

Zen Letter #7  
April 23, 2009

"To know something means having experienced it concretely. A cookbook will not take away your hunger." ~ Takuan

Hello again everyone! I pray that this mail finds you happy, healthy and well. As I am sure you understand we are in a season change and with it comes more things put on top of our already busy schedule. I like to see this as a joy with a serious challenge attached to it. I will keep this letter brief and to the points.

1) ~ Tournament of Champions III : a) It will be held on May 2nd (Sat.), at the Chambersburg Area Middle School, (same as last tournament.) ~ b) Registration starts at 9am- tourney begins at 10am. ~ c) Cost is \$50 pre-paid- \$60 at the door, (no credit cards, cash is good.) ~ d) \$5 to watch per person (kids 5 and under are free) ~ e) This is our 3rd tournament so be patient and positive with us. We get better with every tournament and I feel we already have a wonderful event in our hands. ~ f) It is GOOD and POSITIVE for you and the kids. In a world of 100+ channels, Video Game mania, Angry Soccer mom's, and News on TV and print that is enough to depress Captain Kangaroo, this is a good thing. It is for the individual student to test their ability against other random students of similar belt ranking and age from our school and other quality schools. There is nothing else like it. If there is still any questions, please feel free to write me or talk to Heidi or myself in the dojo. Please, always remember what an influence you have on the people around you. If you are positive and happy, people migrate in your direction with their positive vibes. If you are negative and complain a lot, you will never be truly happy in life. This is a basic Martial understanding and a rule in life. BE AT YOUR BEST ALWAYS!~ You can do it.

2) ~ BIG change in schedule starting in MAY!!!!!! May 2nd is the tournament, AND, on May 1st we begin our schedule change in the dojo. Saturday classes will be moved to Friday evening. 5:00pm-6:15pm will be the class for all belts. (just like Sat. is now) and Golden Tigers class, (see previous letters for what Golden Tigers are or ask in dojo), will be from 6:30-7:45pm. I have meditated long and hard/soft on this move and I am sure it is the right thing to do. There will still be special events and some tests on weekends here and there. For instance, an advanced belt test could be held from 11:00am to 1:00pm and the rest of the day free for the student and/or their family. Since 1987 I have taught a Saturday class. I am also a little excited to have a Saturday 'day' free to explore the world too. I hope this decision is met with support and an open mind. So far the reactions have been very positive.

3) ~ Martial Arts are not a sport they are a way of life. Too often this is a point of much confusion to a student or parent. A Black Belt is what it takes for a student to finally begin their life journey in the Martial Arts. Here are some facts and benefits to this life style : Good Health, a fit student is a person whose day is easier, every day. Their self image is a good one and there is a love and respect for 'self' that is a beautiful and rewarding thing. Today's world is hard enough without the extra weight of being "out of shape". Positive Outlook, there is too much negativity in our world today- positive, focused people change the world for the better. Will Power, There is nothing a Black Belt can not do once we are focused and determined. Through meditation and hard work thought and action become one and the same. Confidence, if ever attacked we can defend ourselves. Our outlook on life is positive, yet if another person wishes harm on us or our family, we can defend with our past training and not be afraid. A student of Bushido does not give in to peer pressure because we need to 'fit in'. Might for Right is a motto and a creed of the martial artist. How many times on the news do you hear of Sports Hero's getting arrested or stripped of awards because of Steroid use? Who are they trying to prove what to?

Money and fame does not make one happy in life, not on a spiritual level. Too many times I meet people who have no trouble paying their bills but are searching for something on a higher level, whether it be inner peace, honesty, honor or just a smile back from their mirror. Sadder yet are the people who are monetarily 'rich' and are not training their spirit or hugging their own soul. Inner peace and happiness in our lives is all anyone can ask for. There is beauty all around us every day, we just need to make sure we see it and appreciate the many blessings. I will say it again, the road to Black Belt is a journey of self that has endless rewards that will last a life time. The Martial Arts are not a Sport (even though good students are in better shape than most of the athletes they know), it is a life style. Stay Strong always in your Support and Attitude.

4) Thank YOU for continuing to help make Zen Dragon School of Martial Arts so magical and wonderful. We have a Great School and Fantastic Students along with supportive family and friends. The future is always bright and we can do anything with team work and patience. I am Honored to lead and serve you and your family. ~peace and zen to you~

5) Our website is [www.zendragonschool.com](http://www.zendragonschool.com) ~ Stop by and say "Hello" and share thoughts and suggestions. More on this later- I am off to teach class =]~

"Do not look upon this world with fear and loathing. Bravely face whatever God has to offer." O-Sensei Morihei Ueshiba