different reason for wanting to join our class. It is important for me to figure out what they want to get out of class and try to see that they achieve that goal along with teaching them all about the "Art of Tae Kwon Do.", living their life following the tenants and making them good martial artists. Watching white belts break a board for the first time is always exciting to me as I remember the joy I felt after I broke my first board. I try to make each belt level special so the students will want to get that next color of belt so they can try something new.

There is a balance in teaching in making sure students don't get over confident or discouraged. It is imperative that you have their respect as a black belt. My goal has been to train every student to understand the chain of command. Grand Master Jung is the foundation of our Tae Kwon Do. Grand Master Jung taught Mr. Meggers, Master Heintz and Master Bair who in turn taught Dr. Hall. Dr. Hall has taught me as well as the other black belt instructors from Missouri. My students are taught this from the time they start class. We explain that it is a military art and everyone is expected to follow the rank from white belt to 9th degree black belt with all the respect and honor due to each belt level.

Being an instructor is a big time commitment. I am very thankful my family has been so supportive of me. We have class Monday, Wednesday and Friday nights. I try to make it to every test, help with demonstrations, go to tournaments, put on self defense classes with Dr. Hall and do everything possible to promote Tae-Kwon-Do.

The highlights of my Tae-Kwon-Do journey was going to North and South Korea and China with Grand Master Jung and to Eagles Nest in Colorado twice. Going to North and South Korea was the trip I had always dreamed of. The feeling of performing Dan-Gun on his burial site was incredible. History came alive as we visited many places that are the foundation of our forms. Stressing the importance of our heritage to my students is a big part of my teaching philosophy. I require that they tell me the meaning of their current form before I will promote them to their next belt level.

The form that I chose to do for my 5th Dan test was made up from my experience at Eagles Nest. Working out in the mountains with all the other black belts was a big help in learning about myself as well as getting to know each person a little better. We are all from different walks of life but Tae Kwon Do makes us all very much the same.

Over the years we have had all kinds of students. Two of our young black belts joined the military as soon as they graduated from high school and have told us how much their Tae Kwon Do training helped them. One of our black belt ladies got a job in the prison system and now trains employees in self-defense tactics. Tae-Kwon-Do really changed her life. We have trained many handicapped students which was challenging for them as well as for us. The success they have is always such a blessing for me. The students from the group home usually go until they feel they can't keep up or lose interest. Some have made it to brown belt levels. Even when they quit they are always so glad to see us and call us by name. To make a difference in someone's life is what Tae-Kwon-Do is all about to me. Students really don't have to become black belts to have made a difference in their life. Students that only come for awhile have come back and told us how much we have influenced their life. What more could we ask for?

My training had to be altered some after I had my knee replacement three years ago. Pivoting is difficult for me. (The Doctor who did my surgery suggested I find another activity that would be less strenuous on my knees but I didn't agree.) I felt like it was just another challenge for me to figure out how to perform techniques that required pivoting in a little different way. Round house

kicks seem to be the most difficult. Some times I explain the technique and have a student demonstrate the proper way to perform the movement. I do work out almost every day on my own as teaching requires paying attention to students and not getting a good physical work out for myself. As I am getting older, I have backed off of some of the more difficult techniques such as tornado kicks, flying side kicks, etc. I do want to continue teaching as well as being a student for many years to come so I have to use some common sense in what my body is capable of.

Every black belt I have trained with has helped contribute to my knowledge of Tae Kwon Do and have helped me on my continuing journey. I want to thank all of them for their dedication and service in promoting Tae Kwon Do.