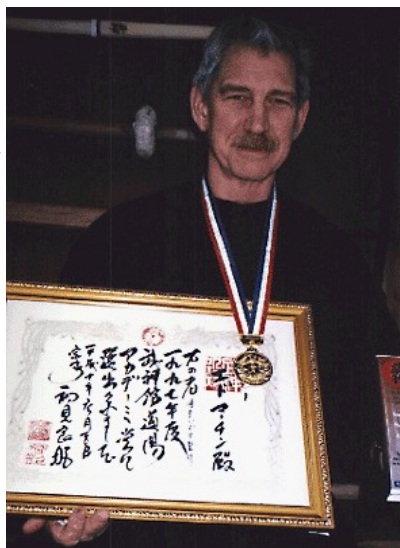


Ed Martin

Body Power versus Muscle Power

When so many of us are either small physically, older, or female, it makes perfect sense not to rely on physical strength for our defense. There are just too many stronger and bigger persons out there, and if we get attacked it will most certainly be one of those "bigger people". This is why it is so important to find another way of countering an opponent's power instead of trying to match their strength. Have you ever picked up a baby only to have this little child arch his/her body, hitting you in the face with his/her head? Most parents have experienced this. It really hurt, didn't it? That child used their entire body in a natural way and produced a powerful strike even if it was unintentional.



This is how one uses body power to replace muscle power, and how a small person can counter a much stronger opponent. The arm merely remains an extension of your body, the leading point that makes first contact. It does not reach out, the entire body moves to cause the hand or foot to strike. The arm remains close "attached" to your body. All your weight becomes a moving mass striking your attacker. It is simply the force of momentum and it makes the power one can develop with the muscles in the arm alone insignificant.

There are very valuable spin-offs from this approach of keeping the arms and legs close to the body and not reaching out to attack. If you take notice, once the arm is extended, it is isolated and can be attacked easily making the whole person vulnerable. When you reach out, areas normally protected by the arms' usual position become exposed. These areas, for example the ribs under the arm, are weak areas of the body and prone to effective attack. The arm pit is another very sensitive area that becomes exposed when your arm is extended. Imagine also what is even more open to attack when the leg is raised. That isn't even considering the severe vulnerability of standing on one leg when your opponent has control of his balance!

Look at the position of the elbow when the arm is extended. It is already only a fraction of movement from being locked. A joint that is locked has no strength and can be easily broken! The same applies to the leg when extended into a kick, it too can easily be broken at the knee. Handing your opponent a locked joint to break is nothing short of stupid, don't do it. Yes, punches and kicks are valid means of defense, but the time to use them is when your opponent is off balance or distracted in some other way. The best way is to let him come to you, let him expose his arm or leg and then damage it in a way that he can no longer use it against you. If you have practiced the off line movement I talked about in the very first column, you will be able to avoid that first attack and your opponent will present you with a perfect opportunity to end his aggressive behavior. To be the aggressive one is to be stupid. Robert Heinlein, the noted science fiction author, gave this definition of stupidity: "Stupidity cannot be cured with money, or through education, or by legislation. Stupidity is not a sin, the victim can't help being stupid. But

stupidity is the only universal capital crime; the sentence is death, there is no appeal, and execution is carried out automatically and without pity."