

Quotes

This file contains cool quotes more or less vaguely or clearly related to martial arts training. But many of them range beyond the people and practices of Tai Chi, and the relevance of some to martial arts per se may be questionable. But they are all guaranteed interesting - I promise almost every one is at least slightly surprising, quirky, funny, or crazy, nothing too conventional. Or some might just be about violence in general. Actually if I must say, many of these have no overt connection to martial arts at all. But at a deeper level they might.

In some cases I've added prefatory contextual remarks, in parens. In some cases the attribution is to 'some guy on the internet' when its from a source of unclear authorship, other times the only attribution I could locate was a net handle. Send me any corrections you may come up with. I'll be adding more from time to time. Follow me as @seeotter on Twitter for update notices.

I promise I've tried really really hard to avoid the old chestnuts that appear on every single martial arts quotes site. I solemnly swear that you will not find the following quote anywhere in this document:

"Be water, my friend."

- Bruce Lee

;)

Enjoy!

-Scott Meredith

(Here's a really weird one, this is from Bill Clegg's interesting book about his own meth addiction. I've never had that pleasure myself, but the way he wrote here (below) really struck me because the wording could apply almost exactly to the experience of the higher internal energies that are released by correct Tai Chi practice - when you finally learn to relax. I know you don't believe that, or you think it's just nutty, but honestly that's how it is. The extreme pleasure of the real Tai Chi energy could even be kind of addictive - in a good way, not destructive addiction. Oh, and don't do anything idiotic like trying to ding me for "comparing Tai Chi to meth". Try to have some literary sophistication for God's sake. Thanks!])

He exhales and is immediately coughing. ... The smoke billows out into the living room like a great unfurling dragon. As he watches the cloud spread and curl, he feels the high at first as a flutter, then a roar. A surge of new energy pounds through every inch of him, and there is a moment of perfect oblivion where he is aware of nothing and everything. A kind of peace breaks out behind his eyes. It spreads down from his temples into his chest, to his hands and everywhere. It storms through him - kinetic, sexual, euphoric - like a magnificent hurricane raging at the speed

of light. It is the warmest, most tender caress he has ever felt and the, as it recedes, the coldest hand. He misses the feeling even before it's left him and not only does he want more, he needs it.

- Bill Clegg 'Portrait of an Addict as a Young Man'

(I liked the sound of this one, that's all.)

Feeling people cannot harm others or even harm animals. Because they can feel, they experience the impact of their every act. They can feel the Pain of others and would not do anything to hurt them. When people cannot live by feelings they must live by categories: right and wrong. For them, all behavior must be so classified.

-Arthur Janov

(The following quote is relevant to the "aiki" power of, not standard Aikido, but Sagawa Yuki Yoshi's 大東流.)

"You make your own reality" and Robert Monroe proved it while discovering reality is a hologram type of illusion one hundred percent mentally created and imagined.

- El Principe (amazon reviewer)

"As a man in a dream who fails to lay hands upon another whom he is pursuing- the one cannot escape nor the other overtake."

- Homer's Iliad, XX11.)

"I wasn't good as Mike Tyson, but as Joe Frazier, I kicked ass."

- Mike Tyson when asked by interviewer how well he played "Fight Night Round 4" video game

"I have never seen. in over 12 years of police work, any attacker threaten another in silence."

- Paul Genge

(Literary version of Prof. Zheng's "invest in loss" teaching.)

Are you not willing to be sponged out, erased, canceled, nothing? If not, you will never really change.

- D.H. Lawrence

(Included for its possible relevance to outcome of your next knife fight, depending on your skill level ... :)

"Personally, if I do get a nuke or several dropped on or near me - which is reasonably likely if I don't relocate off Oahu - and if I'm not, y'know, vaporized - I'll use broken glass to sever an artery. Once thing about suburban rubble, you'll be able to find shards of broken glass, and it's the sharpest edge there is; it's what they use to cut cells in half for electron microscopy. Broken plate glass has a single-molecule edge, I think. And I can attest that bleeding to death is not only painless, but even slightly euphoric - I lost 60+% of my blood once to an arterial bleed."

-DJ

(You might want to check with legal before implementing this program.)

A youth must have seen his blood flow and felt his teeth crack under the blow of his adversary and have been thrown to the ground twenty times. Thus will he be able to face real war with the hope of victory. Without practice the art of war [does] not come naturally when it [is] needed.

- Roger of Howden, 12th Century

(Don't neglect verbal defense training ...)

“People skills’, by the way, just means they smile while they lie.”

- Elberry

“Now when you have that power, the best technique is to ignore all of that discussion, ignore it totally, and to eliminate it, by the simple device of asserting the opposite. If you assert the opposite, that eliminates mountains of evidence demonstrating that what you're saying is false. That's what power means.”

- Noam Chomsky

“The ability to gain and hold power over others is itself a skill and does not require any other ability.”

- Jay Hanson

(When people seek realism in their martial arts training for fear of crime I like to cite the following quote.)

In your car, driving, anywhere, anytime, is where you are most likely to get hurt or killed. Terrorist crap is irrelevant compared to driving. The idiot on your tailgate is much more dangerous to you than Usamabama Muhamabed will ever be.

Pay attention when you are driving. Death is at your fender, countless times every day. Pay attention when you are driving and drive like a person of sense. Or you won't get to live to see doomsday. Wouldn't that suck ! Being in a car , on a road, is the most dangerous thing you do.

Probably.

- Some internet person

“There are two basic reasons why people commit evil. Some people are simply amoral. They lack sympathy and don't think there is any morality. To them their victims are like rabbits. They think, if someone is weak or foolish enough to be a victim, they deserve no better. But most evil is committed by people who believe they are doing good.”

- Fred E. Foldvary, "The Origins of Evil"

(In a thread about the value (or lack of value) of "pressure points" in martial arts (Systema), Charles wrote as below)

From my experience as a lawyer, the most permanently damaging or fatal, situation in real life comes not as a result of any pressure point or exotic maneuver. The worst nightmare is simply is a bouncer/drunk/nitwit punching someone who is rendered unconscious and then falls, striking his head on the pavement. I have had 3 clients victimized in that fashion with catastrophic results. And another 2 beaten by police with flashlights and then falling unconscious and striking the back of their head on the ground.

When the victim does not die outright, they lead the rest of their a shell of their former selves. In my opinion, study this art, or any other, for purposes of self-improvement and union of mind and body. Prisons and jails are full of dangerous men and boys. I doubt if any of them knew pressure points, but they sure knew how to ruin or take the lives of others.

"Wild chimps reveal the natural contexts of territoriality, war, male cooperation, solidarity and sharing, nepotism, sexism, xenophobia, infanticide, murder, cannibalism, polygyny, and mating competition between kin groups of males -- behaviors that have evolved through sexual selection. Also significant is the fact that none of these apes learned these violent behaviors by watching TV or by being victims of socioeconomic handicaps -- poor schools, broken homes, bad fathers, illegal drugs, easy weapons, or any other sociological condition. Nor were these apes spurred to war by any political, religious, or economic ideology or by the rhetoric of an insane demagogue. They also were not seeking an 'identity' or buckling under peer pressure. Instead, they were obeying instincts, coded in the male psyche, dictating that they must win against other males."

- THE DARK SIDE OF MAN: Tracing the Origins of Male Violence,
by Michael P. Ghiglieri; Perseus, 1999; p. 176

"I think we can conclude from this thread that pressure points are the perfect compromise between being unable to grapple and unable to strike."

- hedgehogey

When, under the instructions of the sarvadhikari, Kunju Swami was serving Bhagavan [Ramana] as an attendant, he noticed Bhagavan's body and head were shaking and faltering and so when there was no-one else present but close disciples he asked Bhagavan, "Bhagavan, although only in middle age, strangely enough has a shaking of the head and of the body necessitating his walking with the aid of a stick; what could be the reason for it?". Bhagavan replied, with a smile, "What is there so strange in it? If a big elephant is tied down in a small hut, what else will happen to that hut except troubles of all sorts? This is the same".

One in whom the syllable OM
rises steadily upward
from the sex through the navel,
and only OM, forms a bridge to God.

That one has no interest

in different kinds of magic.
That one is a spell.

- Lalla

JS: Does it mean that all Bagua movements are designed in such a way that one must have Neigong first to be really able to use them?

MR.MA: Exactly. Without Neigong all Bagua techniques are good for nothing and there is no use to practice them. For this reason I'm not willing to teach any techniques to students who do not have Internal Skill - it's waste of time for them and me.

JS: I guess very few people can learn in this traditional way?

MR.MA: Yes, practitioners often feel that walking exercise is very boring and give it up after some time. However once your Neigong develops, once the Small Heavenly Circle opens, the practice becomes very interesting.

Let us consider Ramana Maharshi's death. At seventy, he developed a tumor on his arm which was operated on several times without anesthetic. Ramana tried to clarify the meaning, or lack of meaning, of pain and illness for the totally illuminated person: "They take this body for Ramana and attribute suffering to him. What a pity! Where is pain if there is no mind?" The approach of Ramana was not that of the healer who removes pain but that of the sage who perceives all phenomena, including pain, as Ultimate Consciousness. Years before, Ramana had elucidated this point: "If the hand of the jnani, or knower of Truth, were cut with a knife, there would be pain as with anyone else, but because his mind is in bliss, he does not feel the pain as acutely as others do."

You want to know how to be like Indians?
Live close to the earth. Get rid of some of your things. Help each other.
Talk to the Creator. Be quiet more.
Listen to the earth instead of building things on it all the time.

- Neither Wolf nor Dog - On Forgotten Roads with an Indian Elder

"I do not seek to follow in the footsteps of men of old: I seek the things they sought."

-- Basho

"Some people said Taiji practitioners should not do weight lifting and should not use force. This is not true. Before we learn Taijiquan, our whole bodies are stiff and our force is not flexible. Once we have learned Taijiquan, we are very relaxed, our qi circulates and we can get rid of the stiffness but keep our force. Our rigid force has become resilient force. The rigid force usually comes from the shoulders and is not controlled by the waist and manifested through the fingers. In business term, our rigid force is our capital, and relaxation is the method we use (know-how) to run a business. If we know how to run a business, with a small capital we can still do big business. If we do not know, then even with a big capital, we cannot run any business. Therefore, after you have learned to do Taijiquan properly, there is nothing you cannot do, be it weight-lifting, wrestling, or running. Do not let the misconception worry you."

(Dong Ying-jie: Taijiquan Shi Yi.)

Once is happenstance. Twice is coincidence. The third time it's enemy action."

-Ian Fleming, *Goldfinger*

"In the face of the great superiority of another person there is no means of safety but love."

-Goethe

For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. For every force applied, there is an equal force applied back. The 'world', the universe, maya only exists because of resistance to it: you push against it, it pushes back.

The only way to freedom is surrender. You stop pushing, asserting yourself, and illusion stops pushing back, asserting itself. Stop pushing, putting energy into the system, and there is no energy in the system to push back.

Stop telling the story, and without that constant input of energy the story collapses.

-David Carse

Don't knock Monkey style kung fu !!! You can't kick the ass of a guy who is up a tree and throwing coconuts at you !

- some internet guy

"In basketball, when someone's going to pass the ball, there's a spike in their aura. It only happens a split second before they pass, but that's enough to give you a bit of an advantage. I get a lot of interceptions that way."

- Adam

"I had once talked to Billy Conn, the boxer, about professionals versus amateurs - specifically street fighters. One had always heard rumors of champions being taken out by back-alley fighters. Conn was scornful. "Aw, it's like hitting a girl," he said. "They're nothing."

- George Plimpton "Shadow Box"

The meaning of *jutaijutsu* as Soke was presenting it :

Nothing you do should require any more physical "effort" than it takes to merely move your body through empty space without a training partner or opponent;

"The word "paranoid" is designed to make people not like it. There is an implicit assumption that there's nothing to be paranoid about. In fact, in a very dynamic and unsteady universe, paranoia may well be a true sensitivity to the facts of the matter."

-Terrence McKenna

A Christian priest once told Bhagavan that he considered the goal of mystic union envisaged by Christians to be different from the Hindu goal of moksha [liberation] and superior to it, and Bhagavan replied, "All right, attain that first and then see whether you still find any difference or anything to criticize".

That was always his reply - to turn the critic from theory to practice. Argument did not interest him, only understanding and sincere effort.

- David Godman

30 raccoons, I could not take on bare-handed.

The rules are:

- The raccoons have rabies
 - You can only wear a tank top and shorts
 - You are drenched with female raccoon hormones before the fight
 - The raccoons are all male and roughly 12-16 months old
 - The raccoons will have one day of claw-to-hand combat training by experts before the fight.
 - You will have one hour of counter-raccoon training.
 - The arena is roughly the size of a basketball court, the ground is asphalt
 - There are no weapons whatsoever
 - You win if all raccoons are unconscious/dead, you lose if you are unconscious/dead.
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(Couple of notes about the greatest fighter/martial artist I have ever personally worked with, Vladimir Vasiliev, from various internet posters)

(1) Since Vlad was actually an Alpha trooper for 10 years, he knows his stuff, he had to kill with it and survive, nothing better than that. Most "masters" who teach around Canada, I can mop the floor with them and their theoretical expertise, but Vlad truly scares me with the stuff he can do.

(2) Here is what was most interesting to me, the final knife work. Given my experience with tantojutsu, I began this drill with a high degree of skepticism. In all the years that I've practiced tanto attacks, I've never met anyone who could effectively and consistently defend against a knife attack. Not because I'm so skilled, but because most defenses try to control the obvious global movements of your arms and body, and aren't very effective against the small local movements of your wrist. The subtle local movements that allow you to cut your opponent, even after they've begun their counter. So after practicing with one partner, and constantly reminding him that there wasn't any point in him continuing to disarm me, since I'd already severed all the muscles in his arm, he agreed that his counters weren't working and politely asked the head instructor, Vladimir Vasiliev, to come show me how it's done. Mr. Vasiliev handed me the knife and encouraged me to attack him, which I did. Even at half speed, and with limited force, it was clear that his counters addressed both my global and the local movements. His defenses first neutralized my local movement and range, then proceeded to disarm me by countering my global positioning, all with very little force exerted on his part. In all the years that I've practiced tanto attacks, this was the first person who'd ever done that. I was impressed. On that alone, in that one moment, I lost my skepticism of Systema, and have found a profound respect for Vladimir Vasiliev.

(3) Sergei sees the writing on the wall, moves to Canada with his wife and an incredible amount of liquid currency, teaches at a karate school for pocket money (did I mention he also has a 5th dan in karate?) and hears about Vladimir. He sort of thought it was a scam actually, and he wandered in with a very smug attitude, thought he'd have some fun and show some people

up - and then Vlad pounded on him in such a fashion that he realized that Vlad was way more advanced than anyone he ever saw, and he really had a lot to learn. A familiar story for the people in Toronto.

The Bible of the Christians, like the Koran of the Moslems, never seems to consider that the spiritual experiences in the form of hallucinatory visions by prophet or devotee, reported therein, may, in the last analysis, not be real. But the Bardo Thodol is so sweeping in its assertions that it leaves its reader with the clear-cut impression that every vision, without any exception whatsoever, in which spiritual beings, gods or demons, or paradises or places of torment and purgation play a part, in a Bardo or any Bardo-like dream or ecstasy, is purely illusionary, being based up upon sangsaric phenomena.

- W. Y. Evans-Wentz

In Ireland we hear but little of the darker powers, and come across any who have seen them even more rarely, for the imagination of the people dwells rather upon the fantastic and capricious, and fantasy and caprice would lose the freedom which is their breath of life, were they to unite them either with evil or with good. And yet the wise are of opinion that wherever man is, the dark powers who would feed his rapacities are there too, no less than the bright beings who store their honey in the cells of his heart, and the twilight beings who flit hither and thither, and that they encompass him with a passionate and melancholy multitude. They hold, too, that he who by long desire or through accident of birth possesses the power of piercing into their hidden abode can see them there, those who were once men or women full of a terrible vehemence, and those who have never lived upon the earth, moving slowly and with a subtler malice. The dark powers cling about us, it is said, day and night, like bats upon an old tree; and that we do not hear more of them is merely because the darker kinds of magic have been but little practised.

- W. B. Yeats

(As told by Wolter Keers, a Dutch teacher and writer who visited Bhagavan in 1950, just before his mahasamadhi)

The first time I saw Bhagavan, even at a distance, I immediately recognised that this was the being I had been looking for all my life. My immediate experiences in his presence cemented that conviction. As I sat before him, I became aware of an all- penetrating, all-conquering love that nothing in me was able to resist. But when I use the word 'love', I don't think I quite encapsulate the driving, unstoppable energy with which Bhagavan effortlessly radiated this dissolving force.

If I say that I was repeatedly struck by jolting, shuddering, mind-dissolving bolts of lightning, you will get a better idea of just how powerful his presence was. Or perhaps you won't, because I have discovered that no one who has not experienced this kind of energy for himself can really understand what I am hinting at. You will get the idea of some magnificent being radiating light, but you will not have that experience for yourself.

- The Power of the Presence, part three. David Godman

I turned toward the hill of Arunachala and hurried in the hot sun along the dust-covered road to the abode about two miles from town where the Sage dwelt. As I ran those two miles, deeply within myself I knew that I was running toward the greatest experience of my life. When, dazed and filled with emotion, I first entered the hall, I did not quite know what to do. Coming from strong sunlight into the somewhat darkened hall, it was, at first, difficult to see; nevertheless, I perceived Bhagavan at once, sitting in the Buddha posture on his couch in the corner. At the same moment I felt overcome by some strong power in the hall, as if an invisible wind was pushing violently against me. For a moment I felt dizzy. Then I recovered myself. I was able to look around the hall, but my gaze was drawn to Bhagavan, who was sitting absolutely straight in the Buddha posture looking directly in front of him. His eyes did not blink or in any way move. As he sat there he seemed like a statue, and yet something extraordinary emanated from him. I had a feeling that on some invisible level I was receiving spiritual shocks from him, although his gaze was not directed toward me. He did not seem to be looking at anything, and yet I felt he could see and was conscious of the whole world.

- Mercedes de Acosta

(A good quote on another of my great teachers, Qian Zhaohong)

The seminar promoter was a student of the Yao brothers 20 years ago. He learned the long pole shaking from them. He is training privately with Qian every day until August and Qian wants him to give up zhan zhuang and the pole shaking. He claims that pole shaking tightens the abdomen and one of Qian's insistings is that the dan tien area always be kept soft.

- jmedurga
