

Confidence

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From the beginning of my training in taekwondo and further, I have seen changes in my confidence when interacting with people, connecting with God, and having self worth.

Confidence

Do you want to know how to have better confidence? When I was younger I had very bad confidence issues. I could not do anything without feeling bad about myself. From the beginning of my training in taekwondo and further, I have seen changes in my self-worth, my confidence when interacting with people, and connecting with God.

One of the things I am working on is self-worth. The start of my training in taekwondo was a time of much thinking. I wanted to have more confidence but not gain so much that I became a bully. I was really afraid of having so much confidence that I would act cocky or mean; I tried to find the balance of confidence straight away. It was extra hard to find the balance and it tended to go from too much to too little confidence. Both were not good, but I did prefer to be less confident because it was a habit. I have slowly started to improve and have a balanced sense of self-worth.

I was so frustrated and would beat myself up over the mistakes I was making. I was angry over even the smallest mistakes. I was sad and disappointed all of the time. Taekwondo was one of the times I beat myself up most often. Anytime I did something wrong I would beat myself up and do even worse. When Mrs. Fritsche would say, "It's okay, keep practicing," it was super encouraging. It helped me to do better in taekwondo. At home, when I am frustrated with myself and feel I am not good enough, encouragement from my family helps me have a better sense of self-worth.

Self-doubt was also a problem. It was a big problem in sparring. I would go up against a higher

rank and say to myself, “You're going to lose!” and I would really not even try. Most of the higher ranks would say, “Keep going,” “Finish strong.” It would sometimes help and other times not. Eventually I learned to try after talks with my mom or Mrs. Fritsche. They would encourage me and help me remember who I am and what I’m worth.

After all the difficult testing and class work, I finally made it to the Advanced Belts. I looked one day at the previous belts and realized how far I had come. I was so happy! I realized that I had also come far in my confidence. That was a very happy day! Yay! I also realized I knew a lot of forms and moves, which was also good. I still had in mind that I did not want to become overconfident. During the journey through Brown Low, I began to learn from my mistakes; I started seeing mistakes as not a completely bad thing. Instead, I saw them as a learning opportunity. Before I even started taekwondo, I burned my hand on the fireplace; I thought it would not be hot, but it was. Burning my hand as a little kid has taught me to think before I act and has helped me throughout my life. When I make mistakes I try to learn from them. That is still hard, but taekwondo has really helped me recognize the value of mistakes.

Next I made it to Recommended Belt. After testing, I looked back and saw all the other belts I had passed. I realized I was important! I could teach Color Belt class and sparring. I was happy and it was a pretty good confidence boost. Then I remembered the thought I had had in White Belt that I did not want to be arrogant. I felt like this was one of the times I could be, so I thought about it and tried not to be and I'm pretty sure I'm not too arrogant. As I continue to go through my training, I still have these moments and continue to work on them.

I had a problem communicating with people and telling them what I wanted. I remember one

day when I was in White Belt, I wanted something from the gas station and my mom said, “You can have it if you go get it yourself,” and I didn't go in because I was nervous. A few months later, I wanted something from the gas station and again Mom said, “If you get it yourself,” and this time I did. I had begun to not be afraid of people. When I did go in, though, I could say almost nothing. That was really tough! I could not tell them what I wanted. During White Belt I was in a shell. I did not want to interact with anyone. When I needed someone to hold a board for me I would wait until Mom was done to ask her to help me, instead of asking someone else. Most of these things came from being nervous, so I tried not to be. That was really hard, so every day I would take a step mentally. One day I would say the greeting louder and the next day I would ask someone to hold a board for me. And it worked. I ended up being less nervous.

Advanced level was a huge turning point for me. Talking during discussion was one of the times I worried everyone would be listening and looking at me. So I waited for a good question. I found one, but I did not have enough time to answer, so I decided I would wait until another question. That time I did say something. Everyone looked at me. After that I answered another question until it got so easy and I could do it all the time.

I started to do stuff I never thought I would! One of the things I thought I would never do was share my own personal beliefs. The first step in sharing my own beliefs was being comfortable speaking to others. I started speaking more during discussion. Those topics had been easier. So I had to do a few other things to share my own beliefs. One of them was finding the right timing. After a lot of trying, I finally shared a part of my own beliefs.

One of the other things I had trouble with was correcting people; I wanted to help them but not

hurt their feelings. When someone was doing something wrong, I would think of a way to say that they were wrong without hurting their feelings. It was still difficult, though. I did not want to correct them, but I knew it would help them, so I got through it.

Recommended Belt was tricky because I had a higher responsibility - like with the Little Lions. I had to take responsibility for them. I tried teaching the skills like I thought I was supposed to in Advanced Belt. I had learned the right way to teach the techniques in Recommended Belt. I'm still learning how to do those correctly and I'm getting better. Dealing with Little Lions was exhausting! They don't know what they're doing, and they don't know how to move their body or do a fold. You have to teach them, which is the trickiest part! One day, I was teaching Little Lions and I had a student who was blaming me for his mistakes. That was an interesting class! I have begun to learn how to deal with Little Lions. Another thing I am now trying to teach is not to be nervous. The thing that seems to help the most is saying, "You'll be fine." After that I continue to teach them. I'm still learning not to be nervous, but it does help me to relate to them when they are nervous.

My relationship with God is very complex. At the beginning of my training in taekwondo, I had a very weak relationship with Him. The first step in having a better relationship with Him was continually believing He existed. I knew He did but other times I had trouble. I prayed and looked for ways to move closer on the path to salvation and after a lot of searching I found it. Reading the Bible and praying to have faith are two of the ways that I found.

Praying to have faith was one of the easier things, but I knew I had to do my own part. I had to try to increase my faith, but that was the hard part. I saw God giving me faith. One of the ways He increased my faith was by discussion during class. We constantly talked about God and that really

helped.

Reading the Bible and to keep reading it was difficult and still is. I had heard the Bible is good to read a lot, so I started reading. For a while it was an amazing part of my life, and yet I did not keep it up. I am hoping that there is a time that I will always read the Bible. I realized that I would not read the Bible more just by praying, so I'm trying to read on my own.

While I was building on my faith during the Advanced Belt, I started finding ways to increase my faith. Another thing I started doing was to look at and hear about historical sites that support Christianity. In taekwondo we talk about how Nehemiah did crazy stuff like ask the king for permission to to fix his city. That book is inspiring for me. I also started to see God's plan and have confidence that God's plan is best. I started to see things like why God does not give us neon signs about His will and why He cares for us. God helped me through this level in my training. One of the more tricky things was knowing that I was on the path to salvation. I constantly had a feeling that I was not. I tried to trust God and sometimes I did and other times I did not. In the Advanced Belts though, I made some progress. One of the ways I made progress was going to youth group and hearing short clips of people talking about their faith and how they came to the Lord. It helped me to see how God is working in my life and gave me strength in my faith.

In Recommended Belt I have started to see God as a father and friend. At first I had a problem believing this because He is, well, God, and we are tiny little humans. When I think of my dad, though, I think of him as someone who loves me because I'm me. I started to see God that way and it changed my life. On the other side of that, I realized that He also has other sides like my dad. He gets angry, he

gets frustrated, and He gets tired of giving us chances. I believe God has those same feelings but for holy reasons.

I believe that confidence, self-worth, interacting with people and connecting with God are very important parts of character and everyone should have them - no matter who they are. I have learned and developed as a martial artist, but I still have more to learn. I have learned much and am trying to continuously be a better person. I am proud and confident to call myself Malachi Waggoner.