

## **7 Circle Of Life**

The concept of Internalising and Externalising discussed in Chapter Two is a key concept to be aware of.

In martial arts the concept was best explained by Bruce Lee. Standing upright, he stuck one leg out behind him, gently touching the floor. He then rotated his body a full 360 degrees, making a circle around his body at the point where this leg touched the floor.

### **Kiss or kill**

This is your Circle of Life. From a self-defence perspective, you want to know who is inside your circle! The people inside your circle will either kiss you, or kill you.

Do not take this literally! Especially at parties or networking events. Just because someone is not about to plant a big kiss on you does NOT mean they are about to kill you! In other words, just because someone has not kissed you does not mean that they are about to attack you and that therefore it is OK to attack them.

Imagine that where you are sitting or standing (or even lying) right now there is your Circle of Life around you. This is YOUR circle, it is no-one else's. Even if there is someone sitting or standing (or lying) right next to you, within your circle, this is YOUR circle.

### **We control our circle**

The key thing about the Circle of Life is that we can control what happens in our own circle. Not just people who are physically inside it, but everything that is within it. All our thoughts, our beliefs, our actions, our behaviour. The things inside our circle are things that we have let in to our circle, whether we are aware of them or not.

### **Empowerment**

As we covered in Awareness 2 Self and Responsibility, having a high Locus of Control is where we internalise things. It is where we take full responsibility for what happens inside our Circle of Life.

Having a high Locus of Control, taking responsibility for our own circle, is empowering.

Consider the reactions below which follow on from having a high Locus of Control for when we succeed and fail, compared to a low Locus of Control:

Situation	Locus	Empowering?	Our reaction
When we succeed	High Locus	Yes	Give ourselves credit, reward ourselves. Are happier, more motivated.
	Low Locus	No	Believe it was down to luck, no increase in our self-esteem.
When we fail	High Locus	Yes	Take responsibility, learn from our mistakes. More likely to succeed next time.
	Low Locus	No	Refuse to take responsibility. Never develop, progress or learn.

So with a high Locus of Control, we tend to reward ourselves, learn from our mistakes and have more success.

With a low Locus of Control we maintain low self-esteem, and never develop or progress as we do not learn from our own mistakes.

Black Belts know that life is about them. It is about US. It is about taking responsibility for us, for what we have let in to our Circle, the things that will define who we are.

#### Karate Precept

*“First control yourself before attempting to control others.”*

#### **Take responsibility or be a victim**

In some ways this is not an easy place to be. Taking responsibility for what happens in our life can be a massive step. An easy route is to put the blame on other factors, to just live as a victim, at the whim of circumstance and whatever happens to us next.

The Circle of Life can be likened to our Comfort Zone. Inside the zone is where we feel comfortable. It is outside the zone where we can feel uncomfortable. But it is outside our Comfort Zone where we learn.

Most beginners would not feel comfortable starting in a class where

everyone else is a Black Belt.

But this is the best thing to do! They would learn faster, and more safely, and so progress quicker.

The bigger our zone, our circle, the more comfortable we feel. With a small Circle of Life, our Comfort Zone shrinks. There is just more stuff outside it! And we have less notice of things happening; we don't see them until they are in our face, which means we get hurt.

### **Expanding our Comfort Zone**

The ultimate aim is to expand our Circle of Life as far as possible, so that we are comfortable. For some people this represents their life journey.

As we expand our Comfort Zone, the penultimate stage is to be comfortable being uncomfortable!

And the last stage, which we cover more in Humility, is where we feel connected to EVERYTHING, so we are comfortable everywhere. Because we are one part of the whole thing.

*“Do not try to change the wind, change the sail.”*

From the Little Book of Seishinkai.

The thing about control is that although we only have SOME control over what happens to us (things outside our circle), we do have 100% control over how we react to it (which is inside our circle).

So we can take 100% responsibility for how we feel and react to things outside of our Circle.

**Black Belts are aware of our Circle of Life, which we control and where we take responsibility for what happens inside it. Black Belts give themselves credit when they succeed, and take responsibility when they fail.**

### **One Thing You Can DO Now:**

**Think of something good that happened to you recently. Which aspects of this can YOU take responsibility for? Give yourself credit, reward yourself.**