

Quiet Pride

There are many things in life that make us proud. Some things we earn; some things we feel responsible for; some things we just feel connected to (even though we had no direct contribution to the accomplishment). We *earn* an award for best salesperson. We *feel responsible* for the success of our kid in school because we tutored him and created good study habits. We *feel connected to* the Patriots winning the division championship even though we had nothing to do with it and didn't go to a game all year! Sometimes we get so proud that we boast a little about the accomplishment.

In the traditional martial arts, it is considered bad form to exhibit too much pride. In the West, the squeaky wheel gets the grease, but in the East, the nail that sticks up gets hammered down. It is not that one should feel undeserving of a pat on the back (certainly ranks, certificates, and titles are given in the East as well as the West), rather the accomplishment is not considered completely deserved if it is not handled with *shibumi* (a sort of reserved dignity). We may call it Quiet Pride.

You earn your green belt in karate and celebrate by going out to eat with a few close friends, but you don't wear it over your business suit in the office, e-mail your entire address book, or expect white belts to do your laundry for you. Your son earns his green belt and you show the same reserve. No bragging at the office or putting his photo in the local paper, thank you. **It is important to celebrate, but equally important to keep perspective.**

In contemporary martial arts, many schools have created elaborate ranking ceremonies open to the public intended to produce a sense of awe in the spectator as well as a sense of passage for the student (and to garner few more students in the process). But how many really big events should one expect to have in a lifetime? Is it really a big event if 30 other people get promoted at the same time and it happens every 2 or 3 months? Promotions, certificates, and titles mark progress. They do not necessarily label superior beings. **All one has to know about awards (important as they are) is that Mozart never won one.**

Quiet Pride or *shibumi* is very close to what Dr. Robert Kriegel suggests is the well-balanced character for achievement. He calls it the C-zone. In my book *The Road to Mastery: The Benefits of Budo*, I use his outline to suggest the type of character created by traditional martial arts ideals, or what I call the 5 C's:

Conditioning for character, Commitment, Courage to continue with confidence, Civility, and Control.

Precisely how the martial arts goes about producing a person with these qualities is the subject of a much longer treatise (*The Road to Mastery* is merely 180 pages), but in brief, we can say that **Conditioning** is a sort of mega-preparation, **Commitment** is a formalization of desire rather than a function of coercion, **Courage** is both physical and mental, but ultimately unifies the two in confidence, **Civility** is simple etiquette for safety and smooth social interaction, and **Control** is beneficial self-limitation.

These 5 C's are expressed in the centuries-old *Dojo Kun* (school mottoes) that have been translated and re-interpreted over the years to result in the following admonitions: **Seek Perfection of Character, Be Faithful, Endeavor, Respect Others, Refrain from Violent Behavior.**

Not a bad way to show Quiet Pride.