

## what it means to be a black belt to me

Obtaining a black belt is a huge achievement throughout the martial arts world and it is not an easy task taking people years of hard work and personal growth to achieve their black belt.

To me being a black belt also means I will know how to defend myself in difficult situations with the knowledge and discipline I have learnt during my journey. Through the trainings at Sesma studio, it has taught me discipline and dedication to be the best martial artist I could be. Being well disciplined also means I know when to use the right amount of force in fighting situations like sparring or self defence. Doing regular 1 hour karate sessions twice a week helped me build up my discipline and dedication and to me it's a skill a black belt needs to have. Physical strength and physical ability is a huge skill built up by karate and required for the black belt. Being physically skilled can help you get out of situations and issues to protect yourself which is needed for your black belt. Along with physical strength, mental strength is essential to me for obtaining a black belt. Karate threw many challenges which helped me build up my mental toughness and resilience mentality. Being mentally strong has helped me stay composed and focused in situations like grading days. Being a black belt to me also means I will be able to become an instructor and teach the lower grade belts with the leadership skills I have learnt and seen from the sensei's who have been teaching me. The skills I have listed are a big reason of what it means to be a black belt in my view .

In my family many of my relatives have done karate and got to big stages like the Zimbabwean national team which two of my uncles were on. My journey started when I was in year 2 (around 2017) and my journey wasn't easy it came with a lot of challenges and barriers I had to overcome and persevere through. Obstacles in my journey made me want to give up on karate like lockdown when we were all trapped inside our houses, I struggled finding karate interesting through screens and I missed the fun atmosphere which would get me excited for karate before lockdown struck. Throughout this phase, my parents and family members would always encourage me and motivate me to keep on going and to pursue my goals of karate which helped me get to the stage I am at right now. When my grandma and grandpa came to visit us from Zimbabwe on holiday they came to my karate grading and a couple of sessions. They were very happy and proud of what I was achieving, learning and the dedication I had to practicing my karate to become better . After going back to Zimbabwe they would always ask, and still asking what stage I am at with my karate and they will be very excited to hear that I will be going for my black belt in December. These personal experiences from my journey are a part of what a black belt means to me.

In conclusion the skills I have learnt and experiences I've gone through is what it means to be a black belt to me.