

IT ISN'T ANYTHING: PART I

By LtCol AI

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"Where does the swordsman strike? No where..."

- *Takuan So Ho, The Unfettered Mind: Writings of the Zen Master to the Master Swordsman*

Too many folks still want to put Guided Chaos in a box. They look at it and try to compare it to "this" art or "that" fighting system. They do this because they want to put it into a context that conforms to their mental template which is usually shaped through popular culture and is devoid of the forensic reality of real life and death fighting. They think that even within Guided Chaos they can develop a "secret" technique for every possible situation that they may encounter in the hopes that at some point through repetitious practice they will choose the correct response to a given situation. They totally miss the point of the Contact Flow exercise which is designed to allow you to explore the multitude of movements the human body is capable of creating in order for you to develop the subconscious ability to deal with another person's motion so that when your "moment of truth" arrives you can do "something" [that will be the discussion of another newsletter].

The truth is "it isn't anything." In this newsletter I will discuss from a philosophical standpoint the "The Fifth Principle" (i.e., Freedom of Action or adaptability), because I still think there is some confusion over the importance of why we focus on principles versus a specific technique and how body unity leads to total freedom of action and creativity. In Part II I will then provide specific examples of how you can begin to practice this within your training. As a recap, the principles of Guided Chaos are rooted in physics and human physiology so because they are universal and always present they are available to anyone to develop providing they're willing to put the time in to work at them. The key path toward developing them is through training but even this must be done with the proper mind set.

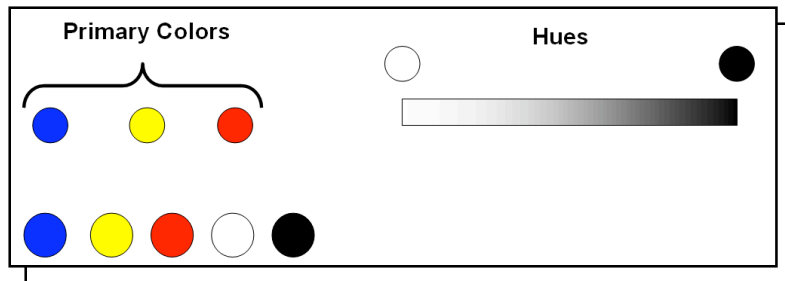
TRAINING

"We must remember that one man is much the same as another, and that he is best who is trained in the severest school."

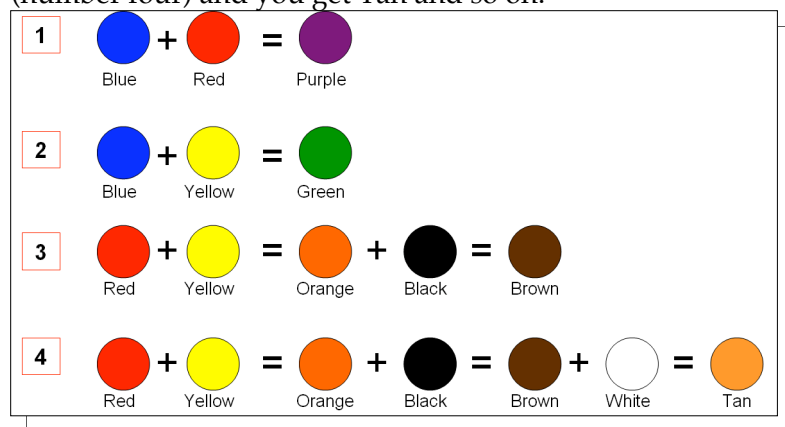
- *Thucydides, "History of the Peloponnesian War"*

Training, as stated in a previous newsletter, serves as the foundation toward the development of all of the attributes [i.e., balance, looseness, sensitivity and body unity] necessary to develop spontaneous movement to deal with the ever-changing chaotic nature of a real knock down drag out blood bath. Through training we are able to develop the subconscious attributes which creates the Fifth Principle or total freedom of action and creativity.

We've all seen this sort of thing in the chart below in grade school so I won't get into this in any depth but merely use it to illustrate a point regarding the nature of why you want to focus on principles in your training and not make it any more complex than it has to be. Just as with the five main principles of Guided Chaos there are only the three primary colors: blue, yellow and red and two shades, black and white. While there are only three colors and two shades, how you mix them will determine what color combinations you come up with.



In the chart below you can see that I've mixed a variety of colors to demonstrate this point. This is important as it relates to Guided Chaos because just as there are only a few colors and shades there are only a few principles and sub principles but from there, there are an almost infinite number of possibilities within them. So for example in the figure below Blue + Red = Purple; Blue + Yellow = Green; Red + Yellow = Orange. Add Black and you get Brown; add white (number four) and you get Tan and so on.

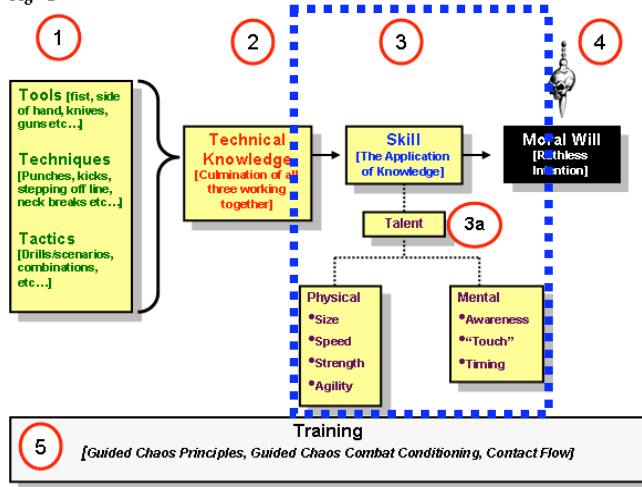


Just as the number of colors you can create are only limited by your imagination so too in the art of Guided Chaos through the principles are you able to "create" an infinite number of possibilities which is what the art is all about. As one of my Marines so aptly observed when describing Guided Chaos, "Guided Chaos is the Art of the Possible..." The point is you don't know what you have to do until you have to do it. Too many people in the martial arts are still looking for the secret move or technique that is the end all to be all. Such thinking is a trap and limits your growth and your martial development.

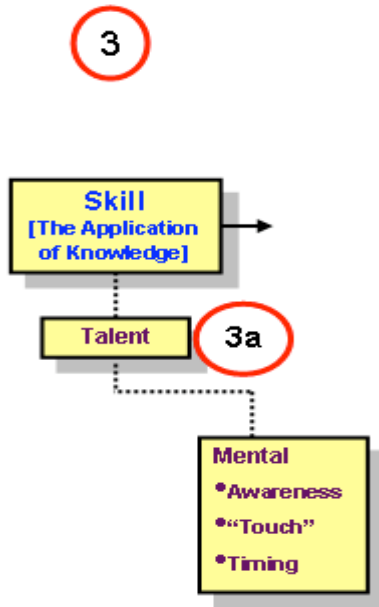
ASPECTS OF MARTIAL DEVELOPMENT

While we try to downplay any type of talk of "secrets" within Guided Chaos (simply because the martial arts are full of this nonsense) there *are* secrets but they are not what you think because they are no different than anything you've learned throughout your life. So here's a secret if you will: while it is true that some people are physically talented (like many of your top sports fighters and other top athletes) there is also a "mental aspect" to talent that at least in my view far surpasses that of physical talent. In the chart below which I've discussed in a previous newsletter I will focus on the concepts shown in number 3 pertaining to skill.

Fig - 1



Skill: this is the actual application of “Technical Knowledge” and is a level “rarely” attained in most martial arts as well as today’s military hand to hand combat training programs. This is mainly because their systems are a) based on the wrong mind set to start; b) they do not understand the forensic reality of real fights to the death; c) they have the wrong set of principles and therefore the wrong training modality so they can’t get to here from there no matter how hard they train. Talent is generally broken up into two areas: physical and mental. I will focus on mental talent since I feel this is the one that is most misunderstood and the one area where Guided Chaos far surpasses other arts in terms of martial development for real fighting.



Mental Talent: The mental aspect of talent [3a] cannot be underestimated. As in anything there is a certain “touch” if you will that must be developed in order to apply the skills you have developed to the fullest. The better you are at applying the fundamentals [principles] which govern a given activity the more efficient and proficient that you become at it. Those who understand the subtle differences and how to use their physical attributes within their own bodies [Body Unity] will have an advantage over a more physically developed adversary. This is the reason why in Guided Chaos we continue to emphasize the development of the various attributes through the principles of the art.

For example there are some who think that balance is about leg strength so they focus on just making their legs stronger to improve their balance. Some think that speed is purely about moving faster than the other person so they do speed drills from here to eternity. The truth is both understandings are limited in that they rely on the same things: muscular strength or that you will always have a physical advantage in some way over another person. However, balance as stated in a number of newsletters, is about developing control over your equilibrium so that you are always able to maintain balance in an ever-changing environment. Speed as it relates to fighting is based more on neural muscular coordination and timing (Body Unity) which is why we constantly harp on moving slowly when people are first performing Contact Flow. You must move slowly in order to develop all of the proper neural muscular coordination, finesse etc... to move without thought *where* you have to *when* you have to.

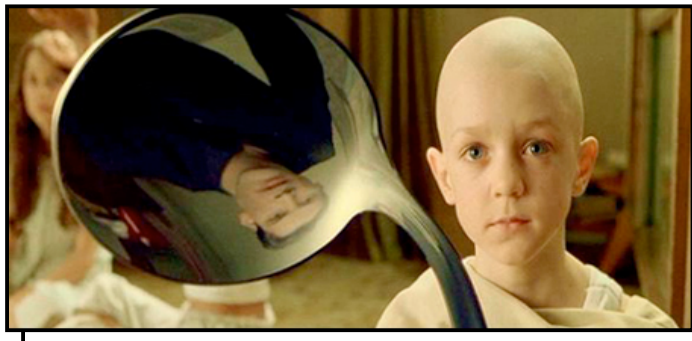
This is why some of the greatest sports athletes, while not the biggest, strongest or the fastest are able to dominate people who possess all of the above. People such as Allan Page, Wayne Gretzky and Jack Lambert come to mind, all great yet all either undersized for their given sports or of just average physical ability within their sport. There are many strong people in the world but they can't all be pro football players. There are many incredibly strong and fast people but they can't all be Olympic caliber weight lifters or sprinters etc... you get the point.

This is what makes Roger Maris' 61 home runs in a season such a phenomenal feat even by today's standards. It is because these individuals learned to overcome their physical disadvantages when compared to others that make them great. The reason they excelled in the fundamentals or principles that governed their sports is because they “had to.” This you must understand! They did it because they couldn't have done it any other way. This is also why oftentimes the best athletes do not make the best coaches, it is because many possess so much physical talent that there are things that they are doing totally unawares or they just don't have to do them as well to be good.

This is also why even average athletes often make the best coaches because they know how hard you have to work at the fundamentals (principles) sometimes just to keep up, and the more they train, the more proficient they become, often surpassing even their own physical limitations.

Now you understand why we consistently harp on the principles and why sport fighting doesn't work for a person even with above average ability in a real fight. A champion Boxer, MMA pro or Olympic caliber wrestler might be able to make such techniques work for them in a real fight. *But unless you're one of them* you're going to have to figure something else out because the speed and chaotic dynamics are just too great for such limited techniques to work for the average person (also I like to point out that to think that you can be like them without training as hard as they do is an insult to their hard work and God-given talent). As stated many different ways in previous newsletters the same could be said for some of the practitioners of Guided Chaos, some of them would be dangerous if they knew nothing. Guess what? *You're not them* so unless *you* have what *they* have, again, you're going to have to figure out something else!

THERE IS NO SPOON - THERE IS NO BOX



Spoon Boy: Do not try and bend the spoon. That's impossible. Instead... only try to realize the truth.

Neo: What truth?

Spoon Boy: There is no spoon.

Neo: There is no spoon?

Spoon Boy: Then you'll see that it is not the spoon that bends, it is only yourself.

-- Spoon Boy, The Matrix

Okay here's the part where I seem like I'm talking out of the other side of my mouth. Please stay with me on this as I try to explain this. When seeking the higher levels of anything, creative thinking is crucial. In order to accomplish this often it all boils down to changing your perspective or the way you think about a thing and seeing things differently than you currently do.

People like to call this "thinking outside of the box," which is the wrong way to look at it. Just like Neo needed to understand that "there is no spoon" in the film *The Matrix*, you need to realize that "there is no box" to step outside of. Once you start with "a box" you have already created something in your mind that limits your creativity because "the box" doesn't really exist.

In other words from the basic principles one is able to develop a multitude of responses and you are not limited by them but eventually you begin to learn to manipulate them at will. From there you are for the most part only limited by your imagination because "there is no box." This is another reason why when I train people whenever I show them a technique I like to stress that "this is only an idea of what you could do," however for that moment you are the master of that motion based on what "you perceive." In other words don't fall in love with any specific technique. Again the truth is it isn't like anything it is what we want it to be when we need it, where we need it, because the fight is what it is, it is less about what you want to do versus what you have to do.

As I always say to students, as long as it is within the laws of physics and human physiology don't ever let anyone tell you what you can't do. For example and especially in demonstrations

when dealing with multiple attackers, it is not uncommon to see many of the more advanced students and instructors strike in two to three different directions simultaneously with power. In conventional thinking / martial arts training there are many people who think this is not possible. However, if you have your balance together not only is this totally doable but at times gives you an advantage simply because your attackers were totally caught off guard as you struck them with tremendous force, sometimes while moving away from them standing on one foot.

When I as well as others have done this in the past and people ask how we do it I usually answer with a question:

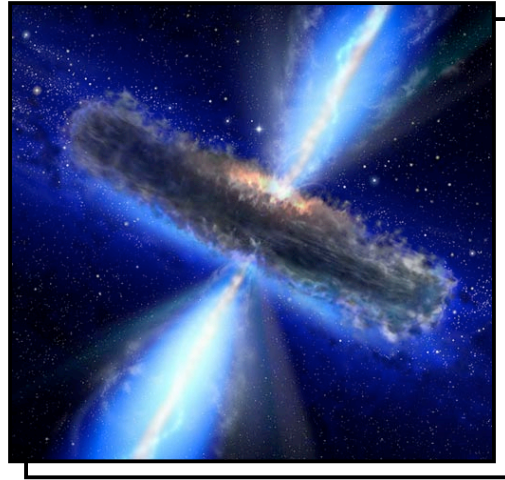
Question: "Do you know why we do that?"

Answer: "Because no one said we couldn't..."

STRIKING FROM THE VOID

“The Way of strategy is the Way of nature. When you appreciate the power of nature, knowing rhythm of any situation, you will be able to hit the enemy naturally and strike naturally. All this is the Way of the Void.”

-- Shinmen Musashi, A Book of Five Rings



Through the development of the principles over time one begins to develop a natural relaxed way of moving. Each movement is fluid and free flowing so while it may not look pretty it is often more efficient and powerful than the flashy cool looking stuff [remember cool will get you killed]. This is because the natural movement that is emphasized within the art is seamless and fluid whereas structured movement as taught in many arts is stiff, choppy and predictable. Through the development of the principles one is able to be *whatever* they need to be *when* they need to be it. It is the ability to be hard and soft all at the same time. The ability to create false surfaces or become like a ghost and strike from seemingly every possible angle all at the same time- this is the ability that many practitioners have described as like being struck by a car. Where just when you think you are clear you are hit from out of nowhere with crushing force.

Natural movement comes from “The Void” of limitless possibilities where there is no beginning, there is no end, it merely “is”. The more natural the movement and coordinated the movement the more likely it will work, the more structured or unnatural the movement the less likely it will work. This is why structured, choreographed or sportive techniques with rules do not work in real fights. The limitations imposed on it make the techniques unsuitable in an environment where the movement dynamics are virtually limitless.

Well that’s it for Part I, in Part II I will focus more on how these concepts apply to training the Guided Chaos Principles.