

No Sacrifice – No Victory

Autumn, evening

The days are getting shorter. Darkness conquers the world, degree by degree.

I am preparing my bag to go to the **gym**. I check that everything is there: **boxing gloves, shin guards, headgear, hand wraps**, and so on.

Honestly, I don't feel much like going anywhere — least of all to the gym to practice **kickboxing**.

My **body**, however, senses that something intense awaits it and reacts in its own way: I need to go to the bathroom.

The Spirit Does Not Train by Itself

Skipping a training session means **weakening the spirit**.

There is a phrase by **Carlos Castaneda** that I don't remember word for word, but its meaning is this:

In a world where **death** is a hunter, you must make the **spirit perfect**. Failing to do so means seeking death. And since death will take us anyway, not committing yourself is equivalent to seeking nothing. Thus, life loses its meaning.

In my opinion, this sentence is powerful. A bit **metaphysical**, yes, but true.

The Body Rejuvenates When It Fights

From a **scientific** point of view, **physical activity** — especially **martial arts** — offers profound benefits:

- The **emotions** that emerge during training activate the **endocrine system**.
- Levels of **testosterone** and **somatotropin** increase, key hormones for **protein synthesis** and **cellular rejuvenation**.
- Every session is an opportunity to learn a **new technique** and put it into

practice.

- **Learning** activates blood flow in the **brain**, with a **rejuvenating effect**.
- New **synaptic connections** form between the **nervous system** and the **muscles**.

I discuss these effects in greater depth in my book *Athletic Preparation in Martial Arts and Beyond* and in the essay *The Core: Active Rejuvenation*.

Both are available **free of charge** on this website in **PDF format**.

The Difficult Choice Is the Right One

It is extremely easy to stay at home tonight.

It is much harder to overcome this moment of **weakness**, load the bag into the car, turn the key, and leave.

But that is exactly where the game is played.

An **easy life** — inherited money, assets obtained without effort — leads to **decay: addictions, depression, illness**.

And then? **Premature aging. Death.**

The Lesson of Long-Lived Farmers

In recent years I have been living in the countryside, in a small village of about a thousand inhabitants.

Near the church there is a space for **funeral notices**. Sometimes I read them.

At first, I was surprised by the **longevity** of the inhabitants: many die well past ninety, some exceed one hundred.

I personally know several **farmers** who, even after eighty, are in excellent shape and work as if nothing were wrong.

When they feel it is time to slow down, they allow themselves to be persuaded by their children to see a **doctor**, who prescribes some **medication**.

I think of **David Rockefeller**, who died at 101, with all the money in the world. If I am not mistaken, he underwent **six heart transplants** to extend his life.

Conclusion

I do not have an elegant closing for this article.

Only one sentence comes to mind, simple and brutal:

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