

# Kenpo 101: Anatomy of a Technique

By Joey Cadena, 4<sup>th</sup> dan IKCA Kenpo



One distinct feature that sets Kenpo apart from all other martial arts is its emphasis on self-defense techniques. All styles teach specific set patterns for self-defense, but no other system that I've encountered spends so much time on self-defense techniques. This has led to one common myth about Kenpo. Those outside of the art are under the misconception that Kenpo techniques are taught as the “answer” to a specific self-defense situation and that they are to be strictly adhered to during the attack. However, anyone with common sense can tell you that there is never an ideal situation in a real attack. Combat, as Bruce Lee states, is alive and is constantly changing. One must be able to adapt and overcome the situation to remain in control. Therefore, it would not be possible to execute a technique completely unchanged against an uncooperative opponent. So then here's the BIG question... Why do we spend so much time doing the techniques ??? Let me allow you to answer the question for yourself. How can you read this article, or better yet, how can you write an article yourself if you have no language, no set system for structuring language, and no words to speak with? It would be impossible to communicate with each other—and here lies the true purpose for the Kenpo self-defense techniques.

Mr. Parker used a lot of analogies in his teaching and one of the most prominent analogies was comparing motion to language. He said that the basics were our words to “speak the language of combat.” Techniques are “sentences of motion,” and forms were “paragraphs” of motion. Thus the true purpose of the technique is to give the practitioner a language and structure of motion to “express themselves” in combat. Within each technique is a complex set of multiple movements all based on sound principles with practical applications for self-defense. It is vital for the practitioner to take a closer look at the techniques in order to find the lesson taught by the technique. They should not just be learned at a surface level. The practitioner should spend time analyzing each sequence, identifying the purpose behind each movement, and experimenting with variables and possible grafts or endings for each technique. One way to do this is to actually dissect the techniques into major components. Mr. Parker's many books spend time doing just this. At Universal Kenpo Karate Studios, we require our students to spend time analyzing the techniques in order to gain the depth of knowledge that we require for all our students, regardless of age. The UKKS advanced class took the time to dissect all the techniques in our system. These will be available on our website soon so they can be added to your Kenpo Journal. What is the Kenpo Journal??? If you are not keeping one, START!!

