

## This is how we deal with verbal attacks | WingTsun-World

Some time ago, a reader of my book *“BlitzDefence – Attack is the best Defence”* asked me how one can protect oneself against non-physical attacks in the "pre-fight" (verbal) phase, and whether the WingTsun system also has solutions to offer here.

Since physical attacks are often a continuation of verbal aggression by physical means, we WT-users, who seek to avoid senseless conflict as far as possible, must concern ourselves with the rules that apply to them.

The same WT principles fundamentally apply during both verbal attacks and physical attacks, therefore I shall discuss a few of them here.

While our main concern in physical self-defence is e.g. to ensure that the attackers punch does not connect, the object during verbal attacks is to ensure that the aggressors words do not find their mark.

This is actually much easier, for while we are struck by the attackers punch if we do not move fast enough, we do not need to move at all in response to the words of an aggressor.

We alone decide whether we have been (verbally) affected. Only if his words have disturbed our mental balance to the extent that we are provoked, and cannot control our anger, has the aggressor scored a hit.

Note: *“It is impossible to give offence to somebody if he is not prepared to take it.”* (Friedrich v. Schlegel)

WT principle: *Do not go against things!*

Just as we do not enter into an exchange of blows (sparring) in WT, we do not counter with clever remarks which only cost us energy and unnecessarily prolong a dispute or even allow it to escalate into physical action.

“Do not argue with a loudmouth, or you will carry wood to his fire.” (Jes. Sirach 8,4 )

Instead we confront the aggressor e.g. with absurd behaviour by smiling back happily at him: *“Thats just what I always say, youre perfectly right!”*, waving at him and walking on, leaving him behind in amazement.

WT principle: *Let the attack go into thin air!*

We do not argue with critical remarks and do not respond with criticisms of our own, otherwise we would be paying the aggressor back in his own coin in the mechanical manner of any layman. When we respond, the aggressor must have the feeling that he is striking a barely transparent curtain which yields but does not strike back. Whatever the opponent throws at the curtain does not rebound, therefore he cannot use it against us again.

WT principle: *Do not try to push the opponent away, push yourself away from him!*

We should not try to convince or change him! Just as we do not attempt to stop a physical attacker pursuing his goal or pushing his arm away in WT, we should not even try to convince the aggressor that he is in the wrong or to make him a better person during verbal self-defence. In physical WT we change our position instead of trying to push the opponent away, which is much more difficult. Nor do we try to persuade the opponent to alter his behaviour. People cannot be changed. We can only change ourselves, and only if we really want to.

Moreover, the aggressors we encounter in practice are often under the influence of alcohol or drugs,

therefore it is seldom of any use to engage in understanding dialogue with them. Since the right hemisphere of the brain is more rapidly numbed by alcohol, our opposite number will have trouble in assessing our emotional manner of speech correctly, and will take humorous or ironic remarks literally.

WT principle: *Protect your centre!*

To ensure that the opponent cannot disturb our physical balance, we must be aware of our centre and protect it.

To ensure that our mental balance is not disturbed, we must find, experience and protect our inner centre, our essential core. We must seal ourselves off hermetically! The wedge formed by our arms protects the front garden of our house like a fence. Our aura of self-assurance defines the limits for the other party, like an invisible protective shield.

If we are probably unable to interrupt an escalation into violence (the transition from verbal aggression to physical attack) despite our best efforts, the following applies to avoid the onset of personal fear:

WT principle: *Direct your attack at the opponents centre, do not follow the arms!*

We must attack the inner core of the opponent!

*“Once I have examined the core of a person, I understand his intentions and his actions.”*

(Wallenstein in Schillers play Death of Wallenstein 2,3)

Our arms move towards the core, the inner vertical centre-line (“wick-line“) of the opponent. Our words (mental energy) penetrate the surface to reach the core (heart, mind) of the other person.

In physical terms: Our arms move along the imaginary centre line, the shortest distance between our centre and the centre“ of the opponent.

If we follow the centre line, the “middle path“ which links us with our opponent, he cannot move past us unless we move aside and let him through.

Our concentration must also refuse to let aggressive, negatively charged, paralysing fear through, which the aggressor is trying to shoot into our heart like arrows in the form of words and thoughts. Here too, the physical principle applies that an object cannot occupy the space already occupied by another. In my view thoughts also have a material aspect, though much finer. And there is only room in our heads for one thought at a time. We must not let the thoughts of the opponent enter. Our positive thoughts must exert unbroken forward pressure, like an uninterrupted series of chain-punches. Just as the advancing wedge of the WT-users arms redirects the opponents arms, our flow of energy must direct negative thoughts away. (If they have already penetrated into our consciousness, a kind of mental “3rd form is necessary to banish them, like an exorcism.)

*“Therefore the wise warrior imposes his will on the enemy, but he does not allow the enemy to impose his will on him.”*

(Sun-Tzu, The Art of War)

In my September editorial I shall give you suggestions and practical examples for applying the physical strength and fighting principles to the 3rd level of WingTsun.

Enjoy your summer, wherever you may be!

Yours

Keith R. Kernspecht

Attention:

Hopefully nobody will imagine that he is working on himself merely by reading my editorials each month. For anybody who thinks so, my wake-up calls are more likely to act as sleeping pills or tranquillisers. Neither should anybody think that I am necessarily capable of doing what I write about in these editorials, or that all their content is the fruit of my own intellect.

In fact a great deal is age-old wisdom, often reflecting the findings and teachings of people who had a great affinity with the “self-liberation ideas of WingTsun.

