

“Guidance”

My Instructor and I

(3rd Dan Grading Essay by Matt Bowden)

“I”

I was eight years old when I began my Taekwon-Do journey. Although I was very drawn to the flying kicks and breaking of wood and tiles, what inspired and drew me to Taekwon-Do the most was my Instructor. In this essay, I will be discussing the roles and responsibilities of a great instructor and how one person has played such a big role in the development of not only me as a martial artist but also as a person.

A TIGHT BOND

Of course, I have a wonderful family. Mum and dad love me unconditionally and have supported me in anything I chose to do and with my cool little brother, we have an awesome life.

Mr. Mantjika though has and will always be my **Taekwon-Do father**. This is the way I have felt since the very beginning. This bond is something that I have cherished and have the utmost respect for and is very special to me. He is not only my instructor but my friend, mentor, confidant and inspiration. He has helped and enabled me to achieve a lot in my years as his student in TKD and besides his TKD stories based on his exceptional knowledge and personal experiences in the Dojang, it's his listening ear and words of wisdom as well as his total support and guidance which has strengthened our bond.

Obvious from the beginning, was the effort Mr Mantjika would make to connect with all of his students no matter their age or ability. I learned a lot watching his “all inclusive”, honest and, genuine personality allow me and my family as well as many other kids and adults from the club we call SCTA, without ever feeling that our bond would be threatened. I realised soon enough that there was always enough to go around.

My connection with him and that of others has been a key contributor to motivating and maintaining my interest in TKD.

MUTUAL RESPECT

Ever since my first night at Taekwon-Do I have had the utmost respect for Mr. Mantjika. Firstly, it came from me being in absolute awe of his achievements as a Competitor.

Secondly, he would command a certain presence without speaking and when he did everyone was so quiet. As I matured I began to realise his ability to inspire and his willingness to see me succeed as well as his unconditional passion for the art which is something I had and continue to have total respect for.

Thirdly, I know he respects me.

This mutual respect for each other is something that I know benefits me and of course there is still a very clear line between student and instructor.

He allows me to be my own person as a martial artist and allows me the freedom to train with other instructors and clubs to grow and seek further improvements in my skills.

Mutual respect also means that like any Taekwon-Do student the proper courtesies are observed at all times, even after 10 years of friendship I have never once called Mr. Mantjika by his first name, to me he will always be first and foremost my instructor.

DEDICATION, COMMITMENT, PASSION AND TRUST

Mr. Mantjika has an undying **passion** for Taekwon-Do. This I saw from the very beginning and I feel was transferred on to me very quickly. As my instructor, I can say very confidently that he is 150% dedicated to my development as a martial artist whether it be Tournaments, Gradings or my own development as an instructor. This has been very important for my growth as a student because I have had someone that only wants to see me succeed and improve.

Dedication has meant not only training me at club training nights, but opening up his garage on the "off" nights after work and on the weekends for as long as I need/want. His dedication to me is also not only in the Dojang, but in all areas of my life whether it be taking me on tramps up mountains to teach the "do" or travelling overseas and learning new languages and culture. This dedication from my Instructor has seen me achieve things that I could only dream about and has also allowed me to strive for my full potential and have experiences that many people my age would never have the opportunity to do.

Commitment is another aspect of Mr. Mantjikas instructing that I respect greatly. Throughout the years I have competed at 3 World cup tournaments, 2 World championships, graded to second Dan, been on a Tul tour and developed my skills as an instructor and Mr. Mantjika has played a huge part in preparing and travelling with me in all of them. He has been fully committed to helping me reach my goals in every aspect and I have never once been without him.

Trust

As well as forming a close bond with my instructor we have built up a high level of Trust. This for me growing up has been very important and beneficial. I have been able to confide in Mr. Mantjika and talk to him about things that I don't feel comfortable talking about with my parents or friends. I am very thankful for his wisdom and guidance as not many people my age are able to talk about their feelings comfortably or have people they feel comfortable talking to so I am very thankful.

As a teenager, especially being good at sport and travelling the world and having recognition for it..... does come with "conditions" and ones that I myself choose because I am serious, dedicated and committed to TKD. It was hard however to explain this to friends initially because they didn't always get it. As well as my parents, Mr Mantjika has certainly assisted through the tough times by speaking of his own experiences but allowing me to make my own decisions with his guidance and acceptance. I have gained valuable lessons in self- assurance, self- awareness and confidence. My friends all know of my Taekwon-Do father and although some haven't met him, they do hold him in very high regard which I am really proud of. They are also very supported of me and my sport and happily accept the decisions I make.

MR MANTJIKA (MR MAN)

Having an instructor that has gone above and beyond his responsibilities for me is the reason for my success as a martial artist.

Whilst the role of an instructor is to help his/her students improve, I feel that Mr. Mantjika not only exceeds this but he sees his students as “people” who he is fully committed to.

Mr. Mantjika is an inspiration to me. I who trains under him and his excitement and passion is contagious.

I plan on becoming the instructor of my own club one day and the guidance I have received from Mr. Mantjika throughout my life will be what I carry through to my own club. I hope that one day I will instruct with the contagious enthusiasm and passion he shares with me.