

# The Black Belt Book of Life - Topic #16 –

## Not To But Through

In finding the mark and hitting it,  
as we our goals pursue,  
the key to raising the Cup is  
*Not To But Through.*

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*I can give you a six-word formula for success:  
Think things through - then follow through.*  
Sir Walter Scott

In martial arts, one of the keys to generating devastating power is penetrating the target, i.e., not focusing *to* the target but rather *through* the target. When we strike at the front of a target, even though we may hit it, our strike will have little effect because of its lack of depth. However, if rather than merely hitting the target, we project and strike *through* it, our effective power will be greatly enhanced.

As an example, if you are a martial artist, next time you do some bag work, focus your punches six to twelve inches beyond the target. Given the same speed, trajectory and technique of the punch, the power output will be greater. Follow the same principle of all strikes and kicks. Focus *not to* the target *but through* the target for maximum effect.

To illustrate the potency of this principle, practice the following *Focus, Nick and Stick* drill. From your position in front of a bag, dummy or makiwara board, deliver a punch full power and *focus* it an inch in front of the target without hitting it. Do five reps. Then adjust your punch to only *nick* the target. Use the same amount of energy in delivering the punch. Do this for five reps. Then, adjust your concentration six to twelve inches beyond the front of the target and punch *through* it with the same intensity used for the two previous punches, the *focus* and the *nick*. Do this also for five reps. See the difference of focusing *through* the target and with the same amount of energy expenditure? It's much greater. As a follow-up drill, execute the *Focus, Nick and Stick* drill in succession, one punch following the other. This will help develop control. A good Black Belt should be able to focus, nick or stick his target at will with total

control with any of his weapons, whether those weapons are punches, kicks, backfists, elbows, knees, armbars, palms, chops or ridgehands.

Although the previous example uses a martial arts exercise, the same principle applies to any problem in life. When we focus not *to* the target but *through* it, not only will we have greater power but we'll also have greater consistency in the results.

Another example. Ever watch a sprinter in a track and field race start slowing down *before* he crosses the finish line? It's a common problem. Why do this? To achieve the best time possible and insure a victory, the key is to run full speed *through* the finish line, not to it. Furthermore, it's an excellent rule in life to always focus *through* and *go through* the problem to develop the habit of always finishing strongly. If we don't practice mentally, physically and spiritually moving through the target [the goal at hand], we'll potentially fall short. To insure success in anything we do, it is important to focus *not to but through* the task at hand.

How does this apply to life? If you need to save \$100, focus on saving \$200. If you want to get an A in a class, think of getting an A+ or doing extra credit to insure an A. If you need to make five sales calls in a given time period, focus on ten. If you want to lose twenty pounds, focus on thirty. If you're writing a book, rather than setting a goal of writing three pages a day, write five. You've got the picture. Always focus beyond and *through* the target for maximum results.

Regarding the journey of life itself, if we are to make the most of our life, it would be wise to focus beyond the grave to the next life, to the next phase of our journey. This life is only one part of our existence. There will be other parts, other phases. By focusing on our death in this life and considering our death to be the end, we limit the success of not only this life but our next life. The admonition is, *not to but through*. Therefore, to make the most of this life and prepare for the next, we need to focus *beyond* the grave to the next phase. This strategy will insure that our energetic *link of life* is not broken, thus solidifying the continuity of our existence and our soul's ultimate triumph.

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