



# THE 5 TENETS OF TAEKWONDO



There are many reasons why someone starts a martial art, or brings their child to learn a martial art.

Reasons can include:

- A lifelong passion to be a martial artist
- Exercise and physical training
- Training in a sport for national/ international competition
- Learning discipline and respect
- Self-defence
- Socialising
- Fun

All these reasons are valid ones. While now well known as a sports martial art, with competition available in sparring, poomsae and weapons, Taekwondo has a long history, steeped in **Korean philosophy and martial necessity**, and it is centred around 5 tenets.

Tenets are **principles or beliefs** related to a philosophy.

The 5 tenets of Taekwondo are:

- **Courtesy**
- **Integrity**
- **Perseverance**
- **Self-control**
- **Indomitable spirit**

What I notice in reading these tenets is that these philosophical principles are also character traits which would help warriors to be effective and survive.

Does one need to subscribe to the principles before training in a martial art? Not necessarily.

The philosophy of Taekwondo is actually built into students as they train, and becomes not only a set of beliefs, but also the **inherent character of the person**.

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They live and train what the philosophy is based on, and so **become the personification of those tenets.**

While we may not all end up modern-day warriors for a living, character traits like these are extremely valuable at school, home,

and in adult life of work and relationships. The traits are not, and cannot be, achieved quickly though.

Every moment from walking into the dojang for the first time, an act of utmost courage for some, until each time a student leaves the dojang, is **an opportunity to learn and develop.**

Achieving black belt level, is a mark of how far someone has come in that journey (try watching a black belt grading and remember that each of those martial artists, who demonstrate discipline, focus, and dedication, all started as a white belt who most likely couldn't tie their belt straight).

Given half a chance, what Taekwondo does above all else is **build character.**

The tenets of Taekwondo are mostly **taught through actions**, not words, and by example (of instructors, and of other students). It may not always be apparent these things are being taught, but every single moment is one where something of character is being learned.

Over the next 5 issues of our eNews, we are going to look at each of these tenets in detail, and how the things we do teach these principles.

And a final word for parents, you can help your child build on these principles, reinforcing outside the dojang what Taekwondo is all about, helping them **persist on the harder days** when training seems like a chore, and even getting on the floor with them and **learning together.**

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