

GMA News April 2025

Upcoming events:

April 2nd	Kristian Woodmansee returns for BJJ classes. Fri am class will be Thurs instead at 9:00 am
April 5 th	Stop Bullies FAST kids' class 9:00-11:30
April 5 th	Stickfighting 12:00-2:30
April 9 th -10 th	National sibling day (April 10 th)—siblings can join us for classes Wed the 9th and Thurs 10 th .
April 11 th	TKD testing 5:30 testing
April 12 th	USHF seminar here at GMA 9:00-5:00
April 19 th	Grapple Series event
April 19 th	possible Demo practice 9:00-10:30. TBD
April 26 th	World Tai Chi day celebration 10:00-11:00 at Jimmy Nash Park.
April 26 th	TKD black belt testing 12:00-2:00
April 26 th	TKD bb stripe testing 2:00-3:30
April 26 th	Fuji BJJ tournament
April 30 th	Lil Dragons Testing—no dragons classes
May 3 rd	Break a thon and school picnic 11:00-3:00ish?
May 10 th	TKD tournament--Bedford
May 17 th -18 th	GMA hosts Chinese Sword workshop

Summer day camp dates are set.

Some people have been asking about this year's dates of our popular day-camps. More details will follow, but we wanted to announce the dates so people can start planning for our intensive training camps. We are also excited to announce a special camp on Rope Dart with a guest instructor. Pre-registration discounts apply. Here is what we have: **Dragons camp July 15-17 TKD camps June 16-20 and July 21-25. BJJ camp June 24-25. HKD June 30-July 1**
**** Special camp: Rope Dart/Meteor Hammer w instructor Ben Kennedy June 4th and 5th.**

Break-a-thon and annual school picnic May 3rd

This is one of our highlight events of the year, rain, or shine, at Jimmy Nash park Shelter 5. We will arrive at 11:00 and set up for the picnic. Breaking practice will start after people eat and then we will finish with some games and fun like throwing pies in the face of the instructors. The break a thon benefits our scholarship program!

GMA Wishes a Happy Birthday to:

Noah Wilson	4/1	Corbin Seacat	4/9	Nolan Tupper	4/12
Finlea Stewart	4/13	Sutton Scott	4/15	Camden Christian	4/18
Markus Pasborg	4/19	Sadie Burgess	4/23	Erica Jones	4/24
Charis Hoffman	4/25	Sara Blair	4/26	Cathy Petraits	4/27
Kayta Alonso	4/27	Alex Jones	4/28		

Training Anniversaries

Cathy Petraits (TKD 13 yrs.)	Evelyn Kaufman (TKD 9 yrs.)	Wesley Yoshida (TKD 13 yrs.)
Jenna Berry (TKD 8 yrs.)	Luke Voorhees (TKD 4 yrs.)	Noel Voorhees (TKD 4 yrs.)
Colt Goforth (kids BJJ 4 yrs.)	Finlea Stewart (LD 2 yrs.)	Alex LaPointe (BJJ 2 yrs.)
Evan LaPointe (KBJJ 2 yrs.)	Darien Troxell (HKD 2 yrs.)	Edit Vagedes (HKD 2 yrs.)
Kason Barnhorst (TKD 2 yrs.)	Leia House (LD, TKD 2 yrs.)	Lynne Stewart (LD, TKD 2 yrs.)
Greydon Parker (TKD 2 yrs)		

Good luck to our black belt candidates in TKD and HKD who will be testing at the end of the month or in May.

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

April 7, 1954. Jackie Chan’s Birthday

April 15, 1922 (-Oct 20, 1982). Donn F Draeger (martial arts historian) birthday

April 26, 1963, Jet Li Birthday

April 1922 Gichin Funakoshi demonstrates karate in Japan—setting the course for Karate and TKD worldwide.

April 11, 1955, the name Tae Kwon Do is approved by President Syngman Rhee to describe Korean martial arts.

April 21, 1993, Walker Texas Ranger starring Chuck Norris debuts.

The Teacher Appears When the Ego Disappears

“It is what you learn when you know it all that counts”—John Wooden

Most people are familiar with the phrase that when the student is ready, the teacher appears. Usually, this is cited after the fact, when a student finally “gets it”, as if it magically describes why the conditions changed or why suddenly the student understands. This is not to dispute the validity of the maxim, but I think it would be far more helpful to attempt to explain how we might actually facilitate the instructor popping out of thin air (metaphorically speaking.)

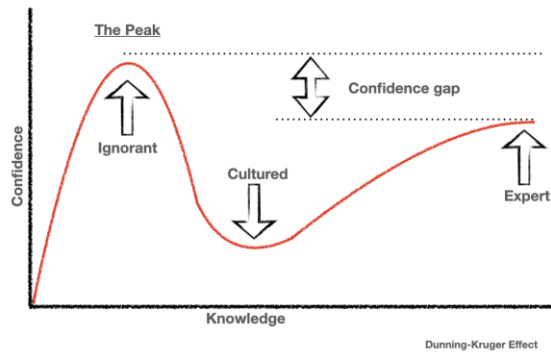
Before I get into my main point, I must acknowledge this ‘phenomenon’ can be explained by or attributed to other, natural progressions. Sometimes it is just a matter of repetition and revisiting a lesson. It is hard to remember all the details of a given technique; you are probably not going to perform it perfectly the first time. You pick up the main points and get the general idea, but sometimes you miss a crucial detail. The next time the technique is revisited, having learned the other components, you are free to mentally focus on the additional information you missed the first time around. You were simply more ready this time.

Another circumstance is when a teacher helps the student connect the dots in a new way. One of the reasons we rely so heavily on metaphors in tai chi is because it is difficult to convey the subtleties, but sometimes certain analogies don’t resonate. Saying the same thing in a different way might turn the light bulb on. My growth in Dr. Yang’s chinna curriculum didn’t really take off until I found a mentor who “spoke my language.” Sometimes it is a parallel learning experience that unlocks things. Working with a Russian special forces soldier gave me an “aha” moment relevant to GM William CC Chen’s tai chi teachings on punching.

I have heard the bromide of the teacher appearing commonly used in both of the aforementioned processes, but I don’t find them to be the best examples. In both cases it is possible the student was ready well beforehand, and it wasn’t the teacher who appeared, but rather it was a particular lesson that came into view as a natural consequence of continued effort. The better question is, what makes the student become ready? What makes them recognize when the teacher is standing in front of them?

That question often comes down to ego. Are you willing to open yourself up to instruction? To do so means becoming vulnerable to the fact you don’t know everything. I am not talking about white belts. Beginners know that they don’t know and are there to learn. Their cup is empty; their clay can be molded; they actively found the teacher and are standing in front of them.

The issue is when the student thinks they know something. Most people are familiar with the Dunning-Kruger effect, which states that relative novices (comparable to say...green belts) wildly over-estimate their competency in something, not realizing they still don’t know all that they don’t know. As R.G Frederick puts it, the real problem is if you decide to camp out on the false summit of ignorance. You must make the descent back down the other side, and then start the climb to more expert views, but it is the ego that will keep you from breaking camp. The “teacher” is on other side of the valley, but it is the ego that won’t let him come into view.



But not all examples of the ego preventing learning can be explained by the overconfident but erroneous mansplainer trying to prop himself up. Sometimes it is the other side of the coin. I like how Peter Ralston puts it: “We believe that someone who is apparently weak, humble, fearful or quite has less ego than he who is apparently flamboyant, strong, opinionated or fearless. This is not so. The form has nothing to do with it. The “flamboyant” personality can have less attachment to its ego-structure than the apparently “reserved” personality. The shy person has as much ego as apparently fearless person. The forceful personality often feels as endangered by the world as the cowering one....it is all the same event.”

Sometimes the student at the false summit of Mount Dunning-Kruger has a sense that the view on the other side is better, but the valley is steep and difficult, and they want to believe they have a similar view of where they are. They are not the flamboyant types shouting at the summit; they have a real sense that there is something more on the other side, but they quietly shrink away from the challenge. Their ego doesn’t want their view of the world, and their place and competency in it, to be challenged. They don’t want to continue to learn for fear it will be painful to their ego and have deluded themselves that their modest gains are just as good. Ralston is again illustrative: “The overwhelming tendency is the desire to win (others’ love, respect, approval, etc. and not to lose the same)...We need to look beyond our own concerns, to see the whole event....Our attention is bound so tightly to our personal concerns, goals, and viewpoints that it is truly rare to notice or experience [anything] out of that arena.” [in other words, the teacher remains hidden]

There is an interesting study where two groups of students took a test that they were told they all passed. Afterwards, one group was praised for their hard work in preparing. The other was praised for their intelligence. Then the students were given the chance to take another test, either harder or easier than the last. Ninety percent of the group praised for hard work opted for the harder test, while the overwhelming number of “intelligent” kids choose the easier route. Their self-esteem was contingent upon keeping up the appearance of looking smart, and they weren’t going to risk that bubble being burst. There should be no surprise that in the long run, the group whose fragile ego kept them from attempting new challenges fared worse.

Regardless of whether our ego keeps us from learning on account of overconfident complacency or fear of being fraud, Ralston once again is perceptive: “It is very conducive to our development to realize that whatever concept we have of our condition, and of our understanding of what we do, it is not complete, and therefore, not actually correct. We maintain a constant condition of limitation; our aim is not to fight that condition, but continually to realize it. In this way, we are frequently, if not constantly, able to transform our approach and our ideas about what we do and who we are.

As Ryan Holiday puts it in *Ego is the Enemy*, “The amateur is defensive. The professional finds learning and even being shown up, to be enjoyable.” The amateur stays on the false summit. Their ego is too large of a pack to carry down into the valley. The professional travels light and finds the teacher on the other side. Regardless of whatever discipline we are studying, we should do our best to travel like a pro—leave the ego behind and soon the teacher will be in front of you.