



# TAEKWONDO TENETS

## COURTESY: 여의 PRONOUNCED YE-WEE

Courtesy... for me, this word brings to mind Mr Darcy, Jane Austen's paragon of good virtue, gentility and impeccable manners, or perhaps an upright, honourable samurai warrior living by the bushido code of conduct that demands compassion, honour, veracity and loyalty.

It carries overtones of a **code of behaviour** towards other people (it's difficult to be courteous in a vacuum).

Without attributes like courtesy, a martial artist may just be a thug, paying no heed to anyone else or their feelings.

Our own Student Creed ends with the notion of "**might for right**", we don't end on might alone, this reinforces the intention that what we learn is for good and for what is right, in defending those weaker than ourselves.

Courtesy has many synonyms such as politeness, respect, deference, thoughtfulness, consideration, empathy.

Learning courtesy and respect starts from the very first time a student enters the Dojang and steps on the mat.

Early lessons in courtesy include **respect for one's belt** (learning to tie it correctly, and not throwing it around, leaving in a bundle on the floor or using as a skipping rope), wearing a **neatly pressed uniform** to every lesson and folding it carefully after use, and **bowing** coming in/out of the Dojang and on/off the training mat.

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*Written by Kay Millican, 4th Dan Black Belt*

During training exercises, courtesy is developed through **bowing to a partner** before contact or self-defence training. Bowing shows respect to the place of training, to Sir as our Head Instructor and as a Seventh Dan Black Belt, and to all the people we come in contact with.

There are also lessons of deference and respect like referring to instructors as Sir, Miss, Mr or Master.

Instructors and more experienced students **teach courtesy by example** – they are conscious that every interaction they have with others, whether they are instructing, training, or walking around off the mat, may be scrutinised by other students and parents.

Their behaviour speaks to new students about what is expected, far louder than words could.

Students learn to respond politely to instruction, while listening and paying attention, and not interrupting.

Courtesy to other students is learned through **lining up in belt order**, thereby showing respect to people with higher level belts, by **waiting in line patiently** for drills, and by not jostling or pushing others at the water station during breaks.

And thoughtfulness and consideration towards others is built through ensuring we try not to hurt each other during training, and **showing empathy** if someone is upset or accidentally injured.

In Taekwondo training, **people of many backgrounds come together for a common purpose**, and we all learn to interact with people from a range of ages, gender, cultural backgrounds, and abilities.

The Dojang is a social situation with many, many opportunities for children to learn about **how to be with people in harmony**.

And remember, parents can support their kids learning of courtesy in simple ways – like ensuring they are quiet when coming into the Dojang as students currently training need to remain focused and pay attention to their instructor, and maintain quiet as they pack up because another class will have started.

While it's nice to have a bit of time to relax while your kids are on the floor, before and after their class **please help teach them the meaning of courtesy, their belt, their impact on others, and the Dojang expectations of behaviour**.

