

Grappling for your Life

By Shihan Pablo Ramos

Everybody knows about it, “No Holds Barred” competitions, grappling tournaments, “Ultimate Fighting”, Sport Jujitsu, etcetera. Tons of youngsters and adults alike join, compete or watch any of these events daily, whether on T.V. or at their local stadium. T-shirts, caps, even trophies. Now, how REAL is “Reality” fighting and/or grappling. What happens when we throw in the element of surprise, the principle of angulation, positioning or even worse have these same people face a particular situation “out of the octagon” and into the concrete arena where there is the actual fact that most of these situations will have a weapon, multiple attackers or limited, surprise attacks involved.



Let’s ask ourselves these questions then, Where does my grappling training fits in all these? How effective are all these joint locks, chokes, takedowns and arm bars when it comes to a real situation. Most practitioners will tell you that” 90% of fights end up on the ground”, yes, but while your opponent is trying to stab, shoot or gang beat you to death, oh! and all that while fighting on CONCRETE!

A sports orientation to the Martial Arts is alright if what you are trying to do is get in shape or have fun but to go home thinking that you can effectively defend yourself just because you beat your next door neighbor at a tournament is downright irresponsible. One thing is Self Defense and another Competition. Streets assaults are a reality and as Bruce Lee used to say, their “broken rhythm” makes it so you are obligated to apply specificity of training to such situations or your skills will simply NOT be enough.

Look at Law enforcement agencies and Special Forces units, Why do you think they train in actual reality combat oriented techniques? Because, just like the regular guy or girl on the street, the concrete jungle will come at you with a fury and do not follow rules or regulations. You are not convinced yet, then ask yourself, Why did my ancestors in ANY style of martial arts created their method? For Self Preservation purposes. Karate men used to train to kill with one blow, Jujutsu practitioners to maim or kill with a devastating throw, joint lock or choke and so the rest. What happened to us that got so far away from the original purpose of the “Martial” Arts?

So, whenever you intend to embark in the practice of Budo or “the way of the WARRIOR”, make sure, especially if you are paying your hard earned cash, to do so with someone that has a realistic view of what Martial Arts and as such Self Defense in mind. After all, you never want to find yourself, “Grappling for YOUR Life”.

In another issue, we will be discussing Grappling for Self Defense, what works or not.

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