

My name is Griffey Edwards, I am 15 years old. I was born on February 9 1995. I'm sorry I don't have some heartwarming story to tell you. I just don't think anything I could say about myself would do any good. I could say I have red hair, but you can see that. I could say I like to play the video games, but what teenage boy doesn't? I could say that I love tae kwon do, but if I didn't why would I have gotten this far. I think it's enough to say that my attitude is my defining feature. Or maybe it's my hair. I couldn't pick. Let's just say I do tae kwon do because it puts a smile on my face and keeps me excited.

I would start off the summary of my quest for the black belt with how long i've been practicing tae kwon do, but considering I've forgotten how long I've been part of Lee's Martial Arts. It's been that long. I do remember it was summertime when I started and that it was right before a belt test. I remember going to the 5 o'clock advanced kids class as a white belt since we couldn't make it to the beginners kids class. I remember my mother not letting me test that September because of issues I was having. Then in December I punched a guy in the face and I wasn't allowed to receive my yellow belt. I don't think I really appreciated tae kwon do at that point. It changed something inside of me. I haven't punched someone in the face since, at least not intentionally. Then my Mom wouldn't let me test for brown belt. I was having problems at school. I cried then. I cried because all of my friends from white belt we're progressing to the ranks of high-brown and beyond, they were moving forward and learning new things, and I was still stuck with balchagi three. Then I got my brown belt. I think I grew the most as a brown belt, both physically and mentally; literally and figuratively. Maybe It's because I was a brown belt for three years, maybe it's because it was then I learned that tae kwon do was not a right but a privilege and it could be taken away. I was having issues not only at home, but at school, and at the afterschool care I was attending. I had become a problem. Mom decided that I shouldn't be allowed to train for a while. I cried then. I didn't want to stop. I wanted to keep training, but it was the right thing to do and I had no say in the matter. I'd do the summer camp. I'd learn Tageuk Chil Chang, only to forget it by the next summer. I watched the two people I remember training with the most achieve their black belts. Then in the summer of 2008 I told my mom I wanted to start training again. And that fall I started catching the bus to Tae Kwon Do after school. I was a brown belt. Almost all of my friends from before I had left were black belts, or were going to be getting them soon. Some of them had only been white or orange belts were now BoDans and Black belts. People who started after I had left were higher belts than me. This is when I met the people whom i'm testing with now. I've developed new friendships and because for that i'm glad. The rest of my black belt journey is uneventful. So i'm not going to talk about it.

As it has done for many and will continue to do for a greater many still, Tae kwon do has changed my life forever. It has taught me life skills. As well as the Children's home rules. They're still posted in the medicine cabinet in the bathroom at home. I shall always be truthful, I will greet my parents when I or they enter and say goodbye when I or they leave, and the most important, at least in my opinion: Children shall always apply sunscreen to one's back when outside in the sun without a shirt on. I learned that the hard way. Trust me. It's not fun. The most important thing I will take away from my journey to black belt is something I was taught by instructor Geoffrey as a white belt it's something called the self control muscle. The self control muscle is an invisible muscle that keeps us from moving when we're at attention or joon bi, I believe I've worked my self control muscle so hard it's become my not only my self control muscle, but one of self respect, self discipline, and one of integrity.

As I wrap things up I want to make some quick thank yous. I'd like to thank my mom for making it possible for me to participate in Tae kwon do. I'd like to thank Dad because he's given me support. I'd like to thank my brother because for once he allowed me to have the spotlight. I'd like to thank Instructor Geoffrey and Doug Brandt for helping me progress especially early on. I'd like to thank Instructor Robert and instructor Mica for teaching the classes. Especially the morning one's I've come to enjoy so much. I'd like to thank the people who've pushed me harder.

Before I end, I want to read to you a quote. It reads as follows : "Too often we are preoccupied with the destination, we forget the journey." I do not know who said this, but it made me think of something our great president once said : "It took a lot of blood, sweat and tears to get to where we are today, but we have just begun." and that statement is true for me in all aspects. I have put blood, sweat, and tears into this journey, and in my honest opinion, if you haven't, you're not working hard enough.