



*The FONGline is a Cyber Newsletter
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PEACE & MARTIAL ARTS SKILLS

When we talk about peace and fighting skills: the first impression that comes to mind is two contrasting and diametrical opposite forces. How can you maintain peace and at the same time sharpen your skills to hurt another human being? In order to be a good fighter, don't you have to have the killer instinct? How can you hit or destroy an attacker with a gentle attitude? After all isn't peace the way of the man or woman of the cloth or left to saints? Those are relevant questions. Webster's dictionary refers to peace as "nonviolent", "pacificatory", "amicable" or "friendly". How can a fighter incapacitate and destroy his or her opponent if peace means being amicable, friendly and pacifistic. If you look to the next word in the dictionary, the word peaceful means to be composed, cool, unruffled and steady. Thus is the key to the ultimate approach to fighting skills. When you can stand before an opponent and not be ruffled and tense, you have found the key to winning.

Martial arts combat at its best is an emotional process. It is not all physical. The body is merely the tool or vehicle of the mind and emotion. All great past martial arts masters were masters of their emotions. Morihei Ueshiba, founder of Aikido, even at the age of eighty was able to down any number of attackers. He was known as the invincible warrior. What made Ueshiba so formidable was his focus on peace. His martial arts skills were not in his physical prowess; in fact he was a small fragile looking man. The heart and soul of his skills was his spiritual depth and inner peace.

When Esquire magazine interviewed Bruce Lee in 1972, he was asked why he practiced kung fu. Bruce Lee replied, "To knock the hell out of all my fears, apprehensions and insecurities..." Almost thirty years later many of us realized what Bruce Lee was all about. Bruce Lee exhibited a well-cut defined body; that was the exterior Bruce Lee. The interior Bruce Lee was all about emotions. In all his lectures and martial arts musing his focus was on composure and keeping steady. Once asked, "What is the secret of martial arts proficiency?" He said, "Two words, stay alert and stay alive." Little did I realize the depth of those two words, until recent years. To stay alert one must have inner peace, one cannot carry a lot of emotional baggage into a fight or a life situation. To stay alive means being in tune and harmony with your opponent and your environment.

Martial arts combat is a spiritual and emotional process. Fighting is the art of expressing your feelings through the physical body. Without composure and calmness, the hands and feet and other physical tools would lack direction. Peace plays an important role in our martial arts skills. Calmness in the face of confrontation gives us the edge. Controlling our emotions can help us to control a fight, or transcend some of life's tough issues. Whether you are facing an opponent in the ring or on the streets, you will always have to deal with emotions: fear, tension, anger,

Impatience and many other feelings that can impede your physical skills. Unless there is calmness and composure in the face of these challenges you will panic and lose all you had learned.

In the mid-seventies I had the opportunity to spend an afternoon with former World Boxing Champion Ken Norton at the Broadway Gym in Inglewood, California. He was in preparation for his second fight with Muhammad Ali. When asked who would win, he replied, "Both of us are in top physical condition. It will boil down to the psychological edge." He pulls out a small paper back book he was carrying in his pocket, a book I was familiar with: "Think and Grow Rich." Ken Norton at that time did not need money. He was already money rich, what he gained from that book were the inner concepts such as faith, perseverance, imagination, inner peace and many other spiritual values that can help a person achieve set goals. It was Cus D' Amato trainer of Floyd Patterson, Jose Torres and Mike Tyson once said, "The skill to win is not as important as the will to win. A fighter's character is closely related to his skills." All great athletes have one common denominator; they are able to maintain calmness in the face of challenges. They can keep a relaxed focus in the midst of competition. Being a true warrior is not confined to just developing the body. Skill in handling challenges depends greatly on what goes on inside of you! Life, you see, is an inside job! When your inner space is in order the outer space will fall in place.

Look for Leo Fong's upcoming tape "20 Minute Spiritual Workout for Martial Arts and Other Warriors." This tape will help you to see martial arts in an entirely different light.

Peace, Leo Fong

In this column each week Leo Fong gets many questions from around the world about martial arts, Bruce Lee and James Lee. The FONGLINE welcomes your questions. If you have a question please send to: **Leo T. Fong**

Questions from Master Philip Ameris of Pittsburgh, PA.

Q - Being a pioneer in kickboxing events. How do you feel it has evolved over the years, has it been positive or negative?

A- I believe kickboxing has come a long way since Ron Marchini and I promoted full contact karate in the 70's. Today kickboxing is more sophisticated. In the early days kickboxing was still rather crude. Most kick boxers in the early years were converted point fighters trying to make the transition to boxing with hands and feet, they look rather awkward. Now, kickboxing is a sport with rules. I would say it is a positive sign.

Q - Coming from a boxing background what do you find are the major differences in training methods, attitudes of fighters, quality of fighters and who do you think was the best pound for pound, and why?

A - I would pick Sugar Ray Robinson as the best fighter pound for pound in the history of boxing. He could box with class and hit with the power of a heavyweight. His record speaks for itself. The training methods of the old time fighters are much different

than today. In the old days many trainers did not advocate weight training because they thought progressive resistant exercises would make a boxer muscle bound. The closest to progressive resistant exercise was chopping trees. Today, boxers have the benefit of scientific proven exercise physiology. Evander Holyfield is a classic example of today's exercise technology. He has the body of a body builder and the skills of a world-class fighter. The heavy bag and the speed bag is an integral part of the training method in all generation. The focus gloves help modern fighters to sharpen their timing and punching skills.

Q - In your videos you talk about Martial Arts being a positive metaphor for living, how do you apply your Martial Arts skills to everyday living?

A - In recent years I discovered the relationship to character and fighting skills. When you are a positive human being, you will have a tendency to embrace some of the martial arts physics, whether you know it or not. From my experience as a boxing practitioner, student and historian; the best boxers are the ones who can stay in the moment, who are relaxed-focused, who are confident, who are able to take negative emotions and turn them into positive forces. Great boxers like Gene Tunney, Rocky Marciano, Muhammad Ali, and Sugar Ray Robinson were men of character. Great martial arts masters like Morihei Ueshiba, Bruce Lee, Gichin Funakoshi and Jigoro Kano were men who embodied the principles of life as well as martial arts. Let's take patience for instance; it is an important quality to have if you want to be a good fighter. Nothing can open you up for a counterattack quicker than anxiousness. When you are patient and wait for your opponent to make a mistake you can score with that winning punch or kick or choke. This is one quality I noticed in Royce Gracie in his fights in the UFC. Patience can take us a long ways in life. By practicing in and out of the dojo we can improve our fighting skills.

Q - You have been in the forefront of martial arts for the past 40 some years. What do you think the positive or negative effects of tournaments like the Ultimate Fighting Championships had on martial arts as a whole?

A - I believe point tournaments are positive activities for kids and those who do not want to take the risk of serious injuries. Tournaments are one of the ways to measure the level of your skills and challenge you to develop inner qualities such as courage, confidence, patience, persistence and discipline. Full contact tournaments like UFC can have a positive effect to the extent that it does test the effectiveness, of your reality fighting skills. It has a negative effective in that it looks brutal and primitive at times. Some people are turned-off by the brutality while others love it. I do feel it has its place in the scheme of things. It gives the martial artists more competitive options.

Q - Coming from a religious background did you find any rejection from your peers, congregation or church authorities?

A - Yes, and no. Yes, there were fellow ministers who felt that I was contradicting myself when I advocate peace and love and then practice ways to destroy another human

being. No, many of my peers did not seem to be concerned what I did. The church authorities were concerned but did not make an issue of it. Today, practicing martial arts is an acceptable activity. In fact I did a seminar for a friend of mine the Rev. Ken Fizer at his church in Martinsville, West Virginia back in March. He has a Tae Kwan Do club in the church.

Q - You wear many hats, author martial arts instructor, minister, actor, and much more. How do you set up your days to accomplish as much?

A - One word, "prioritize." Keeping fit is my number one priority. I have learned to say "No" if it interferes with my daily training. I write when inspiration hits me. Each day I have a planned schedule to accomplish certain things. This way I can keep things in order and accomplish what I set out to do.

Q - You look great for someone half your age. How do you maintain your condition and what is your personal weekly training routine?

A - The key to fitness and wellness lies in what I call the Pyramid Power Program; mental attitude, exercise and nutrition. I try to keep a positive mental attitude at all times. I strongly believe that no matter how bad things get, there is always a reason and we must look for ways to turn things into a positive. Everything, no matter how adverse, is the raw ingredient for success. Secondly, the exercise program I practice is one that I developed for myself after I injured my shoulder. It is called "Chi Fung" which is a combination of Eastern concepts and Western exercise physiology. The entire program consists of meditation, stretching, weight training with light dumbbells with circular motions. By the time I complete my routine, which takes about one to two hours, I have completed over three thousand repetitions. Each movement is related to martial arts. Thirdly, I adhere to a very healthy diet. Lots of fruit, vegetables and lots of fiber. I also take two supplements a day; a vitamin pack and a drink I mix called BioLife2.

Q - One of the biggest boxing fights in history was the Tyson - Lewis fight a few months ago. Knowing Tyson's background, what do you feel led to his downfall?

A - I believe Mike Tyson is one of the most powerful punchers in the annals of boxing. Yet, to see him humiliated by Lennox Lewis was sad. Mike Tyson's worst enemy was Mike Tyson. When he was on top, he was erratic and arrogant, which reflected his own insecurity. A bully is easily defeated if you do not fall victim to the fear factor. When Buster Douglas stood up to him, he knocked him out. When Evander Holyfield stood up to him he knocked him out. So Lewis did the same thing. Tyson's adopted father, the great trainer Cus D' Amato once said, "A fighter's character is closely related to his skills." You cannot always win by intimidation. Tyson succeeded against Bruno, Stewart and scores of other more vulnerable and less confident opponents. They were defeated before they entered the ring. Real champions with championship skills are ones who have character.

Techniques of the Month

Footwork

Last month we discussed the importance of Form. In this issue of FONGline I want to discuss FLOW. What is flow? Flow is not merely the direction of your techniques, but also the deep inner feeling that guides you to change angles on your opponent in the midst of an attack or counter attack. Putting it another way: flow is instinct. Let us use a three-punch combination as an example, a left jab, a left hook and a right body punch. When you execute the punches you must feel as if you are connected to your opponent's energy field. You must feel his reaction. You throw the jab, your opponent reaches out with his right hand to block, and without hesitation you change direction into a left hook. Should he bring his right hand up to block, you drop down abruptly into a right body punch. In flow you adjust to your opponent's reaction without giving him a chance to counterattack.

One of the ways to develop flow is to start with a three-punch combination like the one suggested in the last paragraph. A left jab, left hook and right body punch is an excellent combination to practice within the context of the principles that when you punch straight you are narrowing your opponent's defense, when you hook you are widening his defense and when you hit low, you are lowering his defense. When you execute the three punches: what makes it effective is flow, going from one angle to the next without hesitation. Of course these three simple punches require a lot of depth and core training to perfect. Merely throwing the punches will not make them effective in execution. There are a number of dimensions you must work on before they are effective in a free fighting situation.

There are three ways to perfect flow in the three aforementioned combinations: One, shadow box. Move around the room and visualize an opponent in front of you. As you throw the jab, imagine his right hand reaching out to block, change direction into a hook, image him bringing his right hand to block the left hook, as he brings his hand to block drop down and throw a right body punch. In shadow boxing, always start very slow and relaxed. As you feel the flow, speed up without tension. Tension robs you of speed and punching power. A second way to practice flow is to use a three to five pound dumbbell and practice the combinations just like you did without the weights. Move smoothly and slowly. Let the weights flow from one punch to the next. Go for fluidity. A third way to practice flow is to work with a partner. Have the partner block slowly and softly as you punch. As he reaches out change angles from one blow to the next. As you get better, feel your partner's energy direction and let that guide you in changing directions. Flow is as much a sensitivity phenomenon as it is a component perceived by sight. The great Sugar Ray Robinson at the twilight of his boxing career said, "When I start seeing openings I knew it was time to retire." Feeling is just as important as seeing. Move so in fact.

BEYOND TECHNIQUE

Have you ever asked yourself what it takes to become a proficient martial artist? I am sure many will say commitment, dedication, fitness, techniques, experience and many related components. After years of training, research, practice and teaching, Leo Fong concludes that 80% of your fighting skills is based on emotions. How you handle such things as anger, fear, self-esteem and etc. will have an impact on how well you fight.

With that in mind, Leo Fong will be releasing a series of Life Warrior Video Tapes in September.

The series of 8 tapes will no doubt make you a winner in and out of the ring. Subjects covered will be: Exploring Personal Issues, Turning Anger into Healthy Ambition, Building Self-Esteem versus False Confidence, Tapping into Your Inner Winner, Make Fear Your Friend, Your Life Success Plan, The Power of Love, Inner Peace Through The Art of Detachment. When you can put your internal house in order, you can handle every situation in Life. The key to winning is based on simplicity. Getting rid of your emotional baggage can help you travel light and fast.

WORKSHOP & SEMINARS

Leo Fong will bring his Life Warrior and Internal Martial Arts Combat Program to the following seminars and workshops.

September 20, 2002 [Friday]

9:00 Am to 12:15 PM

Leo Fong will give a three-hour seminar on the Pyramid Power Program

2002 Conference on Healthy Aging in San Francisco, California

Ramada Plaza Hotel, 1231 Market St., San Francisco, CA.

For information contact Dr. Sodonía Wilson [415] 405-0434 or go to

<http://www.sfsu.edu/~ohr>

September 22, 2002 [Sunday]

The 2nd Annual Midwest Meet the Masters Seminar in Channahon, Illinois

For information contact Dustin Seale at [815] 521-1815 or email at **SEALE-**

KARATE-JITSU@yahoo.com

October 20, 2002 [Sunday]

Total Approach Life Warrior Seminar

Featuring Leo Fong and Dr. Thomas J. Nardi

For information contact Dr. Thomas J. Nardi at [845] 623-6400

PRODUCT REVIEW

Koinonia Productions has been in the forefront of martial arts instructional products since 1974. Koinonia continues to provide for the martial arts enthusiasts products that will enhance their skills in combat and sport karate. I am happy to review two new products in this month's FONGline.

On the video shelf, Master Leo Fong has come out with videotape titled, "Explosive Trap fighting." This is an excellent tape for those who want to learn how to apply the art of trapping hands to a combat situation. Many practitioners of Wing Chun finds the trapping hand range an interesting component but many also expressed difficulty in applying the techniques in a fast and furious fight for real. Well, trap fighting is your answer. Master Leo Fong has taken the old wing Chun staple and modified it with a Western boxer's mindset to make it more spontaneous, like a voice and an echo. An excellent tape well worth the price.

Another product that would be of great benefit to martial artists is a book written and published in the late 70's titled, "Iron Palm-Open Hand Fighting." this book was out-of-print for many years but was recently re-published by Koinonia. A tribute to James Yimm Lee has been added to the front of the book. Jimmy Yimm Lee was one of the modern pioneers in Iron Palm training. He also trained in poison hand techniques. Learning from James Yimm Lee and meeting several open hand practitioners in the Philippines Leo Fong shares his experience with readers and martial arts practitioners on the techniques he learned from these masters of Iron Palm. There is little doubt that an open hand is much faster than the closed fist.

New KOINONIA Catalog

The new 2002-2003 Koinonia Production Catalog is now available.
For your copy send \$2.00 to cover cost of mailing to:
Koinonia Productions
P.O. Box 7
Woodland Hills, CA. 91365-0007