Fixing uneven bevels

Posted by dcphoto - 06 Dec 2011 15:10

A couple of weeks ago I let a friend use my WE to sharpen a cheapie (fake) damascus knife. He wanted to learn how to use the WE so he could maintain his own knives on it. I spent about 10 minutes explaining everything and set him to work. I had some other stuff to do so I walked away thinking "how could he possible mess this up."

I came back after about 20 minutes and he tells me "I think I did something wrong." From across the room I look at the knife and it looks fine. The bevel was about 3/16th wide and appeared to have a nice burr. It didn't occur to me at the time that I shouldn't be able to see a burr from across the room. Then I walked up to it and I looked at the other side. Holy diamond dust batman, the bevel was about an inch wide!

I set to work with my 50/80 stones to fix the bevel. I spent some time working on the narrow side, and was able to get both bevels even, and about 1/2 an inch wide.

So now for the question: How would *you* fix this knife?

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Re: Fixing uneven bevels

Posted by leomitch - 06 Dec 2011 15:29

Another interesting question would be, how did he manage to do that to the knife?

Leo

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Re: Fixing uneven bevels

Posted by dcphoto - 06 Dec 2011 15:39

He was trying to raise a burr, but there was a void in the metal so it wouldn't raise. He spent so much time scrubbing on only that side that he inadvertently made the bevels so uneven.

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Re: Fixing uneven bevels
Posted by Jdee - 06 Dec 2011 15:50

One thing I have found is go back and forth when trying to get the bur, side to side

If you just work one side you can take away way more metal than you need to..

Jdee

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Re: Fixing uneven bevels
Posted by edhead35 - 06 Dec 2011 16:52

I don't mean to be rude, so please do not take it as such, but there is something in life called common sense. It drives me mad that McDonald's has to state on the outside of their cups that the coffee is hot, or that Wicked Edge has to state that sharpening a knife is an inherently dangerous act and should be practiced with care. DUH! These things are common sense, and it used to be if you were silly enough to not take a hot cup of coffee seriously, and you get burned, tough S**T.

On the same wavelength, I question anyone doing any task that can be deemed that of a skilled craftsman, where observation, curiosity, process, knowledge, and meticulous attention to detail being necessary, who would be so one track minded on drawing a burr that they grind 1" bevels, the equivalent bevel of a sashimi knife. I think he would be better served by you sharpening his knives, and buy him a crop stick rig to hone on.

There is a reason I don't try and decorate my house. Because it would be a disaster. Maybe he should stay away from knives!

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Re: Fixing uneven bevels
Posted by leomitch - 06 Dec 2011 17:25

You put that in a very kindly and thoughtful way. ☺

Sage advice mate!

Leo

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Re: Fixing uneven bevels

Posted by dcphoto - 07 Dec 2011 02:26

Edhead,

The error was not his it was in my instruction, and I must respectfully disagree with you. Not a single skilled craftsman, in any trade, started with all the knowledge needed to successfully and skillfully ply his trade. He began as an apprentice, studied until he was skilled enough to become a journeyman, and eventually became a master. Along that road he makes many mistakes, some of which seem to be common sense to the journeyman or master. However, many things only become common sense with years of training and experience.

To explain it another way, when a helicopter pilot wishes for his helicopter to fly forward he moves the cyclic control forward. This causes the rotor blades to change pitch at a particular point in the rotation which causes the entire disc to tilt. To a layman or apprentice it is "common sense" to assume the pitch change occurs at the point in which the rotor tilts, e.g. If the front of the disc moves down, the pitch change occurs at the front, however this is incorrect. To me, an experienced and learned helicopter pilot, it is common sense that the pitch change occurs 90° before the response of the rotor. In other words, if you want the front of the disc to tilt down you have to cause a pitch change at the right hand side of the rotor disc. This applies to a counter clockwise rotating system. Common sense dictates that it will be opposite in a clockwise rotating system.

It's common sense and easily intuited because I have training and experience. I don't know you personally so I'm going to assume that you don't have that training or experience, or other training that would help you make that determination.

My point is that a lack of knowledge in a subject shouldn't stop you from studying and learning that skill. I wasn't born a helicopter pilot, a blade smith, or a sharpener. I have learned these skills through study, training, and application. I've made plenty of mistakes along the way, but that doesn't mean I shouldn't have undertaken the learning of these skills. Nor did my mistakes mean that I should have given up and left it to other more skilled persons.

As it stands he has sharpened several more knives and is becoming more skilled every time. Each time he works on a knife the quality of his work improves, and he is able to work more independently.

As to the original question, how would you have fixed the knife?

p.s. my apologies for any spelling errors, grammatical errors, or typos. I'm on my iPhone, so it's difficult to get it all right.

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Re: Fixing uneven bevels

Posted by edhead35 - 07 Dec 2011 07:48

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Again, sorry if it came off insulting. I respectfully disagree with the way you define common sense. Common sense is something that is not learned, but it is internal and natural. It is something that is known without any knowledge or skill on a topic. Having a skill level so high, to the degree of unlearning (which is a different topic), and doing a task is not common sense. It is skill. No one could expect someone to operate a piece of equipment, be it a helicopter, or a sharpening system like a professional, or at all for that matter, without some learning. I am not sure what aspects of flight involve common sense, because I am not a pilot, but I am sure there are aspects that good pilots will tell you that you cannot learn in school. Learning any skill takes a few things like good training, natural talent, effort, motivation, and time. To each individual, the ratio needed of these things is different, but one skill that gets overlooked is common sense.

I am an obsessed home cook that learned to cook from my father, who owned restaurants. I am by no means a chef, but a better cook than 80% of the people I meet, and know more about food than most people. I do not define common sense as learning how to properly cook a steak, and doing it. I define common sense as - if you can smell smoke, see the pan turning black, and the fire alarm going off, why do some contestants on cooking shows not turn the pan down until the pan catches fire? No common sense. My nephew is 10 years old, and has no father in his life, yet when I teach him to do home projects, like tiling, he looks at me and says, "uncle, should we tape off the board on the bottom of the stairs so the grout doesn't ruin the woodwork?" He never did wood working, so he wasn't trying to preserve his own work, and he is just starting to learn how to fix things from me. This is a kid who has more common sense than I do, because I would have gotten grout all over the stairs.

Just because of one screw up, doesn't mean one can't improve. My main point is that anyone who has used a knife knows what the bevel looks like. It is not so small you can't see it, but it is also not 1" wide, unless you are using a high end sushi knife. It is simply a case of having tunnel vision, and not watching closely what you are doing. I am not saying he can't learn, but getting to the many levels of sharpening could be a problem for someone without the attention to notice such a mistake is what is alarming. Me telling you to sharpen his knives was just banter. Of course he can learn.

As far as fixing the knife, you could widen the angle, and knock down the overall height of the knife, spine to edge, or belt sand the edge off, until the bevel gets smaller and start over. Another option is match the other side, consider it a visual grind, and put a new wider bevel at the top.

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