

In all the years that I have been a student of the martial arts and instructor one thing always proves true. This principle is something that has always bothered me and I thought I should write a short essay on it. The true principle is that "people are selfish and only think of the short term consequences of their selfish acts." In the martial arts the self comes last when you're a black belt.

How do I come to this conclusion? Well let's look at a few experiences I have had with both students and instructors to create a statement as listed above. When I first opened my dojo in 1992 I had one student who was extremely dedicated to their training and was a wonderful supporter of our dojo. This student would do anything to help us achieve and grow. They trained four days a week, went to every event and told everyone about our dojo to help us grow and achieve financial independence. This continued on for about three years, and then something changed.

The student showed up at the dojo when I was not there and removed their trophies and started bragging about opening their own school in town. They were rude to the students and had the audacity to let the students know they could experience "true martial arts training" at this new dojo. So what happened? What did I do to make this student get this way? These were questions that bothered me for the next year and I spent many a night staying up meditating to come up with an answer and this is what I found.

I had done nothing to cause this rebellion and it was begun because this student wanted to bigger than they were. They wanted to be famous and all the other self serving, greedy bits that would make them to be a "master" of martial arts. For years I had given this student many hours of my free time to develop them into who they were. I spent weekends with them at tournaments and spent several hours in discussion with them about the martial arts. They had been given special training instruction from me to become the champion they had become in the tournament circuit. I had given them my trust, my confidence and much more...the skill of being a black belt. In return they betrayed everything I had taught that the martial arts were. Did I fail as their instructor? The answer was no.

The simple fact is that this person chose to become the arrogant and self serving black belt on their own. They hid it from much of the dojo and my other black belts in order to plan their scheme. They made sure I would be teaching at another dojo in order to get away with what they did because the entire school knew their position under me. This person did everything a TRUE black belt would never do and that was to dishonor both their sensei and their dojo.

So what had changed to cause this student to react in such a way? It is quite simple. They had grown greedy and did not want to wait for either rank or status in our system. I had refused them their second degree black belt because they needed to develop into a better sensei and person. I clearly explained all this to them and told them what my conditions were for promoting. So instead of doing the right thing as a student of the martial arts which is to train harder and make changes in your life, they chose to betray the dojo and me and believe they could go about it on their own, with their own ways...all after only a few years of experience.

What happened is easy to tell. The student opened a school near mine and began all kinds of political rants against our dojo. They stated how we did not train properly and how mean of a Sensei I was. They played their political hand at tournaments by talking down about me, their own sensei. This all lasted about eight months and then their school was no more and they were no longer welcome at many events in the region. Why you may ask? Well here is the answer...I DID NOTHING.

I chose to ignore the issues and deal with the people who were important to me, my students. Some of my students had left to train with the bad seed and some of my students that stayed went over there to work out a few times, all of which I did nothing or said nothing against this student. At the tournaments this students was setting their self up for failure by talking bad about their sensei. I am sure it would have been different if what was being said was true, but many of the people talked too had known me since I was a white belt and knew it was only blowing smoke. Slowly this person became an outcast

and people laughed at them behind their back. Eventually all the students who left realized they were not learning correctly and came back to my dojo. The students that had gone over there to work out eventually lost interest because all this student did was talk about how "great" they were. In reality everything I knew would happen had. Why? Because there is so much more to being a sensei than being good at martial arts. You have to be humble, honorable and have integrity in what you do. It is not just about winning trophies or bragging. We have an honor code that will remain through the politics, through the bad seeds and through the test of time.

This is where this student went wrong and eventually they disappeared into the "could have been's" world of martial arts...like so many other selfish students before them.