

I shall build a more peaceful world

Mr Dave Ballard

Taekwon Do practitioners all over the world recite the student oath every night of training, at tournaments, camps or at nearly any gathering of students. One line of the oath reads “I shall build a more peaceful world”. Seven words with meaning that is often unknown to our students and maybe instructors. As instructors it is our responsibility to teach our students right from wrong, to understand the meanings behind each of our five tenets and to lead by example allowing students to see them in practice.

The following is my interpretation of that one line, “I shall build a more peaceful world” and how I use the tenets to help achieve this in home, work, training and for my students. How through these workings I can say I am making a difference.

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“A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step” – Chinese Proverb

START WITH THE BASICS

Everyone needs to have some understanding of how they like to be treated as a human being, how and what things make them feel good. Without this understanding you do not have a point to start with.

Q: Do you feel better when someone says “thank you” or “please”.

The answer is obviously YES.

Without these courtesies we cannot expect others to return the same and by doing so start a process of respecting one another. With respect we learn to care for others and be aware of others feelings and plights and how we can influence them.

Confucius said. “To promote the sense of morality one must treat others with faithfulness and sincerity based on righteousness and to eliminate completely vicious thinking”

Never be afraid to use courtesy or people’s titles to show respect and to help gain their confidence and respect.

I think that here in New Zealand we are not that good at using common sense manners and that you can build great respect among others by using them. This needs to start at an early age we should teach our young children to say please and thank you and allow them to grow in a humane and courteous world.

Learn to listen to people. Their ideas and ideals, don’t write someone off because of their beliefs but learn from what they say and you will always continue to grow as a person. Remember to keep in mind that you know “the right from wrong” and make your decision based on fact not hearsay.

UNDERSTANDING THE TENETS OF TAEKWON DO

Courtesy, Integrity, Perseverance, Self Control and Indomitable Spirit are the five tenets of Taekwon Do and every student should be encouraged to learn them and their meanings. When I think of “Building a more peaceful world” these tenets interact between yourself and what you will achieve as a member of our society. The better we know and teach the principles of these tenets the better we will all be.

The younger students that we teach may only work with one or two tenets say courtesy and self control. These two can be easily explained and hopefully easy to understand, keep your definitions plain and pitched at the level of the students. Ask for students to give their own examples of each tenant and not the ones written in our theory handbook.

“Needless to say, the success or failure of Taekwon Do training depends largely on how one observes and implements the tenets of Taekwon Do which should serve as a guide for all serious students of the art”

I think that in general we tend to be good at using these tenets in our own Do jangs but we let ourselves down when we are outside this environment and this is where we all need to continue to strive for improvement.

Ask lots of questions from your students and likewise from your instructors if you can give actual examples of the tenets then this will reinforce your teachings to your students.

Over many years in the public service sector I have learnt that with using the tenets in my work place that people will become loyal and you can build professional relationships that will prosper. The tenets will run hand in hand with creating an environment you wish to be part of everyday

IN THE WORK PLACE

How many of us really enjoy dealing with complaints or upset customers? Hearing someone's troubles or just letting off steam? I would say that none of us enjoy this type of work but through using the tenets and listening you can achieve success from the very hardest of situations. The handling of that one difficult customer can earn you respect and a very loyal customer that will sign your praises. The challenges of work is one that you must continuously strive for improvement and allow yourself to grow and mature in any aspect of your working life.

I will always give my students examples of what I have achieved in my work place and how I have used these to create a stronger client base. It is nice to be in a position that allows me the time to stop and talk to many different people and not just treat them in a rushed or hurried manner. This allows for respect to be gained and foster a good professional relationship with many individuals.

- “Treat people as if they ought to be, and you help them to become what they are capable of becoming’ – Goethe
- “In matters of style, swim with the current; in matters of principle stand like a rock” – Thomas Jefferson

AT HOME

Surely this is where it should begin, the family unit, children learning from their own parents, grandparents and how to live along side siblings. Again the common factor is courtesy and this should be used everyday at all levels, is it too much to ask or expect that the simple “thank you” or “please” be a part of the daily routine, much the same as eating day in, day out.

Our own children are seven and four, while they do not get their manners right all the time we encourage that they use them as much as possible. In their school and kindergarten I bite my tongue at the lack of respect shown by such young people, no simple answer but at this level young people need good ideals from home.

Several years ago I had the honor of introducing the bride's parents at a wedding reception, in that introduction I tried to sum up a parent in one word, tough call. The introduction went something like, "if I was to sum a parent up in one word then that word would be perseverance and that Alan & Jill have done this, with the result we see tonight Sarah. For all parents no matter if you have a young baby or teenagers don't give up on them, persevere with them, if they make an error then assist, don't let them go. With this in mind we can all bring our young people up to play apart in society that you and we can be proud of"

This needs to be driven by the adults, be role models, lead by example, praise the good and correct when needed, children love to be recognized and adore a positive surrounding.

HOW BIG IS THE WORLD AND MY WORLD

Our Taekwon Do gives us a vessel to break down international barriers, to give us common ground from which we can all grow and prosper. The Taekwon Do hand extends to nearly all countries and yes we all recite the same student oath that contains that same line "I shall build a more peaceful world"

Individually the world is a very large place to build into a more peaceful one; the tens of thousands of Taekwon Do students that are practicing the tenets and student oath are indeed making some difference. Our different cultures mean that some places do not have such disrespect to elders or as much crime against one another but as we mature as a species I hope that we truly learn to live alongside each other with true respect and harmony.

September the 11th 2001 brought about a terrible injustice to many, many people and that one event has changed the way in which we as a race will not accept such terror in the international world.

Nationally we see crimes against each other that are as terrible in their own way as the September 11 attacks and it is sad that some fellow New Zealanders hold such a low regard for human life. We cannot sit by and shrug our shoulders, we cannot turn and look away, for then the crimes would be just a statistic, this is where we each play a role in this community by looking out for one another and by stepping forward to help others in need.

My world is but a small part of this globe and I continuously work to make my world a better one for myself and those people that I come in contact with.

Twentyfour hours a day and seven days a week you need to be that champion of freedom and justice and while this sounds fanciful, without it I will not succeed in being the best that I can be or fail in how people perceive me

Sometime ago I sat down with my Taekwon Do club and asked the question “what do you do to build a more peaceful world”

Pleasing to say many said that through the training and courtesy they were bettering their own surroundings and doing their bit for their world, they understood that they could not change the world as such but it was the daily challenge to improve that which was close at heart.

I was proud that perhaps some of my talks had been taken on board but was that enough? And that is what I next asked. What else could we do as a group of people to further improve our community?

This proved to be difficult but I have seen our club get involved in different activities that helps others which helps build our more peaceful world.

Some examples of our club at work:

- Palmerston North Taekwon Do Blood Club. That's right I started a club to donate blood on a regular time frame. This club has been running for nearly eighteen months. We have a number of students and parents that are members of this club and we are always on the recruit for new members from other TKD clubs. I have donated five times in this period.
- Annual appeal collections, the whole club has been involved in door to door collections for the Arthritis foundation, we have done this instead of a nights training.
- March 2002 saw the club enter the “Relay for Life” in aid of the local Cancer Society. This was a twenty four hour team relay. Each team member sought donations or sponsorship for them taking part in the relay. The great thing was not just being a part of this event but it was getting the entire club and some parents involved in this great community event.

“There are two primary choices in life: To accept conditions as they exist, or accept the responsibility for changing them” – Dr Dennis Waitley

Yes, it is all too easy to sit on the side and watch the world go by, perhaps it is those people who sit and watch who are committing an injustice for not taking an active role in their community. I have been very proud of our club in the past two years and I truly feel we do respect one another and that we are not ones to sit and watch. Still, I find myself asking is this enough, what more can we do. We are always on the look out for more ways in which to help others and to continue our great work as a club.

When I read General Choi's writings I think that this is the full circle of training and that through the kup grades we learn respect and courtesy through a disciplined environment and that it is not until we reach our own maturity that we start to understand what impact and influence we actually have on our world.

SUMMARY

Where to from here? For the past sixteen years I have been a part of Taekwon Do and I know that through my instructor, Mr Ng and my years of instructing I think I have reached that maturity, that I do make a difference for myself, family and my Taekwon Do students. The cement has set and that if for some reason I was to leave my Taekwon Do then I feel strongly that I would have to find another activity or group that would assist others and work in helping the community. I do not think that I could stop caring for others and that I am now too aware of others and their feelings.

The way in which you treat others will directly influence you and your surroundings, be aware of yourself and at the same time the changes that take place through your actions.

Listen and learn from others. Try to be your best and see what a difference that this can make to you, your family and your own world.