



ZenQuest Martial Arts Center

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An Okinawa Karatedo Association, Demian Mata Ju-jitsu Network and Siyodtong Boston Affiliate

NEWSLETTER March 2019



Calming Down

Probably the greatest benefit of practicing a martial art is an improved state of mind. Through consistent training we can learn to improve our concentration, focus, and awareness. In order for any of THAT to happen, we also need to learn '**Fudoshin**.' This is an important principle that applies to every martial art at ZenQuest, and is taught in each class. Fudoshin is a Japanese word that translates to "immovable mind." The best way to understand what that means is to think of it as a mind that cannot be distracted or moved from it's momentary focus. It is a state of emotional stability, calmness and peace...even under great pressure.

During the feudal period in Japan the warriors of the day, known as the Samurai, learned that having a strong and unyielding mind was crucial to their success in battle. Those who could stay focused and calm in battle succeeded, and those who buckled under pressure perished. Although most of us will never have to defend ourselves in a life and death confrontation, we can apply the principles that worked for the Samurai in our training, rank promotions, demonstrations or competition.

Being more calm, focused and stable can be learned in training. Essentially, when you step onto the mats you want to adopt a calm and positive attitude. Whatever exercises or drills you do, you deliberately practice being calm and focused. Even under the pressure of sparring or rolling, you do your best to stay totally calm and focused. Over time, this becomes your normal mode of operation. Eventually, you can bring this to all other aspects of your life!

Admittedly, this is easier said than done, and there are many ways that it can be sabotaged or even completely prevented. Some students can train for years without ever learning to really immerse themselves into their training and learn these valuable principles. Some students (especially children) can be so overwhelmed by the commitment, effort and social aspects of the martial arts that they never actually get started, in spite of wanting to do just that.

Here are some common pitfalls that can ruin your progress along the road to calmness:

Anxiety - Uncontrolled anxiety can shut down the ability to settle into a healthy mentality in training. This can be social anxiety, fear of failure, stress and anxiety about life, or even an anxiety disorder. Students who struggle with anxiety should make calmness and Fudoshin training a high priority in their practice. Although it may be especially challenging at first, these students stand to benefit the most from this aspect of martial arts training.

Distractibility - Students who are easily distracted will also have difficulty getting started with any of the mental aspects of training. Some students will be distracted in drilling techniques and strategies and only try to focus during sparring or rolling. But calmness and focus should be practiced consistently throughout all different aspects of training. Signs of distractibility can include constantly talking or joking, thinking about

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Fudoshin

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Timeliness A Must

Recently, we've seen a dramatic increase in the number of children showing up for their classes late. In some cases, kids arrive for their class as much as 15 or 20 minutes after the scheduled start time. This is not only distracting for the other students and instructors, but also makes it difficult for the tardy student to enjoy their class and learn.

Tardiness can affect several aspects of the student's participation. First, the instructor will usually explain what the plan is for that day's class to the students. Kids who miss this may struggle with understanding the theme or message of the class. Next, most classes begin with exercises designed to warm-up, and stretch and strengthen their bodies. Warm-ups also help to minimize injuries, and helps build focus and immersion for more complicated skill-building drills and activities. Arriving late can also make a child feel alienated from the rest of the group, distracting them from learning and enjoying the class. All of this can be exacerbated when the child has learning challenges or behavior issues.

So, if you're a parent or caretaker responsible for bringing kids to classes, please arrive about 5 minutes before their class begins. This allows them to remove their shoes, stow their gear, and mentally prepare for class. If the student needs to change into their uniform, they should be given another 5 minutes to get ready. Arriving on time will ultimately allow them to maximize their participation and progress in their martial arts journey. Please remember to keep track of tuition due dates and be prompt with this aspect of the student's participation, too.



Open House 2019

ZenQuest will be holding it's annual Open House on Saturday, April 27th. The event will feature free trial classes, tours, games for kids, giveaways and FREE self-defense clinics. You can also pick up some goodies from the Bill Wright Scholarship Fund, talk to them about applying for low-income assistance.



A FREE Children's Self-defense Clinic will be offered from 2:00 to 3:00 PM. This will include a discussion on bullying and learning de-escalation and strategies for defending common attacks and holds. We will also touch on school safety, an increasingly real concern for kids and parents.

Immediately following our Children's Self-defense Clinic will be a FREE Adult's Self-defense workshop from 3:00 to 4:30 PM open to men and women. This will also include a discussion on self-defense, and strategies for defending or escaping common attacks and holds that people would likely face in self-defense. The Open house will be from 9 AM to 5 PM. To register for the free clinics or schedule a visit, please call 413-637-0656 or email us at train@zenquestmac.com. See you there!

Weather Closures

Occasionally, the weather will become intense enough during the winter months to present a serious travel risk for our students and instructors. This can result from a single, severe weather event happening at the time of classes; or from an accumulation of events leading up to the time of classes. Other indicators can be other major organizational closings and local travel advisories. If it appears that travel will be too risky during class times, the school will close for that time. Students can verify these closures by checking the school's website or Facebook page, checking their e-mail, and by checking for a message on the ZenQuest phone at 413-637-0656.



WELCOME NEW STUDENTS!

YOUTH: Jack Brown, Luka Riedinger, Carlee Herlihy, Tony Zaniboni, Ava Coe, , Austin Holmes, Owen Corbett, Braelen Kline, Ian Wilkins

ADULTS: Mikyla Wilkins, Tia-Marie Damman, Michael Bragdon, Nikola Cooper -Fateyev

WELCOME BACK: Jeremy Shaw, Mike Reis, Paul Timler, Tim Helmer

IMPORTANT DATES*March/April/May*

Friday, March 15 - No Classes

Sunday, March 31, 1:30 pm - Kyu Test

Sunday, April 21 - NO CLASSES

Saturday, May 11, 1:00 pm - AC Muay Thai

Saturday, May 18, 1:00 pm - AC Uechi

Saturday, May 25, 1:00 pm - AC Jiu-jitsu

Sunday/Monday May 26 & 27 - NO CLASSES
(Sunday Jiu-jitsu Ends for the Summer)**RECENT PROMOTIONS****CRANES:**

Red Star - Greyson Murray

TIGERS:9kyu - Jackson Pemble
7kyu - Nico Dort, Enzo Dort,
Jordan Simmons**PYTHONS:**1 stripe white - Leanne Maschino, Sam Maschino
3 stripe white - Tyler Woodbury**JIU-JITSU:**1 stripe white - Gary Friefeld, Ian Bridgeman,
Phillip Baruch, Evan Consolati
3 stripe white - Kyle Pezzano, Marissa Maher**MUAY THAI:**White - Sadie Giumarra
1 stripe white - Kyle Pezzano, Sean Adamson
4 stripe white - Tilo Jackson***HAPPY BIRTHDAY!***

Ashley Heck 3/3

Katie Soules 3/5

Greyson Murray 3/9

Dominic (Nico) Dort 3/9

Timothy Somerville 3/11

Nikola Cooper-Fateyev 3/11

Jaxson Pemble 3/11

Carlo Petrucci 3/12

Lena Mugridge Neilson 3/12

Samuel Maschino 3/12

Stephen Alsdorf 3/14

Kyren Hanson 3/14

Jordan Diez 3/16

Evan Consolati 3/16

Fernanda Haywood 3/17

Lukus Forouhar-Graff 3/19

Noah Farevaag 3/22

S. Mark Flynn 3/24

Turner Lilley 3/24

Jordan Radhs 3/27

Terminology**"Good Bye" (Daytime)****Japanese:** Sayonara (Sa-yo-na-ra)**Brazilian:** Tchau (chow)**Thai:** Sawadii Krup (sa-wa-dee cup)**"Best Martial Arts Academy"****ZenQuest Martial Arts***Berkshire Eagle's**Readers Choice Awards***2017 & 2018**

AC Clinics

ZenQuest has scheduled it's next round of Advanced Concepts clinics for Jiu-jitsu, Karate and Muay Thai. These are a great opportunity for intermediate and advanced students to practice more advanced techniques and strategies in their chosen art. The next round of clinics will happen as follows:

Sityodtong Muay Thai - Saturday, May 11 (Blue Parjiet and above)
 Uechi-Ryu Karate - Saturday, May 18 (Nikyu and above)
 Demian Maia Jiu-jitsu - Saturday, May 25 (Blue Belt and above)

This training is essential to important insight and progress for these students. So, those who qualify are strongly encouraged to attend. For more information, please see Senseis Connie or Mark. See you there!

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things other than the exercises being taught, letting emotions interfere with class, or taking too many water or bathroom breaks. Distractible students need to identify these patterns and eliminate them as soon as possible so that they can begin to make progress with their mental training.

Negativity - Students who are negative about training, fellow students, or instructors will also struggle with learning to be calm...or anything else. Trying to teach someone with this mentality can be like trying to program a computer with a broken keyboard. Their attitude will prevent the information from ever reaching them. Negativity towards other students or instructors will create unhealthy dynamics in the gym. Training with others in the martial arts requires trust and confidence in others. We all learn from one another in a constructive and positive environment. Negative students will not only ruin their own training, but can be toxic and corrupt others. Of course, every student is given the opportunity to learn and progress, but students who demonstrate a pattern of negativity will ultimately be asked to leave the gym.

Anger - Many people go through much of their lives angry. They take things that other people do or say too personally, and let their tempers boil over too quickly. Going through life angry or getting mad too easily will erode your quality of life, destroy personal relationships, and pose serious health risks over time. Being angry in a martial arts gym will certainly get in the way of progress and cause problems with fellow students and instructors. Students with uncontrollable anger will also eventually be asked to leave the dojo.

Ego - Students who think themselves better or smarter than everyone else in the dojo will likely never begin to learn the most important aspects of training. Sometimes these people will get good at pretending to minimize their own ego and even talk about that, but in the end it is only a misperceived accomplishment in their minds. Some instructors will actually teach a false "confidence" to their students, having them create a fake image of themselves to present to the world. This is especially bad if the student already struggled with an overblown ego and arrogance. But, this false confidence can easily fall apart under pressure. Real confidence is being calm and relaxed in any situation. This can only be gained by perseverance through challenging situations, real achievements, and methodically practicing the mental aspects of training.

Instability - Emotional instability is the opposite of Fudoshin. Students who suffer from this have a tendency to overdramatize things that happen in their life. This can be something they were born with, or a part of their personal culture. These students will be among those who stand to gain the most from real learning stability and calmness, but will also be most challenged to do that. These people need to do their best to practice the principles of Fudoshin in training, and eventually extend that to all aspects of their lives.

It may seem strange that activities that were born in war and self-defense are actually amazing for teaching calmness and stability, but the principle of Fudoshin can be trusted to work for you. So, every program at ZenQuest includes this training. This includes a calm approach to exercises, mindfulness in technical drills, coordinated and methodical breathing, and meditation practice. Although all of our classes including Jiu-jitsu, Muay Thai and even MMA training include these super important elements...our Okinawan Karate program has the most systematic and focused approach to this. Almost every Uechi-Ryu class includes mental exercises for this purpose, which can make an excellent compliment to any other art!

Mastering 'calmness' can have incredible benefits in our daily lives like reducing our stress levels, making us more stable and focused, and helping us to think more clearly. This usually takes time, but with some guidance, it WILL happen! So, keep calm and TRAIN! See you on the mats.



**KEEP
CALM
AND
TRAIN**