

Student of the Year 2010

By Tonya Ellis

Medford Karate and Self Defense

When I heard my name called as the student of the year, I was quite surprised. I was thinking "Holy Cow, what just happened?" I also thought what an honor it was to receive this award. From what I could tell, this was not only based on physical ability. I am certainly not the most skillful student in the class by far. Then I got to think about what it means to be the Student of the Year.

I suppose one of the things that stand out in my mind is to have a good attitude and to set a good example for the other students. It means being focused and having a good spirit when you come to training. A person's attitude and focus can set the tone for the class. If someone has a good attitude, it can lead other people to do the same and if all the students are focused then everyone would have a good training session. As with anything in life you can accomplish more with a positive attitude. With that being said, becoming a Student of the Year comes with great responsibility, and that is to find ways to give back to the dojo.

Another thing that I think about is discipline. Discipline can have several different aspects. It can mean showing up for class even when you don't feel like it. Although there were times I couldn't make it because of physical challenges, I would come back when I recovered and was able to. I stayed committed to coming back again and again. Some may call it stubbornness, but regardless, I still keep coming back for more. I want to show to myself, to Sensei and Sempai that I am committed and dedicated to this karate class. A good example of how not being committed and staying focused is found in the movie "UP". There was an old man, a young boy, and a talking dog. The dog started talking and he seemed almost human.....until he saw a squirrel. He immediately said "squirrel!" then started to chase the squirrel. Sometimes discipline means to focus and stay on task instead of chasing after squirrels. Squirrels can be distractions which occur frequently in daily life, but it is how we react to them that are important. In class, we need to stay focus and listen to instructions from Sensei and Sempai instead of chasing after "squirrels".

I know that at times it is hard to teach an old dog, like me, new tricks. My mind understands to do one thing but my body tries to do something else or it just simply laughs at me. Yet I keep pushing forward until hopefully both body and mind would do what I need them to do. That is with the help of Sensei, Sempai and the other students.

It is also important to help the newer students to learn the basics and to learn how to improve on their techniques. This in turn helps the class to have a good training session.

All in all I feel honored to have received this award and I will do my best to live up to it by setting a good example, having a good attitude and being committed to this

class, as the students before me have done. Thank you to Sensei Ceci and Sempai Sam for selecting me for this award.

Tonya Ellis, Hachi-kyu

