

SELF WORTH AND THE ART OF COMMUNICATING



When you and I talk, we hear words, but we also hear something more – how these words are spoken, the inflection of the voice. How I look when I talk to you, what you think of my appearance, my clothes, my voice and accent, these communicate something about me, and thoughts that I do not utter also say something to you about me. They are often more revealing than a point I might try to make by punctuating my words with a pointed finger or by brushing a question aside with a smile or a smirk.

Our very being communicates so many things about us. Often we form an opinion of a person who may not even be speaking to us by the way that's person acts. How we project and how we respond say more to others about ourselves than mere words could ever communicate.

Listening is also part of communication. Do we really hear what others are saying to us, or do we form opinions only by their words? When we are listening, do we listen with respect or ridicule? We must remember that others, like ourselves, are each unique.



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In nearly everything we do, we are communicating. A positive approach to self worth will greatly enhance our success in various relationship roles that make up life and that can determine our success.

In the dojo as in other relationships your feelings of self worth effect your success. Whether you are the teacher or the student, you and those who work with you are bound together by a common goal – you both want to be time you spend in the dojo to be successful. You can obtain this when you approach it with self confidence and an attitude of enthusiasm and cooperation. A successful relationship is based on mutual respect, the basic foundation of each dojo, the very first thing taught in the dojo – respect.

As a student your teacher gives you certain goals and objectives to be learned and some day mastered. In return you receive a certain ranking and hopefully a great deal of satisfaction. As a teacher, you respect your students' abilities. Both in and out of the dojo, you share responsibilities, you make your expectations clear. You set obtainable goals for each student, usually a little farther beyond what the student actually thinks they can accomplish. Part of your job as a teacher is to push them beyond what they think they can accomplish. You try to remain open-minded, flexible, and work at creating an atmosphere of trust and good will toward all in the dojo. Your students know they can come and talk not only to you but others in the dojo. They know that their time and work they put in is valued and respected. You must show genuine interest in their goals and aspirations.

Now all of this starts with ourselves. It's self worth. Self worth is how you think and feel about your own self. Do you truly value and respect yourself? Loving one's self is not always egotism. It is a recognition that you are a unique and rare individual. Of all the people who have walked the earth since the beginning of time, there has never been another person like you. Think about that and realize how truly special you are. Your abilities and talents, the potentials you possess are not meant to lie dormant within you. They are meant to be expanded, to be shared with others and to be used for good.

Again, self worth is not always about ego - it does tell us that we have an obligation to society and the world at large. We are all part of humankind, and it is impossible to isolate ourselves. Whether at the dojo, at work or play, we constantly interact with others. Incidents thousands of miles away can change our lives so suddenly, while incidents close at hand can affect



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those who live thousands of miles from our shores. Individually and collectively, we are part of society.

The opportunities that await us are limitless and exciting, be they opportunities at home, or of the world. What we think of ourselves and how we go about spreading our own self-esteem determine how well these opportunities will be seized. You should not miss these opportunities. You won't if you take care to communicate your own self-worth and recognize the self-worth of others.

The one constant thing in life is change. Change is everywhere. In the natural world, in the way we do things, in the way we act and react, in our thinking, in our beliefs, and in our codes of conduct. How we generate change, what we do with change, and how we react to it determine whether we grow or fail.

In spite of this fact that change is constant, there is nevertheless a strong tendency to resist it. It presents an unknown factor in our lives and activities. Even though we may have problems, we are often tempted to maintain the status quo rather than venture into the unknown. That way we feel more secure and things of the past seem more predictable, more manageable.

What happens next? We end up isolating ourselves as much as possible from the impact of change, trying to live with the problems so that we feel "safer" with them even though they may make us unhappy. In other words, we become specialists in our negative thinking, living selfishly to minimize the possible impacts that could bring on imagined new problems with which we are not sure we could cope with. Where does this kind of thinking get us? Nowhere, nowhere at all!

To participate in change is to grow. The very act of living is change and growth. Those who accept and adjust to change and keep growing are the winners, the successful, the fittest. Those who cannot accommodate change do not grow, they die by the wayside - a mental, physical and spiritual death. Without change we would still be driving model "T" Fords. We would still be fighting with flintlocks.

The desire to grow must come from within. Genuine growth means having the courage and confidence to try new things, and in the process, to let go of worn-out and out-dated ones.



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Certainly growth involves risks, and sometimes the prospects appear frightening. No, growth is not always easy, and at times it can be quite painful. You can choose merely to exist, leaning on others for survival, or you can struggle and grow, and live.

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