

My Taekwon-Do Journey

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My journey through Taekwon-Do began in 2010, when I signed up to Taekwon-Do for the first time with Mr. Tony Bishop at the IPC club in Palmerston North. At the time I signed up, I didn't think much of it, I thought it would just be a way to keep fit and socialize. But as soon as I joined, I was hooked instantly. Mr. Bishop was always a very cheerful instructor who put his all into trainings and his students, whether it was making sure that his students were prepared to the best of their ability for gradings, or if it was something outside of Taekwon-Do. Mr. Bishop helped me through my grades until I reached green-belt and due to family inconveniences, I transferred to Mr. Lawrence Mantjika at Southern Cross Taekwon-Do Academy. I am forever grateful to Mr. Bishop for his support and the way he made me enjoy Taekwon-Do. He is my original instructor and will always be the person that helped me start my Taekwon-Do career.

When I moved to SCTA from IPC I started to mature in my age a little more and started to be more interested about where Taekwon-Do came from and how it was creating and why. With the help of Mr. Mantjika I soon began to understand the true meanings of patterns and the bigger picture of Taekwon-Do, especially the "do" also referred to as the way of the art. One story that I will always remember from Mr. Mantjika is the story about the pattern "Choong Moo ". I remember being a 5th gup and Mr. Mantjika sitting the club down and telling us all the story of the great Admiral Yi Soon-Sin, he went in depth and not only told us what was written in our hand book, but he went further and told us the story of how he was set up and sent to prison, betrayed by his own king. Then how he forgave so quickly and defeated an entire Japanese fleet with only 12 ships. This opened my eyes about the history behind Taekwon-Do, as well as made me research more in depth about Taekwon-Do patterns in order to be able to "feel" the pattern. It was at this point where Taekwon-Do became more than just a hobby for me. It was part of my life.

Taekwon-Do has helped become a better person. The oath, the tenants, the meanings, it all means much more than "just words that you have to remember for grading "to me. It's a way to live your everyday life. Courtesy, it teaches you to be respectful and kind to people, is possibly the main tenant of Taekwon-Do, it is even taught to Kubz as the "number one rule in Kubz" . Without being courteous in life, you will not have respect. There have been many occasions in which being courteous, has made not only the person I was courteous too feel good, but also myself. It can be as little as using your manners and getting a warm-hearted smile in return. The next tenant is integrity. Integrity means being honest, not only to others but yourself, this has helped me not only in my Taekwon-Do but in my life outside of Taekwon-Do too. Integrity made me realise that if you cheat, you're only letting yourself down and no one else. You do

things for your own benefit, for example working out at the gym, if you have integrity you will not cheat yourself and push yourself without giving up, this also connects into another tenant which is of course perseverance.

To make yourself better you have to never give up, and if something isn't working out quite right, change the way you approach it and start again. This has helped me to achieve everything I have achieved to this date. Not everything always went the way as planned. Sometimes you just need to adapt. Once again like integrity, and perseverance, indomitable spirit also means to be true to yourself, never give up, and become a better person than you were yesterday. Self-control is in my eyes the most beneficial tenant in all martial arts. It is the reason why most parents take their kids to try any martial art. In my past I was extremely short tempered and didn't know how to control my emotions but with the help of Taekwon-Do that soon changed. The person I am today is all thanks to Taekwon-Do and the Taekwon-Do Community.

Throughout my years of Taekwon-Do I have seen success and also defeat and disappointment in myself. I have trained very hard to be on the level I am now, I have been victorious at worldwide tournaments but I have also come out with nothing. But that's not true, even when I lose, although I may feel disappointed at the time, I come out bigger and better than I was previously because I learn from my mistakes and I change. Because of this factor I believe that I have progressed through Taekwon-Do the way I did. But I would not be where I am today without the people that I am surrounded with, I quite often refer to my Taekwon-Do family as a "Second family". This is because of the support of my fellow clubmates and instructors. Especially my instructor Mr. Mantjika, he inspired me to pursue my Taekwon-Do career with not only competition but with instructing as well. It is my absolute pleasure to pass on my knowledge I have gained in the past 8 years to not only coloured belts but also black belts too, I try my best to help them become as best as they can be, as did my original, and current instructors with me.

Ultimately my journey through Taekwon-Do has been an amazing 8 years. Meeting new people not only from New Zealand, but making lifelong friends from around the world. It has changed my life drastically and I don't know where I would be without Taekwon-Do. The travel, the friendships made, bonds created with people is breath-taking and is such an amazing experience. When I first started Taekwon-Do I didn't think anything so huge would happen that it would change my life. But I am extremely thankful that it did.