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I would like all of you that are receiving my bulletins; please send me an email confirming you are receiving my information. A YES or NO would suffice.

I will be combining the Oct. and Nov. bulletin together due to a lot of school

activities and holidays that has put me behind.

"If you want to teach people a new way of thinking, don't bother trying to teach them. Instead, give them a tool, the use of which will lead to new ways of thinking."

BUCKMINSTER FULLER

Here recently, I had a comment made to me that I was very technical in my teaching. I considered that statement as a compliment. I limit my technical training only to the upper black belts. A black belt of Sandan and higher should be concentrating on and understanding the technical aspects of the martial arts. Otherwise, you are just another monkey see monkey do.

To master your martial arts, you must ensure that your focus and endeavors are always ongoing and never wane. Mushahi expressed this principle by saying, *"you must surpass today what you were yesterday."*

The Japanese have a concept expressed in the word Kaizen (kai-zen). Which translates as "continuous, incremental improvement." It is a tendency for most people to stop training, to stop trying to improve after they reach a certain level skill-and this is one of the reasons why the Japanese have had an advantage in virtually everything they do. They have been

culturally conditioned to never stop training and to know that there is order in all things. Your training in martial arts should also follow a pattern, progression or order. For without order, you have nothing but chaos.

If I were to ask you to put in order what you think would be the most important requirement to achieve mastery in the martial arts, what would they be? Now that is assuming you have a very knowledgeable instructor or you're an instructor still in training and having many years of experience.

The following are some terms you need to understand.

Kihon is a Japanese term meaning "basics" or more precisely, "fundamentals." The term is used to refer to the fundamental techniques that are taught and practiced as the foundation of most Japanese martial arts.

Waza, a Japanese term for moves/technique:

Technique: is a skill and ability in an artistic, sporting, or other practical activity that you develop through training and practice. A way of doing an activity that needs skill: a way of performing a skillful activity.

Being technical in your understanding of kihon and waza and how it applies to one's self through countless hours of practice, may translate into what the Japanese call Mushin No Shin.

Mushin No Shin, a Zen expression meaning the mind without mind, and is also referred to as the state of "no-mind". That is, a mind that is highly aware, not fixed or occupied by judgement or emotion and thus is open to everything.

We will all experience mushin, "no mind", in one way or another. A good example would be the ability to type without thinking, and the simple task of walking.

Mushin is accomplished when a person reacts according to all the study and training that has brought the karateka to this point. Relying on, not what you think should be your next move, but on what you trained, instinctive, subconscious reaction directs you to do.

My order of training is below. If you study and train each and everyday **No 1 and No 2** and follow Mushahi's quote, "**Surpass today what you were yesterday.**" You may, in time, achieve **No 3**.

No 1- Kihon/Waza

No 2- Technique/Technical

No 3- Mushin no shin

I have been training in martial arts since 1973 and had my first school in 1975 and still actively teaching. If I were to rank my journey to the top of the mountain, ten being the end of my journey. I would rate myself at five. I say that with all honesty. The more I learn, the more I see there is to learn. With each move, I see my journey becoming longer. To be complacent before the journey ends is to be a loser. I will never be less than what I strive to be.

With each class, I learn a little more; I stay open-minded to everything and everybody. I am constantly striving for perfection, both in mind and body. I will NEVER say, I know. Should this happen, I would be like so many others who have become complacent.

There are those that just after a few years of training, claim to be masters. They take on names and titles such as Soke, Dr. Professor, Shihan, Hanshi, and others to feed their ego. With none having substance.

Most of these wanna-bees started with good intentions, with the desire to learn the true meaning of the martial arts. But somewhere along the way, they lost sight of their objective and developed an ego. There are many reasons this happens, which I will not go into at this time.

During my years of training under Richard Baillargeon there were times even I got a little cocky and felt that I knew it all. I

believe we all go through this phase; its part of learning who and what we are. Many continue this path and develop egos.

Thanks to Mr. B he put me in my place. I did not take what he had said as an insult but rather as corrective criticism. Thank God that I was able to step back and regroup, think logically, and face reality.

If you have become complacent in your training and are too busy showing off, what you think you know, then you have no time to learn and to see just how little you do know. ***Your technical ability will define who and what you are.***

To those who want to reevaluate what you think you know. You must first admit that you have a problem. Then look into what it takes to overcome that problem.

Now comes the hard part. You must be willing to listen, keep an open mind, and put all that you thought you knew on the back burner. You may feel you're starting over again, when, in fact, you're not, you will be ahead of the game. You will be leaning to rethink those moves and techniques that you have been doing may not work, as well as you have previously thought.

You will, in the end, become a better instructor. To know, right is to know wrong. You become a **Believer**. *“One who values*

truth and fights for upholding what is honest, authentic, genuine, and real. A believer will not surrender to deceit and treachery and manipulation.”

It is crucial to understand that proper technique can only be achieved through your understanding of the **anatomical, mechanical and bio-energetic** aspects of the body. This became more clear to me when I became an Associate Member of **AGK, American Goshin Budo & Kobudo**, under Kaicho Velez.

The key to understanding and executing the proper techniques used in the AGK, Waza, is to have a knowledgeable Instructor.

Shihan John Sliger, AGK's Fucho Kaicho, is my instructor. I have been making a three-hour trip every Sunday to train with him, *Provided one of us has no prior engagement*, for almost four years. I have seen how all the arts that are taught in AGK, but in particular Goshin Budo Jujutsu, can enhance my practice and understanding of my existing Ryu-Ha.

Without going into a lot of detail here, I only want to say if you go slow, feel every move, practice every day, and understand anatomically and mechanically how the moves work, then you're on your way to properly learning your martial art.

If you follow the above order/sequence to practice your kata, jiu-jitsu, and Kobudo, you will be surprised by what you will feel and see. It is all intertwined. Leave one step out of order and you will not see the entire picture.

If you wish to be removed from the e-mail list, say so. Or if you know someone who would be interested in the bulletin forward it to them. ***Remember you don't know what you don't know.***

Kaicho Davis