



*Powerful Tools For Leaders™*

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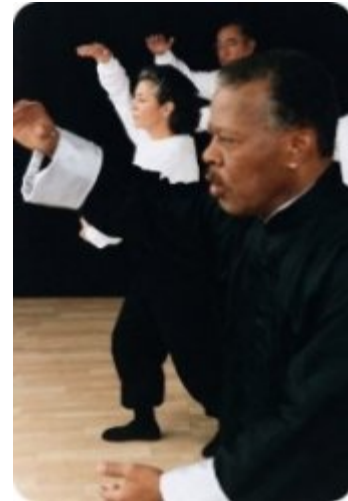
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*Carla Platter*

## Sparring as a Leadership Tool?!

### Neutralizing

Part 2 of 3



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As you recall, I shared last month that my Shao-lin Kung Fu and Tai Chi classes continue to reinforce the life leadership tools I share with my clients and use in my own life. In our slow motion sparring, three life leadership lessons emerge:

**Great Resource**

*The Success Principles*

by Jack Canfield

- Partnering
- Neutralizing
- Cultivating 2-way Growth

In sparring, when I see my partner chambering for a kick, one of my best responses is to step toward her instead of stepping away! I neutralize the kick's effectiveness when I intercept my partner before she can fully extend her leg—at full extension her kick is at full power. Going toward her also keeps me engaged, and keeps me and my energy in a more powerful place for my next move. When I back up or back off my partner, I communicate *less confidence*

—both to myself and to the other person.

This **Neutralizing** is familiar to many of my clients when I coach them in “**going toward**” a personality that is intense with emotion or finds the need to speak loudly, argue or be aggressive in order to get heard.

Picture it--You're in the weekly team meeting with the client (again) and Bitter Bob Blue angrily points out, “This is ridiculous! The proposed project direction is convenient for the technology team but gives no consideration for us on the business side!” Your natural reaction may be to back off. You wonder how you will ever get his sponsorship and support, much less his cooperation in these meetings. You might begin to defend the decision and it becomes a ping-pong match with Bitter Bob getting louder and more distracting by the minute.

### **How might it look differently if you were to “go toward” him and Neutralize?**

1. When Bitter Bob blasts an objection, you could calmly reply, “**Tell me more about your concern.**” This helps to create the space for Bob to express his thoughts and he will not feel such a need to fight to be heard.
2. Another way you could neutralize is to **proactively ask** Bob for his perspective. Being asked and having space to talk, he lets go of the need to fight for the space. He would probably begin to feel silly too since he is the only one talking loudly while you remain calm and confident.
3. Third, use the phrase, “**I can see how you might view it that way.**” Here, you acknowledge his viewpoint while not agreeing with it. *(This works incredibly well at home with your spouse too!)*
4. Finally, remember that these personalities often have a valuable perspective, they simply don't deliver it in a productive way. **Be Curious and Stay Curious.**

When you neutralize, you will **remain in a calm centered place which is attractive and engenders confidence and trust in your leadership.** You also keep positive momentum in your relationships and communication.

Let me know how it goes,  
Coach Cathy

LEADERSHIP**COMMUNICATION**RELATIONSHIPS

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Cathy Maday is the founder of Wingspan Coaching Corporation, which specializes in providing powerful tools to senior leaders who want more success and satisfaction for themselves and their teams. Visit our website at [www.wingspancoaching.com](http://www.wingspancoaching.com) for more information.

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