

BUILD A GOLDEN BRIDGE

Let's say you and some friends or family are out for a walk in the woods. Accidentally, you come across a mountain lion. You throw up your hands, scream and shout and do all you can do to frighten him so he'll go away. However, not having any free space in which to run away to safety, the lion backs into a corner, frightened. Now what? You have a frightened predator who lives his life by killing and who finds himself trapped in a corner with a bunch of human beings who, themselves, are also frightened but who do not live their lives by killing, generally. Obviously, this is not a safe environment for you or the lion to be in. So what do you do?

Experts tell us that if we come across a lion in the woods we're to throw our hands up to look big and fierce and make a lot of noise so the lion will run away. But . . . what happens if he has no place to run to because he finds himself trapped and cornered and, thus, there is no free space allowing him to escape. His only option is to attack you. "NASA, we have a problem."

Enter Sun Tzu. He tells us to "Build your opponent a Golden Bridge to retreat across." In common words, back off and give the lion, i.e., the person in distress, a way out.

In the course of simply living life, normal everyday people can find themselves to be like trapped lions—physically, emotionally, psychologically, financially, etc. If they feel as if they have no way out of a situation, i.e., no Golden Bridge to retreat across or allow them to escape to safety, they may overreact, become angry, hostile, even violent or worse.

The strategy then for the person in the dominant position is to back off, create a way for the "trapped" individual to get to safety so he can feel comfortable and save face, if that is his issue. This is something for us all to remember. Sometimes, we may be the "dominant" force trapping another person in a "corner," or we can be the trapped person ourselves. Applying Sun Tzu's "Golden Bridge" tactic can be a workable solution, which remains with the dominant individual, i.e., the one creating the "entrapment" — whether the entrapment is imaginary or real. The object is to mitigate the stress and fear of the situation and address the issue at another time.

All this is not to say there will never be situations demanding that we stand our ground or deprive other beings of their entrapment, such as an attacker you just knocked out and who needs to be tied up until law enforcement arrives to take him into custody. But there are times when backing off from a potential explosive situation, or giving the other person a way out to save face, is the best option to solving the problem. In such situations we need to be sensitive to the specifics of the moment and, if need be, give others that "Golden Bridge to retreat across" and feel safe. Certainly, nothing positive is going to happen if tensions keep escalating and, perhaps, get out of control. Peace, even remaining alive, demands patience, tolerance, self-control and wisdom. Sun Tzu's "Golden Bridge" may well be the antidote to a crisis, even lethal, situation.



Est. 1979

Kiado-Ryu.com

KingsKarate.net



*Build your opponent a Golden
Bridge to retreat across.*

~ Sun Tzu

The Karate Institute of America

~finis

© Richard Andrew King and Kiado-Ryu Martial Arts