# THE DRAGONFIRE



**Portsmouth, NOVEMBER 2026**

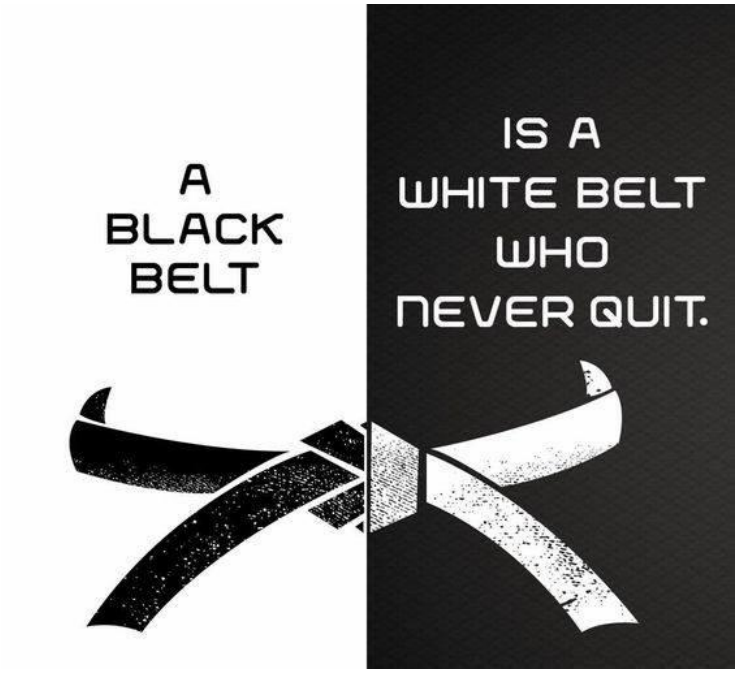
## WELCOME, BLACK BELT CANDIDATES!

Portsmouth Studio is hosting the Black Belt/Black Sash Test on November 14, 2026! It's our first time. And, what an honor to be doing so.

Students will start arriving around 11:30am to mentally and physically prepare for this challenging event that is scheduled to begin at 12-Noon.

Just a reminder, there are no spectators allowed during the actual test. Family and loved ones will be notified when to return to the studio for the award ceremony.

Let's keep all the candidates in our thoughts and wish them success!




### HOT News from the Studio

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Steve DeMasco's shaolin studios

***November Birthdays….***

| | |
|---|---|
| ***Miles T.*** | ***Nov. 2nd*** |
| ***Rowan W.*** | ***Nov. 2nd*** |
| ***Jasper P.*** | ***Nov. 9th*** |
| ***Cayden D.*** | ***Nov. 10th*** |
| ***Alfie D.*** | ***Nov. 17th*** |



**Calendar Updates:**

**November 14** **Black Belt/Black Sash Test w/ GM DeMasco**
Portsmouth Studio, 12-Noon

**November 26-29** **STUDIO CLOSED** (Thanksgiving Wknd)

**December 12** **Portsmouth Belt Advancement**

**December 24-27** **STUDIO CLOSED** (Christmas Holiday)

**January 1, 2026** **STUDIO CLOSED** (New Year's Day)

**February 13** **Portsmouth Belt Advancement**

# Martial Arts – Martial or Art?

The easy answer is that it's both. Looking at dictionary definitions, it seems pretty clear:

> *Definition of Martial*: of, relating to, or suited for war or a warrior; relating to an army or to military life.
>
> *Definition of Art*: skill acquired by experience, study, or observation; a branch of learning; an occupation requiring knowledge or skill.

So put the two together and you get a skill acquired by experience, study, or observation relating to, or suited for war or a warrior. Simple. Easy. Case closed.

But is it? Ask ten people what martial arts is, and you'll get ten different answers. Why? Because each person absorbs the lessons and experience differently, depending on what they're looking for. Someone who wants self-defense skills will probably say that's what martial arts is all about. If you can't defend yourself, then what you're studying isn't useful.

Ask someone who is looking for a oneness, or connection, between mind and body, and you'll get a completely different interpretation of what martial arts is, or should be. Ask someone who wants better balance, strength, and flexibility, and they'll explain what they think martial arts is. Then ask someone who focuses on the discipline and code of conduct, and the answer you receive will again be different from the others.

You get the idea. Each person who studies the martial arts – regardless of the style – is looking for something within their chosen system. If they don't find it, it's likely they'll drift to a different style, or perhaps move away from martial arts completely. Or, maybe they do find what they're looking for, but then wish to expand their knowledge by sampling other styles and comparing. Sometimes they continue with both styles, sometimes they choose just one to pursue.

It doesn't really matter. Each mindset is totally legitimate. What matters is whether one finds what they're seeking. If they do, chances are they will devote much of their life to pursuing excellence in their chosen style. And if they do that, ultimately they will accomplish the very definitions noted above.

….and speaking of mindsets…..

# Develop Your Warrior Mindset

Developing a warrior mindset does *not* mean that you are trying to develop an aggressive, fighting mindset. No, on the contrary. A warrior mindset is one that is strong, doesn't flinch, and knows internal peace. In other words, a person with a strong warrior mindset is one that doesn't ***need*** to win, in order to have already won.

Huh?

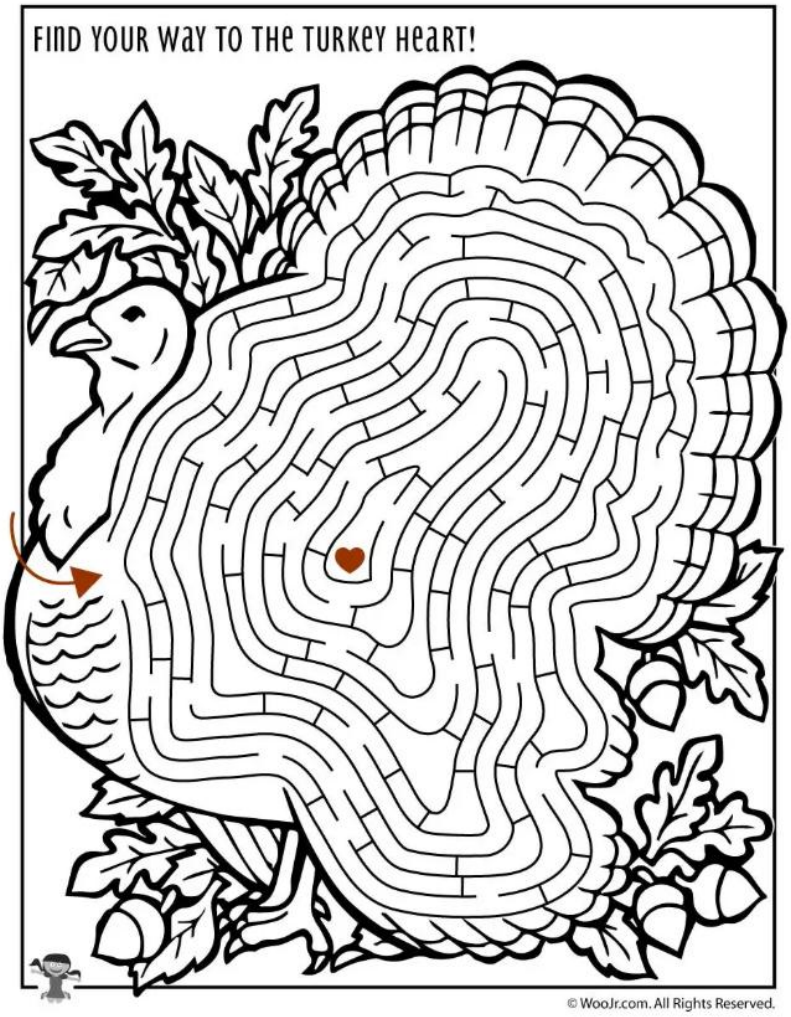
Often times, outcomes of situations are decided within the first few seconds. The person that projects dominance is often the person who is dominant. To use another, perhaps less controversial word, substitute dominance for confidence. The person who projects confidence is often the person who controls any given situation.

Here are some tips to developing that confidence or, if you will, warrior mindset:

1. **Prepare.** Do the work, whatever it is. Sheer talent is not a substitute for practice and more practice….regardless of the subject matter. More importantly, ***trust*** that you are ready. Don't let your mind continually play outrageous scenarios. That creates doubt about preparedness, and defeats all the preparation that may have been done.
2. **Intend to Win.** Most people don't "play to win", they play "not to lose". It isn't the same. Real intent to win isn't prefaced by thoughts of "I hope" or "I want" to win. No, it's an unshakeable certainty that you *will* win.
3. **Be in the Moment.** Once you've prepared and have intent, get out of your own way and let those two go to work for you. Respond to the situation as if you're watching from afar. While counterintuitive, you now must let go of an attachment to winning and release all anxieties about possibly losing. Let your mind go still and be in the moment.

Three simple steps, right? No, not so simple. Training the mind is hard work, but you can do it every day if you look around and see the opportunities that are presented to allow that training. Small things. Big things. Doesn't matter. Any situation can provide an opportunity to train yourself to have a warrior mindset. But, like anything that's worthwhile, it takes time and commitment. Do you have it?

Develop your Warrior Mindset. Be your own warrior!




# Happy Thanksgiving!

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