

NEWSLETTER

April 2005



It's Too Early To Quit

Jason Hindley

When I was 12, a school friend invited me to a karate class he had begun attending. Being a fan of the martial arts movies at the time, I went along hoping to learn some 'cool' moves. I quit after the first class, simply because I could not do a kick I had been shown perfectly. Four years later, I went along to another karate class. After that class I still couldn't kick perfectly, but I decided to at least try again, because this time I understood that you can't do something perfectly first time. I haven't stopped training since.

My point? At the first class I expected too much from myself. I was a fit kid, and I could do most sports well the first time I tried them, but I couldn't master karate at my first class so I quit. When you think about it, who excels at anything when they do it for the first time? Could you do your job perfectly from day one? Or did you need some coaching and experience before you got really good at it?

I see this a lot in beginners to the martial arts. The teacher demonstrates a technique, the new student tries it and can't do it as well as the instructor, so the new student gets angry and upset with themselves. They forget that the instructor has trained for many years, and has put thousands of hours in on the mats to perform that technique so well.

Even the senior students and blackbelts have to contend with this. Whenever I pass a test, there is a whole load of new techniques to learn, and I always feel like a beginner again when I start to practise them. Why is it that I can throw brilliantly one week, then when asked to do it in a different way it feels like I have never thrown anyone before?

It is important to give yourself time to learn. It will take time to ask your body to move in a way that it has never done before. Take it one step at a time, say the Japanese and then practise the movement. Do it over and over and over again. In time, you will learn how to do the technique properly.

Remember that the easiest thing in the world to do is quit something. It is much harder to see something through to the end, but much more rewarding when you get there. A successful businessman once told me, "it's always too early to quit". This is a personal mantra for me now. How good could I be now if I had not quit that first lesson when I was 12?

Also remember that different people learn at different speeds. Some people will pick things up so much faster than you will. It is not important how fast they get it, focus on your own learning and make sure that in time you get it.

The spirit of our martial arts is to never give in, to continue through hardships and gain victory in the end. Whenever things seem tough, both in martial arts training and in life in general, I urge you to think "its too early for me to quit!" It is at this time that you can really appreciate the art of setting goals for yourself.

Train hard,

Jason Hindley
Dojo Cho
Kinkan Dojo