

Reminders

Most *Sunday with Sensei's Journal* readers know that Bushido-kai sends out email reminders about its latest DVD a few times after the initial offering. We want to remind busy people politely so they don't miss out on the sale without reminding them so often that they trash the email as an annoyance. Where is the balance? We choose the frequency of reminders based on informal feedback and experience. Some people have expressed the idea that they get too many emails from us, while others actually thank us for reminding them.

Experience has taught me that most people respond to sales either in the two days after the initial offering or in the two days before the sale ends. (The reminder in the middle is mostly for those who do not fall into either category or who might easily have missed our initial offering.) Let's assume that their numbers are evenly distributed so that 1/3 of our customers purchase their new DVDs early, 1/3 late, and 1/3 somewhere in the middle. Why do the early birds grab the sale early? I suspect that, although they are busy, their interest in the material prompts them to act *before they forget*. They know it is too easy for them to be overwhelmed with the stuff of life and they do not want to put off getting the new material until the item returns to its normal price.

The latecomers probably put off their purchases not because of lack of interest, but because they are just as busy, and something else has been more demanding than martial arts. Understandably, family and work trump budo. Or, perhaps the latecomers have to check the budget or wait to make sure they have put enough of their paycheck in the right category before acting.

The same phenomenon happens when signing up for seminars: a big chunk of people register early, a few register during the middle of the registration period, and another big chunk on the last day or two. It is easy to attribute superior dedication and more serious commitment to those who register early, a moderate commitment to those in the middle, and only a me-too commitment to those who catch the last wave. Although that may be true sometimes and to some extent, I think the appropriate evaluation has to do more with personality types than with commitment.

When did you do your research papers in high school or college? Right after they were assigned, some time in the middle of the week, or on the Sunday before you returned to the classroom? We can assume that those who did most of the work on their papers early were better at organizing homework and, as a result, might apply those organizational skills to any further studies, jobs, or responsibilities, but they were not necessarily more dedicated to the subject, or even to their education. Still, one does not *demonstrate* dedication by waiting until the last second to get something done. Even though we know that, in contemporary life, other pressures draw from that demonstration of dedication, we also know that demonstrations do not always show long-lasting commitment. For example, early birds can organize their work, their seminar registrations, or their purchases well and then disappear from the client list as quickly as they signed on. Others seem always to take up the rear, but have been doing so loyally for decades.

If this sounds like a personal rant on a subject only peripherally related to martial arts practice, you might need to think a little out of the computer frame. I suggest, for the next month, as a personal development exercise, those of you that tend to do things late, make a point of doing things early and taking the time to organize your schedules accordingly. I also suggest those of you that tend to do things early do what you must to accomplish your work or registration on the last day or two. Both extremes will be mentally strenuous, I can guarantee, but this is an exercise in understanding others, developing diversified skills, and knowing oneself, and is worth the stress.

Still don't think this has much to do with martial arts practice? If you try it, your eyes will be opened. If I were your professor, I'd assign a paper on your internal experiences—but who knows which of you would get it done early and which at the last moment?