

A Philosophy of Growing

Tony E. Hansen

July 28, 2007

3rd Dan Promotions

Iowa State University

Master Young Chin Pak

A Philosophy of Growing

Over the years of study within the martial arts, growing has been a consistent theme. Skills, determination, outlook, philosophy, and perspective have grown along with that theme during that time. As in academics, for every question answered, there breeds more questions. Further, there is a quest for open comprehension of principles through patience, tolerance, compassion, the Tao and the warrior spirit. As my heart and mind opened to these principles, my skills and my inner strength grew immensely, and thus, my martial arts, as well as my life, have established a foundation in ancient Oriental philosophies. This foundation inaugurated open constructive growth and development.

When I began studying taekwondo, over thirteen years ago, the motivation was by fear and insecurity. Over the years, the turmoil of insecurity gave way to a promise of patience, dedication, and resilience. Even more, today, my fellow students have taught me more through their perspectives of my teachings than as a simple student being instructed. Thus, I continuously enhance my capacity guided by how skills were taught to me, how the skills evolved in my circumstances, and how others have received the teaching from me.

Many have walked in to, and subsequently out of, martial arts classes during my tenure of study. Of the various motivations to study martial arts, the most promising practitioners were not necessarily those with the best natural skills, but those who were examples to others in spirit, ability to listen, and those persons whom emphasized a sincere willingness to grow. They were the ones that would eventually promote to black belt ranks and beyond. Observing this, one understands that in order to grow, one must be willing to listen. As well, in order to teach successfully, one has to be willing to continue to learn.

Student becoming teacher

An open mind about one's abilities and subsequent realization that we can use all of the faculties, granted to us by the Creator, has helped many, including I, to grow demonstrably over time. Additionally, the teacher that recognizes this aspect of training can guide the student's energy towards that realization and thus, push the practitioner further and harder. Yet, the teacher must recognize the flow of students' minds move at various paces and certain effects will reveal themselves to students at different instances to different students upon their individual journey and training. With proper guidance, the teacher can help the student begin to become conscious that growth is continuously possible and is more than physical strength.

Over time, the student will realize his or her strength, skill, and more knowledge is gained through helping others succeed as well. Motivational speaker, Zig Ziglar, correlates this sentiment in his many discussions across the country when he states, "You can have anything you want in life, if you will help enough other people get what they want" (Ziglar 1988). Likewise, successful growing students are paramount to being a successful growing tutor.

The development of the student's skill, character, and their foundation proceed to include one's whole life and perspectives. The principles grow throughout all aspects of life when the student realizes that listening, learning and fraternity are not just features for the dojang. A positive purpose and affect upon other students in the dojang will transcend the workplace, the school, the sports field, faith, and the overall community.

The student's path, like my own path, then understands what confidence (without arrogance) is, especially where confidence defines conflict resolution other than in terms of physical violence. The confidence helped me to believe in myself and in my capabilities. Confidence helps one to enjoy and to experience life's possibilities. Furthermore, confidence

gives spirit that pushes us to be better than we were yesterday, and such confidence helps to promote that which is great in others rather than focusing upon negative commentary

A teacher becomes a student again...

The practitioner will eventually follow the cycle of growth (circle of life) when they appreciate that growth is not a single dimension, nor of singular martial arts purpose, but dependent upon the vibrant dimensions and growth within those around them. The instruction in the dojang is a small part of this concept through physical growth. Then, the training transcends the physical to mental and to spiritual advancement because true positive growth must involve intangible elements as well as the tangible.

The progression of learning and growth begets an understanding that the teacher inevitably remains a student even during the course of teaching. Again, growth drives an expanding mind and body. The teacher learns how the students comprehend the techniques and the concepts within their unique perspectives. Thus, positive growth is dependant upon how well the teacher (and as student) maintains his or her own willingness to learn and to adapt.

Growth as a path to enlightenment

The martial artist, at some point, may begin to understand enlightenment as part of their training, if the mindset is prepared to receive enlightenment. Realization that true goodwill from within will strengthen relationships between the one and others around them is essential to growth towards enlightenment. This is an aspect that I endeavor to employ in my own awareness and my actions.

What my studies have revealed thus far is that enlightenment is not about a state of being or of a pursuit of grace. Instead, enlightenment is about a higher appreciation and respect for the whole of life that transcends one's own minimal existence within the great cosmos, in a similar

manner where the smallest creek forms a part of the grand seas. The grace is in realizing that we have been granted many wonderful effects in life provided we allow ourselves to view them as they simply are (rather than as a mindfulness of what they are not).

Therefore, we can see how Oriental principles (of the Tao) are imbedded within the martial arts. Acceptance of this aforementioned will help our own martial arts as we, individually and collectively, seek to achieve purer form and thought within our training. Realization that the Creator gave us abilities to hone will help the martial artist to refine and to build one's craft around one's abilities expanding to use all of the facets granted to us. Further, awareness that we have only begun to value those abilities will help us to be better students and better teachers.

Conclusion

As one begins the study of martial arts, life and skills evolve within personal, mental and spiritual growth that accompanies the physical growth. The practitioner's experience, like my own, must recognize essential elements to furthering positive development, not only martial arts skills, but as well, how the concepts are universal throughout life. This foundation will guide students as they become mentors and subsequently when they realize that mentors continue being students themselves. A philosophy of growth must promote positive development and reinforcement of positive attitudes within oneself as well as the interactions between and among all people (in and out of class). Thus, a purpose of growth is to realize one's potential within the energy of life (and within the way of martial arts).

This document was created with Win2PDF available at <http://www.daneprairie.com>.
The unregistered version of Win2PDF is for evaluation or non-commercial use only.