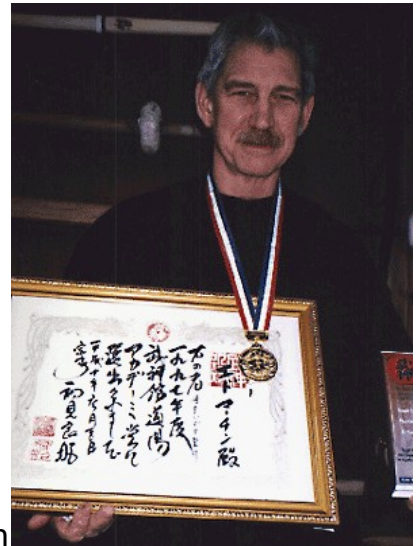


Ed Martin

## **Concepts of importance to us all; not just words! Honor, Respect, Trust, Loyalty, Friendship, Honesty, Integrity**



Let's begin with the concept of Honor, just what does this mean? Probably the most important aspect of honor is that it is *a personal concept*. It refers to how well you live up to the standards you have set for yourself. The evaluation must be an honest one. This means, of course, that you must set standards, and in fact you do even if it is by not setting standards. **By that very act you have set your lack of standards.** I don't believe that the concept of Honor can stop there, because by this definition even criminals can have honor. We must look at the set of standards which the individual sets for him/herself. Those standards must reflect the dual life concept of Robert Humphrey. I maintain that standards should support both the continuance of our human species, and the life of the individual as taught by Dr. Humphrey. Standards of these types can be respected by other members of the human species and so are honorable. The person who holds honorable standards for him/herself and then **lives by them** has honor.

Again it is not someone else's evaluation of how well you do this, that involves reputation, **it is solely dependent on your own honest evaluation.** It is very important that each individual understand the absolute control they exercise over this status. You must not lie to yourself, if you do there is no hope for you and the only one hurt is you.

What is Honesty? Most of us would define it as telling the truth. That is correct and yet incomplete. It is telling the truth without attempting to put a "spin" on it that will change its meaning. It is telling the truth even though it makes us very uncomfortable and puts us in a very embarrassing position. **Truth is not opinion; it is fact.** Are there times when one should not "tell the truth"? Certainly those who concealed Jewish persons from the Nazis respected a higher morality when denying any knowledge during questioning. They neither should or could have "told the truth" to their Nazi interrogators, without fully understanding the consequences of that truth. We should always look beyond the narrow view to the whole picture. To be a moral person is seldom easy, but it does define us as individuals. We do what we do simply because it is the right thing to do.

This leads us to the concept of integrity, which again becomes a very personal concept. It means you will not bend your standards simply because it is to your advantage to do so. Personal gain is not the primary importance for you, living by your standards is. If people can count on your actions to reflect those standards no matter how economically or personally attractive ignoring them "just this once" would be for you, you will have integrity. This may seem a harsh way to look at life, but if you do not exercise self-discipline then you

have no discipline. Externally imposed discipline has no lasting value. If you ever hope to reach to the heights you are capable of, you must impose discipline on yourself. We do create our own reality. In our Art of Ninjutsu, this self-discipline is strongly emphasized, maybe not in so many words, but definitely by actions. We lead by our own actions, if someone asks if we stretch daily, many instructors do but the student must make that decision for him/herself. Do we exercise? It is well known how much Dr. Hatsumi walks, and also many instructors have their own personal exercise program. It is the individual's responsibility to make that choice. The leading is by example not coercion.

The next concepts are all "two way streets", trust, friendship, respect, and loyalty. It is important to understand none of these can continue to exist in isolation. A friend is not someone that always is there for you when you need help, but someone you are there for when they need help. If someone you call friend is always on your doorstep when they need your help but are nowhere to be found when you need their help, that's not a friend, that's an exploiter! Friendship carries with it the responsibility to always treat the relationship with consideration, it is never abused, and it is treasured! I think this means a friend will never ask something of you that violates your code of morality, ethics, or sense of justice. In the same manner neither would you make such a request. A real friend is far too valuable to ever take for granted or treat with carelessness. A friend is always to be cared for like your most prized possession, for that relationship is far more valuable than money or any physical possession.

Trust comes into a relationship when your experience has shown that the other person acts with consistency and never seeks to harm you or yours. You have come to know that, within the framework of your relationship, they will always be up front and honest with you. What needs to be said will be said to you first! You can depend on their sense of fairness and rightness. There will never be any "behind the back" character assassination, they would never stoop to such actions. Obviously much of American business has not learned the value of trust and only seeks personal advantage regardless of who must be stepped on.

Respect comes as a result of what a person is and what they have done. It is recognition of the value of that person's experience and its value to you. Never forget that this is again a "two way street". Each person is entitled to the respect due to another living being, until such time as they act in a way to remove themselves from this right. It is always interesting to note that one of the quickest ways to gain respect is to return it.

Where does the concept of loyalty come in? I think it is based in your knowledge of the person to whom you are loyal. That person has always been honest with you, at least in the areas of your loyalty. Your loyalty is thereby earned. Loyalty means you will never be party to the character assassination others may direct at the object of your loyalty. It presumes good motives rather than fearing bad ones and never will accept the worst motivation without first asking and giving an opportunity for explanation. Every person has habits that others may find objectionable, that's just the nature of humanity. Loyalty enables us to see beyond those habits, to the person, and

appreciate that person for what he/she truly is. That's a wonderful gift of understanding, acceptance, and loyalty. Loyalty must **never** be misused. To misuse it would be to prove one undeserving of loyalty.

A mentor, who has guided, aided, and taught, is deserving of our loyalty. We must always evaluate the relationship and return what is appropriate. In Life we experience what we ourselves create. There can be no avoiding the consequences of our actions. We are always accountable for what we do and say. A Martial Artist has the strength and will to be responsible.