



TRAFFIC SERIES:

On your way to where you want to go, there are many twists and turns that can lead you in the wrong direction. This series helps you to navigate in a proactive way so you end up at the top!

PART I:

STOP



In an industry marked by GO GO GO, it is important that we STOP sometimes and evaluate what we are doing and why we are doing it. Here are 3 areas where we need to STOP:

1. Being overly harsh on students
2. Trying to offer everything
3. Focusing on what you can't do or don't have

PART I: STOP BEING OVERLY HARSH ON STUDENTS

We all mean well. Years ago, I looked at my lateness policy in a new light. As a father of 4 (all girls) and a small business owner, I found it difficult for my wife and I to be everywhere all the time. We only let our kids do 1 other activity besides martial arts. At the time, we had 2 of them in gymnastics. We told the coaches that we would be running late on a few days because of our work schedule. They informed us that it wasn't a big deal, but that the kids would still have to run 20 laps because that's the rule. My girls hated it, and not because of the laps. It was embarrassing to them that they were singled out because of my work schedule. From there I looked at our policies through the filter of: Do we do this because it is the best thing to drive students forward? or do we do it because we have always done it this way and we think we are making the children more responsible by having them do pushups, or stand with their hand up until we recognize their existence. That is just one area where we saw that we were pushing students away from loving the art instead of embracing them and welcoming them to class with a smile as they rush in late. Another area is when they forget gear. Our old policy was that they had to do 5 push ups for each forgotten piece of gear. That would come out to about 50-60 push ups. Then we realized, if the child forgot the gear, they should do the push ups, but if the parents had the bag in the other parent's car, we should show grace and let them do drills instead of spar. What do you do when a student forgets their belt? Our old policy is that they line up at the end of the class to teach them responsibility. Do they? Sure they do. They don't want to come back to class without their belt again. The problem is, the next time that they can't find their belt, they will complain to mom and dad and not want to come to class. I never want a child to have one more reason not to train. Do you?

ACTION POINTS:

1. Look through your policies and make a list of the ones that you should adjust.
2. Meet with your instructors and staff and let them know about the change and that you want to focus more on creating a positive student experience!

PART 2: STOP TRYING TO OFFER EVERYTHING

Are you exhausted? If not, then skip this section, you have found a good balance in your academy. The rest of you, if you are like me, you want to make everyone happy. You will host events, bring in programs, and anything else you think will make your students love your school more. Is that a bad thing? Not at all. However, if you overdo anything, you will pay the price.

AREA 1: PROGRAMS

Do you offer multiple styles at your school? If so, do any of them take attention away from your CORE PROGRAM? If so, then you may be very close to making some tough choices. We used to have a fitness bootcamp. It was supposed to get new adults on the mat and encourage them to do our adult martial arts class, which was the class following the bootcamp workout. What ended up happening, however, was that my adult students did the bootcamp class and were too tired to then do the adult class. I realized, that, even though I personally loved the bootcamp classes, they had to be cut. We lost a few students at 1st, but overall, we were able to build a much stronger and more focused adult program. We now have about 90 actively training adult students, which is a great number for us.

AREA 2: EVENTS

Chances are, there isn't a bad event on your calendar, but there are so many great events on there, that you get stressed out just looking at your year. You have several choices here. You can always train staff to run events for you. The caution that I will extend you on this one is to make sure that you don't burn out staff on events so much that they don't teach as good of classes. Remember that the main thing, is to keep the main thing, the main thing. The "Main Thing" is great classes. The second thing you can do, is cut events that you offer. You don't have to run yourself ragged doing 10 camps throughout the year and day camps on every day off. You don't have to run events every weekend.

ACTION POINTS:

1st: Look at your programs and ask yourself:

1. What programs are we offering because we are afraid to cut them?
2. What programs are taking focus away from our CORE PROGRAM?
3. What programs can I teach my staff to teach for me?

2nd: Look closely at your calendar and be intentional about building in 3 things:

1. Rest
2. Continuing education
3. Personal workouts

PART 3: STOP FOCUSING ON WHAT YOU CAN'T DO OR DON'T HAVE

I talk to school owners all the time who say things like:

"I can't change my curriculum."

"I can't seem to keep teenagers interested in my program."

"I can't get good help."

"I can't get new students because the economy is so bad."

"I don't have money to hire staff."

"I don't have enough space to grow my school."

"I don't have funds to join an association or consulting company."

"I don't have time for vacations."

We are really good at telling our students that they can do anything with a positive attitude, and yet, we are perfectly ok with handicapping ourselves mentally with negative self talk. If you have 1 student or more, then you have all you need to grow your school into the school that you deserve to have. You would be amazed at the things that your studio could do if you STOP saying that you can't do something. I always say that your vision and mission should be written in pen and everything else you do should be written in pencil. That doesn't mean that you change everything all the time. It does, however, mean that you shouldn't have things about your program that you are unwilling to change. From your forms/katas to your business model nothing should be off the table of innovation!

ACTION POINTS:

1. STOP TELLING YOURSELF THAT YOU CAN'T. Others in your type of school in your type of area are successful and you can be too (If you aren't already)
2. Make a plan/goal to hire 1 part time staff member (or an additional one) in the next 2 weeks. When you make the plan, the funds will come.
3. Feel free to contact me via Facebook or the info below if you have any questions or are interested in getting further insight on how to get your studio where you want it to go!



We would love to help your school get to the next level.

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