



KINETIC TAE KWON-DO

A FOCUS MARTIAL ARTS SCHOOL

TAE KWON-DO - THE WAY TO WHAT?

By Andy Taylor, Kinetic Tae Kwon-Do

Translated literally "**Tae**" stands for jumping or flying, to kick or smash with the foot. "**Kwon**" means the fist, to punch or destroy with the hand or fist. "**Do**" means an art or way

태 TAE

MEANS JUMPING OR FLYING, TO KICK OR SMASH WITH THE FOOT.

권 KWON

MEANS THE FIST, TO PUNCH OR DESTROY WITH THE HAND OR FIST

도 DO

MEANS AN ART OR WAY

Figure 1: What does Tae Kwon-Do mean?

So what is the 'Do', what is the way?

Is Taekwondo a means to an end, if so what is that end? Or, is our Taekwondo journey the end in itself.

How many times have you got in your car, taken public transport, cycled or walked somewhere thinking 'I have to get to my end destinations by such a time, I can't be late, and hurried along. When you get to your destination you've been in such a rush you've missed all the sites along the way, and the whole journey has been a blur.

This situation can equally be applied to Taekwondo. Enjoy the training moment to moment, and by not treating each lesson as a means to an end, as a means to the next grading, or as means to prove to oneself how great one is, then one can fully participate in the lesson and enjoy Taekwondo for what it is. One can enjoy the journey, taking in all along the way.

By living in the moment, participating in each lesson as if it were your first and your last, to empty your mind of the grasping of how quickly you can progress, one can participate fully in each lesson. An apt Zen phrase is, 'When you run, just run; when you sit, just sit; when you walk, just walk.' When you train, just train. Don't think of the training as a means to an end, don't think of your day to day issues, what you need to get from the shops, of bills that need to be paid.



Figure 2: Follow the path



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It's so common in today's competitive and egocentric environment to be so caught up in how we should train to win points from judges, how we should perform our respective patterns specifically for the next competition, or treat Taekwondo as a means to winning the next competition, be it patterns, destruction or sparring that we often lose track of the 'Do', the way of Taekwondo. By using Taekwondo as a means to win competitions, we could be in danger of losing the 'Do', and thus the differentiation of TaekwonDo and just a combative sport.

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Figure 2: Tenets

Taekwondo strives to build a more peaceful world by encouraging positive moral traits in all practitioners, namely courtesy, integrity, perseverance and indomitable spirit. We learn and repeat the oath and tenets every session, but how many just repeat them as a matter of due course without meaning or even understanding what is being repeated? To live by the tenets, and to observe the oath is by no means an easy task, but Taekwondo is far more than just hard physical and mental effort a few times a week in the 'Dojang, it was created to provide moral guidance as well as for self defence. The physical challenges of Taekwondo are a means to teach and strengthen the mental and spiritual elements, and to provide a 'Do', a way to live, a path. Teaching and living the 'Do' will help plant seeds in one's own consciousness, as well as those around us. These seeds may not take root and blossom in a day, a month or a year, but with constant maintenance will bloom, providing a more beautiful world for all.

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By striving to achieve the moral teachings of Taekwondo, and living the 'Do' on a day-to-day, moment-by-moment basis one can pass on the teachings and instill positive personal ethos in oneself and in those we come into contact with, not just amongst fellow Taekwondo practitioners. The 'Do' can only be attained by cultivating all three areas of Taekwondo, namely the physical, mental and spiritual. By doing so, Taekwondo will be in a much better position to help build a more peaceful world.

By learning to practice the 'Do', one can begin to understand the nature of Taekwondo, and by doing so help uncover one's own nature. Surely that is more valuable than one more medal, rushing to gain the next grade, or beating the person who started with you to the next grade for no other reason than to feel more important and to satisfy one's ego.