

How does Taekwon-do develop leadership in youth

I started Taekwon-do at five years old in 1990 at Hobsonville TKD club.

At the time there were maybe seventy of us that started that would all be considered youth students. Of that seventy, eight of them tested to 2nd degree and I was the only one who tested to 3rd degree also being the only one to progress onwards and open a club and teach my own students.

I feel Taekwon-do has developed massive leadership qualities in me as person and I would to talk of my experience as a youth coming trough Taekwon-do compared with today's youth.

I feel the backbone of Taekwon-do is discipline and that is why most people get their children involved in Taekwondo.

For me this was the case in a world nowadays that is so

disposable with everything, it taught me that I had to stick with things, if I ever wanted to achieve my goals and nothing was easy.

I believe this is true in life and this is the biggest value Taekwon-do has.

As a youth to see forward 4-5 years to a black belt is hard but is one thing I believe is possible. It takes small stepping stones along the way but is 100% possible.

I also feel the Instructor is a huge part in this show, not only the youth but also the parents that it takes hard work to reach goals and that they are not just given.

When i was younger it was a long wait for gradings so my parents saw the tournament side of Taekwon-do as value to me taking me all over the country/world to compete, this is what I mean in regards to small stepping stones along the way.

It gave me goals and progressing through rank became less important because of these goals.

The biggest thing taught me was stickability to something. In a world where if your phone breaks you just buy another one, or if your TV stops working you get another from the other room. I feel Taekwon-do really

shows you that if it's not working or broken you have to fix it or change it, and it's only on you to do that.

I feel that some of the youth are rushed through the rank system nowadays without a lot of experience as to how ITF works.

They believe that two training sessions per week is enough and that they deserve the rank.

The two comments I have had as an Instructor that have stayed in my mind over the years one from a parent and one from a student :

- Student:
- I have payed my fees like everyone so what's the problem...
- Parent:
- “ Mark I attend the gym three times a week for the last fifteen years so does that mean they should bow to me and give me a rank”

For me this shows me the world we live in that for students they need the leadership qualities that Instructors provide them and you can't buy your way through a Martial Art and that the parents like that if you

stick with something that you are rewarded.

I feel this shows good leadership to our youth.

The thing I like that is encouraged in ITKD is that the Senior members are encouraged to be in Dobok and attend events.

When i was younger I always looked up to several members of (ITFNZ). Back then and felt like it would be a rare moment not to see them at a Nationals for example as it was normal to be there every year.

What is even more amazing to me is that one of those people in particular is still here not only did he just tested to Master but he is also one of the Coaches for the National Team. For me I look at this and it's the kind of person I hold in high regard and would like to follow in his foot footsteps.

So even at the age of thirty-five, 5th degree and twenty years in Taekwon-do I still look to Instructors to gain motivation and ideas for myself.

One thing that helped me a lot with leadership was competing, so as most know this is something I am very passionate about. This is why I have started to take small

groups overseas to compete and train.

I feel this opens the youths eyes as to different Instructor and people who maybe are not as fortunate as us here in New Zealand.

It shows them how other people live and train and it can help them how it has helped me understanding that our organisation has so many opportunities to stand up and lead.

In 2016 we took five people to Argentina and it grew in 2017 we took twelve.

I believe this teaches youth how to be leaders and the more they see the better they know.

For me I would love to see more people involved in tournaments, I feel in a tournament there is so many options and as my first Instructor said you have to do patterns at a grading so you should do them at a tournament.

I feel this is like life in that sometimes you are very nervous and it wakes your uncomfortable, so for me this taught me from a young age how to deal with that and now I feel I am a good leader showing the next generation how to do it and deal with those things not only for Taekwon-do but life.

Conclusion

I feel I can talk about this subject first hand as I have lived it.

I think nowadays The youth in Taekwon-do have way more opportunity than I had and it's amazing. I believe true leaders can be made from Taekwon-do but I also feel we need to maintain discipline as I said earlier just because you pay or turn up doesn't mean you should be promoted or in a position of leadership. I feel Taekwon-do is lacking in discipline and it would be great to see more of it again.

I would like to see more training before people became Instructors in grading areas.

I feel when you became a black belt you start teaching but I think there are areas we are great such as patterns or self-defense but areas that lack for example sparring or breaking.

As I said we do create great leaders and that is something we can always do more on and develop new ways.

I have made many friends over my twenty/thirty years in Taekwon-do and I have asked them to provide some

pharagraphs on what they think on this subject.

They are all friends I have met via Taekwon-do, some still do it and others have taken the leadership qualities and put them into other areas in life but for me the people I have asked are great leaders in their chosen field and all started Taekwon-do as youths.

How do you think TKD provides good leadership qualities for kids?

Maxime Boujodu

5x World Champion

2x World Cup Champion

Started training at age seven

- Like other sports or cultural activities, Taekwon-do

can provide a good setting and opportunities for kids to develop their leadership skills. First, there's the instructor that needs to show certain personality traits and energy to keep kids focused and interested. If the kids enjoy the proximity with the instructor (proximity like being close or sequestered in a gym with them lol, not proximity like emotional) and how he behaves, they will try and copy him. They will use the same words (even if often times they don't understand them), they will try and copy how he executes his techniques, or the way he uses body language or unspoken messages. Kinda like "fake it till you make it". The instructor can rapidly become like an idol they will want to impress.

- What I'm trying to illustrate here is that kids are "stuck" in a room with a person in authority that will display behaviours he wants the kids to copy. Those behaviours can be speaking cleanly and politely (yes sir, thank you, please...) or helping a kid getting up if he got hurt. And this is not just about the teacher, but other competitors when they go to tournaments or even red belts the same age as them. They will observe and copy.

- Kids will not only copy the words and moves. As they get a little bit older, they can understand how team work works. That can be when more advance students are encouraged to take initiatives and help out the instructor with something, or go give a hand to a student in need. By taking these initiatives, they become leaders without knowing it, because the one they help will notice, appreciate and repeat the same behaviour is the opportunity comes up.
- Really my friend, I'm a bad writer. Put simply, kids can become leader when they have a good model, when they are encouraged to help others, when they do extra work even when no one asked them, when they win medals and say thank you to their parents and coach and partners. They become leader when they do things in the shadow for the common good, not for their Instagram. Thanks to Tkd, kids have access to leaders (instructors, class mates, parents) they have access to good settings to develop their leadership (class, competition, demo team, etc), and then they can take their skills to outside the gym and into the world (school, community work, their own house).

Kane Baigent New Zealand

3x World Champion

Started training at age five

I think leadership is taught to kids in Taekwon-do via a number of avenues. From lessons learnt in class to the hierarchy system that TKD poses. However I believe the instructors are the primary source as it is their regular presence in class and ability to demonstrate certain qualities that helps to mould kids into little leaders inside and outside the Do-jang. Not every instructor poses leadership like qualities. To teach kids how to be effective leaders requires themselves to be knowledgeable, capable, compassionate, encouraging and inspiring amongst a whole host of other attributes to set an example for their students. The instructor becomes a role model and progressively overtime I believe kids relate to that and perhaps aspire to be like them. This creates a positive chain reaction and student then

becomes teacher continuing on the cycle and inspiring others to be good leaders. The on going effect is remarkable and

Something we Taekwon-do practitioners should be proud of as we do our bit in building a more peaceful world.

Julio Carlos USA

3x World champion

3x World Cup champion

Started training at age eight

So I personally think Taekwon-do has helped in all aspects of growth as a child .

It taught me discipline while at the same time respect for others.

I learned to be courteous but also to have the integrity to stand up for what is right .

I was taught to always be the bigger man and have absolute self control ,

to persevere even when things got tough !

Lastly , having an indomitable spirit goes hand in hand with Taekwon-do, not allowing us to be influenced or tempted by the outside world;

always staying true and to trust my indomitable spirit. From these Taekwon-do tenets which were engrained growing up as a child I learned immeasurable leadership qualities.

Stephan Tapilatu Netherlands

2x World champion

Hall of Fame ITF

Dutch National coach

Started training at age ten

How you think Taekwon-do provided you with leadership qualities when you were young :

First of all my father, Master Wijnand Tapilatu, was my big/great role model as a competitor, coach and a friend!

When I was a young boy I had the privilege to see how GM Bos taught and coached the national team of The Netherlands. My father was one of the team members that in 1987 in Glasgow, Scotland became Team World champion sparring.

At the age of twelve I already trained for four years with GM Bos and my father. They taught me to have respect to all people. Don't be anybody's friend but have respect no matter where you're from.

At the age of fifteen my father showed me how to teach Taekwon-do. There I learned so much! How to communicate with students have interaction with them. What drives people to train and want to learn from you?

To show people Taekwon-do was a blessing for me. I could talk, practice Taekwon-do for hours! To take people on my path the journey of Taekwon-do was so great. To inspire people takes leadership. Not only that they feel what you feel about Taekwon-do. Also when on competition that you can take a team to the next level.. that they trust you believe in you and let them rise above themselves and set results that they even don't know it was possible!

Taekwon-do gave me so much self-esteem that I could take leadership in my hands.

With kind regards/ met vriendelijke groet,

Soledad Serrano Argentina

6x World champion

Started training at age five

The Taekwon-do gave me absolutely everything. Forge my character. It has helped me to plant me and get out to the world and show what I wanted to achieve with how little I had. It has helped to persevere and to be able to talk about perseverance giving my example. It has helped me to raise my guard against all the situations of life that were not Taekwon-do and hit even harder. I teach myself to create an illusion in students to motivate them to go for theirs. I teach myself to dream and then work to achieve it. Taekwon-do gave me friends all over the world, I got the possibility of feeling like a world start sometimes, and as an initial practitioner more very day. Taekwon-do is road, the way to learn to overcome any challenge.

‘ Dreams give you motivation and Taekwon-do the discipline to achieve them’

Tomaz Barada Slovenia

3x world champion

ITF Hall of fame

ITF board of directors

Started training at age thirteen

Taekwon-do really gives me everything. I can say when I was a child and started Taekwon-do I wanted to improve myself and made the life I have from it.

With Taekwon-do I became a good leader I learnt how to be a leader also all my life is created for Taekwon-do so I could say without Taekwon-do I could not be who I am and I am really happy of the things I can do in Taekwon-do.