

#500 Does Work Have To Be So Stressful?

Humor is your natural defense mechanism against irate customers, work overload, change, and all stressful situations that come as a result of success. It's a prescription from your higher self to cure the madness that attacks you from day to day. To deny yourself the right to find humor and laughter in the midst of all the madness is like denying yourself treatment that can cure an illness.

Even a little levity can help change your perception of a particular problem. I noticed that the more I utilized my sense of humor as a tool to help me deal with my challenges, the more it became a part of who I was and the more emotionally balanced I became. You could say that dealing with life's stresses and challenges from a humor perspective is emotional self-defense – which is very much akin with the principles and theories of the martial arts. Let me explain.

My friend Jeff has a black belt degree in karate. Through years of practice and repetitious training he has conditioned his mind and body to respond automatically against physical attack with a series of self-defense moves consisting of kicks, punches, blocks and throws.

One night at a club someone attacked Jeff by surprise and punched him in the back of the head. Fortunately for Jeff the punch didn't make full contact. Without even thinking, Jeff automatically went into his defense stance, blocked the next punch that was thrown, threw two punches of his own, and hurled his assailant through the air and onto the floor.

When it was over Jeff sat down in a chair, brought his hand to his face and said, *"Wow! I just got into a fight!"* He said he didn't have to think about blocking the next punch or when or how to punch back. He said it just happened. That's conditioning. His mind and body worked together to respond with automatic reflex to keep him from harm's way – to protect his physical self.

In karate one is constantly practicing their *katas*, which are a series of physical moves such as kicks, punches, jumps and throws. These *katas* condition the student to respond and react effectively in the event of physical attack.

If you make a conscious effort every day to see the humor in the events that attack your emotional well-being you will be practicing your emotional *kata*. Slowly but surely, you will reprogram your brain subconsciously to the point that when a major emotional attack occurs you will automatically respond to it with more ease. When you unleash the power of your humor being™ in the workplace challenges don't go away they simply become more manageable.

HIGH POINTS TO REMEMBER

- ❖ We all have our good times and bad times. Humor has a way of ironing out the wrinkles.
- ❖ Allow your humor being to laugh off the fear that represents your greatest challenge. Laughing in the face of fear puts you in control. That's how you become a black belt in humor.
- ❖ Make a conscious effort every day to see the humor in the events that attack your emotional well-being. In time, you will have reprogrammed yourself to the point that when a major challenge occurs, you will be able to deal with it more easily.

Steve Rizzo is The Attitude Adjuster. He shows people how to acquire the attitude they need to succeed on all levels of life – while enjoying the process. He's the author of the critically acclaimed book, *Becoming A Humor Being* and the executive producer of his own nationally syndicated PBS special. Steve Rizzo's keynote speeches and seminars are invaluable in learning about the power of choice, the power of your humor being™ and the power of your thoughts.