



ParkourONE



CHARTA

## Preface

The following Charta is addressed to all interested in Parkour, ParkourONE, the community and our work. It is a business card to make the ParkourONE community graspable for outsiders, convey contents, as well as unveil our opinions, intentions and structures for the purpose of transparency. We do not regard this Charta a corset in which we are wedged, however as a self-imposed standard to be compared with.

### Purpose of the Charta is to describe and illuminate the following areas:

The history of Parkour is pivotal for the ParkourONE community. We want to narrate our knowledge about the history of the origin of our art and how we experienced it or interpret it. We affiliate our understanding of Parkour and its associated values directly to David Belle and have great respect for the pioneers of the ADD-culture. Thus, we perceive ourselves as bearer of a specific idea; Parkour cannot be redefined randomly but rather has its own (even conceptual) history. We distinctly declare: David Belle is a living person; as such he and his perception, likewise, will change. We follow David's original idea, however, not him as a „Guru“, leader or the like. In other words, even if David Belle would fundamentally modify his understanding of Parkour, our idea of it would basically remain unimpaired - we follow our own path, it is precisely this which we regard an important piece of the initial conception of Parkour.

The next chapter recounts the structures of the ParkourONE community, the ParkourONE Company and our own history of genesis. Brought into being as a non-material grouping of tracers, in the meantime a sophisticated structure has evolved, with communities in various German and Swiss cities, with differing levels of professionalisation and institutionalisation in the sector of Parkour-mediation, which is hard to comprehend.

Our primal separation of the community section from the company, is not necessarily evident to outsiders as well - at this point we want to help them understand us.

ParkourONE considers itself as a community of shared values. Non-competitive, caution, respect, trust and modesty are the key values, which represent an ideal for each of us and are a foundation in the mediation of Parkour. Furthermore there is the inner strength; to refine it is also a part of Parkour. We deduce these values/contents among other things from the ideals of „Etre fort pour être utile“<sup>1</sup> and „Etre et durer“<sup>2</sup>. In addition to the history of Parkour it is these values, which give significance and a soul to the efficient art of movement - far beyond learning physical and mental techniques.

Our objectives at it are of two different kinds: On the one hand we want to communicate exactly these values, our ideals, to help and strengthen people. Thus our approach might be idealistic however certainly not naive. We put our message directly into practice in our work with and for Parkour. On the other hand, as Parkour ambassadors we want to illustrate and protect our art and for instance ward off plain false or even dangerous media coverage.

---

<sup>1</sup> „To be strong, in order to be useful“ Georges Hébert

<sup>2</sup> „To be and to live on“ Marcel Bigeard

## Index

- The history of Parkour (P. 4 – 6)
- Development and structure of ParkourONE (P. 7)
- Contents and values (P.8)
- Objectives - Why we do, what we do (P.9)

## 1. The History of Parkour

In our personal training and when teaching Parkour the knowledge of the history of Parkour plays a vital role. Of course there is room for interpretation at this point, this not solely due to the lack of sources. Our sources are personal contacts to pioneers of Parkour and ADD (art du déplacement), conversations, as well as interviews in online publications, academic researches and books. We directly associate the term „Parkour“ with David Belle and as a consequence tell his story beginning with Raymond Belle's biography as the origin. Likewise one could tell the story from a perspective, which considers the childlike, playful training commencements of the ADD-pioneers in Lisses, Evry and Sarcelles as the basis. For a tale of the ADD-culture and its beginnings this would surely be a harmonious perspective. At this point however, we want to narrate the story of Parkour and as mentioned before, regard David at the heart of it. We do realise but yet that the Parkour-culture without its friends and spirit wouldn't have become what it is today.

Raymond Belle was born in 1939 to a French doctor of the colonial army and a Vietnamese mother in Indochina. In 1946, due to the Indochinese conflict, he found himself in an orphanage for children of fallen soldiers located in Dalat. At this point Raymond had already experienced severe abuse<sup>3</sup>. At the orphanage the children were drilled as soldiers, meaning they were taught combat techniques, assembly and disassembly of firearms in the dark. However extremely strenuous marches in the mountains were also part of training for the children. Scarred by the traumatic experiences of his childhood, Raymond Belle swore to never be victim again. As a result, strengthening his body and soul became his essential and most important goal. He developed his own techniques and forms of training, by applying the military obstacle course „Parcours du Combattant“, which the children were taught, onto the jungle to specifically train his skills<sup>4</sup>. The children were already exercising for an emergency and they knew that a single mistake could perhaps cost them their lives. In the eyes of today's observers a certain element of playfulness might adhere to Parkour - the training in Indochina, parcours<sup>5</sup>, was essential for survival. David describes his father's training and its signification as follows: „ C'était un entraînement qui pouvait lui permettre de s'endurcir, du survivre à la guerre et de se protéger contre tous ceux qui lui voudrait du mal. (...) Le fait de donner du sang, des larmes et de la sueur, c'était ça le Parkour pour mon père.“<sup>6</sup>

Raymond Belle arrived in France in 1955, where he continued his military training until 1958. His outstanding physical and mental abilities enabled him to take up employment with the Paris fire brigade - this was a significant change in his life. He, who had been taught how to fight and kill, could now apply his skills to help other people and save lives<sup>7</sup>. Raymond Belle turned into a multi-decorated hero of the Paris fire brigade and his unconventional training methods were implemented in the training of the fire brigade school. He shared his knowledge with his son David Belle<sup>8</sup> (with other kids of the family as well, for example Châu Bell-Dinh) and at this

---

<sup>3</sup> David Belle: Parkour. P. 23 – 27.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: P. 41 – 41.

<sup>5</sup> The „K“ instead of the „C“ in the term „Parkour“ symbolises the rigour of the art and the training; the silent „S“ at the end disappeared, since it doesn't correspond with the efficiency idea.

<sup>6</sup> It was a training which helped him become resilient, survive the war and protect himself from those, who wanted to do him harm. [...] The circumstance of giving blood, sweat and tears, that was Parkour to my father. David Belle: P. 42.

<sup>7</sup> David Belle: P. 24 – 25.

<sup>8</sup> David Belle: P. 43, 56, 69.

point the art of motion wasn't the only focus, herein to a greater degree already, at the origin of Parkour, a moral element was linked to the training: „Etre fort pour être utile!“

David, born in 1973, was actually brought up at his grandfather's home. His grandfather was a war veteran and fire fighter. He too nurtured David's urge to move, encouraged him to train mentally and physically and explained to him, that it didn't only matter to be strong but also what one uses this strength for: „Si tu dois te servir de la force de ton corps, fais-le pour de bonnes raisons [...] utiliser cette énergie pour aller aider“<sup>9</sup>. At the age of 14, David Belle moved in with his mother in Lisses, a suburb of Paris. There the contact to his father intensified, since he wanted to learn more about his background. David didn't have a simple life and was in search of identity, of something true, of something authentic<sup>10</sup>. Through the physical and mental training, in which he was emulating his father, he found this within himself.

Elements of the Méthode Naturelle illustrate a further component of training. The „natural method“ was an element of the military and fire brigade training. Thus, it is likely his grandfather and father as well were trained according to this method in the army and also in the fire brigade. Méthode Naturelle was developed at the beginning of the 20th century, by naval officer Georges Hébert. This method is about a holistic training method, inspired by the native life of indigenous peoples, its impulse emerging from the studies of noticeable health and strength of this near-natural people and their way of life, which come out of the demands that life in the wild imposes<sup>11</sup>. The phrase „Etre fort pour être utile“ originates from the Méthode Naturelle teachings. There lie the roots of Parkour. However the following development is important: David began as a youth with his training of body and mind in his urban surroundings. Together with Châu Belle-Dinh, Williams Belle, Phung Belle, Yann and Frédérick Hnautra, David Maigogne, Sébastien Foucan (later on „founder“ of „Freerunning“), David Foucan, Guylain N' Guba-Boyeke, Malik Diouf, Charles Perriere and Laurent Piemontesi, this represents the first generation of ADD-practitioners<sup>12</sup>. It was particularly not only David's input, which created something new. Yann Hnautra for instance had a lot to offer, which he had learnt during his childhood in New Caledonia. Evry is one of France's youngest cities, the cultural mix of immigrant groups (partially first generation) enabled access to different ways of life and thinking. This led the youth to cultivate their own culture of hard training, morally good strength and solidarity<sup>13</sup>. The toughness of their training was tremendous once they had realized what they were capable of accomplishing. They exceeded their physical and mental boundaries over and over again. It was this group who developed the first techniques and created the training spirit. Without their achievements, their ideas and their spirit, none of us would be training Parkour or ADD today.

---

<sup>9</sup> If you need to avail yourself of your body's strength, do so with good/ positive reason [...] use this energy to help others. David Belle: P. 33.

<sup>10</sup> David Belle: P. 40–43.

<sup>11</sup> Georges Hébert: La Méthode Naturelle: P. 3. Georges Hébert: L'éducation physique (1912): P. 2.

<sup>12</sup> Julie Angel: P. 15–30.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

At some point the media became aware of the group. This led to the group splitting in 1998. In further consequence, David left the group Yamakasi, before they shot their first movie. He subsequently founded the group „Tracers“; this is where the term „Tracer/Traceur“, which is used today by all Parkour practitioners, came into being<sup>14</sup>. At this time, even the term „Parkour“ in its current form, is applied by David for the first time. The original Tracers were: David Belle, Kazuma, Romain Moutault, Jérôme Ben Aoues, Rudy Duong, Stéphane Vigroux, Michael Ramdani, Sébastien Goudot and Johann Vigroux<sup>15</sup>. Ever since the turn of the millennium the new arts of movement have found their way into the world, especially through the Internet. Despite continuous differentiation, in public the definition of Parkour and Freerunning remain vague. ParkourONE is working on a clear distinction of the terms. However the people shouldn't be dissociated from one another; Parkour ought to connect.

---

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.: P. 36 - 37.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.: P. 296.

## 2. Development and Structure of ParkourONE

The basic idea of a union of Tracers, who want to preserve and sustainably pass on Parkour in the sense of David Belle arose in 2006, when the then key people of the German-speaking Parkour community Steven Käser, Felix Iseli and Roger Widmer sat together with David Belle and his then-manager Jocelyn „Joss“ Demoniere in Paris. The specific foundation for ParkourONE as an organised collective of Tracers in the German-speaking region (Germany and Switzerland) was laid in 2007 in Basel. The decision was made to pursue this path together and therefore the meeting in Zurich was the ignition spark for the unification of pioneers of Parkour in Germany and Switzerland as ParkourONE.

ParkourONE signifies „all for ONE and ONE for all.“ Hence at that time and today still, the level of Parkour-skill wasn't crucial, but rather the friendship, the experience, the spirit, the mutual readiness to help, the trust and will, to invest time and passion in the common cause. These were then and still are now the most important elements of our community. It is more concerned with spirit than with structure.

Through the spread of Parkour, the demand for workshops, events and advertising-jobs grew larger. It took on such a scale, that the initiators of ParkourONE, Steven Käser, Felix Iseli and Roger Widmer decided in 2008 to provide the community a professional backing and thus founded the ParkourONE Limited Company. (In the year 2009 Steven Käser left the company due to personal reasons, however remains on cordial terms with ParkourONE.) The aim of the company is to market Parkour sustainable and honest, thereby not losing the affiliation to the origins and the Parkour community. Based on our values, the professional branch of ParkourONE also and particularly feels responsible towards all the other passionate Tracers. It is our concern to keep the balance between value orientation, idealism and unavoidable business that is to say economic interests. This is the only possibility to permanently make room for pedagogic and commercial Parkour-offers, which are not in contradiction to the Parkour-related values itself.

What began in 2007 in Basel, is today a community, which has regional-representatives in Berlin, Hamburg, Cologne, Stuttgart, Brunswick, Hannover, Augsburg Switzerland and Enschede. Therefore ParkourONE is a collective of friends, who based on mutual trust, want to preserve and pass on the origins of Parkour. The ParkourONE Tracers locally advocated within their means for a lasting prevalence and understanding of Parkour according to David Belle. Trust, friendship, honesty, readiness to help and active and also complimentary dedication are elements to maintain the ParkourONE regions and establish new ones.

### 3. Contents and Values

Our dedication, fascination and motivation to teach Parkour can only be explained by our strong values and contents, which in our opinion are inextricably linked with each other. Based on the history of Parkour and deduced from the focal ideals of „Etre fort pour être utile“ (be strong to be useful) and „Etre et durer“ (to be and to live on), we have worded values which we hold true as ideals in our day-to-day life afar from Parkour and without exception introduce every participant of our trainings to. No one in our guided trainings should traverse an obstacle without knowing our values; since both belong together. In a over several years self-developed concept (TRuST), we have taken up five of these values and made them explainable on one hand: from the thumb to the small finger, one value is assigned to each finger.

The values are: non-competitive, caution, respect, trust and modesty. These value-fingers are clenched to a fist of inner strength. Once again it shall be made clear at this point, that these are ideals one strives to. No human can claim to be perfect and to always and in any situation and every minute be free of unhealthy competitive thoughts, cautious, respectful, full of trust and modest. Though, it is possible to regard theses values as good and valuable and to impose them as standards to one's actions.

It is due to our goals and the „spirit“ we feel and that connects us, that we precisely define our values and admittedly cannot do without emotionalism when we speak and write about our art and passion. Nevertheless, we simply enjoy Parkour, movement and the training together as well. Parkour should be viewed and practiced with the respective seriousness but not grimly determined. Delight in training and in the refinement of oneself are the most powerful motivating forces, when one goes out to train! We regard the term „Parkour“ as clearly defined, thus backflips for example are by definition not part of the motion repertory of the art of efficient movement - however when training we are free and play and do as we please; everybody is free and ParkourONE never dictates its members how to train or which movements they are „permitted“ to do. We are always open to exchange and dialogues and want to position ourselves clearly, but not draw strict and static borders. We want to remain open because for us this derives from our Parkour-related values as well.



## 4. Objectives - Why we do, what we do

As indicated above we basically work in two different sectors. On the professional level (coaching, presentations/shows and media appearances in the broadest sense) we specifically work on mediating our values and contents, as well as on the public image of Parkour. On the community level we want to encourage dialogues, support networks and forge links. Overall we see ourselves as Parkour-ambassadors and feel responsible. And so as an example we want to facilitate the access to Parkour with Public Meetings (public, free of charge, not uninstructed trainings) in various cities. With likewise free of charge Hellnights (based on an idea of the British Tracer Chris „Blane“ Rowat) we offer opportunities to strength and endurance training, amongst other things, to raise awareness as to how important specific (strength/endurance) training is in order to protect and fortify one's health. In our competition-oriented society the non-competitive training with one another in Parkour is quite a relief; the self-concentration and necessity of self-reflection, especially concerning the approach to the environment/surroundings and fellow human beings, are directly applicable to everyday life. We utilize Parkour as a tool to convey these and other attached values, abilities and features. A conscious approach to one's own body is equally important. We consider Parkour an art, to be deemed protected. The media's propensity for intense images, willingly promote an image of Parkour as a trend and extreme sport, as a senseless urban culture of courage testing young men and intermix the terms Parkour and Freerunning (Parcouring, etc.) to a mush of street acrobatics and nonsense. The danger arises when kids and youths are animated to risky actions through the media and Internet video platforms. In some cases, plain unsafe actions are confused with the art Parkour. We actively act against such developments. Thus, the quality of reporting has fundamentally gotten better over the past years — we see this as a result of our involvement, as well as that of other responsible Tracers. We also experience increasing positive reactions within the immediate public and are in most cases observed with favor and accepted in public areas. We are grateful for this and also regard this as a consequence of responsible actions by the majority of Tracers. Parkour is our life and we want Parkour to one day occupy a place amongst the (survival-) life-related, serious and useful arts such as martial arts, climbing or swimming. We want the respect for Parkour, which we give society.

## Sources:

Angel, Julie: Ciné Parkour. A cinematic and theoretical contribution to the understanding of the practice of parkour. First Edition 2011.

Belle, David: Parkour. Paris 2009.

Hébert, Georges: L'éducation physique ou l'entraînement complet par la Méthode Naturelle. Paris 1912.

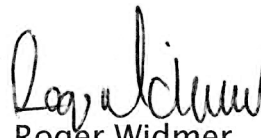
Hébert, Georges: La Méthode Naturelle en éducation physique. Numéro spécial de l'éducation physique, revue d'enseignement et de critique. Paris [ca. 1935].



Felix Iseli



Simon Gfeller



Roger Widmer



Markus Luksch



Ramon Siegenthaler



Tadäus Steinemann



Rino Vanoni



Silvana Werren



Arvo Losinger



Armend Shaqiri



Silvio Stoll



Dominik Friedrich



Michel Stuber



Pierre Biege



Michael Thümmeler



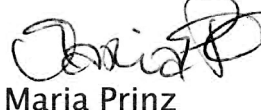
Silje Heilein



Léa Brand



Martin Gessinger



Maria Prinz



Dag-Alexis Kopplin



Oliver Lange



Nico Marquardt



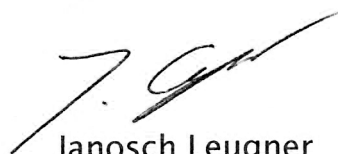
Markus Meyer



Ben Scheffler



Minh Vu Ngoc



Janosch Leugner

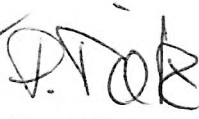


Tobias Reinicke



Marie Fechner

  
 Franz Schönberger

  
 Paul Tietz

  
 Benjamin Böhme

  
 Max Schulte

  
 Lorenz Warnke

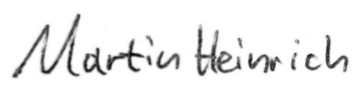
  
 Mathias Fritzen

  
 Philipp Raasch

  
 Deniz Bozkurtan


  
 Rene Röbner

  
 Dino Durdevic


  
 Martin Heinrich

  
 Samson Saathoff

  
 Marcel Lehmann

  
 Laurent Peyer

  
 Michael Nischt

  
 Simon Wessling