

Of the life skills taught in the our school, I think the most important is the black belt attitude. Using black belt as a metaphor for high standards of personal excellence, students seek to act like a black belt would. This attitude of excellence extends beyond the martial arts class. Students work not just to become black belt martial artists, but academic black belts, black belt employees and corporate black belts.

You create a standard that asks throughout each day, How would a black belt do this? How would a black belt sit and listen to the teacher? How would a black belt clean his room? How would a black belt work on this job?

This new standard develops into an attitude of positive self expectancy which means *good things happen to people who work hard*

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The key is in the belt system. Students learn the importance of the four steps to goal setting through the example of earning their black belt.

**Step one** is to know what it is you want. In the martial arts, it's the black belt. Most students don't set black belt as a goal initially. It's up to the instructor in the beginners classes to motivate, educate and instill the desire to earn a black belt in each student.

**The second step** is to take the long term goal and break it down into short term goals. In the martial arts, this is the importance of having a well structured belt and stripe system so students have exams every month. These short term goals work as motivating mini-victories for the students. All confidence is built upon a foundation of excellence and accomplishment. With each exam successfully completed, the student builds confidence towards seeing themselves as black belts.

**The third step** is to map out a very specific plan to take you to your goal. A good martial arts school has developed a curriculum that, while possibly based in a particular style, does not make the student serve the style. Instead, the style or curriculum serves the student. If the student attends class and practices with the black belt attitude, the curriculum is well designed

and specific in helping them achieve the goal of earning a black belt.

**The fourth step is critical.** You must develop a team to help you achieve your goal. This is why the student/instructor relationship is so important. That's why we our Leadership Team and Instructor Team are so important. It's difficult to obtain a goal as worthy as a black belt without the help of people who have already taken that path.

We know you too can earn your black belt, but there will be obstacles and it won't be easy. In fact, you are taking portions of your black belt test every day. Everytime you don't feel like coming to class but make the effort to get in your car or on your bike to get here, you have passed a part of your black belt test. Every class that you take is part of your black belt test. Miss class and you fail that part of the class. Attend class and you pass. Of course, you have to work hard in that class to make it count. Let's see how hard you will work today. Let's get started...