

Pathways

A SOMETIMES MONTHLY NEWSLETTER PRODUCED BY CHRIS DEWEY MARTIAL ARTS, INC.

VOLUME 14, ISSUE 5

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2010



CONTENTS

Tenacity	1
Should you read this?	2
About nutrition.....	3
Unattached and involved	4

**“No man is free,
who is not master
of himself”**

Epictetus

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Tenacity

Tenacity is about clinging to an idea, a project, a hope, or an enterprise, when all seems hopeless. Tenacity is about what others might see at being reckless or taking too great a risk. Tenacity tempers and forges the spirit.

Our business organism is almost fifteen years old...it has tenacity. More to the point, the people who carry its life and who breathe into it their energy allow it to be tenacious.

Our dojo is not simply a business, it is ecological, it is anabolic and is about growth. It has a life of its own and we are merely its energy source at the moment. As I look back over fifteen years, I can see the faces that have come and gone, the faces that have grown with us and stayed with us. I can see the successes, the times when we almost fell over, the times when we did...but we have never quit. We keep going and we will keep going, because the dojo is not about one person or even about martial arts...it is about giving opportunities for growth to those who want them.

The dojo has not always been an easy place to be for some of us. Sometimes it has been low on energy, sometimes the energy has been sluggish, but always, in the undercurrent is an idea of what we could be.

What keeps that undercurrent moving, despite the surface waves of economic downturn, strategic error, or tactical mis-steps is tenacity.

Tenacity is our vision of the future, a vision of who we could be. When we enter the dojo as a white belt, we enter full of hope and resolution. What keeps us there, year after year is tenacity.

Other people will come and go, but we stay. We give our energy to the process and we share the energy of the dojo, drawing and giving as the need arises. We have a vision of who we could be. We have a vision of who those around us might be and we want to share in that synergy of purpose.

Sometimes I take our mission statement for granted: “Committed to Personal Growth.” And that is unwise of me. I was reminded by our recent activities in chicken-raising of an old joke, that in a meal of bacon and eggs, the chicken is involved, but the pig is completely committed. It seems to me that our chickens are completely ambivalent to this whole egg-production process, unless one of the hens has gone broody, but then she’s completely ambivalent if all her chicks die. It was just something I noticed. I didn’t give this ‘involved but not committed thing’ much thought though until I read the exact joke in a book about energy and leadership by Bruce Schneider.

Being committed is about tenacity. It is about seeing through the slumps, the heights, the storms, the triumphs...all of it, and keeping on with that vision planted firmly in mind. Sometimes we don’t see the vision so clearly, but it is still there, buried in the subconscious. Alongside the vision though, is a sense of faith in self...not self as we currently are, but self as we might be, as we have the potential to be.

The dojo is, therefore, just a metaphor. Tenacity is about you. And who you might be. ☺

Should you read this?

So our family was sitting down to a meal the other day and we got into a conversation with our boy about 'Should.' I made the comment to him that it is unwise to should all over yourself. I got that line from John Graden, one of my inspirations in the early days of the business.

Over the years I have decided that there are some truly poisonous self-dialogue terms that can kill us outright or which can undermine us so thoroughly that we lose the ability to take action (the ability to take action is another trait of tenacity).

So what are these life-sapping, energy-sucking, action-killing words?

How about an example of a conversation that took place in my office:

"I know I should have gotten here on time, I would have been here, if only I hadn't got caught in traffic. I ought to have left sooner, I set my alarm, but I just slept through it, because I was working all night and was just too tired to get up. I tried. I really did. I just can't seem to make it on time....would you please give me credit for trying. See? I got the work done...it's just late. That's not a big deal is it? Why does this always happen to me? I really need this grade, I have to get my GPA up or I'll be dismissed."

So let's look at the words that kill:

I should

I would/could....if only

I ought to have

I have to

I must

I'll try

I can't

Yes, but

We tend to use them in chorus, rather than singly. "I'll try, but I can't promise." Sound familiar? How about this one: "I should have done better, I must try harder."

These are the words of willpower and lack the foundation of self-belief. They are also the words that we use to volunteer ourselves into victimhood. They are also the words that we use to beat ourselves up, year after year...trust me I know, I **should** have seen it years ago....Yes, that was deliberate.

The point is that these words are insidious. They creep in and grow like kudzu! They can choke out all positive thoughts. Unfortunately, they are also a part of our culture...we are encouraged to give it a good try. We are told it is O.K. to fail, so long as we tried. That is entirely the wrong message. The correct message is that it is O.K. to fail, so long as you eventually succeed, because then you didn't fail, you continually discovered ways that got you closer to success. The first comment (it's O.K. to fail so long as you tried), is a dead end street. The second comment (fail your way to success) is about a journey towards growth and improvement.

You need Thought Police to stop negative sorts of self-dialogue in their tracks. Watch yourself for a day at first, then a whole week...you'll be amazed at the number of times you say should/could/ought/try/can't/but.

My big one is 'yes, but'...I am too quick to find the problems, I'm not so quick at finding the opportunities, but I am getting better at it...Not through trying though...through watching myself, monitoring myself and replacing 'yeah, but...' with and 'here's is the opportunity in that...'

So here's the tricky bit. It is easy for us to say don't do this or that....but the brain only deals in positives. So when you say don't do something, the brain sees you doing it...not not doing it! So, as an example: don't think about a purple elephant...see? Got it? It is necessary to catch yourself in the act of using one of the killer phrases and then REPLACE it with its positive counterpart.

The positive self-dialogue deals with things like:

I can

I do

I see opportunity here

I am capable.

Most of the negative self-speak lines can be replaced by one or more of these lines....**try it**...you'll see....

Yes, that was deliberate too. I want you to see how easy it is to fall into the trap and not even see it. Do it! You'll see a difference, I guarantee it. Allow yourself no wiggle room for excuses....hold yourself accountable for your self-dialogue and responsible for the results that they generate. It will require effort and tenacity...and there is an opportunity here for you. Enjoy it. ☺

"In every generation there has to be some fool who will speak the truth as he sees it"

Boris Posternak

A word about nutrition

O.K., so I lied...it'll be more than one word!

We have spoken about nutrition several times in the newsletter and I continually encourage people to eat as close to nature as possible.

As our family has worked with finding answers to our son's dietary challenges, I have discovered an opportunity.

I like to think that I eat pretty well. I avoid fast food, I avoid high fructose corn syrup, the three white deaths (refined white sugar, salt and refined white flour), and our family eats quite close to nature.

During the summer, however, I do a bit more traveling and find myself at the mercy of airports, gas stations and restaurants more than I do when I am at home. Recently, I have noticed that when I eat processed foods I lose energy and my mind is not as sharp.

When I travel, I find myself picking up my wife's habit of reading every label of everything she buys at the grocery store, (so that we can meet our son's dietary requirements). The result of my wife's diligence and effort is that we've gone organic...almost completely organic! Additives, colorings and preservatives are not part of our diet at the house any more...and I feel a lot healthier for it. Yes, it's more expensive, but the food lasts longer in the fridge...odd that isn't it?...you'd think that 'preservatives' would do that job for you. O.K. if it's a Twinky bar or a Vienna sausage you might be right. In the case of the Twinky bar I am re-

mindful of the movie Wall-E, and in the case of the Vienna sausage I am reminded of the still-edible sausage from 1924 found in a 1980's drill core from the Staten Island Landfill.

Anyway, back to the results of my wife's activities at home. We eat a lot of fresh food, grow our own vegetables, supposedly have chickens lay eggs for us (when they are a mood to do so), and we shop around the edges of the supermarket.

The changes are hardly noticeable because they are small at first, but when I travel and eat out at restaurants several times a week, I can really feel a difference. My energy is lower, I am more sluggish and my mind is not as quick. When I get home, I'll eat grapefruits to help clean out the system again, but it takes months to rid your body of the preservatives, additives and other stuff that gets put in our food.

The point to all of this is that you are what you eat. How can you expect your mind to function like a Swiss watch if it's being poisoned by the very foods we eat so that it behaves more like a Swiss cheese! Recent research is showing that long-term mental failure can be associated with diet, not just genetics and environment.

Think about it. You are not separate from your environment and your internal environment is only a mirror of the external environment. If you pour in garbage, how can you expect a high-energy system to be the result?

It seems to me that the nutrition and health industry plies us with a lot of

hype about what to eat and how to eat it, but in reality, if you distill it all down to its basics, good eating is about fueling a high-performance sports car, run by one of the most sophisticated computer systems in the world. The system will only run at peak performance when it is given the correct metabolic fuels and the appropriate nutrients...in appropriate amounts at appropriate times.

If you can go through the withdrawal symptoms of weaning yourself from processed foods, your body will tell you what it needs and when it needs it. It is all a matter of being tuned to the body frequency so that you are sensitive to fluctuations in your internal energy levels, energy output and mental acuity.

We are, after all, nothing more than a continually regenerating biochemical cocktail. It behooves us, therefore, to make sure that we are regenerating ourselves with the best possible resources available...and it's only a hunch, but my guess is that a diet of pizza and beer or burgers and fries is not what nature intended for this machine we call the human body.

It's your call, but I would challenge you to start reading what is in the packaged and processed foods you eat. If you don't know what it is and what it does, find out or don't eat it. Next I would challenge you to eat more fresh fruits, fresh vegetables, whole grains, fish and lean meats. You might even find that you actually enjoy eating again as you acquire a taste for freshness. ☺

"No mistakes, no experience; no experience, no wisdom"

Stanley Goldstein

Unattached and Involved

This one is tricky. At first glance you might think that the two words in the title are mutually opposed to each other. So let me see if I can take a stab at explaining what's in my mind here.

Unattached is exactly that. Take the perspective of an observer. If you are attached to an outcome you are affected by an outcome. If you are unattached to an outcome, you are less susceptible to any positive or negative roller-coaster that might be associated with the outcome. You are also more likely to see any potential opportunities that may devolve for any given outcome.

Involved is also, exactly that. You are totally committed, you are present in the moment and you focus all your energy on one thing at a time. If you are totally committed you will commit 100% effort to an enterprise; there is no room for excuses or dissipation of effort.

So what about putting the two things together. You are completely committed to an event and work solidly on a project for several months. The result that you expect is not forthcoming and you start to whine and complain about the inequity in the system and how unfair everything is. On the other hand you also miss a potential opportunity because you

are focused on the 'negative' aspects of the outcome.

I like to think that in all situations there are opportunities. I am also acutely aware that I often miss opportunities because I am blinded by my own attachment to a particular outcome. I also know, if I am honest, that I am rarely fully present in what I do. There are times when I am completely present...like when I have a flow experience in my teaching world, or sometimes when I write the newsletter, or when I am in nature and allow the photography to happen. More often than not, I am 'busy', I'm in a rush and I am distracted by the many things that I 'have' to get done to meet my goals. I lack grace.

I can experience grace, however, in so far as I am willing to be completely involved in what I do, one moment at a time and remain unattached to the outcome. When Judo happens and I perform a move with effortless grace...I am neither attached to the outcome, nor am I uninvolved. Such moments, though rare, are things of profound beauty and when I AM unattached, I can appreciate them for their beauty, and not get trapped by the ego. It is worth years of training just to experience these moments for what they are.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- ◆ SMAA JUDO TOURNAMENT, SEPTEMBER, 18TH 2010
- ◆ JUDO TOURNAMENT, MELTON'S MARTIAL ARTS, JACKSON, MS, NOVEMBER 6TH, 2010
- ◆ SMAA TKD TOURNAMENT, NOVEMBER, 13TH 2010

IN THE FALL WE WILL ALSO BE HOSTING OUR FIRST **BIG** BLACK BELT RANK TEST SINCE WE'VE BEEN IN THE NEW DOJO....SO LEARN YOUR STUFF AND GET READY. ALL ELIGIBLE RANKS WILL BE EXAMINED...NOT JUST THE BLACK BELTS.

CHECK OUT THE CALENDAR OF EVENTS ON THE WEBSITE AT:

SMAA@STARKVILLEMARTIALARTS.COM

"The life of everyman is a diary in which he means to write one story, and writes another; and his humblest hour is when he compares the volume as it is with what he vowed to make of it."

James Barrie



Tenacity is the ability to cling to something when others would give up and quit.
Tenacity is about your vision of the future and your faith in your higher self.
Tenacity is a sapling growing on a rock by a waterfall!

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