

## Progression

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10 December, 2002

Are you a rock or a sponge?

In the relatively short time I have been training in Martial Arts (about 12 years), I have been introduced to many exceptional people, with whom over the years great friendships, respect and admiration have developed.

When I was first introduced to Ju Jutsu by an old friend I thought of it as another physical activity to be involved in, a way to meet new people and most importantly another way to better myself personally. In the initial stages of training I had no concept of what it would take to attain my black belt, nor did I really think it was a possibility for me at the time. As I continued with my training I can recall the many extra workouts, (in addition to regular classes) with much more senior ranking individuals. I remember getting together and training on a "homemade" mat made of an old canvass tarp stuffed with straw. We did this because of our passion for the art as well as our constant quest to develop our understanding of what it was we were actually doing.

Several years later came that memorable day that I tested successfully, for my Shodan. This for me was a very important achievement. However along with this, and changes in personal circumstances for some of the people I was training with, I found myself not only instructing, but also operating a dojo. With the guidance and assistance of the people I have been introduced to, that dojo continues and is a member of a first class organization.

There have been many lessons learned along the road, to this point in my life. I sincerely believe my involvement in the Martial Arts has made me a much better person. I am certain there will be more challenges in the future. If treated as learning opportunities these to will add to my progression.

I try to follow the example of some of the great people I have met, through this organization. In order to get to this point I have had to be a sponge, willing to absorb the information presented to me. One must also have faith in the guidance and tutelage of those who we look up to. If we do not, we will not progress, and will be rocks moving nowhere due to the fact we are unable to absorb and process what is presented to us.

To gain knowledge is one aspect of personal growth. To pass that knowledge on to others is the greatest source of growth. For me personally there is no moment which makes me more proud than to see my students progress and achieve their goals. I realize that everyone's goals will differ and must be willing to accept that.

So ask yourself are you a rock or a sponge?