

THE WARRIOR'S WAY: T'AI CHI PUSH HANDS AND THE ART OF LEADERSHIP
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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.

Some think that leadership means unbending demand. That's not leadership. That's dictatorship. Contemplate the scene between Xerxes and King Leonidas in the recent movie *300*:

Xerxes: Imagine what horrible fate awaits my enemies when I would gladly kill any of my own men for victory.

King Leonidas: And I would die for any of mine.

Or, reflect on the words of Robert the Bruce from 1995's *Braveheart*:

Men fight for me because if they do not, I throw them off my land and I starve their wives and children. Those men who bled the ground red at Falkirk fought for William Wallace.

We're human and, for most of us, we are taught while growing up that leadership is about power and that we should meet resistance with force. What happens when resistance is met with force? Struggle. Devastation on both sides. More resistance. It ain't pretty. And it gets us no closer to being a leader of others. King Leonidas knows that being in the mix with his men makes them fight all the harder for him and his purpose. Robert the Bruce recognizes that fear might cultivate servants-to-a-cause, but won't produce believers-in-a-purpose.

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 guide us in the way we choose to interact with those who might be in our charge. If we can learn to let go, blend, balance, and flow with whatever is coming at us – difference of opinion, hesitation in following the plan, goals not met, lack of focus, or any other such manifestations of resistance, we will be better able to **lead** others 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.

understand that struggle is stressful and completely unnecessary and that neither in the partnership is served by struggling against the other. Through flowing together, there is no need to fight. If we can learn the lessons presented by this “partnership,” we can begin to understand how swimming with the currents of life can show us the way to lead successfully and with honor.



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 during confrontation, to flow and not struggle, to lead in harmony, and to create a community with a shared purpose.

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. The exercise can help us

