

STRENGTH

(Source: THE KARATE CONSCIOUSNESS, Chapter 9)
RichardKing.net/books & Amazon.com

Strength is internal power manifested in external form. As all qualities of Divine Individuality, it flows from the center of man's Oneness with his Creator. It permeates all components of the life system—physical, mental, spiritual—and is the sustaining force in the quest for perfection.

It is an absolute necessity for the student to continually increase his strength if he is to successfully progress in the continuum. New obstacles and challenges on the vertical growth pattern always yield an increased functional understanding of the life force once they are surpassed, but to conquer them demands a degree of strength equal to each task. Therefore, the goal for each individual aspiring to mastery is to continually seek to increase the flow from the Source because, of itself, the Source is strength and man is only as strong as his ability to align himself with it.

SHEDDING THE OLD SKIN

As each new age dawns upon man, new concepts are acquired. The process of this acquisition is not always easy because the old, which was at one time the new, must be discarded for the momentary new.

The kind of strength needed in today's world is different from that which was needed in past times. Animal strength and its manifestations are no longer in vogue. Simply, they are becoming outdated because mankind is acquiring the garments of a higher form of strength.

The old concept of strength was expressed in physically strong and rugged characteristics, in the ability never to weep or exhibit tender feeling emotion, and in the capability to emerge victorious at all cost, even at the sacrifice of integrity, intellect and enlightenment. This may have helped man conquer geographical, primitive, earth-bound frontiers but it will not be of any help in conquering the frontier of self-mastery.

The mortal human ego, based on the old concept of strength, has always been the epitome of fragility. When humans have appeared strong, it has not been their humanness which generated the strength but divine essence penetrating the veil of their mortality. When man sheds the rags of his mortality and

clothes himself in the garments of immortality—love, life and light—he will truly be strong because strength is a natural characteristic of the immortal and the divine.

The higher ideal of strength finds itself not centered in animal prowess but gentleness. This is true strength because it takes more internal power, discipline and control to be gentle than it does to be hard, coarse, caustic, abusive, etc. The gentle spirit is the one which has recognized the need for refinement in the nature of man.

Gentleness is love acting. This is not to say that there are not times when a more rigid and austere posture is necessary but, generally speaking, there is too much of the latter and not enough of the former. As the student strives to effect gentleness, he will see how difficult it is to develop and maintain, but he will also see how beautiful life can be when gentleness is the established norm. Strive to be gentle! This is the epitome of true power and the noble characteristic of the glorified soul.

Gentleness may be defined as love and moderation. Love is the great vibration; moderation, the key to balance. Having already discussed these two principles of life, it is easy to understand why gentleness is a meaningful definition of strength. Therefore, if strength is gentleness, and gentleness is love and moderation, it follows that strength is love and moderation. Thus, it is easy to see why a Master is strong—he is the epitome of love and moderation.

Contrary to this idea is the concept that he who is strong is domineering, i.e., overbearing and arrogant. But the domineering individual is not strong. Contrarily, he is the antithesis of strength. Ostensibly, he is powerful because he seems to dominate others, but in reality he is only attempting to find strength by exhibiting power in the flock. The genuinely strong individual doesn't need to be domineering. He has found his power within the center of his divine Being, not without.

Let it be understood that gentleness is not being flimsy and weak. Nor is it an avoidance of power. It is the control of power—that dynamic universal force which perpetuates life and flows unceasingly into form. Again, gentleness is not the abuse, misuse or avoidance of power. It is the control and divinely creative use of it.

The gentle person is highly disciplined. He has learned to transmute and channel energy in ways which promote the quality of life, not destroy, defame or deprecate it. He is truly enlightened and an invaluable

asset to society. He is to be appreciated, applauded and exemplified, for he is the ideal of the new-age man.

THE ABILITIES

To gain a further understanding of strength, a catalogue of some of its skills may be helpful. Strength is the ability to endure and persevere; to be flexible; to be firm; to feel; to surrender the outer and claim the inner; to admit wrongdoing or injustice when self-generated and apologize for it; to remain steadfast to personal convictions; to stand alone; to stand amid the crowd; to love and be loved; to allow others to be themselves; to take one more step—to carry on when dawn cannot be seen; to discipline the self; to speak the truth; to do what is right; to be patient; to be resilient, i.e., to bounce back after failure and defeat; to stand within the tumultuous cry of mortality and proclaim the right to life, love and light.

Tomorrow is not soon enough to begin the development of strength in body, mind or spirit. It is axiomatic that tomorrow never comes. All action occurs within the forever Here and Now. Therefore, to put off in the future what can be done in the moment is antithetical to progress. Immediate action is the only solution to procrastination.

Physical strength is the easiest to develop because we can see, feel and touch the body, which is a rather concrete idea of mortality and the human spectrum, whereas the mind (intellect) and spirit are more abstract and, therefore, pose a greater challenge to the development of strength. Exercise and participation in athletics on a regular basis, whether organized or unorganized, will enhance bodily strength.

The mind may be strengthened by thinking. To catalyze the thought process, questions beginning with the words why, what, how and so forth are quite effectual. The key is not simply asking the question but in seeking the answer.

For instance, it's easy to ask, "Who am I?" but it's not so easy for most of us to give an intelligent answer beyond stating our names. Other questions may be, "Why am I?" "Why do people really die?" "How can immortality be achieved?" "What is intelligence?" "What is God?" Certainly, in answering these questions the mind must grow. It would be impossible for it not to.

Spirit is to the mass consciousness the most abstract of the three components of the life system. However, as one's individual Being gradually departs the planes of mortality and moves upward into the planes of immortality, spirit will appear less abstract until it is eventually perceived as concrete reality.

The essence of Spirit is God—the all-pervading power, intelligence and substance of the universe. To develop a strength of spirit is more demanding than mere physical or mental exercise. To hold God in consciousness, to cogitate and meditate on God is important. However, we must also learn to act, to instantaneously respond to His dictates. We must align ourselves with our Creator, and in the Oneness we will achieve the highest degree of strength possible.

If the student believes he is created in the image and likeness of God, then he must also understand he is of the same substance. Therefore, to be strong he must simply let the Power flow; he must invigorate and fortify the presence of God in his life. He does this in part by going within and continually making greater contact with the Source which originates from within, from the center of his Being.

FOCAL POINTS

All power flows from the center of Being. If this truth were more readily acknowledged, the mass consciousness would exhibit greater strength. Yet, the focal point of the amalgamated contemporary mind is focused on externalities, on what is located without, not within.

Man today seeks comforts for his body and its array of sensations rather than comforts for this soul. He chases illusions or temporal realities when, for his own well-being, he should be concentrating upon the reality of internal infinite existence.

A simple illustration of this is the individual who dresses in beautiful exquisite garments but allows his/her body to atrophy, to become weak and frail. Additionally, there is the person who, for the sake of excitement and a release of energy, goes everywhere and does everything, vainly trying to pervade the entire spectrum of mortal existence to find thrills and exhilarations. Little is it known that the most intense exhilarations of life, the most sensational experiences, reside in that place which is no farther than the center of individual Being. We cannot grow on the vertical tangent or increase our vibration if we continually avoid the Center. The passageway to infinity lies within. Therefore, in relation to divine progress the admonition is, "Bring it on Home!"

It is through prayer, meditation and thoughtful contemplation that we assist ourselves in reaching the supreme focal point of Being, i.e., God. But to pray, meditate and think requires discipline, control and the power to release ourselves from the pull of external forces. This we develop a little at a time but each little step eventually results in a monumental stride. Therefore, we must continue to persevere, to unceasingly take one less step in the realm of temporal external illusion substituted by one more step into the territory of internal reality and power. As we proceed along this path, we shall consequently emerge strong and unmistakably powerful.

Extended strength is stamina, endurance. It is a characteristic we all need because the journey though the continuum is not a sprint. It is a marathon. One, single, solitary exhibition of strength may result in the conquest of one, maybe two, obstacles, but it will not suffice for the long run. We need staying power, not for five years, ten, twenty, forty or even a hundred years but forever. Strange? Not really when one lives totally within the concept of infinity.

We can generate stamina by focusing our minds on perpetuity and inexhaustibility. In other words, we must visualize our strength as never departing from us but remaining a constant characteristic of our nature. To think of our strength as limited or finite will preclude us from great deeds, for always the greatest tasks demand the greatest strength.

It is probably a valid generalization that most individuals don't realize how strong they actually are. Primarily, this is because they've never been tested to their limits. The experienced karateka should be able to testify to this statement because only as he advances in the study of the art does he learn how to draw power from within himself to generate considerable force. He doesn't have to create it because it already exists naturally in limitless quantities. He just must learn how to give it an avenue of meaningful expression.

We are all intrinsically strong. The only difference in those who demonstrate high levels of strength is that they have learned how to tap the Source. They've learned that if an individual pushes himself to his furthest limit he will surpass his limitations, thus annihilating any concept of limitation in his experience. And as he continues to overcome more distant and difficult obstacles, he becomes proportionally stronger.

Therefore, the admonition is for the student to challenge himself and push back the barriers of his current understanding and to keep pushing them back eternally. This is the path to the development of strength.

THE NON-PROOF POSE

The bearer of strength does not have to prove himself to the world or to anyone in it. He traverses the road of life with a calm, firm posture and fortified resolve.

Oftentimes, however, it is quite noticeable that in the realm of flock power individuals feel it is important to prove their strength to others, if not to themselves. Karate, because it is a vehicle for the development of internal power, is attractive to people so disposed. They study the art only to assist in the expansion of their own egos. This is, indeed, unfortunate, and the sincere student should realize this propensity. In fact, one of the purposes of karate is to help the student grow out of this predicament so he can truly appreciate life. If he is truly sincere, he cannot help but realize that as he learns more of the art and more of this internal power he has absolutely no need to prove his power to anyone or anything. Of himself he is powerful. He knows this and lives, therefore, within the concept of the "Non-Proof Pose."

NEW AGE HERO

A hero, traditionally, has always been epitomized by his strength. Weak heroes have never existed. The heroes of the new age, be they male or female, will, likewise, be characterized by their strength. However, the brawny, physically rugged Herculean type hero will not be in vogue. Times have changed. Animal prowess is rapidly giving way to the higher ideals of gentleness, love, compassion, justice, enlightenment. The idea of the hero has eclipsed the physical realm and is moving upward into the more ethereal planes of consciousness. Look for him or her. Perhaps he may be found across the street or around the corner but, then again, the unmistakable form of the new-age hero may well be found within the reflected personal image of the mirror on the wall.

End, Chapter 9: THE KARATE CONSCIOUSNESS
RichardKing.net/books.htm
Amazon.com: <http://amzn.to/2u4z2eZ>

© Richard Andrew King and Kiado-Ryu Martial Arts