



## HANSEI

### USKL Defense Arts Center Newsletter:

Winter/spring **2015**

The following are some quotes, thoughts and articles contributed and submitted by some of USKL instructors and members. For future bi-annual newsletters, if any of our members have a favorite quote or article that you would like to share please forward it to me at [TyAponte@yahoo.com](mailto:TyAponte@yahoo.com). If I have made any mistakes, typos, etc. I apologize. Please bring it to my attention. I do the best with what I have; my computer and graphic arts experience is limited. The new name for our USKL Newsletter is **Hansei**: (反省, translation: "Reflection on areas for improvement, self-awareness - is the first step to improvement").

As you will see from this and past newsletters pictures of dojo events (exams, socials, special workouts, etc.) are important for posterity and chronological history of USKL dojo and its members. Lastly, I cherish all the good friends I/we have made throughout this journey and I, as well as our USKL staff look forward to our continued success and furthering our relationships.

Osu!

Sensei Ty Aponte (chief Instructor USKL)

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USKL Dojo: 1302 Monte Vista unit 1, Upland CA. 91786 (909) 981-6368

**New USKL dojo: 1811 W. Foothill Blvd. Upland Ca. 91786 Next door to IN & OUT BURGER**



To all USKL members, students and staff: I have said since the mid 1970's that someday we will have our own dojo. I am proud to say that thanks to Sensei James K. Augur's generosity and because he shares the same passion for the Martial Arts our NEW dream dojo is well on its way to becoming a reality. It began in 2009 with the purchase of prime property (during the down period of the housing bust) on Foothill Blvd. next door to In-N-Out Burger. Because of the size of the lot, the only issue was that the parking space would be limited. Because we wanted more square footage for the dojo we decided that parking would be a fairly small sacrifice that we would have to make. We found a good local Architect (Dale R. Cummins – Cummins Architecture), who had previous martial arts training so he was able to relate to our needs. He took my vision, added his insights and expertise and designed practically 30 pages of detailed blue prints that would become the final structure of what is pictured above. The most awe inspiring feature in the interior is a Pagoda (or Clearstory) structure that is nestled approximately 30 feet high above the center of the training floor. I was impressed by the Japanese inspired architectural ceiling/roof at Pomona College (Pendleton Dance Center) and had asked Dale to do his magic and duplicate the roof/celling

style into his plans. After two years of volleying from architect to the planning department, the plans were finally approved by the City of Upland in September 2014.

The dojo is designed with ample ventilation from top (power operated windows in the pagoda) to bottom and includes a reception area, office, men's and women's bath rooms, changing rooms, showers, 30' x 40' sq. ft. spring loaded wood training floor, stairs that lead to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor which will make room for utility and storage rooms as well as possible additional changing rooms, and if needed, additional matted area for work-out space. Without going into the smaller details of what still needs to be done, to date the CMU block structure is built; internal 2"x4" framing, electrical, plumbing, HVAC, fire sprinklers, roofing, skylights, Burglar and security cameras are to this point complete. I am now orchestrating the next phase of work which will include plastering, insulation, drywall, windows and doors, painting, ceramic tile for bathrooms, T&G wood ceiling, etc. etc. The training floor will pretty much be the last thing to do on the interior because the area will get a lot of construction traffic, including indoor scaffolding and scissor lift. On the exterior, landscaping, walkways, driveways, wrought iron work, etc. are still yet to be completed. All in all everything and everyone who has worked on this project has been "Top Shelf" in their craftsmanship and professionalism (including fully licensed), and expedient in their production. As project manager of this major undertaking, people ask how I have been able to orchestrate all of this: collecting and negotiating bids, choosing the right contractors, setting up the next course of construction, etc. The price of General Contractor to do the same job was excessively exorbitant. As some of you already know, I was a licensed Ceramic Tile installer/contractor (Aponte Tile and Marble) for about 18 years (retired). I have firsthand knowledge in the construction field working with and around the various trades, as well as having added 1200 sq. ft. of living space on to my own house a few years back (as owner builder). Additionally, I am fortunate to have working with me experienced General Contractors who freely offer their consultation and advice as needed. Like the teaching and training in the karate dojo it is a group effort. Everyone plays their part to make it all come together. Lastly, it could not be done without the trust, confidence and support of Sensei

James Augur and my wife Lynn. We are tentatively looking at a completion (grand opening) date of around July 2015.

On a different note, I am seeking individuals who may know a little bit of how to swing a hammer, hang drywall, etc. Individuals will be paid according to their skill level starting at about \$8/9/10.00 per hr. The more experienced of course will garner a higher wage. Or one can opt to volunteer their time and or work in exchange for karate training.

**We are also open for fresh and new ideas in all areas of construction, training and equipment, PR-that includes internet advertising, etc. Now is the time to share.**

Feel free to contact me: Ty Aponte, [TyAponte@yahoo.com](mailto:TyAponte@yahoo.com) 951 204-0341

PS: Due to the demanding attention of the NEW dojo project I have had to let some things slip by i.e. last year's Halloween/Christmas party, Winter/Summer gashaku (special training), etc. If anyone wants to take the reins on any of these social/training activities, I welcome it.

The excerpt from my Yondan paper Sensei Leo Shortle (4<sup>th</sup> deg. BB USKL):

## **The Dissatisfied Stonecutter**

(A Chinese Folk Tale of Power & Contentment)

There was once a stonecutter who was dissatisfied with himself and with his position in life. One day he passed a wealthy merchant's house. Through the open gateway, he saw many fine possessions and important visitors. *"How powerful that merchant must be!"* thought the stonecutter. He became very envious and wished that he could be like the merchant. To his great surprise, by magic he suddenly became the merchant, enjoying more luxuries and power than he had ever imagined, but envied and detested by those less wealthy than himself. Soon a high official passed by, carried in a sedan chair, accompanied by attendants and escorted by soldiers beating gongs. Everyone, no matter how wealthy, had to bow low before the procession. *"How powerful that official is!"* he thought. *"I wish that I could be a high official!"* Then he became the high official, carried everywhere in his embroidered sedan chair, feared and hated by the people all around. It was a hot summer day though, so the official felt very uncomfortable in the sticky sedan chair. He looked up at the sun. It shone proudly in the sky, unaffected by his presence. *"How powerful the sun is!"* he thought. *"I wish that I could be the sun!"*. Then he became the sun, shining fiercely down on everyone, scorching the fields, cursed

by the farmers and laborers. But a huge black cloud moved between him and the earth, so that his light could no longer shine on everything below. *"How powerful that storm cloud is!"* he thought. "I wish that I could be a cloud!" Then he became the cloud, flooding the fields and villages, shouted at by everyone. Soon he found that he was being pushed away by some great force, and realized that it was the wind. *"How powerful it is!"* he thought. "I wish that I could be the wind!" Then he became the wind, blowing tiles off the roofs of houses, uprooting trees, feared and hated by all below him. After a while, he ran up against something that would not move, no matter how forcefully he blew against it – a huge, towering rock. *"How powerful that rock is!"* he thought. *"I wish that I could be a rock."* Then he became the rock, more powerful than anything else on earth. But as he stood there, he heard the sound of a hammer pounding a chisel into the hard surface, and felt himself being changed. *"What could be more powerful than I, the rock?"* he thought. He looked down and saw far below him the figure of a stonecutter.

To me, that says it all!

Sensei Leo Shortle (4<sup>th</sup> deg. BB USKL)

#### People's reactions to this story:

"We all have great power within us. We merely need to know that."

"This story reminds me of a quote: 'At the end of all our searching we will arrive at the place we began and know it for the first time.'"

"If the stone cutter restart moving backwards, he go from nature in man. So, man flow out into nature, nature flow out into man. There's a fluid , energy ranbling between objects in the earth. It is'nt human ambition; it's simply life, moving in a circle."

"We are all powerful in our own way.... We all have our own place"

"The Stonecutter's story reflects the nature of the human mind and of our attachment to it. We jump from one compartment to the next, one desire to the next, one point of view to the next, never resting content with how things really are, never grasping the whole."

"We have to learn to celebrate who or what we are. When there is a way that we can better ourselves we must work for it and not just wish and dream."

"He should have settled for being rich and powerful. Then he could have had all the stone cutters working for him."

"So that's why the game of Rock Scissors Paper works...."

"The grass is always greener on the other side -- until you get there. It's a matter of perspective. Satisfaction is a personal choice. Choose to green up your own grass rather than hopping that fence."

"This definitely proves to me that a person can achieve anything, as long as they stay focused and have a goal ahead of them. As I studied in my MBA classes, you always have to work backwards! Find the end product/result and work back on how you are going to achieve it!" "We often meet our destiny on the road we took to avoid it."  
"Do not expect too much and you will get plenty."

<http://www.refinethemind.com/the-sto>

## Yes, You CAN Be a Ninja At Work With These 6 Karate Teachings

By Shane Zackery, August 6, 2014



The other day (and by the other day, I mean months ago), I was talking to my friend who is the mother of two young girls. Her youngest daughter, who was 4 at the time, confided in her mom that she really, really wanted to be a ninja.

I was stoked to hear this. First of all, it's adorably badass, but I was also excited by the possibility that the next generation of strong, high-flying Karate-ka could be sitting right across from me.

"She's going to learn so much about being a good person." I said smiling and staring dreamily into space. I imagined the little girl as a master of *kata*. A sparring prodigy. A well-coordinated keeper of justice!

I think this went on for about a good minute before I realized that it was really quiet. Confused, I looked to my left.

That's when I noticed that my friend was looking at me all kinds of strange.

"What?" I said, wondering if I'd said something weird out loud while I was zoned out.

"What do you mean a 'good person'?" She asked.

I realized that she had no idea what I was talking about; **the mental benefits of the martial arts.**

As I sank back into the couch, I began telling my friend all about the principles that I learned as young kid in Karate that helped shape me into a self-aware adult.

When **Gichin Funakoshi** started Shotokan in Okinawa, he also established the 20 guiding principles of Karate. These principles serve as guidelines for how to approach training with an open mind and set intentions.

The best thing about the principles is that not only do they hold value for the art of Karate, but they can also be applied to so many other aspects of life.

**You don't have to be a Karate-ka to reap the benefits of martial arts.** Here are a few lessons that can make anyone a better student, worker, or whatever you happen to be.

- **Mentality over technique.**

There are a lot of things that I love to do that I actually really suck at. Some of these

things include dancing, singing, drawing, painting, and drinking. Yet I still do them every chance I get. *[Editor's note: I hope Shane doesn't do all these things at once, though actually, that might be kind of fun to watch.]*

Attitude is everything when it comes to learning a new skill. Tackle it with all of the Ferocity that you can muster. If you suck, suck loud and proud.

In Karate, the student with the most spirit will always be praised more than the one with perfect technique.

I ran into a number of professors in my day who believed in being patient and forgiving to students who struggled but always tried their best. It was these hard workers who always stuck out in the minds of their instructor's even years after they'd graduated.

**How to apply this lesson:** If you are new to a job, you probably have no idea what you're doing. Leave an impression on your boss by showing that you may be clueless, but you're eager to completely stumble through the first few lessons that you're poised to learn.

Keep in mind that taking this approach doesn't mean that you shouldn't be focusing on eventually mastering your technique. Just understand that the most bodacious skills take time. Don't be afraid to flex your muscle in the meantime.

- **First know yourself, then others.**

In competitive sports, there's a lot of pressure to compare yourself to others. While competition is an important part of Karate, it's only a small part of one's training. The biggest part is understanding what role you yourself will play in your mental journey.

There's nothing wrong with a little healthy competition (that's the Aries in me talking). Before you can understand your opponent, however, you must understand yourself.

Oh, and here's a big secret. *YOU* are the biggest opponent you will ever face. Once you figure that one out, you're going to be a champ.



Consider what this means for you as a student or employee. If you are competing for that top spot in your class or on your team, stop and ask yourself what studying habits and working conditions are right for you. Remember that in order to get where you want to go, it's going to take much more than beating the person next to you.

Focusing on you is that extra thing that you need. What are you doing to improve your own test scores? What are you doing that's holding you back? You may find that you're sabotaging yourself by focusing more on beating "the competition" than your own self-achievement.

**How to apply this lesson:** Every time that you approach a new challenge, imagine that **Mr. Miyagi, Lao Ma**, and I are all standing over your shoulder holding a giant mirror. Learn to face yourself before squaring off against others.

- **Do not think of winning. Think rather of not losing.**

In Karate, people on the outside seem to think that getting a black belt means that you've "made it." Little do they know that there are actually ten *dan* (levels) of black belt.

Getting to that first black belt is not winning. Rather, it is an indication that you refused to quit. Achieving beyond that means true dedication to the game.

I imagine the day when I'm established enough at a company to be up for a promotion. Little punk rock angels will fly around the room and bass-heavy music will play so that only I can hear it.

If you have similar daydreams, only indulge in them for a moment. That first success in the workplace is just the tip of the iceberg. You've got miles to go! Think of each milestone as affirmation that you're still in the running, but you haven't won the race yet.

Being disillusioned into believing that that first triumph is the only one isn't going to get you very far. It could get you a world record as the oldest, second-level sales rep at a

company. But you don't want to hold that one. Trust me. Especially when the people that you started with are now running the company.

**How to apply this lesson:** Pretend that you have no idea if and when the finish line will ever come. That way, you're always performing at your best and will rarely be caught slipping.

- **Make adjustments according to your opponent.**

Remember how we talked about knowing yourself before knowing others? Know yourself so well that you can identify exactly which of your skills to deploy at the right time so that you come out on top. Whether it's that big presentation, stressful conference call, or international business meeting, know that you have the weapon for success in your arsenal. Then the key is knowing which one to arm yourself with.

You wouldn't tackle a humanities paper the same way that you write a lab report and I don't write each blog post the same way that I wrote the last one. Be able to adjust your style so that you come out on top every time.

**How to apply this lesson:** Internalize the idea that things that are constantly growing are alive and stagnant things dwindle. Approach each opponent with an empty mind, ready to be filled with well-informed tactics that will bring them down. Imagine that each job that you are applying for is the enemy and the only way to take it down is with a killer résumé. Make sure that your approach is unique for each and every one. You can't get away with one generic application.

- **Be constantly mindful, diligent, and resourceful in your pursuit of the Way.**

Define "Way" however you want. This one speaks for itself.

**How to apply this lesson:** Just do it.

- **It's a lifelong pursuit.**

What does it mean to be better? How do you know when you are "it"? Is there a magical point where you are "the best" student, worker, or friend?

If you've answered "no," then you are correct.

Not to sound like an inspirational cat poster or anything, but success is the journey.

A really long one.

"Not to sound like an inspirational cat poster or anything, but success is the journey."

**How to apply this lesson:** Have patience in every single thing that you set out to achieve. Remember that your name will be attached to the work that you turn in. Build a lifelong career of quality and excellence, dude.

This is what I explained to my friend. As I finished my rambling, I noticed that she was looking at me funny again.

"What now?" I asked.

"Nothing," she said with wonder in her voice. "I just didn't realize that you could get all of that from Karate. I thought it was just kicks and punches."

I love kicking and punching; however there's so much more to Karate that's kept me coming back for the last ten years.

As a young kid, Karate taught me courtesy, self-respect, and kindness. As an adult, it teaches me diligence, humility, and patience. In every job interview, I talk about how the lessons that I learned in Karate when I was ten make me a better worker today because I truly believe that they do. Maybe not the kicking and punching part, but all of the other stuff makes me a productive and process-oriented part of my team.

After I shared my collected wisdoms with my friend, she began to see how her kid could indeed develop the makings of a great person, all while wearing a little white uniform and colorful belt. She promised that once her daughter was done pursuing her aspirations to be a dinosaur, she would look into signing her up for a kids' Karate class.

Mission accomplished!

**Homework time!** Are you ready to be a ninja at work? If you're ready to commit to the physical demands of the martial arts, find a Karate class and sign up to take lessons after work. You can improve your mental skills while also learning to kick butt!

If not, explore the non-physical benefits of Karate for yourself by sticky noting some of these principles (**or others**) to your work space. Read them whenever you're feeling frustrated, unmotivated, or stressed out and you'll become the well-disciplined, black-belted *you* that will thrive right from your desk!

- See more at: <http://blog.aftercollege.com/2014/yes-can-be-a-ninja-at-work-6-karate-teachings/#sthash.j2rs4zvo.dpuf>

Author: **Shane Zackery, USKL shodan June 2014**





accomplishment **action** attitude **belief** character **compassion** pro-active  
confidence **courage** decision discipline **discovery** doing **effort** emotion fear **focus**  
friendship giving goals **habits** happiness **help** honest improve inspire **judgment**  
kindness knowledge **love** **motivation** **observation** obstacles personal  
growth **procrastination** question reflection self-improvement **setting an**  
**example** strength struggle **thinking** time understanding **work-ethic**  
consideration empathy

## **Focus without focus:**

During our Sunday Advanced Class (with Sensei Ty Aponte) on 4/6/14, the students paired up and faced one another in kumite kamai across the full width of the dojo floor (aprox. 15' apart). One student then performed 1-3 attacks while the other student, observing the attacks from afar (and without fear of being struck), looked for an opportunity to counter with gyakuzuki. The exercise was then repeated with the students about 5 feet apart and then again with the students within striking distance of one another. When working at a distance, students were better able to see openings, in part because they were not distracted by a need to evade or block, but also because they were able to see all of their opponent, and his movements, without being overly focused on just one part. When fighting at close range, it is more difficult to maintain that same unfocused perspective, but it conveys the same advantage - making it easier to see both the attacks and the opportunities to counter. Bob Nunez described this as "keeping everything in the periphery" and I suggested describing it in Zen terms as "seeing everything by seeing nothing." Sensei Aponte shared with the class that in previous lessons with Nishiyama Sensei (LA/Central Dojo) Sensei would say "see the opponent as if looking afar and see far as if opponent were close".

The ability to see all of an opponent during combat is a fundamentally important skill. Nakayama Sensei wrote about "fixing the eyes" in his Best Karate series, using the Japanese phrase: me no tsukekata. He explained, "If you fasten your eyes on the opponent's face, you will lose sight of other things. When you are watching for his kick, you will not see his upper body. You must see all, from the top of his head to his toes. To take the measure of the opponent in front of you clearly, let your eyes feel as though they were looking at a distant object" (Volume 4, page 16).

Miyamoto Musashi wrote much the same about the "gaze in strategy" nearly 400 years earlier in his Book of Five Rings (Gorin no Sho): "The gaze should be large and broad. This is the twofold gaze "Perception and Sight". Perception is strong and sight weak. In strategy it is important to see distant things as if they were close and to take a distanced view of close things. It is important in strategy to know the enemy's sword and not to be distracted by insignificant movements of his sword. You must study this."

The lesson fits well with other budo concepts that we often discuss. When facing an opponent, we strive to quiet our minds, freeing it from all distractions, so that we can see our opponent's movements and intentions clearly, like the reflection of the moon on the smooth surface of a calm lake. If we are able to free our minds completely from all thoughts, achieving the mind without mind (mushin no shin), we can react without fear, without ego, and without hesitation.

Sempai: **Dr Dave Michelson (USKL Shodan)**

### Some Simple Ways to Cultivate Energy While Training

Some ways to bring about more energy on the dojo floor is by practicing some simple dojo etiquette. These are my thoughts and some sensei may think otherwise. I believe that during training if one is still, meaning not in the act or training he or she should maintain the yoi position. Too many times I have seen karateka waiting for instruction put their hands on their hips, folding their arms, hands clasping in the front or in the back and this is inappropriate in my eyes. Here is why: there has to be a higher degree of concentration, focus and spirit while training. Training needs to be taken seriously. I am not saying that anyone is not taking their training seriously but maintaining a position of readiness while on the dojo floor during class shows the sensei that I am paying attention and I am ready to move forward as well as showing respect. This is also important in sparing or self defense. In sparing or self defense it shows my partner or opponent respect and lets my partner or opponent know "I am ready".

Another way to bring about more energy is kiai. While executing a technique during kumite I need to kiai. Here's why: Not only does it remind one to exhale while executing a technique it also demonstrates focus, spirit, and a release of that explosive energy we are all trying to cultivate. I rarely hear any kiai during sparring in the dojo. During one – step sparring, kiai should be used by the attacker to demonstrate that the attack is focused and strong. The defender should use kiai to demonstrate that his counter is an explosive focused counter.

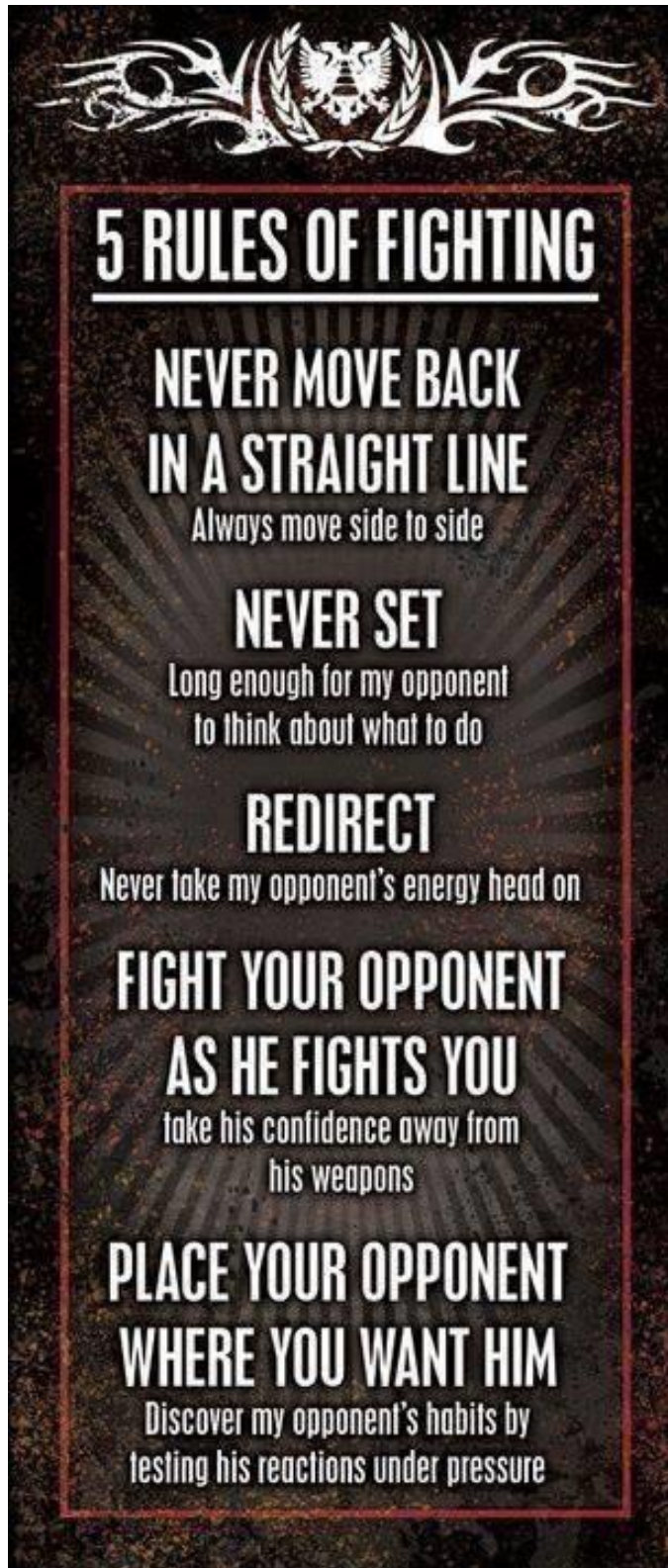
The next time you train be mindful of yoi, the ready stance, and see if you don't feel more energy by being "present". Then next time you spar or square off with your opponent in the dojo take it to another level. Utilize kiai more but with a purpose and feel the energy that comes from it. It makes training more realistic and fun. OSU, **Sensei Andrew Wildasinn (sandan USKL)**



Congrats to Sensei Andrews Special Forces class all students' promotion to green belt.







Benny (The Jet) Urquidez



Congrats to Kayler for advancing to 3<sup>rd</sup> kyu Brown Belt Dec. 2014. What a handsome young man. Look at that radiant smile. My gi pants are a little high but that's OK.



Monday Night class w/Sensei's Ty and Andrew testing night - congratulations!

Hi Sensei,

Today's class was mostly black belts, so I told them "You don't have to prove that you're a martial artist, the mere fact that you're a black belt and you're here training shows me that you're a martial artist. Instead what you have to do is improve every day." "Commit to being better today than you were yesterday, and commit that tomorrow you will be better than you were today."

So you don't need to prove it, you need to improve it.

Sept. 1014

**Sensei Leo**

What master Kanazawa in "Karate, My Life" brings a point that might be good for the dojo paper? \_\_\_ In the world of budo everybody is of equal standing regardless of race, creed, or religion. Good people stand shoulder to shoulder within the great family that is the dojo. Even if the dojo is small, the way pursued is great and it links the whole world together. \_\_\_ or you could put it this way "the family that endures through blood, sweat and tears stays together.

**Yours Mike Whiteside - Godan Shotokan karate-Do**

Not sure who sent these two (no name attached):

Greetings, **I have one little quote for the newsletter:**  
**It's short and to the point, referencing to living in the "now"...**

*Do what you can*

*With what you have*

*Where you are ~*

*By Theodore Roosevelt*

I'd rather be a Maybe if I cannot be an Are;  
Because a Maybe is a Might Be that is reaching for a star;  
I'd rather be a Has-Been than a Might-Have-Been by far;  
Because a Might-Have-Been has never been,  
But a Has was once an Are.

-----Milton Berle

## **Forced Confusion is better than Real Confusion!**

The human brain is capable of healing throughout our lives, it's method of healing is referred to as neuroplasticity. The term Neuroplasticity is derived from the root words Neuron and Plastic. A neuron refers to the nerve cells in our brain. The word plastic means to mold, sculpt, or modify. Neuroplasticity refers to the ability the brain has to reorganize by creating new neural pathways to adapt, as it needs. This constant adjustment is present in a healthy brain. For instance learning a new language, riding a bike or even a new kata, all these activities require the creation of new neuropathways.

Think of the brain as a fresh field of wild flowers, if you walk across this field you may crush and bend these flowers. You walk across the same path and you may kill the flowers. Several more times and the flowers are dead, and you have created a trail. Continue, and there is a permanent trail with no new growth. This is how we create new neuropathways, by learning new things and repeating them until they are solid. Then, when Sensei Ty tells us to perform Kata backwards, or to the opposite side; he is forcing confusion disrupting that path we typically use and

making us create a new path. To learn! Learning is to the brain what exercise is to the body. Challenging the brain this way is like exercising the brain.

Recent information tells us that things like puzzles, learning new languages ect... challenge the brain, exercising. Just as we lose some muscle as we get older, our brains can atrophy, too. More specifically, your brain's "cognitive reserve" or its ability to withstand neurological damage due to aging and other factors without showing visible signs of slowing or memory loss diminishes through the years.

Let's make this New Year one that begins a fresh look at our brains along with our bodies. Let's continue to challenge ourselves in every way possible; body and mind! Because forcing new growth using confusion today, will pay off in dividends in offsetting real confusion tomorrow. Jan. 2015      **Robert Nunez (USKL Nidan)**

Dear USKL Members,

We are fortunate to have a wide variety of resource materials that are provided by the dojo for the use of all members that are **free of charge** including, but not limited to, Books, DVD's, and Videos. It has come to my attention that items previously "checked out" of the library had no time limit on their return. After I concluded a brief inventory I found there are missing DVD's that have been checked out for months, and some date back to a year or even longer! We are not missing just a few – we are **missing many** - almost complete sets! Please check your personal movie libraries, books, etc., for any items that may have been over looked and return them to the dojo as soon as possible. It is very costly for the dojo to replace whole sets of these materials, especially when they should be available for all members to learn from and enjoy.

In the future we will have a new system for our library reference materials where a member will sign for the item and be given a two-week period to return it. It may then be checked out longer if no one else is on the waiting list to borrow it, or at the discretion of Sensei Ty, Sensei James, or the office staff. In the future as with testing and rank advancements where all dues and paperwork must be completed to qualify to test, **all reference materials must be returned to the dojo prior to a rank test.** It would be very unfortunate if we did not have the luxury of these materials anymore because they are becoming too expensive to be replaced. We would be

missing out on technical details of the instruction they provide. Then the only alternative would be to purchase your own DVD or find those details by doing research on a computer.

Thank you for your time and prompt response to this important matter.

Christie Vella Kramer (Nidan), USKL Office Manager

January 27, 2015



Adrian Vera (USKL 2<sup>nd</sup> kyu Brown belt) and his Sister (Cynthia) continue to be formidable opponents-even to the best. Congratulations on your achievements, wishing you continued success in 2015.

All members be familiar with your test rates and test dates:

<b>USKL Test frequency, Months &amp; Test Fees:</b>	
<b>Kyu /Target Rank/belt color</b>	
<b>If a student tests but does not change belt color and receives a progress band the test fee is only \$10.00</b>	
Beginner (Novice) Adults and Youth:	
<b>Test Every 3 months</b> ( <i>Quarterly</i> ) = <b>4 x year:</b>	
(March, June, Sept, December)	
10 <sup>th</sup> kyu yellow white belt =\$25.00 (youth only)	
10 <sup>th</sup> kyu yellow black belt =\$25.00 (youth only)	
10 <sup>th</sup> kyu yellow solid belt =\$25.00 (youth only)	
9 <sup>th</sup> kyu orange belts = \$25.00 / (youth - orange white)	
8 <sup>th</sup> kyu orange belts = \$25.00 / (youth - orange black)	
7 <sup>th</sup> kyu orange belts = \$25.00 / (youth - orange solid)	
Intermediate Adults and Youth:	
<b>Test Every 4 months</b> ( <i>Tri-annually</i> ) = <b>3 x year:</b>	
(April, August, December)	
6 <sup>th</sup> kyu green belts = \$30.00 / (youth - green white)	
5 <sup>th</sup> kyu green belts = \$40.00 / (youth - green black)	
4 <sup>th</sup> kyu green belts = \$50.00 / (youth - green solid)	
Advanced Adults and Youth:	
<b>Test Every 6* months</b> ( <i>Biannually</i> ) = <b>2 x year:</b>	
(June and December)	
*3 <sup>rd</sup> kyu brown belt ranks = \$60.00 / (youth - brown white)	
*2 <sup>nd</sup> kyu brown belt ranks = \$70.00 / (youth - brown black)	
*1 <sup>st</sup> kyu brown belt ranks = \$80.00 / (youth - brown solid)	
1 <sup>st</sup> Degree Black Belt = \$150.00 / (youth - black white)	



When Aponte Sensei asked me to write a few words for the newsletter the first thing that came to mind was to thank everyone at the dojo for all that you've taught me. I'm not just speaking to my seniors, although they have taught me much, but also to those of you who have attended my classes. I've taught some of you from the first day you walked onto the embu-jo (dojo floor) all the way up to your Dan ranks. Along the way you have all made me a better teacher and person. To paraphrase my Matayoshi Kobudo Kodokan teacher, Franco Sanguinetti Sensei, a serious practitioner upon receiving each Dan ranking realizes that it is not an opportunity to rest but an obligation to work harder and continue to learn so that your students are lead by example and not command.

You have all forced me to continue to improve and grow. I thank you all.

In the past year I've had a couple of significant events in my martial arts training. In July of last year I was honored to travel to the local Honbu Dojo of Araki Mujinsai Ryu Iaido, along with my Sempai, Tim Richmond, and Kohai, Joe Fraizer, to train and test with Dowdy Sensei, a highly ranked practitioner from Japan along with Mike Kazmer Sensei, who many of you have met at our dojo. High-ranking members of the ryu (often including Toyoda Shigeharu Soke, the 17<sup>th</sup> Seito Soke and head of the organization) come to the United States and conduct the testing once a year. This year I was honored to test and receive my 2<sup>nd</sup> kyu. Even more exciting was to watch as my Sempai tested and received his Sandan.

Iaido is a fascinating art and has taught me much about the importance of a light touch. The blade gives an immediate critique; too much muscle and the cut fails; not enough focus on where the Kissaki (tip) of the blade is and the blood you see is your own. Yet all the same concepts from Shotokan are present: connection to the ground, proper use and timing of the hips, movement from the core, etc. The principles of the martial arts transfer and make each better. I strongly recommend that everyone involved in a "hard style" art such as Shotokan join us every Saturday and find out how much the sword can improve your empty hand training.

As you all know I have another passion; namely Matayoshi Kobudo Kodokan. I have trained for nearly 20 years in various Kobudo styles, but have been fortunate to have found and trained for the past eight years with Franco Sanguinetti Sensei,

7<sup>th</sup> Dan. In February 2015 I received my Sandan in Matayoshi Kobudo Kodokan, a ranking that is recognized with the Matayoshi family in Okinawa.

Sanguinetti Sensei has had a huge impact on my growth in the martial arts. Very much a traditionalist, Sanguinetti Sensei teaches more than just the technique. Our requirements for each rank include increased knowledge of the weapon, including its origins and applications in the fighting art. Bunkai is an absolute requirement to progression. Sanguinetti Sensei places great emphasis on understanding not only the Japanese language, but also the Okinawan dialect. I have found that this emphasis on not only the art but also the history and culture of Okinawa has greatly enhanced my personal journey. Just like Iaido, Kobudo is different and yet the same as Shotokan. The core principles of connection, body shifting and dropping, pendulum motion etc., are all involved with the weapon. In fact the weapons in many ways enhance the dynamics of body movement. Muscling a Bo, Eku (oar), Kuwa (hoe) or Nunti Bo for an hour will result in an exhausted and sore body. But allow the hips to rotate and the hikite to pull and the weapons power and speed is visibly increased. The shorter weapons also demand the use of body connection and dropping. To stop a Bo attack with either a Sai or Tunkwa requires the arm to connect with the body and the body to sink using the core and body weight to redirect the power of the attack. But more importantly, to me at least, is that the extra length and weight of the weapon allows the practitioner to “feel” the dynamics at play, more so than with the empty hand.

So yet again, Kobudo has enhanced my Shotokan training. For anyone interested, my group of dedicated practitioners (Dr. Dave Michelson 3<sup>rd</sup> kyu, Adam Chang 6<sup>th</sup> kyu and Drew and Jennifer Clinkenbeard 9<sup>th</sup> kyu) meet on Friday evenings at 7 pm.

One final thank you to Aponte Sensei; without your patient guidance I would never have made this journey.

As Mike Whiteside Sensei has said, there is no magic to the martial arts it is just hard work. I am honored and privileged to sweat along with all of you at the USKL.

Sensei Robert Johnson, Yondan USKL



Bob receiving 2<sup>nd</sup> kyu in Iaido



Bob receiving San dan 3<sup>rd</sup> Deg. BB certificate in Kobudo



Bob testing in laido



Bob testing in kobudo



Sempai Tim receiving his San Dan Certificate in Iaido



Joe Fraizer training Iaido

“Our goal as coach (sensei) is to produce an athlete (karate-ka) that is coachable, respectful, is a team player, mentally tough, resilient, and one who tries their best.” Proactive Coaching

<http://www.proactivecoaching.info/>



Thank you to our senior sensei's: Mike W. Lynn A. James A, Bob J, and Leo S. as well as the rest of our USKL staff for supporting our students, making a difference, through your efforts you help make and keep this dojo going strong. Over time I have seen many dojos come and go. As a testament to USKL, and our senior instructors, our dojo has been around since 1973 collectively, we must be doing something right. Lastly, thank you to all of our students and parents of our youth for your dedication, trust and support. If there are any questions, concerns etc. please don't hesitate to ask.

Good luck and continue to train hard. Sincerely,  
Shihan Ty Aponte

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