

## Things

Written by Mark Toorock

Thursday, 14 October 2010 17:00 - Last Updated Monday, 13 December 2010 22:00

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Nathaniel Kauffman started this as a [forum post](#) , and we at APK felt that his message was important and relevant enough for Traceurs and Freerunners to ask him to make it into a full fledged article. Read more for Nathaniel's view on "Things".

'Things'. I consider 'things' to be people, objects, concepts, religions, etc. Pretty much any noun, abstract or concrete. Every day, humans wake up and rely upon things outside of themselves. These 'things' vary from other people, your bed, sciences, and for our purposes, parkour and freerunning. No 'thing' is inherently good or bad. It is merely how you choose to use it or apply it. Also, when using 'things' a transfusion of sorts occur. As a bare human being, devoid of outside influence, you are 100%. All that you are is YOU. However, when for instance you choose to carry that cell phone around, not only do you own that phone, but it that 'thing' owns you. From a PK perspective this could applied to different movements if we are looking at a smaller level. For instance:

I have a fondness for quadrupedal movement. Due to my attachment for this 'thing'(for 'things' are concepts and ideas, not just material items), I may benefit or hinder myself in some way because of it. And this 'thing' has a part of me, just as I have a part of it. I may use it however I please, and the more I use a 'thing', the more it becomes a part of me, and I become a part of it. Eventually, you can become 'one' with the 'thing'. I have known people who have known the use of a knife like they were born with it. However, becoming attached to 'things', whether they be physical or more ephemeral has its disadvantages.

If I were to need to climb, I would be crippled. I have invested so much time into this one 'thing', quadrupedal movement, that I no longer am well rounded and suffer overall. The very 'thing' that helps me now becomes my downfall. If I had not attached myself to this one 'thing' or movement, I would not be in this situation. If someone who is 'one' with their 'thing'(whether it be a knife, gun, nunchuck, etc.), and it is taken away, they are devastated. That very 'thing' has become a very part of them, much as a loved one becomes a part of you. For they are also 'things'.

Becoming attached to the 'thing' for all of its smaller 'things' is illogical. Humans have the ability to pick and choose. For instance: I can love someone very much and still dislike and choose to ignore somewhat negative or unattractive features about them. I do not have to 'love' the fact that my lover does not share my political views. I can attach myself to the 'thing' that is freerunning, and choose to not to do the 'things' that are flips, and take from freerunning what I want. I can use it how I want. I have the power. As Adam McClellan stated so wonderfully:

"The only constant is change, (like you said, we have one name for ourselves, even though every second makes us different and changes us.) That, I believe, is what lies at the root of this. There is one, interconnected discipline, but it is always changing with each individual person. As you said, we elect "things" we like and "things" that help us according to ourselves as individuals, but must be unattached enough to discard old things or accept new things, so

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we can continue to change and therefore continue to grow. That includes movements, philosophies, intentions, etc."

We as traceurs or freerunners are not bound to any 'thing'. Each one of us individually chooses who we are by what we make a part of ourselves. Some may specialize, others may not. Some may flip, others may not. However, we all have the equal ability to choose who we are, and there is no right or wrong here. Someone who is highly specialized runs the risk of being crippled if their 'thing' does not work in a given situation, and a jack of all trades risks not being proficient enough in a given 'thing' since they are more spread out amongst different 'things'. As said prior, the only constant is change. You were born with a name that stays the same, despite the fact that the 'thing' attached to the name(you) has undoubtedly changed. Parkour and freerunning I believe have the same principle apply. Their very meanings change and adapt to each person who makes these 'things' their own.

I wish you all the best of luck in all 'things'. :)

-Nathaniel R. Kauffman