

## Perspective #2 - Chris Kessler

Written by Janine

Saturday, 28 November 2009 12:20 - Last Updated Monday, 13 December 2010 21:50

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*by Chris Kessler*

#### **Self-Analysis:**

Progression can be fast, and it can be slow. However, in my case, it is neither. Progression for me over the past month was simply gathering the will power to continue to push. I was lazy, stagnant, and comfortable: three things that breed inactivity and self-deprecation. I decided to change that, and I haven't looked back.

I am proud of this past month in that I listened to those wiser than me and took the high-road: Waiting. I had injured my back, nearly causing severe damage, and I was frustrated. The problem with many traceurs, and many humans in general, is that we are an impatient race. Before that fall, I had never experienced anything close to an "injury," just your run-of-the-mill scrapes, dings, and bruises. An overall generalization of my thoughts at the time goes as follows, "Am I done with parkour? Is this injury actually going to ruin my training? Will this affect my life as a whole?"

Being a poor college student, with no health insurance, I could not go to a doctor. Not to mention that anyone who is anyone will tell you that back pain is so obscure, that there is no reason to throw your money away on inconclusive diagnoses. So, I did the next best thing: I asked my good friend, Leon Mederos for advice. Leon explained that he went through a similar injury early on in his training and left me with two solid cures: stretching and time. Not exactly what someone in pain wants to hear, but it is what I needed to hear. That is what started my renewal.

#### **Experiences:**

During the past month, I forced myself to do what many have trouble with, and that is rest. The interesting thing about conscious resting, and unconscious inactivity, is that the latter is the result of doing nothing, and the former is the result of active engagement. I began analyzing my training from a mental, almost spiritual, standpoint. I have felt for some time that I am currently stuck on a plateau, and having time off from training gave me time to train my mind.

Meditation. What can be said about meditation? Well it is a lot like parkour. Parkour is about the self. It is about your own flow, your own path, and there is no reason to complicate that with anyone else's mindset but your own. I have discovered that within myself is the capacity for meditation, without needing to consult some online guru on the subject. I find myself trying to clear my mind before certain difficult movements that I know I can do, but won't because of fear.

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While it may seem like I had a fine time of doing nothing, the days I spent resting were probably the most frustrating of my life. I had set up a jam for Halloween, just two weeks or so after my fall, and surprisingly had a pretty good turn out. We moved out to the first spot, and I noticed a kong to precision that I had never seen before. Now, it wasn't that large or anything, just an interesting little place for movement. I did the kong and felt a stabbing pain in my lower back. Needless to say, I did nothing for the rest of the jam. After that, I stopped going to jams, which was very hard to do, especially since I'm an officer of the club at my school. I felt pretty bad about my situation and felt that I was losing valuable training time. However, I just stretched and conditioned as best I could until I could once again go out and jam.

A month and a half after my fall, I went home from school for Thanksgiving break. I had orchestrated a jam for all of my old friends. It felt good to be back in my old town, visiting my old spots. I had found these spots and started the scene there. What I find interesting now is that, while this was the first jam I had been to in a month, the thought of my back hurting was nonexistent. I felt no pain. It was a great jam with a bunch of great friends. With my new knowledge about patience and mental clarity, I was able to attempt a same level kong to precision that I have always wanted to do, but been too afraid to try. While I didn't actually land it, I was able to nearly land in a crane position, which is more than I've ever been able to do before. I had decided that I would not make any excuses for myself and that if I was still unable to fully land the movement, I would be satisfied. And I was.

### Reflections:

Having a tremendous amount of constant pain in your lower back can make you feel slightly hopeless. However, I made sure to not let it get me down. I have many great friends that stuck with me through it, offering advice as well as the right amount of pushing that helped me get through the pain. Being a part of a great community like the Virginia Tech Parkour club has helped me realize that pain is a finite occurrence and will not last forever.

I am thankful for my pain and the realizations that came with it. We should never dwell on the "what ifs" and we should never just be waiting to feel better. You must embrace your pain and be thankful for the time before your injury. Always be aware of the steps that you go through in your life, so that when you heal, you can appreciate the time you spent not being able to train. It would be sad to live a life of waiting. Instead, I urge us all to live in the here and the now, through strife and calm. Take all of your days as gifts and find the good in them all. Enduring pain is a lesson in patience. Do not fight against an injury and do not let it get you down.

*Be like water making its way through cracks. Do not be assertive, but adjust to the object, and you shall find a way round or through it. If nothing within you stays rigid, outward things will disclose themselves.*

□

*Empty your mind, be formless. Shapeless, like water. If you put water into a cup, it becomes the cup. You put water into a bottle and it becomes the bottle. You put it in a teapot it becomes the teapot. Now, water can flow or it can crash. Be water my friend.*

-Bruce Lee

Adapt to your environment, your pain, your calmness. Adapt and you will overcome. Adapt

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and you will live without regrets. Never dwellâ€™ simplyâ€™ adapt.