

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

Do What You Can Do—Perfectly

Most people would agree that one of the best ways to improve in martial arts is to practice hard. But what does practicing hard mean? By performing techniques with as much speed and power as possible, most people would believe they are practicing hard. The workout is vigorous, and they leave sweating, sore and smiling. Although I subscribe to the 'sweating-sore-and-smiling theory', practicing hard involves more than just throwing technique with power.

Perform every action with conscious intention

Practicing hard means to do everything that you are already able to do—perfectly. Maybe the word 'perfectly,' brings to mind the idea that no one is perfect. This might be true, but everyone can do some things perfectly... every time. Some skills and concepts are quite easy to learn, and having a specific fitness and flexibility level to perform them is not necessary. For example, everyone can stand in a perfect attention stance with heels together, backs straight, eyes looking forward, and hands sharply by their side. Each time, when standing in attention stance, everyone can bow deeply and respectfully. Everyone can remember to wear a uniform to class, to line up straight without gaps in the line, to re-cock or chamber the leg after kicking, to make your fist tight when making a fist, to keep your knees bent when they are supposed to be bent, to keep your hands up when they are supposed to be up, and to keep breathing throughout the class. The list of other moments of possible perfection can go on and on. Believing that these are little things and that they don't really matter is not the correct attitude. Remember the saying,

"If you take care of the little things, the big things will take care of themselves."

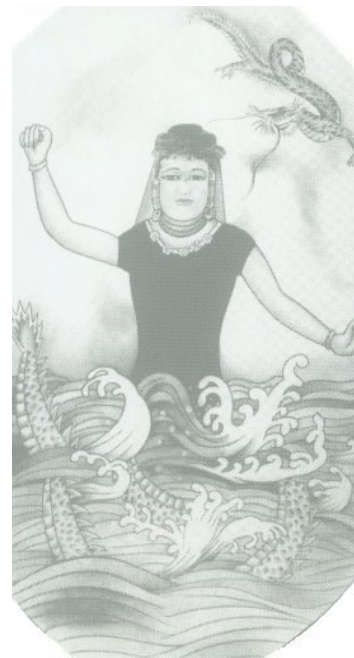
Seeking perfection without judgment

Begin anew with each class. As you enter, determine to put forth your most sincere effort in every action. Resist the desire to dwell on your mistakes or your accomplishments. The practice will move quickly. Your goal is to stay in the moment. Recognize your strengths, but correct your errors, no matter how small they might be. Move from moment to moment with the same watchfulness. But here is the key: do not judge. Simply correct mistakes without feeling disappointment or frustration. Practice with this attitude, and your awareness and sensitivity will increase.

Be patient.

Doing everything that you can do, perfectly, might be difficult in the beginning. It's a good idea to pick five or six techniques, and perform them with this conscious intention. Although the techniques might need physical improvement, which will come through countless repetitions, your effort can always be sincere. In the process, you will be developing muscle memory and making repeated actions a habit. Soon, without thinking, you will just automatically perform the technique correctly. When these become habits, pick others to work on.

Transformation... not rationalization



"Goals we set are
goals we get!"

-Master Steve La-
vallee

By applying this principle everyday, we can raise every aspect of our lives to a higher level without a doubt. What if each of us decided to discard old habits of making excuses and rationalizing less than perfect behavior? Instead, we consciously determine that in each and every moment, we will do everything that we are capable of doing as perfectly as possible. Just think—our work and relationships would excel to unbelievable levels.

In the life of a sincere martial artist, a moment comes when he realizes that practice is actually an opportunity to be mindful, and a time to exercise accountability for his action. When this happens, martial arts practice surpasses the mere physical level of punching and kicking, throwing and grappling. It becomes a discipline of mind and body. It becomes an act in mindfulness... a lesson!



Habits we
train are habits
we gain!

Story

There once were two friends, John and Robert, who wanted to study martial arts. They investigated schools in the area and after finding a good teacher they began to study. They understood that they needed to be patient. They practiced regularly and very hard.

Early on, it was clear that John was more of a natural athlete, and took to the practice easier than Robert. For the first several years, John's power and speed would dominate. John would easily win when the two men sparred. At every testing event, John would stand out. Both had fallen in love with practice, and would continue for many years.

Resolved to taking a back seat to John's talent, Robert started to practice without comparison, and committed himself to the true study of his art and technique. He shed all desire of competition and simply studied the art for himself. At some point, John started to realize that Robert's technique and skills were improving greatly. Eventually Robert beat John in sparring.

One day after a very hard practice, as the two men were changing, John confessed that he was really trying hard, but that no matter how hard he tried he just couldn't beat Robert. He finally asked, "What are you doing differently? Your practice has changed dramatically."

Robert said, "I could never keep up with you. Growing up, you were always stronger faster and more athletic in everything we tried. So, I finally decided to stop competing with you, and started practicing for myself. Master even noticed my change in attitude. One day, he came to me and said, Now that you are practicing for yourself, you should always do whatever you can do, perfectly every time, and then build on that.' I took his advice to heart.

If you think that this change in attitude has helped me develop in the dojo, you should see how it has helped me in the rest of my life! I just made partner at work, and my relationships have never been better. Who would ever guess that out of all the things that we have learned in this dojo, something so simple as 'always do what you can already do, but do it perfectly' would become one of my most important lessons?"

Activity

Now that you have read the topic, “Do what you can do, perfectly,” write down 3 examples of how your life might be affected if you implemented this principle.

Look at your work or career, your martial arts practice, family and home, hobbies or activities. Take your time, and think about it; be specific in your answers.

Write at least a paragraph for each example.

When you have completed the activity, keep a copy for future reference, and make a copy to turn in to your instructor.

Notes:



The three stars in the Isshinryu patch represent the 3 main teachers of Hanshi Tatsuo Shimabuku. (shown in background)

Technique

Just like a jet pilot, we need to start with the end in mind. Imagine that you are going to fly across the country. How would you like it if your pilot did not prepare a flight plan? Or if he was guessing at how much fuel he needed, or in which direction to head. You probably would not get on that plane. Yet, many go through life without any plan of action or direction. This is the perfect time to make a plan and resolve to act upon it.



One of the hardest parts of making a plan of action for a year, or setting even longer-term goals, is determining where we really want to go. To successfully achieve goals, we need to have meaningful objectives that create a *strong desire*, giving us the motivation to stick with our plan until it is accomplished. However, how do we *find* this great quest, this desire in ourselves?

This excerpt from Stephen R. Covey's, The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, may seem a bit dramatic, yet very effective. In it he said, "In your mind's eye, see yourself going to the funeral of a loved one. Picture yourself driving to the funeral parlor or chapel, parking the car, and getting out. As you walk inside the building, you notice the flowers, the soft organ music. You see the faces of friends and family as you pass along the way. You feel the shared sorrow of losing, the joy of having known, that radiates from the hearts of the people there. As you walk down to the front of the room and look inside the casket, you suddenly come face to face with yourself. This is your funeral, three years from today. All these people have come to honor you, to express feelings of love and appreciation for your life. As you take a seat and wait for the services to begin, you look at the program in your hand. There are to be four speakers. The first is from your family, immediate and also extended/children, brothers, sisters, nephews, nieces, aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents, who have come from all over the country to attend. The second speaker is one of your friends, someone who can give a sense of who you were as a person. The third speaker is from your work or profession. The fourth speaker is from your church or some community organization where you have been involved in service. Now, think deeply. What would you like each of these speakers to say about you and your life? What kind of husband, wife, father, or mother would you like their words to reflect? What kind of son, daughter or cousin? What kind of friend? What kind of working associate? What character would you like them to have seen in you? What contributions, what achievements would you want them to remember? Look carefully at the people around you. What difference would you like to have made in their lives?"

Write down what you *want* people to say about you and work backwards. This technique can be extremely helpful in deciding what is important in our lives. It can help us set those meaningful goals that will offer the greatest personal rewards. Let us take some time now and set meaningful goals. Let's take control of our lives before someone else does.

**"Be constantly
mindful, diligent,
and resourceful in
your pursuit of
the way."
Gichin Funakoshi**

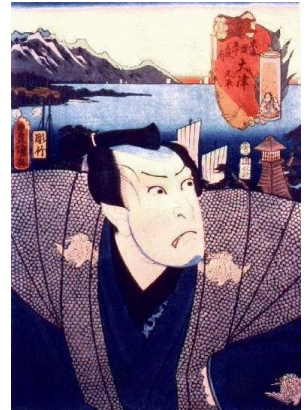
Technique (cont'd)

Key Points:

You are creating a perfect life, be colorful in your descriptions and have fun with it. You must write it down! To be effective you must have your plan in writing and somewhere you can see it often. It will help if you have visual aids for your plan. (photos of leaders you want to emulate, etc.).

Benefits:

Taking control of your future. Having a master plan to follow allows you to focus and speeds up the process of reaching meaningful goals. Adds meaning to your life and gives you a positive reason to get up each morning with enthusiasm.



"The hardest technique to learn in the dojo is the bow."

Hanshi Tatsuo Shimabuku

Glossary



“To unfailingly take what you attack, attack where there is no defense. For unfailingly secure defense, defend where there is no attack.”

-Master Sun Tzu

- Mushin

A Japanese term. The direct translation is “no-mind.” You experience mushin when you are reacting without thought, powered by spontaneous creativity that comes through you, but not from you.

Bruce Lee referred to the experience as when “it” happens. Ueshiba Sensei referred to the experience as when, “spirit flows through you.” All thought is absent, the ego is forgotten, and the individual has freedom from dualistic notions of good or bad, success or failure.

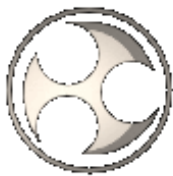
In a sparring situation, any thoughts can usually be traced back to concerns of victory and defeat. If you are trying to fake out or trick your partner, or you are trying to judge or anticipate his movements, you are thinking. Your mind is engaged. Because one could throw hundreds of techniques in a sparring situation, guessing or anticipating someone’s next move is difficult. The great masters have learned that the mind cannot keep up. By relaxing the mind as much as possible, the opportunity to respond to the next attack is greatly expanded. At the highest level, this calm mental state is called mushin or no-mind.

Recommended Reading

- History and Philosophy of Isshinryu Karate-Do- *Michael J. Dobyys*
- Ancient Okinawan Martial Arts Volume #1- *Patrick McCarthy*
- 20 Guiding Principles of Karate*- *Gichin Funikoshi*

*Highly recommended

Ten Steps To Goal Getting by Zig Ziglar



1. Make the commitment to reach your goal. "One person with a commitment is worth a hundred who only have an interest." Mary Crowley.
2. Commit yourself to detailed accountability. Record your progress toward your goals every night, and list the six most important things you need to do the next day. Daily discipline is the key to reaching your goals.
3. Build your life on a solid foundation of honesty, character, integrity, trust, love, and loyalty. This foundation will give you an honest shot at reaching any goal you have set properly.
4. Break your intermediate and long-range goals into increments.
5. Be prepared to change. You can't control the weather, inflation, interest rates, Wall Street, etc. Change your decision to move toward a goal carefully--but be willing to change your direction to get there as conditions and circumstances demand.
6. Share your "give-up" goals (i.e., give up smoking, being rude, procrastinating, being late, eating too much, etc.) with many people. Chances are excellent they're going to encourage you.
7. Become a team player. Remember: You can have everything in life you want if you will just help enough other people get what they want.
8. See the reaching. In your imagination see yourself receiving that diploma, getting that job or promotion, making that speech, moving into the home of your dreams, achieving that weight-loss goal, etc.
9. Each time you reach a goal your confidence will grow so that you can do bigger and better things. After accomplishing any goal, record it in your journal, Weekly Planner or Palm Pilot.
10. Remember, what you get by reaching your destination isn't nearly as important as what you become by reaching your goals--what you will become is the winner you were born to be!

SEISAN KATA

Yellow Belt
Curriculum
Sheet #3

- 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 RH (L hip)
Look behind over R shoulder
Step away LF
Cat stance
Catch RH (drop RH pelvic level)
Step forward T-stance RF
Deflect RH #10
Backfist RH
Straighten RH
Slide up LF, feet together
Lift L knee belt level, step back into cat stance.
Lean forward, Stomp down R heel
Step across LF into crane stance
Twist body
Kiai (spirited yell)
Kick RF
Catch RH on L shoulder
Step down RF forward (in Seisan stance)
#5 block RH then punch LH
Leave LH extended & Catch RH on L hip
Turn LF out 90% on heel
Arm lock

1. How many kiai in Seisan Kata? Two
2. Why is the thumb on top of the Isshinryu fist? Strengthens the wrist

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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