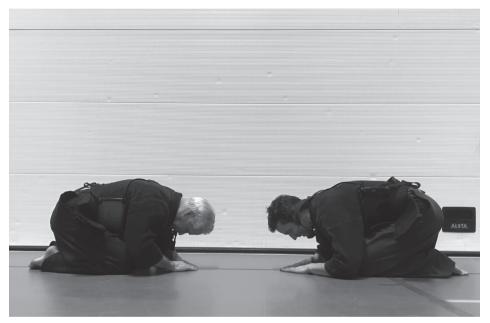


## **Acknowledgements**

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"Sensei ni rei" position – At the end of the lesson.

A true friend is someone who lets you have total freedom to be yourself. That's what real love amounts to – letting a person be what he really is. Jim Morrison

I am indebted to my mother and father for living, but to my teacher for living well. Alexander the Great

The combination of writing a dissertation, working daily as an anesthesiologist, being a husband to my lovely wife Nicole, being a good father of my two beautiful girls Frieda and Jona, was a very complex balancing act. But challenges and have been always a stimulating drugs to me.

When I started this scientific project, I completely underestimated the workload to receive a Ph.D. degree. My wife Nicole knows everything about this. For me personally, such a Ph.D. project has many parallels with the sports I like to do (Kendo, open water swimming, road cycling, hiking and running). To perform a series of competitions I was aware that I need to train hard and effectively, that I need to follow a good teacher or coach (Sensei) and that I have to join a good team or club (Dojo). Furthermore, I learned that using doping with liters of espresso and EPO (= endless positive optimism) isn't a bad thing. But more than that, you a need a family, which understands your personality, supports your motivation to preserve your goals, gives positive and negative feedback, catches counterstrikes, and loves you and vice versa.

The most important person I have to thank first, is my wife Nicole.

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Twenty years ago I started a journey to my own personality – Kendo (Japanese fencing) – , which has become a very important part of my life. Simplified, Kendo still teaches me to perform today better than yesterday, which could be translated to many parts of our lives. I deeply appreciate all the efforts of my teachers in getting me better (Senseis Koos van Hattum, Gerard Barbier, Hein Odinot, Yukio Shimizu, Rene Führen and Roland Niewert). I am very thankful to all my kendo friends especially at Dojo Fumetsu Rotterdam and other Dojo where I could join their lessons. I will never give up in learning, how to hit the perfect Men (strike to the head).

