

“Ichi-Kyu Reflections”

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07/16

Many articles have been written about the testing experiences of students. It could be the rigorous training before the test, the anticipation and anxiety of the test, or finding your own metal through the randori segment of the test. I agree with those points fully, and have tried to write that article a couple times. However, I keep being pulled into writing a different article about the changes I have noticed in myself through the testing process and in my daily life.



The thing I am shocked at most frequently is what I see even when I don't mean to. Before I started training I was like everyone else. I noticed what directly affected me. All through-out training we are taught Zanshin is important. It is important when you are simulating a real world scenario in our training, but it has a bleeding effect into the rest of your life. Catching a glance in a reflection and processing the information as to the intentions of who or whatever you see. The amount of information I have caught myself processing is surprising to me even now. I don't set out with the intention to watch everyone and everything, but I seem to do it without even thinking about it. I think that growth in myself is a direct result of Sukh Sensei's talks on awareness and the need to process things you aren't even looking at during training or randori. It is as simple as being aware of the distance between you and your opponent and adapting that distance for the weapon they are wielding. On the larger scale however it has become recognizing the little bubble I once lived in was wrong and training myself to open my mind to all the information around me.



The next stage of awareness for me has been being truthful with myself. During the test I was able to demonstrate my knowledge of the techniques, but I did have some problem areas. After reading my testing forms most of my issues stem from body dynamics. That is why since the test I have been focusing on my Taijutsu. From things as simple as the way I walk to lifting heavy objects. I have been focusing on how my body should work. This will take a lifetime for me to fully understand, but the dividends will ripple through

everything I do from here on out. I wish there was a simple trick to fix why I can't get low enough on certain techniques, but there isn't and I will have to discover it for myself through training.



I like to think I have discovered a great deal already, but the more I learn the more I understand how much there is to learn. It looked so simple when I came to view a class, but I was woefully arrogant. If there is one thing I could pass on to other students, I would tell them that the more you put in the more you get out. For me, and I would recommend for many of you, this has been helping with the kids classes. When I started reviewing for my brown belt I was amazed by how many of the techniques I had already taught during kids classes. Whatever way each student decides to give back, to the dojo that has given each of us so much, just remember you get out what you put in.