



Humility, Growth, and Forward Thinking in Jiu Jitsu Teaching

As Black Belt instructors, we are stewards of an art rooted in adaptability, resilience, and forward thinking. Jiu Jitsu is about meeting challenges head-on, remaining responsive to change, and embracing continuous growth. Yet, achieving this requires humility, not only in our skill development but in our teaching. To guide our students toward true mastery, we must embrace the foundational elements of Jiu Jitsu constantly learning, adapting, and evolving alongside them.

Embracing Humility and Growth as Teachers

It's natural for instructors to gravitate toward teaching the techniques we've mastered. However, when we focus only on what we know well, we risk stalling our own growth and limiting our students' potential. True humility means acknowledging that even as Black Belts, we're still learners, constantly working to understand and improve. The concept of Jiu Jitsu itself—a martial art centered on adaptability—urges us to challenge our limits and to face our own areas of improvement with openness and persistence.

Forward thinking in Jiu Jitsu teaching means modeling a journey of continuous growth. As instructors, we must convey to students that mastery isn't about reaching a finish line; it's about embracing an endless path of learning, a lifestyle. When students see us willing to engage with our own challenges, they understand that Jiu Jitsu is a lifelong journey of discovery, resilience, and responsiveness.

The Power of Revisiting Fundamentals

No matter how advanced we are, the basics remain the core of our art. Fundamentals serve as the stable foundation that allows us to expand and adapt in any situation. By returning to these essentials regularly, we strengthen the base that supports all advanced techniques.

In our teaching, it's essential to stress that no level of expertise outgrows the need for fundamentals. Demonstrating this to students reinforces that Jiu Jitsu is about constant refinement and responsiveness, no matter the skill level. When we, as Black Belts, make fundamentals part of our practice and teaching, we show that mastery isn't static—it's a continual evolution.

Teaching Left and Right Sides: Expanding the Skill Set

To stay responsive in changing situations, it's vital to develop balance and adaptability by practicing techniques on both sides. While it's easy to rely on our dominant side, embracing both left and right side techniques prepares us—and our students—to meet challenges from all angles.

By training both sides, we enhance our adaptability and deepen our understanding of each technique. Encouraging students to do the same reinforces Jiu Jitsu's core principle of flexibility. This practice instills in them the ability to apply techniques effectively in unpredictable scenarios, an essential trait for a lifelong practitioner.

Working Across Sizes, Strengths, and Skill Levels

Jiu Jitsu is designed to be effective regardless of an opponent's size, strength, or skill level. Practicing with partners of varying body types and abilities is essential for developing a versatile, well-rounded skill set. By demonstrating techniques with partners of different sizes, instructors illustrate that each technique is adaptable, highlighting the art's responsiveness to any challenge.

Encourage students to work with a range of partners in every class. This habit will prepare them to respond effectively in real-life situations, where opponents come in all shapes and sizes. It also builds camaraderie and respect, as students learn to appreciate diverse abilities and perspectives in training.

Moving Beyond Comfort Zones: Forward-Thinking Teaching

Every practitioner has a preferred technique or style, but when we limit ourselves—and our students—to our comfort zones, we narrow the scope of their learning. Teaching only what feels familiar limits growth and does a disservice to students, who deserve a full picture of Jiu Jitsu's potential.

As instructors, forward thinking involves expanding our teaching and demonstrating techniques that challenge us. This adaptability models the essence of Jiu Jitsu—meeting challenges openly and adapting continually. When students witness us working on techniques outside our comfort zones, they understand that the path to mastery requires a mindset of growth, resilience, and openness to new ideas.

Adapting to a Changing World: The Endless Journey of Jiu Jitsu

Jiu Jitsu teaches us to be responsive and flexible, not only on the mat but in life. As the world changes, so too does the application and understanding of martial arts. By embracing growth and forward thinking, we show that Jiu Jitsu isn't a relic of the past but a living, evolving art, ready to meet the demands of modern challenges. As Black Belts, it's our responsibility to model this adaptability, encouraging students to view Jiu Jitsu as an art that adapts with them.

We owe it to our students to prepare them for the ever-changing environments they'll encounter, whether in the dojo or beyond. By being willing to learn and adapt alongside them, we inspire a mindset that looks to the future while honoring the foundational principles of Jiu Jitsu.

Some Final thoughts

The role of a Black Belt instructor is one of humility, growth, and forward thinking. By embracing adaptability, demonstrating techniques with partners of all sizes, refining our fundamentals, and challenging ourselves to go beyond comfort, we honor the true spirit of Jiu Jitsu. We are not simply teaching techniques; we are guiding our students along a lifelong journey of self-discovery, resilience, and continuous improvement. In doing so, we ensure that Jiu Jitsu remains a vibrant, adaptable art that serves not only our students but future generations as well.

Canadian Jiu Jitsu Council Directors

