

# INTERNAL WUSHU ARTS NEWSLETTER

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## LEARNING SPEED

We know that even though our mind may know what to do, sometimes our body doesn't quite do it right. It takes time and repetition for a movement to become a part of our body wisdom and muscle reflexes. In Chinese this term is called Kung Fu = time and work (skill). If you feel frustrated in learning a form

or forms, slow down before you get disillusioned. Let the moves you already know sink in. If you're learning more than one form be sure to listen to yourself to see if you've bitten off more than you can chew. It's better to learn one form correctly and with quality than many poorly. The quicker you learn a form the quicker you'll forget it.

## TEACHING

1. Know the right time to correct a student
2. Know how much to correct at one time
3. Know how much to teach at one time
4. Know what depth to teach or what level
5. Avoid confusion

6. Work to simplify all information and movements
7. How much can you chew at one time?

## LEARNING

1. Relax
2. Listen and try
3. Don't try to remember everything, pick one thing.

## PARTNER PRACTICE ATTITUDES

In addition to a greater degree of exercise and conditioning the partner exercises and applications serve the purpose to enhance the awareness, relaxation and softness we begin to develop in the solo forms. On merely a superficial level they teach the applications of various postures and movements within the form. They also give feedback as to how correct our postures, movements, and body alignment are. These are still just the tip of the iceberg. With practice our self-knowledge and understanding can be brought to deeper levels provided we have a mindful and open attitude. The trick here is to avoid the ME - THEM, attacker - defender attitude. The idea is to learn about ourselves, not to control our partners. One of the biggest misconceptions is that these arts are the forms and postures we practice when it's acutely the forms and postures that lead us to and teach us the art.

Once we get beyond learning the outward movements required, then the NEI KUNG (internal work) begins. The first road block many students come across is the ME - THEM attitude. We see our partner as doing this to us, or we see them as an attacker to be controlled and conquered. Sometimes this brings up a competitive attitude or a fear of certain partners. Unfortunately with this attitude everything comes to a halt, nothing is gained except bad habits and a slow down of our chi flow. When encountering this level many students get stuck and they stop. There is a decision that pushing hands or partner drills aren't worth doing.

The attitude in the art should be one of sharing, there should be no competition; you and your partner are a team learning. The partner exercises are a joint study in the art. PARTNERS You are a team studying, using and discovering the principles of Tai Chi or Pa Kua. The first and most important part of this is to communicate with each other. If your partner goes too fast, hard, or whatever let them know. There is no one-side to these exercises. Don't get angry with them because they were too hard or too fast. Let your partner know! Sometimes they don't realize the force they are using. The end result of this misunderstanding can be bad feelings between you for no real reason what so ever. On the applications, the one having the techniques applied to them should be learning and studying what they feel, how their body reacts to the movement. This is equally as important, if not more, than applying the techniques. I've learned most from being my instructor's dummy.

Now we can begin to focus on the true purpose of these exercises. First, *RELAX* and try to use the least amount of strength in the movements. Be soft and smooth, try to flow with the force. Notice your partner's force and direction, from here you will begin to develop TING JIN, listening energy. The more you relax the more you can feel and listen to your partner's direction, force, and speed. *THIS IS WHAT YOU ARE LEARNING!!!!* You can't learn this on your own in the solo forms.

From here you discover where you're using too much force. Ask your partner what they feel and to let you know from time to time. Where does the movement break? Where are you stiff? The more partners you have the greater your range of learning and skill development. Eventually you try to overcome the idea that the two of you are separate. You should see yourselves as one, beyond separateness, just displaying the interchange of Yin and Yang in motion. Balancing the energy and movement. The goal is to flow with your partner's movements like water, whatever the movements are. Flow into the weak spots and move around the attack as if they were rocks in the stream.

At a deeper level, as you practice, you gain a deeper insight into yourself. Why does anger arise when you are pushed? Why do we feel weak when practicing various movements? Why does practicing with one partner make you feel weaker than another partner? Why does our fighting mind show itself only with certain individuals? Seek to understand the thoughts and emotions as your practice continues.

There is no winning or losing in these exercises. anytime you gain insight into yourself, you've won. Your physical health will improve as will your strength because of the added work of the partner exercises.

Work on how you feel and the emotions that arise when you practice then.....go back to the basics: relax, sink, soften, circle of power, don't fight, peng jin. Stay centered, listen and be alert.