

Kihon

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There is no doubt that there are plenty of techniques in Danzan Ryu that will kill or maim should the circumstance require it--such as in knife attacks or multiple person attacks. But it is the context of the encounter that determines our responses. In combat we simply react and do what we feel is necessary to survive, as there is little or no time to discriminate. If we choose to maim or kill an opponent in order to stop him from attacking again, we can only hope that the automatic reactions we have developed in our training, along with the moral and ethical foundations we have established in our lives, will cause us to react appropriately in moments of crisis.

1. Yield to Force

"Sir Isaac Newton, the great 17th century English physicist, mathematician and astronomer, illustrated this principle in his Third law of Motion: ""For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction."" So, if someone is pressing on you, and you feel that pressure -- that simply means that you are pressing him back. However, if you yield to that pressure, that force, you must not feel it at all. This is the basic principle underlying our work in Jujitsu, and it illustrates the meaning of the word Ju -- to be soft and yielding, flexible and pliable, to pull when pushed, to push when pulled... In other words, to yield to force. By learning the other nine basic principles, you will have learned the keys necessary to move in this way."

2. Do Not Rely on Strength

"Professor Tom Ball once asked his sensei, Bud Estes: ""Doesn't it take strength to do Judo?"" Professor Estes replied, ""It takes strength even to speak."" If this sounds like another koan to contemplate -- it is. In order to speak one needs to activate the muscles of the mouth, tongue, throat, and diaphragm. The key is to use that necessary strength efficiently, with a minimum of effort. In order to learn the principle of yielding to force, one must first discover a way to move without reacting to the other person's force pressing against you by pushing back. Rather, flow with that force, or allow the movement to occur without trying to resist it. When someone grabs you with the intention of controlling you, first relax and then look for the opposite side of that force where their strength is not present. In other words, apply the

principle of Ju by finding the path of least resistance, and then following it out of the hold."

3. Connect

"In order to be able to interpret or assess another person's intentions, or hidden agendas, we must first find a way to ""connect"" with him - physically, psychically, emotionally, and mentally. To connect means to sense, or feel another person's life force even before they act. To master this principle you must first learn to harness your own awareness: to be calm and non-reactive. Then, you must observe everything intently: the other person, the context in which that person approached you, the circumstances surrounding that encounter, the reactions of other people, the environment, and your own feelings. It is the context---the set and the setting---that determines your response."

4. Maintain Integrity

"This principle refers to the necessity of maintaining your frame: the posture you hold while in your basic self-defense stance. In DZR, the ideal posture is essentially erect with the feet a shoulder's width apart, with one foot forward and one foot back, straddling your centerline with your weight evenly distributed 50/50. The arms are elevated so that the hand corresponding to the forward foot is open and at about chin level and is about 2 hand-spans away from your chest. Your second hand is lower than the other and is only one hand-span from your chest. Both hands are open and near your centerline, and both arms are bent. While in this position, you stand comfortable with an awareness of a line running from a point at the top of your head, down the central core of your body, through the perineum, to the ""plumb point"" between your feet. This line is essentially your ""axis,"" around which you rotate when you move. Furthermore, keep your awareness on the itten---the ""one spot"" below the navel in the geographical center of your body. In this way you will stay grounded and centered. The purpose of this stance is to allow mobility and adaptability, as it is a way of standing that gives you the flexibility to move in any direction easily and quickly from a position of balance. We say that in martial arts we move from stance to stance, from one strong position to another. The stance described here enables you to make the transitions from stance to stance quickly and efficiently."

5. Seek the Center

"Since attacks, both defense and offense, are generally directed towards the centerline of an opponent's body, the objective is to erect a ""shield"" to protect you from the inevitable course of action. While standing in your basic self defense stance, keep your leading foot and leading hand on uke's centerline, with your lead hand pointing at a spot underneath uke's nose---like a gun sight. In other words, you constantly seek uke's center as you interact with him. Maintaining a line---a ""bead""---on uke's centerline makes it difficult for him to attack you without moving in some other direction to get around the barrier you have erected. As you perform a technique you will certainly alter your position as needed, but generally you do not deviate much from this basic stance as you make whatever transitions are required. The key to success is to stay aligned with uke's centerline while performing any art."

6. Get Off the Line

"When someone is intent on punching you, his intention from the moment he launches the attack is to keep the course of the punch on the "railroad track" it is following to its target. So, psychically the opponent has already hit you before actual contact has been made. The principle here is simply to get off the line of the attack. The key to applying this principle is to catch the moment that uke launches his attack, then get off the line and divert the "track"---by blocking, parrying, or simply not being at the end point of the attack. Of course, the faster the attack, the faster you must be to respond appropriately."

7. Lead the Mind

"Bruce Lee said in Enter the Dragon; "If you focus on the finger you will miss all the heavenly glory." We lead the mind of our opponent by creating an object that draws the "crow's" attention. Crows will pick up an object that is bright and shiny and carry it around until they see something else that is more interesting. Then they drop what's in their beak and go after the new attraction. So, the "trick" is to get the opponent to focus his attention on something else... to "capture" his attention. We create a diversion---an illusion covering your true intention. For instance, your eyes are naturally drawn to movement that shows up in the periphery of your field of vision as a potential threat. I look to the right, and so do you . Hence, I have created a diversion---an opening that hides my attack that is coming from the upper left into the periphery that you now cannot see. In Tsurikomi Taoshi (Shinnin)---we deliberately look right to divert uke's attention, then step to the right; then quickly turn counter-clockwise and toss uke into the space that has been created. However, the more sophisticated the opponent, the more sophisticated the diversion must be. For advanced martial artists, the suke---the hole through which they deliver their attack---is usually very small. So, if you create a "hole" that is too big, your opponent will know you are faking and easily avoid the trap. So too, you must be ever vigilant not to get faked out and caught up by another's diversions. When you draw your attention to some object presented by an opponent, you can become fixated on this object. When we both put our attention on the same object, like a hold, the hold becomes stronger. When our attention becomes fixed in this way it can lead to mental stagnation... and to defeat. the counter to having your attention diverted is to practice discrimination between what is real and what is not, and to detach from the illusion. That is, to keep the mind free and fluid. This practice is a lifelong pursuit... day to day. The primary practice to develop this kind of mental fluidity is regular meditation."

8. Break the Frame

"While maintaining the integrity of your own stance---your frame---you constantly endeavor to break the frame of an opponent. In order to do this we move in such a way as to put the opponent into a postural configuration that does not allow him to move efficiently. He is now off-balanced, and "floating" in transition to regain the integrity of his stance. It must be kept in mind that most people instinctively resist a force that is pushing them away from the place they are standing, like it is some kind of "real estate" that they have "invested" in and that they think they "own." So, in order to break your opponent's frame, seek the opposite side of his resistance, where there is no resistance. Simply put, we pull when pushed, and we push when pulled."

9. Ma-ai - 間合い - interval; distance; break; pause

"This principle refers to the concept of maintaining ""appropriate distance"" from an opponent. Every movement and every technique has its optimal distance within which it is effective. For instance, an arm's length is the best distance to execute a kick. But this distance is not appropriate for punching. In order to execute an efficient punch, I need to be close enough not only to be able to hit my target but to drive through the impact point. Likewise, in order to perform Ogoshi efficiently, I need to be connected to uke's whole body---back to chest. And, of course, I need to execute these maneuvers without losing the integrity of my own stance."

10. Neutralize

"An opponent will constantly attempt to ""steal"" your center, your balance, and your integrity. We must apply all the foregoing principles in order to ""neutralize"" the force being exerted by that opponent. So, I must yield to force, and not oppose it. I connect, and maintain my integrity. I seek their center, break their frame, lead their mind, and so forth, all in an effort to neutralize their capacity to be effective in executing another attack. However, since we cannot truly control another person, all we can do is adapt to what they do. If you determine that the other person intends to do some harm, then one of your first options may be to simply walk away from the encounter in order to neutralize the situation. If this option is not available, then you try to talk your way out of an unpleasant encounter. If this is still not effective, then another option may be to create a situation where an aggressive person apparently relinquishes his will to you, or suffers the consequences. For instance, the other person attacks you, and your response is to put him in a shoulder lock or army bar. You will have efficiently neutralized your opponent, and through pain compliance they submit by apparently surrendering to your will---at least temporarily. Then, while applying the lock you have the time and space necessary to discuss the virtues of peace and harmony---and hopefully you will have created an opportunity for peaceful reconciliation."

Conclusions

"These fundamental principles are applied throughout our system, and are interrelated. During their daily practice in the dojo, the students consciously practice each principle until they are well established within them and have become automatic responses. The degree to which a student has learned to apply them is self-evident as they demonstrate their arts. What is most interesting is how a student's application of these principles, both externally and internally, illustrates their proximity to the ultimate goal of our training---which is ""completion of character."" These principles offer us a yardstick to measure our progress towards self mastery, as they can be applied in all parts of our life, even in the most mundane of daily activities. When we are stressed, and push comes to shove, do we yield to force, maintain integrity, get off the line, and so forth? Advanced practitioners of DZR live their lives with these principles in mind at all times."