



# Making a good class great

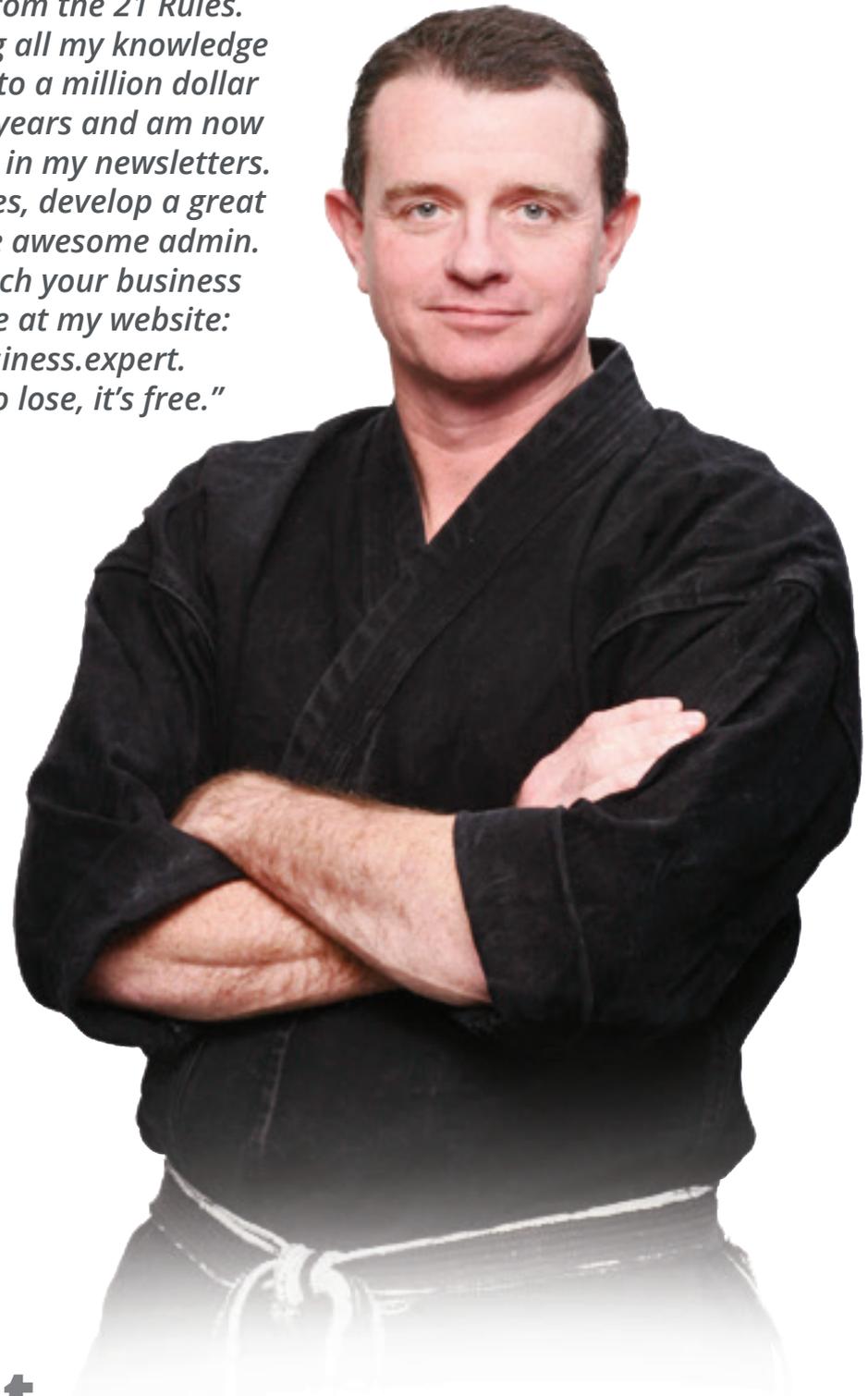
By Andy Dickinson

This E-book contains 21 Rules that will make your class great every time you teach.

Teachers of martial arts, yoga, spin, dance, boxing, pilates or any motion based group class will find clear methods to improve client experience and grow class numbers.

*"I hope you get a lot from the 21 Rules. I'm dedicated to sharing all my knowledge on how I took a hobby to a million dollar business in less than 4 years and am now debt free. I explain it all in my newsletters. How to pack your classes, develop a great trainers team and have awesome admin. Then sit back and watch your business thrive. Sign up on-line at my website: [www.blackbeltbusiness.expert](http://www.blackbeltbusiness.expert). What have you got to lose, it's free."*

Andy



## About **Andy Dickinson**

Andy is a martial artist with over 30 years experience and founder of Northstar Martial Arts. He has developed the **21 Rules** while building his client list to over 1500 students across 8 studios.

If you like this E-book you'll love my **FREE** tips.  
Signup at [www.blackbeltbusiness.expert](http://www.blackbeltbusiness.expert)

# The essence of teaching

## Pass on your "KI"

**Have you ever wondered why some Instructors are incredibly popular yet they are only teaching the most basic class exercises and material?**

Teaching anything is more than just passing on knowledge, information and material. When you realise that each time you teach a group of clients you are actually passing on part of yourself, part of your life force, it doesn't really matter what the content is.

The client/student will come to class simply to experience YOU. If your intention and message is strong the clients will feel it. So it is not so much on what you teach, but how you teach it. Positive personal empowerment attracts! Pass it on and make an incredible difference.

**You are totally unique. Use what YOU are and what YOU know as a positive energy force.**

*There is no use spending huge dollars on marketing if your clients are leaving because the product is not great.*

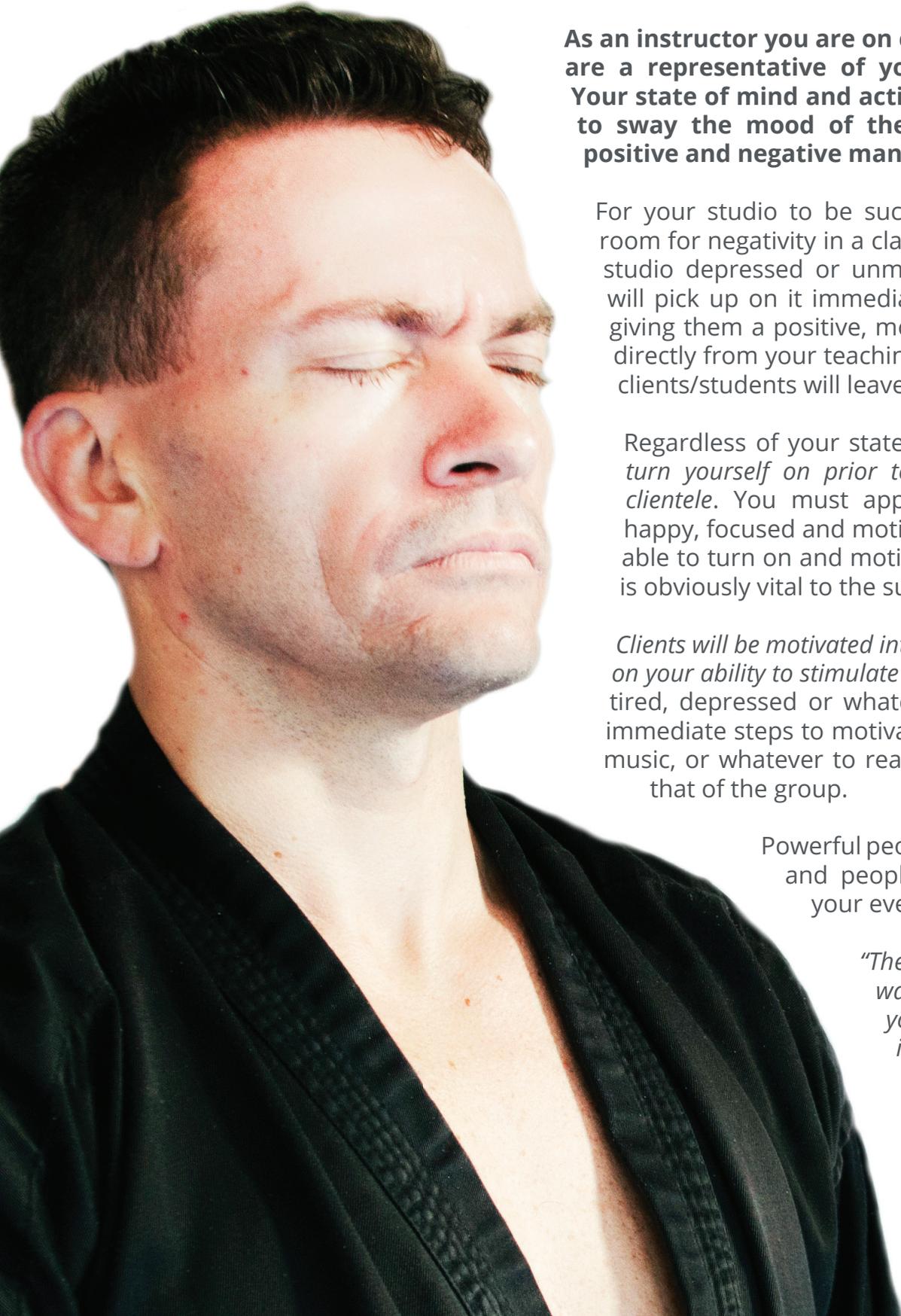
*Great classes are taught by great instructors. Remember we only ever have the client from class to class. Every client in the class, from beginners to the more experienced must leave on a high, feeling they have been revitalised and empowered and taking away something useful that they have learned in class.*

*Follow these rules and go from a "good instructor" to an "exceptional presenter" pack your classes and retain students for life.*



# Rule 1

# Turn yourself on



**As an instructor you are on constant show and are a representative of your system/studio. Your state of mind and actions has the ability to sway the mood of the group in both a positive and negative manner.**

For your studio to be successful, there is no room for negativity in a class. If you enter your studio depressed or unmotivated the clients will pick up on it immediately. If you are not giving them a positive, motivating experience directly from your teaching, bottom line, your clients/students will leave.

Regardless of your state of mind, you must *turn yourself on prior to encountering your clientele*. You must appear full of energy, happy, focused and motivated in order to be able to turn on and motivate the group. This is obviously vital to the success of your class.

*Clients will be motivated into action based solely on your ability to stimulate the group.* If you are tired, depressed or whatever you must take immediate steps to motivate yourself. Be it by music, or whatever to realign your pattern to that of the group.

Powerful people lead by example and people will take note of your every action.

*"The way you walk, the way you talk, how you dress, smell and interact will work in unison to keep you a success in all that you do".*

# Rule 2

# Be on time Be ready

**There is nothing worse than clients seeing an Instructor rush into class at the last minute. Even worse, not showing up.**

This is fundamental to running a great class. No matter what, no exceptions, if you are not on time then your personal management skills need to be seriously looked at. If you cannot make it somewhere on time then you get on your mobile phone and you call well in advance to say that you will be late.

*Being on time is a skill that reflects your ability to pre plan, forward think and prioritise. If you are constantly late then your time management needs to be looked at...immediately.*

*Your clientele rely on you being reliable.*



# Rule 3

# Attend to personal hygiene



**Great Trainers look the part... ALWAYS.**

**Your presentation needs to be impeccable ALWAYS.**

Keep your attire updated, washed and ironed. Our industry is a touch-orientated industry. There is nothing worse than dealing with an instructor that smells, has bad breath, smelly workout clothing or dirty hands. It's definitely enough to stop clients coming.

Be clean, fresh, well presented, underarm deodorant is a must, shave, and clean your hands. Wear clean and neat attire at all times.

Always be immaculately groomed with hair neatly tied back and brushed and a subtle spray of after-shave or perfume always goes down well. No revealing clothing.

*Don't eat, drink coffee or chew gum in class or in front of clients while you are working.*

*I was in a Pilates class recently where one of the trainers was eating mince that she had heated up in the kitchen. She sat on the reformer next to me and ate, talking to my trainer. This is one of Sydney's top studios.*

*There is no use spending thousands of dollars on advertising if you are not delivering on the floor. And that includes your entire team.*

# Rule 4 Meet & Greet

**This first point of physical contact is vital in creating a positive feeling.**

New clients must have a positive impression the moment they walk into your studio. They have to be caught before any doubt or negativity starts to creep in. This is a make or break time.

The biggest turn off for any new client is indifference by staff at the door when they walk in. I have seen people spend thousands on advertising and marketing yet do not realise the importance of this first contact. You must make it easy for new people to like what you do. There is an entire process in place aimed at making sure every step is a positive experience for the new client. Having a great and powerful class is the icing on the cake.

*I have students that run out of my class, as they just can't wait to sign up.*

When you are an instructor and you see some one that is new, in or out of the class, introduce yourself. Current clients are just as important as new prospects.

No instructor is bigger or better than your business. This goes a long way in creating a culture of friendliness in your business, which in turn creates more commitment as the client develops an emotional reason to keep training.

Whether clients have been once or one hundred times, everyone must be made to feel special and welcome.

*Never become too familiar.*

When current clients are signing in or paying, be on the look out for new faces, priority needs to be given to new people. Politely excuse yourself and attend to the new clients.

Get into the habit of remembering names and greeting clients as they arrive. Stand straight and confident, shake hands and empower. There is nothing worse for your business when the front staff are too busy having fun socialising and not giving attention to new people as they arrive.

*When I was training in Japan at one of the most traditional martial arts schools, it always impressed me when the senior instructors arrived in class they always introduced themselves to new faces in class.*

*With in the first 5 minutes of your class: SMILE  
With in the first 10 minutes: Introduce yourself to new faces.*

*At Northstar every new prospect needs to book in for the lesson. On the day of the lesson we then confirm by 1. Calling or 2. SMS. We then send the list of new prospects to the Instructor.*

*When the prospect arrives in class we welcome them by name. It just makes all the difference. After they have filled in the necessary forms, we then pass them onto a mentor that explains the process and shows them how to begin.*

***This works beautifully.***

# Rule 5 Start & Finish on time

**The efficiency of your business will be reflected in your ability to maintain times. Maintain discipline by ensuring your instructors commence and finish on time. This is especially important when running multiple classes in a row.**

Stopping a class suddenly and not planning towards the end because the instructor has not been following a structure or time is bad class management. You should be following a set class structure that gets the most out of the clients and finishes on a high. This way, they just can't wait to get to the next class.

*For the client the work out starts the moment they enter our space; the mood of the studio, the mood of the instructor, and the general feel of the room.*

*As an instructor you are responsible for creating a positive atmosphere for all the clients and you can make or break the initial impact of anyone coming into your studio.*



# Rule 6

# Develop conscious training

***The class for each client must be a complete pattern change.***

Many people when inquiring about my system ask about meditation. A concept of meditation is introduced to them from the moment they commence class. Most of us cannot just sit down and observe our mind, especially when most classes are usually after a full days work.

Motion based classes help the student to disconnect from their everyday patterns and focus on what is happening in the moment. There is no better way to seize the moment than with hard, focused movement.

*Hard, focused movement will bring each student into the moment. We call this "conscious training".*

As the student peels off his/her everyday clothes and puts on their training gear, they commence a transformation from their everyday life and step into another place that is totally controlled by the instructor.

The instructor aims to maintain the student's absolute focus on the workout for the entire duration of the class. During which time the student can fully indulge in what is happening without having the constant chatter of the mind to distract them from the quality of the class. After the workout the student can then re-enter his/her world a little refreshed and hopefully a little wiser.

*The client's barometer of a good workout is not just the content, but how well the instructor can break their everyday pattern and create an atmosphere of complete awareness and keep their focus for the entire class. The Instructor cannot do this unless he/she is also present and puts the needs of the clients ahead of his/her own.*

Every time the instructor senses the students focus is wandering they must break their pattern with exercise and move them to re-focus. I believe this is the real reason that they enjoy the workout so much.

*One really has to put their own ego to the side and put the client and their needs first. If you want long term committed clients then you need to learn to push from behind rather than pull them from the front, demanding respect.*



# Rule 7

# Putting clients first

**Your clients have enrolled with your studio for a reason. They probably inquired into training with more than one studio and you are the one that they chose. They now want to spend money and they want to spend it with 'you'. Your skill now is to keep them 'enter-trained' for as long as possible.**

I use the term "selfless service", whereby you become present and aware of what is happening. When you are fully engaged in the class, the energy will simply flow through you and you will easily enjoy the experience of teaching, and in turn your clients will feel it from you. It is when you start thinking, when is this going to finish, and start looking at the clock that your mind will wander and you will briefly forget why you are there. Your clients will feel it. They may not be able to name what is happening, there will just be something for them that is just not right.

Your lack of engagement is a sure fire way of losing valuable, long-term clients. Being passionate about what you are doing and being genuinely concerned about the growth and wellbeing of your clients is a great way to generate business zealots that will stay for you for years.

You have to really enjoy what you are doing, every time you teach. If you don't then you may need to seriously look at becoming a student again, or better still re training, re shaping and revitalising your outlook on what you do.

*Everyone that comes into contact with your business in any way must be left with having had a positive and memorable experience.*



# Rule 8

# Know your material

**Know the syllabus/teaching material so well that you can change, ad-lib and re-power the group very quickly.**

If something within the class is not working and you can feel the energy shift, you need to be able to quickly change and modify your class plan. This requires you to be able to think on your feet and put together a logical substitute immediately.

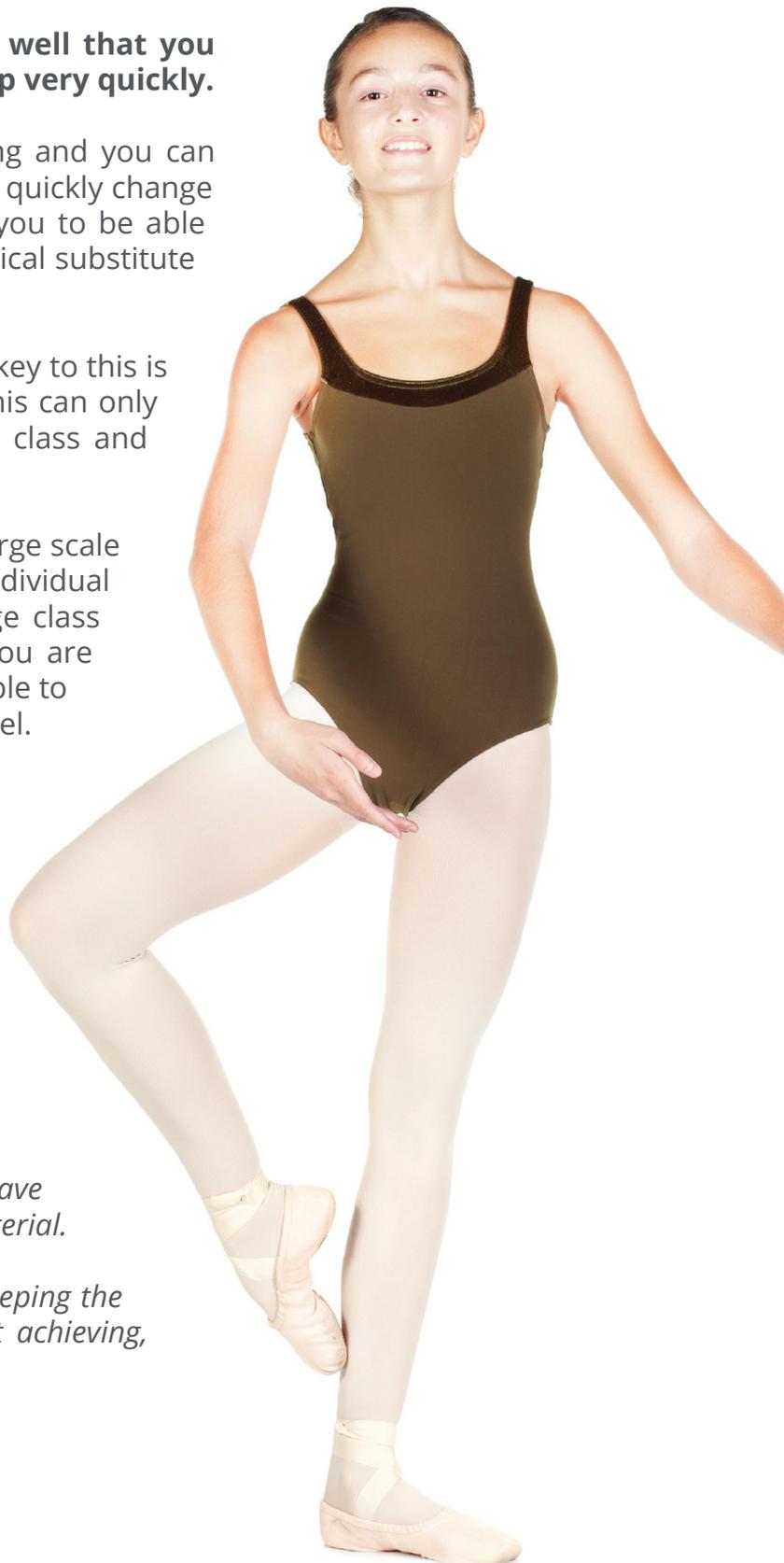
If something is not working, change it. The key to this is 'being able to feel the need of the class.' This can only come from your 100% engagement in the class and your total awareness of what is going on.

You may need to adjust the material on a large scale (the entire class) or adjust the class on an individual level. Adjusting the individual within a large class takes skill and great knowledge of what you are teaching. Again this comes down to being able to feel on a gross level and on an individual level.

Each client needs to feel empowered and capable of attaining their target and needs. Try not to leave the client with an 'almost kinda got it' feeling at the end of the class. This will only be taken into the next class and will compound into reasons to quit. If someone is not getting it or understanding what you are teaching, adjust it so they can and build on that.

*Keep the material simple. At Northstar I have simplified and simplified again the teaching material.*

*The essence of teaching good material and keeping the client long term is for you to keep the client achieving, perfecting and learning, all at the same time.*



# Rule 9

# Work on zero down time

## **No stopping = keep a flow to the class.**

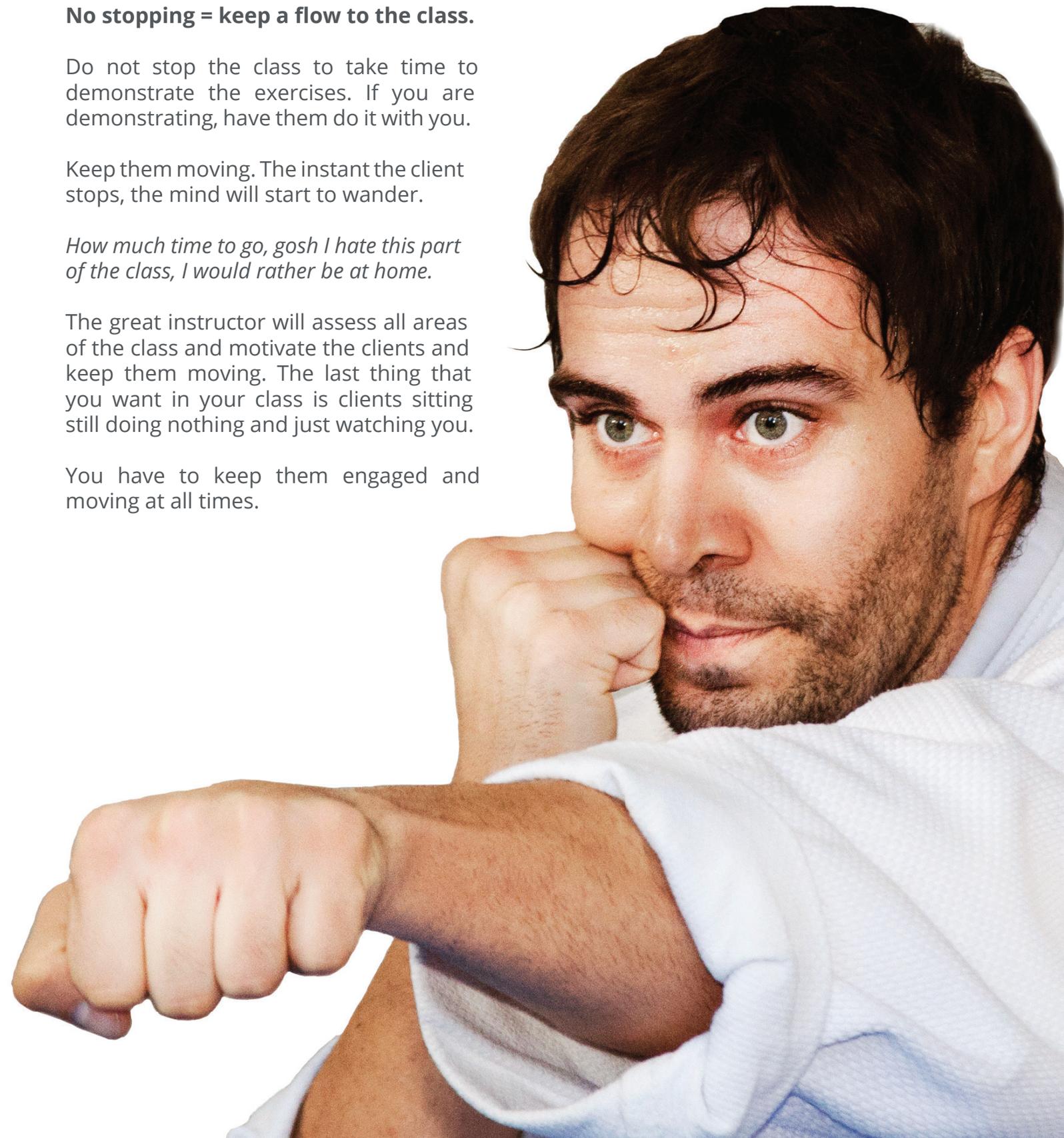
Do not stop the class to take time to demonstrate the exercises. If you are demonstrating, have them do it with you.

Keep them moving. The instant the client stops, the mind will start to wander.

*How much time to go, gosh I hate this part of the class, I would rather be at home.*

The great instructor will assess all areas of the class and motivate the clients and keep them moving. The last thing that you want in your class is clients sitting still doing nothing and just watching you.

You have to keep them engaged and moving at all times.



# Rule 10

# Work the 4 corners

**During the class you want to position your self briefly in all 4 corners of your room/studio.**

From each corneryou can see and experience the class from every ones perspective and then adjust the needs accordingly.

You will quickly see and feel who needs your attention.

*You need to position yourself so you can see the most advanced to the absolute beginner and be able to structure the class so that all clients are empowered.*

*Your testimonial of a great class is empowering the absolute beginner and the most experienced client in the same class, and serving their needs directly. A great instructor can modify for the beginner as well as provide verbal cues for the more experienced to advance their workout.*



# Rule 11

# Pre-think

**An exceptional instructor will never get caught wondering what to do next. They will have planned the class well in advance and know modifications and an extensive range of repertoire to use at any time. If you do have a mental block have the clients do a “holding pattern”. This gives you time to clear your mind and to re-think your next series of exercises.**

Try not to abruptly go from a vigorous exercise to a stretch. You can always repeat a previous set. Do not make the clients wait while you are thinking about the next exercise, it's not a good look and a sure fire way to disappoint your members.



# Rule 12 **Stacking**

**Stacking simply means teaching a little bit at a time and then adding on.**

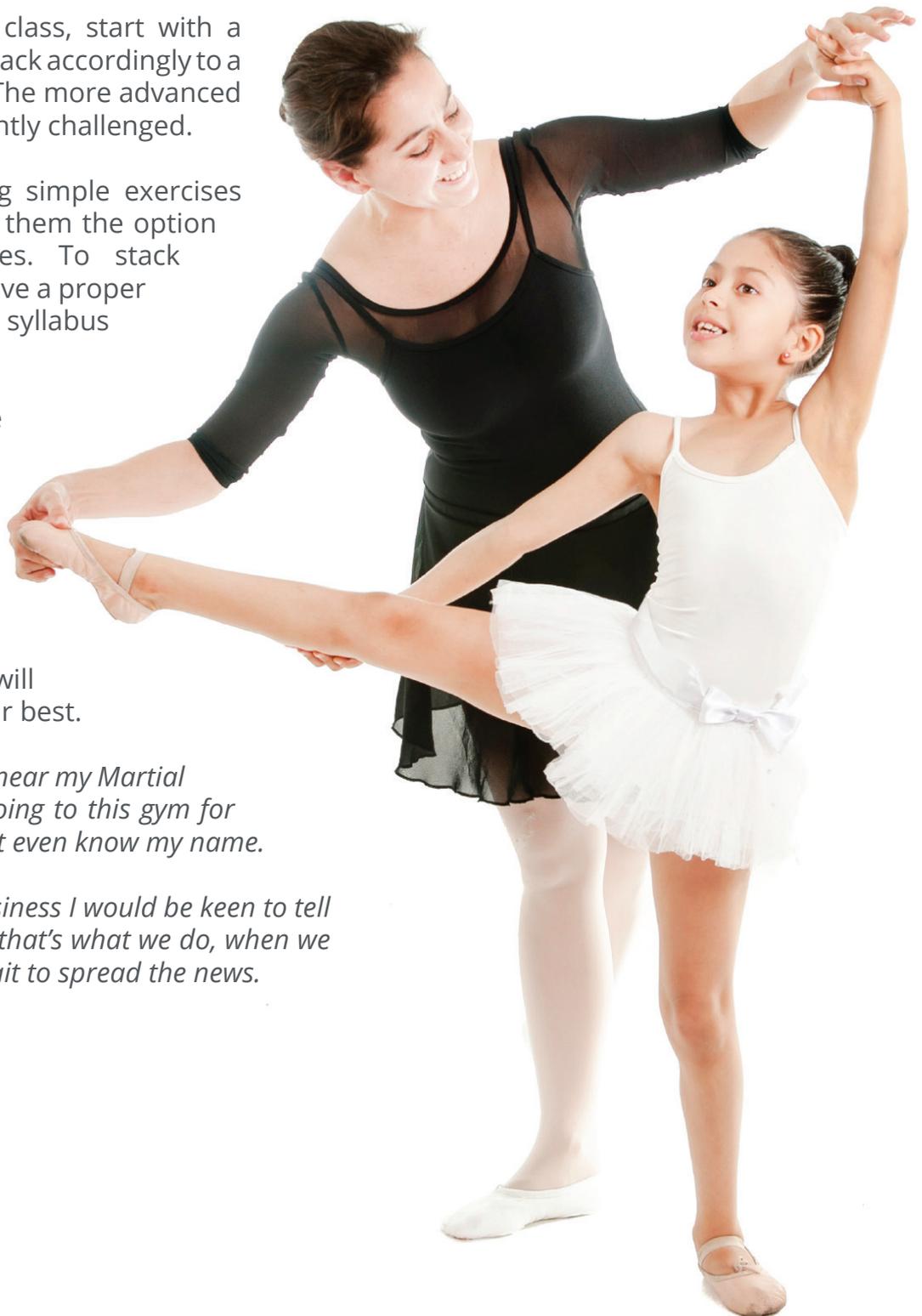
When working with the class, start with a warm up technique and stack accordingly to a more challenging move. The more advanced clients need to be constantly challenged.

Do not have them doing simple exercises for too long. Always give them the option to advance their moves. To stack effectively you need to have a proper lesson plan and know the syllabus well.

Nothing will bore the more advanced clients more than doing beginner moves all the time. Learn to work the entire class by empowering every single level with a combination that will challenge them to do their best.

*I attend a Gym in Balmain near my Martial Arts school. I have been going to this gym for months now and they don't even know my name.*

*If it was an exceptional business I would be keen to tell as many people as I can....that's what we do, when we love something we can't wait to spread the news.*



# Rule 13

# Touch & go

**Teach the correct movement. Don't get caught on the exact details when someone is new.**

See an overall image and perfect the movement over time. Even if they are getting it so wrong, time and time again I will simply say: that's a good start. Don't spend any longer than 10 seconds with each client. A great instructor will correct and motivate in a positive way to all clients in a class situation. Clients love to know that they are on the right track.

**Great ways to motivate: Be genuine and sincere.**

*"I can see now you are really understanding and feeling it in your body"*

*"A nice move and flow, that's improved 100% since last week."*

*"Your technique is really improving each week..."*

*"That is great and if you want to make it even better..."*



# Rule 14

## Getting it right with partners

**Many yoga, boxing, kickboxing and martial arts do partner work. In particular, martial arts can be a very close contact sport, particularly wrestling and judo based martial arts. Getting it right with partners is very important for the fun and safety of all participants.**

*It is vital that people of similar build, gender and experience work together.*

When doing your disclaimer at the beginning of your class, make sure you include “*at any time you are uncomfortable with your training partner, you may request to change.*” Changing partners can be a delicate situation, but you have to make quick decisions to ensure safety. Nothing will turn a client/student off more than getting partners wrong. Women should only partner women in wrestling, children should only work with children in wrestling, and adults should never work with children in wrestling. A word on hygiene, you should ensure that all participants follow your prescribed dress code (if you have one...and if you don't you should).

*Ensure that your commands and technique are clear and precise and can be heard at the back of the room. Do not over-teach. When teaching new material, teach only the concept, not the mechanics, otherwise you spent too much time with one single group of students.*

*Do not over correct, just let the students get on with it and correct a little at a time. It takes months and months to understand and perfect the most basic concepts. Show them once, show them twice, and then move on. Walk through and correct. Keep the group inspired and motivated.*



# Rule 15 Talk rule

**Don't talk too much during class! Keep all talking to basic explanations of what you are teaching.**

Long explanations disrupt the continuity of the class and detract from the core work out. Keep all talks and philosophical discussions to a minimum.

Focus on the physical and empowering through physical training.



# Rule 16

## Counting the technique

**Keep your count clear and precise. Keep an even tempo. Too slow and the workout will lack enthusiasm, too fast and there will be confusion. A fast count may be okay for times when you are doing a quick burner set.**

A great way to re-centre the class is to slow it down for a few counts and work proper form. For example: one for a left jab, two for a right cross, 3 for left hook, 4 for a right upper cut. This can give beginners a chance to get a clear indication of what the correct form is and is a great reminder to more advanced students also. The trainer can move through the group and adjust the technique while counting. This is particularly useful when working combinations with 3 or more moves.

*When teaching children avoid using 'left and right.' Especially 3 - 8 year olds, don't worry too much about which arm or leg they are using. If anything, refer to 'front and back'. Only use one focus pad when working with children.*



# Rule 17

# Negative Motivation

**Negative motivation is threatening some kind of penance for not working hard enough.**

For example: *You are not working hard enough, you can do another set of a hundred.*

Become a great, positive force in your class by always encouraging and offering positive feedback.

For example: *Your technique is looking great and if you want to keep improving it....*

Making a commitment to never say NO or DON'T. Instead of 'no' I will use 'yes and'. Instead of 'don't' say 'try it this way'.

*A good teacher will do a good class but usually they are not present in the workout enough to feel the needs of the group. An exceptional presenter will operate from presence and being sensitive to the needs of the group without filtering it through their own needs. There is no place for ego and "what's in it for me" when presenting martial arts.*

*"Never berate, only motivate"*



# Rule 18

# Leaving feeling

**Always finish on a high. The client must leave the class with something to talk about. Our clients are our sales team. They are the best source of new clients. Closing your class, always thank the clients and tell them what a great group they were. Then walk around the class and thank them individually. *"That was great, you made it!"***

Make your way to the door and thank them again as they leave. Finish it all properly, empower the clients, give them a piece of your excellence, your power, really make this a special experience.

As the clients are leaving, hand out any marketing flyers or brochures, newsletters or any other relevant material. If you cannot do it personally then have one of the clients do it for you.



# Rule 19

## Recommend extra training

**Outside of the normal workout there must be plenty of opportunity for clients to increase their knowledge and fitness. Every client will strive for personal excellence at a different pace.**

In order to cater for the client that will train once per week and the client that will train at every opportunity there must be a constant stream of extra classes, workshops, private sessions and other contact.

By offering more, then clients can also make friends and socialise which enhances the sense of community and gets the client more attached emotionally, making it harder to leave if they know they are leaving a group of friends also.

*Check what is coming up and constantly promote the events during the class. Clients love to be kept up with what is happening,*

*They need to know...*



# Rule 20 Be professional

The Instructor should portray a professional attitude at all times. Avoid too much familiarity with the clients as this may lead to problems. When addressing clients or the class never be indifferent, aggressive or exceptionally loud with instructions. *Always* be polite and *always* use "please" and "thank you". Clearly demonstrate courtesy and respect at all times.

Do not single clients out in class except to praise. Be careful not to favour any single client. Remember client's names and always address them by name.

*Do not contend issues or argue with clients in your class,* this only reflects poor personal management by the Instructor. If there are any issues to be discussed do it in private after class.

Never criticise clients, only give positive feedback. With all programs try and work in amongst the group giving help and encouragement to all. Make a special note to give encouragement to all new clients. This sense of individual contact is unique to Northstar and separates our programs from others.



# Rule 21

## Always a client never a customer

**It is important here to separate providing a good service with customer service. Everything must be done to run a well-oiled and smooth operation where clients are made to feel welcome and can train and achieve goals in a positive and constructive environment. But, clients always need to remain clients and not customers!!**

*So, though our clients are indeed our customers, first and foremost they are there to enjoy the skills and tools that we can provide them to enhance the quality of their lives, so as long as we are continuing to make a difference in their lives the circle of physical, mental, emotional, spiritual and financial success will always be possible.*

The training is the head of the business and not the tail. Business is about creating a great lifestyle doing something that turns you on and at the same time creating a profitable business model that can maintain your lifestyle and give you the freedom to live your life in accordance with your desires.

The moment they become customers we will have to run the school according to the customers expectations like frequent flyers changing an airlines policy in order to suit their own needs. So the clients remain clients and the instructor-client relationship prevails no matter what.



*“Congratulations on getting through the book. Now all you need to do is put the 21 rules into practice and watch your business grow!”*

Andy



Please visit my martial arts school website at:  
<http://www.northstarmartialarts.com.au>

If you like to get in touch please email me at:  
[Andy@northstarmartialarts.com.au](mailto:Andy@northstarmartialarts.com.au)

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