Spiritual And Physical Conditioning

By Zeb Portanova

As a black belt in [Shotokan Karate](http://ska.org/), Zeb Portanova always knew the importance of spiritual and physical conditioning in your daily life. Zeb grew up playing soccer and wakeboarding, and then later taking up martial arts when a senior in college. “I always exercised, but after two graduate school degrees and sitting in front of a computer for all those years, it became obvious that I needed to take my fitness more seriously.”

Then one day he received an email from a friend with a link to a Tough Mudder event in Tampa, Florida. “It scared me. It looked really, really intimidating, especially the electric shock section. And at that moment, I knew that I needed to confront my fear head on…so I signed up immediately.”

This has been a constant theme in Zeb Portanova’s life. When given a task, regardless how daunting, he dives into it head on. When asked if he is ever scared, Zeb responds “oh, absolutely. You’d be crazy not to be scared. But if you are able to accomplish your goal, you’ll realize fewer things really scare you in life.”

This is the same sort of philosophy that makes Zeb Portanova’s character so unique, be it at work or workouts. For example, he joined a Crossfit gym to specifically push himself beyond his regular comfort zone. When asked to reflect on a recent workout that scared him, he jokingly says “pretty much every day.” But when pushed, he brings up a recent team competition that involved numerous movements: kettle bell swings, box jumps, and situps. “The best part of the workout is that you are doing it with a team, all pushing each other through the movements. At the end, one person had to run half a mile and complete 250 double unders (where the jump rope passes you twice for every jump). I was chosen as they guy for my team…and for my first time in my life, I hit 100 unbroken double unders. I thought I was going to pass out,” said Zeb Portanova.

Those are the challenges, through workouts or work, that make Zeb Portanova unique. “I recently just learned about a marathon in Antarctica. It scares the heck out of me. That is why I need to do it.” And so Zeb’s adventure goes on…