

KICKING IT TO THE CURB THE WARRIOR'S WAY: T'AI CHI PUSH HANDS; AN EXERCISE IN PARTNERSHIP AND LETTING GO BY LAOSHI LAURINCE D. MCELROY

Consider one who is traveling in a stream. If they choose to float on the current, they travel without difficulty. If they choose to turn and swim upstream against the current, they will soon tire and may well drown.

We've all been there. Someone is saying something or doing something that is rubbing us the wrong way. How do we react? What do we do?

We're human and, for most of us, we are taught while growing up that we shouldn't take it and that we should meet force with force. Think about that, if you would, for a minute. Let's say that thing that is being done or said is a cement truck. Our response is yet another cement truck. What happens when the two trucks collide?

It ain't pretty. It causes pain. It causes stress.

As a marital art, T'ai Chi utilizes the concept of **four ounces [to] repel one thousand pounds**. This redirection-of-force principle is not only the basis for a dynamic and powerful martial art, but it also helps with the way we talk to one another and deal with all the ins and outs of our daily interactions. If we can learn to flow with whatever is coming at us – the insulting word, the constructive criticism of a teacher, school administrator, sibling, or parent, or any other such “cement trucks,” we will be better able to **live with** the people around us and **not struggle against** them.



Push Hands has many manifestations - one-hand, two-hand, stationary, moving, and even utilizing the weapons of T'ai Chi. They're all about letting go of resistance and flowing with your partner.

The exercise can help us understand that struggle is stressful and completely unnecessary and that neither the “aggressor” nor the “defender” is served by fighting one another. Through flowing together, there is no need for struggle. If we can learn the lessons presented by this “partnership,” we can begin to understand how swimming with the currents of life can become a part of each and every moment of each and every day.



Push Hands is about controlling by letting go, and by blending, balancing, and flowing with your partner.

Push Hands (*tui shou* - p. tway shoh) is an exercise designed to help us find a way to be calm in the midst of chaos, to relax in confrontation, to flow and not fight.

With two people face-to-face and hand-to-hand, the slow and easy, back and forth movement is a partnership, a conversation, a sharing of mutual assistance and balance.

