

# No One Does That To Me And Gets Away With It

Am I wrong, or do increasingly more people seem to have an “attitude” these days? It used to be called a chip on the shoulder. Bullies had it, then bullies and bad dudes had it, then bullies, bad dudes, and gangstah’s had it. Now, it seems that you can’t cross the street without someone being offended and staring you down, daring you to react so that they can feel justified in punching your proboscis. Punching, that is, if you’re lucky.

You feel, hell, I’ve got to defend myself so I’m going to carry around a stick, but Attila Q. Attitude carries around a blade, and he is not the street-tough gang-member from the slums, but is Adam Q. Average from the north side of town. What’s worse — since he carries a blade, the real hoodlums carry .38s.

Everyone is easily hurt, insulted, offended, trespassed against, and incited to violence. Violence preserves pride, they feel, and pride is all we have. Now there is an impoverished attitude for you! You mean you have so little, that pride is everything to you? *Everything?*

The less the person feels he/she has, the quicker the attitude comes forth. The only way to feel special, important, or respected is to put someone else down. Why do you think kids and young adults walk out in front of your cars, ignoring “Don’t Walk” signs? You slam on the breaks and they laugh at you, getting a quick adrenalin boost, something to brag to friends about, and the knowledge that they controlled your life for a moment. They have to control *your* life because they can’t control their own. They have adopted, without desire to correct, help, or improve, the attitude of impoverished, hopeless, even desperate people.

Desperate has become cool.

When people feel that the world is out for its own short-term self-interest and doesn’t care about *them*, they will also feel compelled to care about *themselves* with the same one-sided intensity, making the short-term even shorter. I believe that the world is, in fact, out for its own self-interest, but not necessarily its own short-term self-interest. Sometimes the world does not care about those sensitive hotheads, it is true, but hotheads not caring about the interests of others exaggerate the caring problem, not counter it.

Self-interest can be positive when it takes into account both short and long-term effects. You are acting in your own self-interest when you study self-defense. You do not study self-defense in order to take care of your neighbor Ralph. You do it for yourself. Even the airlines tell you to put on your own oxygen mask before helping your child. You have to take care of yourself before you can help even your own family protect itself. This sort of immediate self-interest has a view of the long-term, as well. By studying self-defense through the traditional martial arts, one builds self-discipline, self-control, self-respect, accomplishment and respect for others while learning to protect oneself. The long-term benefits for oneself are also the long-term benefits for the society.

This is what Kano (founder of judo), Funakoshi (father of modern karate), and Ueshiba (founder of Aikido) intended when they wanted to create martial arts disciplines to be studied by every class and society

throughout the world. They felt that the very environment of martial training would help develop better people thus create more positive, respectful societies. They may have been idealists whose ideal has not been realized, but they have handed down methods by which people can work on themselves first—a positive attempt at correcting their own attitudes.

*Next time, we'll talk about the attitude of Speaking Softly, Stick or no Stick.*