

THE DRAGONFIRE



Portsmouth, April 2026

Ego vs. Attitude

Let's face it. You need a bit of both, to be a successful martial artist. Some would say they're the same thing. But there *is* a difference. And the difference could someday save your life.

The common definition of ego involves being self-centered, as in an egotist is someone who speaks of him/herself often and magnifies his/her own achievements. Always wants to be the hero of the story.

Attitude, on the other hand, is defined more along the lines of a feeling or disposition with regard to a person or thing. As in, a negative attitude, group attitudes, etc.

Huh?

To simplify. Ego = it's all about me. Attitude = strong positive or negative feelings about yourself, others, or abilities. On the positive, attitude might be equated to confidence. But be careful. Too much positive attitude can easily cross over into ego, and not in a good way.

In the martial arts, too much ego might lead one to over-stretch assessment of ability. That could lead to injuries or other dire consequences. There comes a time when the ego just won't let one stop and rethink. The challenge is out there. All or nothing. And often, the result is a bad outcome for all.

Attitude- confidence, if you will- is when there is no need to be in someone else's face. There is inner knowledge that, if needed, the skills are there to keep one safe. But there is no desire to create the situation to prove it. The "I can" attitude projects to others as "I will if I have to". That's often enough.

Moral of the story? Keep your attitude, but keep it under control. Leave your ego at the door. You don't need it with a positive attitude.

**HOT News
from the Studio**

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**Learn the Double Dagger Form
from the Northern Praying Mantis System**

Led by Grandmaster Steve DeMasco PhD

Founder of Steve DeMasco's Shaolin Studios

Assisted by Senior Master Mark Giordano

\$150 per Person | \$250 per Family (3-4 Members)

Sign Up Before May 1, 2026 and get 10% OFF

◆
SATURDAY, JUNE 6, 2026
◆

— **From 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM** —
◆

Clinic Location Concord, NH Studio

◆ **124 Hall St., Suite E** ◆

Concord, NH 03301

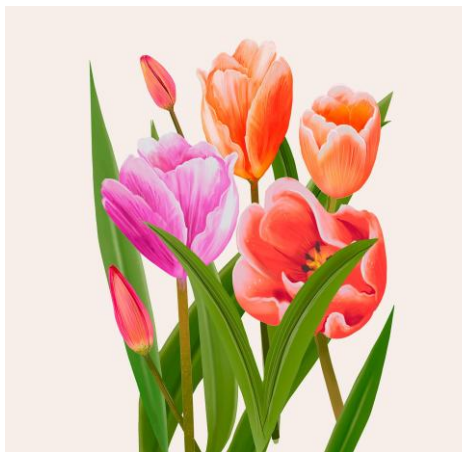
— **Any Questions?** —

Keene@sdsofnh.com

Opportunity to Learn a New Weapon!

Want to learn a new weapons form? Then the double-dagger form, taught by Grandmaster DeMasco, is the one to sign up for. Sr. Master Mark will also be available to assist those who are learning the moves. Two great instructors!

All the info is on the poster, here and in the studio. Sign up today to reserve your spot. Please note: If you sign up before May 1st, you'll get a 10% discount!



**Happy Birthday to
Quinn 4/24**

Quick Reminder....

Although winter is coming to an end (finally), we are now entering the famous “mud season”.

PLEASE keep your training shoes clean and dry! Tracking wet/muddy footprints onto the training room floor is not appreciated by anyone—your fellow students or Master Cindy!

Practice, Practice, Practice

There's an old saying regarding practice –

Don't practice until you get it right, Practice until you can't get it wrong.

Although often seen connected to sports, or martial arts in particular, this saying works for everything. Not too terrific at reading or math? Practice. Like to bake, but always seem to mess it up? Practice. Envision yourself as an artist, but feel like nothing comes together the way you want it to? Practice.

The truth is, practice will always help improve whatever skill you are working towards obtaining. The hard part is to practice on a regular basis, and to practice like you mean it. In other words, if you're only going through the motions, with half your attention focused on the task and the other half thinking about something else you'd rather be doing, you're not going to reap the benefits of the practice session.

If that's your approach, then ultimately, you're only cheating yourself. If you're going to practice, then practice. Like you mean it. Like it's real. It is only in this way that you may see the above saying come true—You've practiced so much you simply can't get it wrong!

CALENDAR UPDATES:

April 11th Portsmouth Belt Advancement

May 9th BLACK BELT / BLACK SASH TEST w/ G.M. DeMasco
Keene Studio PORTSMOUTH STUDIO CLOSED THIS DAY!

May 22-25th STUDIO CLOSED – Friday – Monday Memorial Day weekend

JUNE 1ST SUMMER UNIFORMS!

June 6th Double Dagger Form – Concord Studio 1:00 – 3:00pm

June 13th Portsmouth Belt Advancement

July 4th STUDIO CLOSED Independence Day

August 8th Portsmouth Belt Advancement

Do you just Hear, or do you Listen?

Huh? What's the difference?

Hearing generally infers receipt of a message, of noise, of...well, whatever. Listening, however, tends to infer understanding. There's a huge difference. Let's take something that will probably make you go "huh?" again. Bird calls.

We hear them. But do we understand them? Is the bird calling to make noise, to signal other birds, to express joy in living, to warn of danger? Who knows? Other birds do. Presumably.

Now humans. Specifically human to human. You hear a voice. Perhaps an instruction. Perhaps a sharing of emotion. You hear it. Do you understand it? Enough to act (or not act) on it? That's the question.

All of us could probably use help in our listening skills. Why not make it a goal over the next few months to actively listen. Rephrase what you hear back to the speaker to confirm understanding. Determine the true message. Then respond appropriately. This takes practice (*practice, practice, practice!*). Can you do it?



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(Steve DeMasco's Shaolin Studios of Portsmouth NH)

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