

INTEGRATIVE LEADERSHIP INTERNATIONAL

“Helping individuals and organizations become integrated.”

Lessons on the Path:

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“Paradox of Power”

Richard John Hatala

OBSERVATION:

This weekend I attended our son’s first martial art tournament in Calgary. It was sponsored by the Tae Kwon Do Association and featured ten martial arts schools from across western Canada. Over 150 individuals—along with their families, friends and instructors—participated in the event. That morning, our son won first prize in his Division for performing a *Poomse* (Korean for a pattern of kicks, blocks and punches) at his purple belt level. As we waited for him to begin his first sparring match that morning, I could feel my excitement building with him and for him.

Historians believe that the Martial Arts is as old as civilization, first originating in Mesopotamia, then moving westward 5,000 years ago to Egypt, Africa, Europe and the Americas. It also moved eastward from Mesopotamia to India eventually migrating and evolving into Kung Fu in China, Judo in Japan, Muay Thai in Thailand, Karate in Okinawa and in time, Tae Kwon Do in Korea. The popularity of Tae Kwon Do (**Tae:** flying legs and feet; **Kwon:** punching fists and hands; **Do:** the Way or “the way of flying fists and feet”)- first promoted by General Hong Hi Choi in 1945—has allowed it to become the national sport of Korea. Today Tae Kwon Do is practiced in over 60 countries in the world and has millions of adherents.

Our son had been physically and mentally preparing for his first Taekwondo tournament for many months. That day he continued to prepare at different times through quiet meditation, relaxation and intense listening to the advice offered by his coaches: one from his current Tae Kwon Do dojang (school) with the other from his former Hop Ki Do dojang. His first match against a larger, stronger and more experienced opponent, was spirited to such a degree that he, to his own and everyone else’s surprise, won. Later that afternoon, in his final match against a smaller opponent, much to everyone’s surprise, his fighting spirit was noticeably different, a little off, a little subdued to such a degree, he lost the match coming second overall in his Division.

The next day, I asked if he had time to reflect on his two defining matches and he said: “A little. I know that in my first match, I was a little afraid. I knew I needed help if I was going to win and I listened deeply to all those who were willing to help me. I went within and asked for help and for the chance to do my best no matter what the outcome. I went into the fight without thought, without expectation, totally in the moment, and knew I did the best I could do. And in the end, I won.”

“And what about the final fight?” I asked.

“A totally different feeling,” he said quietly. “Initially I looked at my opponent and thought I could beat him. I was taller, stronger and heavier. I felt I didn’t need any help and didn’t ask for any, internally or externally. I was confident that I could do it alone. After all, I told myself, I had the skill, talent, ability, and experience to beat him. I did it alone, and in the end, I lost.”

On reflecting on our son’s story, in his first fight he was humble in admitting he did not know the way to success. He asked for help and listened to the voices of those outside and inside of himself for the answer. In his final fight, he was arrogant and thought he knew the way to success. He did not ask for help and refused to listen to anyone or anything but himself. In the first fight he sought a higher power as his true self and in the final fight he exercised his own personal power as his false self.

When in your life did you admit that you were powerless and ended the victor and when in your life did you feel you were powerful and ended up in defeat? When did you surrender and find yourself walking the path of flow and grace and when did you hold tenaciously to a course of action or a belief only to find yourself walking the path of struggle and pain?

“Power is of two kinds. One is obtained by the fear of punishment and the other by acts of love. Power based on love is a thousand times more effective and permanent than the one derived from fear of punishment.”

Mohandas K. Gandhi

In the microcosm of the sparring mat my son had uncovered the paradox of power whose spirit of duality haunts every aspect of our worldly lives. How do you exercise power in your life and leadership endeavours? Is it as an invitation or is it as an imposition? For only in answering this question from the heart of your being can you hope to find a resolution to the paradox of power that we all must face in time and space.

APPLICATION: Reflect this week on whether, in all that you do, say, think and feel, you invite in the spirit of your ideal to be your constant companion OR do you feel that you can live your life on your own without any internal or external help? Are you humble enough to ask for help in being shown the way to your image of success, or do you believe you all ready know the way and don't need to ask for help or guidance anymore?

INSPIRATION: "Competition is the spice of sports; but if you make spice the whole meal you'll be sick." **George Leonard.** "Ever since I was a child I have had this instinctive urge for expansion and growth. To me, the function and duty of a quality human being is the sincere and honest development of one's potential." **Bruce Lee, founder of Jeet Kun Do.** (1) "The Art of Peace begins with you. Work on yourself and your appointed task in the Art of Peace. Everyone has a spirit that can be refined, a body that can be trained in some manner, a suitable path to follow. You are here to realize your inner divinity and manifest your innate enlightenment. Foster peace in your own life and then apply the Art to all that you encounter." (2) "Life is growth. If we stop growing, technically and spiritually, we are as good as dead." **Morihei Ueshiba, founder of Aikido.**

INFORMATION: For a description of the world's major martial arts, see: <http://www.martial-way.com>. Another chronology can be found from Joseph R. Svinth at: <http://ejmas.com/kronos>. The three levels of awareness within the integrative model can be found in Taekwondoe's three levels of development: physical, mental and spiritual. In *physical development*, the practitioner learns techniques to stretch and strengthen the muscles of the body and is taught kicks, stances, blocks, hand strikes, breathing, rhythm and balance necessary to execute those techniques. In *mental development*, the practitioner is taught focus and concentration, how to set and reach goals, teach and help others in the *dojo* (school), build confidence and learn to discern when to fight and when to run away from a situation. In *spiritual development* the practitioner learns to apprehend a personal vision, cultivates the belief in an idea, themselves, others or their Image of God, learns to stand for their beliefs, has faith in himself, others and the Divine, and cultivates the virtues of courtesy, integrity, perseverance and self-control. According to Eun-Hee Koo at Shepherd University, studies by Beard (1982), Solis (1997) and Yang (1997) "...have shown that children engaging in martial arts groups versus those who did not have more assertiveness, experimentalism, strength, self esteem and positive attitude towards themselves, others and life." The Basic Ideals of Taekwondo Practitioners are: (1) By developing an upright mind and strong body, we will acquire the self confidence to stand on the side of justice at all times; (2) We shall unite with all men and women in a common fellowship, without regard to race, national or ideological boundaries; (3) We shall dedicate ourselves to building a peaceful humane society in which justice, morality, trust and humanism prevail.

UPCOMING PUBLIC PROGRAMS:

April 14-16 2005: Integrative Leadership: Taking Leadership to the Next Level: Sponsor: Integrative Leadership International. **Location:** *Inn on Crowchild*, 5353 Crowchild Trail NW, Calgary, AB, Canada. **Tuition:** \$895.00 per person. **Topic:** Experiencing the path of integrative life and leadership. To download a brochure and registration form: **Click this link:** For more information, visit the I.L.I. website at www.integrativeleadership.ca under upcoming events.

June 6 2005: 7:30 to 9:30 pm: Integrative Leadership: Pathway to Potential: Sponsor: Centre for Spirituality at Work, Box 100, 162 Spruce Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5A-2J5; **Location:** To be announced, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. **Tuition:** \$30.00 per person. **Topic:** Exploring the process of integration as a path towards developing more of our human potential. **Click this link** for more information on the evening program; **Registration:** Contact Sherry Connolly at **Phone:** (416) 482-9175, **Fax:** (416) 482-9969, **E-Mail:** info@spiritualityatwork.org or **Website:** www.spiritualityatwork.org.

June 14-16, 2005: Integrative Leadership: Taking Leadership to the Next Level: Sponsor: University of Saskatchewan, Business and Leadership Programs. Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. **Tuition:** \$895.00 per person. **Topic:** Experiencing the path of integrative life and leadership. To download a brochure and registration form, **Click this link:** For more information, call (306) 966-5492 or visit the U of S website at www.learntolead.usask.ca under upcoming events.

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