

# Pathways

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## CONTENTS

Deep Respect .....	1
Joy .....	2
Stagnation and Core Skills.....	3
You are what you eat .....	4

***“The ultimate triumph of mind over matter [is] the victory of the spirit over the shadows lurking in the world”***

**—Martin Browning**

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## Deep Respect

I was reading something recently...I don't even remember what, and was hit by the words "Deep Respect". They seemed to stand out in bold letters on the page and reduce the rest of the article to inconsequence.

In the martial arts we place high emphasis on respect. We make a big deal about taking care of our training partners, developing self-respect and respecting the skills that we learn. So why should 'deep respect' make such an impact?

I think it was the addition of the word *deep*. Deep, profound, going further into something than the norm. In this context, deep implied to me a quality of purity that I had not considered. Deep respect suggests that we do nothing that would compromise the integrity of respect for self or others. That's a pretty tall order. After all it seems that we compromise our self respect and our respect of others, and our respect for our planet at every turn for the sake of convenience. I certainly cannot say that I cultivate or live a life of deep respect as often as I should.

But deep self respect, which goes beyond the norm is a quality to which we can all aspire. When I look at the mistakes that I have made in my life and the paths that I took that led nowhere, I can see that respect for self was often lacking. A lack of self respect...O.K., *deep* self respect is an act of selling ourselves short, an act of devaluation.

One of my mentors in the world of Judo is a man who shows uncommon levels of quiet respect to everyone around him. He has a deep knowledge

of his art and a great willingness to share with those who have an open mind, but what attracts me to him as a mentor is his level of respect for himself and for others. Years ago we were talking at a week long camp and we were discussing this very issue, at which point he said that he had pretty much flown straight since he was a young man. Here was a man who could look back on his life without regret, knowing that he had taken the high road at every turn. As our discussion developed I came to realize that it was his self respect that prevented him from doing anything other than taking the high road. He set the bar high for himself and kept his own counsel.

When I look back on my life in the decades to come, it is my hope that I will have cultivated similar levels of respect for self and others. Some of us take longer to learn the lessons of life than others. That's O.K.. What's important is that we make the effort to learn the lessons.

I am drawn to the martial path over and over again because it is tolerant. The path is patient in its teachings and is continually giving of its wisdom. More often than I should, I fall over and I make mistakes.

Judo has taught me to stand back up again and it has taught me to be tolerant of those who fall over around me. There, but for the grace of God.... It is an act of respect that causes us to reach out the hand to help another person stand back on his or her feet. How deep can that respect go? ☺

## Joy

When we are confronted by challenges in life we always have two choices: We can either greet the events of life with joy or sadness.

I guess at this point in my life, I would tell you that we have been pre-conditioned to greet some circumstances of life with joy and some with sadness, but I sometimes wonder if we have missed something here.

If you read the autobiographies of some of the great people in history or the stories of some of the leaders in business, you will find that in many instances the failures that they encountered, the setbacks they received and the suffering that they endured were the foundation blocks of their eventual success.

A buoyant spirit finds negotiating the inevitable ups and downs of life much easier than one that sinks with the setbacks and is only happy when things are going right. It is much easier to see the opportunity that hides within every problem that we face, when we meet those problems and setbacks with optimism and joy.

To my mind, there are three things that go hand in hand here: Optimism, joy and thankfulness. Optimism is bred out of hope. We are optimistic when we see that the current situation,

no matter how bleak it might appear will end and a new day will dawn. Optimism also looks for the lesson to be learned, the opportunity to be taken and the benefit to be gained from any challenge that we face in life.

Thankfulness brings with it a sense of gratitude for all things with equal ardor: We are not more grateful when things are going well in our lives. We are equally grateful in adversity because we know that we can learn and grow in times of stress, uncertainty and calamity. Certainly, some of my greatest challenges in life have brought with them the seeds of my greatest lessons. Some of my biggest failures and mistakes have led to some of my most significant growth experiences.

Joy then, is the essence of buoyancy that keeps us afloat in the storms of life. It is that irrepressible cork that keeps pushing us up into the light and stops us from sinking into the depths. Some of the people whom I admire most in my life are those wondrous souls who ride out every challenge they face, every wave that hits them with a deep sense of certainty, which in itself allows them to be quietly joyful, consistently optimistic and continually thankful. These people are

beacons in my life and remind me how far I have yet to travel. Think about those people in your own life who spread their joy wherever they go. Think about how much light they bring into your world and the world around them. It seems to me that these people spread their joy and light without condition, it is an innate part of who they are. It is as unavoidable to them as is breathing. Such people lift us when we are sad and give us hope when we doubt ourselves. We give thanks for their presence in our lives and if we are truly honest....we want to be more like them.

What is innate in some, I believe can be learned by others. When we are faced with challenges we can learn to do three simple things:

1. Look for the opportunity
2. Give thanks
3. Smile at adversity.

If we do these things on a consistent basis, joy will spread itself through our hearts and fill our lives. Of course, it's much easier to say it than to do it...but think what an effect it would have on the family, the workplace and even the society in which we live! ☺

“Positive thinking is a habit, like any other; we can practice it every day until it becomes second nature to us — and along the way, transforms us”

Washington Crowley

## Stagnation and Core Skills

We all go through times of stagnation. We all know times when the juice just doesn't flow any more. It happens in every life and can affect every circumstance of our lives: It can happen at school, in our relationships, our careers, our hobbies and our creative activities.

At these moments we have one of two choices: Walk away or find the source of joy again. On the one hand, we can choose to see times of stagnation as moments of re-evaluation and re-commitment, ultimately leading to times of renewal and rejuvenation. Conversely, we can see these moments as insurmountable challenges from which we will ultimately walk away. Either answer could be the right one depending upon the circumstances.

There is a dynamic tension between making a new commitment to some activity for which we do not feel the enthusiasm we once knew and creating the opportunity for new experiences by letting stagnant activities go from our lives. I am fond of Frank Herbert's line in *Dune*: "Without new experiences, something within us sleeps, and seldom awakens." When we stagnate in our relationships, our careers or our activities, we may be asleep and losing contact with the essence of our enthusiasm...the newness has worn off or repetition has led to boredom. The reasons for stagnation can be manifold.

What we choose to do at these times says a lot about who we are. There are many times in my life when

things that were once exciting have lost their attraction. Some of those things I have let go, some of them I have clung to and renewed my commitment. In almost every case where I have renewed my commitment to something, I have had to go back to the basics, the roots of the activity or the relationship to find out why I was involved in the first place and to find new lessons that I had overlooked.

As a martial artist who started training in 1968, you can be fairly certain that there have been times when my fires of passion have burned a little low. There have been times when the desire was simply not there and the will to continue training was not as great as the desire to do something else. But in all that time, I have never been able to walk away. This is my journey and there is much that I still have to learn. In the roots of what I learn are lessons that I have only just begun to learn and other lessons that I have not yet even begun to see. When I get stagnant in my martial arts, I am frequently reminded of the line "At higher states of awareness, everything we previously held to be true, is false." So often, on my journey I have discovered that some strongly held belief about what I do turns out to be a stumbling block to my continued growth.

I think that in part this goes to the growth of vision. Using martial arts training as my example, we each begin with some sort of vision about what we think being a martial artist will be. At some point we see that the

vision is actually limiting our growth and then we either adapt our vision or it hold us back and lead to stagnation.

At the end of a minor personal slump I was speaking to one of my students about the core skills of Judo. Basically, all of Judo can be summed up in two core skills: 1. Learning to push and yield at the right moment effectively and efficiently and 2. Learning to fall safely and get up again. This is pretty profound stuff because these are also the core skills of communication, business success and relationship building.

So for me the crystal of Judo had just shown me a new facet. By watching my students I had reduced everything I have learned in more than thirty-five years of training to these two core skills. I found the whole thing highly amusing. Thirty-five years of training...only to see that it is all about pushing and falling, pushing and falling. But in that moment a new light went on in my mind and my heart and I made a new commitment to myself, to the process.

Whenever we have the opportunity to see things that we have done for decades through the eyes of a child, we have the opportunity to see something new.

So this is my advice: During times of stagnation look for new lessons in old places. See with eyes that have never looked and expect to be surprised by the results.

In the words of Frank Herbert: "The sleeper must awaken!"



**It's not the pull from the front or the push from behind.**

**It's the drive from within.**

**- Mark Barlow**

## You are what you eat. By: Becky Follmer

After holding enrollment conferences with potential clients for over two years, it is very clear what many people want to get out of martial arts training. Something to the effect of, “I want to...”: “be in better shape”, “lose weight”, “attain a higher level of physical fitness”, “be healthier”, you get the idea.

Well, by coming to classes regularly you are certainly helping to attain that goal. But, how we feel and our overall health are also greatly affected by our eating habits, and I would like to share with you some information I find helpful. Dr. Dewey has touched on some of these tips before, but they are worth mentioning again. Rather than eating three large meals during the day, try eating 6 small meals, or snacking throughout the day. This helps in maintaining a sensation of fullness and keeping your metabolism active.

At the risk of showing my obsessive tendencies, I will tell you that I plan what I am going to eat throughout the day. This way, getting fast food or sweets never cross my mind. Well, saying “never” is probably going too far, but let’s just say I am much less likely to go for those foods if I have my day planned out. This brings me to my next point, which is that we should allow ourselves the foods we crave in moderation. If you crave salt, allow yourself some every once in a while. People who do this tend to be more successful in maintaining healthy eating habits. Try eating higher-volume, lower-calorie foods. Think about a salad versus a cookie. The salad is much bigger (not to mention more nutritious), but has many fewer calories than the cookie, and will leave you feeling more full. This is due in part to its taking much longer to eat. It takes your body nearly twenty minutes to realize it is full, so eating slowly and drinking water in between bites can be very beneficial.

Research has also shown that if we cut our food into smaller pieces and chew it more, we won’t eat as much.

Try to sit down when you eat and focus on eating a well-balanced, high-nutrient meal. When you eat out, see if you can have your meals grilled (without butter) rather than fried, and limit your appetizers. Another option is to order the salad dressing on the side since restaurants tend to douse the lettuce and vegetables. If possible, avoid watching TV while eating, and snack on low calorie foods. When grocery shopping, focus on the products around the perimeter of the store (i.e., milk, fruit, vegetables), which are more natural, rather than going directly to the processed foods in the center.

Our new food guide pyramid distinguishes between whole and refined grains, and tells us to get more of the former rather than the latter. The fiber in whole grains has a number of benefits including: reduction in risk of coronary heart disease, aiding in proper bowel function, and helping to provide a feeling of satiation with fewer calories, to name a few. Some good sources of whole grains are: brown rice, oatmeal, and whole wheat flour.

If you want to learn more, you can get a more accurate idea of how much you should be eating from each food group at [www.foodpyramid.gov](http://www.foodpyramid.gov), where it will calculate your personal food pyramid (rather than a cookie cutter plan) based on your age, sex, and activity level. I hope you find these tips helpful, but most importantly please remember not to get discouraged! We’re not perfect, but making a few adjustments can make a huge difference in our overall well-being. ☺

AUGUST						
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JULY						
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- ◆ SMAC Karate tournament, Greenwood, MS. August 20th, 2005.
- ◆ Columbus Boys and girls Club Judo Tournament, Columbus, MS August 27th, 2005.
- ◆ Judo/Ju Jitsu Clinic, SMAA, Starkville, MS, September 10th, 2005.
- ◆ International Martial Arts Symposium, Columbia, SC. October 1st & 2nd, 2005.
- ◆ PAF Kick-a-thon, Starkville, MS, October 15th, 2005.
- ◆ Akayama Clinic, Slidell, LA, October 22nd, 2005
- ◆ Midoriyama Clinic, Huntsville, AL. October 29 & 30th, 2005.
- ◆ Shinsei Hapkido Clinic, West Virginia, November 4-6th, 2005.
- ◆ Melton’s Judo Tournament, Jackson, MS November 18th, 2005.
- ◆ USJA Junior nationals, Boca Raton, FL, July 2006.
- ◆

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