

CANT is not a Judo word

Contributed by Stephen Mills
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If you think you can't do it then you won't. But if you think you can, sooner or later you will if you keep trying. It may be difficult and take a long time, but if you work hard in earnest and are sincere you never know what might happen. You never know if you'll be standing atop that podium, literally or figuratively, with a broad smile on your face. You never know unless you think you can and if you try.

Whenever I'm presented with a challenge I always find that it's easier to say that I can't do it or that it can't be done. I'd much rather sit on the sidelines and just say that I can't do something because it's easier than actually going out there, trying it and failing. But, if we don't try, then how will we ever succeed? This is something that I've struggled with not just in judo, but also in life. It's never easy for anyone, but overcoming our fears and the belief that we can do something will lead to a path of success.

I work regularly with the kids in our dojo and find it a great joy. Each and every day I'm learning something new from them. Which, of course, is rather ironic since I'm supposed to be the instructor in the class, not them. But, if we open up our minds, we might just accidentally learn something that we didn't think possible. And this happened to be the case with me one day when some of our kids were struggling with their ukemi.

On occasion, when the kids are practicing their forward rolls, we'll pull an extra obi out of the closet and have them do leaping rolls up and over the belt. Each time through the line we raise the belt a little higher making it more difficult for the student to jump over it and roll. At a certain point the nervousness on the kid's faces becomes apparent as they begin to think they can't do it. They think they can't jump that high and roll over the belt. They think that it's just not possible.

Well, one day while observing this, I just happened to say:

"If you think you can't do it then you won't. But if you think you can, sooner or later you will if you keep trying."

I have repeated this several times to them since that day and I hope that it has reinforced the need to at least try. And who really knows, if you try it, you just might just do it.

Even now though I find it easier not to try and sit on the sidelines and say I can't do it. I can't enter the shiai because I can't win. Why do I think this? Because there will always be more people who don't go out and get that gold medal than do. It will always be easier to identify with those that lose than the one that wins. And while it's not about winning or losing, you never know what just might happen if you think you can and you try. You just might be standing atop that podium with that smile on your face now knowing that you can do it and that it can be done, regardless of what the obstacle may be.

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Every month I will be getting editorials from Sensei around the world about their experiences and how Judo has affected them in their daily Lives, I'd like to thank Hussong Sensei for his contribution to start us off