



When an avid judoka asked Professor Kano how best to improve his judo, Kano reportedly replied, “Never miss practice.” Droll as that may seem, he wasn’t kidding. It is possible the student hoped for an “inner secret”, perhaps something to do with a technical application, maybe a kuzushi gimmick. If so, Kano’s reply might have seemed sardonic. There’s irony for you. Let us pile irony on top of irony. Judo practice teaches the value of perseverance. However, one cannot gain it unless one endeavors to never miss practice.

The true price one pays for judo is not made with the currency of the realm. It is paid with a dearer and more precious commodity, one’s time. Do not short change yourself.

I once heard a sales training guru say, “The difference between those who succeed and those who fail is simple. Those who succeed are willing to do things those who fail will not.” He wasn’t talking about climbing Everest; he was talking about little things, about showing up.

There are two ways to miss practice. One, don’t show up at all; the other, show up physically but not wholeheartedly. The first is easy to spot, but the second is insidious. I suspect the latter often evolves into the former. Since there are bound to be days when you just can’t get into it, your spirit is elsewhere, here, then...

FROM A NORTH STAR  
STUDENT TO T. CRONE:

*Within the famous Paine publication American Crisis, "These are the times that try men's souls....", is this line I thought applicable to perseverance in all matters Judo, "What we attain too cheap, we esteem too lightly-'Tis dearness only that gives every thing its value."*

### The Great Bowing Secret

I learned this back in my college judo days, and even applied it in spirit to my regular classes. I swear it made a significant difference in my GPA.

Most bow in to the dojo, or onto the tatami, or both. Envision the edge of the bowing place as an invisible doorway. You bow, unlocking it, and when you step through, all else behind you is gone. All your preoccupations and concerns are left behind. You tell yourself, “I am here for judo.” (Mentally, actually say it.)

At the start of class, when you bow, tell yourself you will let nothing and no one interfere with your judo improvement. If other distractions exist on the mat, you must find ways to eliminate them. They steal your time.

At the end of class, as you prepare to bow out, revisit a positive and successful judo experience your session provided. Be there again, with feeling, if only for a second.

Do this always. It is a shame to miss practice once you’ve shown up.

The secret keys to victory are not hidden, merely cloaked in simplicity.

The *Judo Compass* is conceived, written and sent by Tom Crone.

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