

## The Art of Peace

It is a paradox that something that teaches “fighting” can make people less aggressive. However, most people don’t know that martial arts are rooted in nonviolent conflict resolution.

As the founder of Aikido, O’Sensei Morihei Ueshiba, said, “To injure an opponent is to injure yourself. To control aggression without inflicting injury is the Art of Peace.” Controlling aggression is the ultimate goal of martial arts. Martial arts teach respect, humility, and life and social skills.

In any form of martial art, there is tradition and discipline. As a result, students become more patient and respectful, from simply bowing to an instructor or other student to waiting for the next direction. But not only does martial arts teach these more straightforward lessons, but it also teaches lessons that have a deeper meaning and application, such as goal setting, control over strong emotions and reactions, and self-actualization. Students learn these character lessons and begin transferring them into their everyday lives. One of the essential things that this helps children with is increased self-esteem. When children feel good about who they are as an individual, aggressive tendencies diminish. They no longer need to “prove” themselves and their abilities. Instead, they have learned to internalize integrity so that violence is not an option. It is important to note that the instructor is at the forefront of this training. Instructors must lead by example and promote the tenets of the martial arts they teach. Showing compassion and respect to students while teaching them will be more beneficial. Take, for example, the movie “The Karate Kid.” In the film, there are two different instructors and two different students, but both are working on the same thing, martial arts. However, the Cobra Kai instructor focuses on aggressiveness and anger in his teaching. At the same time, Mister Miyagi teaches from a place of peace and conflict resolution, making martial arts only a last resort and a means of self-defense.

The SKILLZ program takes the traditional martial arts concepts a step further by dedicating time to Life SKILLZ during class. These character-building lessons expand on conventional martial arts tenets and make them easy to comprehend. They are broken up based on a student’s age and level of understanding. Lessons on sportsmanship, kindness, and optimism Reinforced throughout each student’s journey to a black belt are

sportsmanship, service, and optimism. Martial art is a holistic approach to the self. The physical requirements benefit the student greatly. The social, intellectual, and emotional benefits are, however, the most significant. When taught correctly, martial arts can be the most peaceful approach to conflict resolution, bullying, and violence.