



WATERLOO KUNG-FU ACADEMY

Summer 2021

Fu for You



I'm pretty sure that all of the red being displayed by our instructors influenced the hockey game that evening.

Editor: Sibok Lloyd Fridenburg

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Summer 2021



Editorial

by Sibok Lloyd Fridenburg

I was doing some WKFA research recently and came across this article written by Sigung Bob for the September 2000 newsletter. Much of this still rings true today and you will, coincidentally, see some elements reflected in Sigung Dave's column below. This month marks the 15th anniversary of Sigung's passing.

WKFA Standards (by Sigung Bob Schneider)

"Over the summer I've done a lot of reflecting on what it is that I do, and why and with whom I do it. In our new brochure there is a mission statement that declares, "Kung Fu will work...if *you* will work; and WKFA will show you how!" That pretty much sums up why I started teaching Kung Fu; first at another school, and then ultimately at my own. I wanted to share what had been a thoroughly challenging, frustrating, painful, slow, demanding, (did I mention frustrating and slow yet?) never-ending process with other worthy and like-minded masochists."

"What's the good news in all of this? Simply that it is a never-ending process that has been the most exhilarating and rewarding experience of my life. Is it for everyone? Absolutely not. *Should* it be for everyone? Absolutely not. In these days of mass marketing and infomercial propaganda, I want to continue teaching only those students who have an appreciation of the unparalleled benefits that can be gained through dedicated Kung Fu training."

"On the fiscal side of things, we have the best location and facility around and therefore need a certain income to keep it operating and healthy. Will I sacrifice the standards of the school to improve our "bottom line"? I haven't so far. In fact, as you should all realize by now my ongoing commitment is to make standards even higher. I want to take this opportunity to thank all of the students past and present for allowing me to share this endless kung-fu journey with you and hope to continue for years to come."

Perfection: Attribute or Curse? (by Sigung Bob Schneider)

"When we insist on being "perfect", one of two things usually happens — we don't start something because we believe we can't do it perfectly, or we start only to quit soon thereafter because we are not achieving "perfection" quickly enough."

"That is one of the major challenges about the practice of martial arts. "Kung-fu" literally means "time; work; skill, technique." This very definition is both alluring and at the same time daunting to the perfectionist. Perfectionists are drawn to activities that are precise, aesthetically appealing while intellectually and physically challenging."

"If we look again at the definition of kung fu, we don't see the words fast, easy or perfect anywhere. What we can interpret from it is that if one works hard over a long period of time they will have achieved skill in their techniques. Just how long? As long as it takes."

"While striving to do one's best is always admirable (and is an attainable goal), demanding perfection (something that is in reality impossible to achieve) tends to be counterproductive. Adopting a perfectionist mind-set is often based on "all-or-nothing" thinking, that is, it's perfect or it's nothing. While I confess to using the word perfect in class occasionally, in truth what I mean is, excellent."

"We better serve ourselves when we give ourselves an internal pat on the back for regularly showing up for class and putting in an honest effort than the insistence on, and subsequent pressure and disappointment of perfectionism."



Sigung's Corner

Prior to becoming owner and Head Instructor of the Academy, I occasionally wrote a column for this [newsletter](#). I titled my column, "Definitely Not the Television". This was a spin on a Saturday afternoon CBC Radio program called "[Definitely Not the Opera](#)". I used to be an avid CBC listener. As a kid, the voices of [Peter Gzowski](#) and the crew from [As It Happens](#) coming from my dad's transistor radio was the norm (not to mention the Blue Jays broadcast from the garage radio on weekend afternoons).

Starting my Kung Fu journey with [Sigung Bob Schneider](#) at the age of eleven, I always held him in special regard (I still do) and felt too shy to engage in any lengthy conversation (as I'm sure a lot of us did). As I became a young adult, I mustered up the courage to casually chat *a bit* more with him and it was usually around our shared interest in the cultural programming of CBC Radio; thought provoking shows like [Ideas](#) and often the more abstract and comedic ones like Jonathan Goldstein's [Wiretap](#).

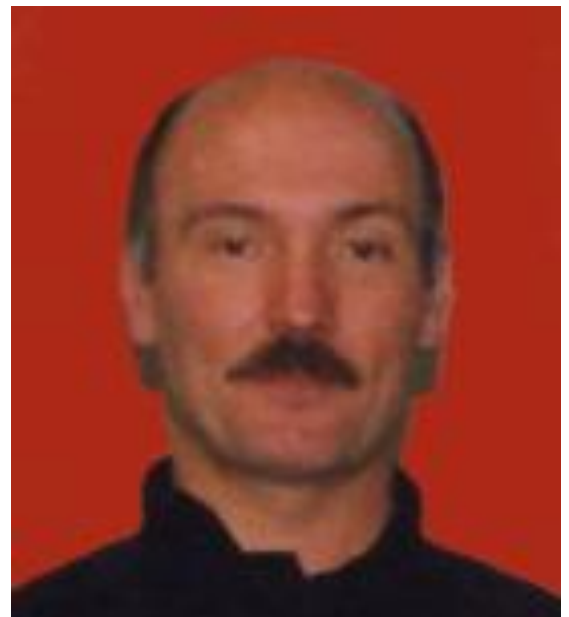
I always had a disdain for the television; to this day, we've never had cable. I feel the screen is designed to suck us in, take our time and sell to us (mostly things we don't need). Definitely Not the Television was my assertion that Kung Fu was one of the great antidotes to the constant draw of the tube.

Another critical antidote is Mother Nature. She doesn't need the sales tactics of the media; the reward of deep engagement with her is much more satisfying. That said, I still do appreciate the medium of sound. I like that it doesn't require us to be inside and immobile. Nowadays, while being physically active, *I can choose what enters my consciousness*, be it an audiobook, podcast or playlist – along with the beauty nature offers.

Being a highly social creature, I understand how people bond over their shared digestion of shows, movies and video games. This is very possible with solely auditory media too, which can be a curated and fulfilling experience that people in my life can affect through their recommendations. We can connect about our listening experience – like how I was starting to do with Sigung at the turn of the millennium.

Unlike types of media that require us to be inactive while absorbing, I find the opposite effect with audio. After I download a new book, album, or podcast, I am extra eager to practice Kung Fu, or get out on a long ride or hike so that I can soak it in, while taking in my surroundings and getting some exercise. I find it motivational, and the experience leaves my mind and body feeling fully engaged.

If you're feeling in a bit of a funk, I implore you to turn off your TV and tune in to Mother Nature. To get started, talk to a friend to get inspired with some good content, then get outside and discover what the natural world will offer!





Youth Students Column

by Sifu Cristina Prudencio-Brunello

Spots and Slither

Welcome back to our ongoing segment about the Kung Fu animals! This month we have a double feature: the leopard and the snake. What do these animals have in common? They are both *strategic* in how and when they use their energy.

Leopard at a glance - Leopard: <https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/animals/mammals/facts/leopard>

- Rank: Yellow Stripe/Yellow Belt animal
- Techniques/Stances: leopard paws, leopard stance/walk
- Skill: Power
- Form: Leopard form (Brown Stripe)

Even though it is smaller than the tiger, leopards are very powerful animals – they explode with movement. Add in a sneaky nature, and they can outsmart and outrun their opponents. A leopard will switch from fast running to escape a predator, to a slow crawl through the grass in order to take its prey by surprise.

Leopards are fast, but that speed can only last a short distance (about 200m). If they run after their prey too early, they might get tired and lose the chase! So, it will sneak up, getting as close as it can before pouncing. When we reach this animal form at Brown Stripe, we try to copy this in our leopard walks. They can be slow and low to the ground, or they can be fast and strong. In order to embody the leopard's power, we have to train our leg muscles... so make sure you practice your horse stance and squats!

Snake at a glance - Snake: <https://www.facebook.com/100004027014429/videos/2493266244150918/>

- Rank: Orange Stripe/Orange Belt animal
- Techniques/Stances: open snake hands, snake mouth, cobra strike, snake stance
- Skill: Suppleness and rhythmic endurance
- Form: Snake form (Jr Brown I and Adult Blue Sash)

The snake is my favourite Kung Fu animal because it combines two important skills: speed and accuracy. Snakes don't have legs, so it would be hard to run fast like a leopard. Instead, they have many *abdominal* muscles in their bellies. They also know how to be explosive. If you have ever seen a snake, it will lie still in the grass and watch, waiting for the perfect moment... then BAM! It strikes faster than the blink of an eye! And when they do strike, snakes hardly miss – that is where accuracy comes in. They need to aim at a small target AND hit it with a small striking surface (their pointy fangs) AND do it all at lightning speed. I'd say that's pretty amazing.

To practice your snake moves, make a bullseye on a pillow, or focus mitt, and see if you can strike it in the middle ten times in a row. If that gets easy, you can make the target smaller. Now add in the speed – give yourself 30 seconds to hit the target 10 times. Keep making the target and time crunch smaller until you are as fast and accurate as a snake!



Junior Students Column

by Sifu Jeremy Norris

Training Ideas for Summer

With the warm weather approaching this is easily one of the most exciting times for us as martial artists. Warm weather means getting to train outside, not having to worry about space, and my favourite... getting to train weapons without the limitations of space. As we prepare for the warm weather, I wanted to gather some of my favourite training ideas and tips for the summer.

1. Moving Drills

When training indoors, there are only so many techniques we can train. Yes, this past year has challenged us in many ways to be able to come up with new methods of training Kung Fu from our households. Although now, with the opportunity to train outside, we can take advantage of the space, and practice things that are not so easily done inside.

One of these techniques is moving drills. It is often hard to comfortably fit moving drills into a tight space. What I like to do in the summer is create moving drills that incorporate bigger movements and stances that you cannot complete inside. A technique I use to create these drills is picking sections from forms and incorporating them into other movements. Here is one to try for yourself: Take the last two moves of the Two Door form (elbow into a backfist), then step up into a side stance and throw a lead leg side kick, once landed reset the drill by trying it to the opposite side and advancing forward.

This simple technique can be used in various ways, have fun with it! And most importantly get creative!

2. Weapon Forms and Techniques

As mentioned above one of my favourite aspects of training outside is the ability to train with weapons. Especially if you are new to the weapon. This is specifically the case for training long weapons. I encourage you to train some weapons outside in a safe area, to get a better feel of the full extension of your weapon. One technique I like to use, is training not only the weapon form, but trying to complete other open-handed forms using a weapon. Doing this allows you to understand how to strike and move in different ways with your weapon.

3. Fun Outdoor Training Activities

Lastly, I would like to provide you with a list of other fun, outside specific activities you can try this summer:

- Water cup stance sequence: Try completing the stance sequence with a cup of water balanced on your head.
- Water bucket horse stance: Go into a horse stance with your arms out holding buckets of water in each hand. As your strength increases, use a larger bucket and more water.
- Squats with a water balloon: Hold a water balloon on the way down and throw the balloon in the air on the way up, catch it and continue this motion until it breaks.

I hope these training ideas inspire you to get outside and train your Kung Fu! Remember when training outside make sure to choose a safe space with no harmful obstacles, and wear appropriate shoes.



Adult Students Column

by Sifu Mark Jolley

Martial Intent

As our third lockdown seems to be winding down, I wanted to visit the martial intent aspect of our Kung Fu style. The term martial art is a form of fighting or defending yourself (Cambridge dictionary). With that definition the question is what is martial intent?

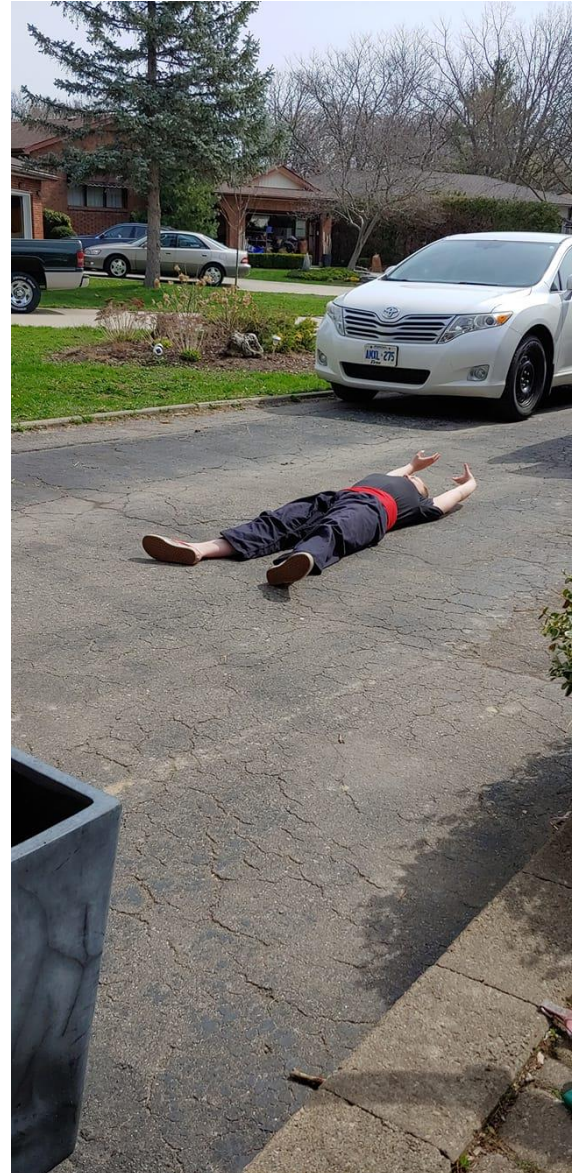
To assist us in understanding what intent is, I wanted to bring up an old saying “flowery fists and embroidery kicks”. Interesting term, but what does it mean? In short, there is no focus on your punches or kicks. They might be at the right height or the correct technique, but in reality, there is no intent (focus) on the technique.

To show the difference between a focused strike vs a halfhearted one, an example is you have 10 minutes to exercise. If you run for that time, or walk, which will burn the most calories? The answer is running since the exercise engages the most muscles at the higher level. Similar, if you are performing a combination of various techniques or forms, if you put half the effort in, you are cheating yourself of obtaining the most benefit possible.

Punch and kick like you mean to break a board! To get the most out of each class, executing martial intent on all your movements (techniques, forms etc) will provide the most benefit. During the lockdown one of the positive side points of modern technology is allowing us to continue training with multiple Zoom classes. On the negative side, we are bombarded with different distractions while training from home. Even with our in-person classes in 2020, most classes were less than an hour. With our tighter training time frames, to get the most out of the class, train as if it were real (if you recall this is a plaque at the front of the kwoon).

With an in-person class, you can get the added incentive to put the most effort in, when there are other students practicing beside you and pushing you. In the Zoom classes, you need the mental discipline to motivate yourself. Use the “gallery view” feature pick another student to train against. Always try to do things better, harder, and faster than your virtual training partner. Training from home brings distractions that we don’t normally have at the kwoon. Applying martial intent to your forms and techniques will help you focus on the class and help tune out those distractions.

So, train hard and train smart, and get the most out of your training! The person benefiting the most from using martial intent is you!



Parents Column

by Sifu Laurent Bernardin

Let's Get Moving

It's been well over a year now that our daily lives have been affected by the pandemic, but it feels like the past couple of months have been particularly tough. Schools reverted to an online format and kids won't be going back until fall. The weather is getting nicer, but it has been difficult to spend time with friends during the lockdown. As a result, I've found that my kids are spending a lot more time in front of a screen both for school and for fun. Kung Fu is contributing additional screen time with Zoom classes and, that too, will last for a few more weeks, at least. Here are a few thoughts on ways to get our kids out of their chairs and away from the screen for a bit.

Move a Zoom class outside - You'll need the backyard or deck space and you'll need to make sure you have a strong enough Wi-Fi signal but, if those issues can be worked out, it's a great way for the kids to get some fresh air while doing Kung Fu. It will also eliminate space constraints.

Practice outside - The backyard or perhaps a nearby park can also be a great space for independent Kung Fu practice. Being able to spread out can really help with kicking sequences and forms. However, please be mindful of taking Kung Fu weapons to a public space. You don't want a surprise visit from the police because someone saw you waking through the park with a broadsword.

Run a family contest - It can be fun getting the whole family engaged in a pushup contest or maybe a daily squat challenge.

Participate in a WKFA social media challenge - If you are looking for ideas, the WKFA Facebook and Instagram pages are a great source for inspiration. Sharing the outcome with our Kung Fu community can add to the fun but is, of course, optional.

Get in the water - If you have access to a pool, challenge the kids to do their Kung Fu forms in the water. Practicing technique like kicks and punches will provide a very challenging workout.

Cross-train - Going for a run, a bike-ride, or even a brisk walk are great ways to get some fresh air and be active.

For our family, some of these ideas have worked but some most definitely have not. I'd appreciate hearing about your own ideas and strategies for coping in these interesting times.



Dr. Sifu Rikin Speaks Out

Building Resilience in Your Child: Part 1

“Resilience” has become the new buzzword in any type of setting -- from students at school or university to adults in the workplace. Succinctly, resilience is the quality of bouncing back. Similar to the theory of buoyancy, when pushed under water, our bodies instinctively rise back up to the surface.

In my work as a pediatrician, I am continuously helping children build resilience by helping families navigate stressors, trying to instill healthy habits and coping mechanisms. The reality of life as we can see from the current pandemic is that problems and challenges will continue to come so our goal must be to raise children who can handle the bumps and bruises the world has in store. In this two-part article, I will introduce a 7 C’s holistic approach to resilience for our Youth and Juniors and show how training Kung fu at WKFA inherently provides an incredible system to promote resilience for students at all ranks.

This model of 7 Cs has been taken from Dr. Kenneth Ginsburg book “Building Resilience in Children and Teens.” A common language about resilience will allow us, as a Kung Fu community, to collaborate better and help one another grow as individuals and as a community. These 7 interrelated principles are – **competence, confidence, connection, character, contribution, coping and control.**

Competence is the ability to handle situations effectively. When a skillset is in place it allows us to trust our judgments, make responsible choices and face difficult situations. The continuous repetition of technique that is the heart and soul of Kung Fu provides us with a graduated system to hone our strengths and develop our weaknesses in our training. The progression of practicing technique in the air, to a kick-shield or heavy bag, then with a partner through self-defense or sparring, gives us the crucial opportunity to trouble shoot and experiment in a variety of tangible experiences. For parents at home some key questions to consider to help fortify your child’s competence: Do I help my child focus on her strengths and build on them? When I need to point out a mistake am I clear and focused, or do I communicate that I believe she always messes up? Do I communicate in a way that empowers my child to make her own decisions (facilitate their thinking), or do I undermine their sense of competence by giving information they cannot grasp (lecturing)?

Confidence is the solid belief in one’s own abilities and is rooted in competence. When any of us demonstrate competence in real life situations we gain confidence. This in turn helps develop deep seeded security that helps one face and cope with challenges. At our school, the continuous practice over time inevitably fosters confidence through rigorous gradings, healthy competition in tournaments, demonstration and Lion Dance teams and finally teaching as an instructor or helping as a Leadership Team member. At home parents can consider: Do I clearly express that I expect the best personal qualities (i.e. persistence) rather than achievements? Do I hold realistically high expectations? Finally, when I criticize or correct him do I focus on what he’s doing wrong, or do I remind him that he is capable of doing well?



Let’s keep training together to stay resilient this summer. Stay tuned for part two in the fall.

Food for Thought

"Commitment is what transforms a promise into a reality. It is the words that speak boldly of your intentions. And the actions that speak louder than the words. It is making the time when there is none. Coming through time after time, year after year. Commitment is the stuff character is made of; the power to change the face of things. It is the daily triumph of integrity over scepticism." ~ *Unknown*

CARDIO WORD SCRAMBLE!

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