Balance

By Jerry Figgiani

We all know martial arts is a balancing act. What I mean by this is how many of us have experienced a time when family, relationships, jobs, injuries and other commitments have interfered with our training? I know in my 40+ years I have experienced my share of life obstacles. Recently, I witnessed these obstacles by a dear friend of mine, Sensei Nestor Ramos 8th Dan Shorin Ryu.

I held a Shorin Ryu Karate Do International World Seminar at my dojo May 18th-20th, 2018. From Europe, Canada and the United States, 80+ people attended the seminar. The seminar was given by Senseis Takeshi Tamaki and Masahiko Tokashiki from Okinawa. During the course of the seminar Sensei Ramos was making arrangements to put his mom in hospice. You could see the stress of this situation on his face. Understanding the mental benefits of the martial arts, I witnessed Sensei Ramos balance the act of taking care of his mother as well as being present at the seminar. With his cellphone close by, he participated in all ten hours of training that weekend. He also made his way back to the hospital to see his mother. This could not have had happen without balance.

There are many benefits to the martial arts beyond just the physical training. With this understanding of the mental aspect, one can make a huge impact in their own personal lives. An impact on how we deal with emotions and the highs along with the lows of life, it will give us a direction to face every day obstacles. Balance is what gives the practitioner longevity in the arts and can make for a lifelong student. When obstacles pop up throughout life we can rely on our training to help us make a better approach and deal with the situation. For example, our physical training can help us prepare ourselves for physical confrontation. When we put our attention on balance, we can deal better with our emotions. When we put our attention on our emotions, we lose our balance.

We all deal with highs and lows. In the martial arts, think about the high we feel when receiving rank recognition. A great example is achieving Shodan. In my years of teaching, I have learned that some who achieve Shodan see it as an end in their training. For those who truly make the mind and body connection, they see it as just the beginning.

In daily life we must achieve balance. For those of us who are into the martial arts, if you want longevity, you must incorporate balance between the physical and the mental. Just as balance is important to our stances, balance is more important to the decisions we face in our life. Balance is so important to our practice. Train to find your balance.