

Milka
Gostović

THE FIGHTER OF INNER PEACE

77 good reasons
to practice martial arts



Inhaltsverzeichnis

[The art of falling and the ability to fail](#)

[Innate or acquired fear?](#)

[Practice conscious breathing](#)

The Fighter of Inner

Peace

77 good reasons to practice martial arts

Milka Gostović Copyright © 2020 Milka Gostović

All rights reserved.

1st edition

Cover design: Milica Radojević

Illustrations: © shutterstock

The work, including its parts, is protected by copyright. Any use outside the narrow limits of the copyright law is not permitted without the consent of the publisher and the author. This applies to electronic or other reproduction, translation, distribution and making publicly available.

Imprint:

Milkica

c/o AutorenServices.de

Birkenallee 24

36037 Fulda, Germany

DEDICATION

I dedicate this book to all martial artists. Life is a fight

"Life without a fight is boring." - Lermontov

The infant emitted a powerful cry as soon as it saw the light of day. Meanwhile, the father, who held the mother's hand during the birth to unite his physical and mental strength with hers, was amazed at how loud his baby's voice was. He was fascinated by the strength of this short scream. In addition, he and his wife analyzed the brief struggle of their baby. Eventually, their baby tried to make clear to everyone in the room what was lacking. It was the air to breathe. An amount of amniotic fluid that the newborn swallowed caused him breathing problems. Fortunately, the midwife spotted this and helped the infant to spit out the amniotic fluid. While the parents, who had been practicing judo and karate for more than 20 years, held their happiness in their arms, they realized, thanks to their baby, that all people are born as fighters. After the stresses and strains of childbirth, these small, delicate creatures prove how well they are prepared to master the challenges of everyday life.

Infants fight for the attention of their parents. In day nursery and kindergarten, children strive for friendships, toys and the affection of their nursery nurse. Then, as pupils, they struggle for the attention of their teacher. They strive to learn to read, write and do the maths. They also fight for good grades. At this level, the battles are not fought on a physical level, but on a mental level. After the time in school they go on to start an apprenticeship or study at university. To find a place at university or an apprenticeship is a contest between these young people. During this fight they use their words as a weapon to convince the university or their future employer of their worth. This is what sets them apart from their competitors.

During the training and study period the fighting continues. However, this type of fighting differs from the previous competitions. It is more complicated, more extensive and

more exhausting. Because the knowledge which students or trainees acquire is different from their acquired school knowledge. During their study and training period, the inquisitive personalities not only fight to broaden their horizons, but also for good grades. Meanwhile however, a large proportion of students and trainees struggle with motivation, reduced self-esteem or self-doubt. Passing exams, on the other hand, and satisfactory results counteract these negative feelings. Occasionally, inquisitive individuals also have periods in which they force themselves to learn. This fact also symbolizes an inner struggle which affected people win. Afterwards, their successful completion serves as proof of why it was worthwhile to fight for their degrees.

The ability to proceed after failing an exam is the reason why students and trainees get up and keep fighting for their goals. Therefore, the acquisition of a degree or training qualification is equivalent to a struggle. When this is over, it continues seamlessly with a subsequent fight. It is called "the search for a job". Graduates try to find a job in their chosen company with the help of their certificates and a skillful choice of words. This is a great challenge, because the world of the Internet has expanded the possibilities many times over. For this reason, job seekers do not find it easy to stand up to their great competition. Probably the fight for a job is the biggest hurdle. After all, this competition is the strongest link between people and reality. The only way to achieve this is to have a permanent job. It enables people to make a living and to fulfil their dreams. But with a permanent job, the struggle continues. Employees then assert themselves in the current company.

As enthusiastic Judoka and Karateka, the parents believed that the philosophy which fighters learn in their training can be linked to the fight called life. As active martial

artists they had noticed this link gradually over the years. They experienced first-hand how far they had come in life due to their chosen martial art. Besides, both were unsure whether they would ever have made it this far without their regular training. That is why they decided mutually to introduce the magic of martial arts to their baby as soon as he was old enough. So, he could courageously face the challenges he would encounter during his life.

The art of falling and the ability to fail

***"Rise eight times if you have fallen seven times." -
From Japan***

The mother watches her one-year-old son as he runs around the room. He is very fit motorically. Sitting still and playing with a car for what feels like eternity is not one of his strengths. Due to the constant running, he suddenly falls slowly backwards. His mother, who is quick on her feet thanks to many years of judo training, is already on her way to catch him. But he makes two movements which almost paralyse her, while she looks at him. The little boy has performed a slimmed-down version of the breakfalls backwards. To avoid landing on the back of his head, he puts his hands next to his hips and pulls his chin towards his chest. Therefore, he does not land on the back of his head but gently on his back. His mother looked at him perplexed and analyzed what had happened once again. She has passed the first dan test in Judo. And while she watches her son, who again happily rushes from toy to toy in the room, she wonders whether humans are born as stand-up characters. Lost in thought, she remembers a lecture by her judo teacher. He established an ideal connection between the breakfalls of judo and everyday life.

"Martial artists who choose Judo, which translates into 'The Gentle Way', as a leisure activity, end up in a large hall of a Judo sports club. In trial training, trainers teach them the advantages of the fall exercises. The Japanese name for the breakfalls is Ukemi-waza. The breakfalls program is an

indispensable exercise for all belt examination programs. Those who do not master the fall exercises are also not able to perform throwing techniques that dominate the judo program. In the first training session, judo instructors teach a beginner the forward roll. To perform this effectively, Judoka first stand up straight with their right leg pointing slightly forward. In the next step they place their palms on the left side of the mats in front of their right foot. Their fingers, however, point in the left direction. Then they stretch their left leg backwards to get the necessary momentum. This is essential for the forward roll. While falling, Judoka lay their head on their left shoulder, as they roll frontally over their right shoulder. In this way Judoka protect their head effectively against injuries. Meanwhile the complete right arm touches the mat. To get back on their feet quickly, falling Judoka use the momentum of the forward roll."

At first glance, the majority does not see a clear connection between the art of falling and the ability to fail. However, an exact analysis confirms how closely related the two verbs "failure" and "falling" are on a philosophical level. At this level, the falling exercise functions as an instructive lesson that projects Judoka and non-Judoka alike onto daily challenges of their everyday life. After all, every human being finds himself in a situation during his life in which he either fails or literally falls through.

"Children who take their first steps often fall over at first. No infant can walk after the first or second attempt. Children who attend the kindergarten also assert themselves there. Making friends or fighting for toys are two tasks that the little ones do not successfully complete after the first day. At school, pupils fight for good grades. Students fail exams. Sooner or later, people who work in the professional world experience the term failure."

Couples do not stay together for personal reasons. They refer to themselves afterwards as a "failed couple". Friendships fall apart because former friends grow apart. This applies to numerous interpersonal relationships. Some are doomed to failure from the outset because of diverging interests.

Applicants who are looking for a job receive numerous rejections and after a certain time they feel like failures. Unfortunately, some of them are discouraged by these experiences and leave their heads hanging.

"Fortunately, however, a large majority of those who supposedly failed stand up again and pick up where they left off. This is exactly the principle of the judo forward roll. It doesn't matter how many times you have fallen, failed or didn't pass, but whether you get up and continue, because that is the only way to achieve your goals. The Japanese proverb says, "Rise eight times if you have fallen seven times."

Martial artists not only get up in the dojo immediately after their fall exercise, but also after a fall in their private and professional life. Martial artists do not give up after an unsuccessful examination, they take it again. Martial artists who have no luck in an interpersonal relationship either fight for it or courageously enter a new relationship. Martial artists who are looking for a job and receive numerous refusals do not give up but continue to apply. Martial artists master the hurdles of life. Martial artists fight determinedly and hard to realize their dreams and goals. Martial artists talk less and act more. Martial artists fall, fail and don't pass, but they get up immediately afterwards. After all, the forward roll requires them to do this. Martial artists owe their stand-up mentality to the fall

exercise, as their body transfers this to their mental attitude.

Innate or acquired fear?

"Fear has power over you only as much as you let it." - L. Brown

During the greeting, the judo trainer observes his students with his watchful eye. Due to his profession he has daily contact with numerous amounts of people, which is why he developed into a hobby psychologist. Each training session starts with a Japanese greeting "Mokuso rei" while the attendants kneel on the mats. After the greeting, they touch the floor with their forehead. In this short moment Judoka free their mind from all thoughts. During this process, they close their eyes. The coach, however, does this less often. He can check who is focused and who is not. This time he notices one of his students nervously waiting for the bow. Because martial arts coaches have an advisory relationship with their students, they care about their students' well-being. That is why Judo training starts with relaxed gymnastics, which includes abdominal lifts. All martial artists regularly train their abdominal and back muscles. These two areas allow for good execution of the techniques when they are strong and muscular. The abdominal lifts, in which partners hook their ankles together in order to move from a lying to a sitting position, are popular. Judo teachers always train with the judoka who has no partner due to the number of participants. Today it is the unfocused student. Because of the educational task, which judo masters follow, the teacher asks his judoka.

"What are you thinking about?"

"I suffer from exam anxiety. I have an exam next week."

Thereupon the judo trainer gives a speech. He once dealt intensively with the subject of fear and anxiety.

"Are you aware of what the term fear stands for? It is a product of your thoughts. Fear is not a synonym for imminent danger. You should memorize the difference between fear and anxiety. The former reflects a product of reality, whereas the latter stands for an abstract form of your thoughts. Fear is expressed by a sudden heartbeat, wet hands or a shaky body. It indicates that those affected are in a dangerous situation. Fear has enabled both our ancestors and us to survive. Those who take it seriously are less likely to take life-threatening risks. Fear hinders the majority from achieving their goals.

However, we humans are born with three types of fear. The first form manifests itself in the fear of falling. I saw it with my own eyes when I carried my four-month-old son down the stairs. He jerked at every step because his small body gave him the feeling of falling. The second innate fear is reflected in the fear of loud noises. Not only infants, but also adults flinch at both an expected and an unexpected loud noise. The third innate fear is the fear of loneliness. Newborns die when they are merely fed and warmed, but without the feeling of security. The three fears mentioned above are innate and have enabled our ancestors to live in safety. Loud noises, traps or loneliness were not conditions to survive. All other types of fear have been acquired during our lives. Also, our environment has imposed them on us.

Pupils and students suffer from exam nerves. Others are plagued by existential fears. Workers are afraid of unemployment. This list can be continued at will. As a martial artist, you can defeat this annoying emotion that takes place inside you. Regular judo and other martial art

training help you to overcome both your innate fears and your acquired anxieties. Falling exercises in Judo, Jiu-Jitsu or Aikido help you to fight against the fear of falling. You are neither afraid of falling nor do you stay on the ground afterwards. Karateka, on the other hand, practice the battle cry called Kiai while performing a punch. This helps them to perform the punch with all their mental and physical strength. They train their resistance to loud noises. The third advantage that you enjoy due to your regular training is your club membership. Martial artists are not alone. We do not only see our dojo as a second home, but we feel connected to people who practice martial art all over the world. Although it is difficult to fight against the innate fears, it is not impossible.

You conquer acquired fears by giving them no meaning. Next time a certain type of fear paralyzes you, ask yourself whether it is innate or acquired. If it is the former, check to see if you are in danger. If it is the latter, become aware of it and focus on your goal instead. In this case, it is your test. Three traits characterize every martial artist. They are respect, discipline and enthusiasm. If a certain fear comes to you, transform it into respect. You automatically put yourself in a better position. Congenital fears were once vital. Today they don't get you anywhere. Thanks to them, you either stay in the same place or take a step back. Brown was right when he realized that fear only has a great power over us humans because we let it.

People who consciously perceive the phenomenon of fear fight against it. As a result, they enjoy an indescribable inner peace, which external influences cannot destroy effortlessly. Imagine that you are on your way to a job interview and an unfounded fear is tormenting you. Answer the question of what you are afraid of at that moment. Do you have a phobia of unpleasant questions? Are you

worried about the gap in your resume? Are you afraid of being rejected by the HR department? If you consciously think about the fears mentioned above, you accept them. They cannot hinder you in your upcoming interview. Thanks to the fear you release a larger amount of adrenaline and are more focused during the conversation. Are you afraid of an exam? Why? Is it the thought of not passing it? Accept the fear and face your fearful expectation. In this way you will lower your fear level. You become more efficient and are ready to accept other results, such as failing the exam. And it is exactly this acceptance of fear or the transformation of acquired fear into respect that gives you inner strength and serenity. Just as you have conquered your fear of falling, of the unknown and of acquiring a new sport in martial arts training, you are also able to counteract further fears.

Practice conscious breathing

"When thou art absent-minded, learn to pay attention to your breath." - Buddha

Hapkido comes from Korea but has its origin in the Japanese martial art Daito-Ryu Aiki-Jujutsu. Due to the constant expansion, the sport developed into an independent martial art. One person who practices Hapkido is called Hapkido-in. In the dojo, Hapkido practitioners expand their knowledge and skills regarding numerous levers, throwing, punching and kicking techniques. Teachers also focus on conscious breathing. By teaching the correct breathing techniques they help their students to become a better version of themselves, to perceive their environment and fellow human beings better and to strengthen their inner self. That is why the Hapkido trainer starts with different breathing exercises after the welcome. Furthermore, he suggests to his students what effect proper breathing has on their health. It encourages, calms and heals. Courage and calmness are also important characteristics of a martial artist. Incorrect breathing has negative effects in many ways. Conscious breathing, however, connects a Hapkido-in with the present.

The Hapkido trainer practices Yoga in his spare time. He appreciates the breathing techniques of the yogi. Therefore, he uses them in the dojo. His trainer already did so. He taught them the role of breathing in Hapkido. Before he starts with the warm-up training, he encourages his students to calm down their restless thoughts, which have accumulated over the day, by means of breathing. Fast,

restless breathing is an indication of restless thoughts, whereas deep, slow breathing is an indication of calm thoughts. During this phase, students kneel on the floor and close their eyes. This allows them to concentrate completely on their breathing.

"In Hapkido training I pursue two important goals. On the one hand I help you to strengthen your body, on the other hand I teach you how to strengthen your mind thanks to martial arts. Breathing plays a role in both points. In stressful situations a deep breath helps you to calm down quickly. Deep breathing supplies your brain with a higher percentage of oxygen. This in turn increases your concentration and memory. The throws, strikes, levers and kicks increase your lung volume and deep breathing. This way your body benefits from a better distribution of oxygen. Let us now continue with a martial art proven greeting. It's time to train your abdominal muscles in combination with proper breathing.

In order to strengthen the feeling of togetherness of his students, the teacher lets them perform their abdominal lifts in partner exercises. They hook their ankles together. While lying with their backs on the floor, they breathe in. As soon as they are in the upright sitting position, they breathe out. Most of the students rarely pay attention to correct breathing during abdominal training. Instead, they gasp for air or hold their breath irregularly. As a result, they are exhausted after 50 abdominal lifts. They believe that they have reached their limit. Therefore, their trainer lets them do the exercise again, slowly and with correct inhalation and exhalation. All those present at the dojo were amazed when they managed another 100 sit ups. The motivation of their trainer as well as the correct inhalation and exhalation made it possible to improve their performance.

After the warm-up, the students practice the forward kick. They also pay attention to conscious breathing during the execution. This kick requires a longer exhalation because the whole leg covers a longer distance.

"If you attach great importance to correct breathing, you will grow beyond your limits. You thought you were at your limit after the first 50 abdominal lifts. The correct breathing convinced you of the opposite. It acts not only in the dojo as a valuable companion for the performance improvement of a Hapkido-in, but also in everyday life.

Are you in sales and annoyed by a grumpy customer? Don't let his energy-consuming behaviour get a hold of you. Instead, breathe softly, deeply and slowly before exhaling. This will keep you calm in this stressful situation. Think clearly and react in favour of the client. Are you in an oral or written exam? Are you having an unpleasant interview? Have you noticed that your breathing is getting faster? Slow it down and concentrate on the exam questions or the questions of the recruiter. A calm breath helps in many situations. Furthermore, you will strengthen your inner peace if you emerge from the stress situations as a winner. A calm breath also takes away the fear of further challenges.

Now lie on your back. Finally, we will practice conscious breathing. Breathe in through the nose, hold it for three breaths and now exhale slowly through the mouth. Now inhale again and make sure to fill your chest with air, hold it for three breaths again. Now breathe out through the mouth. Inhale again and fill your belly with air, hold it for three puffs, exhale. Do you notice how these exercises affect you? Do you feel better? Integrate conscious breathing not only to stressful situations, but to your everyday life in general. This will help you to grow beyond

your limits. Your breathing should not only fit the techniques in Hapkido, but also your everyday hurdles that you master.

The power of the moment

"Do not dwell on the past, do not dream of the future. Concentrate on the present moment." - Buddha

Children belong to those who live in the present. They are neither afraid of the future nor do they waste a single thought on their past. Adults on the other hand consciously forget to stay in the present moment. They fear their unpredictable future or dwell in their unchangeable past. Unfortunately, this way of thinking does not only cause problems but diseases, too. Several studies have proven how numerous health problems arise: They arise from a lack of enjoyment of the present moment. People who practice a martial art are among those who are consciously aware of the present.

Self-defense techniques specialize in the defense of a frontal fist attack. A martial artist, who has trained Judo for several years, evades this type of attack with his right foot to the right side to avoid the fist attack. He then grabs the right wrist of his attacker with his left hand and holds it firmly. Meanwhile the defender turns 180 degrees. He performs this movement with his right foot. He kneels slightly and uses his wrist to push his attacker's arm further forward, while his right arm slides under his opponent's armpit. In this position a skilled Judoka completes a shoulder throw. This caused the attacker to fall forward without having completed his fist attack.

Karateka, in turn, dodge to the left with their left foot and turn their upper body slightly to the side while doing so.

They also block the blow with their left wrist. All martial arts have their own technique with which they fend off this fist attack. The attack has one thing in common with every sport though: Fighters who do not focus on the present moment and the attack, will receive a punch right in the face. In our fast-paced world, however, most people tend to take a different fist punch. This is due to their permanent absence. They oscillate between their past and their future. Therefore, this defense technique from martial arts serves as a signpost that always reminds both fighters and those who want to become fighters to live consciously in the present.

The fist attack and its consequences are used in everyday life. People who commute with their thoughts between their unchangeable past and their unpredictable future receive the biggest blow of their lives due to this way of thinking. They wake up one day and realise in a depressed state that they have never really lived. Moreover, they have not done the things that were close to their hearts because they were not present in the present. Either their past crushes them or their future burdens them. For this reason, it is worthwhile to practice mindfulness regularly and to be aware of the moment. The fist attack helps not only martial artists, but also those who suffer from fear of the future as well as their past to think about the meaning of the present.

Aikidoka, Judoka, Karateka, Taekwondoka, and Boxer, concentrate while performing kicks, levers, falling exercises and other techniques. They do not digress with their thoughts at all. Because if they are distracted for a fraction of a second, they make a mistake in exactly that time. In everyday life, this mistake depends on their respective activities. That is why attack and defense techniques in the numerous martial arts act as mentors

which help the trainee to consciously perceive the present moment. Martial artists owe their highly focused work to their years of training. As a result, they are attentive during all the activities they perform. They transfer the punch that they fend off during training to everyday life. When driving a car unattentively, they'll pay for losing track of their thoughts by causing a car accident. In training, martial artists learn that mindfulness stands for a special form of perception and state of consciousness. Mindful individuals benefit not only from their higher level of attention but also from their optimistic approach. That is why they do not belong to those who are constantly waiting for something. The majority does not focus on the moment, but on fears, anxieties or problems. Most of the time, these have not even occurred. And they will probably never become reality. These individuals forget that they should only think about the solutions to their worries if they come true. In addition, most young people and adults are waiting for something to happen and do not understand how harmful this waiting can be to their state of mind. Many people are waiting for the weekend, for their next holiday or for their retirement. They are eager for this or that to finally pass. Unfortunately, they forget how quickly time passes. That's the reason why it is worthwhile to visualise the fist attack and its required focus on the presence of martial arts training.

6. Mindfulness - an underestimated everyday companion

"Thinking is the basis of everything. It is important that we capture each of our thoughts from the point of view of mindfulness." - Thich Nhat Hanh