

My life Experience of Karate – By Karl Sichert

At a very young age I was one of the unfortunate children to suffer from bullying and I was a victim of this throughout my Infant school time. I was very quiet and shy child and I didn't really have many friends or any hobbies. I believe this was one of the reasons my parents wanted me to take up Karate as they thought it would 'Toughen me up' so to say.

I was about 11 years old when my parents took me along to our local KUGB Shotokan Dojo in Wellington. I'd never done anything like that before and for a while I remember I did want to quit. The dojo rules were very strict and you could not mess about, I'd get 50 press ups if I did! I was among adults as well so the atmosphere was very serious so it did intimidate me a lot as a child.

They were though very welcoming and I did settle in after a few months and I started to enjoy what I was doing. I got fitter, stronger, lost weight, gained knowledge, my confidence grew massively and it really did help me stick into school. Karate did change my frame of mind completely. The kids knew what I did and I don't remember being bullied at all from that point. I never went out to cause any trouble but I knew I could defend myself quite well if something were to happen.

I was never a natural talent at Karate but I did work hard and listened to my instructors, and I did pass a lot of gradings with the KUGB getting to 2nd Kyu quickly. I did also compete in some national Kumite and Kata tournaments but never got any placings, but I was never bitter about that. I was just happy to take part. I also attended a lot of Karate courses headed by Sensei Enoeda and Sherry which did give me some very good insight into Shotokan.

Unfortunately, by the time I was 14 or 15 I took the decision to quit karate. A bad decision in hindsight. I think my parents were disappointed but did respect my decision to do this. Between the ages of 18 – 32 I did take up and quit Karate at multiple clubs but I just don't think I was ready again. I also tried Muay Thai, Kickboxing and Kyokushin Karate, but none of it felt right for me, I think Shotokan was what I wanted.

By the time I reached 33 I decided the time is now, I train or I will get to the point where I cannot train and I know I would regret that. In the back of my mind I knew my dad really wanted me to get my black belt as a kid and I never did. I tried a couple of clubs and finally settled at Junsui Shotokan Karate do.

I passed my 1st kyu in December 2016 and my aim now is not only 1st dan but to go as far as I physically and mentally can. I have the drive I used to have as a child and although my dad sadly passed away when I was 17 and he never got to see me achieve my black belt, I will succeed and I keep on training Karate in his memory for as long as I physically can.

I gained some very valuable experience from old and current instructors in the Shotokan style and I have decided I'd like to pass that knowledge on to anyone willing to listen and train hard with me. For many years to come I'd like to instruct students myself in the very place it all started for me many years ago. I'm also now studying the history of Karate and Shotokan to further improve my knowledge I'm so learning something new every day.

I think even that would go beyond the expectations of my dad and people who know. I hope to make everyone proud!

Karl Sichert

