

When You Don't Want to Train

By Master William Scott Shamblin

The famous karate master Masutatsu Oyama once said; "If someone asked me what a human being ought to devote the maximum of his time to, I would answer, 'Training.' Train more than you sleep." While to some that idea sounds a bit extreme, to a martial artist it emphasizes the importance of consistency in one's training.

The way to proficiency in Isshin-ryu Karate is by training as much as you can. If you are serious and consistent in your training, you can accomplish anything. By the same token, if you are inconsistent, or if you don't put 100% effort into practice when you do train, you are only opening yourself up for much discouragement and frustration.

We can all make excuses as to why we cannot come to class, but very few of them actually hold water. However, when there is something else that we want to do, we always seem to be able to find time to do so. We also seem to be able to justify it to ourselves. Sometimes when it comes to doing things that are good for us (like karate or physical fitness) we allow other things to distract us from our goals.

When Master Tatsuo Shimabuku was trying to encourage his son-in-law Angi Uezu to begin karate, Angi had a thousand excuses. Master Shimabuku sensed that his son-in-law really wanted to train but was afraid. Finally, Angi said, "I'd like to, but I just don't have time!" Master Shimabuku's answer was simple, "Make time."

This means that if you really want to learn karate, do it. But don't play around. Don't be inconsistent in your training. It is like standing in a doorway; either get in or get out. If karate is something that you would truly like to do, then make time to train and be diligent with it. Don't miss your classes.

As I said before, there are hundreds of excuses for missing class. Don't fall into the trap of believing that you need time off every time you get a little tired, or things get a little hard. It is a mistake to feel that life would somehow be easier if you didn't have karate to worry about.

Got a headache? Come on in and train, it will make you feel better. Got a stomachache? Come on in and train, it will make you feel better. Had a bad day? Come on in and train, it will make you feel better.

“I just don’t have time.” Most classes are one to two hours, two or three times a week, with preparations and a short drive time to and back. There are 24 hours in a day, 168 hours in a week. You’ve got time if you make it. Come on in and train, it will make you feel better.

“I just can’t come to class tonight.” My life is all messed up. I’ve got so much on my mind that I just can’t concentrate. Your life is not messed up. Trust me, it will get better. When you walk through the doors of the dojo, you need to leave all of your excess baggage outside. Come on in and train, it will make you feel better.

“I’ve been working so many hours lately; I’m just worn out.” Come on in and train. It will help boost your energy and it will make you feel better.

“I’m just burned out on karate. I need a little break.” No you’re not, and no you don’t. Unless you have been training for a number of years, there is no way that you can be burned out, not really. That’s an excuse. Come on in and train, it will make you feel better.

“I’m having trouble at home with my spouse/or other. They think that karate is silly, and that I need to spend more time with them.” O.K., spend more time with them, and show them how much their happiness means to you and how much you love them. Then explain to them how good for you karate is, and how much it helps you to be a better partner for them. Invite them to come and watch you, or train with you. Explain to them that the time that you spend coming to karate class is relatively small in comparison to the time that you will (or already) spend with them, and that there is no need to be jealous of that. Tell them that you love them very much and show them every chance that you get. Then, come on in and train, it will make you feel better.

“I’ve got too much of housework, homework, yard work, honey-do’s, etc., to come to class. I’m way behind on everything!” Set aside a little extra time somewhere else to do these things. Get them done and then come on in and train, it will make you feel better.

“I have to work, or I have something at my church that I need to go to.” Your faith, your family and your job should always come before karate. None of these should suffer because you train. As a matter of fact, Isshin-ryu Karate should enhance those areas of

your life by cultivating a sense of self-discipline. Take care of them well, and take care of them first, then come on in and train, it will make you feel better.

“I am supposed to meet some friends tonight and we are going to go out.” Great! Tell them you are looking forward to meeting them after class, or invite them to come and watch you train. Then, come on in and train, it will make you feel better.

“I’m getting bored with karate.” (Stay home, as an instructor it’ll make ME feel better.)

“But you don’t understand, I’ve got all of these problems...” What? That no one else has? Come on in and train, it will make you feel better.

“But...but...” Make time.

Come on in and train, it will make you feel better.