

The Fighter's Code

By Snake Blocker

When I first started taking martial arts/combat arts as a young child, I was first taught about RESPECT, before I ever punched a bag. What is lost with several modern arts, including MMA, is the lack of respect for the art...for the instructors... and for the fellow students. As a class, we were taught to respect the countries and flags of the places that brought the arts to us. We were taught to respect the family tree of all the instructors (even if you didn't like them). We were taught to respect the systems and styles of fighting which we took. We were taught to respect the judges, referees, audience, fellow students, training studio/gym/camp, and even the fighting ring or fighting area. I was also taught to never insult or put down another styles or systems. Although some styles/systems are more effective in the street...each style/system has something to offer certain individuals. For example, it's better to have my grandmother take T'ai Chi lessons if her body can't do kickboxing. It's better than having her do nothing and sit at home watching television. Knife fighting arts may be better for someone in a wheelchair. Jiu-Jitsu may be better for a larger person and Pistol shooting may be better for a very small lady for self-defense. Tae Kwon Do may be better for a 5 year old child that needs to improve flexibility and learn how to respect others and learn to say "Yes sir."

I hear too many instructors and students bad mouthing others. This does nothing to the global Marital Arts/Combat Art community. I always tell my students, "Worry about yourself...worry about your training, and worry about your own improvement. Don't waste time putting others down! People that put others down are insecure about their own abilities." A Fighter's Code of Conduct, Core Values, and Worldview play a huge role on their overall success in life and in the street or ring. An instructor should encourage honor, courage, commitment, and pride...which are what RESPECT is all about. There need to be a certain level of respect among the students, instructors, and professors. A combat art/marital art should teach, not only effective moves, but it should teach about the history of the art; the family tree; the evolution of training; and the respect aspect. Although, we are human, and "gossip" is a huge part of American social life, let's try not to dwell on it too much.

A Fighter's Code must also include training:

1. You must train in a variety of environments (indoors, outdoors).
2. You must train with a variety of training equipment (pads, bags, punching dummies, hard and soft striking objects, etc).

3. You must train with a variety of people (different shapes, sizes/heights, strengths, ages, and skill levels).
4. You must train with various techniques.
5. You must train in all ranges of combat (kicking range, punching range, trapping range, grappling range, and weapon's range).
6. You must train at various speeds (slow, medium, and fast).
7. You must train using various power/strength (light contact, medium contact, and full contact).
8. You must train in various climates, weather, and altitudes (in the snow, in the desert, in the mountains, in the ocean/lake/river, etc).
9. You must train empty hand and with various weapons.
10. You must train one-on-one AND with multi-attacker (gang situations).

King Solomon (3rd King of Israel) said, "Though it cost you all you have...acquire wisdom!" This is so true. Never complain about the cost/price of seminar, class, or martial art lesson. It is always cheaper than costing you your life for not learning how to defend it...or worse, losing a loved-one because you couldn't protect them. Bridge the gap and better prepare yourself for the worse-case-scenarios in life. Be prepared! Be pro-active!

"Continue to learn...Continue to grow...Never settle for mediocrity! People die living in mediocrity!" – Snake Blocker