

Think for Yourself



A Briefing for Martial Artists of All Ages

- WARNING -

- Thought provoking briefing coming
- Suitable for Fifth Graders

CAUTION
This Briefing
May upset the
Apple Cart

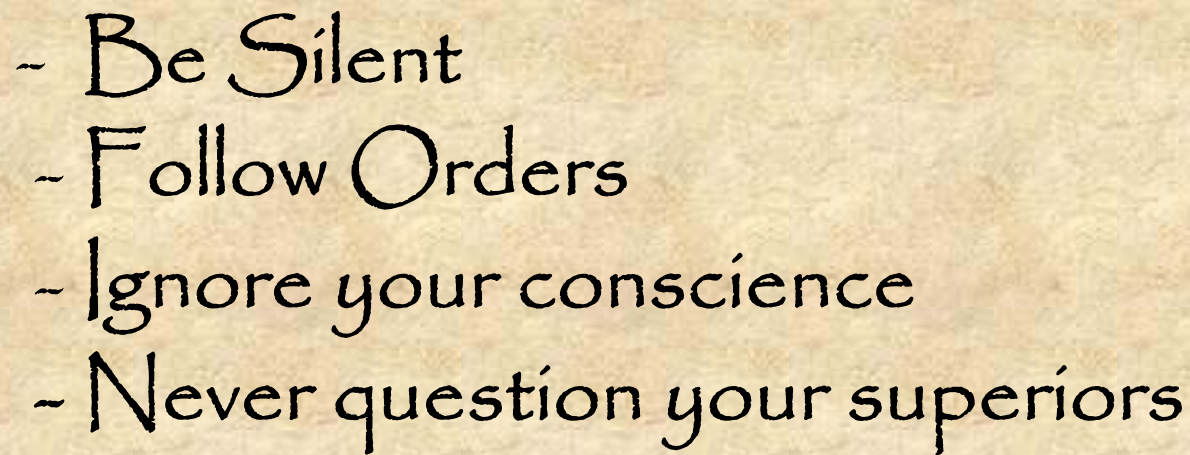


Being Effective

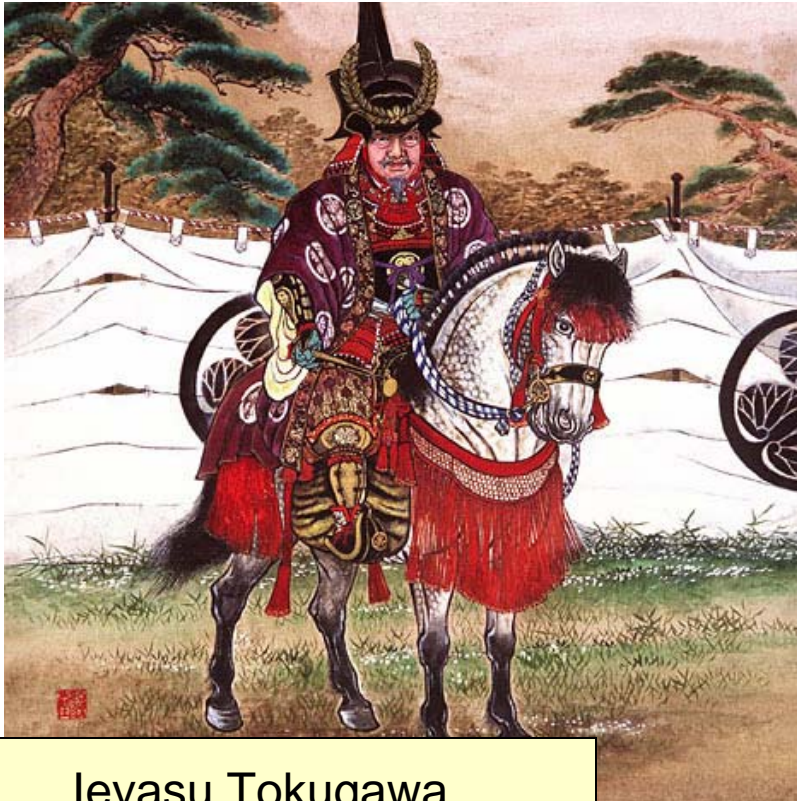
- This briefing will:
 - Introduce the Dojo Kun
 - May counter traditional Japanese philosophy found in Karate because we are not a Japanese society
 - Encourage you to think for yourself
 - Discuss a Western idea of being “Effective”

Exposure to the Dojo Kun

- Many karate schools hang up a picture of the Dojo Kun
- Many schools demand mindless endurance and absolute obedience
- This Dojo Kun wants you to conform to the Japanese idea of good character

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- Be Silent
 - Follow Orders
 - Ignore *your* conscience
 - Never question *your* superiors

Recall Japanese History



Ieyasu Tokugawa
b. 1542 AD, d. 1616 AD

- Tokugawa was a ruthless warlord who took control of Japan declaring himself shogunate in **1603 AD**
- He had a genius for enslaving people
- He creates a highly regulated society (no freedom, no innovation, no new ideas); punishable by torture and death
- People created kata for everyday rules of behavior (how to dress, how to bow, how to cook; example: Japanese tea ceremony)
- He seals the borders of Japan and prohibits contact with the West

Conform or... Die!

What is this Dojo Kun?

Philosophy #1:

Looks Neat! Must be
those fancy
Japanese characters!
Let's recite it and
make it our own!

Philosophy #2: Is it
still relevant in a
Western society?



**Dojo Kun: Was it developed for men
tasked to be loyal to the king and
government?**



**Is it appropriate for kids
winning trophies?**



Dojo Kun in Japanese

- Hitotsu. Jinkaku kansei ni tsutomuru koto
- Hitotsu. Makoto no michi wo mamoru koto
- Hitotsu. Doryoku no Seishin wo yashinau koto
- Hitotsu. Reigi wo omonzuru koto
- Hitotsu. Kekki no yu wo imashimuru koto

訓
一人格完成に努むること
一誠の道を守らば
一努力の精神を養ふこと
一礼儀を重んずること
一血気の勇を戒むこと
根柢を養ふこと

Common Translation

- Each seek perfection of character
- Each be faithful (protect the way of truth)
- Each Endeavour (foster the spirit of effort)
- Each respect the rules of etiquette
- Each refrain from violent behavior (guard against impetuous courage)

Most Karate Students
join a class to learn to
fight – The *Jutsu*

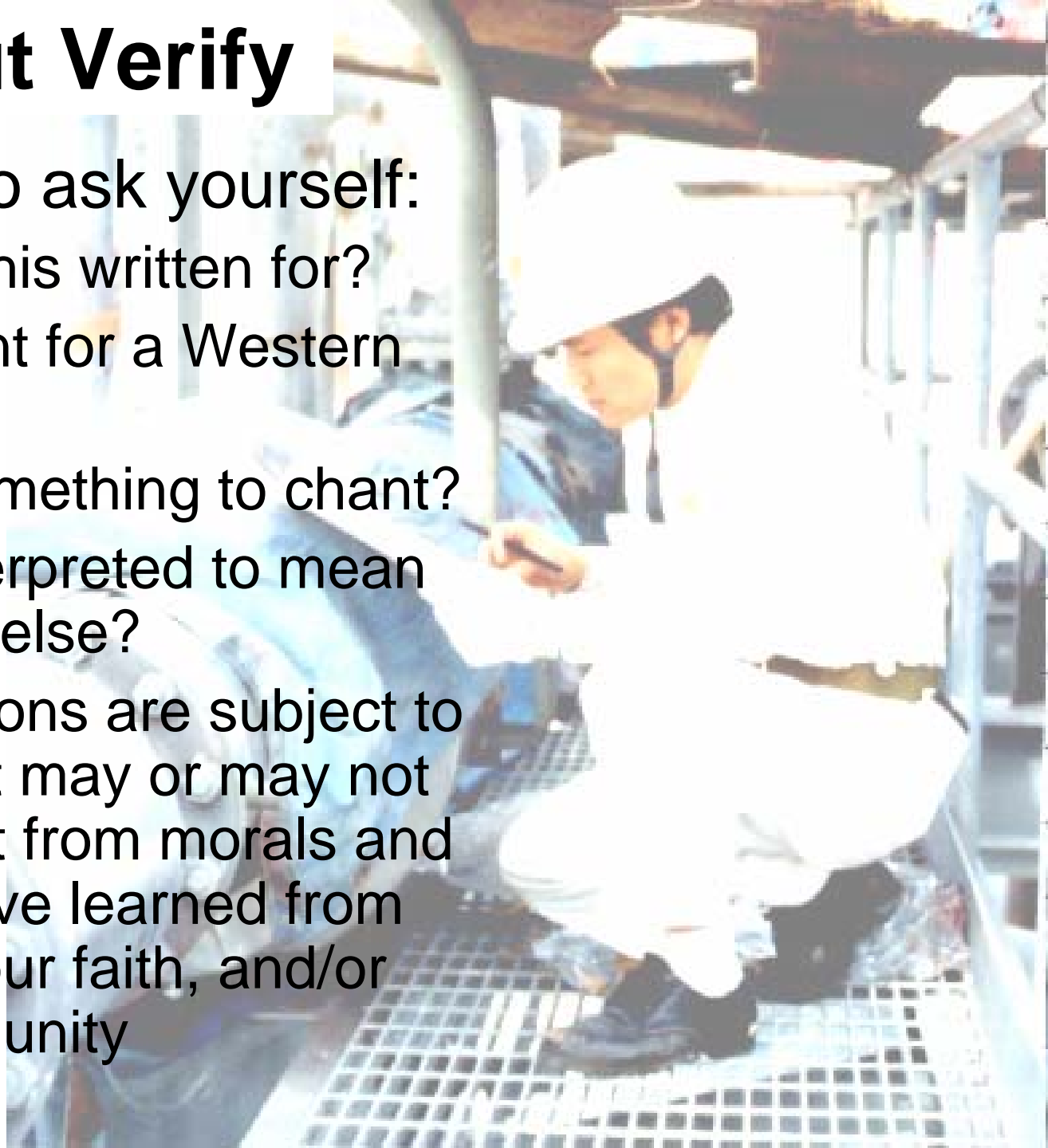
Some schools may end
up teaching you to
endure injustice, pain,
and hardship without
complaint – The

D'OH!



Trust But Verify

- Questions to ask yourself:
 - Who was this written for?
 - Is it relevant for a Western society?
 - Is it just something to chant?
 - Is it misinterpreted to mean something else?
 - Interpretations are subject to morals that may or may not be different from morals and ethics you've learned from parents, your faith, and/or your community



Dojo Kun Rule #1

“Each seek perfection of character”



- In Japanese society, perfection of character to a Samurai means give your superiors instant and blind obedience; disregard your own personal responsibility
- Japanese and Okinawan warriors needed to push through pain and injury, overcome fatigue, never show weakness
- In Japanese society, one does not follow their individual conscience; one must harmonize with the communal unity

Western Analysis of the Dojo Kun Rule #1

“Each seek perfection of character”



- Our Western interpretation of perfection of character
 - Speak the truth
 - Live according to a higher moral standard
 - Defend what is right
 - Stand up for the weak and helpless
- Our Western values are completely different from Japanese Shogun era values

Dojo Kun Rule #2

“Each be faithful (protect the way of truth)”

- Japanese society defines good character as: **Never** question your superiors no matter what they tell you do

Tatamae – perceived truth

Honne – the real truth

Western Analysis:

- Western societies recognize a despot when we see one
- Our idea of faith applies to religion and mutual trust in one another

Despotism - a form of government by a single authority which rules with absolute political power. A **Despot**, wields all the power and authority, and everyone else is considered his slave.

Dojo Kun Rule #3

Each Endeavour (foster the spirit of effort)

- Japanese Samurai were expected to behave like lethal, relentless killing machines even to the point of self-destruction



Western Analysis:

- The sanctity of human life is precious in Western society



Dojo Kun Rule #4

Each respect the rules of etiquette

- Recall Japanese isolationist period, the Tokugawa Shogunate Era dictated EVERY facet of life
- Anyone who raised his voice with a question was considered a dangerous freethinker



Western Analysis:

- Common courtesy is expected but our society allows people to think for themselves

Dojo Kun Rule #5

Each refrain from violent behavior

- Japanese culture stress locality based group formation
- This provides sense of security but repressive rules – produces high self-control

Western Analysis:

- Western culture stress personal attribute-based group formation
- Permissive nature of rules and freedom of action but one that can lead to crime

Dojo Kun

- Sounds harmless enough but upon further investigation this philosophy has been misinterpreted many times over
- Most karate students will chant their rhetorical saying never fully understanding what they're saying
- Summary:
 - Think for yourself
 - Knowledge is power



Leaders don't flock. You have to find them one at a time.

Does Leadership Training belong in Karate?

Answer this: Why do people do karate?

- To exercise
- To become physically skilled
- To compete
- Social event
- Family time

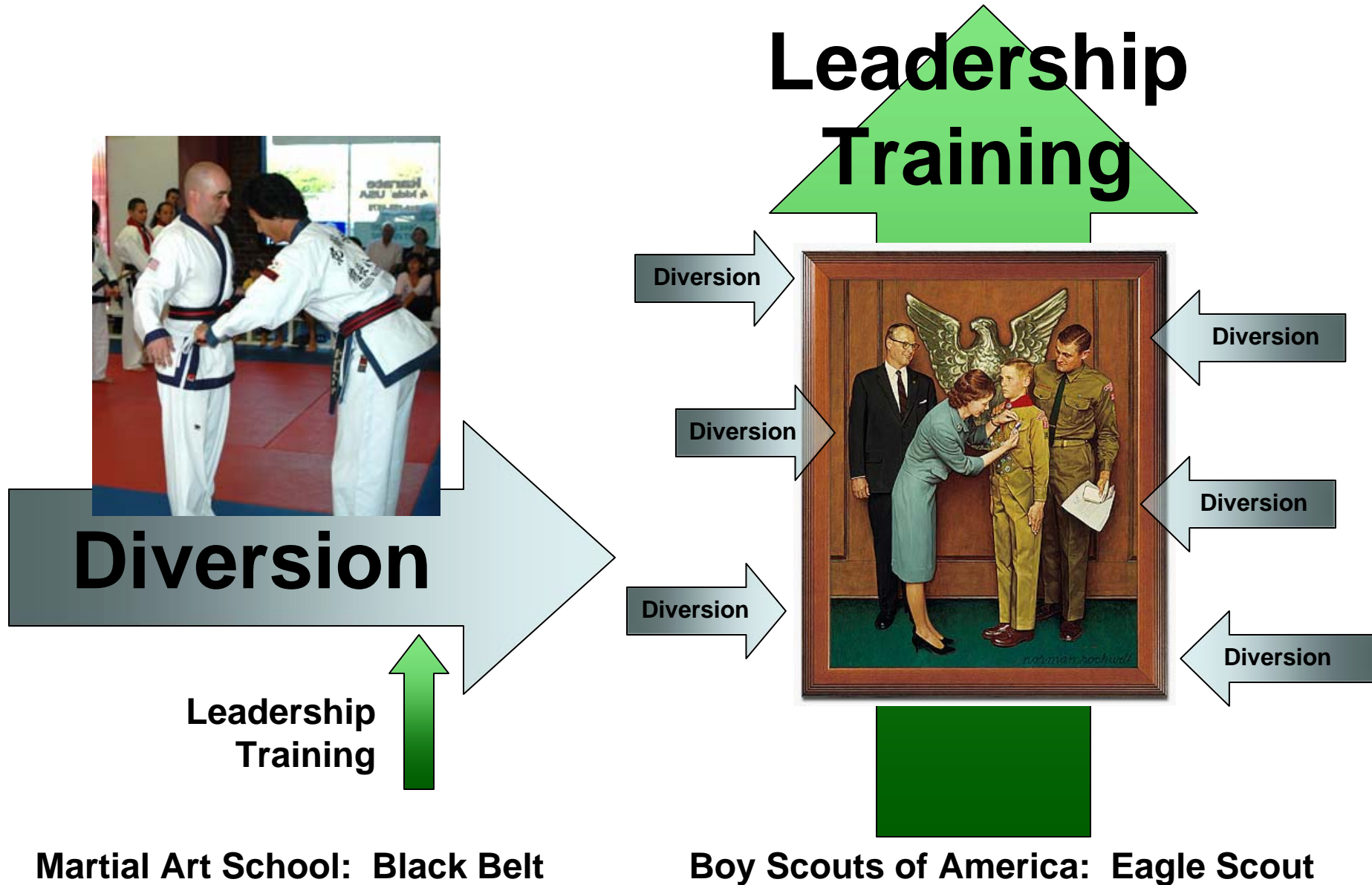


- Is it for a noble purpose?
- Is it to bring justice to this world?
- Defending the weak?

Critical Thinking

- Some may believe they are in the pursuit of something noble vs. exercise / sport / social environment
- Think rational about your activity – don't romanticize
- There are higher priorities: school, family, etc.

Compare two worlds:



Compare two worlds:



Noble Cause?



Noble Cause.

Compare two points of view:

**I'm going to
see a
divorce
lawyer**

**I'm going to
karate tonight
for the fifth time
this week.**



Think For Yourself

- Be Realistic
- Keep Your Priorities Straight

Back to the Dojo Kun...

Maybe it needs to change

- How about this:
 1. Hitotsu! Always remember what it's like to be a beginner.
 2. Hitotsu! Protect your health.
 3. Hitotsu! Don't let fear control you.
 4. Hitotsu! Learn how to handle pressure effectively.
 5. Hitotsu! Learn how to make good decisions.

Dispelling Myths

- The Dojo Kun wasn't created by Funakoshi



- Morals and guidelines are handled by law
- Our culture has laws and expectations of good citizenship
- Morality is subjective
- Preaching Morals to adults is a waste of time

Dispelling Myths

- The Dojo Kun and some karate schools try to play to people's need to believe they are in the pursuit of something noble vs. exercise/sport/social event
- Be rational
- Think clearly
- If you can't ask questions, then maybe you're in the wrong place
- Trust but verify

Leadership Training is not about preaching to you about morals

- Kids – your best influence are your parents
- Adults – already have formed their own beliefs and attitudes



The End