



# Snapkick

Dojo student newsletter



West Valley Martial Arts

"When you are content to be simply yourself and don't compare or compete, everybody will respect you." ~ Lao Tzu

*February, 2015*

**The following is Sempai Maya Matsuoka's Black Belt Essay:**

**What Does Karate Mean To Me?**

家

Maya Matsuoka

The Japanese character for home is constructed from the root words roof and person. I like to think this is because the Japanese people believed that a home is where you find yourself and the people you love under the same roof. Just as arteries will always hold a special place in my heart, so will karate. In my life, karate symbolizes self discipline, acceptance, and family.

One of my favorite teachers in school used to recite that "practice doesn't make perfect; perfect practice does." Although the idea of perfect practice was hammered into my head by Mr. Bui, I never understood what it truly meant until I realized it through karate. Sensei Dan always tells students to "not just go through the moves robotically," because nothing will be accomplished without the will to learn for yourself. For me, who always thought learning was a process that would come to me automatically by attending a class, it was a huge wake up call. Through kata, JiuJitsu, and chanbara I learned that I got as good as I wanted to be through perfect practice and effort. Without the will to be better and to do better, I will never have gotten where I am now.

## Mat Chats

**Good Self Control**

Week 1. Mind over emotion

Week 2. Body over emotion

Week 3. Balance over emotion

Week 4. Words over emotion

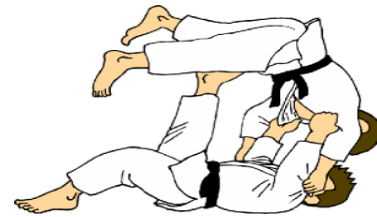
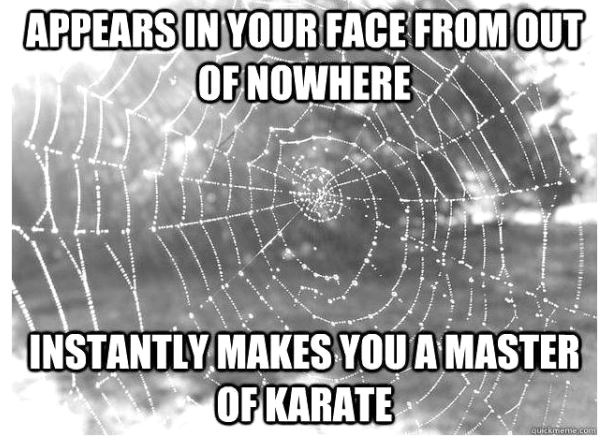
They say that home is where the heart is; and just like pieces of popcorn gets stuck between your teeth, karate is stuck in my heart. Similar to most of the over-dramatic teenagers in high school, I never felt like I belonged. I never felt the "click" one would feel between two people who understood each other perfectly. When I began karate, however, I felt the click in the katas that I was taught.

When taught to you by the Senseis and Senpais, katas seem like an unpolished chunk of limestone, no different than any other rock found on the ground. However by practicing over and over again, the stone is polished into a piece of marble whose shine could only have been created by the individual. *(continued on back)*

*(continued from front)*

The idea of myself being able to create a piece of art that nobody else can thrilled me. As I saw my fellow students with their own marbles, each uniquely perfected and uniquely flawed, I felt as if my individuality was what made me belong.

Although karate has taught me discipline, patience, and so many other life morals, the dojo to me is more than a place where I learn lessons, but a place where I can be myself and belong. A single essay can not explain the appreciation I have for my second home, and a single lifetime cannot repay the debt I owe to the Senseis and Senpais that put up with my madness. We're all stories in the end; thank you for being an amazing chapter.



All month long in our classes we will be practicing Jiu Jitsu. What is Jiu Jitsu? Jiu Jitsu is a martial art, combat sport, and a self defense system that focuses on grappling and especially ground fighting. Jiu Jitsu promotes the concept that a smaller, weaker person can successfully defend against a bigger, stronger assailant by using leverage and proper technique .

## February 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16 Closed	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26 Belt Promotion Regular Class times Thurs & Fri	27	28