



THE SPARK FRAMEWORK

25 THINGS THAT MUST HAPPEN EVERY CLASS TO RUN A BETTER SCHOOL

How do you know if you taught a great class?

BY MASTER RON SELL

SPARK
INSTRUCTOR PLAYBOOK

WITH GRATITUDE

A LIFETIME OF TEACHING. SHARED.

The content and best practices in this guide were developed by **Master Ron Sell** over a lifetime of teaching **tens of thousands of students** and mentoring **hundreds of martial arts studio owners**.

Ron opened his first school in 1991 at age 19, grew it into a four-school operation, and turned the systems behind that growth into the software now used by thousands of studio owners worldwide. As Co-Founder & CEO of **Spark Membership**, he continues to bring that fire, and that burning desire to help small business owners, to the entire community.

It is with Ron's permission and generosity that these learnings and best practices are being provided to the community, to help studios, instructors, and leaders **grow and succeed**.

"Spark is about bringing the fire and burning desire to help small business owners."

MASTER RON SELL



MASTER RON SELL

FOUNDER · SPARK MEMBERSHIP

7th Degree Black Belt



WHY IT MATTERS

How do you know if you taught a **great class**?

Every great class is the product of **ten non-negotiables**: the rhythms, rituals, and instructor habits that turn a good lesson into an unforgettable one. This playbook is the framework. Print it. Internalize it. Run it every time you step on the mat.

PACE

Steady rhythm.
Deliberate
peaks.

PRECISION

Set point.
Structure.
Standards held.

PRESENCE

Engaged. Present.
Nothing left to
chance.

TURN THE PAGE → THE 10 NON-NEGOTIABLES



THE FRAMEWORK

THE CORE TEN.

10 NON-NEGOTIABLES



THE FRAMEWORK

01

PACE & PEAK

Pace is the rhythm of class, the consistency of flow. The class should follow a steady pace and move quickly between each change and segment. Peak refers to the high points of class, changing to a faster pace. There should be many changes in pace and peaks each class. Use voice inflection to drive them.

02

SET POINT

Start every class and every move from set point. This builds consistency. "Get on Your Dot." When students get to set point they **MUST** snap to attention. Always line up the class by size, not rank, smallest in front, biggest in back.

03

NO DOWN TIME

Class is **NEVER** left without instruction. The instructor is in complete control at all times. Drills are always structured. All line drills must have instructor cadence. Always use set point even in line drills. No down time means no boredom and no behavior problems.



THE FRAMEWORK

04

VERBALIZE EXPECTATIONS

Explain exactly what you expect: **(A)** Tell them what you want them to do. **(B)** Tell them how you want them to do it. **(C)** Tell them when to do it. **(D)** After they've done it, tell them how they did it.

05

DEMONSTRATE WITH EXCELLENCE

When teaching a technique use the acronym **D.E.C.R.:** Demonstrate, Explain, Correct, Repetition. Make every demonstration look like the standard students should aspire to.

06

STUDENT CHECK-IN & ATTENDANCE TRACKING

Every class should begin with students checking in through Spark. When check-ins are tracked every class, owners can see who is training, who is not & consistently and make better decisions about student retention.

07

MISSED CLASS FOLLOW-UP

If a student misses class, Spark helps make sure they do not fall through the cracks. Automated missed-class follow-up can alert families, remind students to return, and show parents that the school is paying attention. A quick message after an absence can be the difference between a student coming back or quietly disappearing.



THE FRAMEWORK

08

PARENT & STUDENT COMMUNICATION

Every class should create a reason to communicate. Spark can help schools send updates, announcements, reminders, event invites, and encouragement without relying on memory or manual texting. Strong communication keeps families engaged between classes.

09

FEEDBACK & REVIEW REQUESTS

After a great class, do not let the positive experience stop at the door. Use Spark to request feedback, testimonials, or Google reviews from the right parents at the right time. Consistent review generation helps build trust with future prospects.

10

RETENTION & PROGRESS TRACKING

Every class should move students closer to their next milestone. Spark can help track attendance, rank progress, belt eligibility, notes, and student engagement so instructors and owners know who is progressing and who needs support. When progress is visible, students stay motivated and parents see the value of continued training.



BONUS REPS.

15 MORE FOR MASTERY

**BONUS REPS****11****COACHING**

Encourage and motivate. “Go, Go, Go, Go!” “Higher! Higher! Higher!” Give feedback. Don’t tell them what they’re doing wrong, tell them what to do instead. Use the primary adjective twice: “You’re kicking faster this week than last. NOW kick FASTER, just like a Black Belt!”

12**LESSON OF THE WEEK**

Teach lessons that last a lifetime. Use Brannon Beliso’s One Merit Badges or Jason Silverman’s Powerful Words to inspire excellence in everyday life. Be prepared, know the material, do not wing it.

13**NAME × THREE**

Always call each student by their name at LEAST three times per class.

14**CLASS BREAK DOWN**

Line up class by size. Use the whole floor and spread out, skip dots if you can. Break into sub-groups when needed. Pair good students with good students and challenging students with challenging students.

**BONUS REPS****15****KEEP STUDENTS ENGAGED**

Learn to instantly recognize when students have lost focus. Constantly scan the room. Re-engage by calling their name, changing the activity, or peaking the class.

16**THINK LONG TERM**

Teach Martial Arts for Life, the martial arts lifestyle. Encourage students to keep training and explain the benefits of sticking with it for life.

17**FUN, NOT FUNNY**

Never sacrifice discipline for fun. Be energetic, educational, enthusiastic, varied, challenging, creative, fast-paced, motivational, inspiring, and positive. A great workout, students leave feeling great about their progress.

18**DISGUISE REPETITION**

Drill the fundamentals relentlessly, but make every rep feel new, fresh, and purposeful.

**BONUS REPS****19****BLACK BELT EXCELLENCE**

Use the words “Black Belt” and “Black Belt Excellence” 1000 times. Paint a vision of what the end goal is, what they are working so hard to achieve.

20**SPOTLIGHTING**

Pick one student doing an exceptional job at a particular stance, technique, or attitude, and compliment them in front of everyone. This “lights up” that student and signals the same behavior to the rest of the class.

21**NO PUSH-UPS AS DISCIPLINE**

Push-ups are training, not punishment. Discipline through structure, expectations, and accountability, not pain.

22**DEMONSTRATE WITH EXCELLENCE**

When teaching a technique use the acronym D.E.C.R.: Demonstrate, Explain, Correct, Repetition. Make every demonstration look like the standard students should aspire to.

**BONUS REPS****23****SMILING, SWEATING, LEARNING**

Adults need all three, every class.

24**CONNECT**

Make personal connections with your students, their parents, your staff, and your prospects. Create relationships.

25**GROW**

Grow as a person, instructor, coach, trainer, and leader. The better you are, the more you can impact your students and your community.



**“Life is short.
Do stuff that matters.
Pursue it relentlessly.”**

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