

This Explains That

by Prof. Bob Karnes Teaching DanZan Ryu Zenyo Bujutsu

While following the basic kata and then the freestyle drills, magical moments and blatant blunders happen. With the stress of contests, demos, and rank exams you learn what your strengths and weakness are there for your peers and advanced ranks to see. You may also have a better idea on how you may respond to a real life attacker.

Do not find fault or blame explore ways to improve

By objectively evaluating your success and temporary mistakes you grow. If you do not hold yourself to unrealistic perfectionistic expectations you can find a way to improve. This will also serve as a positive example to your peers and to your students. A good instructor will not blame you, but she/he will look at this as an opportunity for better ways to instruct while encouraging you to practice more.

Did you have a moment of “In the Zone”

Have you felt that the technique did itself without and physical or conscious effort like the technique did itself? That is called in martial arts and in sports being In the zone.

Have you done a technique or had a stressful situation where you “Watched yourself” as if you were in two places at once watching as a third person? Western psychologist it is called depersonalization-derealization disorder, and they debate is Depersonalization a mental-emotional Shield or is it a Disorder? Here is a story from my book STORIES FROM THE DOJO.

“No one told me I couldn’t get out of the hold”

As an old story goes... In class one day, the students were all attempting to get out of a hold that Sensei said no one could get out of. A student came in late to class and joined the other students. The student was placed in the hold, and he escaped. Another student said, “Hey Sensei, how did he get out of the hold that was not escapable?” The Sensei said, “No one told him he could not get out of it.” This student did not have the preconceived idea that the art was not escapable.



My third person story. As a brown belt at the Sparks Dojo, I missed the instruction on how to escape the standing 4 stick-torture stick hold.(This is a picture of my Sensei doing the art) I was hesitant to try it, not knowing how to do the escape but I had faith in my Sensei. Just before the sticks were applied I thought I heard Sensei Herb whisper, “Imagine that you are already standing outside the sticks.” I then saw myself captured and then from outside the sticks I was watching myself escape. I got out somehow, going straight down through the sticks without turning. When Sensei joked, saying, “You should not have been able to get out that way!” I remembered the above story and I said, “Sorry Sensei, you did not tell me that I could not escape that way!”

The benefits of slow practice of martial arts techniques

From our martial art training described above we are learning to use these normal reactions of stress to use these mental states to our advantage. The human brain can perceive time differently. If you want the grade school bell to ring at 3:15 and it is 2:30 it seems to take forever to ring. And during summer vacation time flies by. Our experience of time is relative to our expectations. If you are comfortable with things as they are with preferences but no preconceived ideas you can be in a meditative state called Mushin. Being aware and relaxed to respond to events naturally as they occur can seem to slow time as your mind is uncluttered. During slow practice you can find the parts of the technique to be refined. Then engaging your mind, body and intent your technique becomes a skilled conditioned reflex requiring no thought.

Emotional detachment

Do not fall into fear or the anger trap. While working for 15 years in mental health facilities with homicidal to suicidal people and every type of patients in-between our intent was nonjudgmental with detached compassion. You could not survive if you took their mental and physical attacks personal. As a mental health technician (MHT) we did what was needed to keep everyone safe without harming the patients.

For more about this read my book

MENTAL HEALTH WORKERS The Plumbers of the Fountain of Mental Health by Bob Karnes

Where to look at Uke (the attacker)

Do not allow your eyes to lock on to your opponent's eyes or to their weapon. In the beginning we were taught to gaze at Uke's chest or over Uke's shoulder to pick up their body movements using our peripheral vision. The streetwise attacker may attempt to intimidate you with his eyes. Another reason not to make eye contact is that it may trap you in fear or tunnel vision and your 360-degree situational awareness may be compromised. Many martial art masters teach that you should gaze at the attacker as if you are looking at a distant mountain. Advanced use of Ki (energy) and psychological techniques using the eyes are taught in Black Belt classes.

There is a story about a samurai which illustrates this point: The swordsman was preparing to defend against multiple sword wielding attackers. As he drew his sword all but one of his opponents watched the arching, strobe-like glint of the swordsman's Katana (long sword) in awe. These opponents' minds were captured, and they did not pose a true threat. They had already lost. Only one attacker's mind was focused and remained unmoved. The samurai knew that this man was the only real threat to be dealt with.

Exercise for learning the advantage of peripheral vision

While standing, hold your arms straight out across from your ears with your hands in a thumbs-up position. While looking forward move your arms back to your rear at head level until you can see both thumbs moving slightly in your peripheral vision. Drop your chin slightly, gaze and move your arms back to your rear a little more. Because of the space between your eyebrow and your cheekbone, you should gain an inch or two of peripheral vision. Another reason to use peripheral vision is that the rods and the cones of the eyes work differently.

Rods are responsible for vision at low light levels (scotopic vision). They do not mediate color vision and have a low spatial acuity (I was taught that this acuity is not as focused, but it still detects motion quicker than the cones). This is the peripheral vision, where we still see color but not as much. It takes less time for the brain to detect motion, which is what you want in a self-defense situation.

Cones are active at higher light levels (photopic vision), are capable of color vision and are responsible for high spatial acuity. This was taught to me as focus or tunnel vision in which your attention and eyesight is more concentrated, good for reading and study but not as good for spatial or situational awareness. Cones also take longer to process information.

Isshin Mushin Zanshin The mind of training

The Before , During, and After

Martial Arts Philosophy - Isshin Mushin Zanshin Three Stages of Conflict

www.youtube.com/watch?v=ucVq80_21x0

Isshin 一心 as defined, one heart, one mind or one spirit. **Before the conflict.** At the same time, I observe the situation, I connect with the opponent, how many are there?. I get into a stance or ready position. I use my voice to stop the conflict. (*I call this defensive stance and situational awareness PBK*).

Mushin 無心 as defined, clarity of mind, unobscured by mental activity. **During the conflict.** I do not imagine the outcome of the confrontation, I let go of all preconceptions. For those who do not train this becomes their weak point. When you train physically in the martial arts you will find the technique sometimes does itself. No thought, no preconceived ideas.

(without this you are only doing the physical and nothing more PBK).

Zanshin 残心 is defined, as a continued, relaxed alertness after the technique being on guard **After the conflict.** Lingering spirit. Translation: After victory, tighten your helmet strap. Meaning: Keep your guard up until the very end. Reassess the situation, your opponent may get up or you may face more opponents. Remain connected mentally and with the energy.

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