

# Training Tip: Shibumi – The Pursuit of Perfection

By Allie Alberigo

Occasionally, you experience moments of perfection: A day when no matter what punch, kick or move was thrown at you, you were totally on your game and you were untouchable and felt indestructible. This is what you should strive for every day. The ultimate goal is to experience this on a more regular basis, working at your ultimate peak of potential 100% of the time.

Although, working at 100% all the time is virtually impossible, you will find that pursuing small moments of excellence is a more attainable goal. The theory behind this is simple – if you know you are capable of working full tilt for three minutes, then you do this as often as possible until you can add another minute, and then another, until you reach 10. As you practice this mentality, you strive to reach a total of 45 minutes. This is called “the maximization of potential.” To take your potential and maximize it fully, for as much time as possible without quitting, is Shibumi, the pursuit of perfection.

Shibumi is a Japanese word and the activity it defines is a part of the Japanese culture, known in English, as the refinement of one’s soul. Doing your best, yet sometimes failing, is inevitable, but not trying or not doing your best intentionally, known as “pacing yourself,” is truly what can label you as a failure. The goal of the martial arts, as well as life, should be to strive always to perform at your utmost ability, work full tilt and espouse the mentality of the pursuit of perfection.

When you start, it is okay do this for only five or 10 minutes. That is the natural order of this exercise, but when you train your mind to understand and pursue this kind of commitment then you will experience moments of perfection more regularly. You can add a little each time you pursue perfection, and soon you are working harder than you ever imagined. Once you adopt this mentality, you will find the tasks that you thought were difficult are now easy, and soon you will realize that there is no obstacle that you cannot overcome. You will push your threshold to an entirely different level, realizing that accomplishments you once thought were impossible are totally possible. Still, sometimes, even though you believe you control your mind, you are a victim of thoughts that have been ingrained in you since you were young. At those times, you may even fail because you believe the goal or the dream to be beyond your reach, or not realistic, but anything is possible if you have the right mindset.

If you practice hard enough, then you will discover aspects of yourself that you never believed to be possible. You will live the life of perfection – you will live Shibumi every day.



# News you can use

## Earn your Black Belt in Parenting

By Allie Alberigo

Kids are being raised much differently today than when I was a child. My parents didn't keep track of my extra-curricular activities on a calendar. Today's world is an exciting place to live, but, parents and adults often forget that children need time to be children.

Ju Jitsu is a great opportunity for children to have fun—like children—and provide parents with a powerful tool to prepare their children for the “brave new world” of the future. The martial arts is an all-around activity, with unmatched physical training, compared to other sports. Martial arts training also develops a positive mental aptitude. It stimulates the mind and teaches students *how* to learn.

For many parents, the greatest benefit of martial arts for their children is that it will change their lives forever. One lesson in self-defense, discipline and confidence building could keep a child from falling prey to bad elements.

Parents can help their children benefit fully from martial arts with these tips.

1. Avoid boredom. Most children become bored with martial arts training, due to a lack of support, not lack of fun. It's not the sole responsibility of instructors to keep children's interest high. Parents must be willing to bring martial arts into their home, with designated space for home practice.
2. Do not bring children directly from another activity to their martial arts classes. I suggest at least a bit of downtime, chores or relaxation between activities. This will ease students into their training and have a more positive experience.
3. Don't ask the instructor to be your substitute disciplinarian. Refer to him or her as a role model, not a bad guy. When children misbehave at home they won't want to come to class because they'll be afraid the instructor will reprimand or punish them.
4. Don't expect your children to be always at the maximum level of excitement and motivation. Remember, the only kids that attain excellence are the ones that stick with their training for years. Motivate your children and revitalize their excitement if they ever become bored. Trust in the instructor for advice and keep him or her informed of how your children feel and their concerns.

Remember, your martial arts school and its instructors and the parents are on the same team. Parents often miss the opportunity to use the support system that's available to them. This is an opportunity that shouldn't be wasted.

