

MARCH 2008 - SELF RELIANCE

Dear Family,

This month's POWerful character word is "Self Reliance." We will therefore be centering power-chat discussions and doing activities to help children understand the importance of relying on themselves and having a "can do attitude" as well as to help them become more self reliant in their actions.

It's often difficult to know when to let go and allow your child to work independently. There is no set age when we can say "now you can let go." Every child develops at his own pace. Letting your child take on new responsibilities or try challenging tasks on his own is a matter of gaging his individual abilities and personality. It also takes a little bit of trial, error, hope and faith.

Self-reliance in many ways, is self trust. It's the ability to rely on our own powers, judgments, and abilities. A child who is self reliant is able to think for himself and trust his instincts. He shows independence and competence. He uses his resources to cope with new situations or circumstances that challenge him. Your child may have the capabilities to play by himself, do his chores, and pack his lunch, but without confidence in these abilities, he will likely still ask you to do it for him. With the development of self reliance, your child will trust that he can do it by himself even if it takes longer or it's a bit challenging. He may even make mistakes.

Of course, it can be difficult to watch a child make mistakes. But as Dr. Robyn Silverman says, "some of the greatest lessons are the ones personally learned." Stepping back can be one of the biggest challenges of both parents and teachers. It also takes great sensitivity. On the one hand, if you don't give your child enough freedom, he may come to depend upon you too much and may lack confidence in his own abilities. On the other hand, if you push him before he is ready, he may develop insecurities. Adults must understand this balance.

Building self-reliance takes a partnership between the child, the parent, and other important adults in the child's life. We need to have patience, know when to step back and when to step in. When it comes to a task, it's often easier, quicker, and more skillfully done if we do it for the child. But when we allow him to accomplish a task on his own that is within his developmental capabilities, he gains confidence and learns that he can do it by himself.

Young students: "I can do it by myself!"

Older students, teens and adults: Self Trust; relying on your own powers, judgments, and abilities.

During the four weeks of March we will be discussing the following:

Week 1: What is self reliance and how do I show it?

Week 2: What helps or hinders our ability to be self reliant?

Week 3: When should I try again and when should I ask for help?

Week 4: What skills do I need? How can I show self reliance in the future?

Upcoming Powerful Words

April: Gratitude

May: Compassion

June: Honesty

As always, one of the best ways to teach and reinforce POWerful Words is by modeling strength of character ourselves. We can show our children that we can depend on ourselves for many things.

We thank you for your support. You are pivotal in helping to make our school one of the best Martial Arts and personal development centers in the world.

Best Regards,

Your Motivated and Dedicated Martial Arts Instructors

