

Points to consider in your search for a legitimate Martial Arts Instructor

by: Gene Roos

- 1 If the instructor is the highest dan rank (usually 10th dan) in more than one art, you should be suspicious of a self-annointed rank.
- 2 If the instructor is a high rank in one art (such as Judo) and years later holds the same rank in Jujitsu be suspicious of, at least, the rank in the new art.
- 3 Consider the age of the Instructors and their ranks. For instance, be suspicious if the Instructor is a 10th dan and is under 50 years of age, or an 8th dan and is 28 years old.
- 4 Check the longevity and Authenticity of the umbrella organization. The internet has so many organizations that will sell you certificates — they are worth less than the paper they are printed on.
- 5 Are the terminology of the Kodokan judo throws changed for only that organization? Judo throws are in a universal language for many countries for mutual understanding.
- 6 If you have questions on the Sensei's statements (for example: past history on law enforcement), check him out. A major Sensei stated that he spent 2 months with a Federal Enforcement Agency and had a high rank in a Judo organization.

While employed with the same Enforcement Agency I checked his statements and there was no two-month program — nor any history of him. I wrote a letter to the National Judo organization and they had no records of the individual. If you catch the instructor in misstatements, distance yourself.

7 Does the organization offers a two-hour course (for example: small stick), and for so much money will issue you an instructor's certificate for that course? Remember that one-time courses without renewal training do not allow the student to retain the required skills and techniques.

8 Ask to see the sensei's certificates — they should be posted. If you see a certificate in any art that the sensei did not tell you about, ask to see a number of techniques in a general class. In the past there have been cases of certificate swapping by different organizations.

9 If a self defense instructor states he teaches Japanese techniques, ask what dan he holds. If he avoids the question or doesn't give you enough information that you could check out (for instance the AJA Blackbelt list), consider whether you want to study with this person.

10 Does the instructor make a sincere effort to avoid injuries or hard falls? Are safety protocols clearly explained each time? Injured students are not likely to be training in the near future.

11 If an instructor claims that his system is the only one that can protect you in a fight situation, beware.

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- 12 If the sensei states that a particular technique is the only one that will work, be suspicious.
- 13 Are there many under-age black belts? The school could be an expensive child-care business where you are effectively expected to pay for the privilege of helping.
- 14 Be cautious of several-year or long-term contracts (in a high cost area this might be necessary to keep the school open).
- 15 Be especially cautious if the instructor guarantees you a black belt in 2 or less years.
- 16 The Sensei may be legitimate, but may only have limited knowledge. Then consider: a little knowledge can be hazardous.

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