



8 Keys

*To Being A Better
Martial Arts Instructor And School Owner*



*By Professor Brannon Beliso
Photos by jmichaeltucker.com*

The best investment martial arts school owners have is in themselves. Most would say they're great instructors and/or business owners. The question is, "Can we always be better?" Professor Brannon Beliso of San Francisco, California, a martial arts millionaire, believes the answer to that question is "Absolutely." He attributes his success to his business motto, "We constantly improve upon what we do to better serve our students." Here are eight keys to help *you* to be a better martial arts instructor and school owner.

Tip #1: Create a Positive Attitude

A smile and a positive attitude are the traits of a successful person. If you smile you'll feel better, attract positive people into your life and business, and the challenges you face will be easier.

Exuding a positive attitude will inspire your staff, students and families. It'll make your martial arts business the only place people want to come to and the last place they want to leave.

To create a positive attitude, you must eliminate three words from your vocabulary. They are "problem, try and should." Replace them with "challenge, do and must."

You don't have "problems," only "challenges." Viewing situations as challenges allows you to see them as goals. Having goals are inspiring. You'll be more motivated to achieve a successful outcome when you view problems as challenges.



The great *Star Wars* master, Yoda, once said to a young Jedi, "Do or do not. There is no try." The challenge with trying is that it allows you to rationalize your behavior and failure by saying, "At least I tried."

Successful people achieve their goals by *doing*, not trying.

You should train more. You should eat better. You should manage your time properly. Eliminate "should" from your vocabulary and replace it with "must." You must train regularly. You must eat better. You must manage your time properly. Using the word

"must" instills a sense of urgency and an immediate call to action.

While we're at it, let's also eliminate the words "I can't." Replace them with "Yes, I can." Say it real loud. Say it again. Say it as often as needed every day.

Tip #2: Be a Master of Sustained Passion

To sustain passion is the art of a true master. It's easy to be passionate for a day, a challenge to be passionate for a week, and difficult to be passionate consistently.

The foundations of sustained passion are focus and discipline. These life skills are the characteristics of a great martial artist, instructor and successful school owner.

Focus means to "pay attention." Pay attention to every aspect of your life and business. When you're focused, you're more productive and efficient at



everything you do. Passion comes easy when you are fully focused on teaching a class, enjoying a meal or spending time with a loved one. Focus also leads you to make better choices. Good choices improve the quality of your life and grow your business.

Discipline is the second of these life skills. I define discipline as "To always do your best." When you do your best, you feel great, and feeling great about yourself is called self-esteem. A person with high self-esteem tends to be more goal-oriented and passionate about life.

I always say, "In order to deserve the best, you have to do your best." It doesn't matter if you're tired, in a bad mood, whether it's fun or to your liking, you must *always* do your best to succeed.

Only from a constant state of focus and discipline can you be a master of sustained passion.

Tip #3: Commit to Being a Student for Life

As the old proverb goes, "Always a student and never a master." I love being

a student. It allows me to take chances and make mistakes without fear. There's nothing that feels better than standing in the lineup of a class and responding, "Yes sir" to my instructor's directions.

Instructors often spend so much time teaching that they forget they were once students. Never forget it – by constantly learning and growing as a martial artist. It's the path to being a better martial arts instructor and it maintains the integrity of your skills. The moment you believe you have nothing more to learn, your martial arts and business will suffer.

Instructors often believe teaching is the same as training. Repeat after me, "Teaching is not the same as training." If you don't train, how can you ask it of your students? Lead by example by making it a priority to schedule and participate in weekly training sessions and monthly workshops with your staff.

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The majority of school owners will agree they're all black belts on the mat. But when it comes to business, finances, advertising, staff training, retention or customer service, they admit they could always do better. Learn to be a black belt in all

aspects of your business through joining organizations such as the Martial Arts

Read something every day. I was watching a children's awards show where the actor, Will Smith, encouraged the audience to read. He said something to the effect, "Everything that you could ever want to know has already been written in a book somewhere."

Don't try to reinvent the wheel, simply learn to drive your car better. You'll learn faster, make fewer mistakes, and save yourself time and money by reading and doing your homework.

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Industry Association (MAIA) and MAIA Elite. Attend great events like the annual Martial Arts SuperShow in Las Vegas.

Tip #4: Create Balance in Your Life

Most Eastern philosophies and martial arts practices believe we're composed of three elements: mind, body and spirit. It's also the belief that all three must be nourished equally to create "life balance."

Nourish your mind by learning every day. Nourish your body by eating healthy, exercising and managing your stress. Nourish your spirit by finding your own spiritual path and walking it on a daily basis.



If you neglect your mind, body, or spirit in any way, you create imbalance. If you're imbalanced, you cannot function optimally. This can lead to bad choices, wrong actions, illness and stress.

Creating balance is often the most overlooked aspect of most people's lives. "I'm too busy." "The kids come first." "I don't have the time." Sound familiar? You're no good to anyone unless you're good to yourself. Remember, *you* are your best investment, so make the commitment to create balance in your life.

Here are a few other suggestions I humbly offer you to create life balance. Spend time alone every day. Share quality time with your family and friends. Take vacations every year. Humbly accept your limitations. Recognize that you can't do it alone. Learn to say "no" sometimes. Learn to let go. Develop a quality team in your business. Define what others could and should be doing in your business and delegate authority.

Tip #5: Be Content but Never Satisfied

It's important to be content where you are today, but always strive to be and do better. Successful people don't focus on what they've done. They focus on what they have *yet to do*.

Brannon Beliso to Speak at the 2010 MASuperShow!

Professor Brannon Beliso will give a presentation at this year's Martial Arts SuperShow, being held at the MGM Grand Hotel & Casino on July 5-7, 2010. It marks the first time he will speak at the industry's foremost business convention.

Known as the "Professor" because he holds an 8th-degree black belt in kenpo karate, Brannon Beliso is a modern Renaissance man; a multi-talented artist. He has owned a successful disc-jockey company, had a number-one hit in the Philippines as a recording artist, written a book of poetry, published numerous articles, appeared on television and radio, had a number-one-selling cardio kickboxing video, and has done motivational speaking for Microsoft, Barclay's Global and other major corporations.

As the owner of One Martial Arts, his school with over 600 active students in San Francisco, CA, Beliso developed a strategy he calls "8 Keys to Being a Better Martial Arts Instructor and School Owner," the topic of the accompanying article. He'll share his strategy in-depth with attendees of the MASuperShow.

As he points out in the article, Professor Beliso believes the best investment martial arts school owners and instructors can make is in themselves. He challenges them to focus on the passion that led to their career choice, and offers practical solutions to inspire and re-energize them to do their best.





Live in the present, not the past. That's why the present is called the "present," because it's truly a gift. Teach every class like it's the first, the last and the only class you will ever teach. Be fully present with every person you interact with on a daily basis.

Do take the knowledge of what you have learned from past experiences to help you live a better today. Focus on being the best martial arts instructor, school owner and person possible. What matters most is what you contribute to society, to your family and to yourself today.

Tip #6: Recognize the Importance of Having Goals

Having goals helps build self-esteem. Remember being a white belt and having the goal of one day earning a black belt? How proud did you feel when you finally achieved that?

To achieve your goals, you must be able to visualize them. Accomplish this by writing them down. Seeing your goals on paper can be very powerful and facilitates a call to action. Start by dividing them into three lists: "A", "B" and "C".

The "A" list is composed of daily activities such as teaching quality classes, training, eating healthy, picking your kids up from school and getting enough sleep.

The "B" list comprises tasks that must be accomplished in four to six weeks and require planning and preparation, such as a monthly belt-testing, a demonstration at a local mall, or making a dinner reservation to celebrate your anniversary.

The "C" list is your "wish list," filled with all the things you dream about, such as a vacation around the world, buying a new home or going skydiving. This is my favorite list because it allows you to dream big, where everything is possible and the sky's the limit.

To be successful with your lists, you must follow through by taking action. Talk is cheap. Walk your talk. Ever find yourself saying, "One day I'll do it," or, "I should of have done that"? Own everything you do by taking responsibility for all your actions and choices.

Review your lists on a weekly basis. Whatever goals you didn't achieve this week should get transferred to next week's list. Do this until all your goals are achieved. Then set about making new lists and establishing new goals.

Tip #7: Properly Manage Your Time, Money and Wealth Goals

Managing your time effectively and efficiently is vital to your success. The

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downfall of many martial arts school owners is poor time management.

Does this scenario sound familiar? An old student stops in unannounced, you stop what you're doing and end up in a lengthy conversation about the good old days? Nostalgic as it seems, it's bad time management. Remember those aforementioned goal lists? Stick to



them verbatim. They are the key to good time management.

Proper money management is the fuel that drives your martial arts school. Create a budget for your business and don't deter from it. Pay yourself a livable wage and reinvest as much of your profits that's possible back into your business. Remember, "It takes money to make money."

Be mindful that, at some point, you'll need to show profits if you ever want to secure a loan to grow your business. It's always better to borrow someone else's money than to use your own personal resources.

Wealth goals are the path to financial freedom. You have the potential to determine your level of wealth because you own your own business. It all depends upon how hard you're willing to work to achieve it.

I follow the author of *Rich Dad, Poor Dad*, Robert T. Kiyosaki's model for abundant wealth. He says, "The three goals to financial freedom are to own your own business, have a strong investment portfolio for your retirement, and invest in real estate."

Having wealth goals and achieving financial freedom allows you the vehicle to create the kind of life you've always dreamt about.

Tip #8: Surround Yourself with Quality People

Make it a priority to seek out and develop quality relationships. From your employees to your mentors and friends, spend your time with quality people.

Define what that means to you. Include people who are goal-oriented, compassionate, unselfish, confident, community-minded, spiritually grounded, and devoted to their family. They should exemplify all the qualities you admire in a person and aspire to be. They should inspire you to greatness. They should offer you constructive criticism that helps you recognize your unlimited potential.



They should be one of your greatest reasons to love and do what you do.

Summary

The martial arts industry is one of the greatest in the world. To be able to teach martial arts and own your own business is an honor and a privilege. Helping people being their best is one of the most rewarding careers you could possibly choose.

You are your greatest investment, so invest in yourself constantly. Live every day with a positive attitude. Sustain your passion through focus and discipline. Commit to being a student for life. Create "life balance" by nourishing your mind, body, and spirit equally. Be content but strive to *do* and be better.

Manage your time optimally by creating lists and following through by taking action. Be goal-oriented, budget your money and have wealth goals. Surround yourself with quality people

that you love and respect. And be grateful each and every day you're blessed to be a martial arts instructor and school owner.

To read many more insider tips about becoming a better instructor and successful school owner, visit the Martial Arts Industry Association's website at www.masuccess.com. Through this newly-enhanced website, members can access a massive amount of useful information on just about any topic from A to Z.

Professor Brannon Beliso is the owner and head instructor of One Martial Arts in San Francisco, California. Since opening its doors in 2000, One Martial Arts has grown from a single owner/operator to five full-time employees and 550 active students. In 2008, Beliso's school grossed over \$1 million. He can be reached at brannonb@pacbell.net

