

The Execution of Great Ideas

If you've read the NAPMA G.O.L.D. Reports for the past year, then you've probably noticed that the reports often refer to the importance of the execution of ideas. Although it was not my intent, the two definitions of the word "execution" are significant to my point. I originally meant the implementation of ideas, or putting ideas into action. Ideas are never really great until they become actions that lead to benefits or desired results. It also occurred to me that we often "execute" our ideas (as in capital punishment) because we fail to act; they just die on the vines of our thinking.

The ugly truth is that it is popular and exciting to talk about ideas and write books of ideas, but often that's all—talk and words, but no action. Our lives are filled with great ideas, but too many of us don't benefit from them because we don't act.

Governments, private organizations, schools, doctors and countless other professionals have told us repeatedly that everyone should exercise everyday, sleep seven to eight hours every night and eat these foods and avoid those foods.

These are great ideas with great, positive benefits, but still obesity continues to increase and too many people try to live their busy lives with inadequate amounts of sleep.

"To know but not to act is to not know at all."

ANCIENT CHINESE PROVERB

Information and education provides each of us with the POTENTIAL to act on great ideas, but they are only half of the equation. The other half is consistent and persistent action.

I am confident that the new information and educational ideas in the G.O.L.D. Reports have helped you train your staff to become better individuals, martial artists and instructors, and that, in turn, has benefited your students.

This G.O.L.D Report, however, will not present new ideas, but return to the basics, which all of us should

continue to study and practice, because knowing and executing the basics is what makes any instructor great.

To use a sports analogy, Larry Bird, the great Boston Celtics basketball player, ritually practiced simple set shots after every game. A player of his caliber certainly mastered this most basic of shots many years earlier, but to Larry, this was how he had developed himself into a great player. His secret was to continue to refine and practice the basics because he knew they were the real source of all greatness.

Let's explore some of the basic (and great) ideas that can make any instructor a great person and teacher, if he acts on those ideas.

1. Arriving early to teach a class — This is an action that should be a daily habit, without exception. Nothing instills more confidence in students and reveals the excellence of your operations to parents than a punctual, well-prepared staff. Running into the school at the last minute to change into an uniform and walk onto the floor unprepared isn't professional and mars the image of the instructor, your school and your programs.

"On time is five minutes early."

2. Professional appearance — As the great Zig Ziglar says, "I would go to war and die, so everyone would have the freedom to wear their hair any way they wished, but I would never hire them, looking un-kept." A person's appearance may or may not reflect the person inside, but personal appearance is definitely important to first impressions. In the martial arts school setting, groomed instructors and staff members are positive role models, help to draw teacher and student closer for better instruction, and reflect the professionalism that helps you promote your programs in your community.

"The way you look on the outside, can improve the way you feel on the inside."

BLACK BELT LEADERSHIP

GUIDANCE ON LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

3. Greeting Parents and Students — The most important word in the world is A PERSON'S NAME. Train your staff to refer to every student by their names and every parent, as Mr. or Ms. This must become an absolute, unconscious habit, much like breathing. For without this level of respect, your school will find itself choking to death. The effect of this rather basic, but all-important, "great" idea, will be profound. Those who are always in the habit of giving respect first will earn respect easiest. Everyone always deserves this level of respect. Remind your G.O.L.D. Team to greet everyone, warmly and genuinely, and treat them, according to the Golden Rule. You can create a culture of positive energy in your school everyday—and it all starts with a single greeting.

Principle #1: Be genuinely interested in other people.

DALE CARNEGIE

4. Students First — Everyone on your G.O.L.D. Team must be a dedicated, eager student to be an excellent teacher. Student and parents are able to recognize an instructor who "walks the talk;" someone who wants to improve himself to help improve his students. Their lives may be busy, but nothing is more valuable to your G.O.L.D. Team's performance than continuous personal development. "Actions are caught before they are taught." (Kovar's Martial Arts Career Training Manual)

When you walk your talk, people listen.

GERMAN PROVERB

5. Be the Light — Your G.O.L.D. Team members must always be a source of positive energy in their classes and throughout their lives. Each of them must understand that they control the energy level in the teaching environment, and they have a choice to create a positive, negative or neutral experience (no impact) for their students. Your G.O.L.D. Team members must always strive to "be the light" of confidence, encouragement and opportunity for all the students that choose to train at your school.

Treat people the way they ought to be and you help them become what they are capable of becoming.

JOHANN GOETHE, GERMAN POET

6. Continuous Improvement — A basic component of your staff development program should be the expectation that every G.O.L.D. Team member will continue to improve and upgrade his or her skills. Each team member must also contribute to this effort through his or her drive and desire to exceed past performances. You can help them understand and act on this great idea by teaching them to ask for your feedback after every class in which they've assisted. How they act on that feedback tests their drive to improve their teaching abilities.

*Winning doesn't always mean finishing first.
Winning means that you are doing better than
you have ever done before.*

BONNIE BLAIR, OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALIST IN SPEED SKATING

7. Teach Self-Discipline — Understanding the difference between self-discipline and discipline is a basic idea that deserves more action by your G.O.L.D. Team. Self-discipline means that one takes the initiative to be responsible and complete tasks without being reminded. Discipline typically requires a command, telling students what to do rather than showing them what to do. To instill and control discipline, students are commanded to perform push-ups as punishment. Self-discipline motivates one to achieve because of positive, internal reasons, not the pain of negative, external forces, such as push-ups. When your G.O.L.D. Team instills students with self-discipline, you hear positive phrases, such as P.C.P. (praise, correct, praise), and much encouragement. Even higher ranked students need praise and encouragement, so teach your G.O.L.D. Team members to mix praise and corrections because students with darker belts still deserve to be nurtured just as much as when they were White Belts.

*"Let no one ever come to you without leaving
better and happier."*

MOTHER THERESA

These are some great ideas and basic habits that every G.O.L.D. Team member should learn and learn how to execute. When they do, they create outstanding learning experiences for their students. These are also incredibly important human-relations habits that will

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help your team members to increase their influence in their personal lives.

Use the material as a single G.O.L.D. Team meeting and also as a continuous reminder of some of the basic and great ideas that require our actions everyday. Remember, it's all about execution!