

# Righting a Wrong

Just because you can, does not mean you should. The basic black belt character traits of self control and responsibility could benefit so many leaders in so many industries right now. As they say, absolute power corrupts absolutely. Without self control and responsibility, the temptation to misuse power may become overwhelming.

In my dojang here in America, I like to think it is my moral conscience and effort to live by the black belt character traits that helps me make the right decisions in dealing with safety, students, employees and my community. Also in my successful business in America, there is an ever present threat of being sued, and that too, is a great motivator to do the right thing. Besides, extra safety checks of equipment, background checks on all employees and striving to be politically correct never hurt anyone.

It has been over a dozen years since I lived in Korea. When I lived there, I lived in a small village, not the big city. Perhaps it was the time and place or culture, but what would most definitely have been law suits in the U.S., were handled very differently there.

The first situation came to my attention one day when I showed up for Tae Kwon Do class. The students were all there, but the master was absent. I inquired as to his whereabouts. The senior student explained that the master was "righting a wrong". The master had been sparring with a student and had lost control. The result was a student with a broken nose. I've heard of schools in the U.S. having to close down after similar circumstances. But this was handled differently. The master took full responsibility for his actions. He took time off from his business and took the student to all his doctor appointments. In addition, the master took time every day after school to tutor, to make sure the student did not fall behind in his studies. For many weeks, we students trained on our own until the debt had been paid and our master returned to teach us.

Thinking that this must have been an unusual and isolated incident, I witnessed it again. The second time was more serious. A Korean acquaintance of mine was giving an American visitor a ride to the airport. Everyone was in a hurry, the airport was over an hour away. A while later I received a frantic phone call from the American visitor. "We hit someone. This woman came out of nowhere and dashed in front of the car!" After

getting the visitor to calm down, I was able to get more details. A middle-aged woman appeared in the road in front of them. They maybe were going a little too fast and were unable to slow down and they bumped the woman, hard enough to send her airborne, but she did not appear to have anything broken. At the very least, she was going to be very sore for a while.

I did not understand enough Korean to know how the arrangement was made, but no insurance (if there even was any) or police were ever involved. My acquaintance was learning chiropractic therapy and massage in school. Like clockwork, every few days he would stop at the market and pick up a few groceries. He would then go to the middle-aged woman's home, put the groceries on the counter and have her lie down on a mat. He proceeded to give her a massage and spinal adjustment. She would point out all the areas that were hurting the most and he would carefully work them out. This continued for months until she was feeling better again. Once the wrong had been righted, they parted ways. Debt paid, lesson learned.

In this fusion of cultures, my school strives to use self control in an effort to prevent any and all incidences in the first place. We must also be prepared to take responsibility when even our best efforts fail us and must take immediate action to remedy the wrong.



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