

Are you a Titan?

By Will Grilliot

ShoDan The Gi Yu Honbu Dojo

10/17

In response to Sensei's article on duty versus responsibilities (or guilt) and the Call to Arms he gave the Black Belts this past week, I have had a ton of ideas running around in my head. Early on in my training Dojo-cho Chuck Sempai challenged me to be different from the normal. He told me to be a *Titan*. He said that if I took a look around I would see that there are those who go through the motions and there are those that bear the dojo's weight of responsibility and duty. They hold everyone else up so they can be closer to their personal goals. There are a few people within our association that I consider to be Titans and honestly if you open your eyes you will see who they are for yourself and maybe learn to become one yourself.



We have in our hands the beginnings of something that could outlast all of us (as Sensei has said many times), but we have to take a step back and see it in that manner every once and awhile. 20 years from now, when people see your picture on the wall what will they say about you? Will they remember you? Were you one of The Gi Yu Dojo Titans? There are many different types of backgrounds and situations within our community that we all come from. There is something positive that every single person can do to help the dojo because of those backgrounds. For example, I have a very open schedule on Tuesdays, so I help with the kid's class. I am a firefighter and I own a restaurant, along with being married and about to have my first child. So I understand time and responsibilities. But, that is just me personally and that is what I am able to do.

If you have been part of this community for any amount of time then you understand that there really isn't anything for Sensei to personally gain from running the dojo the way that he does. I think he does that on purpose. The dojo isn't run as a business, because he doesn't want to cheapen the art form he has dedicated his life to honoring. If he did want to run it as a business he could charge appropriately and pay people to perform tasks, but he isn't running things that way, which means, what we aren't paying in money we should be paying with our time or talents. Just my humble opinion.



Running my own business I believe I have a unique understanding as to how lonely it can seem to shoulder the weight of a business or organization by yourself. I feel alone in my business, except for a select few, because it is rare to find employees who are willing to buy into the success of my business. Let that sink in, I am paying people to help me, but they still only care about themselves. That is sad for me, but to be expected. The people we have around to dojo however do care. I know when Sensei asks for people to come forward and be leaders the "bell" will be answered. Sukh Sandhu is our Sensei, but more importantly for most, he is one of the *truest* friends and positive mentors we could ask for. I would love to have as many employees in my business as there are Black Belts in The Gi Yu Kyo Kai that would care about my business as all the Black Belt talent that cares about our dojos. I wish there was more that I could do, but frankly I am helping as much as I can. There is truth in the statement that many hands make light work.

Now there is a natural give and take to everything in life. When we walk through the dojo door as a new student we are expected to learn. As we advance into the higher ranks it is my belief we are supposed to want to help in any way we can. Learn from observation and those around you, watch their actions and mimic them. It is a fundamental change in mindset of taking vs giving. Just as Sensei's teachers gave to him, he now gives to us. That is the same for every higher level black belt I have ever trained with and that is what I try to do. If you have made it to the level of black belt I would hope you share the same sentiments as well. Excuse me for overstepping, but if you do not, I would argue you are much too concerned with yourself and you are not paying attention to the sacrifices others are giving around you for all of us. You are still taking and not giving. You are not seeing your environment that you supposedly care about. You are not paying attention to the examples that have been set for you.

I have often asked myself, why do people above me still keep coming to the dojo to train. It's not like they don't already have all the information from years of training and studying. We younger students are still trying to learn and get that info. The easy answer is they have made the transition from taking to giving. They are giving to the newer students their all to help our Budo development. Now they will tell you they are still learning and I am sure they are, but if that is the case, why do they come to help others train outside of class times. Why do they give more of themselves than necessary? To me, that is an easy answer...It is because they are the Titans!

I am not here to challenge anyone. I am not here to make anyone feel guilty. I am simply writing this because I am thankful for all those of you out there that have given so much to me in my development. I see what you have done for me and I will try to do the same for the others that come after me.