

Loyalty and Taekwon Do

Summary

My perspective on loyalty and Taekwon-do are an outcome of thoughts and ideas built up over years of involvement and training with Taekwon-do. Experiential learning has provide me with an opportunity, and some hindsight to briefly share how I view loyalty and developing loyalty with Taekwon-do.

Loyalty within myself, or “inward thinking”

By focusing on our organisational motto, three words spring to mind and are threaded through all we do (mind, body, and spirit). My interpretation of these three words and how I develop concepts surrounding their meanings in terms of Loyalty, will build a picture of my personal loyalty to Taekwon-do.

Loyalty to Others or “outward thinking,” builds on attitudes, contributions and development of others. It primarily is a product of learned knowledge skill and behaviour and responsibilities that the senior practitioner should display, supported by an organisational focus.

Inward Loyalty

Personal approach

Mind

In tune thoughts or ‘state of mind’ are constantly worked through and have relevance to what I am trying to achieve at the time. This builds a holistic approach towards Taekwon-do outcomes. It is important to “feel right” about goals, and train in a way that is correct. So my intent drives physically and mentally towards how I train with a clear purpose. My constant inward challenge is to improve my current abilities towards levels of achievement and where I would like to be in terms of Taekwon-do. Correct practice and regular training builds capability and contributes “self loyalty in Taekwon-do.”

Body

Loyalty to physical training is balanced with the will to practice. My time spent training is set by me; it is self imposed and defines the standards necessary to achieve the best possible results in terms of practical Taekwon-do. Prioritising, planning and balancing all aspects of my life with a clear direction are key to reaching my personal goals. The physical demands are always high and hard to maintain. I have learnt through time that a consistent and balanced approach towards training methods and, most importantly, time spent training in the Do-jang provides me with my best physical results. As Bruce Lee once said “*Knowing is not enough - we must apply*”.

Therefore, loyalty includes adherence to physical training; It is the starting point for all students and will be the most important throughout everyone’s journey in Taekwon-Do. Taekwon-do sets the bar and ultimately provides the results for a good practitioner.

Spirit

This is about attitude towards application and how I apply my understanding and liveliness towards training. Spirit is contagious in the Do-jang, whether it is at a low or high level, so a motivated approach is important such that I display the attributes in which the art was designed during teaching and learning sessions. In my classes I am carefully watched and analysed by others in terms of capability, knowledge and ability to teach. So it is the spirit I project in all things Taekwon-do that promotes loyalty from others, firstly to the Instructor, then the student and the art.

Outward loyalty

Organisation

ITFNZ and ITKD provide structured pathways for self-improvement whilst at the same time meeting the criteria and adhering to the rules of governance set by the organisation. Public expectation and competition from like-minded organisations provides a constant tension in terms of time and resources which requires a dynamic and changeable management approach. In any organisation this sometimes brings dissatisfaction within groups, so careful planning, education and communication will promote buy-in and provide “sustainable” loyalty.

Keeping our art alive relies on the people—numbers involved, credibility with Instructor certification and the ability to pass on the knowledge, techniques and Way (Do) to the next generation. Meeting the expectations of all members is perhaps the most challenging aspect for “building” loyalty. This is closely linked to professionalism in the way we conduct business at club, regional and National levels. A well run organisation delivers qualifications and accreditations that can meet the highest scrutiny from other organisations or associated activities and gives an individual attaining such qualification a sense of “pride”, satisfaction and self-respect - factors that are critical to Loyalty.

Giving back or contributing also builds a sense of loyalty and provides capability to the organisation. Therefore, participation in organisational events and having an equal share in the rewards and recognition is fundamental to organisational loyalty and builds a sense of ownership.

I have belonged to different Organisations through-out my years with Taekwon-do and my experience varies in terms of loyalty and Taekwon-Do. My Loyalty is derived from correct practice of the art and is influenced by my individual pursuit to achieve higher standards of application

“willing is not enough we must do”, (Bruce lee quote).

ITFNZ has been loyal to me and provided me with an unquestionably high level of training and opportunities for developing my understanding and capability, thus extending my personal development towards goals which I believe would not have been achievable through blind loyalty. I have a sense of “belonging and “belief” not only with the people I engage with but in the way we practice Taekwon-do.

So there is a natural desire to continue to lead and contribute back to ITFNZ. In this sense I characterised “Long term loyalty” that is evident with the journeyman who fill the higher ranks, and associated people who support and contribute to the outcomes of the organisation. These people are the life blood of Taekwon-do and without them I see no real character or influence that would build a sense of Loyalty.

Summary

Taekwon-do is for everyone. Any engagement should be positive.

First impressions will always last and this is the beginning point for “growing loyalty.” Top quality instruction, a professional approach and responsive attitudes are attributes supporting the delivery and acquisition of Taekwon Do skills. Despite all these great qualities this may still not be enough to support individual loyalty because we all seek different aspects from the art, and we will look for the combination that best suits us. The Instructor’s approach and delivery underpins all we learn. This will develop loyalty. If a student of the art can speak well of their experience and has tangible benefit from their training, this then must reflect loyalty in Taekwon –do.

So for me it is not only about the numbers we encounter in terms of popularity. It is more about learning and Instructing the art correctly and effectively, so that it is beneficial for all. I believe real loyalty starts with one’s self, personal achievement will be the natural flow on effect from loyalty to the student and the wider Taekwon-do community, i.e. friends associated people ITFNZ.

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