



“Patience makes peaceful,
step back can see the whole world.”

– Ving Tsun Idiom



Grandmaster Walter Jakimczuk training with Mark Watson

**A word from
Grandmaster Walter Jakimczuk
on the theme of the 6th Annual
Moy Yat Ving Tsun (MYVT) Sisters Retreat**

Balance in Power

Balance is a condition in which different elements are equal or in the correct proportion; the freedom of movement or thought in any direction. Balance also *compares* the value of one thing with another, compare meaning to evaluate, consider, assess, or judge. There are no extremes, thus there is a sense of

being equal. The idea of balance may be viewed as either a physical or intellectual concept. Both require the ability to change in order to maintain a balanced condition.

Power is the ability to move or travel with great speed or force, as well as the capacity to influence the behaviour of others or the course of events, e.g. the power of speech, the power of ideas, which also may lead to changes in behaviour.

Once our definitions of the concepts are understood, then we can proceed to the discussion of balance in power. Agreement is not necessary for growth, however the ability to express ideas allows for thought. This may or may not lead to change but may strengthen views being discussed.

In Ving Tsun, we begin in a static balanced position, progressing to dynamic movement or mobility. Similarly, intellectual growth requires the ability to go from a static position to mobility of thought as the capacity for understanding increases. The physical representation of balance evolves as we progress in the system and mobility is presented progressively to enhance martial skills.

At the same time, the understanding of various ideas evolves to accommodate the new knowledge. This allows for growth and change to take place physically, intellectually and philosophically. The Mo Duk contributes to the moral and ethical conduct of a person who is studying an art designed to harm another. This idea of balance relates to the theory—which remains constant within the system—of Yin/Yang. This describes the nature of opposite

forces being complementary. Although opposite in their individual qualities and nature, they are interdependent, like male/female. However, there are no absolutes; nothing is ever all Yin or all Yang but a harmonious balance of the two forces.

Chi Sau is a good example of Yin/Yang theory, but upon investigation you come to realize that the entire system is an embodiment of this theory. We come to understand that the only constant thing in life (Ving Tsun) is change, which allows for a constant striving to achieve balance, both physically and intellectually. When theory (Faat Do) becomes a physical reality, culminating in an intellectual and philosophical reality, then and only then it is said to be “the Way”.

***The mind combines with the intent.
The intent combines with the chi.
The chi combines with the body.***

Our physical training is based upon the Faat Do, which eventually leads to change in our understanding, culminating in change in our actions or behaviours.

Allow the nature of Yin/Yang to lead you to understanding the importance of the duality of human nature. This will result in unity and strength, not only for you personally but for your fellow classmates, citizens of your community, country and the world at large. Strive to make this a better world for all. Balance and power, conversation and discussion—dialogue— benefits us all.

- *Grandmaster Walter Jakimczuk*

Balance ~in~ Power Panel Discussion



*Grandmaster Walter Jakimczuk, Sifu Liz Parry, Simo Mia Velez and Dai-Sije Joelle Jeremie
at Ving Tsun Montreal (VTMTL)*

SIMO MAY HOURI-CARREON
Ving Tsun, Montreal (VTMTL)



Simo May Houri-Carreon speaking at the MYVT Sisters Retreat on the theme of Power in Balance

The first time I went to the MYVT Sisters Retreat would have been the 5th annual one held in San Francisco. It was such a wonderful experience: getting to know the other women in the various clubs and the other Simos. I had not had much interaction with women from the other clubs and I felt this was a great experience to get out there and see how the other clubs interacted with each other.

By my second day there, it had become obvious to me that Montreal needed to host one of the retreats. It was suggested by Carrie that we do so, and it felt right after our four-day getaway to commit.

I'm in the industry of event planning, so this was right up my alley. I recruited the three other women I knew who would definitely add their time and knowledge to create something spectacular for the attendees. We got to planning. It didn't take us long to identify each of our strengths and see how we could utilize those strengths in the planning process. Delegating is key! It helped so much with the ease of the planning.

Our theme for the 6th Annual Retreat was about finding our Power within our Balance. It's especially important to us women to do that, as we are the main caregivers to our families and we often take on so much more than we should. We made sure that the training exercises reflected that as well. We also wanted our fellow sisters to be able to get in as much training as possible while they had the opportunity of being surrounded by so many talented and giving women. When often only surrounded by male practitioners to train, this was an absolute gift!

Our special treat this year was the panel discussion. We organized it to take place after the retreat at our home club in Montreal. We opened it up to all women and men and had four very wonderful, very insightful panelists discuss what their experiences have been like in the world of kung fu. We had pre-determined questions. We asked each one a question that we felt was best situated to their experiences and their knowledge base. It was very well received and a wonderful culmination of our beautiful four days of practise, mindfulness and being in the moment in our kung fu element!

To our sisters that will be hosting next year, I wish you a wonderful journey in the planning process. This will truly make your sisterhood stronger.



Simo May Houri-Carreon with attendees of the 6th Annual MYVT Sisters Retreat

SIFU LIZ PARRY

Parry's Plum Blossom Ving Tsun, Toronto



Sifu Liz Parry demonstrating with her student Mais Lee

Question 1: Share with us some of your challenges, if any, that you've encountered as a woman Sifu.

It was a lonely journey not having any kung fu sisters while I was training when I started in 1986. This went on for a long time and it showed when I had some difficult experiences while training.

For example, I competed in the Canadian Wushu-Kung Fu Challenge on October 20, 2001 here in Toronto. There were no women for me to fight in my category and so I had to fight a guy who was of a higher ranking. Despite that, I still won the trophy for Grand Champion and three gold medals.

Question 2: Share with us a memorable moment in your kung fu journey that helped to define you.

My most memorable moment was with my Sifu, Grand Master Sunny Tang, in 2002. It was when he told me to practice my Chum Kiu form for our trip to China. I didn't know at the time that I would be doing a solo performance at the Grand Opening Ceremonies of the Ip Man Tong in Foshan, China. My Sifu had faith in me, which I had not yet realized for myself back then. This relationship and

his faith are what helped me to realize the power behind "eyes beaming with courage".

Question 3: If you can, please give advice to the new and younger generations of women martial artists.

There is still a lot of disparity between men and women in the world today. This is from the get go. Men are given more opportunities in terms of education and choices in life. This was true for me in relation to the opportunities given to my brother. He was sent overseas to attend boarding school and university. I was not offered the same by my mother. Born in a Eurasian family in Malaysia, I wasn't asked what I wanted to be when I grew up. It was just assumed that I'd be married off to someone who was hopefully rich. I still see difficult situations for women continue. For example, I work for Canada Post. There is currently a rotating Postal strike going on, and one of the issues has to do with pay equity. The RSMC's (Rural and Suburban Mail Carriers) are mainly female rural workers. The women are getting paid almost 30% less for doing the same job as their male counterparts. This is a two-tier employee system. The 'Because I'm a Girl' movement to transform girls' lives through education is instrumental. Women should be able to have choices in their careers, education, who they wish to marry and when.



Sifu Liz Parry performing at the Grand Opening Ceremonies of the Ip Man Tong in Foshan, China 2002

SIMO MIA VELEZ

Ving Tsun Sum Fot, San Francisco



Simo Mia Velez speaking at the MYVT Sisters Retreat on the theme of the Foundations of Balance

Question 1: As the co-founder of the MYVT Sisters Retreat, what inspired you to start it?

The sisters retreat came out of the Philadelphia Sisters Monthly Meeting. We found our kung fu was improving, just from meeting every month and sharing our experiences. We were not actually physically training. We found that we were internalizing the kung fu differently. After a year of meetings, we figured there must be other women in our lineage that felt the same way as we did, and we wanted to reach out.

Question 2: Can you share with us one of your memorable moments as a Simo, as well as someone who also teaches?

The most memorable experience I hold as a Simo was when I took on my first student. When my husband became a Sifu, I automatically became a Simo because of our relationship. However, our students' experience in learning kung fu has always been having both a Sifu and Simo teaching them. They were OUR students. A Simo is also a teacher:

a "teacher and mother" when literally translating the two Chinese characters. Although most Simos aren't seen on the training floor, they are your Sifu's closest confidant. Your Simo knows more about you than you think. When your Sifu shows up for training, she is also there. I now have a student who calls me Simo and my husband Sibok because she is learning kung fu from me directly and not my husband.

Question 3: How do you live kung fu when you're not training? How do you apply this to your everyday life? How do you integrate your yoga, meditation and other practises with your kung fu?

I use my kung fu every day. What is central to my life? My priorities. When obstacles affect these priorities, how do I approach the obstacle? Do I go around it? Do I resist it? Yoga and kung fu have become interchangeable for me. Yoga is a method by which I create a relationship with myself and kung fu is a method by which I relate outside myself. Both ultimately lead to the same place. Meditation is the stilling of the mind to achieve one-pointedness which sounds a lot like centerline to me.



Simo Mia Velez playfully enjoying the landscape in Val Morin, Quebec

DAI-SIJE JOELLE JEREMIE
Ving Tsun, Montreal (VTMTL)



*Dai-Sije Joelle Jeremie speaking at the
MYVT Sisters Retreat*

Question 1: What was your biggest breakthrough while training that could be applied to the theme "Power in Balance"?

My biggest breakthrough was the realization that the lessons I'd learned in my Ving Tsun practice and the lessons I'd learned in my study of the Path of Happiness were interchangeable. *"The path of least resistance"* is the best way I can sum it up. What's more, is that once I started to pay attention to this relationship, the Ving Tsun training revealed itself as a physical manifestation of what I'd be going through in real life. Lacking confidence in any area? My hands were sure to show me, sometimes by trying too hard, sometimes by failing to try at all. Something was off-balance in my life? My stance would not hesitate to signal it to me. Surely, these revelations would have presented themselves in time, but my training sped up that learning curve exponentially.

Question 2: You've trained for many years, and you've also been away for many years. What have you noticed in life that is inherent in your training? Do you think the fact that you're a woman has an impact on that?

My Ving Tsun is always with me, whether it's in the way I carry myself or in the way I approach a situation. I have a knowledge that cannot be taken from me. Being away has taught me that it's not about performing, sashes or fulfilling anyone's expectations of me, but about living an authentic life of personal sovereignty. Thanks to my Sifu, Darrel Carreon; his Sifu, Walter Jakimczuk; our ancestors; my brothers and my sisters; and the whole kung fu family, I have learned the invaluable skill of knowing how to protect myself. For someone like me—at 5'2"—that's very important, in more ways than one. I've learned how to really own the space I occupy, that I deserve the space I occupy. The way I carry myself is a reflection of that. How I speak, the words that I choose when I speak and my ability to know when to be quiet, all have been facilitated by my training. It can even be as subtle as the way I look at people. I look them in the eyes and I don't feel the need to look away. That is the confidence that kung fu has helped to cultivate in me.

Question 3: Keeping with our theme of Power in Balance, we have learned to balance our light side with our dark side, our feminine side with our masculine energy and to walk with our shadow aspects. How can this be applied in our kung fu training?

It's a curious thing to be a woman in a male dominated world, such as kung fu. We can all agree that to begin with, it takes a particular kind of woman to want to train in martial arts. Usually you're dealing with pretty badass women. What is interesting is what happens once we start training. As women—and this is generalized of course—we have the tremendous advantage of often not being able to rely on muscle strength to train. Yet, we tend to try anyway. We force our way in, perhaps intimidated by the large figure standing opposite us. So we stiffen up, and we forget our true power.

Power is effortless, while strength is not.

Having women train in a club is a huge advantage to everyone who trains there. They can teach you things you can't understand, simply because you're not a woman. The opposite is also true. What we

must also understand is that we all have both energies, some can be on further ends of the spectrum, but we all have both.

It is not necessarily weak to be soft. It is not necessarily strong to be aggressive. We all have to know where to put the female "soft" energy and where to apply the male "hard" energy. The female

energy is formless; it is instinct, energy, feeling. Male energy is action, reasoning and solidity. Any of these—in the absence of its counterbalance—can only fail, or at its best, lack the efficiency we seek in its desired impact. Knowing when to use which energy and where can bring great freedom in your kung fu, as well as in your life.

6th Annual MYVT Sisters Retreat, Val Morin, Quebec



Training

Each newsletter features two discussions: an account from a particular new student, and an account from a senior student. These write-ups are focused on what that individual is working on with their training. This way, we can appreciate different perspectives rooted in different skill levels and experience.

On “Next Level” Training



Kurt Fairfield training blindfolded Chi Sau on platform with Geno Padovese

When Sifu sent out his letter to the seniors of the club asking us if we were interested in bringing our kung fu to the next level, I was intrigued. What did this mean: next level? What did it mean to Sifu? What did it mean to me, and to my siblings? I most definitely wanted to go to the next level, but wasn't this a certainty. Wouldn't I just keep coming to class and the next level would be there waiting for me?

When I look at our curriculum, I see that it is just a series of steps used to imbibe the art of Ving Tsun. But what happens at the end of all those sashes, when there are no more pages written out for us to follow? This is where Sifu finds himself, where our Sigung (I presume) found himself and where Sijo (I

continue to presume) also found himself. At some point, we all lose the guidance of elders and find ourselves in the unknown.

How better to explore this unknown, then with your fellow family members? While I still have much to learn from the pages of our curriculum, let alone master the things I have already been shown, I was happy to answer Sifu's call to action. I felt a sense of satisfaction that I would help to build the scaffolding of this new part of our club that we will all benefit from.

That addresses the necessity of next level training, but not the substance of it.

The obvious answer comes from the *Ving Tsun Kuen Kuit*: “Chor Hock Mo Yung Lic” translated to “beginners must not use strength”. So clearly, the next level might include increased use of power. As power is energy delivered per unit of time, we can work with either part of the equation. If we increase the force and energy delivered or speed up the time to deliver it, we necessarily increase the risk of unwanted injury, to self or others. This risk was a visceral area of concern for most of us. Luckily, Sifu started us out on the right foot by first taking our communication to the next level.

We met as a group and talked about what *next level* meant to us, what it didn't mean and how we felt about the opportunity, the commitment and the risks. From this place, we began to explore other areas to look for next levels.

It didn't take very long for us to realize the gravity of what we had decided to do. Sure, it was the same thing we always do, except now we had chosen to pad up, don headgear, mouth guards, chest pads, arm and leg pads as well as gloves and a cup. With all of this preparation, the expectation of getting hurt should decrease. But I quickly learned that although padding helps, you can still easily rattle your noodle with a clean hit in the head, padding or no padding.



Grandmaster Walter Jakimeczuk demonstrating Chi Sau with Kurt Fairfield

We quickly found a respectful way to play these more energetic drills: with caution and care for your partner. Padding was not so that we could punch each other at will. But rather this allowed us to release more energy. And if we weren't careful and a punch got through, that the damage would be reduced.

The most important awareness that this brought was a sense of ownership. There were certain things we would need to do—and do properly—or we would get hit. It had nothing to do with drills or hand motions anymore. We learned to appreciate why we always want to stay in a position where we can't get hit. It's because it could be a devastating hit in the right circumstance. This quickly put me into the place of focusing not on hitting, but first on defusing all incoming attacks. Easy to do, just occupy center. Who knew? Then I applied the principle of save energy, because it only takes about two minutes of real sparring before your energy and skill execution capacity starts to diminish rapidly. For me these were the very things I wanted to investigate in my next level training. Will my kung fu work? What works? What doesn't work and why? Then I could go back and polish the stone some more in these key and painfully obvious areas.

Next level means learning what it *feels* like to know when you can hit, when you can't hit and when you

shouldn't hit. Next level means taxing your body and *feeling* what hurts and why. Next level means searching inside yourself. Next level means solidifying friendships that have been growing for years. Next level means taking ownership of your kung fu and that of your sisters and brothers.

If you notice, next level training looks a lot like regular old every day training. It all looks the same from the outside, but just like a physical motion, it is your *Yi* or intent, that determines if your training is next level or not. I am really grateful for Sifu focusing his intent on next level training, for all of us, as what we learn in our high intensity classes, we bring back to the entire club to share.

-Kurt Fairfield, Blue Sash

On Practice



Lake Curry training with Norm Stainer

Practicing at home is a struggle for me, especially while only being on the Ving Tsun path for over a year now. I work multiple jobs, have two serious side hobbies, a partner, and a cat that all dictate that my time is chock-full, from sunrise to sunset and beyond. While on vacation for the month of November, I knew it was going to be difficult to motivate myself to do anything but sleep and drink coconuts on the beach, especially when left to my own devices. I have fought this battle before—every day even, as I'm assuming we all do—so I have chosen to write a little bit about my personal—

although limited—interpretation and experience with developing a regular practice on the road.

Here's a quote from page 39 of our handbook that has allowed me to keep determined:

“When we speak of unifying the mind and the body, the aim is to eliminate (the) very sort of contradiction inhibiting the cooperative action of body and mind to reach unification of mind and body, oneness of body and mind, and co-ordination of body and mind.”

The entire article is FULL of gems!

“Oh the mind! It's our greatest friend, or our worst enemy.”

-Bhagavad Gita 6.7

I like to call the mind the “excuse factory”: a constant stream of reasons to not maintain positive daily habits, especially when on vacation.

As soon as I got to Thailand, my mind had already begun repeating “bed, snacks and chocolate”. But before eating and resting, I took fifteen minutes and did some slow Siu Lim Tau, focusing on remaining square, relaxation and breathing, to help me ground myself after the eighteen hours in the air. This little bit of determination actually made resting more fulfilling, instead of falling asleep knowing that I had given in to the mind and skipped practice for the day, which I really try hard not to do. After this small success, I wrote in my journal some guidelines for this trip to keep the momentum going:

1. If I want to watch Netflix, I need to review all of the red sash grading items and do my forms three times. (I'm very, very new to the red sash realm!)
2. Every five minutes on social media would be an extra fifteen minutes of practice on a red sash grading category listed in the back of the manual.
3. Stretch every day for thirty minutes, with focus on breathing.

4. Minimum of one hour practice of forms and grading items per day.
5. Set an alarm and do my practice before I do anything else besides drinking water.

“Consistency in training is the key to success. Daily practice is the way.”

-Walter Jakimczuk

These guidelines have helped me whip my mind into shape while away and have given me something to fall back on. Instead of just doing a whimsical practice each day if my mind allowed me to find the time, I set intentions and goals for myself. Each fulfillment of an item on the list gives me a positive reward for appeasing the mind and allows for a give-take relationship to occur.

Seems simple enough, but holy smokes! I've really struggled my way through even that simple list. My hands find the snooze before I'm awake with the time change, so the alarm goes out of arm's reach now. The heat and 80-90% humidity makes breathing difficult (queue world's smallest violin), but at the time it's the perfect excuse. So now I practice before sunrise when it's still a cool 28 degrees. Amongst so many other distractions—from birds to beers while on vacation—I've had to go with the flow. Once, I even just did my practice in the parking lot of a bar before going in instead of doing twice as much practice the following day as I had promised myself I would do. Nice try, Mind! No work, no play!

After almost two weeks of practice in a new place, my mind is beginning to enjoy the habitual aspect of the mornings here now. There were certainly slip-ups, but I can now feel that practice waking me up before my alarm. And I can sense that it's hankering to extend the sessions longer and longer each day. I really have found that reading the handbook before and after daily practice has helped me focus on specific aspects while I practice. It has inspired thoughts throughout the day as well. I'm still very new to the kung fu family and art form, and these little successes and having a list of guidelines have really helped keep me motivated on the journey. Knowing that I've taken even a baby

step on the path each day makes each step more joyous. It brings light to other goals and relations in my life as well.

Sticking to my list each day, taking it all in stride, working together with the mind instead of fighting it and feeling guilty, and most importantly, acknowledging the inspiration and guidance that my older sisters, brothers and teachers have given me has really helped me develop a burgeoning daily practice while I'm away. Gratitude is the attitude I'm feeling.

I hope there's a little something in here to help anyone who feels similar struggles with daily practice. With the constant classes provided at home and the association of our kung fu family, I find the voice on my left shoulder to be far less intrusive than when I'm left to my own. Not being able to attend classes and experience the learning I receive from touching hands with everyone makes practicing at home exponentially more difficult. I hope I don't develop too many bad habits being so far from everyone for a month. I'm very much looking forward to playing and learning with you all again in December. I'm inspired to keep up my momentum and practice, so as not to waste all the lessons you've given me over this past year.

- Lake Curry, Red Sash



Lake Curry receiving his red sash

Congratulations to the following students on attaining their new respective sash levels during the last quarter:

**Lake Curry (Red Sash)
Norm Stainer (Red Sash)**

Excellent work!



Norm Stainer receiving his red sash

Welcome to our new students:

**Tony Lee
Luke Grabove
Scott Sinclair**



Reviewing basic stepping

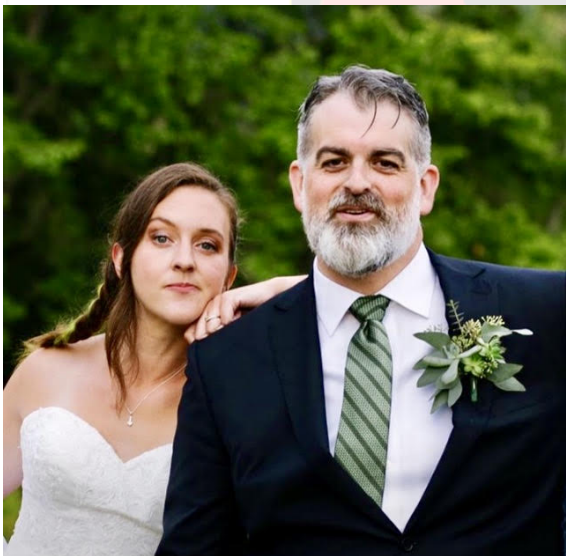


Sifu Jim Kragtwyk, Simo Heidi Erhardt and Dai-Sije Helen Guilding celebrating Canada's successes in China

Editor's Note: *On behalf of the entire club, we celebrate Dai-Sije Helen Guilding, Sifu Jim Kragtwyk and all of our kung fu family for their achievements in the Inaugural World Open Wing Chun Competition in China! Our club successfully raised over \$1800 to support Helen's expenses.*

Special Events

- * September 2018: Sisook Eric Burnett & Holly Christie's Wedding
- * October 2018: 6th Annual MYVT Sisters Retreat
- * October 2018: Book Club: selections from *The Wing Chun Compendium Vol. 1*
- * December 2018: Inaugural World Open Wing Chun Competition in Foshan, China
- * December 2018: Club Christmas Dinner



Eric Burnett and Holly Christie at their wedding in BC

UPCOMING

- * January 2019: Book Club: selections from *The Wing Chun Compendium Vol. 1*
- * February 2019: Sifu Jim & Simo Heidi's Maui Wedding Celebration

Click or cut and paste the links below to see several videos from recent classes:

- <https://www.facebook.com/jim.kragtwyk/videos/10156540975526357/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/WingChunYYJ/videos/318373558921330/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/WingChunYYJ/videos/1184293905073049/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/881935713/videos/10161181581620714/>



Conditioning class lead by head instructor and Sihing Mark Watson

Editors: Heidi Erhardt & Natalie Rogers
Photos: Heidi Erhardt, Natalie Rogers and Mark Watson.

Special thanks to Melanie Lawricht from the Philadelphia Club and her photos of the MYVT Sisterhood.

Note: We use the spelling Ving Tsun, which late Grand Master Ip Man used to differentiate our kung fu from the various branches.

Please check out our Facebook Page (@WingChunYYJ) and website (victoriawingchun.com) for more information about Ving Tsun, Sifu Jim Kragtwyk's talks on various aspects of the system and instructional videos.

Stay tuned for a special edition in our Spring newsletter highlighting the competitors and events of the 2018 Inaugural World Open Wing Chun Competition.