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My previous bulletin was dealing with Energy and Mass as it relates to Kihon and Waza. I am hoping that you have gained more insight into how important it is for things to work together in a sequential pattern, thus allowing you to be able to maximize your Waza.

Here again, proper training is very important as I stated in my last month's bulletin on what to look for in, martial art organization, or school. I am reminded of the Karate Kid movie when Miyagi said. *"Not bad student bad teacher, teacher say student do."*

Let's assume you have a good understanding of the Kihon and Waza I have outlined in my previous bulletins.

The next issue will be very hard to accomplish for some because of physical, mental, and genetic makeups. Let's face it; there will be those that have it and those that will be average or not capable at all. I know that's a harsh statement to make, but everyone has to face reality. "Example" everyone can't be a doctor, lawyer, or an engineer, you have to know your limits.

As an instructor, you will have parents who bring their kids to take karate. That is the keyword. "Take karate." A dojo is not a day-care or playground. I make it understood to the parents that I teach the martial arts; I am not a baby sitter.

I inform the parent that I will give their child a free class, sometimes two based on that child. From this, I can evaluate if the child is ready or not. I have told many parents that their child is not ready at this time and that I would not fill comfortable in taking their money. In almost every situation, they do come back and thank me for being honest and straight forward.

I and my senior students have one basic rule I follow when teaching. That is, teach in a manner that you would like if you were the student. And understand that most everyone can learn, but we all have different levels of learning ability. Over the years, I have noticed that this is the biggest problem most instructors have is the inability to break down what they know to a level that all their students can understand.

Bunkai, Defined as "Analysis." The detailed study of martial arts techniques. *So why not Bunkai your teaching skills so that all may understand it.*

COORDINATION/BALANCE:

Coordination: As it relates to sports. **Balance** is the ability to stay upright or stay in control of body movement, and **Coordination** is the ability to move two or more body parts under **control**, smoothly and efficiently.

There are two types of balance: static and dynamic. Static balance is maintaining equilibrium when stationary, while the dynamic balance is maintaining equilibrium when moving. We use our eyes, ears, and 'body sense' to help retain our balance.

Coordination requires not only good balance, but good levels of other fitness components such as strength and agility. Balance and coordination can be improved through training and practice within specific sports.

There are many sports activities that a person can take that will help to achieve better balance and coordination. The one that I prefer is Gymnastics since this was the sport that I was good at during High School. Specifically, the rings, trampoline, and pommel horse. Before you ask. Yes, I did compete and later taught at a local YMCA. **Note:** Gymnastics is not for everyone, so parents, and take precaution when thinking of putting your child in this program. In my opinion, Karate and Gymnastics go hand in hand since both require a great deal of balance and coordination, in my opinion, gymnastics being at the top of the list. Ask yourself how many overweight gymnasts you see.

One of the key factors to achieve a high level of balance and coordination will be based on his or her physical makeup; for most of us, weight is at the top of the list. Even now, I strive each day to control my weight. I am not as physical as I once was, but I am better than most that are my age because I continue to push myself. Parents who

meet me for the first time and see me during a class session later ask. How old are you? I always say, guess? Ninety percent of the time they put my age 10 to 15 years less than it is. When I tell them, I usually have to show my ID. Does this make me feel good? Dam straight, I work hard to maintain good health. I honestly believe everyone can be better than what they are.

Understand yourself, set realistic goals, follow this up with a good training program and stay consistent, train with a mission. If it's karate, then understand your Kihon/Waza, practice them slowly, and understand all that you do, feel it. Remember, there is no **substitute for time and patience**. Very few programs can carry you through the rest of your life as a legitimate Karate program can.

There are plenty of exercises that you can do that will help you to achieve better balance and coordination. Some will be sport specific so listen to your instructor.

A very simple exercise you can do almost any place would be to put all your weight on one leg. Take the other leg and move it slowly front to back side to side and adjust your leg height as you progress. Do some of your kicks with the extended leg **slowly**. Slow will increase balance much better than doing it fast. Repeat this procedure with the other leg. You can add to this by punching with either hand while moving your leg.

Another simple but effective coordination and balance exercise would be to get yourself a 2x4x8 and lay it on the floor. Wide side face down and walk forward end to end and then backward. Use your imagination. **Do these exercises often.**

I want to clarify something here. I am referring to karate here as a sport, only to show its relevancy to balance and coordination.

In my opinion this is one of the better definitions of what is "Karate?"

Karate is not a sport. It is a way of life. It is not practiced for the sole purpose of entertainment or for money. Karate is there to teach you to endure hardships, to persevere your aims in life, and never to give up or give in.

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Remember: "When you think you know it all, that's when you lose."

Kaicho Davis

