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STAY THE COURSE – TAMARA MCCLURE

Posted by andree | Oct 9, 2019 | Blog, Conditioning,
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This is probably not the best day for me to write about karate as it was a really bad class for me.

But, Andree asked me to write about my experiences, good and bad, so here I am. I guess in life we are forced to take the bad with the good, and karate is a part of my life; I guess sort of

like wedding vows, for better or worse. I suppose it's also like a marriage in that it takes a huge commitment; one that perhaps you don't want to stick to all the time. Especially the rough times when class calls for you to do something you don't want to do or are not comfortable with or "good at".

That's where I am today. Class, with Mr. White no less, called for something I'm definitely not "good at," not comfortable with, and something that in my eyes makes me feel like an idiot, and probably makes me look like an idiot—at least that's what my head tells me (ego)—sparring. The leg of our art that Mr. White calls freestyle. I hate sparring (freestyle). I'm uncomfortable at best. I have not been able to control my emotions all day after class. He preached all class that he understood some people in the class weren't comfortable fighting (me) as I'm pretty sure everyone else in class is totally fine with it, but we must fight through it. I failed miserably...just as I do every Saturday morning sparring class that I attend with my husband teaching. However, I did not die during this class nor after. I lived to cry and feel terrible. But I also lived to hear Mr. White say, "Good job" when I finally learned to go to the front side of the person roundhouse kicking me; step to the front and then go back in for a punch—thank you, Jen, for letting me in on that.

The ego is a funny thing, at least for me, because when you least expect it, it shows up. I never ever thought my ego was a problem until karate. It always seemed to envelop me when I thought I didn't need it. It made me think I was always good at everything—grades, acting—things that came easy to me...yet I seemed to always quit when things didn't come easy. And it came with an excuse. I can't remember the exact words, but always something along the lines of..."Who cares, you don't need this anyway." Or, just do something you're better equipped for—I'm a really good trainer, good at lifting

weights, I can do aerobics with the best of them, let's not get started on correcting grammar. 😊
Yet, I'm not a natural athlete, as has been on display for the past six years, and I don't have beautiful long legs for kicking (thanks genetics).

But here is this, I'm not quitting. I don't care how long it takes to get my black belt because that's not what really matters. (This has been on repeat in my brain all day.) What really matters, to me anyway, is me not quitting. There are three parts to martial arts according to Mr. White: forms, techniques, and freestyle. I can do the forms and techniques, freestyle (sparring), is going to take a little time for me to get comfortable. Do I think I can take someone who does harm to my cats...absofreakinglutely! In a heartbeat, it's not even a question! Yet, when it comes to sparring people in my gym, those not harming my cats...I'm a work in progress—as are we all, I suppose.

The point of this diatribe, I presume, and I hope to heck it helps someone out there. We all have our strengths and weaknesses. We all have our reasons for starting karate and staying in it—I have wanted to quit so many times, probably before each belt. But, I haven't. I've stayed the course and if I, who didn't think I had an ego but really do, can stay in it, so can you. Every time I think I've conquered a milestone a mountain shows up. I'm not quitting so I guess that means we have to stay the course.

Come with me, Kenpo Women, stay the course. We've got this!

Tamara McClure

3rd Degree Brown



Tamara and Andree 2018

Editors Note: Tamara is my student and has been since she was a white belt. I have had the pleasure of working with her for 6 years now and am extremely proud of her. She's like me in so many ways, her husband is Kenpo Hall of Fame honoree Jim McClure and being related to someone who's so well known in the Kenpo world puts an additional strain on an already stressful climb up the ladder. There's a higher level of expectation that we put on ourselves, to prove that we are worthy, to prove that we can do it and to also not let down those we love and most importantly not let down ourselves. She's a true fighter and a strong Kenpo Woman that I'm proud to be associated with and call my friend. Thank you for writing Tamara, can't wait to see more! Andree

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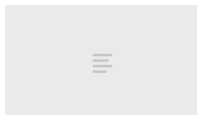
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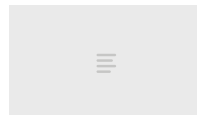
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Daniel A. Amaro, Sr. on October 9, 2019 at 5:33 pm

Tamera! Wow! Part of an amazing lineage of trailblazers.

REPLY



Vishal Shukla on October 10, 2019 at 11:08 am

Tamara,

This is an extremely well written post. Not only is it articulate, it is honest and open. Thank you for sharing your experiences and inspiring others who are going through the same thing. I know how difficult sparring can be for you. I see it in your eyes every Saturday, but I also see you every Saturday. You continue to come in and push yourself past your fears and doubts. You have made tremendous progress over the last year or 2. It's obvious to all who watch you, I think you are the only one who doubts it. Just keep suiting up and showing up and good things will continue to happen. Stay the course and know that I will be there to work with you every Saturday as long as you want. That's what your friends and classmates are for.

Respectfully yours,

Vishal

REPLY



Tamara McClure on October 10, 2019 at 3:49 pm

Thank you so much, sir! I am always so thankful for your help on Saturdays, it makes the class much more bearable.

Thank you also for your support and kind words.

With gratitude,

Tamara

REPLY

REPLY

**Anne Moskoviz** on October 10, 2019 at 1:51 pm

Hi Tamara.

Thanks for sharing your sparring 'shyness'. I think so many of us women in Kenpo want to be Wonder Women like the role models we all see in our Art. That said, and, as you so eloquently pointed out, we AREN'T all Wonder Women. We are Kenpoists because we love our Art and we WANT to have this Journey. But.

Like you, my instructor appeared exactly when I needed him. And like your instructors, mine has been supportive but firm. I also had my doubts about freestyle sparring, but I tried to improve as much as I could within my skill set, to the point where I no longer get bonked on the head by the larger persons at our studio. I'll never be a fighter like Julie Kedzi or Gina Carrano, but I can kick butt well enough.

As martial artists, it's the size and force of our heart, not our punch.

REPLY

**Tamara McClure** on October 10, 2019 at 3:47 pm

Thank you for this. 😊

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