

# BLACK BELT LEADERSHIP

GUIDANCE ON LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

## How to Teach Real Martial Arts – When Teaching Students a Block, Punch, Kick or Choke is Inappropriate



During 2006, Terrence Webster-Doyle, my friend, peace activist, author and martial art teacher, and I had a conversation about teaching children the concepts of peace and non-violence—while instructing them how to elbow-strike each other in the face. Or, maybe it was kneeing each other in the groin or kicking each other in the head, the floating ribs or the knee?

I've forgotten what acts of potential violence we discussed that day, but the point of the conversation was that there is a rather sizable incongruence between "peace talk" and "strike them."

I remember leaving that conversation a bit perplexed, as I believe that we, as martial arts teachers, ought to be the world's biggest proponents of peace education (as it is

the perfect mirror-opposite of the radical and potentially brutal physical self-defense curriculum we teach just about anyone who's willing to step on the mat).

I also believe that practicing the martial arts (the physical techniques, including punches, kicks and throws) has tremendous and lifelong value. Wait a minute; let me restate what I've just written, for clarity's sake: I think we must teach non-violence and, just maybe, teaching kids to kick, punch and arm-bar each other might not be the best way to do it—AND, I believe that teaching kids the martial arts, indeed, enrolling them today in a martial arts class, any class, might be one of the 10 best things you can do for them. So...what's the point?



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### The Anger Management Alternative

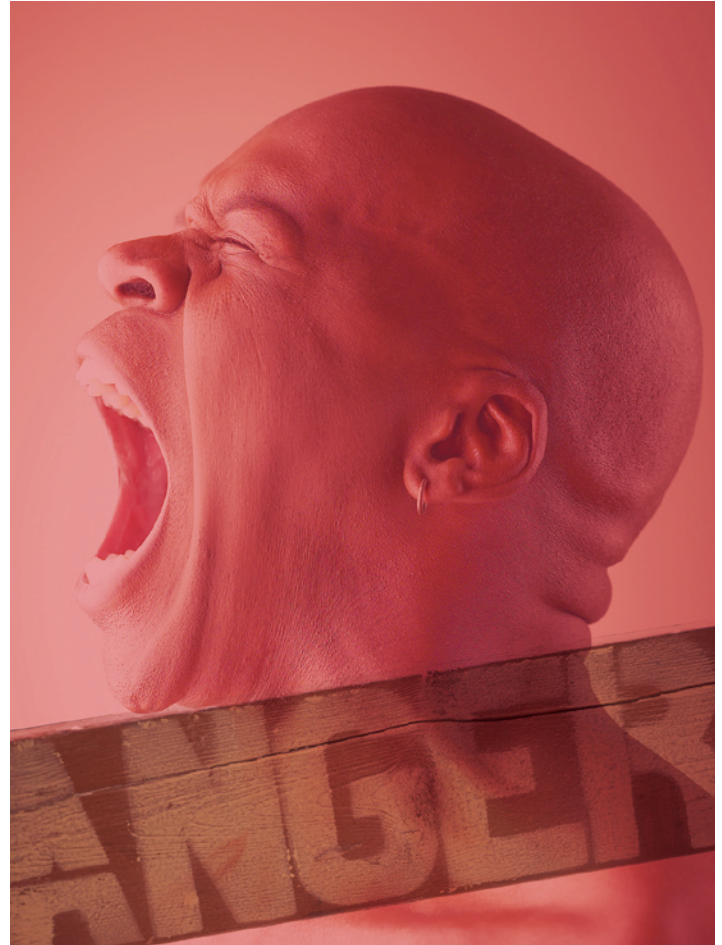
Indulge me for a bit longer, please. OK, I'm planning to speak to 50 seventh-graders at a local middle school. This is the real "wild bunch", so full of pee and vinegar, so hormone-heavy and so peer-pressure puzzled, that I'm thinking just to attract their attention and hold it for a bit, I probably ought to start the show by yanking the biggest kid from the audience and giving him a good thrashing.

That would grab their attention, no? No, you're right, it wouldn't; and I only contemplated that for the briefest of time (approximately two hours). The school principal invited me to teach these kids some self-defense; so what do I teach them that's crazy-good, perfectly applicable to their lives, and that won't have them throwing kicks and choking each other on the football field for the next week (or having the school district's attorney calling to say, "Mr. Callos, do you remember when you came to the school and taught our students how to do a palm strike...?")?

What can I, "Mr. Round Kick to the Head then Sweep 'em and Stomp 'em," teach a bunch of kids that actually gives them something useful and worthwhile, something they can use to save potentially their lives, but that doesn't contain any instruction that involves fists to the face, kicks to the genitals, or cutting off someone's blood supply to the brain, so that they can "take a nap"?

What component of the martial arts is as valuable as physical self-defense? What component (OK, the answer's coming) of the martial arts is as relevant to personal protection under stress and strain, as is a good old low-block and elbow strike to the cranium?

Have you already guessed the answer? It's ANGER MANAGEMENT. Anger is all too often the core of conflict. Anger is the reason many people hurt others – or become injured. Anger causes hurt, it makes it stick – and it can eat you from the inside out. Anger management, MORE than "bully busting," "stranger-danger," MORE than "the three rules of concentration (yawn)," MORE than the "Black Belt success cycle," MORE than some Tony Robbins- or Zig Ziglar-inspired motivational-brain-food, is what people need in the world today.



The ability to control your negative impulses by controlling your own anger – well, now, THAT is self-defense. A kid might face 20 honest-to-goodness bullies in his or her entire life (hopefully not). A kid might find him or herself in an abduction scenario, maybe 10 times, but most likely never (hopefully). Anger, on the other hand, oh man, anger is like Star Thistle, it's a weed that grows everywhere and it hurts, oh does it hurt! It's 24/7; it's seven days a week; it's 365 days a year.

Anger is everywhere – and it's bad, bad, bad for everyone involved. It's poison and it's easier to find than cigarettes – and about a thousand times more dangerous to our health.

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### Is Anger Management The Perfect Self-Defense Lesson?

Finally, I can refer directly to the conversation Dr. Webster-Doyle and I had, and that is the result of the education I received after my confusion about what I want to teach kids versus how I go about it.

The perfect self-defense lesson, that offers the student what may be the ultimate form of personal protection, but doesn't involve any part of one's body striking, restraining, bending, or otherwise interacting with someone's else's body – is anger management. The only problem is that most of us know as much about teaching anger management as we do about what makes an iPod® play music.

Yeah, yeah, you plug it in and push a button! It's a no-brainer, but could we build one? Could we explain, in great detail and with easy-to-follow instructions, how to make an iPod? No, most of us could not. That's anger management! We know something about it, we know it's a part of what we do, we know we somehow develop some of it during training, we know it's there, right on the periphery of all that we do, but we just can't tell you the step-by-step method for perfectly executed anger management. Well, it's time to learn, isn't it?

If there's someone who can teach us how to understand and then teach anger management to kids (and grown-up kids too) like Mike Chat teaches the step-by-step method of 720's, then bring him on!

Guess what, I've found him; and I have asked him to give us the ABC's of anger management, you know, like how to start teaching it, efficiently and, most of all, effectively. Beginning with next month's G.O.L.D. Leadership Report, Dr. Tony Fiore, known internationally as "The Anger Coach," will present you with a monthly lesson in the basics of anger management.

For now, NAPMA members, I have an assignment for you: Go to [www.angercoach.com](http://www.angercoach.com) and read about Dr. Tony Fiore. Look for the free resources on his site and register for them. Look to next month's NAPMA Maximum Impact



Package for your first lesson from Dr. Fiore and then some ideas from me on how to use the lesson to make your school more powerful – and more popular.

*Tom Callos believe that martial arts will soon be the primary source of preventative anger management training for kids everywhere. He resides in an anger-free environment, located in Placerville, California. He is also the team coach for [www.ultimateblackbeltest.com](http://www.ultimateblackbeltest.com) and the designer of The 100 ([www.theonehundred.org](http://www.theonehundred.org)).*

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