



***Martial Arts
Matter***

Master Barry Brill

Why Martial Arts Matter

Discover The Types of Martial Arts and What's Right For You &
The Important Things You Should Know!

By

Master Barry Brill

This book is dedicated to
The Most Amazing Person I Have Ever Met!
To The One Who Is Perfect In Every Way, The One I Dream Of!
To
My Partner,
My Soul Mate,
The Love of My Life,
Bonnie My Beautiful Wife!!

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Preface

Let me introduce myself: my name is Barry Brill and at the time of this writing I have been teaching Martial Arts for 25 years. I decided to write this book because of social media and the impact it has had on my life. All the people I've taught in the past used to stay there (in the past) but now, with Facebook and other social media outlets, all of my old students started contacting me to tell me how my lessons affected their lives and the impact it had. The thought of how I helped them in their lives gave me a deep feeling of happiness and pleasure. I always knew that I had an impact on people and I always took that very seriously, but hearing them tell me in their own words...there is nothing like this. Therefore, I decided to write this book, so I can help educate everybody about Martial Arts and allow all my "future students" to understand the path they're about to take.

Chapter 1

"My Story"

Before I tell you "*Why Martial Arts Matter*" I should tell you "*My Story*", to help you appreciate where I came from and where I'm going. It's funny, I have been asked thousands of times about how I got into the Martial Arts and this is the first time I am putting it in writing (how refreshing, maybe I won't have to tell it again). My interest in Martial Arts probably started when I was about 12 years old. I asked my Dad many times throughout my teen years if I could take Karate, but the answer was always NO! He didn't understand what Martial Arts was so he thought it was just about fighting and being a bully (like my brother, sorry Chris, you just got dissed). My Dad did not understand all the benefits: character building, focus, confidence and the healthy lifestyle the Martial Arts can give. I was a quiet kid and quite frankly, I could have used the extra confidence (just like a lot of kids).

Sometime after graduating high school, I began a part time job while going to school (which my parents paid for). It was now time to find a Karate school. I found a school near my house which I really liked and I told my friend to go check it out also, and see what he thought. We met later that night and talked and I said how great it was, but he said he did not like it at all. I was shocked...and after about 45 minutes we realized we had gone to different schools. The next day he went to mine. Andy and I signed up and the road to Martial Arts for us had just begun.

It was a full year before I told my Dad about it and I dreaded it like crazy because I didn't know how he was going to react. Was he going lose his temper, yell his head off, force me to quit (no chance)? I had no idea and that is why I held off for so long. I loved the Martial Arts more than anything. I loved the feeling I got while doing it and I loved the feeling of empowerment it gave me. It put me in the best shape of my life and it just made me the happiest I'd ever been! My Mom knew right from the beginning (she had to

wash my uniform) and the first thing she noticed was my posture. I had always hunched my shoulders forward and in a short period of time I stood straight and tall. At this point I started having thoughts about teaching Martial Arts for a career, so I knew I had to tell my Dad, but how would he take it?

I remember it so clearly - it was early in the morning. He was in the kitchen in his bathrobe eating oatmeal. I didn't know how to say it so I just blurted it out. "Dad, I am taking Karate." And you wouldn't believe it, you would not believe what he said - "that's good". That was it! That's what I was dreading the whole year! I could not believe it! So smooth sailing ahead.

With that behind me, I could plan the rest of my life. The school I went to had an instructor training program, which Andy and I joined shortly after telling my Dad (I didn't tell him that part). The school I went to was part of a franchise and they were always looking for more instructors to open up more schools. I thought they knew everything (let's just say I was wrong about that). The franchise school location that I joined was new, so I was always the highest rank in the school. Before I knew it, I was working at the school full time and it grew from being open five days a week to seven. I was living my dream. The chief instructor and I got along and we were great friends. I wanted to own my own school more than anything in the world and I worked hard, very hard. In fact, the chief instructor, Todd, and I were doing such a good job that I started to notice something.

After a short time, the other instructors in training were opening schools but not me. I didn't complain much, but as time went on, it felt like everybody was passing me in getting a school. It didn't occur to me until many years later how fast and with so little training that the franchised schools would push instructors through, but at the time I didn't realize getting "stuck" in my first school was one of the best things that could have happened to me. It gave me the opportunity to grow, to learn how to teach properly, and this was the time when I learned the greatest lesson. Helping others is the most rewarding, fulfilling, gratifying feeling you can experience. Early in my training I felt so many changes in myself. My confidence grew and I was focused like a laser. I was on a mission and having the time of my life, until...

Finally! It finally happened. I was next in line to get the next Karate franchise! The replacement was found for me in my original school, and the next thing I knew, it was my grand opening. My life was perfect (I thought)!

There were many problems. I was so young and eager that I overlooked just about everything. The contract I signed for the franchise was totally one sided. The five year lease I signed personally was for a ton of money. The district manager for the franchise was a total jerk. I even remember we were in the bathroom and I was using the urinal and he punched me right in the back for some stupid reason I can't remember. At this time I was making no money. In fact, I didn't even file taxes those years because I had no income... but good news was coming!

About a year later, the district manager left the state and there was really nobody in the company to replace him. So there I was with my school, no one to yell at me or hit me while I was in the bathroom and I was so happy! I was helping my students to grow, learn and progress. At this point I really learned what the Martial Arts can do for others. I knew how much it helped me mentally and physically and I had the opportunity to see the effects on others, both young and old, in a big way. It was amazing, absolutely amazing, until I realized the next big problem.

I was doing what I loved, but I was still making no money. The franchise fees and rent were so high, I felt like I would never be able to get ahead. After 2 ½ years of owning the Karate franchise I decided to pack it in and close the doors. Leaving my students was one of the hardest things I've ever had to do. Even to this day when I see a Karate school close I feel bad for all the lives that are affected. I even had 2 adult students cry on the phone when I had to break the news. Getting out of my situation was no easy task: I owed the franchise \$60,000, I was personally responsible for 2 ½ more years of the lease, which amounted to \$99,000, and the landlord came after me aggressively. I had no choice - I had to file for bankruptcy (business and personally), in order to get out. These were hard times, very hard, but good news was around the corner!

In 1997, broke and on my own, I opened Brill's Karate. I made my start in the local VFW in Milltown, NJ – I rented the hall and started all over again. I was

able to pay the VFW by the week and after a short period of time I was able to enroll some students, pay the rent and have a few dollars in my pocket (by a few, I mean \$3). I was so happy, every big hurdle was gone.

Except for the statistics – 80% of all new businesses fail in the first five years and if that doesn't get you, of the 20% of businesses that made it past the five year mark, 80% of those fail in the next five years, so only 4% of businesses make it to 10 years. It was a good thing that I was still living at home with my parents in the early days of Brill's Karate, because my expenses were low and in the early years I made little money.

Random facts next moving forward...

My favorite statistic is, a lot of successful business owners had to bankrupt a business before developing their successful one (Check, did that!).

On October 15, 2000, I got married. The reason I put this in the book is because if I didn't my wife would kill me.

On April 22, 2007 my only son was born, Benjamin Lawrence Brill, and the reason I put this in he'll probably kill me too, if I didn't (he's just like his mother).

In September, 2007, after 10 years and one month, and with our new baby boy, we were finally ready for the next step. We moved out of Milltown to Spotswood in our new beautiful location!

It took me about nine years of being a Martial Arts teacher before I made a decent living, but the good news is that nobody can tell me I teach Karate just for the money. I always loved the idea of owning my own business and even as a kid something about the challenge always excited me and I've always loved to learn. All my earlier dreams had come true, combining the love of doing Martial Arts, teaching and owning my own business.

I found a great master to continue my studies in the Martial Arts (in 1997 when I opened Brill's Karate). As for business, I started to learn how to run a great ethical organization from all the business mentors I could find that shared my point of view "People First". I read the books, listened to the tape

sets (and in modern days, CDs) (yes I know they're not that modern), and was as great a student of business as I was of the Martial Arts. Throughout all the years of Brill's Karate, we had our ups and downs. It was kind of looking like a staircase going up. But as they say, the rest is history!

Chapter 2

Why Kids NEED Karate!

In the first chapter you learned about my personal story in the Martial Arts. Now I would like to share some facts with you that will demonstrate why I am passionate about sharing the wonderful world of Martial Arts with you. Kids NEED Karate for protection against bullies, for health benefits and making better lifestyle choices, for emotional development and to help with behavioral problems. And to see the biggest effects of Martial Arts training, the earlier that a child begins the better.

Why begin early?

Feelings about self-worth begin to develop at young ages and outside events will either bolster a child's self-esteem or bring it down. When other kids "pick on them" and they don't have the tools to deal with it, their confidence will suffer. And as they get older, it becomes more and more difficult to change the way they see themselves.

As another example, since Martial Arts also helps with fine and gross motor skills and improves balance and coordination, children who take Martial Arts lessons are likely to be better at most sports. Some of us may remember the feelings we had when we were picked last for a sports team (this is a major confidence killer). These and other benefits will be outlined in this chapter.

Self Defense Benefits

The world is a dangerous place. And since children are generally smaller and less mature than the adults around them, these dangers are compounded. When we factor in the additional dangers lurking in the cyber world, it is clear that it is becoming more and more difficult for children to overcome the many challenges that surround them in the playground, in school and even at home. Today, equipping children with the tools to overcome these challenges is as important as the reading, writing and arithmetic lessons they learn in school.

Bullying and exposure to violence

One out of 4 children is bullied every month

(http://ojp.gov/newsroom/factsheets/ojpfs_bullying.html;

<https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=719>), and by the end of their school years 77% of students admit they had been bullied mentally, verbally and/or physically at some point.

But, bullying is not the only cause of violence among children. Children witness acts of violence at earlier and earlier ages from watching TV, going online, playing video games, while hanging out in their neighborhoods and even at school. Children may turn to violent behavior as a way of coping or expressing anger or to gain control or power when they may otherwise feel powerless. And the children who were once bullied may now become bullies themselves.

It is extremely important to rescue children from this cycle of violence. Many school systems have developed anti-bullying and anti-violence programs. But this is just a start and in many cases, this is just not enough.

Structured sports activities can positively channel aggressive behavior and provide a positive social outlet for children. For example, scientific studies [1-3] show that Karate can be used to train students to channel anger, to treat disruptive behavior and aggression, and promote self-confidence. Karate is particularly beneficial because of the absence of peer pressure that often develops with team sports. In a Karate school that allows the child to develop individual goals, he does not have to compete with anybody but himself.

Other studies suggest that Karate styles which teach and emphasize the philosophical and internal components of the Martial Arts, in addition to the traditional physical components, are more likely to help to control aggressive behavior [1]. Some of these benefits are promoting self-esteem and improving concentration and positive behavior. But these benefits are not just limited to violent or disruptive children. All children can benefit from Martial Arts training. In addition, to the health benefits and overall fitness described below, Martial Arts training promotes discipline, respect for one's peers and teachers, and self-confidence to master skills outside of the dojo. And if you

can choose a Karate school that promotes a **fun and exciting environment**, children will want to continue to come to class for many years and the benefits can be realized into adulthood.

How to deal with bullies

There are many methods that can be used in dealing with bullies. Karate, in my opinion, gives you the best set of tools for different situations that might arise whether on the bus, the playground, or even in class. The techniques that are taught in Karate may be a little different than a non-martial artist may assume. One may think that Karate will be used to stop a bully with a punch or kick (although in the very end it may come down to that), but there are a lot of great techniques and philosophies to put into action first.

The first thing that works in a Karate student's favor is the confidence the child has from Karate class itself. Bullies tend to look for the easiest targets and when your child looks strong and confident they will simply pick someone else to bully. The easiest way to stop the bully is to look strong so he will never bother you in the first place.

This and the illustration below are examples of how internal Martial Arts training is important.

Don't look like a victim

Not looking like a victim is the best way to stop some problems from happening in the first place. Karate teaches children to show confidence. When you walk, never have your head down- people see this as weakness and it demonstrates low self-esteem. When you go from place to place, be aware of your surroundings, keep your head up and look strong. By following some of these simple rules, the bullies will look elsewhere. And as mentioned above, the Martial Artist is also equipped with defensive skills if needed.

Child abduction

In 2014 there were almost 500,000 cases of missing children entered into the FBI's National Crime Information Center database

(<http://missingkids.com/KeyFacts>, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children). This large number is attributed to younger and younger children having internet access, at ages when maturity and knowledge about who to

trust are not fully developed. And many admit that they have received sexually suggestive digital material. As a result, there has also been a dramatic increase in cases of sexual exploitation of children since the 1990s (<http://missingkids.com/KeyFacts>, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children). In fact, between 1994 and 2006, ~83% more child pornography cases were introduced into the legal system. Can Martial Arts training help? This story illustrates just how empowering Karate can be for children (<http://www.akravmagalife.com/14-year-old-martial-artist-stops-attempted-kidnapping-her-own/>).

“In early October, 2014, a 35 year old man, 5’7” tall, grabbed a 14 year old girl from behind in a London area park. Turns out he picked the wrong kid. The attempted kidnapping was foiled by none other than the girl herself. Even at the young age of 14, she’d been a Martial Artist for several years. The young lady beat the man off of her, and injured him to the point where he was easily nabbed by police when they arrived on the scene.”

Proper training for abduction situations

How many times do you have to tell your kids to clean their rooms, pick up their toys, and put their plates in the sink? Giving them the proper tools to use if approached by a stranger is at least as important as teaching personal responsibility. These lessons must be continually reinforced in a way they can understand, see and duplicate. Dealing with strangers is a high stress and super scary situation for anybody, especially for children, but if they practice the proper techniques they will be able to do it without a second thought.

Confidence to deal with peer pressure

When your child is very young, peer pressure may not be a big problem, but as he gets older peer pressure problems get bigger and more dangerous. When the kids are in the 7 to 10 year old age range, there is a tremendous amount of peer pressure to “do something” that will get them into trouble. Initially this may be, just for example, a joke on the teacher. But the problems get much worse as they get older.

From the time kids are 11 years old and on through their teen years, they may feel pressured into illegal actions such as taking drugs. This can happen for

two reasons. First, if they have low self-esteem and confidence, they may have a need to just “fit in”. The second reason is that they are scared of what might happen to them if they refuse. So in their minds they may think it’s easier to just go along with the pressure and do what is asked.

For these reasons children should start Martial Arts training at a very young age, so they will grow up with confidence and have strong self-esteem. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, a child’s opinion of himself is formulated within the first 5 years. A parent wants his child to be strong, confident, focused and unyielding, with the ability to ignore bad advice! As parents and Martial Arts instructors, we hope that they will learn lessons early about being a good person and making the right choices. We hope that by learning these lessons at early ages they will be strong teenagers.

Then, if for example, three kids surround them to “convince” them to take drugs, they have the confidence to step forward to the “ring leader”, look him in the eye and in a strong confident voice say, “NO!” You will be so proud when the three kids walk away to pick on someone “easier”.

Physical health aspects

Before computer and video games became a “must have”, children and teens filled their spare time with outdoor activities which provided needed exercise and energy release. With children at earlier and earlier ages become techno-savvy, we have all witnessed the development of younger and younger sedentary kids. The result- increases in child obesity and an increasing number of associated health issues. The story below illustrates this point.

“The patient who walked into the office one day in the mid-1990s didn’t know how sick he really was. He was morbidly obese...The patient essentially had the liver of a middle-aged alcoholic. Yet he was only 8 years old.” The article describes a growing obesity epidemic among children, where obesity leads to liver disease even among young children [4].

Today, about a third of the childhood population in the US is considered obese or severely overweight (<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/an-epidemic-of-obesity>). And the onset of obesity continues to appear at earlier and earlier ages. Obesity is a major public health and socio-economic problem. Childhood obesity leads to increases in health problems including diabetes, high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis, musculoskeletal pain, asthma and a lot of psycho-social problems [5-10]. Since it is probable that obese children will one day become obese adults, all of these medical issues will continue to escalate throughout their lifetimes. Some complications associated with diabetes can include blindness, limb pain associated with neuropathy, cardiovascular disease and kidney failure, and these can begin in children but become more and more severe as they get older (<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs312/en/>; [5, 6, 10, 11]). Obesity can also affect bone development [10] and therefore risk of fracture among diabetics is increased. Unfortunately adult onset, or type 2 diabetes, is occurring among children at alarming rates. About 208,000 Americans under the age of 20 are now estimated to have diabetes (<http://www.diabetes.org/diabetes-basics/statistics/>).

Some of the common causes for the current obesity epidemic in the US and worldwide are poor nutritional choices and a reduction in childhood activity. In short, while children eat larger portions and consume foods with higher fat and sugar content, they also spend substantially less time playing, running around and, in general, are simply less physically active. Some treatment options include medications, but they are often not effective and in any case, the blood sugar of these children has to be continually monitored. We all know how children react when they have to get shots!

Clearly a dependence on drugs to improve the quality of life in children is not optimal [9]. Instead, lifestyle changes which can prevent or reduce the onset of obesity and associated health risks are better for the ultimate health of the child. These include a combination of nutritional and exercise programs.

But it is not always easy to convince children to change their lifestyle habits. Children are more likely to participate in exercise programs if they are enjoyable, **fun and exciting** [12-16]. Therefore, selecting the correct physical activity program which will provide the needed exercise AND promote healthy lifestyle choices will be more successful if the children are eager to participate. Identifying enjoyable physical activities which promote social

interaction (an added benefit for some kids), which do not require specialized equipment and which are available year-round (unlike summer weight loss programs), may be the best remedy to improve the lifestyle of obese or severely overweight children. A scientific study suggested that Martial Arts training appeared to have a positive effect on controlling abdominal fat increases, an important first step to controlling diabetes and obesity [17-19]. And while there is no guarantee, a healthier child has a better chance of growing into a leaner and healthier adult (<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/obesity-prevention-source/>).

Remember- physical fitness is important in not only maintaining overall good health, but is important in optimally using Martial Arts skills effectively to combat physical threats, as described above.

Emotional/behavioral aspects

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a growing problem among children and adolescents and it can interfere with behavior and functioning at home and at school. ADHD also prevents children from forming stable friendships. Treatment generally includes medication and/or behavioral modification. Recently, studies have suggested that physical activity may alleviate some of the symptoms of ADHD so that while it may not be “cured” the symptoms may be manageable. Activities which require memorization and sequential or repeated learned movement patterns are the best activities to help focus attention. Martial Arts is one of these beneficial activities for ADHD patients <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3159917/>; [20].

Martial Arts training can also help in managing pain among children. A program, Kids Kicking Cancer, teaches young patients how to utilize Martial Arts skills in dealing with the painful effects of cancer and its treatments. While the children kick and punch their enemy, it is the breathing techniques that they learn which allows them to neutralize the pain of a needle, the diseases in their bodies and promote a healthier emotional outlook (similar to the examples described above, the internal component of Martial Arts is stressed). Currently over 4000 children are enrolled in the program in the US (<https://www.bostonglobe.com/sports/2013/12/15/rabbi-using-martial-arts-help-children-cope-with-cancer/FI5apwbfiCGUcsh4VatNuL/story.html>).

Summary: In short, Martial Arts is a great alternative to standard sports and freestyle activities for children to improve their physical and emotional health, and offers the additional benefits of learning self-defense skills in a positive social setting [20]; <http://www.resistattack.org/Articles/Child-Safety/Protect-Your-Children-Teach-Them-Self-Defense> . Martial Arts styles which focus on the psychological/philosophical/art components in addition to the physical and defensive components are likely to offer the most benefit for emotional and behavioral improvement.

Chapter 3

Why Adults NEED Karate!

Self-defense aspects

According to the National Violence Against Women Survey, at least 1 in 6 women report an attempted or completed rape ([21]; <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/183781.pdf>). A strategy that has often been suggested to many women is to plead or cry in the hopes of dissuading the attacker. But studies have shown that this approach does not work and may actually exacerbate the attack. Self-defense training has been shown to 1) improve the physical conditioning of women so that they CAN resist and 2) increase self-esteem and personal safety awareness [21, 22] so that they are less likely to look like an easy target. To reinforce this concept, a number of college campuses have introduced the Rape Aggression Defense System (RAD) program, which teaches realistic self-defense techniques against various types of assault using proven Martial Arts tactics. These classes are important because college-aged women are at a particularly high risk of sexual assault as nearly a quarter of these assaults were reported to occur between the ages of 18-24 [23] and the United States Department of Justice data indicated that nearly 1 out of 20 female college students are assaulted each year [24]. These and other women's self-defense classes provide powerful tools to promote increased self-confidence and a greater feeling of self-worth [22-24]. Self-defense training also mentally and physically prepares women (of all shapes and sizes) for potential assaults by allowing them to learn and practice skills through role-playing and simulated exercises and by teaching them how to use impromptu weapons like keys, combs, belts etc. [22].

But crime is not limited to women on college campuses. It is everywhere. While it is difficult to get accurate statistics for individual types of crimes, we have all heard about home invasions, car jackings, robberies, and assaults. Each of us either knows a victim personally or has become very familiar with the stories in the news. Learning how to defend oneself from personal attack can give each person the advantage needed to deter a criminal. And these advantages are not limited to the strong and tough, but can be learned by even

the smallest women and men to ward off their attackers and prevent victimization.

Health aspects

“Americans have reached a weighty milestone: Adults who are obese now outnumber those who are merely overweight...Being overweight or obese increases the risk of a variety of chronic health conditions, including type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Extra weight can also make people more vulnerable to certain types of cancer. The more you weigh, the greater the health risk” (Star Ledger quoting JAMA and the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute, June 25, 2015, p25). Obesity contributes to an estimated 3.4 million deaths per year ([25], <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/an-epidemic-of-obesity/>). As discussed in Chapter 2, childhood obesity is often a precursor to adult obesity and its accompanying health problems. In 1995 there were over 200 million obese adults and by 2000 this number had increased to over 300 million. By 2010, 36 states in the US had obesity rates of 25% or more and today, 1 of 3 adults is obese (<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/an-epidemic-of-obesity/>).

Even in the absence of childhood obesity, many factors are responsible for increasing the obese and severely overweight adult population. These include, as with children, a sedentary lifestyle and consuming large portions of high caloric food. While at work, we generally focus on a computer screen and often eat meals “on the go” without real attention paid to nutritional balance. It is no wonder therefore, that in the absence of an adequate exercise program weight gain and obesity have become national epidemics in adults as well. In 2014, 9% of adults 18 years or older had diabetes and in 2012 it was the direct cause of 1.5 million deaths (<http://www.diabetes.org/diabetes-basics/statistics/>).

While obesity is not the only contributing factor to adult health problems, many of these health problems can be similarly controlled by physical conditioning and nutritional changes. And Martial Arts training can play a role in providing a **fun environment** to promote aerobic conditioning. In addition to aerobic capacity, Martial Arts training improves balance, strength, and flexibility [20]. Martial Arts participation is even safe for obese and diabetic patients and can promote fitness while preventing injury [26]. It has also been promoted by medical experts as a safe and effective strategy to

improve physical and emotional health among the elderly ([27, 28]; <http://nihseniorhealth.gov/exerciseandphysicalactivityexercisestotry/enduranceexercises/01.html>)

Some other health benefits of Martial Arts training in the adult population include,

- 1) Martial Arts training, and other types of exercise, can help to delay the onset of osteoporosis and the effects of osteoarthritis (<http://adaptivemartialarts.org/resource-library/mental-cognitive/how-can-martial-arts-benefit-the-disabled-by-grengory-lichtenthal-part-1-of-6.html>)
- 2) Can improve balance and coordination in an aging population [20]. Every year millions of injuries result from falls resulting in death or severe injury with associated medical costs that cost billions of dollars each year. To combat this trend many physicians have traditionally advised patients to adjust medication protocols, and to participate in fall hazard assessment. More recently exercise programs have been instituted, including gentle Martial Arts training ([20] <http://adaptivemartialarts.org/resource-library/mental-cognitive/how-can-martial-arts-benefit-the-disabled-by-grengory-lichtenthal-part-1-of-6.html>).
- 3) In those who are prone to fall, Martial Arts lessons can teach both old and young adults a safer way to fall and thereby limit injury [28].
- 4) Can improve feelings of well-being among patients who suffer from the effects of chemotherapy and other cancer treatments ([20])
- 5) Can be personalized as a therapeutic strategy to offset the effects of a number of physical and emotional disabilities including blindness, deafness, spinal cord injury, pain management, head trauma, and even can benefit wheel chair bound patients (<http://adaptivemartialarts.org/resource-library/mental-cognitive/how-can-martial-arts-benefit-the-disabled-by-grengory-lichtenthal-part-1-of-6.html>)
- 6) Has been found to be helpful in patients suffering from Parkinson's disease by improving balance and flexibility, improving the ability to walk correctly and reducing fall probability. Martial Arts training also improves strength, reduces tremors associated with the disease and assists in managing both medication side effects and psychological patient well-being (<http://neurotalk.psychcentral.com/thread38682.html>).

- 7) Can improve anger management, reduce depression and improve a sense of well-being [20]
- 8) Can help to control blood pressure.
(<http://adaptivemartialarts.org/resource-library/mental-cognitive/how-can-martial-arts-benefit-the-disabled-by-gregory-lichtenthal-part-1-of-6.html>,
<http://neurotalk.psychcentral.com/thread38682.html>)
- 9) As a self-defense modality for the aging and increasingly vulnerable population who may be seen as targets for crime.
(<http://adaptivemartialarts.org/resource-library/mental-cognitive/how-can-martial-arts-benefit-the-disabled-by-gregory-lichtenthal-part-1-of-6.html>).
- 10) Has been found to improve pulmonary function and quality of life in asthmatic patients. (<http://www.motionhealth.tv/tai-chi-for-asthma/>).

Summary: Clearly, Martial Arts training offers many health benefits to the adult population, even for those who are disabled. However, it is important to realize that the only way these benefits can truly offer long term gain, is through continued participation. Finding programs which offer these physical, emotional and social benefits in a positive, **fun and exciting environment** will likely be optimum in promoting sustained life-style changes.

Chapter 4

Styles of Martial Arts - Really, what's the Difference?

So far you have read about my personal journey and the reasons both kids and adults should learn Martial Arts. The next question is what style is the best for your goals?

People always get most confused and unsure when it comes to understanding the different styles or kinds of Martial Arts. I can totally understand this because there are thousands of different kinds of Martial Arts and it can be very confusing. I will attempt to explain it in an easy to understand way so you can decide what style is best for you and your family to reach your desired results. Within the inner workings of a Martial Arts school, the style can be a sensitive topic for the instructors and students, because they are always looking at the positives and denying the negatives of their particular style. This is very admirable, because we as Martial Artists, treasure our school and style!

Before we get into the specific styles, I would like to talk about general differences among Martial Arts. Since there are so many different styles out there, the easiest way to understand them is by putting them into 2 categories: Sport and Self-Defense Martial Arts. Sport Martial Arts includes any style that trains you for competition where the rules, techniques, and strategies are designed for getting points, winning matches, and earning trophies/prize money. Self-Defense styles are designed to protect you from bullies, attackers, rapists, multiple opponents, or in any situation where you find yourself in trouble. When it comes to Sport or Self-Defense, one is not better than the other. It is just a personal choice. Similar to picking soccer over football, it just comes down to what you like and what fits your needs best.

Before you pick a school, you should learn more about styles and what's out there and the characteristics of each. I will first describe Shaolin Kempo

Karate, which is taught at Brill's Karate, and its characteristics, because it will lay a foundation for explaining the other styles and the differences among them. Every quality school should have a safe environment and therefore the chances of injury should be very low. It's comparable to what you would find in an average sport like baseball, soccer, or basketball (or even way less depending on age). The techniques you will learn in class are meant for an attacker (or opponent) and do not put the students in any danger.

While all Martial Arts schools, whether Sport or Self-Defense style, use a combination of physical and internal development skills, the emphasis placed on each can be very different. And as we mentioned above, the internal component can be very important for both children and adults. So the point is that if you want to develop both skill sets you need a school that really offers and emphasizes both. While you may think right now you only need the physical for the sport or to learn self-defense, you may not be able to predict how the internal component can be helpful- even in developing the physical skill part.

Shaolin Kempo Karate

This is a very effective Self-Defense style because of its fluidity, as it is possible to do many strikes in a very short period of time. The rapid hand strikes of Shaolin Kempo can overwhelm almost any attacker with an almost unending flow of energy. With time and practice, even the smallest of practitioners can take down a much bigger attacker. The kicks tend to be below waist level which increases the speed, power, and accuracy, therefore blending nicely with the overwhelming hand strikes.

The next major characteristic of Shaolin Kempo is breaking of the joints and tearing of the tendons. When combined with the endless flow of strikes, it makes it close to a flawless self-defense style which has no rules or restrictions. Shaolin Kempo Karate has a very thorough curriculum, so by the time you get to black belt you learn how to efficiently and effectively break all joints in the body. Just breaking one or two is enough to get out of most self-defense situations, so with a focused set of material practiced regularly, you are given the ability to take down one or multiple attackers at once. You will

also have the flexibility to complete just a mild attack to get out of the situation, or many devastating strikes with a tremendous amount of damage inflicted on the assailant. What you decide to do will depend on the situation you're in and what you need to do to get out of it.

In fact, the goal of Black Belt in Shaolin Kempo is to be able to stop an attack with a block or evasive maneuver, do several strikes, a takedown and a lock-out, knock-out, or a life ending move, in one second. I know that sounds incredible or almost impossible, but that is the path objective you are on from the beginning. Black Belts in Shaolin Kempo Karate do it on a regular basis, although granted it may take 3 to 6 years (depending on age) to accomplish such a task. Therefore, in time, you and/or your children will be able to defend yourselves from just about any distance, place, or environment.

In time, you will also be efficient at stopping most weapon attacks, such as a club, knife, or gun, from close distances. You will also learn to use a lot of different Karate weapons and how they are similar to everyday objects, so after a while you will be able to pick up almost any object and use it as a self-defense weapon.

In Shaolin Kempo Karate, you also learn how to bring people to the ground and, after learning the thorough curriculum, you can take down any attacker by using any method that you choose that best fits the situation you're in. In self-defense the ability to take down an attacker is important because it gives you many options and advantages. Also, the total exploration of "Joint Locks" is taught to give you the maximum number of options for every self-defense situation. This means holding opponents in ways that cause pain on their joints so that they will want to surrender...without the necessity of actually breaking the joint.

Learning how to respond from the "4 Distances" is critical if you truly want to explore a Self-Defense style that can cover any situation that you may encounter. The first distance is when opponents are furthest away from each other, for example, if an attacker is charging at you with a bat and he is taking several steps toward you. Therefore, you need to quickly get to the attacker to stop his attack, and you need to cover distance to stop him. The second

distance is a boxing or “street fighting” distance. The third is much closer, where knee and elbow strikes play the biggest role, and this “in close” distance is where Shaolin Kempo is best known for. The fourth is grappling, while standing or on the ground.

To understand self-defense it’s best to have a clinical view, so when it comes to fighting, there are only 4 ways to do it. First is the Hitting Arts, where you use your hands and arms for blocks and strikes. Second is the Kicking Arts, where you use your feet and legs offensively and defensively. Third is the Felling Arts, which include all the ways to bring your opponent to the ground (takedowns). Fourth is the Grappling Arts, which is wrestling while standing or on the ground. Shaolin Kempo Karate is renowned for the first three ways of fighting and has extensive techniques, theories and practical applications for the fourth (but without Sport rules).

Shaolin Kempo Karate can be problematic for some because since it contains such a thorough curriculum and there is so much to learn, it can seem like such a challenging task to get to the very advanced levels. This challenge may not be for everyone, where a simplistic style may be a little easier, but it’s a personal choice. If you are looking for competition, this would not be the ideal choice because of the destructive nature of Shaolin Kempo, and there is no focus on points or rules.

(It is important to note that the Shaolin Kempo curriculum is always designed to be age appropriate).

In summary, Shaolin Kempo Karate is great for, and utilizes, all the aspects of self-defense: rapid hand strikes; low, fast, accurate and powerful kicks; breaking of all the joints/tendons; complete methods of takedowns; defense against and with all common Karate weapons; 4 distances of self-defense; all “4 ways of self-defense”; ability to pick up and use anything as a weapon; and joint locks. If Sport is your goal, there are better choices depending on what type of competitions you are looking to enter.

As a side note: The biggest reason that Shaolin Kempo Karate can be studied by the very young to the very old is that it can be totally adapted to different body types, or any minor chronic injury/pain. In fact, it can help alleviate a lot of minor aches and pains because of the strength training, stretching, and range of motion Martial Arts contains. You can even learn in a wheel chair, although a lot of the Sport styles rely on a healthy body to participate.

Tae Kwon Do

Tae Kwon Do, a Korean Martial Arts style, is the most easily found and probably the most well-known style; it is a very pretty looking style with big, jumping, spinning kicks. It can be useful if the attacker is at a far range because of the large movements that cover a lot of ground. It's also a great Sport Style that is outstanding for winning tournaments and trophies.

Since it is such a great tournament style, a tremendous amount of time, training, and techniques are used to impress the judges. A lot of the lessons taught are to give you visual advantages to make it clear "you scored the point" to win against your opponent. The high kicks make it easy for judges to see the points and a majority of the training is done for competition. Since legs are much longer, therefore easier to use to score points, hand strikes are minimally used.

Since Tae Kwon Do is a Sport Style, some of the drawbacks for self-defense are the big kicks which are not practical for most self-defense situations because you need a lot of room to "pull off" these types of movements. Most real attacks are done in close quarters and therefore it is hard to use Tae Kwan Do for self-defense in many of these situations. Because it uses such a high percentage of kicks (85-90%) and in "real life" an attacker gets in close, their commonly used long range weapons are neutralized. Since Tae Kwon Do mostly focuses on distance fighting, hand strikes are minimally used (10-15%) and not focused on relative to kicks.

To sum up, if a future student wishes to learn tournament fighting and win trophies, Tae Kwan Do is one of the best choices, but if you're looking for self-defense it may not be your optimal choice.

Jiu-jitsu

Jiu-jitsu is another great style; in fact, Shaolin Kempo teaches many Jiu-jitsu techniques and philosophies because of the important lessons this style teaches. It is truly the master of ground fighting! It is a great Sport Style and outstanding for grappling competitions and tournaments.

Jiu-jitsu incorporates the ability to lock the joints of your opponents until they are subdued and want to “tap out”. Jiu-jitsu is a great way to subdue your opponent without throwing a strike, so it can have some self-defense uses. For example, if used on an attacker, you can hold down the person until help arrives or break the joint you are holding.

Although if you are looking for a complete self-defense style there are weaknesses: there are no strikes in Jiu-Jitsu, no punches, kicks, knees, elbows, pokes to the eyes, groin strikes...none of these, because competition rules don't allow them. The practitioners will tell you that they can always throw strikes, but it's known if you don't practice it you won't use it. That is just human nature. And if you do throw a strike, it will be totally under developed, therefore really handicapping you in a real life self-defense situation. When it comes to a stressful situation, we always resort back to what we know and what's comfortable, therefore Jiu-jitsu practitioners won't do the critical things needed for self-protection. It's interesting, when new students start Jiu-Jitsu the first thing they want to do in their first match with a partner is hit. Then, instantly, “No hitting,” is the first thing the instructor says, but this goes against our most basic instincts.

In addition, there is only 1 distance of the 4 that is learned, and no use of any common self-defense weapons.

In summary, if a person wants to learn a great ground fighting style that is great for competition, Jiu-Jitsu is one of the best choices, but there are many disadvantages if self-defense is your goal.

Mixed Martial Arts

In the last 10 years MMA has become very popular because it combines different styles together, making it more multi-purpose. A good MMA program will take information from a good stand up fighting style (like Karate and Tae Kwan Do) that gives you strength in your punches and kicks, and ground fighting and grappling from another like Jiu-jitsu.

The MMA Sport Style(s) competitions are a mixture of stand up fighting, like a kick boxing match, and a grappling tournament. The match generally starts on the feet where opponents can punch and kick, and then many times it goes to the floor where grappling skills are required. This method of fighting teaches more options than just one Sport Style alone. Since it's a tournament style, all lessons are taught to gain points, or a "tap out," like Tae Kwan Do or Jiu-Jitsu.

In summary, Mixed Martial Arts does a wonderful job of combining Sport Styles together, therefore making it complete and a great way to compete. In fact, if competition is your thing, I would recommend this one above all other Sport Styles, because you learn all the lessons of each in one place. Although if self-defense is your goal, it has most of the same issues and drawbacks of Tae Kwan Do and Jiu-jitsu.

Goju Ryu, Shotokan, and Isshinryu

The next category is the Japanese styles of Karate. Some of the more popular styles are **Goju Ryu, Shotokan, and Isshinryu**. They are excellent styles and they teach a great foundation of self-defense. They can be used in close quarters, unlike Tae Kwon Do, and also teach the practitioner very powerful punches and kicks that are very explosive in nature, unlike Jiu-Jitsu. In most cases, the styles are very old and have withstood the test of time. Their lineages date back many generations, so when you start training in a school with one of these styles, the advantage is that it will stay pure for your whole lifetime of study.

Some of the drawbacks of traditional Karate- it lacks the sophistication and thorough exploration of the body and causing damage to the joints. It relies on

explosive punches and kicks to get the job done. The focus is on developing a very powerful punch or kick, and this is wonderful if it connects with the attacker, but the problem is attackers (on average) can usually block three strikes coming at them. Therefore when many strikes are thrown, like in Shaolin Kempo Karate, it becomes overwhelming. This is where traditional Japanese Karate can have flaws. Because it relies on very few but powerful strikes to get the job done, the big and powerful strikes are easy to see coming and therefore relatively easy to block or get out of their way. Any Martial Arts practitioner can kick out an attacker's knee and stop him, so there is always value in all kinds of Self-Defense styles, including the Japanese Karate styles. But if the Japanese Karate styles do not teach a thorough curriculum, the self-defense aspect is limited. For example, the curriculum does not include how to injure/break every joint, many options of takedowns, or extensive joint locks. They teach no/very little ground fighting skills, and a limited amount of weapon defense and Karate weapons is covered. All 4 distances of fighting are not explored in these styles.

In summary, the different Japanese Karate styles give good foundations for self-defense, but lack many of the important components needed. This is important because every attack and situation is different, so it is optimal to have all options open to you, depending on what is needed for the situation.

Krav Maga

Krav Maga, from Israel, is a fantastic self-defense style! It is the only one that closely competes with Shaolin Kempo in its ability for self-defense and if you are looking for a simplistic program for self-defense I recommend it highly. It covers the 4 distances of fighting and it has numerous ways of fighting, including teaching techniques from the ground, in addition to weapon defense. It even has a loose curriculum that can be easily followed.

There are very few negatives to this fighting system. The biggest deficiency is a thorough curriculum of material that needs to be practiced on a continual basis. The best way to explain this is with the analogy of a sport, say

basketball. If your coach tells you, teaches you, and shows you how to do a layup and score a point, that is great. On that first day you try it many times until you understand it and depending on your skill, you can do it. . The issue with the techniques is that it's not part of the set material where you must practice it on a regular basis, so if it does not become instinctual when it's time to use it, you must first think about it because it has not been internalized.

The Martial Arts develops the mind along with the body, but when only the physical is emphasized, you only get half of the benefits (and some would say, the more important half). This style is only known for the physical with no emphasis on the internal.

In summary, Krav Maga is a fantastic simplistic self-defense style! Although, it lacks a complete curriculum and the complexity of an internal self-defense program.

As a side note: in many Martial Arts schools they don't teach Krav Maga to children, so this may not be an option for your child, depending on your local school. All Martial Arts styles need years of training, but this is the only style that offers weekend certification classes to learn the material in order to teach it. I have seen this in other industries like cardio kickboxing and Zumba, but never a Martial Art. If you are going to learn Krav Maga, just look for an instructor that has a long history of study.

Chapter 5

What to be Cautious About!

There are two types of schools out there that you should be aware of and maybe have second thoughts about joining. The issues pertain to their styles and what they teach. You don't want to go to a cooking school that has bad recipes or bad food, no matter how much you love the instructor and how well they teach (even if the price is low).

Schools like the ones below rely on people's lack of knowledge in the field of Martial Arts, because when someone knows very little they're easy to deceive. Most people can only judge based on price and whether the instructor appears competent, because that is the only way many know how to judge a school.

The first issue or warning sign is when they are very vague about what style they teach. If they say the name of the school is the style, there is something they are not telling you. For example, if they say Brill's Karate is the style, it's not, it's the name, and they are not being forthcoming with telling you what kind of Martial Arts they teach. Most likely they (or their instructor) made up the style themselves, which is a little disconcerting (reminiscent of teenage boys creating it in their basement). If the school has been around for many years, maybe they actually put together a pretty good basic program, but I am not sure it is worth your time or money.

Even if they say it's a Mixed Martial Arts school, they should still be able to tell you what styles are being taught, and if they seem reluctant, be careful, because they might then just say any style just to stop the questions (do your homework).

The next issue is when a school changes its curriculum every 3 to 8 years. This is probably one of the biggest problems because you think you're learning one thing and then they change it. As a result, this is very destructive and mentally defeating for students and makes them want to quit because they feel like everything they learned up that date was wasted. This happens a lot when the chief instructor is not the owner, because when the chief

instructor quits (and this happens frequently) the owner is then left looking for any instructor that is good with kids to take his place. More times than not, the new instructor will most likely teach a different style because it's difficult to find someone with knowledge of the original style, to replace him. Even if the owner is a Martial Artist, he generally doesn't want to teach the classes. That is why the school had a chief instructor in the first place.

Another major issue develops when a chain appears to be very successful and opens schools rapidly. In this case the staff really gets thinned out. Most of the time, since the owner doesn't plan for any loss of staff because they are so eager to expand, they make big mistakes in judgement (I see this one all the time). If for example, one of the chief instructors gets into an argument and quits, they may pull your instructor away to cover that school because it's bigger, and then they may scramble to get anybody to teach in your school (I have seen first-hand how these franchises work).

When you're asking these questions about their school, they will try to put their best face forward and say things that sound good. To help with your research in finding a school, here are some questions to ask: What year did this school first open? Have you been teaching the same style since the school first started? Is the chief instructor the original chief instructor and if not how many have there been and how long did each stay? What happens if the chief instructor decides to leave, who will fill his spot? Just see how they answer and see if they can convince you everything is secure. When they start using strange and apparently philosophical riddles it is usually not a good sign; for example, if they say, "All Martial Arts are like a tree and the different styles are like the branches," they are most likely trying to change the topic. Asking questions is truly the best way to do your homework and find out more, and they should be happy to answer all these questions. After teaching for almost 25 years, I know it is very rare for people to ask these types of informed questions and that is why these schools can get away with inferior "products".

Another thing to remember: the instructor can be great and do an awesome job with kids, but this has nothing to do with Martial Arts and what's taught; it's just that they have a good personality and work well with children. A

school should have both, a great instructor and the style you're looking for; although it can be difficult to find, it's definitely worth the extra driving time.

It is also best to have a long-term view when picking out a school in the first place. There are times when you may be thinking, "I'm just bringing my four-year-old to a class, so it really doesn't matter," but a quality school will keep the students for many years. You want your kids to be on the best path right from the beginning and save them from aggravation in the future. In addition, there's a good chance they will not want to change schools and would rather just stop, therefore not getting all the benefits of Martial Arts. It just involves doing a little homework before you make your decision.

Chapter 6

Other Important things to know in choosing a school!

Finding a Martial Arts school can be challenging, but when the process is completed successfully, you will hopefully be there for a long time. Therefore, you should start to feel like a detective in researching all of the schools you are considering, so you don't make the mistake of picking the wrong place or style for you or your family.

Below is an assortment of topics that, I think no matter how much research you do, most people would probably not think to ask about or even consider. I would like to use my years of experience in the Martial Arts to help you discover these things, so you can ask great questions and find a school for your long term success and happiness.

Note: It is a little more challenging running a morally responsible business because it takes longer to grow. When you take short cuts and use some trickery, yes, profits go up faster. But I feel if you do it the right way you will have steady growth and in your heart you know you are doing the right thing!

Unfortunately I can see why some of these franchises use the different methods described below, because of all the explosive growth it gives and the allure of fast money.

A lot of schools have different methods to increase revenue beyond monthly and belt test fees. There is no problem with this, in my opinion, as long as they describe all required fees to potential students up front, so you can make an informed decision right from the beginning. Many schools keep the monthly tuition low compared to their competitors, so they can lure the students that are "price shopping", and then at a later time introduce surprise fees, such as the "Black Belt Club" method, or add-ons to increase revenue later. I think it is important to point out all possible revenue methods, so you can choose a school based on all of the facts.

Black Belt Club

The Black Belt Club is an upgrade program that is used in many schools and franchises. These schools may have a low monthly rate when you sign up, then shortly after, even as little as a few weeks later, they tell you how “special” your child is and how well he is doing – in essence they think the child has what it takes to “go all the way”. In the beginning your child is usually very excited about this new activity, so it is very easy to go along with the new program, because it’s always nice to hear good things about your child. This makes this method very effective. The idea is very seductive to get your child into their special program; in fact, it is very easy to talk the adult students into joining the special program as well.

I think a quality school should have upgrade programs available, because in time the students can grow and the school should have ways to facilitate this growth. This is especially true for the little ones that are ready for bigger challenges such as coming to more classes per week, and older ones that are ready to go on to the advanced levels which ultimately leads to many years of study.

I think a good way to tell if the program is sincere and appropriate for the student’s best interest (and not just the school), is when the percentage of students that are in the program is low. That is a good sign that the praise is real. In many of the schools that have the Black Belt Club, the percentage is normally in the 90’s, and some schools actually make you feel left behind if you don’t join. I like the example of being in honors classes in school and you think your kid is special, but then you find out that 90% of the kids are in the “Honors Classes” and you realize it just the average class with a high price tag.

Some schools are even more forceful and require the upgrade program, or the child will no longer be allowed to attend the school “because their program expires”. This can be difficult for parents because all their children’s friends are joining. It becomes very difficult to tell your children they can’t go to Karate anymore. This method is harsh, but unfortunately it works very well.

In conclusion: Upgrade programs can be great, but just decide if it is in your best interest or just the school's. Ask a lot of questions about the upgrade programs: How is it determined when a student is ready to go from one program to the next and what are the associated costs? What is the average time it takes before they are ready for the new program? What happens if the student decides to stay in the current program and do the lessons simply end?

Contracts

(Even the word sounds scary)

There is no reason that a family looking for Martial Arts lessons should want to sign a contract. Nevertheless, the school staff has the script memorized to convince you to sign one. They may try to convince you it's in your best interest to have one, but it is definitely not - it's only in the school's best interest. The script may include statements like, "If you want to receive the benefits of Martial Arts, you must commit long term," and things like that. Simply put, if you are happy you will want to continue, because it is the school's job to keep you engaged and excited. The school is ultimately responsible to keep you as a student for many years to come.

In my opinion, contracts are one of the major reasons Karate schools get bad reputations, so if I sound a little strong about this, that is why. I think contracts hurt the whole industry, because when people are going to court about Karate (because of broken or breaking contracts), it tarnishes all Karate schools.

Besides the legal aspect of being "locked in", the philosophical component is probably worse. Because what sometimes happens is the instructors aren't as concerned about your progress as they "once were". After all, you have to pay no matter what, so why try so hard? The bigger issue, although common, is that they may try to get you to stop coming, although you're still paying tuition and fees, so they can sell another person your spot. This is easy to do by neglecting existing students until they get so bored they want to quit. There are other methods as well. This way the classes never look too crowded, and it is easier to get new people to sign contracts.

(Now you see why I have strong feelings about this)

In conclusion: Well, you know.

Beware of Add-Ons!

This is a common method that schools and franchises use to receive extra revenue. They may give you a price that you can comfortably afford. You may even think you are getting a good deal, as you shop around for a school. Then after a short period of time, they may require you to buy equipment every couple of months and it's usually several hundred dollars each time – costs that you didn't expect. If you refuse to pay for these items they may pull your children out of the program, or just embarrass them in front of the others. Some schools can charge as much as \$1,500 just in the first year alone, further emphasizing our belief that a school should be up front with all required costs.

In conclusion: If you are going to compare different schools, make this question a priority. What are all the required things that must be purchased in the first couple of years and what are the costs?

Rotating Curriculum vs. Traditional Curriculum

Traditionally, we educate our children by starting with the most basic and fundamental elements of learning first. Next, we build upon what they previously learned to have a solid foundation so that advanced learning can be achieved. This is the Traditional way most learning is done- building on what we have already learned, getting more advanced and increasing the difficulty of the material as we go along.

When it comes to teaching Martial Arts there are two methods, the Traditional way and the Rotating curriculum approach. In the Traditional method we teach starting from the beginning basics to advanced levels. The advantage of the Rotating curriculum method is that you can teach a tremendous number of students at the same time, because everybody is learning the same thing at the same time. In the Traditional method everybody learns from beginner to advanced, at his own pace.

It can be difficult to explain how Martial Arts schools with the Rotating curriculum work, but I will attempt using an easy, over-simplified example. Let's just say there are 12 levels in the Karate school. In January the school will teach the first level, and in February the second and so on until all 12 levels are completed at the end of the year. This might resemble the Traditional method if you happen to enroll in the beginning of January. But let's just say you signed up in September. In your first month of classes, the material that is taught will be advanced. And I know the instructors will do everything they can to help, but the material will be quite challenging for a new beginner. Using my example, after a year, you will eventually go back and now cover all the beginning basics. The Rotating curriculum method does give a school the ability to teach a lot of students at the same time. It is a fantastic way to manage a tremendous number of students, but it may be a problem if your child learns at a quicker or slower pace than the average.

A lot of Martial Arts schools are not upfront about what teaching method they use and may be evasive of the terminology, so I will give you some clues to judge for yourself.

In the Traditional method, the kids 8 & up, including adults, will have belt advancement tests or ceremonies only when they can demonstrate that they know the required material. Everybody sets his own pace and the test will be scheduled when the student understands and can perform the moves well. Since this is based on individual effort, it can take one month or ten, but the student will earn his new rank only when he is ready. With the Traditional method there may be a scheduled test every month in the school, but individual students will only be advanced when they are ready.

In the Rotating curriculum method, almost all students are included in belt advancement every 3 to 4 months, depending on the school. In a Rotating curriculum school, they may also have a test every month, but the difference is that all students who start the Karate program at approximately the same time will test for rank for advancement on the same 3 to 4 month schedule.

In conclusion: It is important to know what teaching method a school uses before you enroll, so make sure you put this on your list of questions: What

method of teaching do you use, Rotating curriculum or Traditional method? If they are being evasive, just ask questions about how belt advancement is done and you will be able to figure it out.

Firehouse, Daycare, Gyms: the Problems You May Face

Signing-up for part time Karate lessons at your local firehouse, daycare, or gym can be a wonderful and exciting idea. It can be a great way to see if you or your child has an interest in Martial Arts and to see if it's right for you. However, keep in mind that these types of programs might have some issues. The instructor may be poor quality and actually turn you off. Their lack of skill and professionalism might be enough to turn potential students off forever to the concept of learning Karate and therefore, you will never get all the benefits that Martial Arts offers. When it comes to a Karate dojo, it's just an empty room- the instructor can either make it great or ruin the class. The opposite is also an issue in these part time programs when you enroll your child in a program that has a very good instructor. In this case the class tends to get overloaded and may have 40 kids per class. Your child will get no attention, then get bored and finally decide Karate is not fun and never want to try it again.

In conclusion: It may be a wonderful way to be introduced to the Martial Arts, but don't let its problems stop you from the long term benefits a great school can provide.

“My child has a friend at another school and they feel happy there”

Choosing a school because a friend goes there is certainly a logical way to pick a school and getting a referral is traditionally a great idea. In addition, it's the easiest way to get your reluctant child into a class, because his friend is already there.

The concern is that while the school/style met the goals of the other family, because they were clear about their objectives, or they enrolled at the first

place they went to because they liked the instructor, it might not meet your goals.

95% of the time people know very little or nothing about Martial Arts and how to choose a school, so in a lot of cases a referral is not as helpful as most other things. Most people know when they had a good handyman, painter, or roofer, but Martial Arts and styles can be complex and there are many things you might not want to get trapped into, like a contract.

It's best to do your homework and go to a place that is right for your family based on your goals and needs for your long term happiness. The best situation is finding the perfect school where your best friend is already enrolled. A lot of people choose a school just because a friend goes there, but that may cause them to settle on a style or methods that are not right for them.

In conclusion: Getting a referral to a school is a great place to start, but you still must do your homework and find a place that is right for you.

If You Have Taken Martial Arts Before, It Can Cloud Your Judgement.

This is a small point, but worth a quick mention. There are times when a parent has fond memories of classes taken in the past, maybe as a teenager or as an adult. If the parent then brings his child (say for example, a 6-year-old) into a school, he subconsciously visualizes the class the same way as when he took classes. The problem is if a parent took the class as a teenager, the class structure is totally different and meant for an older student. When he sees something different (and age appropriate for a 6-year-old), he may feel like the school is teaching improperly, but it may simply just be geared to that particular age. Most likely the teen/adult class is probably similar to the way the parent remembers it, but he is just not observing that class.

Is Martial Arts Just Like Any Other Activity?

When a parent starts to look for an activity for his child there are many options to choose from, but none of them is as complete as the Martial Arts. It's truly mind and body (and we have emphasized the importance of both components throughout this book), and there is no other activity that can build a person's confidence and overall self-worth like the Martial Arts.

There is no other activity that requires lots of learning in conjunction with building a student's coordination, cardiovascular strength, balance, flexibility, and overall muscle tone. Then there are all of the mental aspects; the focus, concentration, discipline, and teaching respect, integrity, honor, and humility. Martial Arts also promotes the development of great character, and teaches its students to always do the right things and make healthy lifestyle choices. Martial Arts teaches its students to be less concerned with immediate gratification and to sacrifice the "now" for the future payoff, because today's discipline is tomorrow's happiness/success.

There is no other activity that that can combine all of these character development and health benefits in one. In fact, if you wanted to get all the benefits listed above with different activities, you would have to handpick 3 to 5 different ones just to get the same results in all the areas.

In conclusion: There is NO other activity that can compete with the benefits of Martial Arts.

I Can't Get My Child to Do Any Activities!

When Martial Arts classes are really fun, it makes learning exciting and motivating. In fact, one of the blessings I found with Martial Arts classes is that even with the children that don't like "anything", they just fall in love with it. There are many reasons to get excited about Martial Arts, both mental and physical, and I think that is the explanation for such a high success ratio with kids who don't want to do anything. Some examples are the empowering feeling, the cool moves, or ...whatever it is..., we are just happy it works.

It is the same for adults who know they should do something for exercise, but they don't feel like doing anything and they hate the gym. Martial Arts is something they really get into...and for many years!

In conclusion: If you think you don't like anything...Do Martial Arts!

Be Careful of Bad Advice

It's funny, in a lot of schools they don't teach the most basic rule – RUN! Get out of the situation, because if you are not there, you cannot be attacked, or worse. The biggest culprit of this is the sport styles (MMA, Tae Kwan Do, and Jiu-jitsu) because they look at this as a “game”, so why would you run away from the game? This never occurs to them, although if you run and get caught, at least you tried and then you fight. But at least you tried. That is a big issue when it comes to the low price schools, because you never know what advice they're going to give you and your family (you would not believe the stuff I've heard).

Military-like Classes

There are many schools that have classes that look like they're practicing military drills, and this may have a good appearance to people watching the class. This satisfies many people's belief about what a Karate class should look and sound like (because it's usually always loud).

To impart all the lessons and benefits that the Martial Arts can provide, the classes should not be like army training. The school should provide learning, skill building, and an environment where students can grow. During the process, a great class may definitely look militaristic at times, but it should not be the whole class, all the time, every day.

If it is military all the time, it tells me two things:

First, what they're doing is just drills and basics over and over again, therefore the program is not balanced and they are rarely learning new material and

information. Correcting and adjusting things students already learned is important, but if that's primarily what the school does, the students won't have optimal growth.

Second, this usually indicates that the school has not developed a quality program, but wants to create an impression for outside observers. Schools like this are usually run by the head instructor who opened the school, did Martial Arts as a hobby and decided to go into business. These instructors are generally not trained extensively, but want to make it look and sound like they are running a high quality program.

In conclusion: Schools that are Military all the time are simply not balanced and this may be a sign of something bigger.

Is Price the Only Deciding Factor?

Everybody is always looking for a bargain, but as you can tell so far, not all Martial Art schools and styles are created equally. When you understand the differences in Martial Arts and what they teach, how they teach it and the advice and information they give, schools can range from superior to super bad.

When it comes to getting value in a Martial Arts school, there are three major things to look for: first, the greatest class/learning environment; second, customer service and how involved they are with their students' progress; third, the best price. In my experience, a school cannot give you all three- the best classes, and great personal attention, for the best price. The question you should be asking for your long term happiness is what would you be willing to give up? 1) A great learning experience, 2) Professional, caring instructors, 3) The lowest price?

If you go to a less expensive school and don't get the results you were after, then all the time and money you put in was wasted. For your long term happiness you are better off spending a few extra dollars and being

ridiculously happy. If you believe Karate is worth doing, then you should find a school that is the best for your needs.

In conclusion: Price is just one factor of many to consider.

Kids Sitting While Others Are Taking Their Turns.

If children are sitting while others are taking their turn, that is okay as long as it's done in moderation and used as a teaching tool. This will give a quality school an opportunity to teach the internal lessons of Martial Arts; for example, self-control, patience, focus, and self-discipline. This does not just happen on its own, because it is something the instructor must work on with students and it represents another opportunity to learn.

In conclusion: In a quality school, kids' sitting should be a great opportunity to practice the lessons they are learning.

Only One Class Per Week for Ages 3 ½ , 4, and 5

At this age the classes should be limited to just once a week because the kids get burned out easily if they come too often. In the beginning they will love coming in all the time because it's fun, but before long the excitement will diminish and fade. If that happens it will be a struggle to get them to come to class and eventually they will want to stop. At this age, once a week is perfect for them to learn all the mental aspects of the Martial Arts and their skill and enthusiasm will grow in a steady and predictable manner.

Schools that have multiple-times-per-week programs for this age set up an environment that leads to burnout. The parents want to bring their children as much as possible to "get their money's worth" and they may say, "The kid just loves Karate." However, the kids can change quickly and before you know it, they don't want to go anymore because they feel like they are "always going". Although the parents were well meaning, going multiple times per week often backfires. The next thing that may happen is they want to take a break, but in Martial Arts that is challenging because once they stop, they

rarely want to begin again. Consistency in Martial Arts, like most things, is the secret to success.

When a child quits at an early age, it's a rarity that they want to come back to Martial Arts later in their childhood. This can be a problem if they're being bullied, for example, and Karate would have been an outstanding solution, but now your best option was taken away.

Because so many schools offer multiple-times-a-week programs for this age group you would think it's typical, and I have even seen schools boast about it. I think there are three possible underlying reasons why they may do this. First, they may not be concerned with burnout because of a signed contract (see section on contracts). Second, some schools think they can get higher tuition rates, because "per class" it looks more economical. Third, they may have been given bad advice, or haven't had a lot of experience with this age group, so they didn't get the opportunity to see the rapid rate at which the students leave.

In conclusion: You want young children to always look forward to coming to class with a minimal chance of burnout for long term Success. This way you can have optimal growth for many years to come!

Classes for Ages 6 & 7

This is a pivotal age and it is my belief that the program should continue to be one class per week. Even though the child falls into the six or seven year old range he may be mature or immature for his age. If he is mature, he may be able to handle more than one class per week and really prosper and succeed. However, while a particular child may seem to be mature in other environments, such as sports (remember that those last only a couple of months), when he first starts Karate it cannot be predicted how he will do in the medium/long term. On the other hand, if the child is less mature, he should definitely be going to class only once a week. The optimal schedule for long-term success is to start new students in this age category at the one time per week schedule. Once students have proven themselves and the instructor

is convinced they are “in it” for the long term, then there should be options for the kids of this age group to attend classes more often.

In conclusion: If you proceed too quickly, you risk losing them.

Classes for Kids 8 & Up and Adults

For these age groups, it is important for students to come to class at least twice a week. It is even better if they come more often, but if that is all their individual schedules allow they will still get tremendous benefit. Schools should allow kids and adults to come to class as much as they like, because there are some students who are so “into” the Martial Arts that the program should be able to expand with them. When the students in these groups come often, they really excel, their confidence soars, and the more motivated they become. When dealing with older kids and adults, the school should not dictate/limit how often you should come to class. It is our belief that the student/family should be the deciding factor in the decision because when a student is new, the instructor cannot evaluate the student yet, although a recommendation can be helpful.

Also, students within these age groups are responsible for their Martial Arts material and memorizing the things they have learned. Therefore, if they are only coming to class once a week, they will progress so slowly that they will most likely lose interest and may not want to continue. It’s not like the younger ages, because the older kids are more mature and responsible for their progress. It’s a rare student that can come once a week at this age, practice on his own and still be able to make substantial progress.

What the Classes Should Look Like for the Age

All kids’ classes should be exciting, fun and focused! At different ages the equation may change, but the elements must all be there. If the class is too

strict, serious or boring, after a while a child of any age will tend not to want to continue. There are some kids who want to practice Karate so badly that they might last a while longer under these conditions, but after a while it will wear on them. Even if their motivation is high, eventually it will end and they will not get all the benefits you were hoping for in the first place.

There are many ways to measure a good Karate class, and the best initial gauge is to observe if the kids are smiling and laughing, while having a lot of “focus time”. The correct formula, meaning what percentage of the time they should be smiling, laughing and focused, is dependent on the age of the students in the class.

Classes for the Ages 3 ½, 4, and 5

For this age group the children should be smiling, laughing, giggling and having a great time! At this age, class should have a lot of focus games and methods to increase concentration and attention span while they learn. For example, being able to stand in one place without moving, using laser-like focus, can be made into a game so it's fun. When it's not a particular student's turn, he should be against the back wall, sitting with perfect self-control, focus, and thereby increasing self-discipline.

You will get a good indication of what is expected of your child by observing other kids in the class, even if your child is reluctant to jump in. With patience on the parent's part the child will eventually jump in since, after all...it is fun. But keep in mind that sometimes it takes up to four weeks to get individual children into class. Yes, sometimes it takes patience but it's worth it.

Just use your best judgement while observing the other kids, because some of them come to class with issues to work on, so looking at the other kids is no absolute guarantee either.

Classes for the Ages 6 & 7

The class structure should resemble the last age group, but the expectations are much higher. It should still be really fun and the kids should look like they are having a good time. Building their skills at this age is a big component of the class; for example, if a bully throws a hard punch at them on the playground, blocking it should be no problem. One of the small pleasures we have is when a smiling parent comes and tells us some kid tried to hit their child and they were able to block it without getting hurt and the other kid got in trouble for trying to start a fight!

Classes for Kids 8 & Up

The classes for these age groups should still be fun for the students, but they also have many different components, such as, some focus time, practice time, learning time, and fun drills that build skills. The classes should have a basic structure, but look different from day to day in order to increase abilities and expertise in many different areas. Most of the classes should have character development built right into the structure of the class.

Chapter 7

My Dream!

At Brill's Karate we strive to make **Learning the Most Exciting & Fun Way Imaginable**, because it is our belief if students are Engaged and Excited they will Never want to stop learning! WE WANT TO HAVE STUDENTS FOR LIFE and everything we do is designed to reach that objective, because if students stay, it prepares them for whatever life throws at them. Everybody excels when they're doing what they LOVE, that's why we want to give students a passion for learning! The positive momentum in their Martial Arts life carries over into everything else they do!!

This is the reason why We Believe what we believe.

When **Our Kids are Very Young** they should have the capability and the tools to deal with most Bullying Situations! At a time when they're deciding their own value and forming opinions of themselves, we want to instill in them Self-Confidence, Discipline, and Focus. A Very Young age is the Greatest Time to have the Maximum Impact in their life and make the biggest difference. This is also the time to increase their Self-Esteem, therefore putting them on the Right Path to **Future Success!**

When they reach 10 years of age, they will have the ability Not to be influenced by peer pressure and Not to go along with the "Bad Kids" just to fit in, or just because they are desperate to make friends. **Our Karate Kids Feel Confident, Feel Strong, and they are Empowered** to make the Wise Choices and Smart Decisions in Life!

When they are teenagers, they will have the **Confidence to Stand Up** and deal with any situation that comes their way. When three older kids walk up to them and try to push their drugs, they will have the **Mental Strength** to deal with them because they know they can handle any type of physical aggression.

They'll be able to walk right up, look them straight in the eyes, and in an unwavering voice say "NO" and then watch as the three kids walk away looking for an easier "victim". Just knowing your children can handle themselves will make this challenging age much easier and give parents Peace of Mind!

When it's time to go off to college, they'll have a **Sharp Mind** along with Focus, Discipline, and Great Character to do a fantastic job and face new challenges alone for the first time in their lives. Even with their new freedom, they will stay out of trouble because by now they have spent **A Lifetime of Making Smart Choices** and this will leave parents with the security of knowing They Can Handle Whatever Comes Their Way!

I see them having the **Drive and Ambition** To Chase Their Dreams, the **Focus To Pursue Their Passion**, and the ability to **Accomplish Whatever They Desire!** Maybe, this will translate into starting their own corporation someday (or any other fulfilling objective) and becoming a Huge Success, while having the Most Extraordinary Exciting Life **Pursuing Their Dreams!!**

Martial Arts can continue until almost any age, so it's a love and passion that can be enjoyed throughout their whole lives. This is "*My Dream*" for our students and together we can truly make their life on Earth A Really Special Time!!

Our Competition!

We are always trying to get better, striving for improvement, and always trying to “out do” ourselves. We never worry about what other schools are doing, because we only compare ourselves to ourselves. If you joined our school before or shortly after this book was written, you will be joining a school I am truly very proud of, but year after year, it will get better and better and we could not be more Excited!

People often ask us, who is your competition, and the answer is ourselves. We are constantly setting the bar higher and higher for us to reach. We embody what we teach: focus, discipline, great character and determination, and we apply it to our students and our school. I believe in what we do and I believe in the Martial Arts. I have seen the magic so many times before, so the answer is always, “Our competition is truly ourselves!”

Brill's Karate

Is Always Striving To Make

Learning

*The Most Awesome,
The Most Advanced,
The Most Exciting,
The Most Fun Imaginable!*

*Therefore Keeping Students
For Life!*

Barry Brill ☺

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