

RULES FOR SUCCESS IN KARATE

**A COLLECTION OF ADVICE
FROM TEN SENSEI**

COMPILED BY LES BUBKA

RULES FOR SUCCESS IN KARATE

Compiled By
Les Bubka

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Dedication

To all of those who suffer, I hope that this book will help you
to find motivation again.

You can do it I believe in you!

Acknowledgments

A big thank you to all of the authors that have contributed to this eBook. Thank you for sharing your thoughts and insights on how to succeed in the art of Karate.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

Months into the pandemic and COVID-19 is not going away. We all face difficulties, maybe our finances are not great, our physical health is not up to scratch, we might be depressed. We all miss social interaction and there are so many effects that an individual can experience during these tough times. I'm no different, I struggle, I miss contact with my friends and most of all, I miss training in the dojo. The way that my training is structured makes it very difficult to make training via platforms such as Zoom worthwhile. I mean, how many times can you go through Kata, Kihon and combinations without repeating the process again and again? I want to be punched and thrown about. I would like to feel the resistance against a technique from a partner. I know that the situation right now is bleak, but I do believe that we will make it through these hard times and martial arts will flourish again. I understand that it is difficult to stay optimistic and motivated, but we need to.

My way of dealing with this situation is to get busy and creative. When I feel low in relation to business aspects, I have recently found that watching, reading or listening to motivational speakers has helped me to keep going. I thought, well if that works for me, then maybe it would work for a wider audience. Then I had this idea to create an eBook, 10 Rules for Success in Karate, to help motivate others in the hopes that it may lift our spirits. I have borrowed the idea

from Evan Carmichael's, *The Top 10 Rules for Success*. In this video series, and associated book, Carmichael interviews a variety of entrepreneurs and celebrities and collates together 10 rules. I found it fascinating, so I thought, let's get 10 top martial artists to provide their views on what they see is the most important rule for success in relation to Karate. Soon enough I realised that the inclusion of 10 in the title will not work. With many contributors we had a high chance that there would be one rule to rule them all! I was right, as a few of the kind Sensei that have contributed to this book have written similar rules, so I changed the title to Rules for Success in Karate. I think it is nice to see different angles on the same rule and so I have not tried to merge the contributions of different authors, but have left them as they were written. Giving you time to think about the rule, then read a different one, and then return to the same rule from another perspective. I hope it works for you, if not, drop me a message and tell me off at info@lesbubka.co.uk! You can get in touch even if you like it, it will be a pleasure to hear from you.

Having had my initial idea and not wanting to lose momentum, I grabbed the phone and rang Iain Abernethy to see if this idea would be of interest. Without hesitation, Iain joined the team, and with his encouragement I started to assemble a team of Karateka to bring the best advice to you. I have to say that everyone that I contacted was super positive about this project. I hope that you will enjoy the rules presented in this eBook by Christian Wedewardt, Don Came, Gary Chamberlain, Iain Abernethy, James Hatch, John Titchen, Kris Wilder, Matt Jardine, Paul Enfield and myself. You might wonder why I chose these Karateka to get involved with this

book. The answer is that I have been fortunate enough to meet and train with them all personally, and they have all had a positive impact on my Karate. I believe that they are all positively inspiring people around the world.

As this book is about success and people are likely to have different views of what this means, let's have a look at its definition.

As a concept *"Success is the state or condition of meeting a defined range of expectations. It may be viewed as the opposite of failure. The process of learning is entirely dependent on success. It involves making a prediction and paying attention to the outcome of an event."*¹ Another definition is that Success is *"the accomplishment of an aim or purpose."*²

With these definitions we can see that any activity that results in the achievement of a desired outcome can be seen as a success, the perspective of success can differ from one person to another. Where one can see financial security from teaching Karate as a success, another can define sporting achievement as a success. Yet another person will say that helping others via Karate is a success. So, I leave you an open question – what is success to you? Maybe you already have your vision of success, or perhaps you haven't thought about it yet. I have confidence that this work will help give you guidance and clarity.

I consider all of the Sensei in this book to be highly successful for many different reasons, I also believe that I'm quite successful and shamelessly put myself here too.

¹ Wikipedia

² Oxford English Dictionary

I hope that the encouraging information in this eBook will inspire you and give you motivation to structure and plan for the future once the pandemic has passed.

This eBook is distributed without charge, however if you like what you read here then I urge you to check out the links to the other works of our contributors at the end of the book where there are also a few words about the authors. If you enjoy reading this eBook then why not share it with your friends or others that you think may benefit from it?

Now it is time for me to let the rules take over! Thank you for your time.

Chapter 2 - Christian Wedewardt

Being a diligent dreamer!

Hi everyone out there! I'm Christian Wedewardt from Germany. I was born in 1974 and have been learning Martial-Arts since I was 13 years old. My main focus was always on Karate. I like to say Karate-(Do) for a reason I will explain later in this text. Along with my training I learned a little bit of "everything" to enrich my beloved Karate. I came across Judo, Jiu Jitsu, Ai-Ki-Do, Boxing, Kick-Boxing and Krav-Maga. Through all the years I've never stopped training, and here is my story.

Les Bubka asked me to contribute to this Book-project and I'm delighted to do so.

My #1-Rule for success in Martial Arts is what you find in the headline and a bit more...

Being a diligent dreamer!

From my early childhood I was driven by doing things differently and asked the adults why things are the way they are. It felt even back then that I wanted to make a difference (in whatever).

Then I found Karate-(Do) in a small Dojo in the suburbs of my city. Once I started, I went there by bike every day and trained, regardless of the weather. There simply was no weather! I didn't miss a single class. I dreamed of being a

yellow-belt and put all my effort into achieving this milestone. By the way – I do strongly believe that this step is the hardest one for a Martial Artist, since he doesn't know anything and has to learn so much at once before he shows up for his very first test in his art.

My Beginner-Trainer, my Sensei, once told me, and I quote:

“You are a Karate-Guy! You can reach all your goals and can belong to the best in every area of your life!”

I did listen to this very carefully and somehow it connected with my inner wish to make a difference. In every field of my life I have compared myself to the best and then tried to catch them up. I dreamed of being successful in school, sports, family, behaviour, work and Karate. Just like for my Yellow-Belt, I put my efforts into fulfilling my dreams.

This dreaming never stopped during the color belts, it didn't in regards to competition sports in tournaments, and also not towards the black-belt.

Being a diligent dreamer just means to me to make decisions!

From my point of view, success is a result of decisions. Those decisions are based on facts and/or dreams (goals). Once one has had his dream, his goal, and made the decision to achieve it, all is set to do so! Then it takes effort and dreams can become true!

Is it really that simple? Quite!

I've got an ambivalent relationship with my father. But one good thing he told me when I was a child was:

“A baby that doesn’t cry, doesn’t get food!”

This was the answer to my question, why my sister got extra pocket money every now and then and I didn’t. The simple reason was: I didn’t ask!!!

So I learned that to make your dreams come true it is mostly up to you to create your world the way you would like it to become, but it is sometimes good or even necessary to ask for help or advice.

In 1994 I reached my then highest goal. I became a black-belt in Karate-(Do). My dream had come true. Little me... a black-belt. It’s true to say that I wear it with pride every single day of my life and it has never become a normal thing.

All through the years, with my beginner-trainer and my teacher today, I’ve been shown by them that the rules of behavior in training like honesty, courtesy, diligence, reliability, respect and even love, are values to be taken into everyday life. Wearing a black-belt means to be a role model, not only on the dojo floor, but also and even more importantly in the social community. This is the reason I’ve put the (Do) behind the term Karate. Karate-Do for me means being a good person!

In 2008 I passed the test for the 4th Dan degree and wrote an essay for it. Its name: KARATEPRAXIS.

In this text I wrote about a vision, a dream, a goal!

*“Make the practical application of Karate
the focus of every class, to bring success to every student.”*

Success in that the direct physical information, whatever the content of that training session, has a benefit for participants in terms of partner work. Both delivering and receiving techniques in partner work give non-verbal information of yes or no, success or failure.

So, the dream was there, the goal set. I was 34 years old and had already reached some of my dreams including a family and two kids. But I wasn't good in asking for help or advice. I used to relate to myself. Only myself!

I jumped over my shadow and asked my trainer and best friend for advice on how to become a good trainer and for his support in leading seminars.

Well, in 2020, while I'm writing these words to point out my #1-Rule for success in Martial-Arts, KARATEPRAXIS is still out there, internationally connected and growing.

And here is why:

I had a dream of becoming a karate-teacher, who makes a difference for all those who seek sense in their Martial-arts combinations and forms. One who helps people to find success and motivation in their art without the need of winning tournaments. One who contributes to transfer the mindboggling art of Karate-Do into today's world without leaving the traditional roots behind. Just become one of those who spread their contagious love for Karate over to others and help to let the tribe grow into the future.

I'm aware it sounds a bit much, it was a dream, my vision.

I have been able to bring my little contribution towards this goal only because of my personal efforts and, most importantly, because I did ask for help!

To put it in nutshell:

My #1-Rule for success in Martial-Arts - AND LIFE!

Be a good member of your community by being helpful and respecting the values of honesty, courtesy, diligence, reliability, respect and even love – this on and off the mat!

Dare to dream! Work for it with all your efforts to make your goals come true! When doing this, don't hesitate to ask for advice and help from those able to support your vision.

Be well!

Christian

Chapter 3 - Don Came

DON'T QUIT!

When Les asked me if I wanted to contribute to this worthy project, I was honoured; I also thought “What a great idea, should be simple enough”... but as we all know, just because something is simple doesn’t mean that it is going to be easy! Restricting the content to only one “rule for success” is a difficult task indeed! Many of the rules I follow do in fact overlap, each strengthening the other by creating a matrix of interlocking ideas and principles in which the whole is greater than the sum of its parts... but I will do my best to make some sort sense of it as I write! I hope that you enjoy my offering... and if you don’t, you can always blame Les for asking me to contribute in the first place!

Life is often tough on us, but this past year (2020) has been extra tough on everybody; we’ve been kept apart from our family and friends, many of us have lost loved ones, the self-employed face the financial burden of trying to keep their businesses afloat, uncertain whether they can survive another lockdown, the employed wondering if they will still have a job on the other side! The impact on the worlds mental well-being has been immense during this time of uncertainty.

Staying positive about the things we can control and/or change and having the strength to accept the things that we can’t is probably as good a starting point as any.

I pondered what would be the best piece of advice that I could offer to myself, prior to the start of this pandemic, if I had the opportunity. After some consideration I decided that it would be to not give up - don't quit! No matter what the odds - real or perceived!

By picturing what you want to achieve - and along with it the positive steps or actions you can take towards reaching your goals - you will bring about a clarity of focus; this clearer image will help you further refine and sharpen your vision. I cannot stress enough how important it is that you acknowledge the positive steps already taken in your chosen direction, as this will be essential in building the momentum you need, and will in turn encourage you to keep moving forwards. In essence, give yourself a pat on the back for what you've achieved rather than scold yourself for what you haven't! Acknowledge it and move on.

Ultimately, it doesn't really matter when - or even if - you reach your goal; if you don't, you just keep moving towards it, and if you do, you just set a new one. The important thing is not to fixate on what can possibly go wrong (a case of putting "the cart before the horse" if you will) but to instead focus on what could go right as you continue to move towards the desired outcome! Of course there will be set backs, nothing runs smoothly forever, if things do go wrong, just don't quit! If things start to get tough, remind yourself that everything changes in time; the good, the bad, and the ugly!

Please understand that giving up or "quitting" is not the same thing as recognising that something has run its course and it is time for a change of direction. Nor is it the same as acknowledging that something just isn't right and that you

need to take the appropriate steps to change it... sometimes the goals we set and the dreams we aspire to aren't actually what we really want (we just think they are) and it may take a while to realise that.

There is a wonderful quote from the late Zig Ziglar, a well-known and inspirational motivational speaker from the USA, who asks "Have you ever climbed the ladder of success and found that you've put the ladder up against the wrong wall?". Constantly re-evaluate, don't be afraid to revise your targets if you need to. You can even scrap them and start again if necessary, supported by the valuable lessons garnered from your previous endeavours!

For me, there are a few things that I do that help me to maintain a level of discipline as I attempt to face life's challenges. These range from reading, watching and listening to inspirational literature and podcasts (there's plenty out there to choose from), maintaining a training regime - and of equal importance, staying connected with likeminded people who are on a similar journey and who can share their experiences with you - and you with them.

So what does the future hold in store for us all? Nobody knows for sure - we didn't know before the pandemic and we don't know now. I have a small full-time dojo where I teach, train, study and meditate - it has been a sanctuary through the good times and the bad. Will the dojo survive as we continue to deal with an uncertain future? I don't know, but honestly if it does have to close, I know I will still be teaching, training, studying and meditating, it will just not be within that space any more.

Okay, so my "one rule" has blurred around the edges a

bit, but hopefully you will still get the point. I salute to Les Bubka for coming up with the idea for this project, and acting as its curator, a difficult job in which he has to bring all the different strands together. It wouldn't have happened without him and I am really looking forward to reading the other contributions.

Remember - stay positive and don't quit!

Don Came

Chapter 4 - Gary Chamberlain

Commitment

I first met Les through one of my Polish students - Pawel Sepek - who encouraged him to attend one of our seminars with Kancho Joko Ninomiya. He struck me as quiet, technically sound and quite a gritty character. We didn't talk much as it was a busy event but he returned the next year and we talked a little. I have a great respect for his work with karate and mental health. I sincerely believe that the challenge of disciplined training has helped thousands to calm their thoughts and focus their energies in a productive way.

So I was delighted when he asked me to write a short piece about 'the top rule for success in karate'. That's a vast subject. We're all individuals with our own unique characters and physiology. Added to that there are 'hard' styles and 'soft' styles, 'traditional' styles and 'sport' styles. Clearly offering technical advice might not be suitable for all.

So I looked back through my fifty years of training and coaching. It was great to remember some of the things we did (I still bear the scars) and some of the characters I trained with. I was reasonably successful individually and some of my students far exceeded my personal ability, so what was the key? Then it hit me: Commitment.

This isn't about me but I must start with a few lines. I was a shy youth, very tall and skinny, when I started training. We

had no money and I had to cycle to the dojo fifteen miles away. In those days we were allowed to watch one session then had to pay on the nose with money for membership and a gi (suit) if we wanted to join. My mother agreed to pay but on one condition: I had to stick it out for at least a year. I agreed and in my opinion that made all the difference. My parents were old school and if you gave your word that was it, job done. No going back.

On joining the line in my new suit I soon saw that there were some very tough and talented people in the class. The training in those days was severe and had no grounding at all in proper coaching principles. The instructors simply made it as tough as possible and if anything seemed easy or comfortable it was something they'd overlooked. People came in and literally left in a pool of sweat. But there was a difference. Some came in and had a tremendous session, but limped out as they'd overdone it. They then wouldn't be back for a week or so. I trained hard, but mindful that I'd have to be there at every session I kept things sensible.

The great US strength coach Dan John defines the key to improvement as "Little and often over the long haul." I trained hard but kept my word. I never missed a session. After a couple of promotion tests I found I'd passed some bigger and stronger people who didn't train consistently. Grades weren't given for regular attendance, far from it, but the steady improvements of regular training paid off. After the year was done I'd found my stride and continued training regularly. I eventually passed everyone in the dojo, getting my black belt first and being the first one from the dojo to win a National Knockdown Championships. As I said, this is not about me, but

I hope my experiences illustrate that it's not just how 'hard' you train, but how regularly that makes all the difference.

Repetition is the mother of skill, and fitness built up gradually stays for longer. When I started coaching I was one of the first clubs locally to ask students to pay by standing order. Many objected and I'm sure I lost some that just wanted to turn up if there was nothing better on television (no Netflix back then) and put a few pounds in the tin. But I was looking to the long term and I knew the ones that made a commitment and turned up come what may would succeed. After a couple of years a nucleus formed and followed the same path, many going on to achieve high grades and win high level tournaments.

So to sum up. My number one 'secret' to success is to make a commitment and show up whether you feel like it or not. I used to explain to my students that if they feel great they can push hard and that's a 'spirit' session. If they've had a tiring day, it's fine to bring the power down a bit and have a 'skill' session. If they really didn't want to train they should come anyway, grit their teeth and get through it. I called those 'mental toughness' sessions and most agreed that they were at least as important as the rest.

So there we have it. Make a commitment and train regularly despite whatever obstacles life puts in your way. To me that's the secret of success in karate and I wish you all as much pleasure as I had.

Osu!

Gary Chamberlain

Former Enshin Branch Chief

Chapter 5 - Iain Abernethy

Consistency

My friend Les Bubka has asked me to write a chapter about my most important rule for success. I think this book is a fantastic idea and it is an honour to be asked. It's a struggle to think of one single rule though because I don't think there is a single element to success. Instead, there are many different tools, actions and mindsets that get us from where we are to where we want to be. So, I'm going to cheat a little bit by giving a minor "pre-rule" before I get to what I feel would be my most important rule for success.

To get from here to there, you need to clearly define where "there" is. You need to have a crystal-clear vision of what your success is. Not anyone else's: YOURS. There is an advantage to others if they can get you to contribute to their success. Working with others towards a common goal is sure to help you get there faster. However, there are manipulative people out there who will seek to make their goal yours; even when their goal is not in your best interests or what will truly make you happiest. We are bombarded with subtle and not so subtle messages from the moment we wake until the moment we fall sleep for most of our lives. We are told what a "successful life" should look like. We are told how to think, what to look like, what possessions we "need", what career to pursue, etc. These messages are pushed by the media,

businesses, friends, family, the education system, entertainment, and on and on. The number one task is therefore to separate all that from your own thinking: and it's not easy! It needs done though.

I would define success as being able to spend your life in the way you chose. Think long and hard about the life you want. Once you have clearly defined that, you can then work on getting there. Bottomline, pursue what makes YOU truly happy.

Cheating over! Now to what I would say is the most important rule for getting you to where you want to be:

Be consistent over time.

It is a simple and highly effective rule. It works for almost anything. However, it's no quick fix and requires work over a long period of time. That's why most people seek to ignore the truth of it; preferring instead mountainous mounds of bullshit promising effortless success, or "justifications" for remaining right where you are.

There is a tendency to think that those who we view as successful were somehow dropped into that position by providence, or of them being a different breed of person. The truth is that, in the vast majority of cases, those people have simply been consistent over time. We tend to focus on the fruits of their success when we should be looking at the roots of their success.

Martial arts have always been something I have a great passion for. I have developed a high degree of competence which has enabled me to teach professionally on the world stage. I started training as a child, and by the age of 16 I knew this is what I wanted to do. I didn't get there in a single step. I

worked countless hours over many decades. I still work way harder than most. That's the price that needs paying; and I'm happy to pay that price because it's totally worth it. It also does not feel like a "chore" because I know with certainty what my success is, and I know it is the work that will get me there.

If you truly want something, the effort of getting there – although still hard and demanding – will be something you will be happy to do. If the work does not seem worth it, then you're almost certainly pursuing someone else's goal.

Results come from following the process. Therefore, the smart thing to do is put your efforts into the process. If you don't, the results will never come. If you want to lose weight in a healthy way, you need to be in a slight caloric deficit for an extended period of time. "Crash dieting" for a week or two won't do it. You need to be consistent with your food intake over time. If you want to be fitter, then training hard now and again won't get results. You need to work a little harder than you currently do and build up over time.

The good news of all this is that you don't have to do anything drastic on Day One. Instead, just take one small step. You then need to maintain that going forward as you take small step after small step, day after day, week after week, year after year until you reach your goal.

Be consistent over time!

It may take a while before it seems like any progress is being made. Don't focus on the results. Focus on consistently applying the process over time in the certain knowledge that the results will come.

When you nurture the roots of your success with

consistent effort over time the fruits will be forthcoming. To run with the analogy, if look at a tree it can seem like nothing is changing, but that tree is growing right in front of your eyes.

Consistent tiny steps in the right direction will eventually get you to where you want to be.

One “trick” I have used is to keep a notebook of those tiny steps. Each day I would write down what I had done in pursuit of my goals. It’s not about doing something huge each day; it’s about motivating yourself to be consistent (having something, no matter how small, to enter each day) and so you can see those little steps build up.

So, there you go! Set YOUR goals, and then be consistent over time in your pursuit of those goals. Nothing complicated, but it works ... as you will see!

Chapter 6 - James Hatch

Over the past few years, I have watched with respect and gratitude as Bubka-Sensei has built a programme of excellence wherein he uses karate to enable mental health and overall wellbeing. Therefore, when Bubka-Sensei asked me to contribute a reflection for his newest publication, '*10 Rules for Success in Karate*' I was chuffed! However, what could I say about the idea of 'success in karate'? As an academic and teacher, I like to have clear lines drawn around what I mean when I give students an assessment. So what does success mean? How does it look and secondly, how can a karate-ka ensure it is repeatable? What follows is me working out what this question means for me, and hopefully, some will find it resonates with them.

Setting the stage.

I came to karate at a later age than most, 21 to be precise. I remember the pebble being dropped in the pond. I had yet again got myself kicked out of a rugby game for using my fist to *discuss* with an opposing player. My team captain, John W, whom I respected deeply on several fronts, was furious with me. I could have cost our team the game, and we were looking to win the league. John got in my face and proceeded to explain in his focused, but intentional Welsh

voice how I needed to get my act together and soon! He 'suggested' that I come to his dojo and start getting my temper under control. His words went deep as I knew he was right. There had been too many times when my nature had gotten the better of me. I knew when I got into this state; my words fell asunder. When the red mist had descended, and I came out the other side full of regret, anger at my weakness and shame. So, I showed up at John's dojo, which he ran out of the rugby club. The workout was brutal, but if I am honest it was love at first sight!

This all took place just over 33 years ago and despite a bump and hurdle along the way I have continued to progress in my goal of becoming a better and more robust version of me. In karate, I found a home where violence and spirituality were unified. I emigrated to Japan (twice), met my wife, became a dad, earned a doctorate, worked as a Principal at an international school and even managed to learn some Japanese along the way. Now I run a small dojo in Japan. Along this path, I discovered that the secret to karate is a holistic endeavour of mind, body, spirit, *and* it's hard work. It was not some mystic on a mountain. It is relentless. Success, for me, was becoming aware of this - karate is what you want it to be. It is a path into yourself, that permits you to walk more fully within the world.

Thanks to karate, I have met some of the most inspiring people and call many friends. When we meet, we may discuss karate, but we regularly chat about life, astrophysics, the state of the world or research.

So to answer Les' question, I believe that success in karate is measured by how it makes your life better, and by

extension, the life of those around you.

Make your life better.

Karate is the gift that keeps on giving. One of my concerns with the current focus on 'practical karate' is that it risks losing the physical and psychological aspects that come from training. Limbering limbs, improved circulation and full activation of the brain are but a few of the physical side of training karate. At the same time, the use of kata and the mental exercise needed to figure out what it means has been shown to enhance brain function. Persistence is necessary, and again a benefit to us beyond the dojo.

Likewise, what is known as 'traditional karate' in the UK (i.e. any karate that is post-1904) can similarly mislead practitioners. It can lack clarity regarding what it is preparing practitioners for. Moreover, it has the potential to offer form over function.

Regardless of what 'system' we currently are in, a central weakness in all ryuha I have seen is the idolisation of the founder. They are without reproach and the central message is always the same. 1. You will never be as good as the founder. 2. There is secret knowledge he (it is usually a male) had. 3. The founder was above reproach in all matters of life. Aside from being historically untrue, these lies serve as a means to mislead, misrepresent and disenfranchise. They may be suitable for the bank account of the founder or the 'elect' who speak on his behalf. However, for the rest of us mere mortals, they are lies we must see through if we are ever to discover the true richness of our self as expressed and understood

through karate.

For this latter point, I always remember the teaching of the master poet and calligrapher Basho who reminded us: 'Seek not to copy the ancient masters. Rather, seek what they sought'.

At its core, karate must be for you. It should offer you exactly what you seek to gain from it.

It is deep.

Should you wish, karate can be an effective vehicle for self-defence, physical development, spiritual introspection, but, it can also be a career, a fun past-time, a cultural activity or a highly competitive sport. Too often somewhere along the road we get confused and we think karate is about external rewards such as the next grading, keeping Sensei, or the designated powers, happy or winning the local, state or international championship. While all of these may be necessary, the key must be in moderation.

The demon that first drove us into the dojo will remain unless you name it. My experience is that demons drive a high percentage of people who study karate. If this demon is there and is not named and engaged with, it can be fatal. Sadly, I have seen two fantastic karate fighters who were world champions take their life because the despair which they were trying to kick-out of their lives eventually became too much. They were incredible losses to those around them as they were deeply loved and respected. While extreme such examples are all too common and should remind us never to assume we know what brings someone to the dojo.

Karate will stretch us as people. Aside from the physical challenges, there will be emotional, cultural, philosophical, and

any other number of potentials for growth that the right dojo, with an honourable Sensei, will enable and offer. As you move up the ranks, physical prowess will improve and with it the confidence to control that new skill you have. But remain humble. There is always someone who can see your weakness and exploit it.

But such exploitation, should with a martial mindset be embraced. So long as one has the ability and the awareness those who 'attack us' offer yet another reason to strengthen the self and defeat that wee demon inside us all. This is often a painful lesson to learn and necessitates that the dojo Sensei be a person of sound moral character and experience - sadly, not all are. Musashi, the legendary warrior-philosopher, stated in his *Book of Five Rings* 'Today I defeat myself, tomorrow lesser men'. There is deep wisdom here. Study it well.

As I have aged my body sadly has decided to rebel. Illness has become a companion. However, I am unwilling to give in. Not yet, at least.

Kata for me remains the soul of karate, and as I age, I begin to understand more deeply the story and lessons which kata can teach. Yes, kata are effective templates for self-defence, but what their original meaning was, is now, lost to the sands of time. However, with ingenuity and insight, we can begin to see patterns and how these katas can be templates to address unarmed physical violence. Through engaging the mind and experience not only may we begin to make sense of these patterns, but the process will keep us mentally acute. Moreover, it always gives us a reason to further our quest for understanding.

As we all know, 1+1 does equal 2, unless it is in biology

and it could be 3, 4 or some other number.

Miyase Sensei, a master of the Jodo and other Koryu, had this equation writ large on the door as we entered the dojo - $1+1 = 3$. Study this well.

Improve the lives of others around you.

This understanding has slowly evolved. Life is a struggle for most, and we are all in it together. We always need to be mindful of this. When I was younger, I permitted karate to put a financial strain on my family, while the continuous training often left little favourable time for family life. While the short term benefits to those around me was a decrease in aggressive behaviour, it took me some time to see that this also needed to apply to those closest to me. Words can also be weapons.

In retrospect, we have all met people for whom karate has been negative. It could be aggression, conceit or the constant slagging off of others to name but a few of the vices which drain the lifeblood out of relationships and end friendships. If your karate is here, my advice is to stop.

Karate which does not add to the overall wellbeing and social harmony of others, is going in the wrong direction.

Life is short and runs the gamut of the human experience from joy to despair, ecstasy to pain. If your karate leads others in your sphere to experience the more negative aspects of this gamut, it is an excellent indicator that something is not right.

Time to change paths.

Life-giving karate enables others. It helps you always to pay others respect, even if they do not respect you. This is a sign of the strength of character so often *sold* as 'the product'

within karate. Sadly a responsibility of being a karate-ka is that sometimes you must take it on the chin and be an adult if the situation calls for such action.

Likewise, you must also recognise when a line has been crossed. Understanding this teaspoon insight into karate empowers you to enable others to grow. It is into this sphere that *true Sensei* fall. People like Miyase-sense, Les Bubka or Mary Stevens who use their karate as an expression of empowerment and hope for others, are in my opinion, mastering the art.

Such karate moves us beyond the sinews and muscle expression of our art and begins to shape our essence.

This is the soul of karate, and not a place all can or *need* to walk.

The choice is yours.

It always was.

Chapter 7 - John Titchen

Play

There are many connected factors that contribute to gaining the most from karate training. So much so that it is difficult to identify a single one to discuss.

My initial instinct was to write on the topic of perseverance. But then I asked myself 'Why have I persevered with this endeavour for so many years when I have let go of so many other interests? Why have I risen from the ashes and returned to karate from the various fires of pain, broken and cracked bones, dialysis, transplants and now thirteen operations under general anaesthetic since I began training as a teenager? What draws me back and inspires me to go on?'

The answer is play.

I can remember from my first year of karate exploring techniques and combinations in my own free time and relishing any opportunity to play with applications with a training partner. The fun of trying ideas from watching others, from reading and from attending seminars with different instructors is what motivated me to put in the hours of hard graft in drilling fundamentals at class and at home.

Without the enjoyment and experience of being able to try out things myself, to explore possibilities and play with ideas and solutions to problems, I would no longer be training and I would certainly not have gained as much from my karate

as I have.

By allowing myself the freedom to encounter failure and then to play with the potential routes both to avoid it and to navigate from it, I have discovered far more about both conflict and karate than had I simply stuck to pre-planned concepts.

What we do in training is a game. That is true whether you are competing in any of the top-level martial arts competitions or whether you are engaging in the most realistic self-defence focused training possible. If you think that my describing training as a game undermines its seriousness then stop to contemplate the amount of emotion, finance and research that is invested in sport around the world; consider the number of livelihoods involved. Karate may be an activity focused on a very serious purpose, it can be incredibly tough, but it is a game nonetheless, and we have rules and conventions in place to train in a manner that not only allows for progressive skill development but is also safe. I believe it is important to accept this in order to gain the maximum benefit from our training.

So, what do I mean by 'playing'?

Imagine you joined a football club. It may be that your ambition was to become a world-class player, it may be that you simply wanted to enjoy a game of football. If your training at the club consisted solely of sprinting, running up and down the pitch passing the ball, practising penalty shoots and staged fixed tackle drills, but you never got to play a game, would you stay? The training would bring many benefits and increase your skill level at individual elements, but it would not give you the experience of uniting those elements or adapting freely to

your environment. You aren't playing and the training isn't giving you the enjoyment, experience or skills you wanted.

If you look at karate from this perspective you can quickly equate doing basics in lines, fixed throwing or ground drills and hitting pads to exercises such as running up and down a field passing a ball. Depending on your understanding of them and how you integrate them with your other training, forms can be viewed as physical manuals indicating potential related and interlinking tactics along with fundamental training exercises. Fixed sparring combinations are akin to set corner drills, especially if the one being done is called out beforehand. Isolating and practising such fundamentals is important for teaching and refining core skills – but the heart and purpose of training is having the freedom to play.

Playing for karateka is free-sparring and the act of physical problem solving according to the compromises (rules) that we have put in place. Proficiency at any kind of sparring comes through the combination of regular exposure with supporting instruction and coaching of isolated elements. I wasn't stopped from playing football as a child at school because I was too young. The game was simply played at a different pace and with a lower skill level. While I'm sure many of my peers would have benefitted from more skill training isolation in sports while in school, they would not have been motivated to continue without the actual challenge and fun of playing.

In karate we are often so focused on making people 'safe' that many delay letting them play with their techniques for far too long and that can negatively affect skill development, attribute development and motivation. If we let large groups

of people do fixed attacks and defences at full speed with minimal supervision (because one instructor can only see so much), then why wouldn't we let them choose their attacks and defences at variable speeds? If we feel that confidence or enthusiasm might get the better of some then working in threes with one participant acting as the dedicated 'eyes on' safety monitor can ensure both added safety and (through observation of others) additional learning. We can always add in greater caveats in terms of restricting techniques (such as no head strikes, no holds, no ground fighting, list allowed throws etc.) according to the rules of each game and the skill level and maturity of the participants. There are many different ways that we can maximise the necessary challenges in playing of free movement, decision making and 'unpredictability' while maintaining safety.

In the *Heian Flow System* in 2004 and later in the *Pinan Flow System* my intent was not to show kata applications but to demonstrate a way of enabling karateka to link drills through interlocking failure cascades to enable them to move freely between positions and stimuli. The aim was not only to make it natural for them to transition between grappling and striking, but also to ensure that moving from static exercises to actually playing freely with movements was a seamless transition. I wanted to make it as easy as possible for others to play with the diverse options that different positions bring; to ensure that the excitement, stimulation and learning benefits of dynamic and alive training were introduced early in their development. Without compulsion few will train long enough to glimpse their potential unless they enjoy their karate and the best way to achieve that is by letting them play.

Every karateka has the option to embrace the broader experience of engaging in play to explore new ideas and to learn from different groups beyond their own. One tradition of karate is that it is not and has never been a limited or fixed entity; it is continuously changing and has always taken on new ideas. If this were not the case there would be no new 'styles' and we would still only have Naha-Te, Shuri-Te and Tomari-Te rather than the ever-growing disparate branches that have come from the cross-training between not only those three Okinawan roots but also from the diverse arts of other countries as well as the integration of knowledge from external disciplines. Our understanding of our own approaches can only be strengthened by investigating both them and their alternatives through the exploration and evidence of playing with others.

If you really want to understand your karate and gain the maximum benefit from it, you must play.

Chapter 8 - Kris Wilder

Let's Find Balance Once Again

"Never have I worked so hard for so little. I'm out of balance." Those words came across my cell phone speaker. It was Dave a fellow martial arts instructor with whom I have been friends for a good decade. The sense of helplessness was clear in his voice. He was facing the same thing I was facing, that you also have faced and are experiencing.

I could belabor the topic with many examples of leases lost, livelihoods crushed, and, in some instances, relationships are thrown to the curb to be collected.

These items are not about teaching martial arts in the face of a Pandemic you say. "I know everything you have shared and I even have more," flashed across your mind.

"Never have I worked so hard for so little, I'm out of balance."

I am the same way, it may not be factual, but it feels like it. This is the place where you lift an eyebrow slightly and nod your head in agreement.

The Full Experience is Lacking

Martial arts are kinetic, they are hands-on, they are about a full experience. Online classes lack the kinetic nature, they are not hands-on. When we teach online, we are teaching in the same environment the students experience for education. The same for business people. Zoom for school, Zoom for meetings. Because the platform has become the go-to system, it has become common, even mundane.

Further, the systems are insufficient and are being used poorly. Online education in the United States has presented failure, pure unadulterated failure. The teachers are frustrated, the parents are angry and the kids are tuned out. There is much blame to go around. The platform takes much of the blame, but it is about the experience.

Martial Arts teaching on this platform is hard. Most of the tools you use to instruct have been stripped away from you. You can't be kinetic; you can't be hands-on. Sure, you have made adjustments. Getting a pad and putting it on your non-dominant hand and practicing elbow strikes is a weak comparison to a real class. This is a commendable act. Making this training method is creative and it is necessary, it just isn't optimal.

The Leader

As the nexus of your tribe, the leader, you are expected to have a vision of how this is supposed to go. You likely are making a great play at being inspirational. You are good at keeping the communication going and being dependable.

This is not a condemnation of the effort. It is only a recognition it is a poor substitute constructed as a stop-gap measure in difficult times.

I submit the pad and elbow drill, mentioned earlier, plus several other drills will disappear after COVID.

You are working hard with little reward. Small feedback in a two-dimensional meeting on a platform already contaminated with the mundane.

Here is the kicker, we are supposed to be the strong ones.

This isn't about the students, or how you can make a class a better experience for those people you teach. It's about you.

It is rare for a martial arts organization to not be dominated by a single individual, maybe a handful of people. When it comes to a school each of them is a reflection of the lead instructor. The proof is in the reverse viewpoint. Ask yourself one question? How many martial arts schools have you seen vaporize when the head instructor leaves? Yes, many schools have folded when the leader leaves. Other schools limp along and die a slow death

Without You, it Stops

If you stopped right now, would your students continue, or even attempt to continue? The answer is, "Unlikely."

It takes energy to keep a class, course, school, and or organization functioning and healthy. It takes fuel, and you are that fuel.

Nobody cares you are tired, rundown, gassed, and have your struggles. Nobody sees the strong when they are weak, the cracks, the chinks in the armor.

But they are there.

How do you be successful in this two-dimensional world, feed the energy, make a success out of a bad situation?

You have to take care of yourself. It is the only element of which you have control.

The 3 Realizations

Number 1.

The news is Terror-porn. Stop watching it, it is not news. It is designed to hype you up, and burn you out. Its purpose is to drive you out of your Cortex and into your Amygdala. Then you are weak and commit to stupid acts.

Number 2.

The usual, get enough sleep, drink water, blah, blah, blah. It is important. You know it, I know it, so let's do those things and move on.

Number 3.

Realize if you go down it all goes down. The school ends and all of the potentials are swept away. It's time for an accounting.

How to see what is missing. We have likely seen the web

of life chart used as a personal life assessment tool. Now let's use the Web of Life in an unusual way to see our world.

Using the Web of Life

The goal of this section of this valuable book is not to provide answers. It would be arrogant to offer simple contrived answers. But I can tell you, you are an achiever. And now you are the fuel that makes the tribe move.

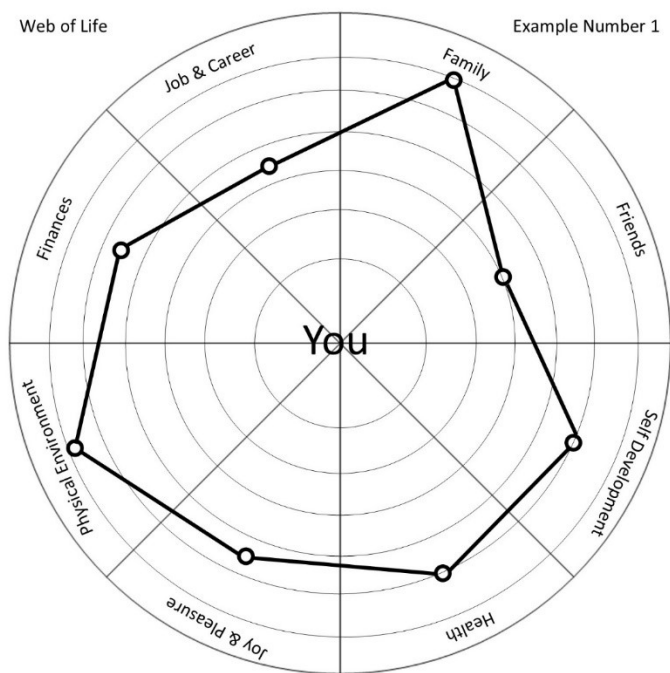
You are at the center of each of the eight sections of life you make a mark in the section that corresponds to how well you are doing. The closer to, "You," the less successful you are at that section. The larger you are in the act, the better you see yourself the farther out from the center your dot will be.

It has been my experience that hard chargers are not always aware of their world and the level at which they operate. I have rightfully been accused of these two things and I suspect you have as well.

This makes the Web of Life a valuable tool for us. It may take ten minutes to use the Web of Life, a ten-minute pause to reset your compass. And remember the greatest information you are going to get is in the gaps, the gaps between perception and excellence.

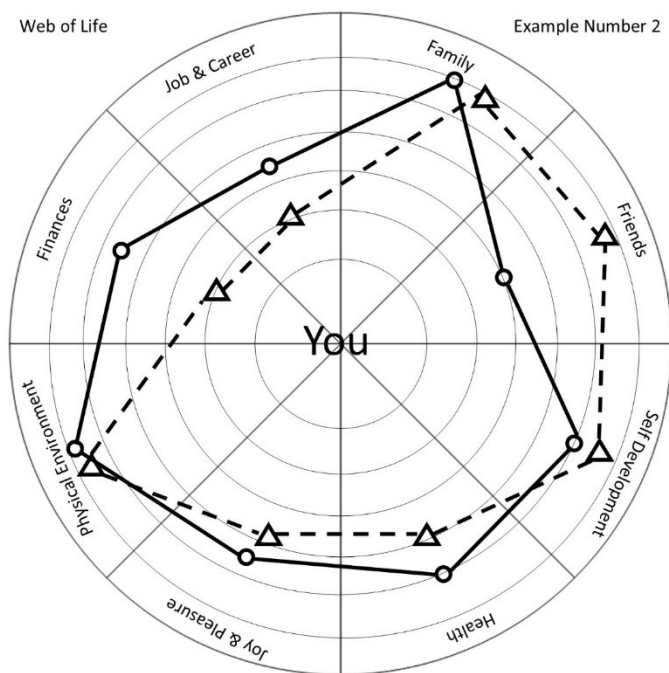
Example Number 1

For example, in Number 1 you see the circles and the solid lines forming a web. The more the lines get to the outer edge the better, the dips, or movement inward to, “You,” the less successful you are. In this example, the family is going well, Job & Career, not as well.



Example Number 2

The triangles and dotted lines. This is how a close associate sees you. You can ask them to fill it out or you can, if you choose, fill it out on their behalf imagining who they see you in these eight dimensions.



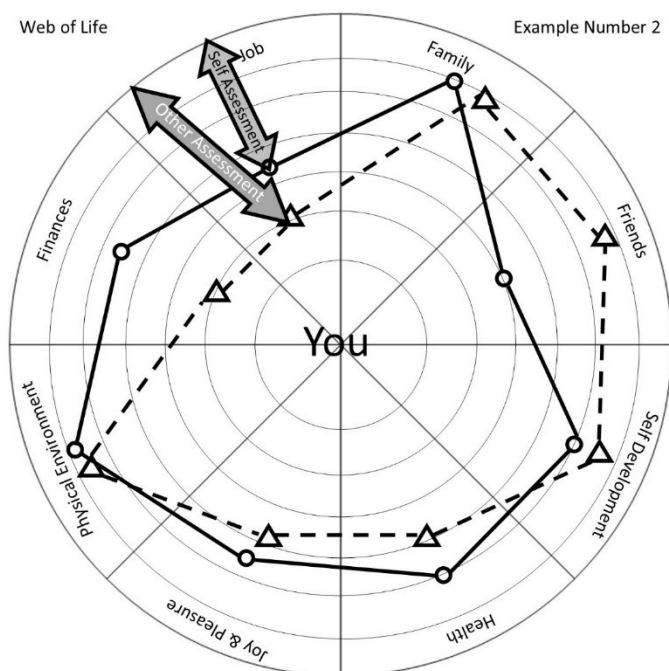
Example Number 3

Example Number 3 is blank for you to use.



Example Number 4

This is the place for two assessments. Let's look at, Job & Career in this instance. The gap from the outer rim to the dot you drew on the chart is a concern. This dot is far away from the successful outer edge. The lower triangle is a greater concern. The Job & Career are not going well and a close associate sees it worse. It means you may not be realistic about your situation. How and why this section is skewed is for you to analyze, the Web of Life only points to the aberration.



Now go make the best of a foul situation, because that's what you do, lead. And lead in a better manner than before. Because when you are in balance you can lead, teach, and provide the fuel on which so many are dependent.

Wishing you the best of success. More success than you envision for yourself and more than anyone person deserves.

Kris Wilder

Chapter 9 - Les Bubka

Importance of Mentoring

For as long as I can remember I have been afraid to ask questions, I feared that I would be perceived as stupid, and the thought of being judged in most cases stopped me in my tracks. Over the years I tried to figure things out for myself, mostly by trial and error. If I managed to achieve a goal that I had set myself then I was happy. However, I was often failing, rationalising to myself that I'm either stupid or it's not a goal suitable for me, and I would just abandon my efforts. Starting Karate slowly altered my approach and a major change was finding motivational speakers. At a time when I was nearly giving up on my newly started career as a Personal Trainer, those speeches made me think about mentoring.

If we think about it, since the day we are born, we are being coached by our parents, then by our teachers, and then maybe by our co-workers. It is a natural process for humans, as we learn faster if we can benefit from the experience of our predecessors. Under normal conditions, people ask questions if they need information or help, but the big question is, who to ask?

There is no point asking a car mechanic about a Karate suit if he has no experience in this field. We need to ask the right questions of the right people, in this way we can acquire

much more knowledge, much quicker, and can save ourselves a lot of time.

Another thing that had hindered me in asking questions was the worry that I would be bothering people. I didn't want to be a nuisance. Especially as my view of successful people was that they are super busy and wouldn't have the time or willingness to help some unknown foreigner.

Well, I was wrong! Successful people (in a lot of cases) like to help others, as they are aware of how difficult it is to get to the top, they also tend not to have insecurity issues. They are not worried about the competition, so they are willing to help out. Those who are not motivated to help are usually motivated to talk about their success, which gives us a chance to get information from their self-praising. In either case we can learn and propel ourselves towards success. Having that information on what obstacles we might face and what are the solutions to those problems will give you tools to overcome them much easier.

Don't get me wrong, having a mentor does not mean that you don't have to work hard. It is quite the opposite! Being guided means that you will often be faced with a lot of uncomfortable situations, as the only way to growth is via challenge and leaving one's comfort zone. People who are successful know that, and they will push you to your limits so that you get comfortable being uncomfortable and still push forward towards your goal.

Since I started to be mentored by others, I appreciated that I didn't grasp all the facets of my business, and my business then started to grow; I started to grow. Slowly my insecurities slipped away and with time, when things started

to fall into place, I started to see the benefits. My groups started to grow and I realised that every problem is an opportunity.

Let's look at our current situation, the COVID-19 pandemic has put a lot of us on hold. The start of the first lockdown meant for me the closure of classes and loss of income, and no new students. My old self would have stopped completely and shut down the club. The new guy looks at it as an opportunity, for example, I never predicted that I will create and sell t-shirts... I never thought of myself as a salesperson, nonetheless that was one of my options, so I took it. I sought advice and used mentoring to learn about the clothing business and sales – I'm definitely not great at it, but I'm improving.

In the realms of Karate, as this is what this book is about, I was never a fan of online training. It is not what I enjoy, but at this current time there are limited options. So not knowing anything about this type of Karate teaching, I reached out to people who are experienced in delivering online training and they helped me learn how it works. Now I can balance online and regular training sessions. If I hadn't asked for help, I would have had many problems before getting my online classes going.

I think the easiest argument for embracing mentoring is our training. As Karate is an activity that is solely based on mentoring both physical skills and behaviours. From day one we are shown what to do, how to do it and what mistakes to avoid. As our instructor learnt from his instructor how to be better at Karate, so you can be better than your instructor. As a natural progression, when you acquired the knowledge of

your teacher, so you reach out to a higher rank or more experienced teacher. The mentoring process can be adapted to all aspects of our lives, and it is one of the best shortcuts to success. Through the chain of knowledge being passed through the generations of instructors, we are not required to reinvent the wheel. Mentoring also allows us to have our actions reviewed by someone with a clear and honest view, who is not personally attached to our success or failure. The feedback that we can get from this is hugely beneficial, although may be hard to take at times.

In summary, if you need to improve your skills in a given field, try to get yourself an appropriate mentor. If you need to improve a technical skill, get in touch with a great technician. If you want to achieve growth in your dojo, speak to a Sensei that has a big school. If you need to advance your marketing, then speak to people who are influencers. Give yourself the best chance to succeed and learn from the experience of others. They did it, so they can help you get there quicker, not necessarily easier, but it will be worth it.

Les Bubka

Chapter 10 - Matt Jardine

You flinch as you bite on the feint: the jab you thought was coming- isn't. Before you know it, your opponent has taken a shot. He's in, his hands locked tight for a single leg.

Wrestling defence is not your 'A' game. Your mind searches frantically for that technique you learnt at a seminar once, from a Polish guy, maybe a Mongolian, thinking back, it might have been someone from Dagestan.

Too late.

You're on your back looking up at the ceiling: "Ippon", or whatever- the-hell-else they call it in every art but your own.

We've all been there, under pressure, where the simple technique we didn't choose would have sufficed. It is in this spirit of simplicity, K.I.S.S (Keep It Simple Sensei), that I offer my 'rule of success'.

Before I reveal the 'rule', I want to talk briefly of all the other rules in this book.

In the world of writing, they say that to understand an author's motivation, one only has to read the entire body of their work. The advice equally applies to martial artists and the teachers who appear in these chapters.

Each of us has a unique take on the arts, a personal perspective that shapes the art/s we choose, why we choose it, who we choose to do it with, when we choose to do it and what meaning we hope to develop through its practice.

For me, the vein of gold, the thing that appeals most

about learning, teaching and practising martial arts is the profound affect it has on, not just my physical skills, but my life, mentally, emotionally and, yes, even spiritually.

This book, *'Ten Rules for success in Karate'*, could equally be called, *'Ten Rules for success in work, relationships, health'*. I urge you, from time to time, to think how these rules might also improve your day-to-day life.

Ok, enough preamble.

The rule: ***show up***.

Yes, that's it, show up. I warned you that my rule would be a simple one, but it's important not to mistake it for one devoid of deep meaning.

Of course, this rule is not mine, it is universal, but it is the one that has guided me to all the successes and experiences I have been fortunate enough to enjoy. It is a 'foundation rule', a rule upon which all others stand. Without it, no other can find a foothold.

It sounds trite, too simple a rule to have meaning, so common you might find yourself flipping the pages in search of something more profound. Yet that, in my opinion, would be a mistake.

Zen Buddhist practice, by way of example, also finds value in simplicity, particularly when giving meditation instruction: "Sit up, sit still, do nothing."

When I was first given this instruction, over thirty years ago, I was striving to be the next Wimbledon tennis champion. Techniques and complexity were 'my thing': watch the ball, bend your knees, take your racket back, pronate, accelerate, follow through... the list goes on.

I brought the same mindset to the practice of meditation

and, later, karate. This way of learning is exhausting, much like trying to hold up the world with your fingertips. It brings home the meaning of the saying, "Trying too hard".

It was those many years of trying too hard, and a life-changing pilgrimage in Japan in 2007, that bought me to the realisation that I share with you.

As you read this, your body is working to keep you alive without the need for your interference. Your liver is performing over 200 separate functions, your heart is thumping, on average, 115,000 times each day, your lungs are drawing in 7-8 litres of air per minute, your brain is working tirelessly behind the scenes, keeping it all together.

The point to these amazing facts is that there is a wonderful natural system working, on our behalf, to help us thrive. But this is not a one-way street; after all, who enjoys relationships where takers take without giving back? (We all know that student or friend.) There is a cost to having this fortuitous life, a responsibility we must uphold if we are to honour this precious gift. The price we must pay for walking this earth is to 'show up,' as often and with as much passion as we can possibly muster.

What does it mean to show up?

One way of answering this is to say what it does not mean. As a martial arts teacher and author, I seem to be a magnet for people wanting to tell me their ambitions of, one day, becoming a black belt, or writing a book (some tell me they plan to do both.)

"Great," I say, "If you need any help, just give me a

shout.”

Often they then contact me, mostly to tell me, again, of their ambition to, one day, be a black belt or to write a book!

“How’s it going so far?” I ask.

“I haven’t found the right instructor yet (hopeful black belts), I haven’t found the time yet (hopeful writers),” they tell me.

After a few of these exchanges, I tell them, as gently as I can, that “I can’t help you if you don’t show up.”

The thing that is so simple to see from the outside of their predicament, but seemingly impossible from within, is that life cannot work its magic on our behalf if we do not direct it with our willingness to ‘show up’.

The heart will work harder on your behalf if you ask it to sprint up a mountain; muscles will relax and lengthen if you choose to keep them in a stretch; lungs will retain oxygen if you decide to hold your breath for two minutes.

Our job, our one and only job, is to show up at the arena in which we have decided to hone our skills. Want to get better at kata? Do kata. Want to write a book? Sit and write ten pages a day. Want to improve your relationships with your kids? Work on your anger/patience/meditation. You see where I’m going with this, don’t you?

The magic of ‘showing up’.

In my latest book (*How to be a Buddhist Millionaire*), I quote W.H.Murray from his 1951 book, ‘*The Scottish Himalayan Expedition*’. I include it again here because no other passage more beautifully describes the magic of showing up:

‘Until one is committed there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. Concerning all acts of initiative (and creation), there is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans; that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then Providence moves too... A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one’s favour all manner of unforeseen incidents and meetings and material assistance which no man could have dreamt would have come his way.’

Obstacles to showing up.

I have a teaching paradigm: if more than one student fails to understand what I have said, it’s not the student’s fault, it’s mine.

Over the years, I have witnessed so many people failing to ‘show up’, that I have had to face the fact that, maybe, showing up isn’t quite as easy as I believe it to be. This brings us full circle to the point I made at the start of this chapter. Although showing up is simple, you will discover that it is not necessarily easy.

These are some of the many things (from the excuses I have heard) that may stop you from showing up:

- Time
- Money
- Energy
- Motivation
- Resources
- Too little support

- Too much support
- Boredom
- Family
- Friends
- Not having a car
- Not having a bike...the excuses go on.

So what is the answer to coping with the difficulties you might find when trying to integrate this rule into your life? Yep, you guessed it: show up.

There is no short cut to showing up, you will still have to drag yourself to the dojo on the days when it's the last place you want to be.

There is no panacea, other than showing up, to sitting down and finishing that chapter you've promised your publisher.

There is no alternative to showing up, not if you want life to give you the gifts it is waiting to hand over.

I'm an optimist at heart, on the whole I believe that life wants us to succeed. It will provide for us, as karate ka, as martial artists, as human beings, if only we can demonstrate, once and for all, that we are willing to show up and receive.

Chapter 11 - Paul Enfield

Don't Stop! やめないで!

As a long-time personal student of Higaonna Morio Sensei I heard all kinds of interesting, outlandish, and cringe worthy questions asked of him over the years. Questions such as, “what should you do if you feel a fart coming on while doing Sanchin kata?”, and, “How do you like the name GoKanRyu for my new karate style?” (I’ll save that story for another day). One particularly (cringeworthy) question I remember well was, “What is a Master of karate?” (not that he considered himself one, or the question important, but he did pause thoughtfully before answering). His reply was, “continue training” – as in, keep training, don’t stop, EVER. That answer has stuck with me and although it seems a simple thing it is, I believe and experience has told me, in many ways the most challenging part of karate.



It would seem therefore, that the answer to being successful in karate is both the simplest of undertakings while simultaneously being the most difficult.

How do we achieve the goal to “continue training”? Hopefully some of the following do’s and don’ts may steer us in the right direction:

- Learn from competent educators - your teacher may be a good martial artist but do they know how to teach? Additionally, if you yourself teach then take time to study with good teachers from various disciplines – not only martial arts.

- Consistency trumps intensity - yes, we should work hard, however consistency over time is what dictates real progress. With this in mind, don't be so hard on yourself.
- Train the fundamentals well, and always - don't look at a technique and copy the outcome, rather discover the underlying fundamentals that allow for the technique to function. In this way you will discover a myriad ways from a handful of principles, and as a bonus you'll be able to self-correct errors.
- Never stop asking questions, and do be curious - mostly questions of yourself that arise from your own training effort and experiences.
- Be true to yourself - you don't have to like/do/be something just because it's popular.
- Practice for yourself, not for someone else - if you are an adult and need the 'threat' of someone else's displeasure to motivate you to train then perhaps consider an alternate activity. That's not to say that our teachers and training partners don't push us to be better, but they are not the reason we train.
- Teacher's should be respected but don't belong on pedestals - common sense and common decency in both directions should guide student teacher relationships.
- Training partners who have joined you on the path are precious, treat them as such - ever been to a seminar where a training partner seems to think you are their crash-test dummy? Training partners facilitate our progress and therefore, if for no other reason, we should take care of them and respect their health and wellbeing.

- Respect your limitations as well as your ambitions - most limitations will fall away with dedicated training however it is wise to know which ones will not. Having said that, limitations can be a catalyst for creative growth as we find ways to constantly progress and adapt.
- Metaphorically (or not), if you are going to hit a makiwara then believe in it - belief in what we do is paramount; constant doubt will scuttle progress.
- Stop listening to all and sundry - in today's martial arts world, colleagues, friends, random social media acquaintances, influencers, are incessantly telling us what karate is and isn't. take a step back from this noise and take ownership – define for yourself how, when, and why you engage with karate. You don't have to be able to defeat a cage fighter, listen to the guy who knows all the secrets but can't tell you, or have trained in Okinawa or Japan to be doing real karate.
- Rituals have proven to be significant in human endeavor; sometimes for good, sometimes not so much. I do recommend adopting a ritual to prepare you for training as this can be particularly beneficial to get you in the 'mood' and onto the mat. Rituals can be tradition based, rule bound complex affairs, or simple personal habits. The act of donning specific clothing for training, sweeping your mat, a short bow, repeating a mantra, for example can be a great way to get you up and moving.
- It's not all about you! - particularly if we mentor or teach, we have a responsibility to present a wider horizon to those who look to us for guidance than the horizon we ourselves were presented with. Likewise, creating a sense

of excitement and possibility in all there is to learn, while encouraging self-development, finding one's unique path, and the confidence to fulfill one's potential and dreams – in other words let students realize themselves through this wonderful activity that is karate.

In closing, you, I, all of us, are, as the cliché goes, on our own individual path. A path that only we can walk, a path that deserves due respect for each footstep laid down and footprint left behind, whatever the speed we are able to travel or sideroads we decide to take along the way. If you are doing karate; taking the time to regularly and consistently involve yourself in the concrete physical act of moving your arms, legs, and mind to the tune of your chosen art, in whatever form, then you have been, are, and will continue to be, in my book anyway, successful at it.

Chapter 12 - Summary

Thank you for reading! I'm so happy that all of the Sensei that were invite to contribute to this eBook have kindly provided their insight into being successful in Karate.

Whatever your vision of success is now I hope that you have some clear ideas on how to achieve your goal. Something you can do to help make your goal a reality is to write it down. Studies have shown that if you commit your goal or dreams to paper that you are 42% more likely to achieve them. The simple process of writing it down gives you more clarity, allows you to create a strategy and brings your mind to focus on exactly what you are planning to achieve. It will also help motivate you to complete the strategy if you put it in a visible place as a constant reminder.

In these difficult times I hope that this small gift from us will help to brighten up your life and spark up creativity and motivation to take action. If you are interested, most of the contributors are available for teaching seminars etc., please feel free to contact them directly.

Kind regards and stay safe,

Les Bubka.

About the Authors

Christian Wedewardt

Christian Wedewardt is not only a great Karateka but also a writer, entrepreneur, and creator of Karatepraxis - Modern Tradition.

Please check out Christian's work at:

www.karatepraxis.com

[*The Heian Kata Bunkai Phenomenon \(book\)*](#)

[Karatepraxis Clothing](#)

Don Came

Don Came has been actively involved in the martial arts since 1976. He has acted as a civilian instructor for a Metropolitan Police Karate club and taught successful self defence courses for the Crime Prevention Office in South London.

He has a BSc (Hon's) in Exercise Science from Brighton University and he was a key member of the renowned International Institute of Kyusho Research (IIKR). He has had a number of articles published on the application of kata and is the author of the popular DVD "the Kissaki Method".

Don has collaborated with the Eastbourne Borough

Council to develop a pilot scheme for a youth protection programme aimed at helping young people who have been victims of, or are considered at risk of, physical violence.

In demand as a freelance physical intervention consultant, Don has provided specialised training courses for companies in the private sector. He was honoured to be awarded the title of Kyoshi (Professor) by the International Society of Okinawan/Japanese Karate in September 2016.

Please check out Don's work at:

<http://www.doncame.com>

[Online Courses](#)

[Workshops](#)

Gary Chamberlain

Gary Chamberlain began training in Kyokushinkai in 1971 and has trained in several countries including Sweden and Japan.

In 2000 Gary joined Enshin and was the branch chief of Enshin UK before retiring in 2018.

Gary is a former British and International Open Light Heavyweight Knockdown Champion and has since coached many British and European Champions.

Iain Abernethy

Iain Abernethy has been involved in the martial arts since childhood. Iain holds the rank of 7th Dan with the British Combat Association (one of the world's leading groups for

close-quarter combat, self-protection and practical martial arts), the British Combat Karate Association, and the English Karate Federation.

Iain regularly writes for the UK's leading martial arts magazines and he is a member of the "Combat Hall of Fame". Iain has also written a number of critically acclaimed books on the practical application of traditional martial arts and is well known for his work on the pragmatic use of the techniques and concepts recorded in the traditional kata.

Please check out Iain's work at:

<https://www.iainabernethy.co.uk/>

[*Mental Strength \(book\)*](#)

[The Iain Abernethy App](#)

James Hatch

James M. Hatch, EdD

- 6th dan Karate
- 6th dan Okinawan Kobudo
- 6th dan Iaido
- 1st dan Judo

I Live and work in Tokyo. My blog can be found at jamesmhatch.com and my Facebook account is Shichibujuku. I often travel to the UK, Ireland and North America. For those who would like me to run a seminar for them, drop me a line at shichibujuku@gmail.com.

John Titchen

John began his martial arts training in Shotokan Karate. Early experiences of cross training whet his appetite for exploring karate in greater depth and he has since trained with a wide range of leading martial artists in diverse styles.

In 1999, while researching for his PhD, John began a parallel long-term study of the patterns of violent crime that made his training and teaching more relevant to self protection: this led to the creation of the Heian Flow System failure cascade method of training in 2004 and his adoption of scenario simulation training in 2006. In recent years John has published his four book Pinan Flow System series, Karate & Self Defence: selected articles, and Karate Beyond Kata – melting ice into water. He is also a guest author in The Problem of Practical Karate.

Alongside his research projects and regular classes in DART and Shotokan Karate John designs and delivers professional Personal Safety and Conflict Management training. In addition to his books, blog and social media, John has shared his ideas in interviews with Combat Magazine and Martial Arts Planet, and as a former regular columnist for Traditional Karate Magazine and Jissen. John travels around the world to share his ideas on karate and effective self protection training.

Please check out John's work at:

<https://titchen.com/>

[Karate Beyond Kata \(book\)](#)

[Karate and Self Defence \(book\)](#)

Kris Wilder

Kris Wilder started his Martial Arts journey around 1977 and has never stopped. Since then, he has had a varied and wide-reaching experience. From political and public affairs consultant to legislative staff to, Franciscan Friar, membership in the United States Martial Arts Hall of Fame and author of seventeen books Kris' experiences are far-reaching and deep.

Please check out Kris' work at:

<https://kriswilder.com/>

[Online Courses](#)

[*The Way of Sanchin Kata \(book\)*](#)

Les Bubka

Karateka and personal trainer, Les is focussed on inclusion and the health benefits of martial arts. Les works with individuals and organisations to provide courses, seminars, and workshops that promote the mental and physical benefits of martial arts training. Les has over 20 years of experience in teaching Karate to students of all abilities. In recent years Les has also become an author, his first book, *Anxious Black Belt*, is a personal story about overcoming anxiety with the help of Karate.

Please check out Les' work at:

www.lesbubka.co.uk

[*Anxious Black Belt \(book\)*](#)

[*Thoughts on Karate \(book\)*](#)

Matt Jardine

Matt Jardine is an author, life-long martial artist, competitor and teacher. He currently lives with his wife and Jack Russell in Oman where he is working on his next novel. His previous books, *'The Hardest Path'* and *'How to be a Buddhist Millionaire'* are available in all good book stores and online retailers.

Please check out Matt's work at:

[Matt's Author Page](#)

[*The Hardest Path* \(book\)](#)

[*How to be a Buddhist Millionaire* \(book\)](#)

Paul Enfield

Paul Enfield began studying the martial arts in Oxford, England in 1979; first in Lau Gar Kung Fu, and then Goju-Ryu Karate under Paul Coleman Kyoshi. He obtained Shodan in 1984 and shortly afterwards journeyed to Okinawa, to study karate full-time. He remained in Okinawa and Japan for three years and became uchi-deshi (live in student) under Higaonna Morio Hanshi. While in Asia he traveled to Korea, Taiwan, and China to further his research into the martial arts. In 1987 he participated in the first ever official (IOGKF) karate origins research trip to Fuzhou, China, and the Fuzhou Wushu Association. In 1988 he came to the United States, founding the Goju Karate Center in Carlsbad, CA in 1992.

December 1997, Paul returned to Okinawa to study Goju-ryu karate under Jundokan founder Miyazato Eiichi Hanshi. He

later became a student under Taira Masaji Hanshi and was appointed United States west coast representative for Taira's Kenkyukai organization.

In 2017 Paul Sensei was honored to be awarded eighth-degree black belt by Patrick McCarthy Hanshi director of the International Ryukyu Karate-jutsu Research Society. In the same year he was awarded International Ryukyu Karate Research Society Instructor of the Year Award.

While Okinawa Goju-ryu karate is Paul's main area of study he has also studied Tai Chi Chuan, Lau Gar Gung Fu, and Brazilian JiuJitsu.

Paul has translated three martial arts books from Japanese to English, and has written martial arts related articles that have been published in the United States and the United Kingdom. in addition to releasing over forty instructional video titles on various topics.

Paul and Michelle Enfield founded GKCglobal, an international karate organization in 2017. They currently have members, and member dojo(s) across the globe. They travel widely teaching international seminars each year, in addition to running a robust uchi-deshi (live-in training) program - and more recently (in response to the Covid-19 pandemic) they have established the GKCollege distance learning program.

Please check out Paul's work at:

<https://gojukaratecenter.com/>

[A Guide to Makiwara \(DVD\)](#)

[GKCollege \(online class\)](#)