

With Knowledge Comes Responsibility

In 1945, Franklin Delano Roosevelt said, “With great power comes great responsibility.” There is another saying that says, “Knowledge is power.” Now, if “knowledge is power” and “with great power comes great responsibility,” it would be fair to say with the acquisition of vast knowledge comes a required vast responsibility...and so it is with Martial Arts.

It is our belief that knowledge of Martial Arts sets us apart from other people, in general. This is the reason why some people look at us the way they do when we’re telling them something about some technique we’ve learned. They sometimes look at us like we are just crazy. What do we know?

We know something that others do not, or choose not, to accept. We know when others just believe. We see what others, at times, cannot see. We know what drives us to learn more. We, as students and teachers of Martial Arts, learn to observe the changes in our body, our attitude, and our life. It started us on this journey of a lifetime—for knowledge and understanding.

Martial Arts is truly a powerful thing. It is NOT, however, where our true power resides. Our true power resides within each and every one of us; in our knowledge of the “art” we have chosen to study, the glue that holds it all together, the Philosophy, and, finally, how we use that knowledge. It is said that “knowledge is contagious. Infect truth.” If there is anything that we as teachers want our students to “catch”—it should be knowledge.

I know that it is difficult sometimes to teach martial arts—I have had trouble, too. It is especially hard to explain to students how to draw the line in applying certain techniques. Just because we **can** do a thing—doesn’t mean we **should**. Knowing when “**enough is enough**” in any given situation is a difficult and sometimes painful lesson to learn. Meet force with force and then a little further. This is a critical stage for our students. We must use our knowledge and experience as teachers to help them learn how to make good decisions. I face this decision-making process everyday in my job as a bounty hunter/bail bondsman.

The stages of students are typically fear and apprehension, then faith, and finally knowledge. Each step involves a different type of awakening and realization about one’s self, one’s life, and about martial arts. With each step of the journey, understanding becomes more simple and obvious about who we are and where we are going. The ultimate goal of a martial artist is the black belt...but it shouldn’t stop there. It has been said that the first level black belt means that we are good at the basics. The next steps we take on the path is where we begin to learn the real “knowledge and power” of Martial Arts.

Remember, our Knowledge is our Power and with this tremendous power comes great responsibility. The responsibility that we, students and teachers, have is to “infect” truth or knowledge and its application of such. This calling for a martial artist is both a gift and a curse.

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