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## **SENSEI'S BLOGS:**

October 2008

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### **Leaders for Tomorrow**

Recently we were discussing our advertising in the yellow pages for next year. There was some consideration given to new technology overtaking traditional phone books and the need to make sure our promotional material was placed where people could most readily access it. We were also contemplating how best to communicate the benefits of traditional martial arts training for young people in particular. Given it was an advertisement in a phone book, the goal was to capture in a few key words what was on offer and just how essential those things are to human development.

And that's when I realised again just how cheap words have become ... how their meaning has been diluted by overuse and abuse. Even essential attributes ... integrity ... respect ... compassion ... etiquette ... resilience ... even these have become dulled somehow when we hear them. They should resonate with us and galvanise us ... draw us like a magnet towards any opportunity to develop them in ourselves and our children. Why? Because without them we are individually so very much less than our potential - and collectively, certain to repeat the mistakes of the past ... to descend further into the shallowest existence.

How can I communicate the urgency with which we need to approach the development and maintenance of these human traits? Are they diminishing in people and society in general? I don't know, but I doubt they are growing. The question I ask myself as I struggle with this simple act of promotion is "How can I best encourage parents to embrace an environment and a culture that will help their young people to develop these fine characteristics?"

When I was teaching the 'Modern Warrior' programme in local schools I would take a six hundred year old sword to show the students and I would explain how it was made. Working with the base ore, the swordsmith would heat and beat - remove impurities, add elements to transform the ore to steel, fold and refold, working and shaping the steel to the optimum combination of hardness and softness. This ritual can be likened to the transformation of young people into adulthood in the care of their parents and teachers. Where the sword had no choice - it couldn't run from the forge - young people often either withdraw from the process or don't have the necessary parents and teachers able and willing to guide their development.

This crucial process of drawing out the full potential from the base material - of revealing the 'ideal' person within - is very much the work of the martial arts Dojo. But how can we communicate the priority this must have? How can I express how limited the future will be for individuals and society without this vital aspect of human development? With the confusion between combat sports and martial arts, how do we educate people to discern the difference?





In today's world it is all the more important that martial arts organisations promote the values and opportunities that they provide to contribute to a positive future. The forging process of a Dojo develops resourceful and capable people with the capacity to lead and follow with integrity and flair – tested people who understand mutual benefit and are able to balance social and economic prosperity in their endeavours – Leaders for tomorrow.

**David**

