



Judo for Fun

We spend our days working, going to school, performing what we often call “tasks”. Sometimes, the getting to and fro is an unpleasant journey. Nobody said it was going to be easy. We balance, when we can, the rigors of life with many things. For many, that is the realm of the couch potato, the incessant electronic game player, the Facebook junkie, and a variety of others who want total escape. Here is a quote from Dale Carnegie’s *How to Win Friends and Influence People*.

The chairman of the board of directors of one of the largest rubber companies in the United States told me that, according to his observations, people rarely succeed at anything unless they have fun doing it. This industrial leader doesn't put much faith in the old adage that hard work alone is the magic key that will unlock the door to our desires, "I have known people," he said, "who succeeded

because they had a rip-roaring good time conducting their business. Later, I saw those people change as the fun became work. The business had grown dull, They lost all joy in it, and they failed."

And how can we not have fun? After all, we are striving to achieve incredible results with the optimum use of our energies, and in the process achieve mutual benefit and welfare. Plus, we get the physical and mental benefits of the exercise; and this was one of Kano’s great motivations for creating judo. If we have a touch of light-hearted masochism, the intensity of the workout, the anaerobic suffering while being held down, unable to escape from the human python entrapping us, and the joy of frequently taking flight and crash landing, with finesse, will add to the joy. Don’t forget the pleasure of the company you are keeping, your judo buddies.

Missing practice must bring tears to our eyes. It should be as tragic as being seven years old and having the top of the ice cream cone come loose and tumble into the dirt. Asked, “Where are you going?”, the reply isn’t, “To practice judo.” It is, “To have fun at judo.”

On those times when that skill challenge overwhelms, when futility is the prize in randori, and when energy fails, the response might best be, “Oh, good. I have improvement ahead!”

Find the joy in judo, seek it out, relish it, and never let judo become a task. When the fun becomes work, and the play becomes dull, failure lies ahead.

Judo is fun.