

Hello. My name is Anne Chandler. I am 39 years old. I have been involved with Tae Kwon Do for the last 3 ½ years. My oldest daughter, Mykaela started tkd well before I even had an inkling of wanting to try tkd. I sat with all the other parents and watched Mykaela do her kicks, punches and forms. It was May 2008 and LMA was promoting Mom's train free for the entire month. A few friends asked me to try it out and I said sure, not really knowing what I was getting myself into. Prior to trying tkd, I was in a place in my life where I was living my dream life. I retired from corporate America to stay home and raise my lovely girls, Mykaela and Ava. I was doing exactly what I wanted to do but something was missing. My husband, Frank kept telling me that I need something just for me. At that time, I really didn't understand what that meant because I honestly felt that I should be fulfilled because I was living the life I had envisioned. When I tried Tae Kwon Do, I had no expectations. When I walked in there to train for the first time, it was like a light had been turned on inside me. I walked out that door a different person and I haven't looked back since.

When my husband came home, I told him "honey, I found my thing!" Frank knew exactly what I meant and he told me that night that he was glad that I found my thing. And it is true, Tae Kwon Do is my thing. I tell people it has been like my lifeline. It recharges me, challenges me and fulfills me inside. It has challenged me to venture beyond my comfort zones. And in doing that, I discovered a lot of things about myself. I learned that I love yelling while I'm working out, it's actually very relaxing. I learned that I like being challenged, that I like facing my fears, except maybe sparring. I also learned once again to use my left and right brain because when you train in tkd, you will learn to use both. TKD has taught me that it is okay to dream again, to have a goal. One of the goals that I have set for myself was acquiring my black belt before I turn 40. I'm so excited to say that I am few months ahead of schedule! TKD has given me my energy back and made me stronger physically and mentally.

They say TKD is an individual sport but I honestly don't think you get to this point where I am now, on your own. By the time you get to this point, there usually is a long line of people that have helped and encouraged you along the way. I have been waiting for this moment for so long because I really have so many people to acknowledge. I was able to make this journey because of these people.

So allow me to say my sincerest thank you to these people. First, I want to acknowledge my awesome instructors, Sabunim Geoffrey, Sabunim Micah and Sabunim Robert. You guys are amazing and have taught me so much the last few years. I remember watching my first belt as a white belt and was completely overwhelmed. I asked Instructor Micah if I can just stay as a white belt because I was sure I wouldn't make it through a belt test. I remember him telling me, yeah you can but you would get bored being a white belt, and besides we will get you there, we will help you. And that is what you guys did, you got me here. Master Lee, I thank you for your encouraging words of wisdom at each and every belt test. The friends I have made here. The mentors I have had along the way, Roy and Geoffrey. My best friend Sheeba, who was there to pick up Ava from preschool while I train at LMA. Thanks, your support meant a lot to me. You might not realize it, but you text me every time I have a belt promotion and ask me how Mykaela and I did. That kind of support means so much to me. I want to thank my girls who are so awesome at wishing me good luck at every belt test. Most of the time I can hear them cheering for me! Ava is always giving me a good luck kiss before my test. Mykaela you are an amazing athlete, and I wish that someday my turn snap kick would look like yours. And best of all, I want to thank my husband,

Frank who has been a great source of support for me. You recognized that this is my thing and that this is important to me. Thank you for washing my uniform every single week! Thank you for not letting me give up and I'm humbled by your love and support and I share this moment with you.

I also want to thank friends and family who have come to watch and support me here today. I hope that you caught a glimpse of the reason why I love Tae Kwon Do so much. Tae Kwon Do really is a total mind, body and soul experience for all of us that stayed with it and have gotten to this point. This is not the end of my journey, but the beginning of another chapter and I'm excited to see where Tae Kwon Do takes me from here. Thank you!!!