

UNITING THE WORLD THROUGH **MARTIAL ARTS**

TWD *TaeKwonDo* **TIMES**

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**KICKIN' IT
WITH KICKPICS'
STACE SANCHEZ**

**martial
inheritance
MASTER ERIC
KOVALESKI**

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WORLD

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**THE TRUE STORY OF
HAPKIDO'S FOUNDER**





• Master Terry Wisniewski is a 7th degree Black Belt in ITF Taekwon-Do, founder of Tien Lung Taekwon-Do. He is a full time professional Taekwon-Do instructor with three schools. As a 9-time coach for Team Canada he has trained World Champions in Patterns, Self Defense & Power Breaking.

by Master Terry Wisniewski

During my martial art career I have been fortunate to encounter some amazing instructors and learn some incredible things. Sometimes it's the seemingly unrelated courses and information that provide insights into areas you thought you understood. That's exactly what happened to me while I was studying the effects the sympathetic nervous system (SNS) has on my athletes and how to use this information to improve their ability to compete.

The SNS, which operates through a series of interconnected neurons primarily in the spinal column, activates what is commonly referred to as "fight, flight or freeze" response. The SNS triggers the release of adrenaline for one or more of the four following reasons. 1. Fear of Fear. 2. Fear of Injury. 3. Fear of Death. 4. Fear of Failure. When the SNS is activated the person EITHER becomes debilitated (freeze), becoming physically and mentally inefficient and uncoordinated, OR jacked: the dump of noradrenaline hormones heightens performance and strength allowing him or her to run away faster (flight), or effectively defend themselves (fight).

Bungee jumping, rock climbing, paintball, and ... martial arts all can cause this hormone dump/adrenaline rush. Through repeated and structured exposure to SNS activations, athletes and warriors can learn to use it to their advantage and, in fact, must if they want to succeed.

Sparring used to create all the fears that cause an SNS activation. But now we use headgear with face shields, and protection for chest, hand, foot, shin, forearms, instep, and thighs. Insurance companies impose restrictions, which can include touch or even no contact sparring, and stop point sparring. As a result, today's sparring is more a game of tag or aggressive break dancing, which doesn't generate much fear or cause much of an SNS reaction.

Breaking on the other hand....

Striking a board is scary. If you don't break the board it can hurt... if you do it badly enough you could get injured, and there's always a fear of failing in front of others. All of this can cause a SNS activation. Therefore if used properly, board breaking is much more than simply proof of how powerful your strike is or for developing techniques. It's a way to create a purposeful SNS activation to learn how to control and focus the adrenaline rush to prevail in competition or on the street.

With the use of modern technology and materials, breaking can provide a safe and structured opportunity for instructors to teach students to face and

deal with their fears. By using rebreakable (plastic) boards, instructors can choose an appropriate, safe level of difficulty for students of any age, size and ability. Using specially designed board holders reduces the risk to those holding the boards to virtually nothing.

Once students have mastered a break and become comfortable it's no longer scary and they stop experiencing SNS activation. What do we do now? Not a problem! Escalate!

To keep stimulating the SNS once the student becomes comfortable with the board or technique, the instructor can challenge them to:

- A) Break a more difficult board.
- B) Break multiple boards stacked together (it can be several easy boards plus the usual board).
- C) Use a different technique.
- D) Add a twist on the technique...jumping, spinning, blindfolded or a combination of the three.
- E) Invite their parents or the rest of the class to come and watch.

Adrenaline junkies and sugar high kids naturally love the excitement of breaking. Others need to be challenged to reach their potential.

Keep it challenging, keep it fun, and keep breaking! **TKD**

