

Foreword

Osteotomies of the Foot and Ankle



Vincent J. Mandracchia, DPM, MS
Consulting Editor

If you can dodge a wrench, you can dodge a ball.

—Patches O’Houlihan, 2004

My 11-year-old son kept bugging me about taking Tae Kwon Do lessons. Finally, after months of begging and pleading, I told my wife to go ahead and sign him up for classes. About a week later, my wife informed me that we all were registered for Tae Kwon Do. I looked at her and said, “define *all*.” Subsequently, I have been involved in the martial arts, with my entire family, for the past 6 months.

We are very fortunate to have instructors who understand the martial arts—not just the forms, blocks, kicks, and punches, but more importantly, the philosophy, the way of life. They spend as much time explaining the role of Tae Kwon Do in every aspect of life as they do the self-defense aspects. This is a great experience for my children and, quite frankly, for me as well. One very important understanding is the concept of yin and yang, the balance in one’s life. The yin and yang represent opposites, opposing one another in their actions, and each of these opposites produces the other. According to Chinese philosophy, the production of yin from yang and yang from yin occurs cyclically and constantly, so that no one principle continually dominates the other or determines the other.

So, this got me to thinking about podiatry. I have been actively involved in the training of students and residents for the past 28 years, and I wonder if I have taught them the application of yin and yang, for I believe that there should be a balance in our professional lives. Have I taught them, through my word and own actions, that podiatric medicine, being a doctor is a way of life, a lifestyle that exudes compassion, understanding, empathy, and humility in our everyday encounters? Have I shown them the balance between family and profession, or is it just about ego, finances, and prestige? Isn't there balance within our own profession, conservative versus surgical care, decision making taking the patient and their lifestyle into account? As I look around me I see tremendous application of this balance in life.

I guess you can teach an old dog new tricks. I know that I will be approaching students and residents differently. I have a better understanding of balance in my life, and as I endeavor to achieve that balance, I will attempt to help the students and residents achieve the same. It is a simple yet profoundly wonderful concept.

Vincent J. Mandracchia, DPM, MS

Broadlawns Medical Center

1801 Hickman Road

Des Moines, IA 50314, USA

E-mail address: vmandracchia@broadlawns.org