

My interpretation of Loyalty would be to give oneself to a person, a group, an organization, an idea, or a philosophy; within the person's ability to do so. As I see it Taekwon-Do encompasses all of these components: the person being the instructor, the group being the club, the organization being ITFNZ, the idea a form of unarmed combat and self-defense developed by General Choi Hong-Hi and the philosophy being our tenants: Courtesy, Integrity, Perseverance, Self-Control and Indomitable Spirit; as well as our Student Oath. In this essay I would like to focus on the way in which the instructor earns the loyalty of their students because it is an area that I believe isn't touched on, but is an important aspect of loyalty within our art.

I want to start with how the instructor earns the loyalty of the student. I have identified some parts of the instructor's code, while all are relevant, these ones speak to me most:

1. Never tire of teaching. A good instructor can teach anywhere, any time, and always be ready to answer questions.

A good example of this is when my daughter and another student was having trouble with their flying kicks going for black belt, and so I called up Mr. Niven, who although wasn't my immediate instructor, because of his skill in flying techniques, I asked for his assistance. Without hesitation he arranged a time and he came straight over to my house to teach the girls, both out of a club setting and a club time. This really showed how dedicated he was to teaching practitioners even though they were not his own students. This taught me how the instructor can give himself to the student, to give his loyalty to his students and how that in turn is reciprocated by them.

4. The development of students should take precedence over commercialism. Once an instructor becomes concerned with materialism, he will lose the respect of his students.

I've seen this sort of commercialism in other martial arts, for example while I lived in Hawaii I saw advertisements for Karate where they promised the student a black belt within one year. Now when I saw this I didn't believe it because it sounded as if you're simply buying the belt, not actually earning it, as such even if their system would allow them to earn it in such a way, the manner of advertisement made it seem as if it was too good to be true. So coming back into Taekwon-Do, finding it again after 29 years the New Zealand version presented to me was the same disciplines I found when learning Taekwon-Do in my years of service at Vietnam. This was because it advertised itself in a way to better yourself through those disciplines as opposed to the obtaining a symbol of status. I think this rule for instructors relies heavily on the instructor's integrity, which I have found in many of the instructors throughout Taekwon-Do, such as the Masters and my instructor Mr. Peter Graham.

5. Instructors should teach scientifically and theoretically to save time and energy.

I try to teach very much to this rule. While my knowledge of the actual sciences is quite limited and my theoretical knowledge is ever improving, I teach my students in ways that I can better understand. In terms of scientific teaching, rather than explaining the formulas, I instead interpret them and practically

demonstrate them so that the student can watch and understand the theory in its physical form. In terms of theoretical, I tend to pose the application as a question to gauge their mindset and so that they come to those conclusions themselves. These methods have been successful for me and everyone I have taught has shown their appreciation in one way or another, my son usually hears people talk about how I “fixed” their problems in a simple manner. This in a way caused a lot of people to become loyal towards my teaching methods, despite my only intention being to make them the best that they can be.

7. Students should be encouraged to visit other do jangs and study other techniques. Students who are forbidden to visit other do jangs are likely to become rebellious. There are two advantages for allowing the student to visit other gyms: not only is there the possibility that a student may observe a technique that is ideally suited for him, but he may also have a chance to learn by comparing his techniques to inferior techniques.

I believe that this rule should always be followed by instructors. If you try to force a student to be loyal to you, it isn't true loyalty, if you let them see what else is out there, they usually are sure to come back, themselves bettered and the bond between you and the student stronger. An example of this would be my own son, who going for his black belt for the second time, decided it was best if he attended a different club who held classes on the same day. While Mr. Graham was a bit disappointed in this, he still let him go, and the results were that after obtaining his black belt he was back to Remuera Taekwon-Do full time as a great instructor.

8. All students should be treated equally, there should be no favorites. Students should always be scolded in private, never in front of the class.

A good example of this is Warrior Taekwon-Do. The ability to hold such a large number of students is nothing short of exceptional. Looking closer at their method of doing so it is easy to see why. This is because they hold many classes to accommodate the various age groups and needs of the people. What's really impressive about this is the workload that the instructors have on them since many of these classes run one after another. However since they do teach specific age groups each group gets their own attention and a class geared towards them. It is this method that has allowed them to keep their large number of students so well. I think this is a good example of how to earn a large number of student's loyalty.

10. An instructor should not seek any favors such as cleaning the studio, doing repair works, etc. from his students.

I think the mark of a good instructor is that they don't have to ask the students to do these tasks. If the instructor has earned the loyalty of the students, the student will always volunteer themselves for these tasks.

11. An instructor should not exploit his students. The only purpose of an instructor is to produce both technically and mentally excellent students.

This is an interesting rule because it's not so much where it earns the students loyalty but it's the point where that trust and that student's loyalty to the instructor can be misused. This rule in a sense is there to prevent such an abuse of this relationship.

12. Always be honest with the students and never break a trust.

This relates back to all the rules in the sense that once you've earned the students loyalty, it's important to maintain and keep it.

I realized that throughout all these rules they are in a way designed to teach the instructor how to earn the loyalty of the student. As well as this it's also a way of keeping the instructor from abusing this relationship once it's gained. In the bigger picture loyalty will be the thing that keeps students coming back, keeps students interested, and the thing that keeps the art alive.

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John Matsuoka (4<sup>th</sup> Dan)  
Assistant Instructor  
Remuera Taekwon-Do