

MOTIVATION TO KEEP TRAINING AFTER REACHING BLACK BELT

Written by KMAA Black Belts Ms Kay and Ms Annika

Ms Annika and Ms Kay have joined forces to write about Taekwondo from two different perspectives. Perhaps the older and the younger, but we're sure there are other differences in our perspectives that we'll explore as we continue to collaborate.

So our first topic, is **what motivates each of us to keep training** after we achieved black belt status.

Ms Annika:

Lots of people get tired of training after they've been doing it for a few years. Once you get your black belt it can feel like you're just learning the same thing over and over. It's really easy to give up and stop coming to training. I've been doing taekwondo for 8 years now, and I have no intention of quitting.



Some things that really **inspire me** to keep going are:

- Everyone, regardless of age, height, weight, sexuality, race, religion, ethnicity, mental or physical state and culture, can participate.
- The sense of **community and belonging** when I'm training.
- The **enthusiasm and excitement** of the kids when I'm teaching.
- The look on people's faces when I tell them I'm a black belt and their immediate response of "can you show me a kick?".
- Trying to **compete with myself** to improve.

I could have stopped at black belt, but until the kids stop looking at themselves in the mirror while they're training, until there isn't a weird smell when you walk in, until we finally clean up our locker, and until the chest guard area stays tidy for more than a week, I'll keep coming back.

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Ms Kay:

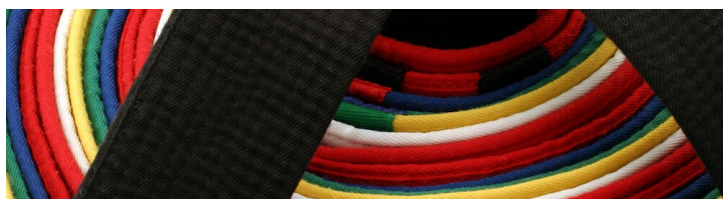
I've also been doing Taekwondo for about 9 years now. I sometimes get tired after a long day at work, and its tempting to just head home, but I keep coming back for more.

I think of achieving my black belt as **the start of a new journey**, while it was also the end of a different one.

One very clear reason I remain is the **friends I've met and who keep training**, so I love to come and see them and work hard and laugh together as we train.

I love instructing too and teaching people new skills and seeing their faces when they master something.

I like that there continue to be things to learn or ways that I can improve: as you get older and more experienced in life and Taekwondo it can take more to learn something new, and **Taekwondo keeps my mind and body active**.



A lot of martial arts for me is about **being prepared to defend myself or others**, and in many ways I see the dojang and training as ways to hone those skills and keep them current, so my body and muscle memory and techniques kick in if and when I need it.

Starting Taekwondo was like coming home for me, as I started later in life though I'd wanted to do a martial art since I was about 16 years old.

So I guess a final thought for me is, once you come home, why would you leave again?

