



By Morné Swanepoel

Real difficulties can be overcome; it is only the imaginary ones that are unconquerable
—Theodore N. Vail

Using about half of his speed, the coach threw a jab at his student's face. Without flinching, the student easily parried the punch.

"Good! Let's try again" the coach said. "I'm going to pick up the pace a little". The Student smiled and nodded confidently. The coach threw a jab at three-quarter speed, but this time the student wasn't fast enough. The coach pulled the punch just barely touching his student's face.

Frowning, the Coach said, "Okay. Let's do it again. Remember, I'm going to do it faster. Try to react quicker". The Student smiled confidently. And again, the coach had to pull his punch.

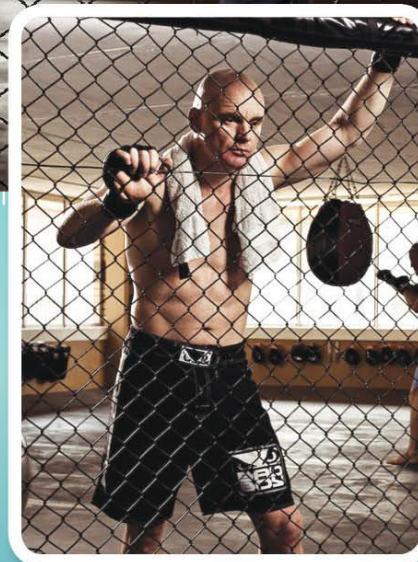
"I guess I can't go any faster", the student said apologetically.

"Again", the coach said. He threw the punch at about one-quarter speed, but the student barely managed to parry it.

"One more", the coach said. This time the punch was even slower. And again the student barely managed to block it.

The student shrugged his shoulders, "I'm just not that fast, I guess", he said sheepishly.

"Wait", said the coach. Wait? the student wondered. Wait for what? Without emotion, the coach, turned, walked to the



safety equipment and slipped a large pair of boxing gloves on. As he approached the student, he threw several fast punches. The student's smile faded.....

"Okay, we'll do it again", the coach said.

"But, err, but why are you, what's the gloves for?" the student said.

"So you don't get hurt too badly if my punch gets through", the coach said nonchalantly. "I am not going to hold back. I am going to hit you in your head". The student's eyes bulged. Before he could say another word, the coach's punched flashed at him at about half-speed. The student blocked the strike with ease.

"Again!" the coach ordered, as he threw several more punches in rapid succession. The wide-eyed young man blocked each one.

"Again!" This time the punches were almost full speed. Yet the student blocked each one, even though his techniques were somewhat poor and sloppy.

Nevertheless, the student's movements had suddenly developed a new vitality. There was energy and spirit in each parry. The coach stopped. He stepped back and grinned.

"Ok that's enough for now!"

Somewhat bewildered, the student returned the grin and stared at his coach's back as he walked away. He couldn't see the smile forming on his coach's face.

lieve Mister Mo should be the most important person in your life, even more important than your teacher, your classmates or your students. It's good to have an end to journey toward, but it's the journey that matters in the end. Mister Mo is the one who urges you to attend class when you'd rather stay at home and watch TV. Mister Mo is inside you when you do the extra kick, punch or takedown. Mister Mo wipes the sweat out of your eyes so you can crank out a dozen more

reps of that technique that has been so difficult for you. Motivation is what keeps us training month after month, year after year. It is what drives us to face our own physical and mental limitations. Mister Mo makes us confront our own laziness, fears and failure and fears of success. It is what makes us walk the endless path of the martial arts. It encourages us to push ourselves to our limit and then beyond. It helps us tune out pain as we drive ourselves to victory over oneself.

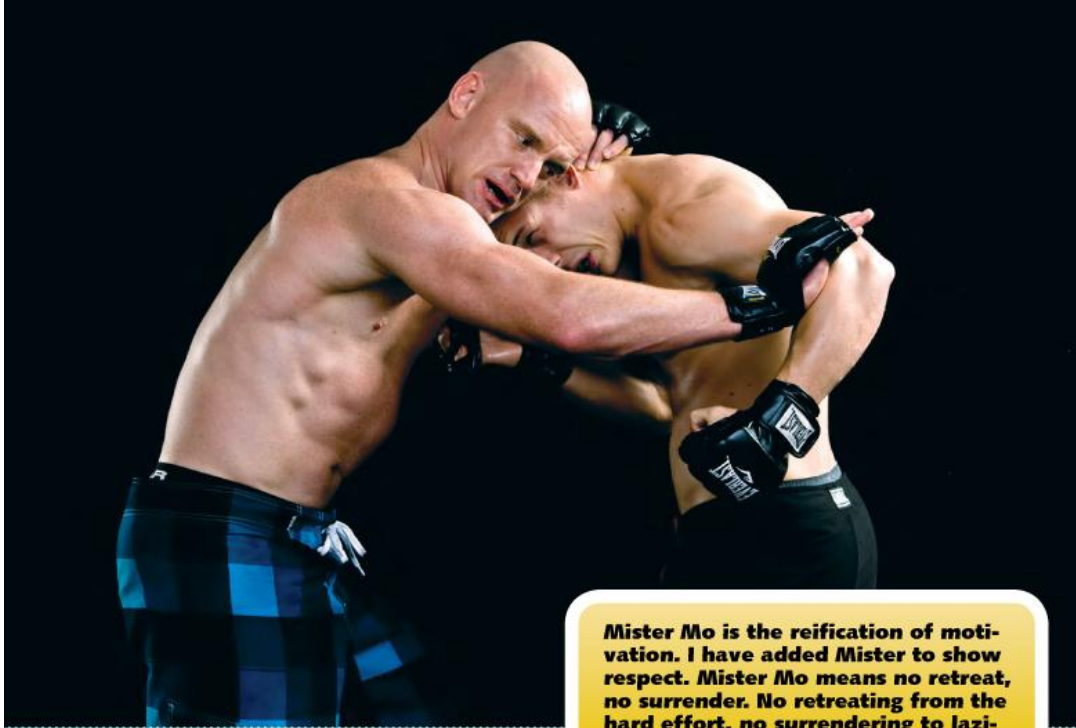
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As many of you know, I have been training and teaching since 1976. Martial Arts has become my full time profession and way of life since the early 1990's. How does a person stay motivated to be involved in the Martial arts for the rest of your life, or to stand up every morning and faithfully stick to your training routine? How do I not become part of the majority of people who give up their training in a few years time?

*Difficulties should act as a tonic.
They should spur us to
greater exertion - B. C. Forbes*

If someone asks me what a human being ought to devote the maximum of his time to, I would answer TRAINING. Train more than you sleep! I put my non-stop dedication to the arts down to one phrase "Mister Mo". Mister Mo is the reification of motivation. I have added Mister to show respect. Mister Mo means no retreat, no surrender. No retreating from the hard effort, no surrendering to laziness or sloppy form. I be-





'A desire can overcome all objections and obstacles'
- Gunderson

Teachers open the door, but you must enter by yourself. Avoiding pain might be the biggest motivational factor there is. For example, doing a proper technique to avoid a broken nose is an example of an external motivation. Most people who train in the martial arts do so, at least initially, because they want to learn self-defence. They don't want to get hurt if they are attacked. For those who enjoy the sport aspects of the arts, external motivation may be the next tournament trophy. For some it is the next belt. For example students quit when they reach a particular belt rank. The belt was their goal. Once they earn it, they no longer have motivation. Mister Mo departs from their thinking. Unlike external motivation, internal motivation is a more difficult concept to understand. Internal motivation is the desire to excel for the sake of pursuing excellence. Internal motivation means

you are competing against yourself not others. It means wanting to do as well as you can, regardless of how others do. Internally motivated students tend to persist in their training. While they are satisfied with each promotion, they are also driven to succeed beyond ranking or trophies. These students train because they want to improve, not to impress others. If you cannot find the truth right where you are, where else do you expect to find it?

How can I stay motivated?


- Search for that drive to succeed.
- Become mentally motivated. Mister Mo is in all of us. You can call on him at any time when things get tough.
- Don't worry what others are doing. If you are trying to surpass someone else, you are limited to what that person has done. You must have no limits! Always strive for excellence.
- Set yourself to more challenging

Mister Mo is the reification of motivation. I have added Mister to show respect. Mister Mo means no retreat, no surrender. No retreating from the hard effort, no surrendering to laziness or sloppy form. I believe Mister Mo should be the most important person in your life, even more important than your teacher, your classmates or your students.

goals and record them in a journal or diary. Then set your time to review your goals so you can evaluate your progress. Then set new goals.

- Focus your growth and development as a martial artist and as a person.

Learn joyfully, and then share joyfully. Daily improvement in every aspect of your life is the overall goal. Don't just think positively, act positively!

Be yourself, but be the best of yourself! And when you feel discouraged, call on Mister Mo. 

Morné Swanepoel

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Morne is a full time Martial Arts Professional and is International recognized in Mixed Martial Arts, Reality Based Personal Protection and Tai Chi

