

Spirit

What is Spirit?

Our training in Shotokan Karate – do develops character by training body, mind, and spirit. But what do we mean by “spirit”, as it pertains to our karate training? There’s no one definition that adequately captures all that we mean when discussing martial spirit. The definition that comes closest to the mark for me defines spirit as an individual’s willingness to accept and then attack challenges as they confront us.

Challenges will present themselves in and out of the dojo. Who hasn’t gotten a few butterflies on the first day of school, or when called upon to recite your book report to the class, or give that briefing to your boss. Challenges encountered within the dojo include kyu exams, kumite challenges, the physical and mental challenge of pushing yourself beyond your comfort level when you’re physically exhausted, how about when you find yourself lined up across from the biggest, strongest, meanest karateka in the dojo, does that challenge your spirit? You bet! The real question is what do you do when confronted with these challenges. Do you accept them and strengthen your spirit or do you wilt like a daffodil in the Las Vegas summer heat?

The measure of your spirit is how you respond to these challenges. When you’re tired do you push yourself to continue or do you look for an easy way out? Do you accept kumite challenges or do you shy away and try to avoid the challenge? What is the measure of your spirit?

How do you develop Spirit?

Well, first, you must recognize opportunities/challenges inside and outside of the dojo when confronted with them. That math assignment you were assigned, for some (myself included!) could be a significant challenge, just the day to day grind of getting by, work, school, bills, etc, (especially in this economy) can definitely be a challenge. Question – do the challenges that occur outside the dojo develop spirit? Of course! As will accepting challenges within the dojo develop spirit that can be drawn upon outside the dojo.

So, I ask the question again – how do we, as karateka, develop our spirit? Answer – accept challenges, inside and outside the dojo. Do not be afraid to fail – we all fail, failure is part of the process. A true karateka should only fear a lack of opportunities to develop their spirit.

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Just Train

Train Hard