



The instructors at Anthony Quatrochi's Martial Arts Institute take an unconventional approach to teaching self-defense tactics.

# Looks the Same, but It's Different

By Anthony Quatrochi

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We've previously established that I'm not a big reader. That said, I obviously am drawn to the topic of Japanese martial arts, so upon the recommendation of a friend, I checked out the novel *Shogun* by James Clavell. (Let's be honest here—it's over 1,000 pages...I listened to the audiobook.) I even watched the old television miniseries from 1980, because I really enjoyed the story and wanted to "see" it. When I saw a 2024 remake of the miniseries was coming out, I made plans to watch that, too.

So, now I've absorbed three different versions of the same concept in a short time period. They had similarities; after all, you can't change the core story too much or you shouldn't use the same name to title the piece, right? There's a basic expectation in place.

The presentations did, too, distinctly have their differences. Clearly, the author's original vision of the characters and their motivations was interpreted differently by each of the scriptwriters, directors and actors who went on to tell their own version of the story. With subtle tweaks to dialogue or delivery, by leaving out bits of backstory or changing a character's expected physical appearance, the same "person" could develop a completely different persona from one work to the next. Someone you liked in one show maybe you reviled in the next. A little change can make a big difference.

## THE HISTORY OF JUJITSU

If I had the room here, I'd copy the history of jujitsu that we provide to new students at our school, but in brief, here's the main point: Today's Japanese martial arts, as they're commonly known, all pretty much stem originally from the same beginning—the famed Samurai of Japan who were deadly with weapons or their bare hands. This is a wild oversimplification, but it's a close enough description for my point. Different disciplines spun off over time, each focusing on different skills that a warrior was expected to know, each being narrowed and honed by practitioners over countless years and generations of teachers.

Jujitsu was one of these spinoffs. And it had spinoffs of the core principles that became what we see now as Brazilian jujitsu, Aikido, Judo and many others. See? Different versions of the same "story," different versions of the same expected core discipline. To a nonpractitioner, they might look the same—but they're different. Ask anyone who has picked one or more to study. They'll tell you how you "feel" the differences between one and the next.

## A STYLE LIKE NO OTHER

At my school, we have what we call either the "Intention Wall" or the "Principle Wall." It's primarily a collection of sayings by my teacher (heavily censored for language) that exemplify what we're all about, and the phrase "Looks the Same, but It's Different" is a feature. My jujitsu style, Kokoro Kai, which is an

evolution of my teacher's style, is like no other school's. I'm not saying that to brag; I just know it to be true.

My teacher developed his style in an unconventional way. He and his friends learned the basic skills of many martial arts, took them to the streets to see what actually worked, and fine-tuned and developed new techniques from there. It is the absolute truth that they picked violent fights with people throughout Brooklyn just to practice in real-life situations. A little rough, I know. And when my teacher decided to teach me and my training partner what he knew, he did it by brutally beating lessons into us class after class. I do not do that at my school, for which my black belts constantly thank me, but I assuredly know very well which defense techniques work and which do not.

## TECHNIQUES TO KEEP YOU SAFE

My training partner, who has trained all over the United States, just returned from four months of training in Thailand and from his third training trip to Japan before that, and he says there's no one like our teacher. He's convinced that our "professor" is the best developer and practitioner of self-defense tactics in the world. He might be right; he might be wrong. Frankly, I agree with him. The simple truth, though, is that what my teacher taught me, and what I can teach you, can help keep you safe, and you'll never find or feel these techniques anywhere else. Does that sound conceited? I apologize if it does. I don't mean to offend—I mean to keep you safe and present for yourself and your loved ones. Come see how, and remember...we might look the same at first glance, but we ARE different.

Learn more at [www.AQMAI.com](http://www.AQMAI.com). Reach us at [aqkkjj@gmail.com](mailto:aqkkjj@gmail.com) or 845-298-2177. ♦



The "Intention Wall," also known as the "Principle Wall," at the dojo.