

## How Tae Kwon Do has Changed My Life

### Sam – Black Belt Paper

For me tae kwon do has changed my life for the better. I'm not saying just a little bit here and there. I'm talking big time. In terms of self-control, self-confidence, discipline, and determination. These are the improvements that made me a way better person.

Before I came to tae kwon do I was sometimes very aggressive. After a few months of attending tae kwon do I was a little better. After a year I had significantly changed my attitude.

When I was in fourth and fifth grade, if people made me mad at recess, I would attack them. No major injuries were involved just enough to the point across. Anything that annoyed me, they got it. I hated this one first-grader so bad, he and I fought so much we almost were kicked out of gym. TKD helped me out a lot here.

Now I didn't just attack second graders, my brother was tormented by me ever since he was younger than three. From smashed fingers to being pushed down the stairs and being thrown in bushes, you name it, it happened to him all over the course of eight years. After a bit of TKD I was better, but it is still a struggle to not do those things anymore.

My self-control is almost under control now thanks to TKD. It was not easy though. Just like in anything in life, you have to work or it. The non-stop battle for self-control is near an end now. If I work some more it could be ended by next year.

My self-confidence wasn't so hot a few years ago either. If I had to do anything new it took a whole breakdown of crying and attempts of persuading my parents otherwise before I did something. I know it seems childish but it happened. The things they were for weren't even bad for example swim lessons. I wouldn't stay like that forever when I stepped into Chay's Tae Kwon Do.

It was the same thing over again, another freak-out about a new thing. When my mom dropped me off at Chay's I was a disaster. My mom just left me, with nobody I knew at a tae-kwon-do studio. When she came back however she was blown away to see me smiling and telling her all about TKD.

Now after four years I can walk into almost anything without a fight.

Like a few weeks ago when I went to the J.K. Lee tournament in Brookfield with only my dad and brother as the people I knew, I just went along with it. I know TKD has had the most effect on my self-confidence.

Discipline is another strength I've gained through TKD by practicing. I used to never do anything without someone telling me to. I didn't think it necessary, just more work. When I got around green belt, the slacker days were over. I had to start remembering to practice. That was a big commitment even though it was twenty minutes.

It didn't come naturally; it took numerous times of telling me to practice by instructors and parents. It got to the point when I almost quit because it was so depressing. One night I changed and made a decision to practice. After that I got into Black Belt Club and new belts came easier. I still had trouble practicing, but it was the first step. I can practice now for forty minutes to an hour non-stop.

Determination also helped with my discipline. On the night I decided to practice, I thought about getting a black belt and into Black Belt Club. I thought about the respect and status throughout the martial arts society. I thought about how proud my family would be, I could be the first black belt on my mom's side and the second on my dad's side of the family. I decided that is what I wanted to become. To do so I had to start practicing.

One Saturday in summer before my purple belt test Master Chay asked me if I was practicing, I replied, "no" with disappointment. He told me to practice 30 minutes a day to catch up for lost time. I remember doing exactly what he told me. I did not miss a day except for one, which I made up.

I have had determination in other things too. Tournaments are one of those. In tournaments I, like everybody else, want to come first and get a grand champion trophy. When I'm at tournaments I always make a point of doing my best and wanting that first place trophy. The outcome has so far been five firsts and one second. This is how I know I have a lot of determination

Another example is at school. Sometimes I have the urge to be the last standing in fitness tests or get the best grade in class. Whatever I put my mind to whether it's school, tae kwon do, or even home related things I most always have a good outcome.

Everything I have done in tae kwon do has helped in some way. From the talks at class, to fitness, even at my first class with the focus your eyes technique. From the determination, discipline, self-confidence, and self-control I am still here today in TKD to keep going another day, to pull through to the end of the beginning and start a new journey; The journey of a black belt. That is the goal of being a black belt, to get to the second and third degrees maybe more. To be on that wall with my picture on it and for kids to say I know that guy. To be a role model wherever I go. To me tae kwon do is more than self-defense, it is to be and make you be the best you can be. That is why I have pushed on with tae kwon do.