



GMA News Feb 25

Congrats to our new BJJ Blue Belt—Chuck Goforth

Upcoming events:

Feb 1 st	TKD tournament
Feb 4 th	TKD instructor training in BB class starts.
Feb 8 th	Stickfighting 9:00-11:30
Feb 15 th	Leadership Team 9:00-10:30
Feb 15 th	Black belt prep 10:30-12:00
Feb 21 st	TKD testing—no TKD class
Feb 22 nd	Blue belt BJJ class 9:00-11:00
Feb 22 nd	Black belt prep 11:00-12:30
Feb 22 nd	Go and other Game Night-- Go at 6:00, all others at 7:00-9:00
Feb 24 th	Lil Dragons testing—(no regular dragons class) beg 4:15-5:30, int/adv 5:30-6:45

Valentine Passes Coming Soon

Don't forget to look out for our annual Valentine Day Guest Passes to share with your friends. If they bring one in, they get the bonus, and you still get the referral credit on your tuition.

GMA Wishes a Happy Birthday to:

Brantlee Austin	02/01	AJ Starodub	02/02	Jude Scheve	02/02
Thomas Campbell	02/03	Katie Mason	02/04	Kason Barnhorst	02/06
Garrett Minardo	02/08	Jasper Scott	02/10	Eli Elmore	02/12
Michael Heady	02/12	Chuck Goforth	02/21	Monroe Long	02/21
Collin Goodner	02/22	Aubrey Ledford	02/22	Rylee Bryant	02/25

Quotes of the Week

This month we will be revisiting our focus points.

Training Anniversaries

Cathy Petraits (TCC 15 yrs.)	Clay Thacker (BJJ 14 yrs.)	Annika Gray (TKD 7 yrs.)
Joseph Runnebohm (TKD 5 yrs.)	Seth Mackin (BJJ 3 yrs.)	Lily McDonald (TKD 3 yrs.)
Jude Scheve (TKD 3 yrs.)	Willow Seacat (kids BJJ 2 yr.)	Faowyn Mascoe (LD 2 yr.)
Arias Grimes (TKD 1 yr.)	Lyle Britton (LD 1 yr.)	

This Month in Martial Arts History (selected from “Dates with Destiny” in *Martial Arts Success* by John Corcoran.)

Feb 1882	Jigoro Kano opens the Kodokan and becomes the founder of Judo.
Feb 2, 1965,	Brandon Lee's (son of Bruce Lee) birthday
Feb 12: 1968,	Jean Jacques Machado (BJJ pioneer) birthday
Feb 22, 1972,	Kung Fu debuts on TV and starts a craze.
Feb 26, 1988,	Blood sport with Jean-Claude Van Damme is released, inspiring Mr. Sieg and countless others.

Congrats to our BJJ competitors

Some of our kid BJJ students started the year off right by bringing home medals in the first tournament of the year.



Congrats to

Brycen Byrum Gold and Silver (two divisions)

Cameron Gregory Gold

Colt Goforth Gold

Your Parents Lied, But Martial Arts Is the Comrade Who Will Tell You the Truth.

Contrary to what your parents told you, you are not a perfect little angel. I partly say that tongue in cheek, but I increasingly meet kids who might truly believe it. When confronted with the possibility that they aren't perfect and might actually fail to do something—heaven forbid—on their very 1st try, they might retreat entirely. I see the fear of failure become so crippling it prevents success. And I increasingly think that one of the most important intangibles of a martial arts education is accepting our failures and shortcomings, while also gaining a healthier, more balanced perspective of striving for excellence but also accepting our limitations. I am hardly the only person who has pointed this out, but the broader base of support just gives further credence to the point. So here are just a few examples our students might directly experience, with explanations on how failure can be a good thing.

As our TKD students practice their forms, they should be doing more than just trying to memorize a cha-cha routine. As the new KKW textbook explains the value of poomsae: “In this fight against themselves, if practitioners feel imbalance between forces, disharmony of speed, imbalance of center of gravity, or imperfect body coordination, they will experience imperfection, even if it is minute.” Granted, there are certainly degrees or level to this. Our younger yellow belts are not working on very minute details in their forms, but the process is never finished even for our master ranks.

One of my Hapkido mentors used a phrase that I have certainly borrowed in our classes—his highest level of praise was “that didn't suck!” In other words, it likely wasn't great, and it is never going to be perfect, but it was a lot better than it had been (it didn't need to improve to suck). It is a tongue in cheek way of acknowledging the truth and keeping perspective. Relatively speaking, you might be getting pretty good, but you still have a long way to go. Keep practicing.

BJJ sparring (rolling) will certainly keep you humble. You will constantly make mistakes—from losing micro-battles in terms of position to ultimately being submitted. We have had people come in who can't handle that feeling of failure so frequently, so rather than working towards limiting (but not eliminating) its frequency, they instead choose to retreat from the challenge, presumably to other activities that don't remind them so often of their inadequacies. But to reiterate, the thing to keep in mind is that we all have the same inadequacies, just to greater or lesser degrees.

Similarly, a phrase thrown around in combatives programs, like Tricom, is “die less often.” We are not superheroes or action stars, and in the non-fiction world, there is a real possibility that we can't control all the variable and even make fatal errors. We accept the fact that we aren't invincible and things won't be perfect...we just attempt to stack best practices to increase the probability of not dying.

We have a term in tai chi to embrace the proper attitude towards failure—invest in loss. Push hands is another exercise that reminds us how far we have to go and keeps us humble. One of the primary goals of push hands is stated as remaining relaxed against incoming force. In practice, that same goal might be better described as trying not to cheat by using too much force. Since doing push hands properly is so difficult, both mentally and physically, it takes a long time to get good at. And during this time, it is quite easy for a more advanced player, who is trying to learn to do it right, to lose to a lesser player who still insists on using force. It is easy to get caught up in the competition and respond against their force with some of your own, thereby sacrificing the possibility of long term growth for short term satisfaction and success. You must be willing to invest in loss at this phase to get past that superficial level.



Investing in loss makes you look at failure differently. You are not afraid of making mistakes or looking foolish. It makes you less fearful, less prideful, more open to people and situations. Once we become more willing to accept failure in the short term, we are better able to see the paths to higher levels of success in the long term.

Note that in none of the above examples was the implication to be ok with remaining at your current level. They teach us to be more accepting of where we are, but not to settle. To be happy but not satisfied. We strive for perfection but realize we will never be able to achieve it. As the saying goes, shoot for the moon—even if you miss, you will be among the stars. Such an attitude can still get us to a level of excellence, but one that is balanced with humility by reminding us of our shortcomings. Of course, this is an attitude that should be extrapolated to all areas of life-work or academics, religious journeys and attitudes, other relationships, etc.

The Taichi Chuan legend Cheng Man Ch'ing discussed a term in the Analects (as related by Wolfe Lowenthal). A student remarked that the translation of a passage used the word friend, but noted that friend wasn't the Chinese term in the original. Professor noted that the student was correct, the term wasn't friends. "This passage is about what we are doing here- the study of gung-fu." He elaborated that the term is about a different, special kind of relationship, that he called 'comrades in the same discipline.' This relationship in some ways is higher than being a friend. It is more special to be truthful, perhaps even brutally honest with one another. You have an obligation to both help one another, and to be strong enough for the other to help you.

In a society full of over-affirming parents and friends, the martial arts may be the one comrade you have. The one that will teach you how much you suck. But if you are strong enough to listen, your comrade can teach you to be more successful and more accepting of your limitations at the same time.