

Principles of the martial arts

These are the basic principles that a student of budo should follow if he/she wants to become a true warrior. These principles can be changed or altered to fit into the life of the student better. However, if they change them too much or stray from their true meanings, they will never become the warriors that they want to be.

1- No secrets in the martial arts

There are no secrets in budo. Budo is found in three parts: Mind, Body, Spirit.

With the body, there are only a few techniques in budo that are usable.

But there are no “secret” movements or one movement that is the best one to use in all situations. Learn all of the movements, but know which ones work for you. Keep sharp on all of your basics.

2- Karate starts with the feet

If you are doing kata, doing basics, or preparing for combat, always start with your feet. Just like building a castle, build from the ground up.

No matter how strong of a strike you may have, without a strong stance, your strike will fail. Your stances should be wide with the toes gripping the ground.

Many people practice katas and only focus on the strikes and blocks. Make sure that you spend an equal amount of time practicing the footwork.

3- Always keep an open mind

A student should not look for what makes an attacker weak, but what makes them strong. By finding out what makes a person strong, you can reflect on what they have done and model it. Never think that someone else’s style is wrong or weak. Even if it doesn’t work for you, it may work for them. Take what you can from everyone and learn from them. Have many teachers. Even your enemy can be your teacher.

4- Conditioning of your body

Everybody’s bodies are made the same. As a bushi, your body must be better.

This means you must train and change your body to be that of a warrior’s body.

Work on hardening your forearms, knuckles, finger tips, shoulders, knees, shins, and feet. This can be done using a makiwara daily. Other things that should be used on a daily are: the sanshingami (vases), the wing chun dummy (wooden person), and the chishis (rock hammers).

5- Setting aside time for train

Dedication comes in many forms. One way is training outside of the dojo. A student should make the time to train everyday. Starting off with 20 minutes a day by simply repeating what was done in the last class. Failing to practice will leave your skills weak. You must always be ready for combat. Also, doing katas/wazas everyday can be your workout. Sometimes it is too hard to work out on your own because there is no one there to lead you. By doing katas and wazas, your workout is already set up for you.

6 - Never become the attacker

One must stay calm and well disciplined. Never lose your self control. Know when to strike and when not to. Discipline is the keystone to the martial arts. Without it, we become a danger to ourselves and to others. With these skills, we must know the difference in a life and death battle and a playground pushing match. Only fight when there is a reason for it and only do what is necessary to get away. Never step over that fine line between defender and attacker. There are no first strikes in budo. Budo was made for defense and not attacking.

7.- Know the environment

One must use the environment to their advantage. Know the layout of the land, the weather, and even where the sun shines the brightest. Doing a few punches and kicks will not win the fight. You must be smarter than your attacker. This is where the environment plays in. If you see something that can be used against you, or if it is something that will make your battle more difficult, then it can do the same for your attacker. Maybe they don't know about it yet. Everything around you is a weapon that can be used against you or can be used to help you. You only need to open your mind.

8.- Deception is the key

To win, strike where the enemy is not guarded. Make them think that you will strike at a certain point, then strike at a different one. Make them think one way, and then change it. Just like in a chess game, you must think a few moves ahead. But you must also have the ability to adapt and change your plans without stumbling. When striking the body, strike so that the attacker's body bends into the places that you want it to. This way, you are controlling the attacker and opening them up to more powerful strikes in better locations.

9.- Leadership

After being a student for a long time, you must complete the circle and become a teacher. This will give you a new insight into your training and hopefully change your art for the better. You must set the example for your students and practice what you preach. This will fortify the basics that make up your foundation.

10.-Always with a purpose

Never make a move if there is no reason or effort behind it. When training, train for real life. Train not to win, but to survive. Everything has meaning, even something that is such a small detail that you think that it does not matter. The small details can matter the most! If you perform a movement that has no purpose, it will lack speed and power. This gives the attacker something to grab and break and you will be at a disadvantage. Know what you are doing, but lose yourself in the movements, so that your mind can relax, but your body moves with great power.

For the most powerful strikes
just remember;
Work from the ground up



**Do the right movement, at the right time,
with 100% of your abilities.
And never anything less.**