



Karate by PowerPoint

By Charlie Lang, Executive Coach & Trainer @ Progress-U Ltd.

Imagine that you have been asked to participate in a karate kumite (1:1 combat) competition. Imagine further that you were given only 3 months to prepare. Let's assume that you have only heard of karate but never practiced it in any way.

You may or may not be a particularly sporty person. You may or may not be fit, flexible, strong, etc. Just imagine the situation as realistically as possible.

What would you do? You are not permitted to decline participation; you were given only time and some resources to prepare yourself.

Let's look at some options:

- You do nothing, just go into the combat and see how it goes. If you are a fairly fit person and had your share of fights as an adolescent, you might think that this is enough for you to compete.
- You try to learn from a couple of books on karate.
- You go to a karate university where a professor gives a lecture on the different aspects of karate, its history, the effectiveness of certain techniques, etc.

You go to a training called "Understand Karate in 3 Months." When you reach the classroom, you sit down and listen to the presenter, who uses a PowerPoint presentation to illustrate his points. You are supposed to come for a 1-hour session every week for the next 3 months. All sessions are set in the same format, i.e., an experienced 3rd Dan Sensei (black-belt karate master) shares his knowledge and wisdom on karate using modern presentation tools.

If you follow any or a combination of these methods, how well will you be able to perform in the competition? Of course, it depends. It depends on your ability to learn using these methods and your talent, as well as your physical condition.

Apart from that, how developed will your technique be? How well will you perform with an opponent? In all of the options above, you never actually practiced what you learned or dealt with the unexpected moves of an opponent.

Perhaps you can already tell where I want to take you with this analogy. Whether you want to learn karate or piano or English or leadership, the principles of learning seem to be pretty much the same.

It is easy to see why, using any of the methods above without actual training, a beginner won't have a good chance to win a karate match. However, in the case of leadership or executive development, these methods seem to be the most widely accepted and applied.

How do sports people learn a sport? How do musicians learn an instrument? Of course, basic theories must be understood first. True learning, however, is acquired through actually practicing skills under expert guidance, usually achieved in a highly interactive and experiential training environment. Top performers get top individualized guidance to assure maximum performance.

Why should it be any different when it comes to leadership development? Because we believe in "natural leaders"? Well, yes, great talent and a conducive upbringing are always helpful. Just look at Tiger Woods. However, this natural talent certainly needed and still needs his fair share of training and coaching.

This realization led us to design our seminars in a way that respects each participant's background and experience, and builds mostly on the strengths of each individual while overcoming any weaknesses that could hold back overall performance. Our workshops are highly experiential, fostering self-learning opportunities. Rather than "role play", we include "real play" whenever possible.

Furthermore, we strongly encourage our clients to include a follow-up coaching/mentoring/conferencing package to assure that participants don't fall back into their old habits as soon as the seminar is over.

How did you learn what you know about leadership? How is it working for you?
What do you need to know in order to decide how you can develop your performance and effectiveness in the best possible way?

Feel free to contact me at any time so we can explore whether our services could assist you in your further development.

For more information related to Progress-U Leadership Coaching please visit <http://www.progressu.com.hk/leadership.htm>.