

# The Karate Times

- RIPPLE EFFECT MARTIAL ARTS -

SEPTEMBER 2023

## CONCENTRATION



"Concentration is my motto." — Andrew Carnegie

### *Concentration: How Black Belt Training Helps Us Focus*

We all know what it's like to be out of focus. When you wake up in the morning, for example, to the tune of an alarm or a kid yelling "Mom!!" Those eyeballs need a good rub before they open to let in the light. And when they do, for the first few seconds (or minutes), everything's still a big fat blur.

Contrast that to the cranked up concentration you deliver to all kinds of tasks when you've hit your groove, awake and alert, tuned in to whatever you've got going on that demands your primal attention.

So how do we harness our powers of concentration and use them for what we need?

One source of concentration is, ironically, the ability to do things on autopilot.

Our brains have two systems of computing that work together to produce our thoughts and actions. One of these systems stores massive amounts of data that it's constantly crunching. This "deep mind" is in essence a galactic network of all the experiences you've attained, consciously and unconsciously, your whole life, a giant web of patterns and information from which the brain can spark any action or response.

Cognitive scientists call this operation of the brain "bottom up," a reference to the subcortical (lower) part of the brain's transfer of signals and impulses to the neocortex, the part of our brain that lets us be consciously aware of what we see, feel, taste, touch and smell.

The other system works "top down." This is where we have to stop and really think about what course of action to take in order to solve a problem. When you're first learning to read or write (if you can remember those first clunky experiences with literacy), it's complicated, perplexing. Your brain has to squeeze the essence out of every word, sentence and paragraph. You really have to concentrate.

But after you've been reading for years, at accelerated levels of length and complexity, your bottom up thinking takes over. You can skim pages of information in seconds, still with good recall and comprehension.

Bottom up thinking happens almost automatically. Action comes in milliseconds, a snap. Top down operations take much longer. Seconds, minutes. Too long to save you from an unexpected round kick.

The footwork in karate, the multiple moves and stances of a combination or form, work the same way. Our first attempts are awkward, stumbling, as our top down brain power concentrates all our attention on what we're trying to do.

But as we drill, again and again and again at the same forms and combinations, as muscle memory sinks into the fibers and we focus on the details, on doing each move not just fast and automatically but with perfection, our bodies become more fluid. There's flow.

At 5th-degree black belt they call this mastery. And you can see mastery at work, in what seems like an impossible, almost magical way, in this level of performance. Stay focused, stay determined, concentrate on every move you make, and you'll be there too.

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Martial Arts

**FORT COLLINS**

**LONGMONT**

**JOHNSTOWN**

**BROOMFIELD**

*"Excellent experience. Best martial arts around!!!! You guys have helped Cam grow tremendously and he's only at green belt! I can't wait to see what he's capable of with the skills you guys teach him everyday!!!!" Rita Evans*

**844-321-KICK (5425)**

**WWW.KARATESPECIAL.COM**

# COACHES CORNER

## *How Karate Helps Kids "Tune in" to Concentration*



*"Concentration and mental toughness are the margins of victory." **Bill Russell***

**Coaches:** How many times have you tried to get your kids to focus, only to find their eyes darting, feet stamping and head lolling all over the place?

In short, not listening. Not absorbing. And certainly not obeying. They're not tuned in.

It's like a radio misdialed, full of crackles, static. Nothing's discernible until you start cranking the knob, dialing in that band and tightening up those electrostatic wavelengths so that they arc and sing in sync.

Now the music's coming through loud and throaty and clear. Now you're grooving.

Same thing with kids' brains. They're full of fuzz, too, but there are some techniques you can use to cut through it.

The first is called the "stoplight" approach, and it works just like it sounds. When your kid starts to feel upset, ask him or her to imagine a red light--and stop their emotional train in its tracks.

"See the red light? Ok, let's stop for a second and talk about how you're feeling. Tell me."

Frustrated. Sad. Angry. Awful.

Next is the yellow light. Here's where you consider why your kid feels the way he does and make a plan, give some consideration to how to move forward and feel better.

"See the yellow light? Ok, what's making you feel bad? How can we make you feel better? What'll help?"

Now you're ready for the green light. Which, as always, means "go." As in, go, take action. It may not be perfect, but this focus exercise helps kids dial in their emotions and calm themselves down.

The second exercise has to do with faces, expressions, and having kids identify them with words. Karate instructors (Mr. Worth's famous for this) have their "mean face." Kids recognize it. It's intimidating.

Of course everyone (Mr. Worth included) has a range of emotions they express on their faces. Have your kids, at times of happiness and of struggle, read what's on your face. Ask:

How do I look right now? What do you think I'm feeling?

And back that up with readings of your own. Let those kiddos know you have them in mind and are doing your best to dial them in, too.

Keep up that focus, coaches. It's working wonders.

*"Ripple Effect Johnstown has been an amazing addition to our family. I started my 4-year-olds a few years ago. In that time, they have grown tremendously. The self-discipline, self-respect, confidence, and empowered strength they now hold is inspiring." **Ryan Norris***

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER BELT CYCLE

10/16-10/21

STRIPE WEEK 1

11/6-11/9

STRIPE WEEK 2

11/13-11/16

BELT TESTING

11/18

BELT PROMOTION

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# TALKS

New Book and Curriculum Starting Week of: September 25th

LEAD Talk Classes will be focusing on Energy\_Bus by Jon Gordon.

There is both a children's book and a teen/adult book, so truly there is something for everyone!

“

Positive energy and positive people create positive results.

”



- **September 30th: No Classes - Board Break Workshops**
  - Where: Broomfield Ripple Effect Martial Arts
- **October 7th: Monthly SWAT Focus in Leadership Class**
  - Topic: Leadership
- **October 14th:**
  - Bully Prevention Workshops in Leadership Class
  - Teen Self Defense Workshop 3pm-5pm
- **October 16th-21st: Stripe Week 1**
  - Come to your normal belt rank classes to start earning your curriculum stripes for this cycle!
- **October 21st: Trunk or Treat 3:30pm-5:00pm**
  - Where: I-25 and Hwy 34 Johnstown Plaza Shopping Center
- **October 28th: Costume Day in All Classes**
- **October 31st: No Classes - Halloween - Be Safe and Have Fun!**
- **November 4th: Monthly SWAT Focus in Leadership Class**
  - Topic: Awareness
- **November 6th-November 9th: Stripe Week 2**
  - This is student's last chance to earn the stripes they need in order to be eligible to test the following week.
- **November 10th-November 12th: Black Belt Summit**
  - Where: YMCA of the Rockies, Estes Park
  - Reminder: No Classes Friday or Saturday
- **November 13th - November 16th: Belt Testing**
- **November 18th: Belt Promotion Day!**

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“CONFIDENCE, RESPECT, AND SELF-CONTROL ARE THE BIGGEST HIGHLIGHTS MY BOYS HAVE LEARNED.”

- AMY SHUMYLO

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# BULLY PROOF

Learn Black Belt Boundaries to Stop Bullies



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**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14th**



TRUNK OR TREAT!!  
OCTOBER 21  
3:30 TO 5 P.M.

FREE FAMILY FUN!!!

JOHNSTOWN PLAZA SHOPPING CENTER HWY 34 AND I-25  
PARKING LOT NORTH OF AT HOME AND WEST OF URBAN ECC

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(970) 829-1837

## BOARD BREAK!!

JUST \$10 TO REGISTER  
ALL BELT LEVELS!

PARTNERING WITH THE BUTTERFLY PAVILION



LIMITED SPOTS!

SATURDAY  
SEPTEMBER 30  
RIPPLE EFFECT MARTIAL ARTS  
BROOMFIELD, CO

REGISTER @  
MYKARATECLASSES.COM

The Butterfly Effect.

THREE TIMES AVAILABLE:  
9 - 10:30 A.M.  
11 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.  
1 - 2:30 P.M.

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BUTTERFLY PAVILION

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**"IT'S A SCHOOL OF POSITIVE  
CHARACTER-BUILDING, OF  
MERGING THEORY INTO THE  
LIVES OF THE STUDENT,  
THEIR FAMILIES AND  
THE COMMUNITY."**

**- TAMMY B.**