



National Association of Professional Martial Artists

# NATIONAL BLACK BELT CLUB

## NEWSLETTER

### How To Make Your Journey to Black Belt Rewarding

As a martial artist for almost 30 years, I've lost count of how many students I've graduated to Black Belt. I've seen what works and doesn't work. Here's some advice on how to make the journey as rewarding and simple as possible.

It's important to be consistent. Your body needs time to evolve. You need flexibility, strength, speed, endurance, muscle tone and strong bones. There is no substitute for training four to five days a week. Some people take classes and then add home training. Whether you train exclusively at your school or supplement it with home training, it's important to be mentally and physically pushed, consistently, week after week, month after month and year after year. Students who take time off and then add more classes at test time are more likely to be nervous and become injured than those who train regularly.

Another important part of achieving your Black Belt is proper eating and hydration. At least half of how you look and feel is attributed to diet. You need to be at your physical peak the day of your test. Eating nutrient-dense foods and drinking at least 90 ounces of water daily will give you the best opportunity to succeed. Stay away from unnecessary sugars, fats and carbohydrates. Eat two to three servings of both fruits and vegetables and at least two servings of protein daily. Fast foods, processed foods and sugary sweets will sink your dreams to be your best. By eating properly during your Black Belt journey, you will heal faster, build toned muscle and increase stamina.



Martial arts is a journey towards perfection of the mind, body and spirit. Train consistently, eat and sleep right and stay positive and focused. Read good books, listen to inspirational CDs and surround yourself with goal-oriented people who ask more of you than you ask of yourself.

Live your life as a martial artist: you will enjoy the benefits of your training before, and long after, you achieve your Black Belt.

# TRANSFORM YOUR FEARS INTO STRENGTHS—AND SUCCESS, PART 1

You must feed your mind and heart with information that uplifts and keeps you on the “right-thinking” track, allowing you to be resourceful at all times. When you take the time to nurture your mind and heart, you will always land on your feet and make lemonade from lemons.

From teaching woman’s self-defense seminars, I’ve learned, as you may have, that many of their fears were created early in their lives. Those women were conditioned to fear men and often intimacy because of incidents of domestic violence, date rape, muggings, etc.

You were similarly conditioned when your parents told you not to talk to strangers. A fear was created, and the more you heard it, the stronger your fear grew. Fortunately, you became an accomplished martial artist and learned the techniques that both children and adults can use to deal with strangers.

Whenever you have been told that you might be too slow or not smart enough, these or any other negative criticism can create blocks that you must overcome to reach success. On the other hand, every time you achieve success, accomplish a goal or experience a winning situation, it builds a foundation for more success. Your mission in life is to rewrite negative thoughts and highlight your accomplishments.

I suggest that you identify your weaknesses and determine a method to transform them into your strengths. The old statement about immediately riding the horse that just threw you comes to mind. As a martial artist, it should be much easier for you to apply the lessons you’ve learned, so you’ll climb back on that horse and jump over all of the obstacles to your success.

*...continues next month*

## FELLOW MARTIAL ARTIST: GICHIN FUNAKOSHI

Gichin Funakoshi (Funakoshi Gichin, November 10, 1868 – April 26, 1957) was the founder of Shotokan karate, perhaps the most widely known style of karate, and is attributed as being the "father of modern karate". Following the teachings of Ankō Itosu, he was one of the Okinawan karate masters who introduced karate to the Japanese mainland in 1922. He taught karate at various Japanese universities and became honorary head of the Japan Karate Association upon its establishment in 1949.



Funakoshi had trained in both of the popular styles of Okinawan karate of the time: Shōrei-ryū and Shōrin-ryū. Shotokan is named after Funakoshi's pen name, Shoto, which means "waving pines". In addition to being a karate master, Funakoshi was an avid poet and philosopher who would reportedly go for long walks in the forest where he would meditate and write his poetry. Kan means training hall, or house, thus Shotokan referred to the "house of Shoto". This name was coined by Funakoshi's students when they posted a sign above the entrance of the hall at which Funakoshi taught reading "Shotokan".

By the late 1910s, Funakoshi had many students, of which a few were deemed capable of passing on their master's teachings. Continuing his effort to garner widespread interest in Okinawan karate, Funakoshi ventured to mainland Japan in 1922.

In 1930, Funakoshi established an association named Dai-Nihon Karate-do Kenkyukai to promote communication and information exchange among people who study karate-do. In 1936, Dai-Nippon Karate-do Kenkyukai changed its name to Dai-Nippon Karate-do Shoto-kai. The association is known today as Shotokai, and is the official keeper of Funakoshi's karate heritage.

In 1939, Funakoshi built the first Shōtōkan dojo (training hall) in Tokyo. He changed the name of karate to mean "empty hand" instead of "China hand" (as referred to in Okinawa); the two words sound the same in Japanese, but are written differently. It was his belief that using the term for "Chinese" would mislead people into thinking karate originated with Chinese boxing. Karate had borrowed many aspects from Chinese boxing which the original creators say as being positive, as they had done with other martial arts. In addition, Funakoshi argued in his autobiography that a philosophical evaluation of the use of "empty" seemed to fit as it implied a way which was not tethered to any other physical object.

Funakoshi got Osteoarthritis in 1948 and died of cancer in 1957.