

# Sword and Spirit

The eNewsletter of Itten Dojo

November 2016



## — Why Budo? —

**Regardless of the times you live in, or the circumstances of your life, success largely depends on things you actually can control:**

- **Building strong relationships in a community of achievement.**
- **Forging a disciplined and positive mindset.**
- **Enhancing your physical health and capabilities.**

*These are exactly the things membership in a dojo provides.*

## *Life Hacks from the Martial Arts...*

# Reishiki: Wellspring of Mindset

*Reishiki* (礼式), usually translated as etiquette, ritual, or ceremony, is intrinsic to traditional, Japanese martial arts. As detailed by Lovret Sensei in *The Student's Handbook*, "There are three primary reasons for reishiki in a dojo: safety, learning enhancement, and power." Reishiki is situationally dependent, and can range from actions as simple as a solo, standing bow when entering the dojo to elaborate, elegant sequences involving a partner and/or weapons.

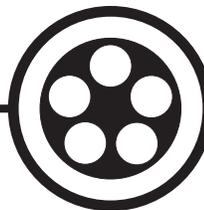
As a safety measure, reishiki is used to define and control the level of intensity in training. Training partners don't engage in practice combat until they are prepared and have bowed to each other. The engagement ends when the partners "bow out." Until that point, it's "weapons hot." The more elaborate the reishiki, it's understood the ensuing engagement will be conducted at a higher level of physical and mental intensity (and risk).

Reishiki enhances learning by allowing partners a chance to walk-through or otherwise acquaint themselves with what they're to practice. If this exploration is conducted prior to "bowing in," it's understood that the real engagement has not yet started.

Lovret Sensei explains the source of power in reishiki this way: "When you concentrate fully on what you are doing you can apply all your energy to it." In other words, you establish a focused mindset, and a focused mindset has the direct effect of making you stronger.

Reishiki permeates our kenjutsu and aikijutsu, to the extent an oral teaching is, "Waza (techniques) fill the space between reishiki." Long before new students are able to execute spectacular techniques, they can become expert in the forms of reishiki. And it is this exceptional focus on reishiki that is most responsible for producing the exceptional men and women comprising our ryu.

*Continued on next page*



## Reishiki: Wellspring of Mindset

But the focus of this newsletter is addressing how persons not necessarily training in martial arts can apply the lessons of budo to their lives. For this purpose, let's look into the ritual aspects of reishiki and the consequent effects on mindset.

Sean Covey — son of Steven Covey, author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* — has said, “We become what we repeatedly do.” Habits can be unconscious, and more detrimental than beneficial, but conscious, positive habits can be made rituals. More importantly, the inverse is true. Rituals can shape habits, and those habits in turn can “effectively help shape your thoughts, beliefs and emotions,” as described by Adam Sicinski in *Building Empowering Rituals*. Sicinski

emphasizes creating “rituals you partake in each day that help keep you mentally focused, alert, motivated and on track.”

Rituals can be mundane, things like making your bed first thing in the morning, but nonetheless can be used to set the tone for the day. Square away the bed; square away yourself. A few minutes spent in prayer or meditation, with a focus on gratitude, can engender a lighter attitude prior to heading into the workaday world. On reaching the office, but before being drawn into the first challenge, sorting the paper on one's desk and clearing anything unnecessary can help unclutter the mind.

Look for things you do routinely, then ritualize these actions by performing them especially consciously with an intended outcome and effect. In the process, become the self you envision. ☸

