

How does TaeKwon-Do provide leadership qualities for youth? What do you do in your club specifically to develop leadership and what ideas do you have to further develop leadership in your club or the organisation?

Part 1

How does Taekwon-Do provide leadership qualities for youth?

To start with I would like to look at what leadership is and what are some of the qualities that give people, not just youth, the ability to be good leaders, this is because TaeKwon-Do is for all and if we can help to create better leaders irrespective of age.

So what is leadership?

DEFINITION: Leadership is a process of social influence, which maximizes the efforts of others, towards the achievement of a goal.

Bill Gates is quoted as saying: *"As we look ahead into the next century, leaders will be those who empower others."*

Leadership:

- Interpersonal influence that comes from one's personal attributes
- The ability to trigger intrinsic motivation in others
- Evoking the discretionary effort of others
- Moments of accountability that one chooses
- Resides in between people and can be channelled by anyone
- Maximizes Individual-Environment Fit in order to produce alignment and happiness
- Produces intangible rewards in others (e.g. meaning, growth)
- Multi-directional among people regardless of status

So what are recognised good leadership qualities?

- Honesty
- Integrity
- Confidence
- Inspire others
- Commitment or passion
- Good communicator
- Accountability
- Delegation or empowerment
- Creativity
- Humility

Secondly we need to look at how leadership fits into TaeKwon-Do.

The foundation of TaeKwon-Do and its historical roots are in the military.

For a very long time the leadership of TaeKwon-Do was based around rank which gives authority not necessarily leadership. (This is changing on national and international levels but club level is still based on this).

Some definitions of an Authority structure:

- Formal power that comes from one's title, role or position within a hierarchy
- The ability to administer extrinsic motivators (i.e. to grade students)
- Securing the obligatory effort of others
- A set of continuous responsibilities during the entirety of one's tenure
- Resides within the position and transfers to whoever holds it
- Enforces rules, procedures and policies as determined by the organization
- Unidirectional from person with authority to subordinates

On the surface looking in TaeKwon-Do is based on an Authoritive structure.

So if TaeKwon-Do is based on an Authoritive structure how can we help people to develop leadership qualities?

The Do of TaeKwon-Do, Leadership qualities are based in TaeKwon-Do philosophy.

From the very first class students are reciting the student oath:

- I shall observe the tenets of TaeKwon-Do.
- I Shall Respect instructors and seniors.
- I shall never misuse TaeKwon-Do.
- I shall be a champion of freedom and justice.
- I shall build a more peaceful world.

The very first line I shall observe the tenets of TaeKwon-Do:

Courtesy

- behaviour marked by polished manners or respect for others
- a courteous and respectful act or expression

Integrity

- firm adherence to a code of especially moral or artistic values : incorruptibility
- an unimpaired condition : soundness
- the quality or state of being complete or undivided : completeness

Perseverance

- continued effort to do or achieve something despite difficulties, failure, or opposition : the action or condition or an instance of persevering : steadfastness

Self-Control

- restraint exercised over one's own impulses, emotions, or desires

Indomitable Spirit

Definition of indomitable:

- incapable of being subdued
- unconquerable

Definition of spirit (only relevant defining noted):

- the activating or essential principle influencing a person
- a special attitude or frame of mind
- the feeling, quality, or disposition characterizing something
- a lively or brisk quality in a person or a person's actions
- a person having a character or disposition of a specified nature
- a mental disposition characterized by firmness or assertiveness

Looking back at the list of leadership qualities above, we can see that we are already ticking off some of them.

So without delving deeply into the Do of TaeKwon-Do we are already setting out the framework for good leadership qualities with the very first class, if people are able to take them on board.

Thus TaeKwon-Do provides leadership qualities for youth by providing the framework through the moral guidance of the philosophy of the martial art.

Part Two:

What do you do in your club specifically to develop leadership?

At Te Awamutu TaeKwon-Do

- We, as do all the other clubs in our organisation, start the class with the student oath, by doing this we are continually exposing the students to the start of the "DO", we regularly ask for what people think parts of the oath mean, and expand on each part, for a lot of youth this can seem like a waste of time, but by continually talking about it we can see an increased understanding over time.

- We try to identify people who want to lead and those that don't, but still giving those that don't the chance to take little steps in controlled environments.
- We give juniors the responsibility to instruct others, this helps to build confidence, increases their ability to communicate and by getting the students who have been instructed to demonstrate what they were taught gives accountability.
- We encourage students to enter TaeKwon-Do events, this can help with confidence, gives the opportunity to communicate with likeminded people and to be inspired or inspire others through the activity undertaken.
- We as instructors try to provide positive role models by our actions and share our passion for the art that we do.

Part Three

What ideas do you have to further develop leadership in your club or the organisation?

At club level

- To continually instil the tenants of TaeKwon-Do into the students, providing a foundation for good leadership not just in TaeKwon-Do but in all facets of their life.
- To provide people with the opportunity to take on responsibility and be given guidance on the outcomes.

For the organisation

- Guidance to the development of the Do and a modernisation on how it is taught.

To end with

I believe the best leadership quality that TaeKwon-Do can provide for youth is confidence, to build up confidence in them self, this helps them to be able to achieve goals that are set, to be able to talk, teach or do things in front of groups. Having confidence helps to move past disappointment to be able to move forward and in the current mental health crises we face in New Zealand this can only be a good thing.

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Te Awamutu TaeKwon-Do

Reference

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