

# "Do" in Taekwon-Do

Mr Rene Kunz

---

All through my school life I was fascinated by Martial Arts, it held a mystique that the general public just didn't and still doesn't understand.

On a regular basis I would watch Martial Art movies & see practitioners such as Bruce Lee perform awesome physical feats thinking "wow" I'd love to do that – be the champion of freedom & justice, take on overwhelming odds without regard for my own safety, handle myself on all situations, after all isn't that what all guys aspired to be like?

Yes, I wanted to be someone special, get the best out my own body, make a positive impact on society, inspire my peers, family, friends, but hey who wants to be seen as a beginner at school?

It wasn't until my early 20's that I got the opportunity attend a class with a person who was living with me at the time, which happened to be ITF NZ. I found that I did indeed have a natural gift for doing Martial Arts & took to it like a duck to water, since then it has been nine very rewarding years developing my own abilities both externally as well as internally.

Though TKD is something that I do myself it is something that has made me a stronger/better person which has benefited my friends, family, & employer.

Right after I attained my Black-belt I had a shoulder operation which prevented me from training for six months, during this time I reflected again on the mystery of Martial Arts & discovered that after seven years I hadn't been doing Martial Arts, what I had been doing was a sport which developed me externally, where was the "Do" which originally attracted me to the Arts?

In October '98 I was approached by my instructor to take over Miramar Club as Head Instructor , whilst very flattering I was very conscious of the fact that I felt I had very little knowledge of TKD. How could I teach if I didn't know myself ?

This was the only reason I answered "no" to the question on the Black belt application form "do you wish to become an instructor". How can a beginning student become a good instructor ? I think this is common for black belts, the perception to the public is that you are an expert, a lethal weapon, but it's only when you get to Black belt that you realise just how little you know.

I began to read books such as Zen in the Martial Arts by Joe Hyams & began to develop myself internally, philosophy became very important to me & I started to include it in my classes to the senior students, promoting a strong mind as well as body. I began to see a change in their attitude towards class & a renewed excitement as if I had begun to give them something they couldn't get elsewhere.

The sport had now changed to a Martial Art, students were developing themselves internally as well as externally. They were encouraged to read more and take an interest in the “complete package” not just throwing your arms & legs around twice a week.

Through teaching TKD to the Juniors from 6-12 years I could see that I was helping children by installing confidence, respect, discipline, the tenets & principles which have been lost on the new generation of television absorbed children.

Today many of the younger generation have been given an too much slack, they are told it is O.K. to question authority, you can talk back to adults & they have rights far beyond their years. This is fine to prevent abuse & protect our children however some have actually taken this to the extreme where some children go into adult life without ever being reprimanded for poor attitude or behaviour.

I was finally doing my part to build a more peaceful world.

I had found the “Do” but in doing so became aware that my fellow instructors did very little if no philosophy at all thus depriving there students of the heart & soul of the Arts.

We as an organisation must take responsibility for training our instructors not just in the external but the internal – the “Do”, teach the instructors about this amazing thing so that they can pass on their learning to all our students, this will create depth within the organisation & will enable us to create a loyal following of practitioners who are not continually looking for an Art which will fill their gap, they will have it all in ITFNZ.

In the orient wisdom & teaching were passed on from elder to student, in the western world we have a completely different culture, in New Zealand this is possibly due to the youth of our country, we simply do not have the history of the Orient & are therefore at a big disadvantage.

Without the “Do” our organisation cannot get stronger. One only needs to attend a grading, Kup or Black belt & notice that many students lack the spirit & correct attitude to become true Martial Artists.

These student have no “Do” & it is not their fault, a student is only as good as his teacher, to become better than his teacher he must learn elsewhere, either from books or from another teacher.

We need to be addressing this, our instructors need to be instructed . How can this be achieved ? First we need to be aware of this problem & admit that “yes, this is true we do have a problem”, then we need to confirm that this is something that we need /want to fix .

Perhaps our most senior instructors should make regular trips around the country visiting different clubs & instructing on a club night, or at the least conduct regular combined training on a normal training night where students get to meet & receive instruction from them.

Only a few students tend to go to technique seminars held in the weekends due to family commitments & other interests.

Also we should gain the knowledge of other Martial Artists from other styles& not be afraid to listen , learn & pass this knowledge on to our students.

Philosophy is universal & not specific to any Art.

Instructors need to be given tuition in Philosophy, books need to be recommended for reference, special seminars with guest instructors need to be organise & knowledge needs to be passed on to from Senior Instructor to Junior Instructor.

First we need to be aware of the problem...