

## ***KAIZEN: The Power to Change***

A few weeks ago, my wife Chris and I were in Salt Lake City attending a convention for our Monavie business. We heard many distributors speak on how they became successful in the business. One in particular really got our attention.

This distributor, one of the most successful in the company, told us of an ancient Japanese philosophy that he was using everyday to improve not only his business, but his relationships, his health and his entire life. The philosophy he said, was called “***Kaizen***.” He went on to describe how this way old way of thinking was being employed in modern times, by regular people like us, to improve every facet of our lives – to achieve unbounded success – and it was working!

I found the idea so powerful that I couldn’t stop thinking about it. When I got back to Florida, I decided to find out as much as I could about this ancient philosophy and figure out how I could use it – in business, family, marital arts and everywhere.

I already knew and used the Law of Attraction – what you think about and feel about is what you bring about in your life. I wondered how ***Kaizen*** fit into that. So I started doing some research on the internet and talking to other Senseis about the philosophy. We discovered that this idea was truly powerful. It was more than just actions, it was a state of being – a supreme level of consciousness, alertness and preparedness.

Here is what we learned:

***Kaizen*** translates as follows:

**改 (kai) – change      善 (zen) – for the good**

The Japanese have been employing ***Kaizen*** in life and business for centuries. A modern example of the success of ***Kaizen*** is Toyota. Every employee is responsible for creating a workspace and a process that improves productivity and quality. To that end, they are continually analyzing how they work and implementing small but significant changes that enable them to be more efficient, more effective and more successful in their jobs and as a whole company.

Few can argue that Toyota produces some of the most reliable, attractive and cost-effective cars in the industry. Toyota cars not only last longer than most others, but retain their resale value because of their reputation for quality. Much of Toyota’s success is due to the fact that everyday, their employees ask themselves one important question:

***How can I do my job even better today?***

If you and I put ***Kaizen*** to work in our lives, we will begin to understand why we may not

yet have achieved all that we want. If we examine every aspect of our lives and implement thoughtful changes, we can begin living to our fullest potential.

### **Gain Enlightenment – Be a Buddha in Your Life & the Lives of Others**

Becoming fully awake to the possibilities of life is the aim of *Kaizen*. Throughout our human history, enlightened people have seen potential all around them. By becoming fully conscious of this potential, they made their lives and ours a thousand percent better. For example, Benjamin Franklin saw the potential in lightening and electricity, and Thomas Edison furthered that potential by harnessing this power and bringing controllable light into our lives.

*Kaizen is an every moment of every day habit.*

Clearly, it takes a lot of energy at first to contemplate everything before us. But I firmly believe that once it truly becomes second nature, we won't even realize we're doing it and the changes we experience will be remarkable.

### **CASE STUDY: CREAM OF POTENTIAL SOUP**

**Once there was an apprentice cook who worked under an accomplished head chef. The cook worked hard in the kitchen and was eager to learn. The head chef recognized this and put her in charge of making the daily soup.**

**On her first day making the soup, the head chef approached her. After observing her preparations for a moment, he put his hand on her shoulder and said, "Jane, you are a hard worker and that's good, but it is important that we all work smarter...not harder."**

**Jane became nervous. Wasn't working hard the best way? Was she doing something wrong? She looked at her workstation, but didn't immediately see any problems. Still, the head chef had obviously noticed something amiss.**

**The next day, Jane decided to be ultra-organized. She gathered all of her ingredients and set them up in the order in which she would need to add them to the soup. The head chef again put his hand on her shoulder and said, "Jane, the soup yesterday was very good. But remember, work smarter...not harder."**

*(continued...)*

### **We Have the Power of Change Within Us**

Through *Kaizen*, we can harness that power and put it to work.

Remember, that true change takes time, effort, patience and planning. Knowing what we want is the first step. From here we can set about on a daily basis making continual, gradual improvements until we are the best we can be – in our personal, professional, social, and athletic lives.

Adopting the spirit of *Kaizen* unleashes our limitless human potentials:

- Limitless potential for change
- Limitless potential for success

- Limitless potential to create beauty
- Limitless potential to achieve any goal we wish

### Growing Young

When we were children, we believed that anything was possible. Someone in your life, perhaps a parent or teacher, may have told you that, “you can be anything. You can even be president of the United States if you want!” And we believed it, because as a child we were wholly invested in the possibilities of the universe.

#### *Reinvest in the power of possibility.*

As we grow older, life may present us with disappointments or difficulties. We often let these setbacks disappoint and even defeat us. *Kaizen* teaches us to strip away these feelings; get rid of the *muda* in our lives – the clutter, the useless thoughts, and the wastefulness – anything and everything that does not add value to our lives. These things serve no purpose except to hold us back from achieving our full potentials.

### Think: Am I Doing All I Can...How Can I Do More, Do Better?

It is important to accept that we are in control of our own lives. Outside forces and people do not hold us back – we hold ourselves back with what we think about and how we act.

Are you thinking, “but I’m already doing everything as well as I can and I still can’t achieve my goals.” If you were truly doing everything you possibly could, you would achieve all of your goals, easily. We must be honest with ourselves.

Or, are you thinking, “I’m doing okay, I’m happy enough, even if I don’t have everything I want.” Complacency is the antithesis of *Kaizen*. We only have a limited amount of time here on earth. Shouldn’t we have the best life possible?

### CASE STUDY *(continued...)*

**Now what? Jane thought, “He said my soup was very good, but maybe it was not good enough.” The next day, she got to work early to study the day’s recipe and arrange her workstation with everything needed within reach. When the head chef came over following service, he said, “Jane, you are really improving, but remember that its better to work smarter...not harder.”**

**Jane became frustrated. What more could she possibly do? That night, and each night after, she went home and resolved to improve even more. Over a little time, she improved her preparation time so much that she was able to help the other stations, and in doing so, learned new skills. Soon she was promoted from soup chef to sous chef, helping the head chef manage the entire kitchen.**

**If Jane had not gotten over the fact that she believed she was doing absolutely everything that she could, she may never have realized her full potential. If the head chef hadn’t been there to inspire excellence in her, she may still be making good, but not excellent soup.**

## **Small, But Significant**

It may seem at first that improving in small increments takes too much time. We want change and we want it now. But time will pass whether we decide to improve our life or not. If we do nothing, we will have nothing.

### **Start New Habits Right Now: Break It Down**

List your goals. Break them down into steps, start small but keep a steady pace.

If you want to advance from yellow belt to black, start by being the best yellow belt possible. That means know all of your moves and executing them perfectly. Start with one move. Practice until that one move is flawless, then go to the next one, and so on.

If you follow this process all the way through, you won't just eventually earn your black belt – you will be one of the best black belts. You can be an example for others, inspiring them towards excellence.

### **Your Life Deserves Improvement**

We are given the tools, the talents, and the abilities to achieve excellence in our lives. Not doing so, is showing disrespect to ourselves and those around us. We were put here on this earth to live the best life possible and to help others do the same.

Most of us have not even scratched the surface of our potential. ***Kaizen*** is the idea we've been waiting for – the “how” we need to start achieving our goals.

***You already have the potential inside you...why not be the best “you” you can be?***