

# The Black Belt Book of Life - Topic #15

## Strength is the Ability to Endure

The meanings of strength are many,  
but one thing is for sure,  
in the struggle-strewn strife of life  
*Strength Is The Ability To Endure.*

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*You only have to endure to conquer.*  
Winston Churchill

*What does not kill me makes me stronger.*  
Goethe

*The strongest man in the world  
is he who stands most alone.*  
Henrik Ibsen

*Strength does not come from physical capacity.  
It comes from an indomitable will.*  
Gandhi

*Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength,  
while loving someone deeply gives you courage.*  
Lao Tzu

Life is a test from birth to death; an endless struggle to maintain one's balance, poise and grace while striving to achieve one's personal goals. If we're to conquer the challenges of life, we must be strong . . . for the long haul, not just for the passing moment or the fleeting glimpses of capricious fortune.

Strength is a virtue. Talent is a gift. One can have talent but fail to achieve great things because of a lack of strength. One can have mediocre talent but achieve wondrous things through the strength of will.

As an example, in the history of the Karate Institute of America, there have been some very noteworthy physically talented individuals who never succeeded in becoming a Black Belt because they lacked the

strength [the ability to endure] to achieve the goal, some giving up the ghost just weeks before their final exam. Contrastingly, there have been many individuals who, lacking great talent, succeeded in achieving a Black Belt rating because they never quit. They fought, struggled, endured and saw the journey through to its conclusion. In fact, if there is one quality of all Kiado-Ryu Black Belts, it is that they all expressed an indomitable will and relentless spirit to succeed. Their strength exceeded the challenges and adversities they faced in their martial arts journey. Such is the truth in every discipline, in every line of work. Those who succeed never quit.

At the Karate Institute of America there is a tradition of honoring each individual who achieved the rank of Black Belt by hanging a black belt embroidered with their name and coronation date on the walls of the studio. In effect, this becomes a visual living testimony to their accomplishments in the same fashion that collegiate and professional sports institutions honor their champions with banners on their walls, ceilings and facades. The following two poems, entitled *The Wall* and *The Wall II*, are included on the following two pages as another means of honoring their accomplishments of strength and character.

## THE WALL

It stands, unyielding, to an ever-present flow of suppliants:

THE WALL

It beckons, calling and challenging those  
whose spirit would be tested in the fire:

THE WALL

It rewards and holds within its bosom and on its face  
those individuals who came to challenge and to conquer  
and prove their spirit equal to the task:

THE WALL

It honors and presents forever to the world  
those collective souls whose spirits would never die,  
would never yield to the fire of its own relentless spirit:

THE WALL

It stands as a grand and noble legacy for grand and  
noble conquerors - Black Belts of the Kiado-Ryu.  
It is their exclusive right, their exclusive heritage,  
their exclusive destiny.  
It is undeniably and unquestionably  
*their* WALL.

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## THE WALL II

They have come in multitudes, for decades.  
Through their sweat, blood, tears,  
hopes and dreams they have come --  
Seeking, striving to reach a pinnacle  
only few have conquered;  
Seeking to rise above  
the mediocre and mundane  
to stand apart in triumph!

But the Wall, standing as an edifice  
to courage, determination and the  
substance of a relentless spirit,  
has broken all but just a few --  
The few who could not be broken;  
The few who would not be broken;  
The few who can truly claim to be named  
Black Belts of the Kiado-Ryu!

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