



why on earth....

My first experience of karate wasn't stood in a dojo lined up, it was in my sister's kitchen. I was watching my future brother in law (and Sensei, although I had no idea at the time !) Andy Barker, arm forging (ude tanren) with Jason Smallwood. At the time, I remember thinking, 'why on earth do you want to hit each other like that when it so obviously hurts so much' .I would find out later why they did it!

I started training in February 2000, after moving back to Sheffield from Leeds .Initially I went to get a little fitter and to widen my circle of friends. I did both, and without noticing, I was starting to get hooked on karate. I spent many of my first lessons stood at the back being completely and utterly bewildered. Watching people do gedan barai and thinking 'how do you do that without looking like a demented windmill?' The answer, I found, was practice and plenty of it. It sounds easy for me to say, but those that know me will know that I've struggled to fit karate in with a demanding job and a long commute to work. I've also had times in my karate life when I've felt the need to take a break from it, sometimes to recover from an injury or just to get focused again but I've always come back to it. And that's ok.

And here I am, on my count down to my Shodan exam. Five days to go and counting... I never thought I would get this far and part of me still can't quite believe that in five days time I will hopefully hear those words 'Shodan -pass' from Sensei George. It's taken me a long time to get to this stage and a lot of effort. It doesn't happen over night and I think that's what I want to get across is, never give up. But also, you have to put the effort and practice in. Sensei Andy, Terry and Richard can pass on their knowledge to us but it is up to us to listen, take the information in and practice, practice, practice. I now know why Sensei Andy and Sensei Jason were stood in my sister's kitchen all those years ago, it was to be the best they could at that point in time and also a little to see who would wince first!

Barbara Dakin

Postscript

Barbara (left in the photo) was indeed successful and heard the words Shodan pass on December 7th, her sister Margaret was also successful in attaining her Sandan on the same day



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