

Kenshinryu

流神劍

TRADITIONS FOR THE FUTURE

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Kancho's Corner -

Freedom

For many years now in the junior classes in our Dojo we've played a game called 'Stuck in the Mud'. In this particular game the teacher appoints a 'Tagger' whose job it is to tag as many people as possible. The rest of the students run around trying to avoid the tagger. Once tagged, you must remain standing with your legs apart and you can only be freed by another student sliding through your legs. Naturally the students try to avoid the tagger at all costs so as to not be caught. At intervals the teacher can introduce another tagger and another tagger until all the students are caught.



After playing as above for a while I like to introduce a rule change, stipulating that the aim of the activity is now to free other students at any cost even though you may be caught in the process. The children always respond to this idea with enthusiasm and the change in their intent always results in the most incredible shift. Where a group of 20 students would normally all be caught within a few minutes by two taggers, the majority will now remain free and even as I introduce more taggers, the majority of the players continued to remain free.

When I stop the game and ask for feedback the students invariably say that it's more fun the second way because they have a positive goal. It's less stressful because they aren't trying to hide from the taggers all the time. They also don't experience being caught as a negative any longer – it's a positive because it happens as a result of trying to help their friends. Finally even waiting to be saved is a positive experience because they know that their friends are committed to trying to save them at any cost.

With the variation above, the game goes from a simple one of fun and fitness to become a social experiment that

I believe provides an insight into the very nature of freedom. Over the past 20 years I have played this game with hundreds of diverse groups – elite athletes through to high flying corporates in different parts of the world... literally thousands of people, and always with the same result. We play the game first without instruction and the concept of self-preservation amongst the players prevails from the outset. Then when I suggest we change our focus to 'freeing others' the magic starts. The debriefing is always the same... people are in awe of the change both inside themselves and in the outcome of the game. Smiling ruefully and shaking their heads, the adults report the same things as the original group of children in our Dojo.

The game allows us to bypass the intellect and to approach freedom from an experiential perspective where our mind, body and spirit receive the learning at the same time. This is the power of the Budo experience - mind, body and spirit encouraged to learn as one.

One of the things I have gained from the experience of this game has been an appreciation of the subtle difference between 'freedom from' and 'freedom to'. It's occurred to me over time that many of us seek freedom **from** many things... The freedom not to do a lot of things we consider onerous. We may even avoid some of those things as strenuously as we would the taggers in the above game. It feels to me that this type of freedom has its roots in fear.

On the other hand, the 'freedom to' is aspirational. Our focus can be on the things we believe in and that we know make a difference. The freedom to live the life we choose is integrally woven in with the courage to do the things we may not want to do and to face the things we may prefer to avoid.

Finally, I have realised a very interesting thing. Freedom is something best appreciated when it is shared. It seems to me that the vast majority of people talk about freedom as a personal goal and not a collective experience. The game in fact shows us that to enjoy the collective experience of freedom we need to be capable of self-sacrifice.

To my mind, the more people who are free the better. Otherwise freedom could be a very lonely place.

Sensei David



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Deshi's Diary

Osu!

I hope you guys are going well with this weather! We recently had our Winter Gasshuku! Thank you to those who were involved and made the trip up for the 3 days of intensive training.



This was quickly followed by a trip down to the cold depths of Armidale where we barely survived. A big thank you to Sensei Tim, Sensei Steve and Sensei Josie for keeping the dojo up and running.



Recently Sensei shared a link to an ABC catalyst video about mindfulness meditation and its link to anti depression, calmness in everyday life, brain function etc.

It got me thinking about how we do this in our training possibly without thinking or knowing we do this. An example of this might be how we are always aware of those around us, who is next to us, who or what is behind us.

Our own example of this is "**Zanshin**".

If you wish to follow up on the ABC's article, head to episode 17 on <http://www.abc.net.au/catalyst/vodcast/>

Do not forget we have our 25th Anniversary on October the 15th! Keep your week open!

In last months newsletter we forgot mention one of our valued members in our list of start dates!

◆ Wayne Hibbert—14/09/2014

James



Check out our Facebook page at
www.facebook.com/kenshinryupalmwoods
 For some fabulous Kenshin memories!

Dojo Doctor

Cold & Flu - Tips for prevention

With the cold weather set in, it is time to talk about how to deal with winter colds and the flu. If you are in an environment where others are ill, wash your hands frequently, especially before eating.

Consume vitamin C rich foods such as oranges and broccoli and drink lemon juice in warm water each morning.

Ensure you get enough rest. Take time for yourself to relax each day. Just a few minutes of relaxed breathing does wonders.



Reduce sugar and sugar rich foods in your diet as these foods suppress your immunity.



Astragalus is the herb of choice for immune building. But you should **discontinue use should it you get a cold.** In this case a regular vitamin c and a multi supplement will help keep you above the sickness threshold.

Cold & Flu management:

Eat nutritious foods and drink plenty of fluids. Homemade soups with veggies, chicken, ginger and garlic. It is easy to digest, leaving more energy for your immune system to do its job. Ensure you are avoiding cold drinks, fatty foods and excessive dairy (increases mucus production).

Ginger Immune booster:

Juice of 1 lemon
 1 teaspoon of finely grated or chopped ginger
 A pinch of chili powder or chopped fresh chili.
 1-2 cloves of garlic.
 1-2 teaspoons of honey.

If feverish have a cup of the immune booster, rug up and sweet it out.

Herbs & nutrients for colds and flu:

Vitamin and Zinc in a powdered form at the first sign of cold for at least 48 hours.
 B Vitamins for general health & immunity.
 Echinacea and Elderberry to reduce the severity and duration of your cold. Elderberry is especially good for head colds. Andrographis & Cat's Claw greatly assist your immune function. For coughs try a herbal mixture containing Thyme.

Reduce your physical activity. Intense exercise and hard physical or mental work will just prolong your cold.

Jan Newton

Member's Corner



Recently, I attended a course surrounding the ideas of resilience and wellbeing within the schooling environment. Although interesting, what I focused on the most was the work of Carol Dweck surrounding Mindset. Mindsets are beliefs, beliefs about yourself and your most basic qualities.

Everyone in life will tend to fall into one of two states of mind - fixed or growth. People with a fixed mindset believe that their traits are just givens. They have a certain amount of intelligence and skills and nothing can change that.

“Think about your intelligence, talents, and personality. Are they just fixed or can you develop them?”

People with a growth mindset, see their qualities as things that can be molded through their dedication and effort.

Something that was asked of us within this course was to think about our intelligence, our skills, and our personality. Whether these qualities were simply fixed traits, carved in stone and that's it, or were they things you can cultivate throughout your life? While answering these questions I started thinking about martial arts and how it cultivates a growth in mindset.

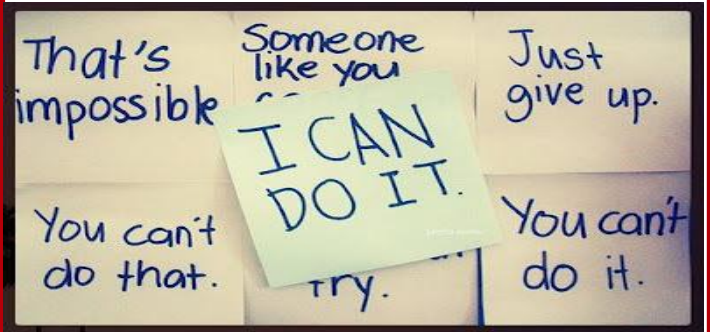
Martial arts will more often than not, cultivate a growth in mindset among its practitioners. Because ultimately, martial arts will always ask more of you, then you would of yourself in any given day. You will be asked to test your skills against others. You will be asked to hand over your body and safety to the ability of your partner and instructor. Day in and day out however, you will see the growth shine through at any dojo. This is because every student in there, is continually striving for more in their training and in themselves.



Member's Corner cont.

A *Forbes* piece on mindset included an anecdote about the martial artist Bruce Lee.

One of Bruce Lee's pupils ran three miles every day with him. One day, they were about to hit the three-mile mark when Bruce said, "Let's do two more." His pupil was tired and said, "I'll die if I run two more." Bruce's response? "Then do it"...



“Quit and you might as well be dead. If you always put limits on what you can do, physical or anything else, it'll spread over into the rest of your life. It'll spread into your work, into your morality, into your entire being.”

“There are no limits. There are plateaus, but you must not stay there; you must go beyond them. If it kills you, it kills you. A man must constantly exceed his level.”

Now something that I might ask of you is to look at your own training... have you stopped pushing yourself because you believe that's all you have left? Or do you believe that there is more to learn, more strength to gain, more wisdom to attain? As a result of this kind of thinking, people with a growth mindset are more likely to maximize their potential. They tend to learn from criticism rather than ignoring it, to overcome challenges rather than avoiding them, and to find inspiration in the success of others rather than feeling threatened.

This is where any journey begins...

Tamara Burriss

