

Mr Gwyn Brown

Loyalty is faithfulness or a devotion to a person or cause.

Plato said that "only a man who is just can be loyal, and that loyalty is a condition of genuine philosophy."

Lao Tzu's take on loyalty:

"When people lost sight of the way to live
Came codes of love and honesty,
Learning came,
Charity came,
Hypocrisy took charge;
When differences weakened family ties
Came benevolent fathers and dutiful sons;
And when lands were disrupted and misgoverned
Came ministers commended as loyal."

(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Loyalty>) The above are quoted from this website dictionary.

The clinical definition of loyalty is easy. And by using words like devotion, sincerity, honesty, and trust; a picture of a person who simply does the right thing when confronted with ethical decisions is easily established in the mind.

As a student progresses through the ranks, and more skill in Taekwon-Do is learned, so to is more knowledge of the philosophical side gained. Until such a time that a wise student reaches a stage where they realise that the philosophy Taekwon-Do is built on, is more important than the actual techniques of self defence themselves.

For, in learning a martial art, a deadly skill is gained. But without the philosophical moral code to use that skill wisely, the student is in danger of becoming everything that Taekwon-Do was designed to prevent.

Taekwon-Do training in preparation for grading to 4th Dan includes an in-depth study of what it means to be a loyal and virtuous person. Loyalty is devotion. Devotion to the art, to the history, to one's instructor, and to the founder.

Loyalty is also to one's family, one's friends, and especially to oneself. Someone who doesn't believe in these values, cannot remain loyal to them. You cannot steal from your family if you are loyal to them. You cannot become a criminal if you are a loyal person, for to do so means you have betrayed your parents, your friends, and yourself. You have in every sense, become disloyal.

Loyalty to me is simply all the things above. It is the little things and the big things in my life. For me, Taekwon-Do is not the most important thing; my family is. And sometimes being loyal to both is a compromise. I want to be there for everything my kids do, or my wife is doing. However I also have a responsibility to Taekwon-Do. The two have often clashed. But I have made a

commitment to live by the moral codes and the philosophy of Taekwon-Do because I believe in them. I value them. And these values, including loyalty, I teach to my children and try to be an example for my friends and colleagues.

Sometimes Taekwon-Do misses out, and sometimes my family does. This is not disloyalty to either. It is a compromise, realising that the two can co-exist, and each can benefit the other. This is in fact loyalty to both.

General Choi valued loyalty very highly. And perhaps after all the betrayals that he suffered he is more qualified than anyone I know to talk about what loyalty means. From reading his memoirs I get the impression that he was deeply hurt by the betrayals of the instructors who turned from him, and each betrayal only stood to strengthen his resolve to spread Taekwon-Do, and to encourage those who followed the true Taekwon-Do, to also follow the philosophy that forms it's heart. I am loyal to this.