

WHAT SELF-DEFENSE IS ALL ABOUT

By Dr. Sifu Larry Adams

It is common among the Martial Arts world to refer to the art as self-defense, many people have also taken this reference to signify this. From a basic understanding of this reference, the meaning has somehow taken an aggressive approach. The purpose, idea and philosophy has been altered based on the consideration of the individual's need. Realizing how personal it is should lead us in a direction of concern for certain areas of personal significance, such as confidence, courage, skill development and ability to apply ourselves. It matters a great deal what we think about self-defense, for this thinking will determine our learning and development. Whatever our reason for learning self-defense, whether it be "for protection" or "knowing how to fight," are no more than excuses to admit to ourselves the fact that we have the ability to defend ourselves, we just do not know how to put it in effect. Let me, if I may, make it clear that self-defense is not all physical but also extends to social and economical traces: Self-defense is any action taken to defend oneself from possible harm whether it be verbal, such as the defense of a lawyer, testimony or economical as when being or putting oneself in a possible situation or place that could result in harm or violence. We surely do not think of it this way, but the fact still remains that self-defense is how you think of it. This is a rather brief but necessary insight in order to approach the foundation of what self-defense is all about. The idea of self-defense clearly exposes a need, not only for protection from others, but also an in-depth study or observance of our thinking and ourselves. In other words, possible cause for the need of a particular type of self-defense may be stimulated or provoked by us. Self-defense is not what is being sought but the idea or way of performing what we already have in the area of protecting ourselves. In other words, the method of defending ourselves in any situation is a part of us, but must be learned just like anything else

we experience in life. We already have a sense of defending ourselves; we just do not know how to use it. Now we have a better understanding of self-defense and realize that it is not something that can be taught but rather put into effect.

Self-defense consists of discipline, confidence and skill. These are the areas of development with which we are concerned. They are the foundation from which performance of self-defense will depend upon to be effective. Discipline is necessary in order to learn any skill. It is required as the first step in realizing the type of control needed as a vital part of performance in the execution of any response. The moral attitude may greatly affect the individual's decision-making efforts in vital situations. The cause can be easily blamed on discipline or lack of knowledge. Therefore, self-control is an important step; it is not to be taken lightly. Confidence may encourage us to follow through in a responsive situation but it will take skill to bring us out. We all need confidence, but beware, that it can be dangerous if it becomes a source of over-estimating our skill or response. Many times we have seen confidence being misused to cover up what should have been performed. We hear the saying "we build confidence" which is a necessary part of preparing for self-defense. Confidence should not be used as a source, but as a reflection of our ability to use what we have learned. Too much confidence can lead us to disaster.

In the martial arts, defensive skill development is the ultimate goal. Being able to defend ourselves mainly from a defensive standpoint is the basic principle. People have somehow gotten the idea that an offensive approach was the whole purpose of development. This is not the idea at all, but only the impression that has been given by those standing on the outside looking in. It is also one of the reasons why false principles of training have emerged. Self-defense pretty much says it just as it is. The preparation of self-discipline, which will aid in the development of

performing defensively, is a protective skill. Defense, in other words, is what it is all about; rather it be individual or an entire nation, fighting is all about defense.

If we are to prepare ourselves, we must prepare our defense. This brings us to the source of beginning to understand the types of skills needed to perform defensively. We can be certain that if we train properly with defensive skills in mind, we will progress extensively in the area of self-defense. We will not only realize our weakness, but also our opponent's weaknesses. By studying ourselves we can also learn about our opponents. We will not have to worry about our offense, it will result in the perfection of our defenses. In most cases our defense puts us in the position to take the offense. The technical skills that we choose to help us develop, must have qualities demanded by the principles of defensive nature, allowing us to train in that direction and therefore bringing us into full control of our training. With this type of self-control and correct principles of self-defense, we should be able to accomplish our goals.