

# Do Your Students Have a Clearly Defined Purpose for Their Leadership Training?

by NAPMA member Gary Engels



## Leadership Starts with a Mission

This month's G.O.L.D. Leadership Team Report explains how you can implement a Leadership Student Mission for your students to help focus their leadership training for maximum results. This mission is different than your school's "student creed", but has similar qualities.

Three important (yet simple) facts to know:

- Students train for different reasons and have different goals.
- Parents enroll their children for different reasons, which are most often different than the children's.
- Parents enrolled their children to learn personal development and leadership skills, not to learn how to fight.

Your student's leadership mission will give students, parents and instructors a clear outline of the needs and desires of each student and their families. A leadership student's mission is necessary for them to excel in the leadership development aspects of their martial arts training. Let's begin by clearly defining your school's mission and then we'll move to your students' missions.

## Your School's Mission

As a martial arts instructor and successful school owner, you must know your school's #1 mission. Without a mis-

sion, you are walking aimlessly in the dark. Without a plan, you are leaving the success of your school to chance.

More than likely you already have a written mission statement for your school. I'm sure you even have some sort of student creed that your students recite. If I came to your school, would your students and parents be able to tell me your school's mission?



Many school owners tend to focus mostly on enrolling new students, increasing student retention or generating record revenues this month. A properly defined mission can help you achieve all those goals, without losing focus on the important aspects of your martial arts business.

## Your Mission Has to Be Bigger Than You and Your School

Your school mission should include not only your instructors and owners, but also your students, parents and community. Your mission should also state your ability to provide a powerful service for the people in your community. This, in itself, will make your mission really stand out and fulfill the needs and goals of your students and their families.

Once you've clearly defined your school's mission, tell everyone! It is a powerful tool that demonstrates to your students and the community exactly what you are trying to accomplish with your classes.

The best way to lead is by example. A clearly defined mission is showing your students how to train with an ultimate goal in mind. They watch every move you make, so your mission should complement theirs.

## “Why is My School’s Mission So Important To My Students Leadership Training?”

Let me be very clear: a mission is bigger than a goal. A goal is future event that you expect to accomplish some day. A goal has a completion date. Your mission is continuous, never ending. It is a statement of purpose to assist you in achieving all of the goals that you have set. It is the reason you will succeed at your goals.

Each of your students should have the goal to “earn their Black Belts;” however, that is not their mission.

They must understand “why” they are training. As a Leadership student, they must understand that how they perform in martial arts class and act in the community affects everyone around them.

A “Leadership Student Mission” will help guide your students individually inside and outside of class. It helps them become more responsible citizens and developing leaders in your community.

## Use Your Next Leadership Class To Help Your Students Define Their Martial Arts Mission

Help your students develop their missions. It must be bigger than them.

It must include a:

- Positive Black Belt attitude.
- “Will Not Quit” mind set to reach any goals that they set.
- Compassion and empathy to help others.

This mission is designed to help them understand that their leadership training is bigger than themselves; it’s about helping others. In understanding this, they will be helping themselves, as well.

Leadership training should not be solely about setting goals to excel in the physical aspects of the martial arts. It is much more than that.

Leadership in the martial arts is about leading by example. It’s about doing the right thing when adversity strikes. It’s about doing your personal best and watching others follow you.

The best definition I’ve ever come across for the word leadership is: People follow people because they want to, not because they have to.

A leadership mission should be on purpose, help others and be followed and lived every day. Having this attitude towards their mission, your leadership team students will attract others to follow them wherever they go.

## Martial Arts Students Deserve The Level of Leadership Training Only You Can Give Them

You can talk about leadership with your students until you’re blue in the face. It will go right over their heads. Personal development lectures and books are just not good enough.

Your students need a place to practice hands-on Leadership training. The good news is that they’ve chosen your school to learn these valuable skills.

Leadership is the most precious commodity on earth! In fact, it’s the most sought after skill on the planet. Everyone is looking for real leadership development, especially for children.

A great start for your student’s experiential-based leadership training is to have them define and write their own personal mission statements.

Earlier, I mentioned how students have a tough time learning leadership solely from talking about it; this is because they need to experience it first hand.

Some students naturally learn the ability to lead. Because of this, leadership is already occurring in your classes, today. Some students naturally excel and are “followed” by other students; however, other students need to be taught this priceless skill.

The best method I’ve ever come across to teach Leadership (to those students that are not natural leaders) is to create/write their own personal mission statements and practice living their mission every day. This is experiential-based leadership training.

Here are a few examples of a mission that is on purpose:

- My mission for this leadership column is: *To provide a resource for martial arts instructors and school owners to learn techniques and strategies that may help them lead their students to new levels of success in their martial arts schools.*
- My mission for The National Leadership Team (NLT) is: *To provide an online resource to unite Leadership Students across the nation to compete healthfully on their personal*

# BLACK BELT LEADERSHIP

GUIDANCE ON LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

*development and compassion training. My goal is to create a team that will complete 1,500+ Community Service Projects, 15,000+ Personal Goals, and 150,000+ Random Acts of Kindness.*

- My mission for my martial arts school is: *To increase the Leadership education in our community by creating positive role models and citizens through martial arts and personal development training.*
- One of my student's missions was: *"To lead by example by beginning each day and every class with a "Yes I Can Attitude" and to never leave class or go to bed at night without learning something new." He also set some goals: to complete 600 random acts of kindness in 60 days and to practice 50 good sit-ups each night before bed.*
- Another student's mission was: *"To act like a Black Belt each day at school and home and in martial arts classes. To lead others in class by doing my best and improving each and every day."*

Each individual mission statement above was created to assist others. Even these student goals will assist others.

The first student above became one of our best students because of his strong mission that he set early in his training. Because of his leadership and attitude in class, he helped to lead many other students to adapt a similar attitude.

Because of this student's clearly defined mission, he learned real leadership through the experience of becoming a leader in his martial arts class.

## **"How Can I Introduce this Idea to My Leadership Students Today?"**

First, you must lead by example. Set your own mission and tell everyone. Your clearly defined mission is a great tool for your school, as it will attract other like-minded families and students to your martial arts program. This can only grow your school with quality students.

Then, in your next Leadership Class, have each student write their reason(s) for training in the martial arts.

Ask them:

- "What are your ultimate plans for your training?"
- "What do you wish to accomplish with their leadership training?"
- "What character traits would you like to adapt during your leadership training?"

- "What community projects would you like to pursue?" Then, put it together into a mission statement that is personalized for them. Once they have written a clearly defined mission, help them set some specific goals (with dates of completion) that are part of their overall mission.

Help guide them, as this may be difficult at first for some. When they finish writing their mission statements, keep copies on file and have them display their mission statements in their bedrooms or on their bathroom mirrors. Make sure they put their missions somewhere that they will see them each day.

When they create their mission statements and begin to practice living with their missions in mind, your school will be filled with students who are training with purpose. Your students will begin to experience real leadership through this process and will inspire others to do the same.

Your students, and especially their parents, will thank you for this one simple leadership skill that you can implement in your leadership classes immediately.

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