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Leopard Pause

The Martial Arts Belt

by Joseph Galea

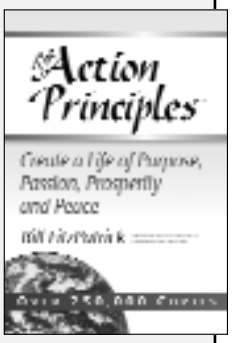
Did you know that many years ago martial arts was taught in secrecy? Martial arts schools as we know them today did not exist. Students trained solely for self-defense and meditation. Unknown at that time were the multitude of benefits of martial arts training that would appeal to millions of people of all ages in the future.

Some students wore a special white uniform that allowed easy freedom of movement for the practitioner. A white belt tied around the waist completed the ensemble. These first martial artists trained hard, sometimes hours a day, learning to fight and to defend using their hands and feet as weapons. After months and years of practicing, the student's belt, which was never washed, became soiled and noticeably darker in color. This became a visual sign of the amount of training and experience the student had and why the black belt symbolized an expert in the arts.

Most modern day martial arts schools use some form of progressive ranking system to indicate the student's level of experience. Beginner students typically wear a white belt (or sash) and expert students wear a black belt. However, since students train indoors in a facility, belts are not exposed to elements that would automatically darken the belt with training experience. Therefore to appropriately distinguish students based on skill level, many martial arts organizations adopted a color belt system between white and black. Imitating the soiled progression of light to dark, beginner colors are usually light such as yellow and orange; intermediate colors, blue and green; advanced colors, purple and brown. The order of colors are by no means a standard. In some styles for example, the red belt, not black, is the highest rank in the system while in others, red may precede black. Although ranking systems may differ from school to school, the function of the system remains consistent: Each belt rank represents the culmination of knowledge the student has learned and also clearly defines the information that is to be learned to achieve future ranks.

action principles

Master Success



- There is a master inside you. It is an ideal. It is you at your best. Keep working.
- You are calm, thoughtful, patient and confident.
- You are honest, trustworthy, responsible and reliable.
- You are loyal and proud.
- You are humble and reverent.
- You are tough, self-reliant, persistent and hard working.
- You are organized, neat and poised.
- You are inquisitive and teachable.
- You are healthy, vibrant and enthusiastic.
- You are kind, friendly, helpful and generous.
- You are brave and daring.
- You are moral and ethical.

Bill FitzPatrick is a 5th-degree black belt, holds a Master's Degree in Education and runs the nonprofit American Success Institute: www.mastersuccess.com.

Kempo Success Stories

personalProfile

Personal Profile

By Alison Romero, Age 14

I value karate because of it's many benefits. It has helped me reach a level of physical fitness that is above what I would be otherwise. It keeps me flexible, has increased my overall strength and stamina, and helps me stay in shape. It has sharpened my mental skills also. It has taught me to be focused. I can concentrate in crowded and noisy environments because I mentally apply myself to what I am doing and tune out the things around me. There are organizational benefits also. I manage my time so that I am able to get to my karate classes, and still get my homework done as well as the other activities I do. I have learned to prioritize my activities and then plan ahead so I can accomplish the things I have selected.

I have personally benefited from martial arts because it has helped me to learn important things that are related to every day life. Some examples of these things are: practice if you want to get better at something, pay close attention to directions, then try to remember and apply them, set goals and then make commitments, give your best effort, and believe in yourself. All of these things have made me more successive in school, and in every day life.

Allison Romero is a student at Gary Nakahama's West Coast Martial Arts

The Black Belt

One of the best stories I've ever heard tells about a martial artist who kneels before an Instructor in a ceremony to receive the hard-earned Black Belt. After years of relentless training, the student has finally reached a pinnacle of achievement in the discipline.

"Before granting you the belt, you must pass one more test," the Instructor solemnly tells the young man.

"I'm ready," responds the student, expecting perhaps one more round of sparring.

"You must answer the essential question, 'What is the true meaning of the Black Belt?'"

"Why, the end of my journey," says the student. "A well-deserved reward for all of my hard work." The master waits for more. Clearly, he is not satisfied.

The Instructor finally speaks: "You are not ready for the Black Belt. Return in one year."

As the student kneels before his master a year later, he is again asked the question, "What is the true meaning of the Black Belt?"

"A symbol of distinction and the highest achievement in our art," the young man responds.

Again the Instructor waits for more. Still unsatisfied, he says once more: "You are not ready for the Black Belt. Return in one year."

A year later the student kneels before his Instructor and hears the question, "What is the true meaning of the Black Belt?"

This time he answers, "The Black Belt represents not the end, but the beginning, the start of a never-ending journey of discipline, work and the pursuit of an ever-higher standard."

"Yes," says the Instructor. "You are now ready to receive the Black Belt and begin your work."

All wise people see that changes can be new beginnings. Change need not be feared. And neither should we be looking for a permanent resting place, for a full and happy life is never stagnant.

Can you affirm that the change you face represents, not just an ending, but a new beginning in your life's journey? If so, you may be ready to move forward.☯

HealthKick:

My Heath & Fitness Goals

By Jennifer G. Galea MS RD

Give yourself a Valentine's Day present by evaluating your health and fitness goals. How does your diet "measure up?"

Do you exercise as often as recommended? Are you as healthy as you can be?

Recently, the Institute of Medicine's Food and Nutrition Board released its recommendations for better health. The last time this panel of government health advisors made recommendations, which was in 1989, the recommendations became the basis for government policy and food labeling. According to these experts, people are eating too much saturated fat, not getting enough exercise, and eating too many calories. So what are their recommendations for us to improve our health?

The first relates to fat. The panel recommends eliminating saturated fats, as well as trans fatty acids (found predominately in partially hydrogenated or hydrogenated vegetable oils). There is no biological need for either of these types of fats. These fats add only an increased risk of heart disease and empty calories (no beneficial nutrients).

The panel also warns against consuming added sugars. They recommend that these empty calories make up no more than 25% of the day's total caloric intake. (Other health groups, such as the Center for Science in the Public Interest, criticized this goal saying that it is still too high.)

Finally, and perhaps the most significantly, this team of experts recommend to exercise at least an hour of physical activity a day. Now is the time to get into a physical activity program that is not only great for you, but also enjoyable so you can stick to it. You'll see the results: feeling great. That will further motivate you to improve your diet to have a positive impact on all aspects of your health. So get fit, eat right and be healthy.☯

Testing Information

All rank and stripe testing is done in your regular class. All test candidates must wear a clean uniform and bring the appropriate gear. Also, you must be early to class. Tardy students will not be tested.

Little Leopards

The updated curriculum will award stripes for the successful completion of Skills. After all eight skills have been awarded, then the Little Leopards will be tested for their new color belt.

Level	Current Rank	Has earned Red Stripe	Has earned Black Stripe
Candidate Ranks	(W-O)	2/18	2/25
Beginner Ranks	(P-B)	2/18	2/25
Intermediate Ranks	(G-Br)	2/18	2/25
Advanced Ranks	(Blk)	postponed until 2004	

Testing Guidelines - Candidate Testing

To be eligible to test for your next belt, all the testing requirements must be met.

1. Minimum time of 8 weeks at your current belt rank.
2. Trained in a minimum of 16 classes.
3. Red stripe from an instructor, showing knowledge of the curriculum.
4. Consistent Black Belt attitude during class.

Beginner and Intermediate Testing

To be eligible to test for your next belt, all the testing requirements must be met.

1. Minimum time of 12 weeks at your current belt rank.
2. Trained in a minimum of 24 classes.
3. Red stripe from an instructor, showing knowledge of the curriculum.
4. Consistent Black Belt attitude during class.

Advanced Testing

All black belt testing is held once per year at the discretion of Sifu. The next exam is June, 2004. Be ready candidates.☯

Leadership Team News

The Leadership Team meetings are Saturday morning after Demo Team meetings.

Demo Team News

The Demo Team meetings are Saturdays, 8 AM at the Coral Gate Park.

Congratulations, New Members

Alexis Perez (almost new)

Happy Birthday

Leadership Team Recruits

If you're interested in learning more about the Leadership Team and what it does, please talk to Sifu immediately. The team is in need of new members.

Learn to teach, mentor, speak in public, and develop leadership qualities.

Leopard Pause

Golden Leopard Kempo

Managing Editor:
Bryan Bagnas

Editor:
Elizabeth Bagnas

Guest Columnist:
Joseph Galea
Jennifer Galea
Bill Fitzpatrick

Article Sources:
ARA Content
NAPMA
MartialArtsBusiness

Printing:
Bagnas Creative Solutions

Office Assistants:
Danielle & Rachel Bagnas

Spiritual Advisor:
Sijo Sonny Gascon

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Golden Leopard Kempo
PMB #818
416 W. San Ysidro Blvd. Suite L
San Ysidro, CA 92173

World Wide Web site:
http://www.goldenleopard.org

Send Leopard Pause feedback to:
sifu@goldenleopard.org

Postmaster: Send address corrections to Golden Leopard Kempo at the address above.

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Golden Leopard Kempo
PMB #818
416 W. San Ysidro Blvd. Suite L
San Ysidro, CA 92173

Special Delivery

Martial Arts is the Perfect Family Activity

Parents: Looking for a safe, fun, rewarding activity for your entire family? If so, then give martial arts a try!

You'll just love the quality time you get to spend with your children, as all of you practice together as a family. And parents, imagine how fast your child will excel when you become involved too. Fitness, focus, confidence, and self-defense—the skills we teach will benefit your family forever.

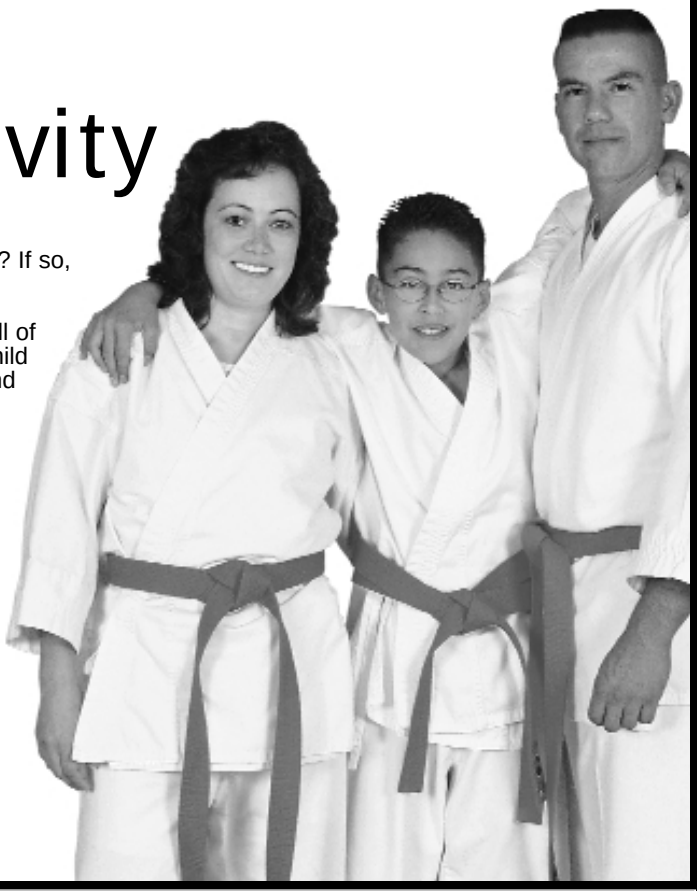
Plus, our school offers families:

- Age-appropriate curriculums
- Special family classes
- Family oriented activities
- Affordable family rates

This month is family month at our school. Call today to find our more about our special discount programs for families.

Golden Leopard Kempo
PMB #818
416 W. San Ysidro Blvd. Suite L
San Ysidro, CA 92173

(619) 301-2154



MEMBER: National Association of Professional Martial Artists