



President's Message



September 21th, 2006

A SUCCESSFUL AND FULFILLING CAREER IN ITF TAEKWON-DO

This message is addressed to our ITF Taekwon-Do teachers – and to those who hope to become teachers:

I am sure that you are passionate about Taekwon-Do. Like me, you believe that practicing Taekwon-Do and living according to its philosophy leads to a happier life. Because we can see how Taekwon-Do has changed our lives and those of others, we want to share our passion for Taekwon-Do by teaching it to others.

However, I have observed that teaching Taekwon-Do is not generally considered a career. Many of our teachers and potential teachers do not have the goal of making Taekwon-Do their full-time job. This is unfortunate because teaching Taekwon-Do can be a rewarding and well-paid career.

We need to replace this way of thinking with a new positive concept that will encourage our current and future teachers to view teaching Taekwon-Do as their career of choice.

This issue is very important for the ITF and it is a major preoccupation for me.

Promoting ITF Taekwon-Do

When talking with ITF members around the world, I have noticed that they often speak of the ITF as if it is just the organization that takes care of administration, delivering Black Belt degrees and instructor plaque certificates (teaching licenses). But the ITF is also all the people who teach and train Taekwon-Do.

The mission of the ITF is to promote Taekwon-Do, and our teaching members are ambassadors of the ITF and of Taekwon-Do. The ITF puts a lot of effort into providing services and supporting our teachers, our core members. We want to encourage full-time teachers and help them be successful.

We can be very proud to offer ITF Taekwon-Do to the public. It is an excellent product that will enhance their health and safety. It responds to a very real need that will continue to grow in the coming years.

Now that the organizational structure of the ITF is in place and working well, we will be working to increase the visibility of the ITF and of ITF Taekwon-Do. So our schools must be well-organized and our teachers prepared to welcome new students.

A Taekwon-Do school is a business

Taekwon-Do school owners have to wear two hats: They are, first and foremost, teachers. But they also have to be business people.

The philosophy of Taekwon-Do, as developed by General Choi Hong Hi, teaches us to strive to live our lives based on principles such as integrity and respect for others. So an ITF teacher would certainly not try to take advantage of his students in any way. On the

other hand, ITF teachers are offering a quality product, a product that is not available elsewhere, and that product has a certain value. Our students recognize that value and are willing to pay a fair price for it.

Ideally, an ITF teacher should make teaching Taekwon-Do his career. If he can make a decent living from teaching, he will have fewer financial worries and will be able to devote himself full-time to Taekwon-Do. As a result, he will be better able to serve his students and his community.

So, although teaching Taekwon-Do is a means to the realization of our vision of a better world, this does not mean that Taekwon-Do schools should not make a profit. In fact, it is essential that schools make a profit if they want to continue to operate!

Thus, school owners should charge fees that are in line with the quality of the courses they offer. It is important to differentiate our ITF Taekwon-Do schools from the competition by offering the best value for the money. Resist the temptation to participate in a price war with your competitors. Instead, concentrate on improving quality.

It is important that the working conditions for school owners and for their employees be interesting, and the salaries for teaching should also cover preparation time. Remember, if you want to keep up to date and make your courses interesting for your students, two hours should be devoted to preparation for each hour of teaching.

I believe that the salary for an ITF teacher with a 4th degree Black Belt should be the equivalent of the salary of a physical education teacher with a Bachelor's degree. Similarly, a teacher with a 7th degree Black Belt should be in the same salary range as a professor with a Ph.D. This comparison should be kept in mind when you do your planning.

In order for a school to be profitable, the school owner must be an entrepreneur. You need to use business development principles and methods, planning and setting goals and defining action plans to reach your goals. It is particularly important to handle your finances properly. Courses on these subjects are often included in adult education programs.

It can be very interesting to be your own boss and make your own business decisions and the potential is great but to be successful you have to be well prepared. It is certainly not a 9 to 5 job. However, you do set your own hours, which means more time for your family. Very often family members are also involved, so everyone works together and shares in the success of the family business.

Three success stories

It is possible to have a very successful career teaching ITF Taekwon-Do, and there are many success stories. Here are three:

- In Argentina, Master Hector Marano and Master Pablo Trajtenberg are partners who have been very successful in their Taekwon-Do careers. In fact, there are now an estimated 10,000 students in their schools. Master Marano had a successful career as a dentist, but he decided to give up his practice and make teaching Taekwon-Do his career because he is much happier working full-time in Taekwon-Do.



- Here in Quebec (Canada), about twenty years ago we were able to obtain government

funding for a program of intensive Taekwon-Do training for unemployed young people. As a result, the number of ITF Taekwon-Do teachers tripled, and many of those who were once unemployed are now successful teachers.



- Master Ruben Suarez has a Taekwon-Do school in the borough of Queen's in New York City (U.S.A.). When Master Suarez arrived in the U.S. as an immigrant from Colombia, he did not even speak English. Now his Taekwon-Do club is a success, and he makes a good living. Master Suarez is very happy with his career, especially because his family members work with him. He is particularly proud of a program that provides the funds to send students to participate in competitions.

Do you have a success story to tell? Watch for an upcoming announcement about how you can share your story with visitors to the ITF Web site and motivate others to be successful as well.

Why are some Taekwon-Do schools more successful?

There are many reasons why a school will be successful; here are three:

A Taekwon-Do school is a business, and it must be run like a business. Strategic planning and marketing are essential for any successful business. Sometimes Taekwon-Do school owners do not have the business experience and the expertise necessary to market their product. However, the skills required can be acquired.

Sufficient financial resources and an understanding of financial management are essential for any successful business. Here again, it is important to get the training you need to manage your business successfully.

Taekwon-Do teachers must move with the times. If you keep teaching the same contents using the same methods you used 10 or 20 or more years ago, your students will become discouraged or bored and stop practicing Taekwon-Do.

If, on the other hand, you carefully plan your lessons and continually work to improve your teaching methods, your courses will always be interesting. When your students are involved and motivated, they will continue to train and progress. If you want to expand your business, you must make the effort to keep your current students i.e. having high rate of retention and attract new students.

The ITF is here to supply the tools you need and offer advice on how to become more successful.

How does the ITF help?

The ITF helps in many ways. Here are just a few examples:

- The ITF is working to have teaching Taekwon-Do recognized and valued as a career.
- In the past, the ITF granted the right to teach ITF Taekwon-Do by issuing a plaque to a school. Now each teacher must be registered with the ITF by obtaining an instructor plaque certificate (teaching license). Why did we make this change? Because it will enable

us to identify and communicate with each of our teachers so that we can help and support them.

Very soon ITF teachers will be able to access practical teaching materials and useful information in a section of the ITF Web site available only to holders of ITF instructor plaque certificates. Information about developing your Taekwon-Do school as a business will also be provided.

- The first ITF Leadership Camp was held in Tegucipalpa (Honduras) in July; twenty-one participants from nine countries attended.

The purpose of our Leadership Camps is to provide information to current and future leaders in Taekwon-Do and to help them succeed. The information provided is tailored to local needs and there is no cost for registration.

The second Leadership Camp is scheduled for Benidorm (Spain) in October in conjunction with the 2nd World Cup.

- The first International Workshop on Teaching the Do will take place at the end of October in Benidorm (Spain). In fact, the workshop will be offered two times (all day on October 25th or two half days on the afternoons of the 26th and 28th), with a maximum of forty participants at each session.

We developed this workshop because our teachers had expressed their need for more information and training about teaching the Do. The goal is to help our teachers in their personal development; teaching the Do will certainly have a positive effect on business development as well.

Participants will learn to apply the ITF philosophy in their own lives and how to share what they learn with their students and other teachers in their home countries.

- All teachers are encouraged to attend International Instructor Courses to improve their skills. Since 2002, the ITF has held twenty-two International Instructor Courses in various locations. The purpose of these courses is to ensure that the same high quality instruction is available from ITF instructors everywhere. Feedback from participants in these courses has always been very positive.



The next course will take place in December of this year in Halifax (Canada). The 2007 schedule of International Instructor Courses will be announced in the coming weeks. Watch this Web site for more information.

- Promotional materials and marketing tools such as posters and information documents will be produced for use by schools.

- The ITF believes ITF Taekwon-Do courses should be recognized by colleges and universities, and we have started to work on this. In the meantime, those who want to make a career of teaching Taekwon-Do can choose courses that will provide useful skills: education, psychology, marketing, administration, etc. offered by colleges, universities or in local adult education classes.

- Looking to the future, the ITF is considering starting a program to provide coaching and mentoring for our future leaders.

As President of the ITF, I have visited quite a few countries around the world. These trips are very important because they allow me to observe local conditions and, especially, to take the time to listen to you, our teachers and future teachers. This is how I learn about your successes and your concerns. This is how I see what the ITF can do to help you be more successful.

What do you need to do to make progress toward a successful career in Taekwon-Do?

Start by assessing your current situation: Where can you make improvements in your teaching and your school? What do you need to do to be more successful? How can you make the necessary improvements? We have produced a form to help you analyze your potential.

If you are just starting out, don't be afraid to start small. Concentrate on offering quality services, and your Taekwon-Do business will grow. But don't be afraid to «think big». By building your business on a strong foundation and working to expand it one step at a time, you can be successful.

Find the information you need and get additional training. You can read and study on your own, but you should also try to travel to attend courses such as the International Instructors Course, the Teaching the Do workshop, and the Leadership Camp. This will give you the opportunity to exchange information and experiences with other ITF Taekwon-Do school owners and teachers. Your skills will improve, and you will be motivated to continue your efforts. Never stop learning!

Be proud to be part of the ITF. The ITF name and the value of your product are recognized around the world. This is a valuable asset.

Have a positive attitude but don't be afraid to ask for help. The ITF is pleased to offer you helpful information and support.



Master Trần Triều Quân
ITF President

