

Wisdom of the Martial Arts



To Lift the Mind, Body, and Spirit

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The study of martial arts is a path of personal growth, encompassing body, mind, and spirit. The Mindful Lessons of the Martial Arts program is designed to support and supplement your physical practice, and to motivate and inspire you to deeper levels. Congratulations on taking the first step toward achieving all your personal goals, lets get started!

Topic

Breaking Through Your Limitations

A wise phrase reads, "No one who has led a life of ease has a name worth remembering." The lives of some of the most remarkable martial artists are woven with stories of great personal struggle. A couple of qualities that they all shared were relentless enthusiasm and optimism. We can all admire and learn from their unwavering positive attitudes. I don't mean that we should adopt a "Pollyanna" attitude, and claim that the glass is half full when it really is empty. Instead, like these great martial artists, we could all benefit during our difficult moments if we remember that "this too shall pass."

Control your reactions

Life always contains cycles of good times and bad. During either period, we only have control over one thing—our own behavior—specifically, our reaction. Realizing this truth, great martial artists choose to develop habits which lead them in the directions they wish to go. Once they determine their path, they stay diligent in their disciplines and choices. Everyone has heard the phrase "attitude is everything," but nothing sums up this concept as sufficiently as the Japanese phrase, "Kaizen." More than just a word, Kaizen represents a philosophy of commitment. The person makes a resolution to never stop improving.

Seize every opportunity

A person with a weak will might hear about constant never-ending improvement and immediately think, "Nothing will ever be good enough. No matter how hard I try, I will always have to improve." This same idea would have the opposite effect on an optimistic and enthusiastic martial artist. He understands the philosophy as an opportunity to continuously grow and strive for his fullest potential. He doesn't judge or get frustrated by errors. Optimists correct and improve their behavior, and perceive this as an opportunity. Pessimists see this same act as proof that they are failing.

A plateau can be the next step in the journey

Relate this idea of Kaizen to the practice of martial arts. With a pessimistic attitude, the student reaches only a very basic level of development in his physical technique. When he hits a plateau, he becomes frustrated and rationalizes why he cannot get any better. In his mind, he has decided that this is as good as he will ever be, or the effort that is required to get better is just too much. The lazy minded pessimist will give up. On the other hand, a strong willed optimist makes a new commitment to practice each time he reaches a plateau. He understands that with diligence his technique will improve. A plateau should not be the end of the journey, but just a place to assess your practice and make necessary changes before moving on.

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Empower your life

It is important to note that most people are mentally defeated long before they are

"Do the thing we
fear, and death of
fear is certain."

-Ralph Waldo
Emerson



physically defeated. By developing the will, the body, and the mind, martial artists are able to withstand and conquer most challenges in their lives. If you sometimes fall into the category of a pessimist, make a commitment right now to replace this debilitating habit. Use your practice as a tool for disciplining and developing your body, as well as a means to building a strong and powerful attitude. With Kaizen, you can empower all aspects of your life.



Determination breeds success

Pessimists might set a goal, but upon reaching the first obstacle, they simply give up. This process actually weakens the mind and causes more doubt. On the other hand, a strong willed positive person will accept the challenge and push himself, determined to finish the project. Not only will he succeed, but this process actually reinforces his strength of purpose and will. He enters an upward spiral, where his determination is breeding success, as well as more determination-more strength of will. A true martial artist possesses a strong body, but an even stronger mind.

Break through your limitations

What prevents most people from reaching their fullest potential? Why do most people snuggle up in their comfort zone and never push themselves to greater heights? The biggest reason is fear. When you determine to break through your limitations, remember the saying, "Everything that you want is on the other side of fear." Do not get too comfortable in any part of your life. Compare your life to your workout. If everything is easy, and you are not really pushing yourself, then you probably aren't making much progress.

A young man was driven to succeed in life. He was having lunch with an older man, who had been quite successful himself. He asked the old man, "Sir, what is life?"

Without hesitation, the old man responded, "Exciting and fun! You could probably ask fifty people and get fifty different answers, and they could all be right. But, if their answers didn't encompass fun and excitement, then what's the use of living?" Before the young man could respond, the old man added, "Rewarding, life is also rewarding."

The young man asked, "Sir, how did you become so successful?"

The old man paused a moment, and then said, "The first thing you have to ask yourself is, 'What defines success for you?' Do not believe that success for everyone looks the same." The old man added, "What do you want out of life? In the next few days, get a pencil and paper and write down what you want to accomplish in your life."

The young man thought about the power of the old man's words. "May I ask another question?" The old man nodded with approval. "If you knew everything that you now know to be true, and could live your life over, what would you change?"

The old man smiled and quickly answered, "I would take more risks!"

Immediately the young man shot back, "I have heard the stories of your accomplishments sir and I am certain you took a lot of risks in your life."

The old man looked him square in the eye and said, "Life is meant to be lived, and if your heart isn't in your throat at least once a week, then you are too comfortable. The only difference between a comfort zone and a grave is about six feet."

The two men finished their lunch and walked out of the restaurant. The old man put his arm around the young man and said, "In life, bite off more than you can chew, and then

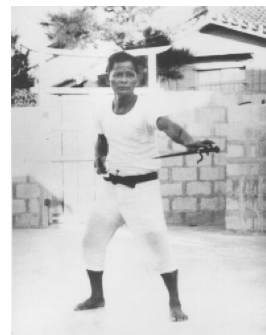
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Failure is the key
to success. Each
failure teaches us
something.
Morihei Ueshiba

chew it.”

Pilsung is a Korean term, which means: indomitable spirit; to obtain certain victory and to never give up.

No difficulty in life can conquer a rock solid attitude based on Kaizen and Pilsung. Most of your limitations are self-created. So, only you have the power to break through them.



The fearless founder of Isshinryu Karate. He followed his heart and developed our system.

Activity

Taking the old man's advice from the story, write a wish list of 15 to 25 experiences or accomplishments that you will have by the end of your life. Wisdom does not come with age, but with experiences and opportunities to learn. You might include examples such as traveling abroad, learning a foreign language, skydiving, changing careers or perhaps opening your own business. The list should contain any and all things that you really want to obtain or experience during your lifetime. Do not be afraid to dream, but stay out of the realm of the absurd. Example of absurd: a 350-pound man wants to be a jockey in the Kentucky Derby. Have fun with your list!

After completing your list, keep a copy for future reference and make a copy for your instructor.

Notes:

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Activity



When weeding,
destroy the
roots.

*Ancient Proverb
from China*

Technique:

One of the most important aspects a martial artists can develop is high levels of focus and concentration. Our forms, breathing techniques and conscious effort are some of the tools we can use to improve. We shall discover as we advance in the martial arts that the biggest part of our training is the mental aspect. This is the most important part of what we do. We harmonize the physical with the mental and unite the two with breathing. This is easier said than done but we must know where we are going in order to plot our course to get there. This next drill was taught to us by Hanchi Willie Adams and is very effective.

Start by getting a dime and some adhesive, toothpaste works well and will come off easily. Next find an area where you can attach your dime to the wall at solar plexus level. Make sure that this wall area is in a place where if you make a mistake it won't cause a problem.

After you have a suitable spot you can start your focus work. Assume a natural guard (Seisan stance facing in a 45 degree angle from the dime). Now you will throw reverse punches at the dime, coming as close as you can without hitting the wall. Start punching about two inches out from the dime and work your way in closer. Work both sides and as you improve you may start trying new strikes (uppercuts-shote-kicks).

As you progress it's ok to add other dimes for more target areas such as groin, eyes, throat and so on. As you get better you can advance to the final stage. That's the "gun-slinger" stage. Stand with your back to the wall and suddenly turn and strike in a blur of motion hitting the exact spot you choose at will. Remember that the goal is to develop pinpoint accuracy and blinding speed without hitting the wall or dime!

Benefits:

Great focus development is gained along with speed. Quiet confidence is gained as your skills are developed.

Key Points:

- This drill is best done after quieting the mind with breathing.
- Find a place with few distractions.
- Exhale 90% of your air before the strike begins.
- Retract the strike faster than it goes out.



A martial artist must develop unerring focus to gain a true understanding of our art.

Master R. Joslin

Glossary



Kaizen

Japanese term for continuous improvement, regarding all levels of life: mental, physical, emotional and spiritual.

Karma

Eastern concept referring to the law of cause and effect— what you sow, you shall reap. What you do, think, or say, good or bad, will be done or said to you. It is not returned in judgment or as a reward or punishment, but to help us learn and grow.

I shall pass this way but once;
any good, therefore, that I can do or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now.
Let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.

Pasted on the mirror
of Dale Carnegie

Recommended Reading

- * The Art of War -*Sun Tzu*
- Okinawan Karate -*Mark Bishop*
- Fish Tales -*Stephen Lundin PHD*

*Highly recommended

Dear Friends,

I am feeling guilty.

And I don't want to sound like an alarmist... but did you know that somewhere in our community:

- A child stays in the house, even on hot summer days — playing video games. Her mother is puzzled. She has no idea that her daughter is afraid to play outside, with children who are more physically active. Even though there is no real danger, she feels intimidated!

- A young boy struggles in school and at home. He just can't seem to control himself. His father begins to think the teacher may be right... maybe he should be tested for ADD! If the boy were older, maybe he could explain that he is hungry for structure, attention, and some positive recognition!

- A nice young lady struggles with a weight problem. She turns down the few invitations to go out that she does receive. She is uncomfortable with her physical appearance, and doesn't believe that anybody could find her interesting. She is not aware that she is experiencing a confidence problem!

- A young husband and wife work hard... they want to get ahead, but they just can't seem to achieve their goal of owning their own home. They don't lack desire -- but they have never been able to set and reach goals!

My friends, there are so many people who want improved lives -- for themselves and for their families. But where do they turn? Teachers, pastors, and counselors at times provide instruction and encouragement... but they have their hands full, don't they? And they often seem to be kind of discouraged themselves.

And so, I feel guilty. Because, you see, we have a solution right here, don't we?

And I'm afraid that, at times, we've almost been keeping it a secret. It hurts me when I walk through our town, and see the type of people mentioned above and know that our lessons could be making a difference. Maybe... a big difference.

Somebody is waiting for your help. Please use this opportunity to tell them about Martial Arts training...

We make it easy to share the experience of the martial arts with the ones in our lives. Stop by the front counter to pick up a V.I.P. pass and sponsor someone to one month of lessons and a new uniform... absolutely FREE!

Your Friend,

Master Joslin

SEISAN KATA

Yellow Belt

**Curriculum
Sheet #2**

- Students are to be able to perform the following curriculum.
- Know the answer to history questions.
- Minimum of eight classes attended.
- Regular practice at home.
- Positive Martial Arts attitude.

Catch LH (on R hip)
Look L
Raise L knee
Big step to L
Block #6
Punch RH, punch LH,
Kick RF
Punch RH
Catch RH (on L hip)
Look R (behind 180%)
Turn R (half-step, turn only 90%)
Raise R knee (cover)
Big step to R
Block #6 RH
Punch LH, punch RH
Kick LF

Punch LH
Catch LH (on R hip)
Look L
Raise L knee (cover)
Big step to L
Block #6, LH
Punch RH, punch LH
Kick RF
Punch RH
Leave RH extended &
Catch LH at R hip.
Turns RF outward 90% on heel.
Arm lock

How many blocks in Seisan Kata? Twenty-four

What is the weight distribution in Seisan stance? 50/50

A third degree black belt or higher must sign off on this form to test!

Student name

Instructor

Authorized Signature

Joslin's East West Karate



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