



# TEACHING KARATE - AND LIFE LESSONS

By Kevin Gould

It's a teaching mantra for Karate, but really, it could apply to anything in life.

"Slow down, concentrate and practice," says Renshi Dave Wattie, owner of Wattie Karate.

"I tell my students that this works for Karate, for math, reading and writing, playing piano and anything else they can think of. All of my students have heard this at nearly every single class. I frequently break it down to: 'Slow down so that you have time to concentrate while you practice'."

Wattie Karate has classes in Cornwall and Winchester, focusing on traditional training through respect and discipline, while maintaining a family atmosphere.

"Our dedicated instructors have decades of experience, a passion for teaching and a drive for excellence," says Dave. "Wattie Karate has classes for all ranks and all ages, insisting on small class sizes and a lot of fun . . . and a bit of shouting."

Dave started training in karate as a youngster, around 1995, and started as an instructor in 2003. He has run multiple schools in Canada and the United States over the years.

Wherever and whenever he has run the schools, the philosophy has remained constant.

"I want my program to be accessible to as many as possible, financially," he says. "I work hard to keep costs as low as I can. While I have run classes of over 100 students with a team of instructors side-by-side, at Wattie Karate I keep class sizes small so that I can give individual attention to each student."

Seeing students progress is one of the best parts of the business for Dave.

"When they are finally able to do the really hard kick, or when a special move finally clicks, I feel most proud of my students in those moments, when they realize that they can, and should, be proud of themselves," he says. "They hold their head high, and I am nothing but proud of them - it's a great moment."

It's a sport where discipline is paramount, but there's also room for fun, and plenty of it.

"One thing that is tricky to develop as an instructor is the ability to maintain respect and authority, while still being silly sometimes," says Dave. "There's a time for silly and there's a time for serious. Teaching this to adults is easy, youngsters are usually harder. Eventually everyone figures it out, and then they help me to lead the next group of new students that come in."

Dave and his wife Danielle have three children – two daughters (Harmony, 8, and Levie, born in 2020) and a son (Hunter, 4).

Both Harmony and Hunter take Karate classes with their dad. Harmony has a green belt, and often serves as Dave's assistant, and Hunter is a white belt.

The family also has what Dave calls "a pile of pets." There's a husky (Zuki), a large cat (Kai), a tarantula (Kitty), and a couple of snakes. Dave's snake is a four-foot ball python (Hydra), and Harmony has a three-foot ghost corn snake (Phantom). "Plus we have some fish tanks," says Dave.


Giving back to the community is important to Dave, and he is involved in numerous local endeavours. He is a first-aid Instructor and lifeguard instructor with the Lifesaving Society, and also volunteers with Camp Kagama (President of the Board, and other roles), WDMH (Board Member), the Russell Community Concert Band (Musical Director), Roxborough Agricultural Society (First Vice President) and Knights of Columbus (Officer).

"The best way to learn and grow is to start a conversation," he says. "Reach out and let's talk. Whether you want to take classes, see if it's a good fit - for you, a child, grandchild, friend of a friend, whomever - or you want to get some support for a community function - reach out!"




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