



# The Roundhouse: Headlines from Around the Do-jang.

Welcome to the first edition of Duvall Taekwon-Do's e-newsletter: The Roundhouse. We hope you will find it educational and inspirational. The article below provides an interesting perspective on the importance of basic training in martial arts. We recommend you use the information as a means for further discussion with our instructors, so you can apply the concepts to your own training in Traditional Taekwon-Do.

## **Learning the Basics.**

Unfortunately, some students drop out of Taekwon-Do at the white and yellow belt levels because they are bored with the basics. You can show these "bored" students how to do a specific stance, block or striking technique once, and they believe they are "done" because they have learned it. As "bored" students, they think to themselves, "I already know this. Why do I have to keep repeating it over and over again?"

The following story taken from the Martial Training Systems June 2005 newsletter delivers a thought-provoking message about basic repetition, and why it is the foundation of all martial arts, including what we do here in Traditional Taekwon Do.

### **A Case in Point.**

In the story, "Peter Freedman's father was a professional boxer, and a champion bare-knuckles fighter. When it came time for young Peter to learn to box at 6 years old, his father had him practice the same footwork every day for months on end. Then he would have him move and throw a jab for hours at a time for months on end. Peter hated it, but he continued to train this way."

*This is not unlike our tradition of doing repetitive kicking, striking and blocking drills, as well as running through our hyungs over and over again in each class.*

Years later, when Peter found himself in a situation where he needed to use his training, "his footwork was so ingrained into his neurology he just kept moving naturally and the person could never get him. When he threw a punch – it was powerful and fast and he didn't have to think about it."

*This "muscle memory" is similar to the speed, accuracy and control you gain when you apply your basic techniques to sparring.*

The author goes on to ask: "How long would you stick with a martial arts school if all you ever did for months was throw a jab and do very basic footwork? For most people the answer is – not long." He adds, "I might have memorized some movements, but I don't 'know' them. If I can possibly improve on what I'm doing, then I'm not done yet, and I can always improve on what I'm doing."

*This is true at every belt level -- from white to black. Promoting to higher ranks should be looked at as a journey, not a destination.*

The article continues: "The main goal of martial arts training is to conquer the ego. The ego doesn't protect you, in fact it makes you weak. The ego lies to you. It says, 'Dude, you're too good to be doing basics all the time, you're ready to learn the secret flying death touch technique.' The ego says, 'Hey man, let's test out your martial arts on the next guy that looks at you funny.' The ego says, 'Why be humble, if you just act like a self-important know-it-all, everybody will respect you.'

*That's why all Traditional Taekwon-Do students are required to honor the Traditional Taekwon-Do Oath: "I shall practice Taekwon-Do only for self-defense and physical fitness."*

The author elaborates on this thought with a personal anecdote: "We had a jujitsu student recently whose bodyweight was 78% ego. He kept telling us how great a martial artist he was from his former training (because the ego likes to talk). One day he was bored with basics and wanted to show how good a puncher he was so he punched a wall – twice. Let's just say that he is no longer training with us, but is now getting his hand surgically reconstructed. Yes, yes – we're all very impressed now."

In closing, the article ends: "Remember this: Lions don't have to roar. The best marital artists I have ever met are also some of the most humble people I have ever met. So check your ego and get back to the basics. After your 100,000 repetition then maybe you have earned a short rest."