



sensitivity is often a tricky subject. it seems to be one of those words that carries so many nuanced meanings, that functions as a compliment, an insult, and perhaps more often - a sort of back handed mix of the two.

it is also a trait.

devoid of value, it is a measure of information gathering.

if i am offended by something someone says, i will most likely be accused of being "too sensitive" - but is that the best way to understand what is happening? is it possible that i am not being sensitive enough to the intent of the speaker? language is complex and words carry individual and cultural memories, like burrs they can attach to thoughts and emotions and carry them unwittingly into other territories. as a speaker i need to be sensitive to the state of who i am communicating with, to their history and their world view. likewise, if i intend to be a useful listener i need to understand the baggage i am carrying, be sensitive enough to realize when i am having an internal, historic reaction - and when i am responding to the information and *intent* of the speaker.

sensitivity in a scientific realm is in reference to the range in which an instrument can gather useful information - if we are getting too much noise, we can simply dial up or down the sensitivity of the instrument to clarify the image. this is all well and good when dealing with one goal. but if we wish to understand and not simply measure, we have to back up - we have to look at a bigger picture to understand what is happening...

in jiu-jitsu we train to be sensitive to our opponents actions, to feel things as they happen, *before* they happen, and respond accordingly. but if we reduce our training partner to a collection of actions, if we respond to each and every movement we become exactly as predictable and manipulatable as if we responded to none of them. while it is important to be sensitive to the actions of your opponent that is only as a mechanism to be sensitive to their intent. more directly, a truly sensitive practitioner knows what to ignore on the path to better understanding.

i love photography because it is evocative. it is illuminating. it is a story, a chance to see through

someone else's eyes. it is a capture of an event, a moment in many ways like any other, but flavored by the person that captured it. focus and composition, speed and exposure... the moment is highlighted, colored with emotions - like a memory. it is true and untrue at the same time. and if it is possible to lie with facts, perhaps we can also be honest with poetry.

sensitivity is a trait. a tactic. and a tool.

it is a skill and like any other it must be practiced if you wish to wield it with proficiency.

so practice. make it a practice. choose to test yourself. push into a place where sensitivity is the pathway to progress.

and do just that.

-the station