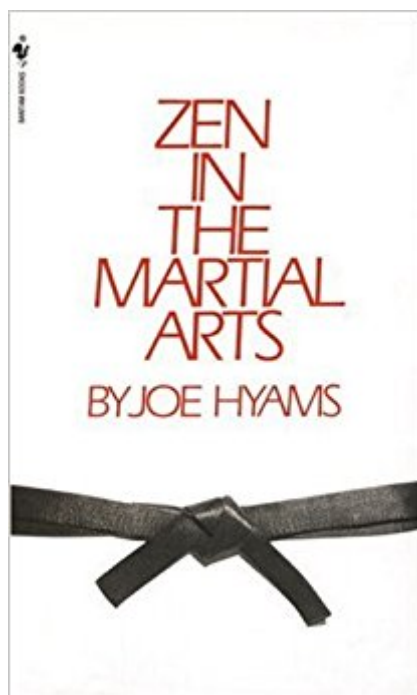


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Zen In The Martial Arts



Synopsis

"A man who has attained mastery of an art reveals it in his every action."--Samurai Maximum. Under the guidance of such celebrated masters as Ed Parker and the immortal Bruce Lee, Joe Hyams vividly recounts his more than 25 years of experience in the martial arts. In his illuminating story, Hyams reveals to you how the daily application of Zen principles not only developed his physical expertise but gave him the mental discipline to control his personal problems-self-image, work pressure, competition. Indeed, mastering the spiritual goals in martial arts can dramatically alter the quality of your life-enriching your relationships with people, as well as helping you make use of all your abilities.

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Customer Reviews

"If one of your goals is to live with maximum zest and minimum stress, read Zen In The Martial Arts. The great beauty of the book is that as Hyams' mind receives enlightenment, so does our."--Playboy.

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A series of approx. 30 short (1-3 page) stories from a veteran, with a recollection of an experience with a martial arts master, and the wisdom from each, such as "focus on the present" and "tension is the enemy of speed". Each chapter can be summed up in a sentence or two, and the chapter titles set each up as well. The author also recounts how many of these skills in outside life. This book is a fast read, and can be finished in an hour or so, but is worth re-reading, and a martial arts school I know mandates it for its junior level black belt candidates.

There are a lot of good thoughts in this book that I've struggled with in the past, and continue to struggle with. Especially good is the passage about a young, aspiring martial arts student asking how long it will take him to become a master/black belt. The instructor tells him 10 years, to which the student naturally responds by asking if he trained 8 hours/day, and the response from the instructor was 20 years. He asked if he trained 24 hours/day, 7 days/week and the answer was 30 years (or forever, I forget). Regardless, the point is that trying 'too hard' reduces your ability to focus on the skills and techniques you are trying to learn. By relaxing, and giving yourself time to learn you become a better student, faster!The same point is made throughout the book, where extra effort is often a downfall. Extra effort in martial arts means being tight, often times, which translates to slowing yourself down and wearing yourself out. This is the same reason lower belts are wiped out by doing kata, whereas the higher belts (usually) seem to be almost unphased, yet they demonstrate more power during the kata.I will be glad to go through the book and paraphrase the lessons, they will be useful for decades to come. It is also great to hear what Bruce Lee's lessons to the author and others were, some of them surprising! One of them being that your limitations can exceed your capabilities, so accept them and basically work around them rather than becoming demotivated.

Oh wow...I wish I'd known about and read this book when I was actively studying martial arts decades ago. This book should be (not required, but) highly recommended reading for anyone interested in practicing martial arts. All the other positive reviews do it justice. Get this book and

read it for better understanding of the entire subject.

ZEN IN THE MARTIAL ARTS is one of the more seminal "Zen in the Art of..."-type titles. Karateka Joe Hyams (FKA Mr. Elke Sommer) is a martial arts generalist who studied under, among many others, Bruce Lee. Within the covers of this slim volume, Hyams' approach to Zen seems a bit haphazard and informal. Although epigrams from various Zen masters pepper the pages, Hyams seems to have only the most limited grasp of structured Zen practice, such as koans and shikantaza. Hyams' exposure to Zen seems to have occurred less in the zendo than in the dojo, a fact which does not detract from the pragmatic lessons he illustrates but does give the reader a foreshortened view of Zen as a way of life. But Hyams does provide a path to understanding Zen as the critical underpinning of the serious study of any martial art. Hyams shows us that Zen imbues the martial arts with a deeper philosophical meaning, so that what would otherwise be just a way to war becomes a just warrior's way.

I am a serious martial artist. I really had no idea what this book was really about. However, I saw that most of the reviews were positive and decided to check it out. I am so glad I did. This book was written quite a while ago. Before UFC became all the rage. For me, this book clearly delineates between the physicality of martial arts (as seen in UFC matches) from the mental and spiritual aspects which few truly master. Many martial artists, including myself, spend very little time focusing on the mental and spiritual aspects of our chosen styles. However, I think this is the area that distinguishes "a really good martial artist" from a "true master." This book has really opened my eyes and is taken me one step further in my journey to master the martial arts. My instructor says "focus on being your best and mastering yourself." I never really understood the "mastering yourself" part until I read this book.

Great book, if you can spare 1.5 hours go read it. It is short, simple, and full of easy thoughts that remind us to slow down. I have purchased this book 3 times in the past 20 or so years. It is a great book. Don't expect too much, accept it as is and you will like it. It is not a Martial Art training manual, it's a life message. Be simple, do the right thing. It is a reminder of what we all already know but forget to do.

This is the finest introduction to the core of Zen philosophy through the context of martial arts. It is clear, insightful, and easily read. Each section is only 2-3 pages long and yet successfully

enlightens the reader and is extremely thought provoking. The book is also entertaining, mentioning Bruce Lee and Ed Parker among the martial arts luminaries that apparently the author personally knew and trained under.

A great read, insights from masters, for becoming disciplined in life , not just the martial arts.

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