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A Broad Perspective of Martial Arts: Refining Soft Skills Through Martial Experience

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The World Health Organization (WHO) clarifies that mental health is related to the way a person reacts to the demands, challenges and changes of life and the way they harmonize their ideas and emotions.

It's not news to anyone that the mental health of many security professionals is compromised. The daily routine faced by these people is challenging. Stress in the workplace, working in conflict-ridden areas dominated by criminals, insecurity because they don't know if they will return home alive, illnesses that may affect a loved one, lack of financial resources, legal proceedings they are facing... Those are just a few examples of factors that can negatively influence mental health.

According to the Albert Einstein Israelite Hospital website, some of the most common mental disorders associated with work are: burnout syndrome, post-traumatic stress disorder, chronic fatigue syndrome, professional neurosis and professional burnout syndrome. This can cause direct damage to the work performance of these operators, putting their lives and the lives of others at risk. This is due to the fact that emotions are responsible for the interface between technical knowledge and the situations experienced. If this emotional connection is compromised, scenario assessment, adaptability and decision-making may not be carried out properly.

Soft skills for security

Soft skills are behavioral abilities related to the way professionals deal with others and themselves in different situations. According to a report in "Você S/A" magazine, psychologist and author of the bestseller Emotional Intelligence, Daniel Goleman, says that skills such as resilience, empathy, collaboration and communication are all competencies based on emotional intelligence and distinguish incredible professionals from the average.

Just as important as identifying the best operators to carry out a mission is knowing the level of rapport between them. Operating using experience and technical knowledge alone is not enough; behavioral skills need to be refined in order to increase the operation's potential

for success.

Martial experience

Martial experience is the experiential study of combat, in a systematized way and with progressive unpredictability, through martial arts. Its purpose is to cultivate the individual's strategic intelligence.

The enhancement of strategic intelligence from the martial experience is called martial intelligence (term coined by Mr. Leo Imamura, Grand Master in Ving Tsun, traditional Chinese martial art system).

Strategic intelligence, according to classical Chinese strategic thinking, is the ability to anticipate and wisely exploit the potential that exists in a given situation, based on interaction with the adversary.

Classical Chinese strategic thinking was widely propagated by ancient sages and strategists, such as Sun Tzu in his book *The Art of War*.

The role of martial arts today

In all martial arts, or at least in most of them, there is enormous potential for human transformation and development. Unfortunately, many people still hold stereotypes about them and don't understand the breadth of their role in contemporary society.

Confusing self-defense, combat sports and fighting with martial arts is common. Self-defense is using martial arts as a source for developing strategies to prevent and defend against possible threats. Combat sport is the use of martial arts for competitive purposes, such as Vale Tudo, also known as No Holds Barred (NHB) in the United States or the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC), where there are well-defined rules, duration, judge, number of opponents, among other conditions for holding events. Fighting is directly linked to friction, brute force, and the tendency is for the strongest to prevail.

Martial arts, on the other hand, delve deeper into the

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study of fighting, with the aim, among other things, of providing strategic conditions for victory even for those considered to be physically weaker, and often without the need for a physical confrontation with the opponent. Therefore, more important than imposing our will is understanding the other. Even more important than fighting is identifying potential situations that could lead to victory, before fighting.

That's why it's important to study fighting through martial arts based on human development. The opponent is not an enemy, he's just someone on the other side. And it is precisely they who will inform you of your own vulnerability (unintentionally, of course). Therefore, another level of relationship must be formed between the opponents.

Human development is not just a moral issue, but a strategic one, because when you know the other person, the relationship becomes more constructive, allowing for a greater perception of the conflict. It makes it possible to identify the desires, motivations and other reasons that lead the opponent to seek combat. The transition or path from "confrontation" to "encounter" tends to be shorter.

Thus, martial arts can even serve to defend ourselves physically, but to use it, only with this purpose would impoverish their potential, since there are many other values linked to these practices.

Refining soft skills through martial experience

The article published in "Você RH" magazine, entitled "Liquid careers: adaptability is the new mantra for people management", inspired by actor Bruce Lee's phrase in *Longstreet*, a 1971 series, which read "Be water, my friend", presents the importance of refining emotional intelligence, whether it's to face crises, deal with the unexpected or face transformations. According to the article, the metaphor of being like water shows that it is essential to develop and/or refine skills according to the context.

As many of you know, as well as being an actor, Bruce Lee was a profound student of martial arts, especially the Ving Tsun system.

In ancient China, among other things, the Ving Tsun system was used by wealthy families to prepare their descendants to manage their businesses in the future and to protect themselves. This gave them access to martial experience to hone their strategic intelligence.

Martial experience has the potential to make us think differently about how we perceive and interpret reality, setting thinking in motion, developing a meaning that is extended to the person's own life, using the movements of the human body to frustrate the mental division between acting and not acting, which petrifies the fluidity of a trend and prevents us from identifying the tiniest signs of the transformation that is to come.

Thus, it is almost impossible for the person not to be themselves during the martial experience, providing a favorable environment for stimulating behavioral change, not least because the movements are not based on "fighting techniques", since "technique" is related to a standard operating procedure for carrying out a task and, just as in real combat (where there are no rules, judge, start and finish time, number of opponents or a ring), life is dynamic, it is constantly changing, and it is unlikely that anything will happen exactly like what has been studied at a "technical" level.

The movements used in the martial experience are based on "combat body devices", which make it possible to prepare the individual to broaden their level of perception of the situation they are experiencing, so that they are better able to adapt and make appropriate decisions in their daily lives.

In this way, knowing how to manage emotional or behavioral skills is fundamental to success at work and in life. **ILEETA**

About the Author

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