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My Goals and Aspirations as a Third Degree

“Not I, nor anyone else can travel that road for you. You must travel it by yourself. It is not far. It is within reach” (Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*). Life is often symbolized by a twisting yet tantalizing road full of abrupt stops and sharp turns, quick decisions and unmistakable regrets. The goal in life, as most would say, is to live it such that the ends justify the means, and that one fulfills one's true purpose; some would argue that finding this purpose in the first place is the feat to be achieved. However, no one life is the same; one could not hold up the fragile components of two different lives and find them to be identical. Everyone finds meaning and value in a different way.

Taekwon-do, in essence, was a method with which I sought to find meaning, understanding and purpose in my own life. It is a lifestyle that fulfilled its promises of self-discovery and awareness. It was, to me, the sharp, defined pencil that traced over the blurred lines of indecision and doubt. Now, however, the lines are seen more vividly, and my goals in Taekwon-do have shifted away from a focus on understanding myself. My goals instead foster an emphasis on others; on using what I have learned, and what I have achieved to further the progress and development of others. This development is not just in the art of Taekwon-do but also socially and psychologically. I am cognizant of the numerous and remarkable affects that the art has had on my life; the community atmosphere, and the welcoming ambience that is relayed by anyone who has felt its tenor. It is this very essence that I now seek to pass on and share with others; the feeling of loyalty and support that is unparalleled in my own experience.

As a third degree, I hope to, primarily, make difference in the lives of others. I hope to embody for others the influence and motivation that is imbued by my instructors. They radiate a sort of passion that supersedes the bounds of obligation and commitment. They emanate the very quintessence of the word passion. The word, to me, means literally to “pass-I-on” in that one gives a portion of oneself in everything they do. The authenticity that results from the giving of oneself is precisely what has made the difference for me. I hope to achieve my own sense of authenticity, wherein people can see that I am not doing things for the benefit of myself or out of obligation, but out of the genuine desire to help and positively impact others. This is important to me because I want to share the depths of my own experience with others, and inspire meaning in others. There is something remarkable to be said about feeling that what you have done has had an influence outside of oneself; a feeling of self-worth and accomplishment ensues that knows no equivalent.

My goals and aspirations have changed drastically since the beginning of my journey in Taekwon-do. I believe that life is less about the ends, but more about the path travelled to get there. It is about finding things that help you to tap into the hidden joys and pleasures in life. Taekwon-do has helped me to discover much about myself, and this understanding has helped me to see clearly what I want for myself. My goals and aspirations now are to bestow in others what I have discovered; that when you find something that is important to you, you will find a clarity in life that carries you in all the twists and bumps you may endure.