

ADVANCED FIGHTING THEORY

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AWARENESS: Of both yourself and your opponent. One of the greatest strengths of the superb fighter. Cultivate your awareness of yourself, your opponent, and your environment.

Balance: Where is your weight? How much do you have on each foot? Is your center past your front foot? Are you falling forward? Are your shoulders in front of your hips? If you stopped your motion at any point in time and looked at it as a snapshot, would you still be in balance? Is your weight moving smoothly (horizontally), or are you “bouncing” with your steps, launching your center in a trajectory?

Location: Where are you in space? Where are you in relation to your opponent, and to the environment (boundary ropes, terrain, spectators, etc.)? What is your range? Where is your Kill Zone? Where is your opponent’s Kill Zone? Who has the greater range? Do you need to fight an inside game? Can you fight a range game?

Position: Where are your tools? Where are your sticks/shield? What lines are they guarding? What lines are open? Which direction are they moving towards (momentum)? What lines are opening? What lines are closing? Where are your opponent’s tools? What lines are they covering? What is their momentum? Where are they going?

Speed: What is your speed in relation to your opponent’s? Your perception time + reaction time? Can you out-Speed them with a snap? Do you need to counter-attack? Do you need to set up combos to open a line?

Timing: Are you being beaten by timing? Are you throwing your shots into an opening line, or a closing line? Are you throwing your shots when your opponent is stepping into balance, or out of balance? Are you able to break rhythm? Hit on the half-beat? Are you able to use feints to open lines?

Emotion: What are you feeling during the fight? What do you fear? What makes you feel confident? How are you being intimidated? How are you intimidating your opponent? How are these emotions affecting your performance? What can be done about them?

QUESTION YOUR FIGHTING!

Don't ask "WHY?!" Instead, ask what, where, when, how questions.

Thought into action, action into thought = TRANSLATION.

Understand the language of thought and motion.

THOUGHT + Experience + Outside Info = IDEA → PLAN → CHANGES in Action
(through changes in balance, location, position, speed, timing, emotion: **BLPSTE**)

SAMPLING – The process of sensing action and measuring it against the Idea of how it is supposed to be working. Sampling costs Attention: Thought to Action, Action to Thought.

ATTENTION - It is a finite resource. Say you have \$10 worth of attention; if you spend all of your attention (\$10 worth) on a particular aspect of fighting, you have no attention left over - at that particular time - to spend on anything else. It is possible to divide one's attention. For example, to spend \$2 on footwork, \$3 on balance, \$2 on a technique, \$1 on location, etc.

If you can't remember what you did during some part of the fight, then you were spending too much attention on action, and not enough on thought.

When you notice something about fighting, it becomes a Thought about fighting. Combining the Thought about fighting with what you know about fighting (Experience + Understanding), the Thought becomes an Idea. The third step is putting the Idea into Action: this creates a Plan, and is Translation – turning a thought into Action. This requires the decision and commitment to Act on the Plan.

PLAN – the most important part. Your plan allows you to “see” to the next moment. Your senses don't “see” to the next moment; they merely register what is happening at that time. Without a plan, most of the info received from your senses is wasted.

Problems with Plans:

1. Missing parts.
2. No plan: “Hit them first” – Not Plan; merely Idea!
3. Multiple plans – 2 plans operating at once work against each other.

Most fighters never take their thoughts past the Idea stage to make a Plan, and then put that Plan into Action!

CONCEPTS:

1. Fighting can be divided into Thoughts and Action.
2. How you fight is determined by your Ideas.
3. As a fighter, you translate your Ideas into different Actions of fighting.
4. If your Idea of how to do something doesn't match the reality of the fight, you do it wrong; if the Idea is right, there's a good chance you'll do it right.
5. An Idea with a missing part will produce poor results on the Field.
6. You Translate the things that happen to you in the fight (Action) into Thoughts about fighting.
7. Take those thoughts and examine them; decide to change something, and then turn your new idea into a plan to do something different in the next fight.
8. Making new plans during the fight can be dangerous because they haven't been thought out.
9. Reviewing your fighting can be difficult. If your Attention was being spent on what you were doing (your Action), you probably weren't paying much attention to the plan or idea. If you were thinking about what you "should" be doing (your Plan), you probably didn't have much attention on the action or how well the plan worked.
10. A fighter is limited by how well they can translate their action on the field into thought, and then turn their thought back into action.
11. You fight based on your Idea of how to fight, and each fighter has a different Idea of how to do each thing.

QUESTIONS AND DRILLS:

1. Choose a fight you remember well.
2. Play back you own “mental movie” of it.
3. Try to recall the thoughts you had about it.
4. What are the thoughts you have while “fighting” it? (Write them down.)
5. What actions did you experience in it?

If you have trouble recalling those thoughts:

1. Go back over the things you looked at (paid attention to) during the fight.
2. What did they mean to you? For example, if you saw a particular opening (line of attack) such as a shield held too low exposing the temple:
 - a. What does it mean if your balance is to one side or the other of it?
 - b. If the position of your stick is on the same side or offside?
 - c. Moving towards or away?
 - d. Does it mean you can still take that line of attack?
 - e. Does it mean you have to change lines?
 - f. Does it mean you need to increase your speed to get there?
 - g. Or change your timing?

These are all THOUGHTS about fighting.

1. Do you have thoughts like these?
2. Do you think of things like this while fighting?
3. Do you think of things like this after fighting?
4. Does this whole process of thinking things through seem useless?
5. Could you handle it easier by just fighting?
6. Can your fighting improve?
 - a. By spending more time on thought?
 - b. By spending more time on fighting?

MORE CONCEPTS:

1. You experience Action through your Senses. All of the forces and sensations of fighting – both good and bad – are a part of your fighting.
2. Feelings become associated with different kinds of action while fighting.
3. Sampling is the process of sensing action and measuring it against the idea of how it is supposed to be going. Your concept of the fight (where to be located, what your timing is, which line to attack, etc.) is contained in your thoughts, ideas, and plans about fighting. Sampling is how you judge your progress.
4. The process of sampling costs Attention. You spend attention on action, to see how things are going. You then switch your attention to the idea you have of how it should be done. You make a decision based on those two things. If you decide that things aren't going as they should, you can change that aspect of your fighting.
5. Having certain Feelings can slow or stop your improvement. Negative feelings can prevent you from investigating and handling a fighting problem.
6. The laws of physics and the language of science do not look at fighting the same way a fighter does; they do not include the emotional component.
7. Fighters must decide what is important, and then spend their attention on their thoughts or on action, depending on what is happening and where they are on the field. Having a Plan really means that the fighter has decided on what is important, and has planned where to spend their attention.

QUESTIONS AND DRILLS:

1. What is the worst thing that ever happened to you in a fight?
2. What is the best thing?
3. List the things that make you feel bad when fighting.
4. List the things that make you feel good.
5. What are the things about fighting that have strong feelings connected to them?
6. Are you “blind” in those areas that have strong feelings connected to them?
7. How well do you judge BLPSTE?
8. Do you ever become “lost” during a fight?
9. What techniques do you do worst?
10. What techniques do you do best?
11. List the times during the fight where you are tense (particular ranges: inside game, range game, etc.; closing; offense; defense; counters; combos – the list goes on...).
 - a. Where is your attention being spent at those times?
 - b. Is it being spent on Thoughts or Action?
 - c. Is what you are spending it on important?
 - d. Where should you be spending it?
 - e. How is your Control (both physically and emotionally) of yourself - and therefore the fight - at those times?
12. Pick a time during the fight that you handle well.
 - a. Do you have a Plan?
 - b. Does your plan include where you should spend your attention?
13. Talk with someone about a fighter you have both fought.
 - a. Find out how they spend their attention during the fight.
 - b. Are the things they think about the same as yours?
 - c. Are they different?
14. Think about a fight where you know you are spending your attention on the wrong place.
 - a. Make a plan to spend your attention carefully.
 - b. What is different about this new plan?
 - c. Decide whether you can do it or not.

FIGHT CHECKLIST:

1. Do you have a plan for this fight? (Yes or No?)
2. What is it? (Think it through.)
3. Is it truly a Plan, or is it a Thought, or an Idea?
 - a. A plan takes the whole fight into consideration.
 - b. A thought is something you noticed.
 - c. An idea is an incomplete plan; something you think you can or can't do.
4. If it is a plan, what is the result? (Are you able to fight the fight according to the plan?)
5. Does the plan need refinement or changes to make it work? (Decide whether your plan is complete, and make sure you do not have more than one plan.)
6. If you need corrections in the plan, should you correct the thoughts and ideas, or the action? (Is it what you think or what you do that needs fixing?)
7. What other thoughts and ideas do you have for this fight? (What else do you notice while fighting it?)
8. What part of BLPSTE are you spending your attention on? (What part did you notice?)
9. Do the things you notice in 7 and 8 fit into your plan for this fight? (Do they add to or subtract from your plan?)
10. Break the fight down by where you are sampling the action and where you are sampling the thoughts connected with your plan. (The areas where you are unclear on what is being looked at are the areas or things that are either missing from your plan, part of another plan, or the result of having no plan at all.)
11. Do you have Feelings about some part of the fight that makes it hard to win? (Does something in the fight scare you? Did you ever lose this fight before? Are you psyched out before the fight begins?)
12. What about it is easy and feels good?