

Brown Belt 2nd Kyu Paper

What motivates you to train harder or more often?

Here's a secret about karate: it's not easy. When you've been busting out line work for twenty minutes you may find your muscles quivering from exertion, sweat dripping off the end of your fists, your breathing labored, difficulties just maintaining your stance, and your mind shouting that it's long past time to stop. Somewhere inside you must light the spark to keep going. Without motivation a karateka cannot train hard enough nor often enough to better their techniques. The following are some of my motivations which are varied and have evolved over time.

As a beginner it was exciting to learn just the basic movements of blocks and punches. Before then I had never thrown a punch. I had never known how to move my body to block a punch outside of basic instinct. There's something exhilarating about learning to control your body in new ways. I found myself practicing the various blocks while riding in the elevator at work and throwing punches in the stairwells. For years I had focused mainly on training my mind and now I had discovered new satisfaction in training the mind and body together. I found motivation in the joy of learning new skills, and continue to do so even now.

Any karateka will tell you that their fellow practitioners and senseis are great motivators for their training and this is just as true for me. Seeing the karateka next to me throw their combination quicker challenges me to be faster. Seeing others persevering alongside me inspires me to persevere as well. My senseis motivate me both verbally and in their leading by example. They also provide a foundation for internal motivation. My senseis work hard to help me improve, but progress does not come without practice. If I did not train often, all of their efforts

might be wasted. My indolence would be an insult to their hard work. To be able to demonstrate that their words were not lost on deaf ears is a great motivation for training.

One of the most powerful motivators is simply the thrill of learning to execute a skill better than before. The more a karateka trains, the closer they will get to proper technique. In training you hone the feel and effectiveness of different techniques. The day you find out during kumite or kata that all your hard work has paid off, that the motions feel more powerful and work better, is a great motivation for continuing training. The tangible results of progress elicit feelings of great satisfaction and inspiration to persist in your hard work.

Without a concrete source of motivation a karateka may find no reason to return to the dojo day after day. Or perhaps they may go through the motions but never really learn karate. Motivation inspires extra training outside the dojo and harder training inside. It is the mind-body connection, fellow student and sensei relationships, and enjoyment of visible improvements that motivate me to train harder and more often.