

3rd Dan Paper

Ten years ago my Dad literally dragged me here to Lee's Martial Arts kicking and screaming. When my Dad first told me that I was going to be starting Tae Kwon Do lessons I cried because I thought it was just about beating people up, which did not sound fun to me. But once I started taking lessons my opinion quickly changed. Tae Kwon Do teaches self control and how to focus power and strength, which is the opposite of my first impression. Although Tae Kwon Do may appear to be just a physical sport, there is a mental aspect that is just as important. The lessons you learn here go beyond the next belt test or tournament and influence your entire life.

When I began my TKD lessons I was in desperate need of some of these lessons. At first it took my dad bribing me with Beanie Babies and forcing him to do the first part of class with me, but soon I actually wanted to go to class. I started making new friends and enjoying it more and more. Now, many years later these friends have grown to be family. All of you are part of this LMA family and you all have helped me get to where I am today with your constant encouragement. You all push me every day to improve not only in Tae Kwon Do but also in school and in my own life. Before Tae Kwon Do, I was extremely shy as you might have noticed by how I had to have my dad do class with me. LMA has helped me to gain confidence and has taught me how to be a leader.

I now teach at the Maple Valley LMA every week. This is something that I would have been scared to do many years ago. I enjoy working with all the different belts and

ages. Being able to see their progress as a result to their hard work and dedication is always rewarding. They have all taught me patience and how to lead and work with others. All of these life lessons have helped me to succeed outside of LMA and in school. The diligence and perseverance I have gained over the past 10 years has helped me to achieve my 3.95 cumulative GPA over the last 3 years of High School. These same qualities have helped me to succeed in school sports. This year I was a part of the Kentwood Judo Team and I placed 2nd at the State Tournament in my weight class. None of this would have happened without my experiences here at LMA.

All of these lessons will stay with me for the rest of my life. Respect, integrity, determination, perseverance, and confidence will help me in the years to come when I graduate from high school and move on to college. I want to thank so many people for helping me get here today. First I want to thank my family for forcing me to start TKD in the first place and for the constant love and support they always give me. I also want to give a big thanks to Master Lee and Instructor Robert, Geoffrey, and Micah. Thank you for always being there to push me to be my best and to always give 110%. Last I want to thank the rest of my Lee's Martial Arts family. All of you who I have trained and grown up with for the past 10 years, thank you for always motivating and encouraging me. I could not have made it here without any one of you. You all have truly changed my life. Thank you!