

# DOJO DAD

*Raising Your Kids Without Fighting*

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**Dojo Dad**

Raising Your Kids Without Fighting!

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## TESTIMONIALS

My son has been training at MMA now for a couple years and I would DEFINITELY recommend Sensei Mark and the whole MMA group as a phenomenal Karate, self defense, martial arts training and really- LIFE TRAINING for my child. I really think Sensei Mark's motto "A Dream is a Goal With a Deadline" speaks to the nurturing environment of MMA. It is SO much more than just karate and physicality. The instructors are truly mentors that are helping to shape the mind and emotional health of the students. My son has(and continues to) learn respect, commitment, courage, self discipline, and so much more! When I first enrolled my son here at MMA, he was being bullied at school. I will never forget how Sensei Courtney met with him one on one after training one day spending time listening and giving my son the strength, wisdom, knowledge, and mostly just a real sense of personal empowerment to help him overcome the situation. AND THEN - he also went out of his way to follow up with us to make sure the situation was being resolved.

The commitment of Sensei Courtney and ALL the instructors here is amazing and I feel very lucky that my son is growing, training, and learning here. I definitely recommend MMA to anyone with children(young or old) and adults as well!! Sensei Mark Cameron and Manteca Martial Arts is definitely the best place train - not just your physical self but your mental self as well! Give them a shout out today! I hear they have a free trial deal!\*\*\*That is how I started my son- he didn't think he would like it at first. now a couple years later and a confident blue belt starting junior high, he is striving for his black belt with pure determination!\*\*\*

TONYA ROSS

My son was enrolled with a different dojo a few years ago and he lost interest after 2 weeks, that's pretty much the pattern that he had with everything he showed interest in. It would only last long enough for my money to be spent on registration and equipment and then DONE. Since joining MMA, it's been very different. I see motivation, confidence, commitment, and happiness. He looks forward to training every week and I'm

so proud to see him growing through this program. We love Manteca Martial Arts!

PATTY TURK

Before my daughter started attending Manteca Martial Arts she was taking dance classes which she wasn't very interested in. As soon as she started the class dojo she was very excited and now can't wait to go to class! She loves learning new techniques. And it has really helped her overcome her shyness.

ANGELINA MARTINEZ

I'm so glad that I chose Manteca Martial Arts for my son. This place is exceptional! Sensei Mark, Mrs Jamie and all the junior instructors are completely dedicated to provide the upmost service and tools for learning for my junior martial artist. This place is a huge success and we love being part of it!!

COURTNEY

My daughter has been training with MMA since she was 6 years old. My daughter had always been such a perfectionist and hated to lose at anything when she was so little. Joining MMA helped her build confidence without breaking her spirit. Sensei Mark and staff are patient, knowledgeable, and really good at what they do. I love that they also incorporate life lessons into their trainings during mat chats. With things that we talk about at home and go over and over in circles trying to get them to listen and understand. Its always nice when they can hear it from their Sensei's whom they look up to as well. I can honestly say, have witnessed my daughter grow into such a confident, disciplined young lady. In this day and age in the world we live in, its also important for me to know that she feels confident, shes safe and has the skills and knowledge to know how to protect herself if needed. Its a skill she will always have. This has been an investment my husband and i do not regret.

ROCHELLE COOPER

I took martial arts as a teenager, right up until the time I had a devastating knee injury. I figured that would be it for me so I never went back and pretty much gave up on the idea. While at one of Manteca's street fairs I talked to the people at the MMA booth and it started me thinking, maybe I could? What's the harm in trying? I can leave if I feel I can't physically take it and the trial is free. I went into the Dojo, watched a class and talked to one of the Senseis. I found out that my age (59 at the time) didn't make any difference and physical issues could and would be worked around, so I started my free trial. That "trial" was a year and a half ago and I'm still going almost every night. Don't get me wrong, you will get a good workout. It's amazing how much it's helped my balance, strength, flexibility and cardio endurance. I feel so much better physically and mentally, it helps with stress relief and even works my memory at the same time. No pressure, I focus on making progress not perfection and have come a long way in just this short time. So if you think your too old or can't physically handle it, think again, you just may surprise yourself. While researching on line "Am I'm I tool old for martial arts?" I found this quote: "The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago, the next best time in now". It is so true.

JOHNNY V

My kids love MMA. From my observations Sensei Mark and his team care about the children and teaching them respect, discipline, safety, awareness and motivation. They are encouraging and make a fun environment for learning. I use going to MMA as motivation to have good behavior at home. They respect all their Sensei and want to do their best. I feel my kids are more disciplined and self motivated since going to Manteca Martial Arts.

RODINA MULLENIX

Hi, My son Patrick has been a student here since sept. 2021 and he loves it . I love the overall message that the dojo stands for. Respect, and discipline. I actually went to a bday party there when we first moved here and I inquired about the dojo, he's also got quite a few friends who attend from school. I love that they are learning to fight so they don't have to fight. Also they just don't get the next belt because they have passed their test,

they need to be respectful at home and also be doing good in school in order to move on to the next step. Overall we are very happy with his performance and the dojo.

MARIA ESQUIVEL

My son loves it at MMA. Everyone is professional, friendly, dedicated and very passionate about what they do. I totally recommend MMA to everyone and I brag about how awesome this place is, Specially the stranger danger class... so, thank you!

VIRGINIA CANDELARIO

Our daughter Elizabeth has been a student of the Manteca Martial Arts for about 4 years. We are so happy that we have had her join she has learned so much. We definitely recommend Manteca Martial Arts for anybody it's really one of the dojo that really show discipline both Sensei Mark and Sensei Katie and Sensei Ryan are all very knowledgeable. We definitely recommend Manteca Martial Arts.

ANNA & NICOLAS ROSALES

Our son has been training with Manteca Martial Arts for a few months now and he really enjoys his training and takes it very seriously. He has gained strength, technique and self-confidence with each class. When I asked Jackson what he values from his training he said, "how he is gaining strength". I really appreciate how the class reinforces good values and etiquette that will help him grow well.

JUSTIN GEER

My daughter has been a student at MMA for a couple months now and she absolutely loves it. Her confidence is continuously growing in multiple areas. I have a changing schedule and Sensei Mark is very helpful in allowing us to make up classes when space allows. The learning environment is great for young kid just starting out.

JAYLIN BROOKS

## FORWARD

Alcoholism, Drug Abuse, Smoking, Promiscuity, Suicide, Gangs and violence. These are a parent's biggest fears for their children, not to mention abduction and trafficking. But where does it start? How can we reduce the risk of these things happening to our precious children?

My wife and I have seen the direct results of some of these things in both of our lives. From teaching self-defense to victims of abuse, to fostering children of parents addicted to a number of drugs. Sometimes it's very overwhelming as we watch a multitude of people, Police Officers, Social Workers, Doctors.

Nurses, Teachers, Grandparents, and Foster Parents try to deal with the epidemic wreaking havoc on our society. All these kind and compassionate people are doing their very best to help in this epidemic. We do know that sometimes even against insurmountable odds children grow into respectable members of society. My dear wife is a great example of this. Born into poverty in a very mentally and physically abusive environment she managed to pull herself out of it. Raise some wonderful children and achieve her college degree all whilst working a full-time job and raising the kids. She would be the first to tell you, the reason for her achievements against the odds are due to kind compassionate people she met along the way such as her Aunt Joanne and Uncle Cooper who saw a need and stepped up. I know these are extreme examples, but what if we could do our small part and help as many children as possible to avoid these pit falls in life and somehow break the chain.

The purpose of writing this book is to provide some tips that you as a parent might find useful on this amazing journey of raising children.



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*Raising Your Kids Without Fighting*

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## CHAPTER ONE:

# Raising kids is hard, is there even a right or wrong way?

“Isn’t it just biological anyway”?

“I’m pretty sure I read it was Environmental”?

Our children are at higher and higher risk of not being physically attacked, but of participation in risky behavior such as smoking, alcohol or drug abuse. A well known and respected book “Man’s search for meaning” by Victor Frankl touches on this with his Logo Therapy in regard to our human need to have meaning or purpose in our life. His experience with hundreds of suicide attempt patients boiled down to finding each individual’s purpose.

Hi, my name is Mark Cameron, I’m also called Dad, Step Dad, Foster Dad, Adoptive Dad, and Grand Dad as well as Sensei.

I have 40 years of experience raising and working with kids from all walks of life. I am a Biological DAD, a step DAD, a foster DAD and an adoptive DAD.

So back to the questions. Is there even a right way?

Actually I prefer to look at it as a number of ways, each of which you can try and see which one works best for you.

Studies show that there is definitely a BIOLOGICAL element to the success or failure for our children, but in my experience there are things we

can do to stack the deck in our favor. From poor behavior, struggling at school to mild Aspergers and non verbal autism there are processes and procedures we can implement to help ensure a better outcome for our children.

Once again, studies show there is an ENVIRONMENTAL element to the success or failure of our children. But we can do things to empower them even if their environment was not that great at the start of their young lives. For example foster children who have been removed from their homes. Extreme example I know, and for most people not relevant. But if the lessons learned from these children can be applied to other regular children who have loving parents, why not give it a go.

Involving your child in extra curricular activities is from my observations one of the best things you can do for them. The benefits far out way the negatives. It does put a huge burden on you as a parent, financially, transportation and time commitment can be difficult. But I assure you it's worth it in the long run. The lessons the kids learn are immeasurable. From the conversations in the car on the way to practice or competition, to interacting with other kids and adults, to confidence building, overcoming challenges to just not wanting to go on certain days but going anyway. But there is one thing I cannot emphasize enough. Once the activities have been chosen, quitting is not an option until the predetermined goal has been achieved.

Even if in the back of your mind you know life is going to be so much easier for you, if you no longer have to spend the time involved in the activity, the damage and mind set you are creating for the future is not good. As a martial arts instructor for over 40 years I have seen kids over and over allowed to just decide to quit when things get tough and it becomes a pattern of failure in their future.

At Manteca Martial Arts we actually have a Commitment Contract that we ask the student, parents and our instructors to sign so that everyone is on the same page. Not legally enforceable but a mind set to stay on track until the goal is reached. For us it's the next belt. Not all the way to Black Belt. Just the next belt. You can do this with any activity, the baseball season, the first dance recital, the spelling bee, what ever. But the goal must be reached before moving on to try other things.

## **Commitment Contract**

### *“A Goal Is A Dream With A Deadline”*

We are truly committed to this sentence, we even have it printed on our uniforms. But to help each student achieve their goals we ask that you Commit. As a new student to the martial arts we ask that you make a commitment by signing this contract with our instructors as well as your parents.

#### Students Commitment:

1. I commit to attending a minimum of two classes per week.
2. I commit to Training hard and focusing to the best of my ability.
3. I commit to being respectful to all others on and of the Mat.
4. I commit to continuing my training to the next belt at which time I will have reached my first goal and can decide to commit to my next goal.
5. I commit to doing my very best at school and all related educational activities.
6. I commit to helping at home, to being respectful to my parents and siblings at all times.

#### Parents Commitment:

1. I commit to encouraging my son / daughter in the martial arts by transporting to and from Dojo a minimum of twice per week.
2. I commit to providing all the training equipment necessary for student to attain their goal.
3. I commit to the financial portion of the training.
4. I commit to not allowing my son/daughter to discontinue their training until reaching the next belt. At which time we will sit down and decide together to commit to the next level.

#### Instructors Commitment:

1. I commit to training students in a safe and clean environment.
2. I commit to teaching to the best of my ability at all times.
3. I commit to being respectful to all students on and of the Mat.

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Instructor Signature \_\_\_\_\_

We start this process as early as 3 years old. Yes, it's amazing that we have 3 year olds training with us. When I started 45 years ago, you couldn't even step on the mat until you where 11. Now, I realize the reason for this was more the instructors inability to teach than the students inability to learn. Later in the book I will be discussing how to look for a good Martial Arts School, most of the subjects discussed can be applied to Looking for a dance school, boxing, gymnastics as well as multitude of other activities.

I am an avid reader, consuming an average of a book every two week. If I can gain one idea, concept or words of advice from each book, to me it was worth the time invested to read it. My hope is that you find this book useful on your Journey to raise kind compassionate happy young people.

## CHAPTER TWO:

# Child Behaviors

Here are some solutions to different child behaviors that have worked for us through the years. Just as there is no perfect solution or answer to these specific behaviors my hope is that it gives you just one more thing to try on your journey.

### **Shy, won't engage with others!**

At the Dojo we teach 3 year olds and up. Sometimes the kids come in and they shut down, hold on to Dads leg and don't want to participate. The parent usually has the response that the child was so excited to come and has talked about it for days. Now not so much!

As we do an evaluation class first there is usually only a small amount of children there to participate. This gives the instructor an opportunity to show both the parent and the student our facility and get to know them a little. Usually once the child feels safe and comfortable they relax and participate. It just takes a little time. We actually have no expectations from this age group. If they sit and watch and don't participate that's ok. If they participate for 10 minutes then want to go home that's ok also. Next class we will try for 12 minutes. When I speak to parents, a lot of the time I hear, well he doesn't like the class so we will try something else after 1 class? How about you stop being frustrated at the fact it took longer to get ready and get to the class then it did to actually do the class. My 3

year old spent the first 3 dance classes doing absolutely nothing the teacher asked. She would just wonder over to the corner and sit and observe. Or she would go to the end of the line of kids then just stand there. The teacher was very patient and as long as she was not being disruptive to the class it was fine. Now she loves dance. Participates and is getting ready to do a recital. As a parent Is it frustrating to watch this stuff? to feel like it's a waist of time and money. Absolutely. But I have learned to think of this as a long term investment. You probably won't see any return on your hard earned cash for many years. But believe me, when you do there is no price you can put on it. The same basic principles apply to all age groups. Teens can be the hardest to motivate as they are usually very concerned about being embarrassed. Take your time, relax, no expectations just gentle encouragement. I attended a great seminar recently and the speaker was covering the subject of motivation and follow through with adults. The example was if you want to start Jogging, on the first day put your shoes by the bed and when you wake up just put them on. Nothing else, you can take them of if you like and go back to bed. The second day put them on and make it to the front door. In other words, set very small incremental goals to achieve every day.

**Don't:** Don't focus on the short term rewards. Remember it's a marathon not a sprint.

## **Screaming and yelling tantrums**

Do you ever feel like screaming and yelling? Throwing a tantrum? Things are not going as you planned. I know I do. As adults we have just learned to control it. (Or maybe not!)

But children don't know how to control it a lot of the time. But they do understand consequences. They are feeling frustrated and out of control. So the best way we have found is first, try to get them to a quiet area with not to many distraction. Then calmly but firmly explain that you understand they are frustrated right now, to take a deep breath and that you have some choices you would like them to consider. Then give them the choice to continue shopping or what ever it was you were doing, or go home and sit in time out, or not go to the movies or event you were planning. The

trick here is no matter how inconvenient it is for you. Don't offer a consequence you are not 100% going to follow through with.

Just recently my 4 year old had a meltdown at - can you believe it - the happiest place on earth. We had flown to Disney Land, and while checking in at the resort she decides she wants to run around jumping on chairs and tables all the while yelling at the top of her lungs and ignoring everything I am trying to tell her as mom handles the check in process. I finally caught up with her and carried her outside to a quiet spot on a nearby lawn. Grabbed a garden chair and sat in lock down with her, which is wrapping arms around her so as to hold her firmly without hurting her so she can not hurt me or herself. As she screamed at the top of her lungs I calmly talked into her ear, explaining her behavior was not appropriate and that she would have to calm down in order to be released. It took a couple of minutes which seemed like hours to be honest as people walked by shaking their heads. But she finally calmed down. Because she had already been warned of the consequences if she did not listen we spent the first evening at Disney Land in the hotel room. She begged to go swimming, go see Mickey and numerous other things trying to negotiate the hole time. The last thing my wife and I wanted to do was spend the evening with a miserable 4 year hold trapped in a hotel room. But we stuck to our guns and didn't have any more melt downs the whole visit. It wasn't perfect and she still came close and still did stuff 4 year olds do. But each time you could see her brain ticking and she managed to control her temper.

Once again, we actually discuss this kind of behavior with the kids in our Martial Arts Classes with our breathing drill. I will use an example I would not have believed possible if I had not seen it with my own eyes. We had a 2 year old that had suffered trauma in her first few months of life. (My wife and I have been foster parents for a few years now). She would get extremely upset over the slightest things totally out of the blue. We had her in therapy, but Covid had hit so it was all being done by zoom. I watched this amazing lady teach a two year old how to breath, taking deep breaths and exhaling slowly. When I first heard her trying to do it I was extremely skeptical and remember thinking what a bunch of mumbo jumbo. A few days later when the two year old went into tantrum mode, my wife actually sat with her and did exactly what the therapist had said

and the two year old actually sat and took deep breaths and calmed down. I of course was no help as I sat wide eyed, jaw dropped in amazement.

We usually teach breathing exercises during our Martial Arts classes. I think I spent a whole month teaching them in every class after that.

**Don't:** Don't react to this behavior. Stay calm, talk calmly and firmly.

## **Defiant behavior**

Defiant behavior is absolutely normal and expected at certain ages. As our children become more independent and learn to grow apart from us and be more self reliant. The problem is being disrespectful is not acceptable. Once again clear consequences for disrespectful behavior is the key. So many times I witness threats and lots of chances but no follow through. I have found that being consistent, having clear and sometimes written expectations is very useful. It's interesting to watch the older foster children who come to us. One of the first things they take an interest in is the written rules we have posted on the wall. This is actually State mandated. At first my wife and I figured it was a way of them figuring out what they could get away with, and there is an element of that. But it's also for them to understand their new environment and know where they fit in. Which after all is what we all want. Especially children. Going back to the extra curricular activities, that's where our children learn about fitting in. Communication and team work.

**Don't:** Don't take this behavior personally, stay calm and remind the child of the consequences of their behavior so it is their choice. They are in control of what happens.

## **Won't help out at home**

This starts early. Encouraging and allowing the child to help with chores at home is essential. Our guys start at around 3 years old. Emptying the dishwasher. Placing their cups in the sink. Picking up and putting away

toys at the end of the day before bed. When they resist it once again becomes a choice. Help with dishes and I will have time to play with you before bed. Put away toys you can continue to watch your show for an additional 15 minutes. What ever you feel motivates them.

When a new student shows up at the Dojo, we actually require they fill out a self discipline sheet which asks them to complete 3 chores at home before their next class to earn their white belt. Showing them that helping at home is part of being a martial artist plus they will be required to earn every belt.

**Don't:** yell and threaten. It just stresses you out and becomes negative and struggle each time.

### **Doesn't want to go to school**

I don't know about you, but I do not relish the thought of going to work every day. So I'm not sure why we think our kids will want to go to school. But I have found that using the acronym WIFM (what's in it for me ) works wonders. As part of our lesson plans I teach the different age groups about the importance of school and how it is going to affect their future. With a good education they get to choose what they do in the future. Our belt system is actually connected to their behavior at home as well as their school grades. Their teacher has to actually sign their test slip before they are allowed to move to the next belt.

Another thing to consider is to get involved at the school, I know this can be difficult with work etc. I volunteered once per week for about a year in my sons kindergarten class, it was only for an hour or so, but in that short time I got to know the office staff while signing in and out, the principle as well as the teacher of course. It made it so much easier if there was a problem of some kind.

**Don't:** Tell them about how you had to walk to school up hill in the snow bare foot every day. They don't care. Motivate them with the WIFM.

## Struggling with grades at school

Honestly I have never met a kid yet that doesn't want to do good at school. I have however met lots of kids who either didn't really get the purpose of school, had trouble with the social aspect, or had difficulty with understanding certain subjects. I would refer to previous chapter but also look into how the child processes information. Are they Audio, Visual or kinesthetic. Because of the method we use to teach at school which is mostly visual and audio it sometimes leaves the poor kinesthetic kids feeling lost. At the martial arts school we have been very successful by evaluating the students learning method then fitting the teaching method to that. Another thing to consider is that our teachers are over worked and under paid. They are also human just like us and make mistakes. My wife would regularly check the online resource that most schools have these days in regard to current grades, assignments handed in, attendance etc. She has found quite a few errors in all those areas which dramatically effected our kids grades. I shudder to think what would have happened if those errors where not corrected.

**Don't:** Don't compare them with others such as a sibling, "why can't you just focus like your brother". Try to listen very carefully to the answers to your questions about what they are finding so difficult. Don't threaten, it's probably not something they have control of. So threats are redundant.

## Getting bullied at school

This subject is near and dear to my heart. It's the reason I got into martial arts in the first place. At 11 I was getting severely bullied. Actually hated school and was deprived of a decent education for about 2 years because of it. So I get the bully thing. In my day it was a toughen up buttercup attitude. Now the pendulum has swung the complete opposite direction and there is a no tolerance attitude which can lead to a hole slew of other problems. In my experience, bully's pick on the most vulnerable kids. So by doing activities such as soccer, baseball, martial arts, etc it can build that confidence and make them less of a target. I know I know, but my kids a book worm, computer nerd or hates sports. I promise you, with a

little creative thinking and imagination there is something out there which will be of interest to them and that they can gain all the social interaction and confidence they need. Also get involved in the school. It's so much easier to approach the necessary personal at the school when you have attended parent meetings, served on a board or helped out at a fund raiser.

**Don't:** Don't tell them to toughen up. If they could they already would have. Don't tell them to hit back, that just leads to a hole new can of worms you don't want to open.

### **Bullying others at school**

Study's show that most bullies are either being bullied somewhere else in their life, so therefore need that sense of control back so they bully others or are feeling over whelmed and out of control so it can manifest itself in this kind of behavior. There has to be consequences for their actions. But it's important to get to the root of the problem also. Lots of talking, even professional help may be necessary. I'm ashamed to say it, but at one point I severely over reacted when my daughter came home from preschool with bite marks from another child. I was expressing to my wife how I need to go straight down to the school and get these parents and child sorted, she gently smiled and said how about we give it a day or two. Well of course everything got sorted out in an adult manner and went back to normal. A few months later we got a note that my daughter had bitten someone and I was so much calmer and civilized. Funny how we respond differently when the shoe is on the other foot. Older kids need to use conflict resolution techniques which once again are taught naturally in extra curricular activities.

**Don't:** Don't brush it off as kids being kids. It needs to be taken care of ASAP. But also try not to over react.

## Arguing and fighting with siblings

I have kids in there 30's now, at family gatherings they still disagree about lots of things and have heated discussions about it. Usually it's about who's moms favorite. When they were younger it sometimes got physical. Especially as the oldest brother and the middle brother became similar in size and strength and the middle one was no longer intimidated by the older one. Some of this competitiveness can be healthy, as they have different opinions and perspectives. My wife had a great solution for when it got physical. She had a giant t shirt that said I Love My Brother. Which she would make them both get into and hug. Then they would have to complete their chores wearing the shirt together. It was hilarious to watch and they usually ended up laughing and giggling together. They still talk about the "dumb shirt" to this day. I know its annoying and can be very stressful, especially on long trips. I remember lots of those trips, but strangely the kids remember the fun stuff and very little about the fighting stuff. I guess time does heal all wounds.

**Don't:** Don't allow siblings to hit each other and put it down to "kids being kids" I have seen this happen a lot and it's never ended well.

## Constantly interrupting

Once again I have experienced this and witnessed it a lot. It's extremely frustrating to be constantly interrupted, no it's not your imagination that your child only interrupts when you are talking to your spouse or other important adult. It's a form of control. The therapists call this the triangle. They want your full attention when you are talking to someone else. But if the other person was not there they would be quiet as a mouse playing. This behavior has to be stopped ASAP as it will get worse and more complex as they get older. When it happens, briefly stop the conversation get down to eye level and explain to the child that you are having a conversation and will be with them as soon as your done talking, quickly explain that if they interrupt again the consequence, then have them repeat back the consequence. Then continue on with conversation. If the interruption

continues it's the child testing if you are going to follow through with consequence. Which should be done immediately.

**Don't:** Don't allow constant interruptions. It will get worse the older the child gets.

### **Seems withdrawn and distant**

We as parents are constantly exposed to lots of horrific stories about things happening to our young ones, so it's only natural for us to go into panic mode when our children exhibit behaviors similar to those we have seen on the news. 99.99% of the time it's only similar behavior and has nothing to do with what we saw on the news. If your child seems distant and withdrawn there is definitely something going on. But it is probably something perfectly natural like stressed about school grades, a crush at school or a falling out with a friend. I wish I could say I had the answers for this stuff. But I have to once again defer to my wife, she is like a super detective. She will ask subtle questions on a car drive to school or to practice and before you know it will be able to give me a full run down of all that is going on in the child's life.

My wife recently had to visit the emergency room due to food poisoning. The nurse proceeded to ask her symptoms then asked if she had any thoughts of self harm?

After assuring the nurse she did not, my wife then asked why she would be asked such questions? The nurse replied that due to the high suicide attempts recently the hospital now had a policy of ask everyone no matter the symptoms.

Even though we as parents should not panic and assume the worst. It doesn't hurt to ask questions either.

**Don't:** Don't panic and immediately call in the therapist, do a little digging first. But of course if the behavior continues contact a professional.

## **Doesn't follow through or complete anything.**

I have to say, this is usually the result from a young age of being allowed to quit when things are a little tough, this has the direct effect of children not completing things in the future. Unfortunately this can follow them all the way to adulthood. Please understand I am not advocating dragging your child to a sport or activity they don't want to do. What I am saying, is being very clear when you do decide to do an activity that the child chooses, they will be expected to complete that activity to a specific point, be it a date, belt color or season. There is a great book called the Compound Effect by Darren Hardy,

I teach some of these concepts in the Dojo as they are so effective in achieving your goals.

Another observation I have with my own children is that it sometimes takes a little while to figure out what the child is actually interested in. Setting small expectations in the beginning as discussed before is crucial. If there is a large financial commitment such as investing in equipment, ie snow boarding, horse riding, hockey, consider renting for a while. I was terrible at this. As soon as my little one showed an interest in something, I got so excited I would rush out and buy all new gear. I remember spending close to \$1000 on paint ball gear only to see it in a garage sale less than a year later. Renting is good.

**Don't:** Don't allow the child to quit at the slightest sign of trouble.

## CHAPTER THREE:

# A Goal is a Dream with a Deadline.

Our goal as parents, coaches, Sensei's and teachers is to raise well rounded, successful, compassionate members of society. Just as in the book *The Compound Effect*, By Darren Hardy, implementing small processes and procedures over time can make a huge difference in our kids lives.

Being the example.

We all know that 90% of communication is visual. But do we actually put that into practice. Try as I might to be an example to my kids, I still find myself falling short. Just the other day I was trying to get our little one to drink more water, of course she wanted juice which I informed her she could not have. She was upset and frustrated. As I watched her from the dinner table I followed her line of sight looking directly at my big glass of coconut flavor boia. Oh my goodness what a hypocrite I was being. So I promptly got rid of that and poured a large glass of ice cold water. The taste was not nearly as good, but the peace was bliss. As I watched her guzzle down her sippy cup of water. What else are we expecting of our kids but not doing our selves?

1. Are we over weight but want them to eat healthy?
2. Are we yelling at people on the road as we drive down the highway but expecting them to be kind to others?
3. Are we wanting them to clean their room but our room looks like a storage container?

4. Are we wanting them to read more but we never pick up a book?
5. Do we want them to watch less TV but watch hours as soon as they go to bed?
6. Do we get frustrated with them being on their phones all the time but our heads are always bent forward looking at our screens, using the excuse it's work related!
7. Do we get frustrated when they are rude or disrespectful to our spouse but we talk the very same way?
8. When was the last time we started a new challenging activity?

We are the main influence in their lives, it's hard and we will constantly fail. But let's SHOW them the attributes we want them to have.

Now you as the reader have somewhat of an understanding of where I am coming from as a Dad, I thought I would spend some time on the subject that has been my focus for the last 45 years. Martial Arts.

## CHAPTER FOUR:

# Martial Arts - Why We...

### Bow to each other!

Bowing to each other shows mutual respect for both students and Instructor. It says thank you for the honor of either learning from or teaching you. I promise to do my very best as either a student or as an instructor.

### Stand to attention, yell yes sir!

Showing respect with confidence is a leadership quality. To lead you must first follow, not timidly but with confidence. This first simple step helps the student on the Journey he / she is about to embark on.

### Kia (Yell loudly while executing a technique)

This well known but often misunderstood part of martial arts achieves a number of things. 1. Teaches student to breath out when executing a powerful technique as the natural response is to hold one breath. 2. Commit 100% to the technique being executed. 3. Creates hesitation and fear in your opponent, leading you to victory.

### Testing on techniques in front of class and parents!

Once again moving towards confidence and over coming fear, most adults are very fearful of performing, speaking or even addressing a large group of their peers. By challenging our young students regularly, testing allows them to slowly get used to this environment. Putting them way ahead of life skills as they journey through school, college and the work force.

The first time a young student try's this, they are usually very timid, by having the instructor do the required material with them, using an encouraging tone of voice and the class giving them a loud round of applause at the end, this 30 second exercise does wonders for their self esteem. By yellow belt no instructor is necessary. By purple belt they will not only be able to demonstrate technique in the air, but be able to perform on another student.

### Teach stranger danger!

I pray for the day when I no longer have to teach stranger danger because the world has become a much safer place. Statistically we live in a much safer world than 50 years ago. Unfortunately not safe enough yet. We teach stranger danger in different ways depending on the age group. I have been teaching stranger danger at local elementary schools, churches, girl scouts, boy scouts as well as the Dojo for many years. One of the subjects that never fails to amaze me is when asked ‘What does a bad guy look like’ most young students will answer with, dressed all in black with a mask on. Or some other description far removed from reality. I am guessing due to the TV or movies they watch. If I can get them to remember just two things in an hour class once or twice per year its, A bad guy can look like anyone and the best self defense technique in the world is to run. Obviously our regular Dojo students are much more versed on this and we do lots of training with different scenario's.

### Teach escape and evade tactics

Escape and evade techniques are more sophisticated stranger danger techniques moving into on line predators taught to the older kids. We also cover subjects such as child trafficking. On line bullying etc.

### Have mat chats!

Mat chats are during water break about half way through class. They give us as instructors an opportunity to engage with students and reinforce the lessons or subjects of the week. If a parent has voiced a concern about something happening at home, we will generalize the subject in a non threatening manner to the whole class. The amount of times my kids have come home telling me that from now on they need to drink more water or eat healthy or cut back on sugar because their COACH said so I lost count,

as a parent we sometimes become that blah blah blah voice in the back ground like the parent on Charlie Brown. Good Roll models such as Coaches, Teachers, Instructors etc help our children navigate the world.

### Do event nights such as Nerf Night, movie night etc.

When students are in a class room setting the interactions are important but different than when they are in a more relaxed fun non learning environment. I have students that I taught when they where 5 years old who are now bringing their 5 year olds to class. Some of the fondest memories they talk about when reminiscing about their days at the Dojo are Summer camps, movie nights, Nerf Nights, Obstacle courses and Santas work shop. Not a punch or kick in site but smiles all over.

### Have parent participation days.

In my experience parents are sometimes hesitant to step on the mat with their children, worried they will be embarrassed in some way or asked to do exercises they are unable to perform. With a little persuasion, I usually get the kids to ask them wide eyed and adorable, I Know it always works with my 4 year old. Then we have the parents hold the punching bags, or help the students stretch etc, lots of giggles and smiles. It's a great way to let the kids see mom and dad having fun and focusing on just them, no distractions.

### Have a Belt system!

Our Slogan at Manteca Martial Arts is “A Goal is a Dream with a Deadline”

That's what belts actually are, short term goals leading to the long term goal of black belt. They demonstrate progression, moving forward one step or belt at a time getting progressively harder.

### Learn forms!

Forms or Kata as they are commonly known are a set series of moves put together in a specific sequence that must be memorized and perfected. I am sad to say some systems of martial arts have decided to eliminate forms all together. Claiming they serve no useful purpose and are to hard for the students to learn. My opinion is that forms have all sorts of benefits. The

perseverance one must have to constantly improve them. The hidden self defense techniques that reveal themselves after years of practicing them. The neurons in the brain that improve memory and cognitive skills to name a few. Once again I witness society lowering the bar instead of expecting more from the student.

### Sparring!

Sparring has multiple levels, from no contact, touch control to full contact.

Students face of one to one and try to score points on their opponent. Although not realistic in a self defense scenario, sparring teaches self control, being able to control the amount of contact is a very hard skill to learn. Distancing, timing, reaction to incoming attacks are also great benefits to master. In both my military career and work in security as a civilian I often witnessed confident Black Belts get taken down by accomplished street fighters. Part of teaching sparring should also include the limitations sparring has.

### Do bag work!

Bag work is so very important in a students training. Being able to throw kicks and punches at an object that reacts similarly to the human body is vital. This is where you learn if your wrist bends on impact, if your toes are in the correct position for kicks, as well as the level of power you actually generate with your technique. I was fortunate enough to be placed on the boxing team during my service as a British Soldier. I wish I could say it was my natural talent, but to be honest I was the only one in our group who had any formal training and was willing to volunteer. I learned very quickly that the guys I had sparred with to get there where nothing compared to the guys that knew how to Box. My martial arts training when not allowed to use my feet become limited to say the least. Combining the Boxing training with the Martial Arts training has served me well.

### Promote students in front of class mates and family members!

It is human nature to want to be respected and admired within our Tribe. The feeling of pride and accomplishment students feel while being promoted in front of their family and fellow students is priceless. The confidence and self worth that we gain from this simple but important part of the training invaluable.

### Have Leadership Programs.

There are all sorts of leadership programs out there, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Swim coaches, Soccer reffing, the list goes on.

We have two leadership programs:

Junior Instructor Program - Our students are required to reach the rank of green belt which takes around 2 years. The student can then request to participate in the Junior Instructor program which they must commit an hour per week to help teach lower ranks. Punctuality is a must, they are required to give plenty of notice if unable to make their teaching times and must be dressed in correct apparel at all times. The life lessons learned on this course are invaluable. We actually do not attach a monetary cost to participate in this program as I feel its essential to allow all students to participate regardless of their financial ability to pay.

### Assistant Instructor Program

Once Black Belt has been achieved our students can then interview for a paid position as an assistant instructor. I love the fact that our young people who are usually attending high school or college can make a decent wage doing something that is fun and rewarding.



## CHAPTER FIVE:

# And finally!

How to look for a good school:

1. Location: If you decide that the school your looking at is the one for you, you will be going there 2 to 3 times per week for an average of 3 to 5 years. Choosing a school that is conveniently located is important, although should not be the determining factor.
2. Instructor qualification: There is no world governing body on black belt accreditation, almost anyone can open their own school. So doing research is a must. Don't be afraid to ask questions. How long training. Where and who did they train with. Legitimate instructors will be more than happy to answer these question.
3. How long in business: Important question to ask as 90% of schools like most small business close within the first two years. This can be heart breaking if you have been training a year and the school closes, especially as surrounding schools very rarely acknowledge another systems belt or rank as its also referred to.
4. Free trial: Good schools will let you try at least a class or two before committing. Be wary of anyone trying to pressure you into signing a contract of any kind, other than a waiver form for liability purposes.
5. Can you observe class: Any school not allowing you to observe before trying a class, be very careful, personally I would run, they are hiding something.

6. Pricing: Some schools have higher over head than others. For instance a Community center is going to be less expensive than a professional store front school. Community centers are usually limited to 2 days per week, where as a professional school offers 5, 6 sometimes 7 days per week. The classes tend to be smaller and more instructors are available to help with material taught. Prices range from \$35 to \$200 or more. Really sit down and run the numbers. At first glance \$35 may seem the best option. But what is your schedule like. How many classes can you attend. How long does it take to go through the belts.
7. Contracts: The industry standard is for students to sign a 6 to 12 month contract, tuition is then automatically deducted each month from your bank account. Keep in mind it gets deducted if you attend class or not, they are very difficult to get out of if at any point you can not train any more. The sad thing is, most contract companies are a sub contractor of the school and will cancel the contract on the instructors request. But the instructor will tell you it's out of their hands. I am not a fan of contracts.
8. Testing Fees: There is usually some kind of charge each time the student goes to the next belt. Testing fees can range anywhere from \$5.00 to \$500.00 depending on what belt, just know going in about the cost.
9. Length of time to achieve black belt: A good school will take anywhere from 3 to 10 years for students to reach black belt. Usually depends on the system being taught.
10. School focus: Some schools focus on self defense, some on tournaments, others on weapons. Most do a combination of all three. Tournaments can be very exciting and fun to do. But be aware they can also be very expensive.
11. Additional equipment or weapons needed: You may need to purchase equipment such as gloves, head gear etc. This is important for the student's safety, as in most sports or hobbies you will be looking at additional cost.

12. Schedule: Can you make the class times. Are the classes split into beginner, intermediate and advanced students. Are they split into age groups. If you can not make a class, are there make up classes. Do these classes cost extra.

I have studied the martial arts for over 45 years and have loved every minute of my training. I would recommend martial arts to anyone, there are schools for all ages and abilities. If you do your research, take your time and go in with the right attitude and expectations the journey you are about to embark on will be a wonderful fulfilling experience.

“We look forward to seeing you and helping in any way we can! Check out our resources on the next page”

**Resources you can access to find out more, or to answer questions.**

“Contact Me Personally! I’d love to help you!”

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For Information on becoming a foster parent or the adoption process,  
please contact Agape Villages  
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