

Beat: Miscellaneous

Character Of The Master

Students mimic what they see

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USPA NEWS - Teachers and mentors can make an indelible imprint on the mind of a student. This mark can help determine the path in life that child will follow. As a teacher/mentor you must ask yourself, "Will I be a positive role model or will I be the one that creates another irresponsible adult in society?"

The Iron Leaf Press Team has been meeting a variety of martial artists over the past year. They have dramatically ranged in talent and temperament. The quality of an instructor can influence the quality of their student's performance, that is for sure. However, do those instructors influence a student's behavior too? In the Karate Kid movie series we saw several lost students' behavior significantly tainted by a lost instructor's evil ways. But, can this happen in real life? It sure can if we are not vigilant to instill positive character.

There are some instructors out there that should never teach, they still have far too much to learn themselves. When a lost instructor practices and teaches bad character traits like anger, fear, jealousy, lust, pride, envy, or hate they are passing those flaws onto their students. Life is too short to waste on foolishness like that. Looking for trustworthy character traits in an instructor is critical; love, discipline, self control, and compassion are traits you can learn from as they foster growth, understanding and accountability that encourage you to achieve all your dreams. In addition to you learning martial arts forms, techniques, strength, endurance and the value of hard work, you will learn to be a better person.

Many quality instructors require their students to have a level of sportsmanship that meets their code of discipline and respect. These instructors realize that the actions of their students are a direct reflection of their teaching. When a student is in class or performing their craft in competitions they are taught to bow, introduce themselves, seek and receive permission to start, and bow again to show gratitude. They must also demonstrate kindness to other students and competitors.

Higher quality instructors guide their students to care for others outside the studio too. By teaching them how to lend a helping hand in the community, donating to charities, and putting the needs of others above their own, these instructors are instilling positive traits in students that are building trustworthy inner character. The instructor is not asking you to forsake yourself, but simply showing you the rewards of caring for others.

When dealing with a student's youth and inexperience, sometimes a student can surprise even the best instructors. What happens when a student loses their temper during an event? After speaking with Master Alex Ziwak I was impressed. He shared a story of an impetuous competitive young man during a fight competition at the Providence, RI Civic Center. Prior to this event the student was progressing well.

But, after losing at this event he lost his cool. Master Ziwak, not allowing this type of behavior, did something wonderfully responsible. He took that student back up to the ring. He required that student to apologize to the opponent, ring Masters, judges and then to Grand Master Don Rodrigues and other sponsors of the event. That is the way it should be handled. Well done Master Ziwak.

Does faith have anything to do with the way Master Ziwak handled that situation, perhaps. We have a short time to live this life to the fullest. It is important that all of us be a quality person that others can count on. Be true to God, be true to your instructor and be true to yourself while you take this journey called life. The results could be everlasting.

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