

THE JEDI SANCTUARY TRAINING GUIDE FOR NEW MEMBERS

(Updated 29 Dec 05)

WHAT IS JEDIISM?

Jediism is a new age religion that was created as a result of the famous 'Star Wars' series. George Lucas, the writer of 'Star Wars', used aspects of Taoism, Shintoism, Zen Buddhism, Christianity, Mysticism and martial arts like Aikido, Kendo, Iaito, Kung Fu, Tai Chi, and the Medieval Knight's Code of Chivalry, in order to create the 'Jedi Knight' and the philosophy of 'the Force'. According to interviews, George's intention was to create a religion for his 'Star Wars' films that had 'universal appeal'.

The 'Jedi Knight' is a modern version of the Shaolin Monk, the Samari Warrior, and the European Knight, all mixed together. Some consider the Jedi to be a perfect example of the 'Spiritual Warrior' or the 'Peaceful Warrior'. The Jedi religion or philosophy was born as the result of George's borrowing, distilling, and mixing of ancient faiths, and it took on a life of its own. George didn't intend to create an actual religion for people to follow, but it happened anyway! Like the experiment that escaped from the laboratory, Jediism escaped from the Star Wars Episodes I - VI and has become an inspiration, religion, or way of life to tens of thousands of people.

Even though Jediism is a new faith, it is just as real as the ancient faiths and philosophies that it came from. Jediism contains the same spiritual truths as the old faiths, but in a new package that is more 'user friendly' for modern times.

WHAT ARE JEDI?

Jedi are individuals who try to apply the principles and teachings of Jediism in their own lives. Jedi try to contact the Living Force within for guidance. Members of the Jedi Sanctuary call each other "Jedi" to honor the Jedi Knights of Star Wars.

HOW TO BECOME A JEDI?

1. Profess that you are a Jedi and believe that you are a Jedi. You can have other religion(s) as well, but you must also be committed to the Jedi faith. "Remember, your focus determines your reality." - Qui-Gon, Episode I
2. Believe in the Force and vow allegiance to the Force. This means that you will not serve the dark side in any way, shape or form. You will know what is right for you by developing your own inner agreements with the indwelling Living Force.
3. Accept the Jedi teachings that were presented by the Star Wars characters of Yoda, Obi-Wan, Qui-Gon and the other Jedi in 'Star Wars' Episodes I - VI. These characters are fictional, but their teachings are spiritual gems taken from a 'mixture' of real faiths such as Taoism, Buddhism, Mysticism and the Martial Arts, etc. This 'mixture' is what we refer to as 'Jediism'.
4. Associate with other Jedi for their knowledge and support. On-line fellowship is fine and we will be happy to have you in our Jedi Sanctuary Congregation's forum and yahoo group. You really don't have to tell anyone you're a Jedi if you don't want to. It's no ones business but your own. It's your own inner path with the Living Force that you are working on. Jediism is really a private path of inner development.

The Jedi Oath:

"I choose the Jedi path as a way to do that which is right. I choose to be a Jedi to express my allegiance to the Force. I vow to uphold the Jedi teachings, and to henceforth devote my life to the Force. May the Force be with me!"

16 Teachings or Guidelines for Jedi

1. Jedi believe that a calm mind can be achieved through meditation and contemplation. Jedi need to meditate in order to clear their minds. Our minds get 'dirty' and need to be cleaned out daily. We even absorb things from those who are around us, so it's important to have a clear mind. Not every thought that pops in our head is actually ours. We have to be able to discern thoughts and remove the bad ones.

Yoda: "Concentrate, feel the Force flow. Yes, good, calm, yes." (Yoda teaching meditation)-Episode V

Yoda: You will know. When you are calm, at peace, passive. -Episode V

Yoda: "Control, control. You must learn control."

(Yoda teaching Luke discipline in meditation)-Episode V

2. Jedi live in the present; they don't have stress about the future or the past. Jedi focus on the present moment. This isn't as easy as it might seem because the mind always rushes to the future or past and doesn't seem to be content with the eternal present moment. At least when you are stressed out, try to come back to present moment and chill out.

Qui-Gon: "Keep your concentration here and now where it belongs."

Obi-Wan: "Master Yoda says I should be mindful of the future."

Qui-Gon: "But not at the expense of the moment." -Episode I

Qui-Gon: "Concentrate on the moment." -Episode I

3. Jedi feel the Living Force flowing around them. Jedi are spiritually aware of the Force. Jedi are usually sensitive to energy and can feel the Force moving, in the same way that users of Reiki or Qi-Gong can feel Chi moving.

Yoda: "You must feel the Force around you." -Episode V

Obi-Wan: "Be mindful of the Living Force my young Padawan." -Episode I

Obi-Wan: "A Jedi can feel the Force flowing through him." -Episode IV

Yoda: "Reach out. Sense the Force around you." -Episode II

4. Jedi believe in using and trusting their feelings and intuition. Jedi are intuitive and are in touch with the core of their being. They can access the ancient inner knowledge.

Obi-Wan: "Stretch out with your feelings." -Episode IV

Obi-Wan: "Trust your feelings, Luke." -Episode IV.

Qui-Gon: "Feel, don't think. Use your instincts." -Episode I

Yoda: "Use your feelings, you must." -Episode II

Yoda: "Use your feeling, Obi-Wan, and find him you will." -Episode III

5. Jedi believe in being mindful of their thoughts. Jedi keep their thoughts positive. A positive attitude is healthy for both the mind and body. This has been proven by science too. Jedi are mindful and watch their thoughts.

Obi-Wan: "Anakin, you're focusing on the negative again. Be mindful of your thoughts." -Episode II

Qui-Gon: "Don't center on your anxiety, Obi-Wan." -Episode I

Obi-Wan: "Be mindful of your thoughts Anakin. They'll betray you." - Episode II

Mace Windu: "Be mindful of your feelings." -Episode I

Qui-Gon: "Remember: Your focus determines your reality." -Episode I

6. Jedi cultivate Patience in their lives. Yoda tested Luke to see if he had patience, which he didn't at the beginning. But Luke learned to have patience later on. Patience has to be consciously developed over time.

Yoda: "Patience. For the Jedi it is time to eat as well. Eat, eat! -Episode V

Yoda: "I cannot teach him. The boy has no patience." -Episode V

Obi-Wan: "He will learn patience." -Episode V

Qui-Gon: "We shall have patience." -Episode I

7. Jedi try to protect others if possible. Jedi are peaceful warriors. Jedi are also aware being prepared and trained gives them the advantage if they do have to protect others. Most Jedi know at least one form of martial arts or self defense.

Yoda: "Around the remaining Jedi, a perimeter you will make." -Episode II

Qui-Gon: "Your Highness, it is our pleasure to continue to serve and protect you." -Episode I

Qui-Gon: "I cannot fight a war for you, Your Highness, only protect you." - Episode I

8. Jedi are aware of, and avoid the 4 vices that lead to the dark side; Fear, Anger, Aggression, and Hate. If Jedi see these negative emotions manifesting within, they know its time for some meditation to work it out.

Yoda: "Anger, fear, aggression; the dark side of the Force are they." -Episode V

Obi-Wan: "Luke, don't give in to hate. That leads to the dark side." -Episode V

Yoda: "Fear is the path to the dark side. Fear leads to Anger. Anger leads to Hate. Hate leads to suffering." -Episode I

Yoda: "The fear of loss is a path to the dark side." -Episode III

9. Jedi stay physically fit in order to accomplish their mission in life. Fitness is a part of Jediism, but the level of fitness depends on the individual. Yoga, Tai Chi, the Martial Arts, jogging, swimming, etc... are excellent ways to stay fit. Always consult with your physician before starting any fitness program.

Yoda: "Run! Yes. A Jedi's strength flows from the Force."
(Yoda was giving Luke physical training)-Episode V

10. Jedi trust in the will of the Force and accept the fact that nothing happens by accident. Jedi believe in destiny, and that there is some method to this madness of the creation. There is a 'soul-plan' for every person, but it's hard to understand these things from our level.

Qui-Gon: "Finding him was the will of the Force. I have no doubt of that."
-Episode I

Qui-Gon: "Nothing happens by accident." -Episode I

Obi-Wan: "In my experience, there's no such thing as luck." -Episode IV

Obi-Wan: "You cannot escape your Destiny." -Episode VI

Obi-Wan: "Don't worry. The Force will guide us." -Episode I

Qui-Gon: "I'm sure another situation will present itself." -Episode I (Qui-Gon was trusting in the Force because there wasn't enough money to buy parts)

11. Jedi work on 'letting go' of attachments and train themselves on this. The fear of loss of attachments leads to the dark side, so a 'letting go' and 'trusting the Force' attitude needs to be developed gradually over time.

Yoda: "Attachment leads to jealousy. The shadow of greed, that is."
-Episode III

Yoda: "Train yourself to let go of everything you fear to lose." -Episode III

Anakin: "Attachment is forbidden. Possession is forbidden." -Episode II

12. Jedi believe that the soul survives death. Jedi do not mourn those who pass. There will always be some mourning, which is only natural. But Jedi avoid the extremes of mourning that can be so debilitating. We trust the Force to take care of our departed loved ones.

Yoda: "Death is a natural part of life. Rejoice for those around you who transform into the Force. Mourn them, do not. Miss them, do not."
-Episode III

Yoda: "Luminous beings are we, not this crude matter." -Episode V

Yoda: "One who has returned from the netherworld of the Force to train me, your old Master, Qui-Gon Jinn." -Episode III

Yoda: "Twilight is upon me and soon night must fall. That is the way of things...the way of the Force." -Episode VI

13. Jedi are encouraged to use the Force, but only for reasons of training, defense and knowledge. Jedi never use the Force in order to show off or to impress others, like Anakin did. A Jedi hides his/her powers from public view to help preserve humility.

Obi-Wan: "Use the Force, Luke." -Episode IV

Yoda: "Use the Force. Yes. Now the stone. Feel it. Concentrate."

-Episode V (Luke using the Force during training.)

Yoda: "A Jedi uses the Force for knowledge and defense, never for attack."

-Episode V

Yoda: "Through the Force, things you will see. Other places, the future, the past, old friends long gone." -Episode V

Luke: "I don't believe it." Yoda: "That is why you fail." -Episode V

14. Compassion and love are central to a Jedi's life. Jedi believe that the core of everything is love. We have to love ourselves first and foremost, and then let that love gravitate outwards to the whole creation.

Anakin: "Compassion, which I would define as unconditional love is central to a Jedi's life. So you might say that we are encouraged to love." -Episode II

15. Jedi are committed and serious about Jediism and the Jedi cause. Jediism means a lot to the Jedi, and Jedi take action on this path for self improvement, and to help others. Jedi are both the witnesses and protectors of Jediism.

Yoda: "A Jedi must have the deepest commitment, the most serious mind." -Episode V

16. Jedi are guardians of peace and justice. Jedi deeply believe in finding peaceful solutions to problems and are expert negotiators. Jedi embrace justice, which means protecting and preserving the basic rights of others. Empathy and compassion are so important because without them we can't understand how others feel when they are injured by injustice.

Obi-Wan: "For over a thousand generations the Jedi Knights were the guardians of peace and justice in the Old Republic." -Episode IV

Mace Windu: "The Jedi are keepers of the peace." -Episode II

Opening Logos: The Supreme Chancellor has secretly dispatched two Jedi Knights, the guardians of peace and justice in the Galaxy to settle the conflict. -Episode I

Jedi Sanctuary Tenets of Faith

1. We believe that the Force is an all pervading Universal Energy that creates, binds together, and maintains everything in existence.
2. We believe that the Natural Order of the universe comes from the Force.
3. We believe that the Force is, and probably always will be, a mystery.

The Jedi Creed

Jedi are the guardians of peace and justice in the galaxy.
Jedi use their powers to defend and protect, never to attack others.
Jedi respect all life, in any form.
Jedi serve others rather than rule over them, for the good of the galaxy.
Jedi seek to improve themselves through knowledge and training.

The Jedi Code

There is no emotion; there is peace.
There is no ignorance; there is knowledge.
There is no passion; there is serenity.
There is no death; there is the Force.

Assorted Teachings from the Jedi Sanctuary Congregation

A Jedi Never Attacks

Yoda: A Jedi uses the Force for knowledge and defense, never for attack. -Episode V

Discussion:

Yoda teaches us that a Jedi uses the Force for knowledge and defense, never for attack. If you are attacking someone, in words or actions, you are allowing the dark side to gain control. We have to consider verbal attacks too, and even mental attacks.

First we attack that person with our thoughts, then verbally and then physically. It may start by thinking that someone is an 'arse' because they have said or done something to make you angry. Then it progresses...you call that person an arse to his/her face. Then comes the physical attack because you believe that person is an arse, and needs to be taught a lesson! It's all of the dark side.

Defense is a different type of energy, whether it's mental, verbal or physical defense. But even while defending, we have to watch out for anger and aggression. If you are correctly defending, you will stay calm and at peace with yourself throughout the attack.

The attacker will probably try to stir-up some anger in you, so be on the guard. If you remain calm, relaxed and at peace during an attack, you will really throw off the attacker. They will truly be baffled and it might bring a quick end to the attack. Staying calm during an attack or fight (mental, verbal or physical) is a Jedi's goal. I didn't say it would be easy. MTFBWY!

Fear

KI-ADI: Your thoughts dwell on your mother.

ANAKIN: I miss her.

YODA: Afraid to lose her...I think.

ANAKIN: (a little angry) What's that got to do with anything?

YODA: Everything. Fear is the path to the dark side... fear leads to anger... anger leads to hate... hate leads to suffering. -Episode I

Discussion:

Jedis should never underestimate what fear can do. The fear of losing a family member or a loved one can get a terrible grip on us. We can become paranoid because of fear. We can lose our balance because of fear. Some people are even afraid to leave their home, or afraid to go anywhere alone because of fear. Some people are crippled because fear has gripped their mind and it won't let go. Anakin was fearful that his mother might die and leave him all alone. In Anakin's case, fear did eventually lead to anger against the Sand people. The Sand people captured his mother and tortured her. He came to her rescue and freed her, only to have her die in his arms. His anger became hatred, and his hatred led to untold suffering. He wiped out a whole village of Sand people to avenge the death of his mother. He attacked and destroyed instead of sticking to the Jedi way of just defending. He killed male, female and children out of anger and hatred. This was the beginning of his conversion to the dark side.

Perfect trust in the Force destroys fear. If we trust in the will of the Force and surrender to it, we can defeat fear. There is a soul plan for every creature, and that plan is in the soul's best interest. It may not seem that way from our perspective, but everything happens as it was meant to happen for a reason. We have to surrender to the will of the Force and believe that all will be well for us. Only then can we defeat fear and have peace of mind. MTFBWY!

Nature

Yoda: You must feel the Force around you. Here, between you...me...the tree...the rock...everywhere! -Episode V

Discussion:

We often get so busy with getting to work, the office, traffic jams, and family problems, etc..., that we lose contact with Nature. Jedis view Nature as something sacred and as a living expression of the Force. Nature is our great teacher too.

The Force is in everything, all around you. We should make an effort to spend time in Nature everyday, even if it's just for a few minutes. You don't have to go to Churches or Temples made of wood and stone to worship the Force. Jedis prefer to go out and sit in the woods and listen to a bird's song. The Force can be heard from the leaves rattling in the wind, a cricket's soothing melody, a Hawk's cry, or a Dove's coo.

People are a part of Nature, but most people have lost contact with Nature, the Force and themselves. Peaceful energy and harmony comes from the animals, trees and plants in Nature. This peaceful energy and harmony can also radiate from you if you are in touch with yourself and at peace with yourself. If you don't have peace with yourself, you won't have peace anywhere you go.

During the recent Tsunami, anthropologists believe that ancient knowledge of the movement of wind, sea and birds may have combined to save the five indigenous tribes on the Indian archipelago of Andaman and Nicobar islands. Their tribal elders ordered them to higher ground before the Tsunami hit their islands. They were in tune with nature and it saved them.

May the Force be with you!

Perceiving Through the Heart

Obi-Wan: "Your eyes can deceive you. Don't trust them. Stretch out with your feelings."

Obi-Wan: "Trust your feelings, Luke." -Episode IV

Discussion:

Obi-Wan was always trying to teach Luke to trust his feelings. Luke finally learned this lesson while he was passing through the dangerous maze of enemy corridors guarding the Death Star. The distant voice of Obi-Wan echoed, "Trust your feelings, Luke!" Luke then turned off the computer targeting mechanism just in time to release the only missile that destroys the Death Star. He turned off the computer and trusted his feelings.

Jedi need to develop their ability to perceive or feel things through their hearts instead of depending solely on their 'computer' or brain. Our over active minds seem to block our perception of the heart. Modern society seems to take us away from the heart and our feelings in general. We are too busy at work, earning a living, driving cars, telephone calls, watching television, DVDs, computers, etc... We don't seem to have time to connect with ourselves or even with the people around us. These modern things are all distracters of our inner perception. There has to be a balance. A proper balance between feeling/perceiving and thinking is essential.

Many people in modern society live totally in their minds and don't even know how to perceive through their hearts anymore. They may have known how as children but forgot, or were discouraged by parents, friends, peers or teachers. Here are some possible symptoms of someone who only perceives through their mind: sarcastic, skeptical, critical, and unemotional. Some people even experience a sense of hopelessness, or a lack of purpose in life or self fulfillment.

Webster's dictionary defines the heart as "the center of the total personality, especially with reference to intuition, feeling, or emotion; the center of emotion; the central part, the core". The head is the seat of the intellect, thinking, analyzing, and memorizing. The heart gives us feelings like compassion, care, gratitude, joy, love, forgiveness, and also the hidden knowledge called intuition or that 'gut feeling'.

In order to contact the heart we have to direct our focus or consciousness away from our minds and into the core of our being called the heart in the west, but also known as 'Hara' in Japanese, or 'Tan Tien' in Chinese. There is a subtle connection between the heart and the mind, and you can learn to use this connection in time.

Perceiving Through the Heart (cont.)

Suggested Exercise:

Some people recommend going to a quiet, peaceful place where you won't be distracted. Visualize that your focus is moving from your mind to your heart area, or the core of your being. Keep your focus there for at least 10 seconds and relax. Ask your heart or core the question you need answered and then perceive or 'feel' the answer that your heart is giving. Allow a few extra moments for you mind to fully translate the message from your heart. It will take some practice at first, but soon you'll be a professional because it is a natural process. MTFBWY!

The Deadly Four

YODA: "A Jedi's strength flows from the Force. But beware of the dark side. Anger... fear... aggression. The dark side are they.

Easily they flow, quick to join you in a fight." -Episode V

Obi-Wan: "Luke, don't give in to hate. That leads to the dark side."

-Episode V

Yoda: "Fear is the path to the dark side. Fear leads to Anger. Anger leads to Hate. Hate leads to suffering." -Episode I

Yoda: "The fear of loss is a path to the dark side." -Episode III

Discussion: When a Jedi is in tune and in harmony with the Force within himself, he is also in tune with the greater Universal Force. Great strength and energy comes from this connection with the Force.

But then Yoda warns that there are four ways to block this connection: Anger, fear, hate, and aggression. These four negative emotions poison our system. Even modern medical experts warn about the ill effects of anger, fear, hate and aggression. They actually destroy white blood cells and weaken our immune system! They hinder our inner peace and harmony, and break off our conscious connection with the Living Force. Who needs that?

It's too easy to give in to Anger if you are in fight. If your purpose is to defend, and that should be the only time a Jedi is involved in a fight, then it is possible to avoid Anger. If you stay centered and see your opponent's actions as misguided energy that simply needs to be re-directed, then you can avoid Anger. Remember not to take the attack personal.

Fear comes from a lack of total trust in the Force. When you are really in contact with the Force, then you will have total trust that all will go well, no matter what. Aggression is anger in action, and is a misdirected energy. If you are able to control anger, you will also be able to control aggression. Webster defines hate as: intense hostility and aversion usually deriving from fear, anger, or sense of injury: extreme dislike or antipathy.

Jedi always try to find a way to avoid a fight if possible. They will try to influence their opponent, through words or actions, in order to turn them away from aggression. If that fails, then a Jedi is ready to defend. MTFBWY!

A Serious Mind

Yoda: A Jedi must have the deepest commitment, the most serious mind.
-Episode I and Episode V

Discussion:

This is interesting because Yoda said the exact same quote in both Episode's I and V. In Episode I, he was talking to young Anakin. In Episode V he was talking to Luke, Anakin's son. What does Yoda mean when he says "The deepest commitment" and "the most serious mind"? I think it's about a Jedi's general approach to life.

The dictionary says that commitment is: The act of committing, pledging, or engaging oneself; a pledge, promise, obligation, involvement or engagement. Yoda is saying: be committed, don't give up, apply yourself, stick with it. Jedis must have discipline when they under take a course of action. Without discipline nothing is accomplished. We have to apply ourselves in all the endeavors that we undertake.

A 'serious mind' means a Jedi should have a serious and realistic view of the world. A Jedi should not try to run away from reality through drugs or alcohol, but should face the world bravely. We have to look at the facts. We have to size up the world for what it is, without using rose colored glasses. We have to wake up and smell the coffee! We have to ask ourselves questions like; What is reality? Why am I here? What is my purpose in life? Why is the world like it is? Just being in the world prompts many such questions to a serious seeker of the truth.

Without a serious and sober approach to the truth, a Jedi can't meditate, contemplate or know himself/herself. However, this doesn't mean that Jedis aren't allowed to have fun and joke around. Even Yoda joked around with Luke and Obi-Wan. We have to keep our sense of humor too. We can't take ourselves too seriously. I would say, 'balance in all things'. We should have a balance between seriousness, fun, work, contemplation and meditation, family or social life, working out, practicing martial arts, and everything else. We have to live in the world and be Jedis too.
May the Force be with you!

Unlearn What You Have Learned

LUKE: Master, moving stones around is one thing. This is totally different.

YODA: No! No different! Only different in your mind. You must unlearn what you have learned. -Episode V

Discussion:

Yoda was trying to teach Luke to open up his mind, and to think outside of the box. He wanted Luke to understand that anything is possible with the Force. If you have always been taught that it's impossible to do something, it's hard to believe otherwise. Unlearning what we have learned and accepted as the truth since childhood is difficult! But not impossible.

All of the feats that were done by Jedi Knights in Star Wars have been accomplished by Mystics, Yogis, and Masters of the Martial Arts in our own world, according to reports from witnesses. Mystics, Yogis and Masters have flown through the air, moved objects with their minds, walked on water and fire, survived without oxygen for long periods of time, deflected arrows with swords, etc... There is nothing new about what the Jedis accomplished.

The "whole in every part" nature of the hologram theory, in a nutshell, states that all the wonders of the Universe are also found in the smallest of particles of the Universe, to include you and me. The possibilities for everyone are unlimited. May the Force be with you!

Your Focus Determines Your Reality

QUI-GON: Always remember, your focus determines your reality.

Discussion:

Qui-Gon was not allowed to train Anakin. The Jedi Council had not approved his request, at that point, but Anakin was allowed to stay with him and watch him. Qui-Gon told Anakin that his focus would determine his reality. He would become that which he desired and dreamed for.

This reminds me of the story of Grey Owl, British born Archie Belaney, who became a Native American. The story took place back in the 1930's. One day he was being awarded by a Sioux Chief for his literary contributions to Native Americans. Few people knew that he was a white man at that time, and the Sioux's had never seen him in person. Anyhow, when he walked into the large tee pee the main Sioux Chief stood before him and greeted him. The Chief kept on looking at him and studying him for quite a few moments, and finally busted out laughing. Grey Owl didn't need to tell him that he wasn't Native American by birth because the Chief saw it. Soon everyone in the entire tee pee busted out laughing.

They were enjoying the irony and paradox of the most famous Indian of their time being a white man! After the initial shock, the Native Americans embraced him as one of their own. The Chief removed an intricately beaded neckpiece from around his own neck and placed it around the neck of Grey Owl, which symbolized his being truly one with the Native Americans and a worthy spokesman for them. He then said, "Men become what they dream. You have dreamed well." There are many 'white' Native Americans now and many people from all over the world have adopted the Native American religion as their own. I have met both German and Russian Native Americans in Europe.

Here is another quote that applies: "We are what we think; as we desire so do we become! By our thoughts, desires, and habits, we either ascend to the full divine dignity of our nature, or we descend to suffer and learn."
- J. Todd Ferrier

I think this all applies to Jediism. By our focus, our dreams, our thoughts, and our desires we eventually become that which we desire and long for.
MTFBWY!

There Is No Try

LUKE: (focusing, quietly) All right, I'll give it a try.

YODA: No! Try not. Do. Or do not. There is no try. -Episode V

Discussion:

Yoda was trying to teach Luke not to be 'wishy washy' because 'wishy washy' is not the way of the Force. Jedis make a firm decision from the core of their being and make it happen. When Jedis desire something, there is focused energy and discipline behind their decision.

The energy of 'I'll try it' is different from 'I'll do it'. For example, small children and animals can feel the difference between the two methods. If you are trying to teach or train them, they perceive the energy behind the words. They can feel 'the firm' or 'not so firm' energy that is coming from you. If you are training a dog, you can't say "Rex, I want you to try this, ok?" Rex will only look at you like you're a dumb human. But if you know what you want and firmly say "Rex, do this!" Rex will understand. It's the same with small children. They will perceive and know if you are solid in your decision, or if you are 'wishy washy'.

You have to firmly know what you want, and project that decision with confidence from the core of your being. Jedis make it happen. There is no try. May the Force be with you!

Hard To See

Yoda: Hard to see, the dark side is. -Episode II

Discussion:

Yoda and the other Jedi Masters had a difficult time seeing the dark side. They were highly trained to use the Force but the dark side had eclipsed their vision of what was really happening in the Republic.

The quote also applies to us. We have a hard time seeing our own dark side. Why is that? Sometimes we don't see it until its almost too late. It could be drugs, alcohol, smoking, harmful relationships, or self destructive behavior, fear, anger, hatred, prejudice, etc. Many times we just don't see it until the snowball effect makes it so large that it rolls right over us! By then it's hard to control.

Daily contemplation and meditation are important because a Jedi has to sort through his/her actions, thoughts, feelings and emotions. I have a virus scanner on my computer and it sorts through the hard drive and every file. It takes some time but the end results are worth it.

We have to do the same thing everyday or else we will loose our ability to see what is going on within us. Feelings and incidents can become suppressed deep inside us. We have to stay on top of our feelings and emotions and question everything. Why do I feel this way? What caused me to react like that? Why did I say that? Why did I do that? The ultimate goal is inner peace and harmony. MTFBWY!

Luminous Beings

YODA: Luminous beings are we... (Yoda pinches Luke's shoulder)...
not this crude matter. -Episode V

Discussion:

The existence of the soul is very much a part of Jedi Teachings, and so is life after death. Yoda said that our true nature is not crude matter; we are really Luminous Beings. Of course, he was talking about our spirit or soul. The soul survives the death of the body and is eternal. It is the very life of the body.

According to Star Wars, Jedi Masters continue to instruct their students, even after they leave their physical bodies. I'm sure that Lucas got this idea from Mysticism. In Mysticism, the 'Radiant Form of the Master' appears to disciples in order to guide them to higher spiritual development. The concept of the 'Radiant Master' who appears to disciples in order to guide them is ancient, and appears in many eastern teachings.

We are luminous, radiant beings and our goal is to do the will of the Force. Someone once said "We are not human beings having a spiritual experience; we are spiritual beings having a human experience." I think this saying is true. May the Force be with you!

Nothing Happens by Accident

QUI-GON: Our meeting was not a coincidence. Nothing happens by accident.

ANAKIN: You mean I get to go with you in your starship?!

QUI-GON: Anakin, training to be a Jedi will not be an easy challenge. And if you succeed, it will be a hard life.

ANAKIN: But it's what I want. What I've always dreamed about. Can I go, Mom?!

SHMI: Anakin, this path has been placed before you. The choice is yours alone.

ANAKIN: I want to do it. -Episode I

Discussion:

Qui-Gon believed in destiny and that nothing happens by accident. He believed that the Force had guided him to find Anakin. He thought that Anakin was the 'Chosen One' who would restore the balance. Later, before the Jedi Council, Qui-Gon stated: "Finding him was the will of the Force...I have no doubt of that."

From these statements we can conclude that the Jedi believed in destiny and that a benevolent Force was guiding events. Some Jedi's disagreed with Qui-Gon, but tolerated his different views. In the same way, we the modern Jedi view the Force differently, and we must learn to tolerate these differences of beliefs.

Qui-Gon warned Anakin that Jedi training would be difficult, and that Jedi's have a hard life. But Anakin wanted to meet that challenge, and his mother Shmi allowed him to make his own choice. She encouraged him to follow his own heart. She knew that Anakin was destined for greater things. I'm not saying that you have to believe in destiny and guidance from the Force. But the Episodes do support destiny, but it's your choice if you want to believe in it or not. MTFBWY!

The Dark Side versus the Light Side

LUKE: Is the dark side stronger?

YODA: No...no...no. Quicker, easier, more seductive.

LUKE: But how am I to know the good side from the bad?

YODA: You will know. When you are calm, at peace, passive. -Episode V

Discussion:

There are some great Jedi lessons in these few lines. First of all Yoda taught Luke that the dark side of the Force (or the dark side of one's self) is not stronger than the light side. But the dark side it is easier, quicker and more seductive. For example, it's easier to get angry if someone insults you than to stay calm and at peace with yourself. That's just how it is. You have to work on yourself in order to stay calm during insults.

How can we tell the difference between the light side and the dark side? Yoda explained that you will know that you are with the light side because you will be at peace with yourself, calm and passive. A Jedi should base his/her decisions and actions on this test.

The opposite is true with the dark side: you won't be at peace with yourself. You will be mentally agitated. You will tend to be aggressive. You will also know that it's the dark side because it will be easier, quicker and more seductive. It may be easier to tell a lie than tell the truth, or to cheat or steal than to earn an honest living, but you won't be at peace with it.

You will not be at peace with yourself when you are full of anger or rage either. It may take you hours or days to calm down again. You may just have a temporary slip to the dark side. Catch it and correct it immediately. Try to 'nip it in the bud' before it becomes a habit or obsession. You have to confront this anger and challenge it. Find its roots within yourself and remove them.

It's the same with fear. Are you at peace with yourself when you have fear? Or when you are greedy? Or when you are jealous? You have to make a choice: either you control the dark side emotions or they will control you. MTFBWY!

The Here and Now

QUI-GON: Don't center on your anxiety, Obi-Wan. Keep your concentration here and now where it belongs.

OBI-WAN: Master Yoda says I should be mindful of the future...

QUI-GON:but not at the expense of the moment. Be mindful of the Living Force, young Padawan. -Episode I

Discussion:

Here Qui-Gon is trying to teach Obi-Wan that Jedis need to live in the present so that we don't miss what the Force is trying to tell us through nature, our surroundings and other people. Living in the present helps us to enjoy life better too. Why should we be stressed out about the future? Why should we be burdened about the past? Our connection to the Force is in the eternal present moment.

We should be aware of the signs of nature, which can be very subtle. For example: Are the birds singing? Are the crickets chirping? Is everything or everyone acting normal? How do we feel right now? What are we really seeing? We have to learn to read the signs of nature, but if we are mentally off in the future planning next week's activities, it won't be possible.

When you are driving your car in a new city for the first time and you are not exactly sure which way to go, you are probably living in the present. You turn off the radio and pay attention to what is going on because you don't want to get lost. You see what is ahead of you, what is to your sides and what is behind you. This is a good example of living in the present.

The problem seems to be that our brains are too big and too active and our thoughts are always dashing to the future or the past. The only true reality is the present. The future is only a 'mental concept' that humans have developed in order to make plans for survival. The past is no longer reality and is forever gone and unchangeable, and is not worth dwelling on either. Of course we have to be realistic about this. Sometimes we have to plan ahead for careers, finances, retirement, and other activities. We have to remember past events too. However, we shouldn't become obsessed with the future or the past. The present is where the living Force is. The present is where we need to keep our consciousness. May the Force be with you!

The Will of the Force

QUI-GON: I request the boy be tested.

YODA: Trained as a Jedi, you request for him?

QUI-GON: Finding him was the will of the Force...I have no doubt of that. There is too much happening here...

MACE WINDU: Bring him before us, then.

YODA: Tested he will be. -Episode I

Discussion:

Qui-Gon believed that finding Anakin Skywalker was the will of the Force. So many events happened which proved this to Qui-Gon beyond a doubt. He believed that Anakin was the one who, according to Jedi prophecies, would restore balance to the Force.

Qui-Gon was a Jedi who viewed the Force as a 'Benevolent Energy' with a will. Jedi Masters talked about destiny in other Episodes, and now there are discussions of Jedi prophecy in Episode I. These things all project a more personal side to the Force.

I feel that opinions and beliefs about the Force vary to some degree among the Jedi, and that this variance is acceptable. After all, the Force is, and always will be a mystery! May the Force be with you!

What do Jedis Do?

LUKE: What is it?

OBI-WAN: Your father's lightsaber. This is the weapon of a Jedi Knight. Not as clumsy or as random as a blaster.

OBI-WAN: An elegant weapon for a more civilized time. For over a thousand generations the Jedi Knights were the guardians of peace and justice in the Old Republic. Before the dark times, before the Empire.

Discussion:

Obi-wan taught Luke that Jedis were the guardians of peace and justice. According to the dictionary a guardian is 'a person who guards, protects, or preserves'. Jedis strive to preserve the peace and protect rightfulness. Jedis work to stop warring among nations, groups or individuals. Jedis want to ensure that people are treated rightfully and fairly; this is justice. They try to restore the natural order of peace and harmony wherever they go.

Jedis can do this on many levels. First of all, they have to achieve peace and rightfulness within themselves. Then they can restore peace and justice among their own friends and families. A Jedi has to take care of his/her own love ones first. Next will be his/her community, state, country, and planet. Jedis use their devotion and commitment to the Force to accomplish all of this. May the Force be with you!

The Force Will Guide Us

Qui-Gon: "Don't worry. The Force will guide us." -Episode I

Qui-Gon: "Concentrate on the moment, feel, don't think, use your instincts." -Episode I

Discussion:

Qui-Gon used the Force for guidance. He had an inner connection to the Force and always trusted his feelings. Jedis developed the skill of 'feeling' to a fine art. They were always in touch with their feelings. Unlimited knowledge is available to us within ourselves. We have to make an effort to become conscious of our inner connection to the Force. The connection has always been there, but for some reason most people don't take advantage of it.

If you look at Nature, you quickly realize that animals have the ability to tap into the inner Force. Wild Geese use it for navigational guidance. All migratory birds use it. All animals use it to help them survive. Humans seem to be the only creature that has difficulties connecting to the inner Force. As Jedis, we need to work on developing this 'feeling' skill. This theme is repeated often in Jediism to help us remember: 'feel, don't think'.
MTFBWY!

Points of View

Obi-Wan Kenobi: "You are going to find that many of the truths we cling to depend greatly on our own point of view." -Episode VI

Here Obi-Wan was trying to teach Luke about different points of view. Luke was troubled because Obi-Wan and Yoda had always told him that Darth Vader killed his Father. When Luke found out that Darth Vader was in fact his Father, he felt confused. From Obi-Wan's point of view, Anakin died the moment he became Darth Vader. Obi-Wan felt that he had been truthful to Luke, according his point of view.

Many things are not totally true or totally false, and we may or may not be able to judge the truth of something. Things are not always black and white. The most famous example of perceptions is found in Plato's 'The Republic' and is called the cave allegory. Socrates is talking to Glaucon, Plato's brother about it.

Socrates: "Let's compare our own education and understanding of the world to people in a cave—to human beings in an underground, cave-like dwelling. From childhood on, the people who live in this cave have their legs and necks chained so that they can see only straight ahead in front of them. The chains keep them from turning their heads in any other direction.

"The only light in the cave is from a fire burning far above the people and behind them. Between the fire and the chained people there's a road, built on a kind of stage structure such as you find in theaters—again above and behind the people—along which move other people and animals, some carrying things, some not, some speaking, some not."

The discussion goes on and on about the shadows from the above description being perceived as reality by the cave dwellers. When the cave dwellers finally leave the cave and see the reality of the outside world, they have a hard time accepting the truth.

Then Socrates sums it all up:

"Let's take this whole allegory and apply it to everything we've said so far. What we see with our eyes and experience through our senses is like the cave, while the sun, the center of the universe, is like the fire that illumines the cave. As you probably expect—and I agree with your expectations—the ascent from the cave is like the soul's ascent to the Realm of Ideas.

Points of View (cont.)

"Of course, just because we agree on this doesn't make it true; there may be some god or power somewhere who knows the truth about these things. But this is the way it appears to me: that of all the subjects of human knowledge, the last and most difficult to be seen is the Idea of the Good. But once seen, it is clear that the Idea of the Good is the source of everything. In the visible realm, it's the source of physical light, and in the consciousness realm, it's the source of truth and wisdom. And any person who wants to act with justice, either personally or publicly, must see it."
MTFBWY!

Compassion, Marriage, Attachments and Possessions

Padme: Are you allowed to love? I thought that was forbidden for a Jedi?

Anakin: Attachment is forbidden. Possession is forbidden. Compassion, which I would define as unconditional love, is central to a Jedi's life, so you might say we are encouraged to love. -Episode II

Yoda: "Attachment leads to jealousy. The shadow of greed, that is."

-Episode III

Yoda: "Train yourself to let go of everything you fear to lose." -Episode III

This is taken from an interesting conversation between Anakin and Padme while they were traveling to Naboo. We can gain some important insights about the Jedi teachings from this conversation.

Compassion is central to a Jedi's life. Compassion is defined in the Cambridge Dictionary as: "a strong feeling of sympathy and sadness for the suffering or bad luck of others and a desire to help them." Compassion is a necessary trait. Jedi must possess compassion in order to help and serve others.

It is also clear from this conversation that the Jedi of the Old Republic lived a lot like Monks. They were not allowed to marry, have possessions or attachments if they wanted to be a Jedi Knight. They lived in Temples, did not receive pay for their work, and their lives were dedicated to serving the Force and the Jedi Order.

We want to avoid any future rebellion and devastation like the Jedi of the Old Republic had with Anakin Skywalker who became Darth Vader. Therefore, Jedi from the Jedi Sanctuary are allowed to marry, have possessions and attachments as long as they maintain their balance.

Normal attachments are to be expected in life and are acceptable as long as we stay well balanced. But when we become obsessive, possessive, jealous and controlling towards our attachments, then we are moving towards the dark side. We have to train ourselves to let go. How can you feel the Living Force when you are obsessed with another person or thing? How can you meditate or have a clear mind?

We must be careful that our attachments don't control and possess us. We must always keep our balance. Of course, Jedi can still choose to live a monk-type lifestyle if they want to, but it's not mandatory in the Jedi Sanctuary Congregation. MTFBWY!

Jedi Help Others

“Jedi serve others rather than rule over them.” - The Jedi Code

The way of the Jedi is to help others. You can see this theme repeated again and again in the Star Wars Episodes. How many times did Han, Leia, Luke, Obi-Wan, Qui-Gon, and the other Jedi stick out their necks to selflessly help others?

Think about the Clone Wars and how the Jedi jumped in to save Anakin, Obi-Wan and Padme, with no thought of their own personal safety or comfort. The way of the Jedi is to respond to the call for help from others, and not to be self-absorbed or egocentric. Its not that we don't want to help others. We are usually too worried and obsessed with our own problems to even realize that other people need our help. We just can't see it.

Every time we reach out to help others, a part of our own dark side is defeated, and some of our own problems are solved too. Answering another person's cry for help is more important than to fret and worry about ourselves all the time. Of course, balance in all things. We need to take care of our own problems and this is important too. But somehow by helping others, we are helped.

As Jedi we need to open our eyes and look around us because someone out there might need our help and support. It might even be some one in your own family, an old friend, a fellow Jedi or a stranger. MTFBWY!

Alternatives to Fighting

"There are always alternatives to fighting." -Obi-Wan Kenobi, Episode IV

Obi-Wan taught Luke that there were always alternatives to fighting. Sometimes he used Jedi Mind tricks, or a fake dragon call to scare the sand people away, or he tried to persuade aggressors not to attack through reason. He always tried to look for alternatives to fighting if possible. Only when all other means failed would he use his Lightsaber.

I think modern Jedi can learn from Obi-Wan's example, and should only consider fighting as the last resort. We should be well trained how to defend others, and ourselves but we should always look for alternatives before we decide to fight.

Avoiding a fight could be something as easy as moving out of the aggressor's striking range, and trying to calm the aggressor. But if all else fails, a Jedi will defend himself/herself and others. MTFBWY!