

Black Belt Paper
Trent Tucker

My name is Trent Tucker, I am 38 years old and I live in Renton Washington. I have lived in Washington my entire life but have been fortunate to travel to most states and several countries including Australia, Russia, Mexico, Canada and Sweden.

I was first introduced to Lee's Martial Arts 3 years ago while looking for a summer activity for our (then 4 year old) son Carson. Having trained in Tae Kwon Do when I was in middle school I thought it would be a great activity for Carson, so we looked at Lee's Martial arts in Renton because it advertised a 'family' environment. We were also looking for something to help with discipline and respect. Although Carson did not take to it right away, with the patient instruction of Geoffrey Driver he caught on and started to thrive. Shortly after Carson started, I entered a two year Executive MBA program at the University of Washington. Knowing what a mental challenge it was going to be I recognized that I needed to stay physically fit to survive the program. Coincidentally the "parents train free" offer came up and I was reluctantly (not really) recruited back into Tae Kwon Do. I had achieved the rank of Brown belt when I was 12 years old and thought I would be able to jump back in and pick up where I left off. The good news was that my mind was working just fine and learning the poomses was relatively easy, but what I failed to recognize was that my body was not nearly in the shape it needed to be. Because I am a fierce competitor and always want to keep up with the top of the class, I pushed myself from day one. Unfortunately my physical capabilities did not match my drive and I became friends with the dumpster on my second class. I learned that if I wanted to advance I had to work outside of class to sharpen my physical stamina and strength.

Along the way I learned a great many things. I learned that my wife Desi is the best thing that ever happened to me. Knowing that I was unavailable many nights due to studying and off-site team meetings, and those nights I was not studying I was at Tae Kwon Do, I realized what tremendous support she provided. Taking care of our kids while I was working on accomplishing two of my long term goals was a sacrifice she made that is still unbelievable to me, and I will forever be grateful. At the start of the second year of my MBA program I found myself in a position that I had never experienced before, I was unemployed. Being with a company for 14 years I had felt secure in my position as I had risen fast among the ranks and was the youngest executive the company every had. Unfortunately working for just one company for so long did not prepare me for such a dramatic downturn in the economy and I became a casualty. What I quickly learned was humility, a new level of humbleness and I had to learn to do something I never had to do in my life, ask others for help. I had always been in control of my life and career and now I was venturing into a scary new territory. What struck me the most about Lee's Martial Arts was how supportive the school was, specifically Geoffrey

Driver, Ann Chandler, Kelly Malleck, and Joe Rafchick. They always provided words of encouragement which helped keep me focused. Tae Kwon Do also provided an outlet that allowed me to focus on what was important, which kept me on task.

Tae Kwon Do has changed my life for the better. It helps keep me focused on what was important, which allowed me to start a new career. It provides opportunities to make new friends and learn from their experiences and expertise. It enables me to do what I enjoy most which is to teach and mentor. It provides me with a tremendous challenge and stretch goals, which help not only my physical fitness but also provides a common activity that I can share with my son. Over the past 2 years I have gained 20 pounds which was something I never thought I could accomplish (outside of a Twinkie and beer diet). It helped me to better realize what a fantastic and supportive wife and family I have and that makes me work even harder to support them. Through my experiences at Lee's Martial Arts I have been able to extend relationships with friends from Renton Christian School who have many students that are also part of the Tae Kwon Do family. Through these relationships I was asked to join the Board of Directors of the school which was a great honor, and an opportunity for me to give back to the school and church.

In closing, I would like to thank Master Lee for his courage to open Lee's Martial Arts and offer to share his experience and insight with others. To Master Robert who provided an amazing role model of physical fitness, dedication to the school, work out regiment and leadership. To Instructor Geoffrey who without, we may have never been a part of Lee's Martial Arts. Geoffrey's skills at mentoring young children kept Carson coming back which eventually led to me joining. To Instructor Micah who taught me the value of doing ab exercises at home to keep up with his punishing program, it was well worth it. My biggest thanks go out to my wife and kids for their support and patience with me not being home for the past 2 years through school and Tae Kwon Do. I could not have accomplished either without Desi's love and support and her amazing patience.