

## MARTIAL ARTS METAPHORS AND HYPNOSIS: CHAPTER 2

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This second article in this series outlines more processes and metaphors of personal integrity and systemic harmony derived from the Martial Arts that can be included in hypnotic inductions to promote personal growth and peace. As we continue this venture, let us reaffirm that you do not need to be a martial artist to attain these insights or use these metaphors. Many of these ideas are common to all fields of human excellence and consciousness development. Nevertheless, there are extra philosophical colorings that derive from the personal and spiritual struggles that emanate from a combative model of conflict into confluence. Martial arts experience and practice lead to hypnotic states in which metaphors for the reframing of daily living are compellingly attractive and adaptive.

In the first article about the metaphors of the martial arts, we focused on the creation of a context of clearing the mind to make space for learning and insight. We also observed roles and rituals of conduct to create a social learning contract of mutual respect and integrity. We now continue to develop other topics to illustrate more of these principles, and show their connection to the field of hypnotic phenomena. We will also extend these learnings to practical applications in hypnotherapy and counselling in general.

### A. NARROWING THE FOCUS TO WHAT IS RELEVANT

1. **Exact Focus allows us to break through obstacles** to penetrate the illusory barriers of life to realize opportunity and vision. Precise focus allows us to care about ourselves and our living systems while we mould and transform external and internal realities.

The greatest test is breaking through our own fears. Much of this discipline is counter-intuitive, in that we need to approach and embrace our fears in order to manage them. We create the art of the impossible, and enter The Eye of the Tiger, the centre of our worst fears, to discover an astounding zone of peace where we least expected it. That is, when we focus entirely on the Eternal Now there is no past to regret, nor is there future to fear. Our mind is entirely one with

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our actions. The present moment is our provisional reality, and we use this platform as if it were the only reality. Also, we learn how to absorb a hit without cowering or flinching, until finally we realize we are liberated from the paralysis of fear. We can still feel fear, but we can respond rather than react when faced with a challenging situation.

2. **Ki or Chi is a sense of Guiding Internal Spirit that overrides all considerations.** This spirit is both fierce and compassionate. Its ultimate expression is the mystical “Moment of Truth” when your body operates totally unconsciously with lightening speed to produce a beautiful moment of Pure Flow, an ecstatic time of awe and spiritual rapture. Ki and its development are assisted by rituals and acts that focus subjective reality.

**Dissociation from ordinary reality.** Obstacles such as pain, fear, limitations, doubts, are left behind by the setting of context through ritual and extraordinary focusing experiences. The Sanchin or Breathing Kata and the “Kiai” power-shout that represents the meeting of the spirits exemplify powerful techniques to block out external reality and narrow focus into the here-and-now.

## B. OTHER HYPNOTIC ASPECTS OF THE MARTIAL ARTS

1. **Affirmation of the Positive.** Similar to the Yes-set Induction in hypnosis, we focus on the technique of the impossible, such as putting a straw through a potato in one stroke. As in hypnosis, we use the **Principle of Inevitability** to affirm an outcome that we envision, but we do not insist that it **must** happen, merely that it **will** happen.
2. **Repetition and the Boredom Barrier.** Alpha and theta states are induced by the sheer weight of millions of repetitions of basic movements until they are totally instinctive. Meanwhile the learning process itself induces altered states of consciousness and quasi-mystical states by virtue of its requirement of mind-numbing repetition of a kinetic action mantra. That is, the analytic thinking associated with beta rapid brainwaves is blocked, forcing the induction of hypnotic alpha and even theta states.
- 3.. **Kinetic Meditation of Connectedness.** Like other forms of dance and rhythmic motion, the Martial Arts engage a sense of aesthetics of balance in motion. As this motion is in response with real and imagined opponents, the meditation extends beyond ego and includes a profound sense of connectedness with ourselves, our opponents, our group, our community, nature, and the universe.

## C. BUSHIDO: THE WARRIOR’S CODE

1. **The Suffix “-do” is an ethos that is a blueprint for a philosophy of life for its practitioners.** The practices of judo, aikido, bushido etc., have the suffix –do to indicate a way of being. This way of thinking and its corresponding codes of morality and action gradually acquire a guiding and automatic “life of their own” that, at least in theory if not in practice, guide every breath we take. From a cognitive behavior therapy perspective, the world is perceived calmly from a perspective of opening patterns of possibility.

2. **The Martial Arts are indeed arts.** There is adherence to pure form or method. All action is based on a substrate of applied biomechanics. That is, if the technique is practically ineffective, it is not worth learning. Thus, in many martial arts there is frequent emphasis on Kata or prearranged forms of practice, so that the building blocks of classical method can be thoroughly mastered and understood. As in art and music, technical method leads to strategic linkage and synthesis, and finally artistic expression. Only then can elaboration, improvisation, adaptation, and the creation of personal style be effective. Still, “No one may enter the hall of mastery without the key of pure form.” This guideline means that classical form or method must still be the platform underlying the surface of personal style and creative flair.
  
3. **Mindfulness** and every-moment-Zen awareness are essential to the vision and perspective of the Martial Arts. Earlier we outlined the mantra-like repetition of practice to go beyond the limitations of the analytic mind. However, even in these many repetitions, we remain aware of our movement and our surroundings, especially the interaction feedback loops between ourselves and our opponents, so that we are still alertly present and observing ourselves and our surroundings in the spirit of calm reflection.
  
4. **Conflict Into Confluence.** Many of the Martial Arts emphasize flexibility, pliability, gentleness, and harmony in dealing with both internal and external field forces or seemingly conflicting trends. The martial arts of Aikido (the way of harmony) and Judo (the way of gentleness or flexibility) particularly utilize this principle of moving with field forces that are impinging upon us. Force that could harm us is not merely neutralized; when we actively join its energy with our own, we amplify that power in confluence to create startlingly powerful outcomes. The image of the empty paper cup demonstrates this principle. Although the cup itself is light and frail, when you push it around with your finger, it gives way and moves out of the way so that it is not crushed. When two fingers push at it from opposite sides, it spins out of the middle, allowing the two fingers to meet each other with the cup standing by on the outside of the conflict, rather than being crushed by it. Thus the paper cup models formal integrity with spatial flexibility, a key dimension of the flexible martial arts.
  
5. **Patience, Discipline, and Persistence arise from a doctrine of Acceptance.** Acceptance is a global concept of humility in regarding our limitations as well as our strengths, and acceptance of life as it is, rather than as we would like it to be. This spirit can apply in situations that are unfair, or where strong power differentials make it seem that our efforts will not prevail. Yet this form of acceptance is far from passive, and actions arising from it are often powerful in the expression of personal spiritual integrity. Acceptance is the surrender of attachment to desire while maintaining personal purpose. There are stories of patient but persistent change produced by an attitude of quiet firmness, and its accompanying spirit of fierce courage.

One such story involved the general of a conquering army insisting total allegiance of all the citizens to the new occupation political regime. Most of the citizens complied, except one silent monk meditating under a tree. The general dismounted from his horse, and with all his armour and weaponry towered over the little monk. He bellowed in a loud and angry voice, “Do you know who **I** am? Do you realize that **I** could decide at will to raise **my** sword and cut off **your** head, without blinking my eye?”

In a steady and quiet regard of compassion, the monk nodded slowly and replied, “And do you know who **I** am? Do you realize that **I** could have you decide at will to raise your sword and cut off **my** head without blinking **my** eye?”

The courage of this monk, choosing an opportunity of acceptance and spiritual integrity, and even a potential coaching or teaching moment with the general, exercised a spirit of detachment in the practice of life. Socrates said “Practice dying.” In the Martial Arts, we indeed do this symbolically many times in each training session.

6. **Understanding is only a step toward Realization.** Understanding acknowledges that a principle in theory could apply in reality, maybe for somebody else, but not necessarily in my life. Realization is the convincing belief based on evidence in application that this principle can and does apply effectively in my life. Once this realization has occurred, the possibility of peace, joy, and enlightenment become more attainable and practical.
7. **The Circle of Life becomes a Spiral.** Linear time becomes a circular recursive concept, as all lines of opposition are transformed into circles that reflect upon each other. Thus our life view reflects a systemic view of reality, an adaptive way of functioning in post-modern constructions of social and global life connectedness. Other applications derived from this philosophy are that underneath the maya or illusion of separateness is the implicate order of unity in a holographic universe. Furthermore, beyond the illusion of the ego is emergent self as a vessel of expression of this unity.

#### D. APPLICATIONS IN HYPNOSIS

Many of the spiritual understandings derived from the experience and practice of the Martial Arts can be powerful metaphors for the reframing of life stories and the incorporation of frameworks that encourage peace and transcendence of life adversities. There are many ways to refer to the collective wisdom of the warrior archetype, whether or not you or your client has had any direct exposure to the Martial Arts. Here are some suggested applications:

1. Learn and explore the application of these lessons **with those who have experienced the Martial Arts.** Obviously, the lessons of the Martial Arts extend beyond the dojo and become a way of life and a guiding philosophy for its practitioners. Even if you yourself do not share this background, you can discuss these principles and wonder with your client whether they have valid application in reframing their life narrative story. You can have them go back into the trance of their martial art as a naturalistic utilization of a well-rehearsed induction, and then have them feel these principles applying in trance and beyond.
2. **With those with no Martial Arts experience, use vicarious identification with the Inner Warrior archetype.** Since many media such as television and movies render depictions of these actions and principles, you could have a client with no direct experience imagine what it might be like to be a Warrior, and get in touch with their Inner Warrior, instead of identifying their Inner Worrier.
3. **Cultivate in your own mind an appreciation of the utility of conflict.** Many hypnotherapists wish to avoid metaphors that invoke the concept of conflict. Particularly, many feminist therapists would rather bypass the traps of conflict and use metaphors of joining and collaboration. However, such metaphors of incorporation and joining can be integrated in a model that has the dynamic of conflict. Researchers in stress management have talked about the need for some sense of opposition or struggle or the challenge of positive stress in order for growth and resiliency to be developed. Researchers in creativity, flow, and happiness have also cited the need to simulate or generate some kind of challenge dynamic to generate flow states.
4. **Encourage the model of Conflict into Confluence.** In hypnotic fantasy and simulation, have your clients imagine their opponent's objective, then use their opponents force in congruency with your client's signature strengths to

generate a win-win whereby their opponents now become their allies, and they come to understand some of the benevolence in their former adversary. At a bare minimum, they come to have some empathy, compassion, and acceptance of their former foe.

5. **Forgiveness is largely self-forgiveness; acceptance is largely self-acceptance; trust is ultimately self-trust.** As your client comes to see that much of the misery of life is generated by attachment to desire, have your client forgive themselves for falling into the illusion that we are all separate, and then promote metaphors of cooperation and integration of shadows and opposite parts of the self. Rejoice with your clients as they grow in integration and transpersonal ways of seeing humanity and their role in the evolution of our collective consciousness.<sup>2[2]</sup>

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<sup>2[2]</sup> Note: Dr. Young will be conducting an experiential workshop incorporating these principles at the Banff Conference of CSCH, April 2004.