

Pathways

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The Four D's of Success.

**Eighty percent of success
is just showing up
Woody Allen**

I was doing a fitness test with my PE class at the beginning of the semester (actually, just last week, as I write this article). As I lapped one of the students doing the one-mile walk I was asked how I could walk so fast with such short legs. I replied in an off-hand sort of way that it came down to the four D's: Desire, Determination, Dedication and Discipline. I am sure that I got this idea from all the personal development tapes that I listen to as I drive along in my car, but as I talked to the student (literally in passing) I realized that this had become part of my internal code of living. If you want to achieve anything, you must have desire. If you don't desire something, you will not be willing to sacrifice your resources of time, energy and money to achieve it or develop the discipline to keep going. Desire, however, only gets us started. It may help to sustain us, but on its own it is not enough to keep us going towards our goals. I see lots of people who tell me that they desire something, but they never arrive at their supposed

goal. Something was missing. Next there has to be determination, but as I said a couple of months ago, determination has a stubborn, brittle quality about it. Determination is a trait that provides a bulwark in times of difficulty; without it, we quit. Determination, however, must be tempered by dedication. Dedication is a willingness to change course, to overcome obstacles and pay the price of success up front, with no visible assurance that we will actually get the prize at the end. There must be a dedication to self, a dedication to the process and a dedication to the goal. Without it, determination will fail and desire will lose its potency to stimulate action. Lastly, these three must be accompanied by discipline. In this sense, discipline is the ground rock of indomitable spirit. It is the quality that gives suppleness to determination, gives meaning to dedication and keeps the fires of desire burning. Discipline is not about blind sacrifice, it is about a willful commitment. I realized that these four D's

have been my constant companions through all the challenges, successes and failures of my life. Whether I acknowledged their presence or not, they were at work within me, working their magic and guiding my efforts. From these four D's has grown a knowledge that I can succeed at any task that I set for myself provided that I am willing to pay the price. Since I am still a work in progress I am still developing the quality of indomitable spirit. I say that I am still developing the quality because there are time of self doubt. But when those times come I can look at the four D's and know that the best is still ahead of me. I can renew my efforts and I can face the demons of self doubt for the charlatans that they really are. I am either moving forward in my life or sliding backwards; there is no staying stationary. It is the lure of my comfort zone that triggers my self doubt. It is the four D's that will keep me pushing forward, seeking my greatest potential.

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Actions and Words

I don't often speak about the real world aspects of personal security in this newsletter, but in the past two days, I have cause to consider the beneficial and positive effects of the training that we offer.

Last night, one of my black belts came up to me to tell me how much his training had changed his responses to stressful situations over time. He recounted an incident that occurred in his job in which an irate male was literally inches from his face shouting and preparing to launch a strike. By remaining calm and not being provoked, the black belt was able to defuse the situation without incident.

Today, one of my previous students stopped me as I was walking across campus. She had just returned from a semester in the big city where she was accosted by a man who held a knife to her throat. In this instance she instinctively blocked the knife and took the man down to the ground, surprising both herself and the attacker. The young lady told me that she suddenly saw that what she had learned in my class was of real everyday value, because the world is not always as nice as small-town Mississippi.

I was surprised by both these stories coming so closely together

and coming from such extreme opposite ends of my student population.

In the first case I was talking with a black belt who has been with me for many years, and in the second instance I was talking to a young lady who had one semester of training.

In one instance implied physical aggression was met with composure, self control and discipline. In the other instance a direct, potentially lethal attack with a bladed weapon was met with an immediate and appropriate disarming technique, followed by verbal commands and police intervention.

I have said earlier this year, that I never know where the ripples of our training extend. Events like this bring home to me the full force of the martial aspect of martial arts training.

I can talk all I want about the mental benefits of improved self-image, the physical benefits of improved fitness, the societal benefits of improved leadership skills, but where the rubber really meets the tarmac is whether or not what we teach has real application in a situation of personal aggression.

Personal safety relates as much to avoidance (first situation) as it does to measured and reasonable

response (second situation) to threat.

When a man holds a knife to your throat with criminal intent you are facing a very real threat to your life. How you react in those few seconds can be life changing. Each of us, if ever placed in such a situation must make that determination for ourselves. It is my hope that the mental and physical skills that we aim to instill in our lessons as well as spiritual strength will guide you to the successful resolution of the incident.

When we learn martial arts, even if we say we want to learn self defense, we have no idea how we will react when that fateful moment arrives. For most of us, the moment may never arrive. For some of us it may be a moment that changes us forever. It is our hope as instructors that we will teach you to avoid situations of conflict and confrontation. It is, however, an unfortunate fact of life that there are predators in society and they are looking for opportunities.

Our goal is to teach real self defense skills, for sure. But more than that we need to instill an understanding of when, where, why and how to use those skills to ensure our own personal safety or the safety of those around us.

We can do anything we want to do, if we stick
to it long enough

Helen Keller

So why don't we set goals?

I have often wondered why some of my students have such a hard time filling out their rank forms when they get to the last page that asks them to list five life goals.

It seems, upon reflection, that there are a multitude of reasons, but perhaps we can distill a few of them out.

Firstly we are comfortable where we are. Goal setting involves stepping outside of our comfort zones and that's entering uncharted territory. We are much better off where we are, comfortable in the prisons of our own making.

Secondly, there is the fear of success. What would I do if I actually succeeded at reaching my goal?

Thirdly there is the fear of failure. No-one wants to look like a fool, falling flat on his or her face. But success cannot be achieved without risk of failure and oftentimes cannot be attained without several failures along the way.

Fourthly, we never learned how to set goals. We grew up in families where goals were not discussed, promoted or encouraged, so we never really learned how to set them or recognize them.

Fifthly, we don't believe that we deserve success. We simply do not see ourselves as worthy of success. This is a crippling ailment that robs us of our true potential and yet so many of us suffer from it. Some of us carry guilt for things we have or have not done, some of us carry shame for the things in our past. Most of us carry both guilt and shame. In any case, they rob us of our birthright.

Next, we are dragging around so much past baggage with us that it is difficult to see any kind of future without the baggage attached. It's not that we feel comfortable with the baggage, it's more that we haven't figured out how to let it go, cut it adrift and learn how to move ahead without it.

Next there is the whole concept of resting inertia. It takes more energy to get something moving than it does to keep it in motion. Newton told us this. He was right. Our comfort zone is controlled by resting inertia. We have to generate a large force in order to get knocked out of our comfort zones and move us in a new direction.

Another reason we don't set goals is that we have done it in the past and we set such unrealistically huge goals that we gave up shortly after starting. A six year old who wants to be a fireman has no idea what it takes to get there. This may be a facile example, but as adults we sometimes do the same thing. If we set manageable goals to begin with that are visible to us, and yet just out of reach, we are much more likely to attain the goals. I see way too many students set black belt as a goal (however noble that might be) only to fail because when they begin, the goal is so far from what they know they have no idea how to achieve the goal or what it will take to get there. It is much better to set a goal of an intermediate rank and set black belt as a ultimate objective.

Misery loves company. Here is a really insidious reason for not setting

goals. So few people ever really set life goals for all aspects of their lives AND live by them. Those people who set goals are in a minority. As I have said before, the extra mile is always unpopulated. I can complain and commiserate with my co-workers and friends about my job, my marriage, my kids, my finances, my home, the planet. Since most of us believe that we are overworked and underpaid, this is the status quo for life. Misery loves company. This is as it should be, because clearly most of us are living lives of quiet desperation. What's the point in setting goals?

The last reason that we don't set goals is that we have done so in the past, but were ridiculed or put down by those around us, who, with the very best of intentions told us that we could not achieve our dreams. I have spoken with many International and/or Olympic Judo players who have told me that they were told that they couldn't win or would never amount to much. These were people who could rise above the expectations and words of others to achieve their own personal goals. How many countless others give up because they believe it when they are told "You can't do that, you are too old, young, slow, small, short, tall, thin, fat, stupid etc etc"?

It is a willful act to set challenging, attainable, measurable goals, but I believe that each of us is capable of doing exactly that and reaching higher than we ever thought possible when we set out on the road.

Braving obstacles and hardships is nobler than
retreat to tranquility

Kahlil Gibran

Calendar of Events:

- ◆ Swamp Classic Judo Tournament. Lafayette, LA, April 3rd, 2004
- ◆ Peachtree Open Judo tournament. Peachtree City, GA, April 17th, 2004
- ◆ Project Action Break-A-Thon, SMAA, May 15th, 2004
- ◆ Camp Catawba, Charlotte, N.C., June 16th–20th, 2004
- ◆ USJA Junior NtIs, and Coaching Symposium, Chicago, IL, July 10th-12th, 2004
- ◆ Akayama Jujitsu Camp, Biloxi, MS. July 17th, 2004 Tentative
- ◆ USJI Junior Olympics, Ft Lauderdale, FL, July 23-24th, 2004
- ◆ Gentle Wind Judo Tournament, Baton Rouge, LA, September 25th, 2004

Habits of a martial artist

Recently I was asked how it is that I get so much done in a single day, or how I keep the pace going in my life. I answered the question with my standard thoughts about time and resource management, but afterwards, I wondered if I had not really given the right answer. Perhaps the first article in this newsletter gave me a clue to how I should have answered my student. I am reminded of Steven Covey's book: "The seven habits of highly successful people" and we see any number of seven habits sorts of programs these days.

I believe that effective martial arts doesn't just happen in the dojo; it happens in every aspect of a person's life. To that end there are some key ingredients that cannot be ignored:

1. Exercise: Daily if at all possible. Certainly work up a sweat for at least half an hour three times a week doing martial arts. Continue to train and improve your skills. You are not just saving your body, you are refining your mind and spirit.
2. Diet: Eat well, eat small meals often, eat variety. Eat close to nature. Avoid junk. Avoid big meals. Never eat to capacity. Avoid eating before you go to bed. Keep the machinery of your body in top working condition by giving it the right fuels.
3. Set goals and stay the course. Know what you want to

achieve. Break the goals into short term plans. Work the plans, compare where you are to where you want to be and readjust the course. Keep on target, keep going.

4. Be positive in thought, word and deed. Nothing can be as internally corrosive as negative self speak. Nothing comes back to haunt you like speaking negatively of others.
5. Meditate. I know that for some of you, the thought of mediation is a difficult thing to accept, but it is an indispensable part of my tool kit. Meditation is quiet time to reflect, to let go, to bring yourself back to your center, to ground your being and to focus. Meditation is calming and a source of spiritual renewal. It charges the batteries of life. It brings us connection.
6. Know your value set and never compromise it. Not only do you need to know your values, you need to know the order in which you prioritize your values.
7. For me the hardest of the ingredients is to never criticize, condemn or complain. When I was younger I never really thought it was that important, but as I get older I realize that every time I complain I undermine my own will. When I criticize and condemn, I undermine others.

Well, gosh darn it...I came up with seven habits of highly effective martial artists. Well, they are my seven habits that I keep in my tool box. Perhaps you have others; the key is to know what they are and to practice them daily.

***Taekwondo Black belt rank test
March 29th at 5:30 p.m.***

***Judo Black belt rank test
April 1st at 5:30 p.m.***

Don't miss it!

***We have a Project Action
Foundation Scholarship open for a
qualified At-Risk child.***

***If you are interested in knowing
more call Miss Becky at 323 5522***