

Struggle, Victory, and Fighting Spirit

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For those of you who may or may not know, this author fought on the amateur boxing card that took place here in Kahnawake about two weeks ago. This experience, which included six months of intense trainings for 6 lonely minutes in the ring, inspired an epiphany in terms of the meaning of life. While this statement may be perceived as somewhat exaggerated, let me further explain my hypothesis.

Just what is the meaning of life you ask? A combination of peace of mind and happiness seems to be generally the primary objectives in life, and in a sense, gives it at least motive. But how does one achieve such a state of bliss? My answer to this question is struggle, for the act of struggle gives meaning to life. To understand this concept further, we must recognize our objectives of peace of mind and happiness as a series achievements or victories, rather than circumstance, attained through a process of struggle. Without struggle happiness cannot not be achieved. Victory without struggle is meaningless as anything received without effort is ungratifying by nature.

The late Karoniaktajeh had often said that, “comfort comes as a friend and departs as the master”. Never were truer words been spoken. This quotation suggests that victory or success, so long desired and work for, when achieved becomes a gratifying comfort; perhaps even intoxicating. However, it also cautions one to avoid coasting on previous victories and successes, which may spoil if they are held on too long. This suggests that new struggles or challenges must be embraced to renew the sensation of peace of mind and happiness. Sometimes, for those who are trapped in the past, the memory of old achievements are overwhelming and prevent themselves from moving on into the future.

When one takes a sabbatical from struggle or challenge, especially amongst young people, it becomes increasingly difficult to commit to another struggle. This is why once a victory is achieved, another struggle should be focused upon, and after a reasonable rest period, this next objective should be committed to. For if too much time is wasted in the intoxication of comfort, a necessary ingredient of struggle known as “fighting spirit” will be lost. Fighting spirit refers to an inner psyche that thrives and desires victory; knowing neither defeat nor acquiescence.

Harnessed or not, it would seem that young people have a greater supply of this state of spirituality, but age deteriorates this and in time the burning embers of fighting spirit begin to cool and eventually begin to burn out. As age increases, struggle becomes all the more difficult unless fighting spirit is properly channeled. This state of spirituality is not tangible, but it is there nonetheless. Although possible, once fighting spirit is lost, it becomes quite difficult to resurrect it. Only through intense inspiration and proper motivation, can this spirituality be summoned again.

How does one determine what challenges or struggles to pursue? Indeed, that is a decision best left to each individual; as each individual will best understand his or her own limitations and aspirations. But in order to understand the spectrum of struggle let us use an analogy. Picture a rubber band that is stretched almost to its limits. The rubber band symbolizes dreams or objectives, on one side is reality or the status quo and on the other side are unrealistic or unattainable

objectives. If you pull too hard on the side of reality, the rubber band will snap and rappel back to reality; meaning that if your dreams or aspirations are too reality based, they will never progress beyond the status quo. The opposite is also true, whereas if you pull too hard on the side of unattainable aspiration, it will snap into the realm of unreality and the struggle committed would be in vain. The trick is to stretch your objectives as far as they will go before snapping back. This analogy teaches the most efficient and effective way to target objectives or aspirations that can actually be achieved. This theory applies not only to the individual, but also to collective endeavors.

Always remember that in life, in terms of morale and discipline, the thing that is harder to do is more often than not; the right thing to do. It is harder to love than it is to hate and it is easier to give up than it is to persevere. You may find that simple hard work in the pursuit of victory or success is almost as rewarding as actually achieving it, although chances are if one does the homework; one should get their diploma.

Midwinter greetings to all!