

Ken shinryu 流神劍

TRADITIONS FOR THE FUTURE

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Kancho's Corner -

Here we are only six weeks out from our major Shinsa for the year. This time round we have four people grading for Shodan, two for first Kyu and an assortment of people for other levels. Thinking back over my experiences, I can't say I can really remember any of my gradings - even minutes afterwards I've struggled to recall details. Mind you I could always remember the mistakes. If we've trained well, we enter into a state the psychologists would call unconscious competence and the reason our mistakes stand out is because we fall out of that state. Self-consciousness returns with a clunk, disrupting the harmony of action & awareness. The one thing I will never forget though is the effort that went into the preparation for the grading... especially over those couple of months in the lead up to the big day. This is the time to commit everything we have to our training. Life has to take a back seat and we have to push ourselves and open ourselves to being pushed. You will be repaid tenfold for the effort.



In the fine tradition of Japanese koans, I'd like to share a couple of thoughts with you... but not attempt to tie them together or even to complete them. Instead I will just leave them for you to ponder.

I was sharing a little life story with a colleague recently and it occurred to me that some of you may also be interested in this metaphor. Generalising broadly, I said that if life was a river, 7 out of 10 people would spend varying amounts of their time drowning and for a variety of reasons. Some would be drowning for much of their life and never really understand why. Amongst those drowning there would be a percentage of people at different times who would be trying to save themselves by climbing all over the others. Then there would be those who would recognise that they were drowning, but would believe this was how life was meant to be. Still others would recognise that they were drowning but be content to wait for some external intervention to save them. From the original 10 people, two would be

constantly motivated to try to save all the ones who are drowning, so they'd spend much of their time moving from one to another of those drowning trying to hold them up. As a result they would also spend a lot of their time drowning. This leaves only one person from the original ten. What might this person do? What do you think? I believe the most effective use of that person's time would be to....

Float



The other little idea rolling through my mind this past month concerns this...

Should we do the things that give us pleasure? Or do a mixture of things that give us pleasure and those that do not? ... Or can we instead seek to find pleasure in the things we do?



I heard it argued recently that we regularly experience sadness in our lives... when we lose someone precious for example... and this deep sadness precludes all pleasure. At the time I wondered to myself whether this is true,

... or is this again a tendency to the dualistic thinking of 'either / or'.

I reflected that if I lost someone precious this must automatically presume that I'd also had this precious person in my life... and therein lay the pleasure.

Sensei David



Deshi's Diary

Osu!

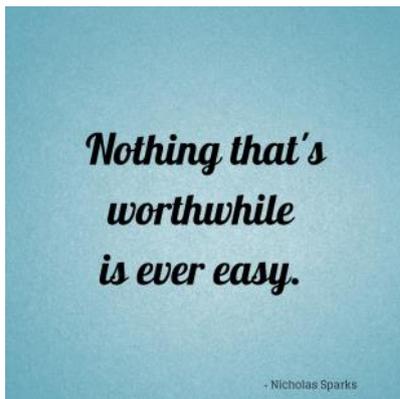
Hope you are all going well...

Osu, is a good answer.....but what is Osu???

I'm sure we're all familiar with the word. We use it when we enter the dojo, when we start class, when Sensei shows us a technique, when we say bye, and especially when Sensei tells us something and we don't know what he has necessary said...

In Japan the word 'Osu' is usually only used by sports teams of High Schools or Universities and most Karate styles. In some companies 'Osu' is used as a lazy 'Ohayo gozaimasu' (good morning).

In Chinese the word 'Osu' literally can be translated as 'push'. 'Osu' is written with two characters "OSU" being the first, the second one being "NIN" (SHINOBU - dictionary definition) which means to endure, persevere, put up with. when written together you get: *to push ourselves, to endure any hardship, in training or in our daily lives.*



Now I don't mean to say to stop using Osu as a means of hi and bye, but just take the word on board and don't let it go lightly...

Don't forget that this year is our 25th year of being a full time dojo, that's 1991 to 2016. In the lead up for this there are a few celebrations including a Shodan grading. Keep up the good work and just keep on training.



James



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

Dojo Doctor

Commitment

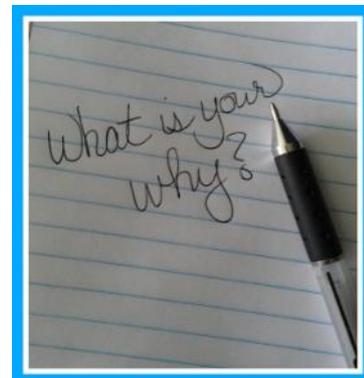
The old story says that in order to prepare bacon and eggs the pig is committed and the chicken is interested. One question I ask is why humans on average are so uncommitted to their own physical and emotional wellbeing. It's not from a lack of knowledge, we are surrounded by good health information, it's rarely from a lack of understanding, for the most part good health isn't rocket science, and it's a no brainer to know that most takeaway and processed food isn't good for you.



So what does that leave us with? Are we just a self destructive species? Are we inherently stupid or weak? After over 30 years of being a health practitioner I've rightly or wrongly concluded that how we treat ourselves the bulk of the time, knowing that occasional breakouts are OK, is about two things:

1. A reason why. A clear why can lead us to making good choices, and finding it easier to stick to them. Reminding ourselves regularly of our why will make it easier.
2. Self respect. A clear belief that we are deserving and worthy of being happy and healthy.

What is your powerful 'why', in difficult times it may seem hard to find, but it will be there, you may just need to look a little harder.



Jan Newton

Teacher Tam

The "Roll" of Uke

Something that I was asked recently by a co-worker was whether I enjoyed the fact that martial arts was a solo sport. This was not something I had ever really thought about in regards to martial arts. Yes, I understood that I continually work on my own technique, but I've found that martial arts is never wholly focused on the individual. You work consistently with your instructor and a partner – Uke - blending both student's ability, in an attempt to practise defence in a safe environment.



In Japanese Martial Arts, the **Uke** is the person who "receives" a technique. Specifically in Aikido the Uke initiates an attack against their partner, who then defends. The action of *uke* is called "taking *ukemi*." Translated this literally this means "receiving body". It is the art of knowing how to respond appropriately to a technique and often incorporates skills to allow one to do so safely.

Being an uke or training partner in the martial arts involves a level of trust. We have to trust that our partners are there to help us learn, not to boost their own egos. If the training partner changes the rhythm with the purpose of tripping up their partner, they bring a negative atmosphere to the partnership. Even if it's not intentional, making the rhythm more challenging than your partner is ready for can also cause them harm. That's not to say students should only give attacks that they know their partner will succeed in responding to. You have to push them a little past their comfort zone so they can meet the challenge, and grow further in this art.



Teacher Tam cont.

When I answered my colleague, I told them that personally, Martial Arts is anything but an individual sport. The building of trust and understanding of your partner's limits and boundaries can take a considerable amount of time to figure out. In fact, I consider it to be the idealised way that we as humans should respond to the people in our lives.

Consider this, how often will you in your friendships, relationships and partnerships with co-workers, put the time and effort into improving the structure? How about really understanding the ebb and flow of emotions with each person that you come into contact with? Are you asking for constructive criticism? Are you thinking about strategies that could improve your reactions? This is something that I hope everyone will think about the next time you step onto the mat or the next time you greet someone important in your life... You might find the end result far outweighs the challenge.



Tamara Burriss

SHINSA DATE

Friday 9 September—6:00pm

