

Read this to see the amazing benefits martial arts has to offer your children, and the way to get them on the path to life-long empowerment and success!

Dear Parent,

You want to see your children grow up and develop into mature, confident adults with the skills to take advantage of opportunities without compromising their integrity. I know that starting them in martial arts training could well be one of the best decisions you've ever made on their behalf. How do I know this? My own experiences in martial arts have been life changing. Let me tell you my story...

When I was 6 years old, I was first exposed to the idea of martial arts principles through the movie Star Wars. Although I didn't know it at the time, this movie would have a profound impact on who I am today. As a kid, I wanted to be a Jedi Knight. All through my childhood and teen years I pictured myself as one of them. I was entranced by the vision of being a powerful person able to take on any challenge with dignity and strength of purpose. Of course, I thought having a green lightsaber would be pretty cool, too. Now let me assure you that if there was anyone less likely to become a Jedi than yours truly, I have yet to meet him or her. Outside of being born in the wrong galaxy, I had plenty of other things going against me. I was a gawky, nerdy-looking kid and I weighed 74 pounds heading into high school; a picture-perfect target for bullies and peer pressure.

In 1985 when I began my own "journey" into martial arts at the age of thirteen, the life-shaping benefits of training were still largely unrecognized. "The Karate Kid" had come out the year before, and it changed people's perceptions from it being a sport that was strictly for adults to one that children could get some value from as well. (I was a Boy Scout at that time, and I remember that the Sports merit badge specifically prohibited karate and other martial arts as counting towards earning it. Boy was I disappointed!)

Now that I'm a little older, I realize just how incredibly fortunate I was as a kid. I grew up in a good neighborhood and went to great schools. I was blessed to have parents just like you who cared about my future and were able and willing to bring me to lessons. They allowed me to borrow the car when I was old enough to drive because they recognized the positive changes they were seeing in me as a result of my training. I had never been one for organized sports; trying this and that for a season or two before moving on to something else. In martial arts, I found an activity that consistently rewarded my hard work in the form of **confidence, self-discipline, and focus**. Not only that, but because of my training I was able to withstand the temptations that all kids face in their formative years without feeling embarrassment or shame.

Now it's more than thirty years later and my passion for martial arts is undiminished. What is different is that my mission has changed. Today what drives me is the opportunity to help other people experience the same feelings of personal success and empowerment that I have had throughout my martial arts life. I have studied under many teachers and paid hundreds of

thousands of dollars, not to mention my investment of time and energy. I have traveled extensively to get the best training I could from the best teachers I could find.

What does this mean for you?

It means that your child will be getting the best possible training. From each of these teachers, I have borrowed ideas and shaped them to help build a curriculum that empowers children in a progressive manner. **Building on children's physical successes can often mean taking huge leaps in terms of self-confidence, focus, and discipline. And believe me, you will notice a difference.**

"[Z-Ultimate's] programs have the unique ability to bring out each child's individual best. Class formats benefit those who are shy and need confidence building as well as those that have difficulties with acting out behaviors and require guidance in the areas of self-discipline and control. The program offers all participants the opportunity to have fun while experiencing personal success.

"I am continually impressed by the way the instructors identify each child's particular needs/abilities and respond in ways which help individuals achieve their best. And, all this is done through positive reinforcement/re-direction without the need for reprimand or embarrassment."

--Mary C, Psy.D. and parent of a Black Belt

Even more than the physical part, your children will grow in other ways. Just as your child will become stronger, better coordinated, and more balanced, she will also certainly develop new positive habits, overcome obstacles and challenges, and be a leader on her path to Black Belt. You see, the best measure is not usually one of being able to stand up to a bully (although that's certainly important) but also to have the confidence to make the right decisions when kids are presented with life's inevitable challenges. Imagine these scenarios:

"I'm afraid to try ice skating, because I don't want to look silly in front of the other kids."

"I have this big test coming up. I don't think I'll do very well on it, because I'm not very smart."

"Ashley sometimes makes fun of me at school. I'll never be as pretty or popular as her!"

Wouldn't it be great to know that your children have developed the ability to think this way instead?

"I've tried new things before and had success, so it's going to be exciting to take on this new challenge!"

"I have this big test to study for, and all these other projects I'm working on. I need a plan to accomplish it all."

"Other kids like me because I'm smart and kind and funny. I'll always have friends that like me for who I am."

When your child uses the discipline of karate to conquer his fears, he has the power to transfer that discipline to all other areas of his life.

Combating self-doubt and finding ways to accomplish goals are keys to success in martial arts at any level, and finding ways to help kids overcome the monsters in their own minds is just as important as learning the physical tools to **keep them safe** from the monsters outside. The great news is that this is a program that has already worked for over a thousand kids.

"My son Cameron ... started hesitatingly, having tried martial arts a few years ago at a different studio and it was not a good experience for him. It took some prodding, but he finally decided to give it another try. I'm pleased to say the once hesitant Cameron loves both Sensei Ben and the school and is loving it more and more every day! It has become his favorite recreational activity. With each belt promotion, Cameron has developed more and more self-confidence. He is more self-disciplined and has self-respect. He is not afraid of the bullying he may face in adolescence, because he now possesses the confidence to handle a situation maturely. The discipline and self-confidence he has gained have also carried over to his schoolwork. He is accepting more responsibilities around the house, which is a nice bonus!

"We commute [more than 20 miles] to attend classes. There are studios closer to home which I am sure are great studios, but I am sure we would not find a studio that would offer us the quality of learning and the atmosphere, and we would never find a better martial arts instructor."

--Colleen C, Parent of a Black Belt

Before you go any farther, I want you to do something.

14

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= _____

I want you to put your child's age in that line under the number 14 and do the math.

After more than 25 years of teaching people how to become self-disciplined, self-confident, and self-reliant, you begin to notice some things. Whatever that number is, it represents approximately how many years you've got left to dramatically influence your child. After 14, it gets tougher. Until your

children reach their mid-twenties, leave the house, and start making it in the real world, the long-term impact of their current activities remains hidden. Let's face it, the world you and I grew up in is **COMPLETELY DIFFERENT** from the world out there now. I mean, who ever thought we'd be hearing almost weekly news stories about mass shootings? NOW is the time for us as a society to get working on this stuff!

"I wanted to take a minute to say a big 'Thank You!' for all you've done for Tannin. He has really enjoyed learning from you these past couple years. And I have appreciated your willingness to be so accommodating to my crazy schedule! I also need to acknowledge the influence you have had on him as a positive male role model in his life. As a young (almost) man, Tannin doesn't have a lot of good male role models around right now. I appreciate the time you have taken to talk to him one on one when he has struggled with growing pains. It means a lot to both of us."

--Cari J, Parent

Now you may also be asking, why does martial arts training manage to do a better job of doing this than any other sport? More than any other sport karate gives your child the chance to explore their innate powers. In fact, the physical part acts as a foundation for something more important: the development of value skills, whether those are mental, social, or spiritual.

So how does Z-Ultimate's program help children develop themselves?

Unlike many schools that cram as many people into a group setting as possible, we prefer to focus on the individual. To do that, we've taken our training a step further than your average school. We do this through our **unique personalized approach and our Dynamic Mastery Method of teaching!**

"As an elementary teacher, I know how important it is to establish good rapport with students and make them feel that they are respected and cared for. That is what the school is all about! Their emphasis on character development and achieving personal goals puts their place above all others in my eyes! I'm always searching for superior role models for my son and Sensei Ben is certainly one of them."

--Lori Zisk, Parent

What the heck does that mean? It means that we form a bond with each student through personalized lessons and help individual students achieve their personal best with an approach that is suitable for them. Studies show that the vast majority of children do their best learning in small groups, and so every student we work with does some form of training like this. Most typically, a student participates in one or more 30-minute personalized training sessions each week with between 1 and 4 participants of similar age, skill, and learning style. We are able to really work with an individual's needs, whether they require some extra guidance learning a new move, there is some challenge in their life that they need to discuss

with a trusted advisor, or they could use some extra attention because for them, working in large groups is difficult.

"Ben works wonders with my special needs (ASD) son. I have never seen anyone so good at connecting with these kids. He has a gift. I tell everyone about Z-Ultimate. Best!"

--April P, Parent

For those that are interested in a group format, in addition to the personalized sessions, learners are able to take part in as many group classes as they would like through the week in order to improve their conditioning, increase practice time, and heighten their engagement with our community of martial artists.

Because we understand that people have differing priorities and interests, we have some students that attend only their personalized sessions and others that attend five or even six days a week. Unlike some other schools that dictate that you must come in a certain number of times each week, we leave that up to you. Although you may come in more or less often, once your child is enrolled in our program you may notice some of the following changes:

- **COURAGE.** Your child will learn how to move outside of his comfort zone. You'll see it in a lot of ways. Maybe he'll decide to try new things, take on more challenges, or become less fearful of other kids at school.
- **STAYING POWER:** Your child will find joy in improving her physical stamina. She can walk farther, run longer, and practice skills until she gets them right. In turn, she'll learn to stick things out and not give up. Even if she fails the first time, she perseveres and finds a solution.
- **SELF-CONTROL:** He'll refuse to give in to negative peer pressure and have a deeper respect for rules.
- **FOCUS:** She'll learn how to zero in on the tasks at hand and won't be as easily distracted by the normal but time-wasting childhood distractions.
- **SELF-CONFIDENCE:** He will be able to open the door to any opportunity life has to offer.

"When I asked Paulie what he liked most about karate, he replied that he felt proud of himself when he was finished with class each week. Your program has given him an opportunity to feel a sense of pride and accomplishment."

"The dialogue that you have with the children during each of the lessons is one of the many reasons that we believe martial arts training is vital to our child's development. You often speak to the children about staying focused during their lesson. We have reinforced this message when doing reading exercises with Paulie. You are truly helping to shape our child's mind as well as helping him develop physical strength."

--Robin Cocco, parent

Now of course I understand that studying martial arts isn't for everybody.

In fact, our program is not for everybody who is interested in martial arts! You may not care if your children get anything out of martial arts but an after-school exercise program. You may not think our program is the best fit for your child. Heck, you may not even like me (or any of the other teachers here, for that matter). For those that are interested in the positive benefits of training, I encourage you to look around and find the person or place that makes you feel the most comfortable.

Our program is also not for those who are unwilling or unable to take a certain amount of risk. I don't necessarily mean physical risk because in my experience both as a student and a teacher, I have seen far more people hurt playing basketball or baseball than I ever have practicing karate. I mean taking risks psychologically and mentally, because our curriculum is challenging. As is the nature of anything worth learning, your child will certainly have obstacles to his progress, so **if you are likely to let him give up at the first sign of adversity, I would also not recommend our program to you.** I believe in bringing out each student's potential over the long haul, overcoming obstacles and enjoying their growth as I am certain you will too. I have many students who have been with me for well over ten years and several who have gone on to become martial arts teachers in their own right, sharing their experiences and enthusiasm with others.

Here's how you can get your child started in our program:

STEP 1: Call the school at (612) 564-8849 and ask for Ben. If you would prefer, you can e-mail me at edina@zultimate.com instead. (Or, if you're online and want to do it yourself, go to <https://zultimate.as.me> and click on "**FREE INTRODUCTORY PRIVATE CLASS**".) Whichever way you decide, we'll set up a **FREE** consultation class, valued at \$75. This will give us the opportunity to find out how we can best help you, and in just 30 minutes, she will understand how to bow and why respect is important for studying martial arts. She will learn the proper way to stand, kick, and punch. Most importantly, she will learn that using karate is only appropriate in extreme situations.

STEP 2: I am convinced that you will be so impressed with the quality of your child's first experience with us that you'll want him to continue. However, just to make sure our school is the right place for him, he'll be able to try our \$99 "**STARTER PACKAGE**," a special package that includes:

- 4 personalized sessions, scheduled at a convenient time
- Unlimited access to our group classes for the appropriate age bracket
- A martial arts uniform, belt, and school patches
- And as a bonus, he'll also get a Z-Ultimate T-shirt

This gives you the opportunity to evaluate us and see if you are getting the results you want for your child!

Well, what if my child doesn't like it or it doesn't work out?

Like I said before, I understand that karate is not for everyone. If it doesn't work out for any reason, keep the uniform as our gift to you and we will wish you well on whatever other endeavors you choose to pursue.

If you, like the over 1500 long-term students I've been privileged to personally work with in my career, absolutely love the school and want to enroll in our regular program, we have a very simple **KICK START ENROLLMENT** process, which we'll help walk you through once you've had a chance to evaluate our services.

In fact, you can even try out our "**STARTER PACKAGE**" for the first month and if you don't notice a difference in your child's confidence, attitude, or physical abilities, cancel your membership and we'll refund your money.

So you can "test drive" us for a whole month with no risk!

"Most studios advertise that each student is encouraged to do his or her best, and at the same time, each is allowed to progress at his or her own pace. Many will tell you that the martial arts develop self-confidence, self-discipline, and self-control. What the other studios don't have is the dedicated staff ... We're proud of our daughter. I'd like to take credit for getting her involved in the martial arts, but the truth of the matter is, she's there because she wants to be."

--Art C, Parent of Black Belt

I want to thank you for taking the time to read this letter. I really and truly believe that studying martial arts can make a huge difference for your child whether it's here with us or with some other school. I know because I have had it happen for me personally and I get to hear the success stories of those who I am fortunate to call our students. If nothing else, I hope you feel more educated about the positive impact this sport can have in personal growth and long-lasting, life-shaping change.

In closing, I'd like to leave you with a few words from other people whose children have participated in our program.

I look forward to seeing your child in classes soon.

Sincerely,

Benjamin Thomas

A Sample of Other Parents' Experiences with Our Program

"I can really see just how prepared my children are to face not only other opponents but the world itself. It is a scary place to have children grow up in but I feel very confident that the boys would use their skills if they had too. The dedication and care that you have is evident in how our children carry themselves around every day.

"PS. One of the projects for Liam this past month was to keep his room clean. I should thank you for that too!! He picks up every night before bed. There are firsts for everything."

--Gina B, parent of 3 Black Belts

"I just had to let you know that I have never seen my son as happy and proud as he was yesterday when he came home from class with his Yellow Belt! He was positively glowing with excitement as he showed me his certificate along with his new belt! I cannot thank you enough for being such a wonderful teacher and role model for him and making him fall in love with karate."

--Alicia M, Parent

"In the end of life what will people remember about you, it's about the people you have touched and have touched you and have made a difference. My grandpa taught me that, and I didn't fully understand until my brush with death.

"You and Meghan made a significant impact in my life when I came to the dojo for self-defense. You both get the golden rules of life and enjoy people, how could I not appreciate you both! You're both awesome and proof that there are nice, kind, people in this world! It was a very rough year and I still managed to get my MOJO back in the Dojo! If the need arises I will defend myself. If it ends up being my time to go, I won't go without a damn good fight at staying alive. You and Meghan knew this, it just took me some time to figure it out again and I will always be grateful you were there for me (and Kyle too). Kyle doesn't know his strength yet, but he will be a fierce little dude if he needs to be."

--Katie I, Student and Parent of a Student

"As I am sure you noticed, James tends to verbalize his thoughts. We consider this a strength that he is not afraid to communicate. However, as we prepare him for kindergarten in the fall we want to help him develop skills to focus his energy on the present moment, be more aware of his surroundings by listening to others (vs. just thinking about what he plans to say next), and to have better control of his body. I really like how you focus on these aspects!"

--Joe C, Parent

"Where do I begin?! Z Ultimate Defense has far exceeded my expectations and I've been to other martial arts centers.....not the same experience at all!!!! The instructors are attentive and engaging. They truly enjoy what they do and enjoy teaching both children and adults. I am amazed by the positive energy at every class my sons and I have taken jointly, independently, and in the classroom. I love the option of private classes and set class times. My sons are both excited to go to their lessons and I have seen an increase in focus and confidence in them."

--Dawnn E, Student and Parent of 2 Students

"Ben is absolutely incredible! He has more patience than anyone I have ever seen and our son looks forward to every class with him! It's been a great experience for our son and we can't recommend Ben and Z-Ultimate enough!!"

--Emily K, Parent

"Ben is an amazing instructor. He is positive, never negative, and so encouraging. He has taught my son discipline, perseverance and fitness too. Very well worth the time and money!"

--Jenifer M, Parent

"I am so proud to have our sons attend and that you are leading them in a great direction. You display an excellent example of leadership and caring. Our sons not only learn a lot but have fun doing it. Thank you!"

--Susan M, Parent of 2 students

"My son has been enrolled at Z-Ultimate Self Defense Studios for over a year. Sensei Ben Thomas has been the lead instructor and is the reason my son is still enthusiastically engaged. He provides the perfect balance of discipline, fun, excitement and humor while training. Having taken martial arts in the past, I recognize how good Sensei Ben is at teaching the important skills, while ensuring safety. He creates an atmosphere of learning, that is spirited and fun, so kids are excited to learn to do things the right way. I actually stay to watch the sessions when I can, since I enjoy watching them practice their moves. Sensei Ben mixes a variety of instruction techniques, physical challenges, mental challenges and competitions to drive the kids to do their best. I strongly recommend enrolling your child at this studio so they can learn martial arts, improve their athletic ability (my son plays other sports which karate has helped), develop discipline and have fun!"

--Mark S, Parent

"My husband attended class for the first time last week. He was impressed with your unit on stranger danger; you presented the material in a way that was not frightening to the children and yet you were still able to convey the message of personal safety to each of them. He was impressed with the fact that you directly spoke to each individual child and gave each of them personal attention and instruction."

--Robin C, Parent of a Black Belt