

Karate, Kata, Kumite & Kime: A Business Model

By: Waywood Press

Within karate there are different components which, when practiced make up the whole picture. The main components are *Kata* and *Kumite*.

Kata comprise structured sequences of moves which include attacks and blocks (defenses) using hands, feet and body. Traditionally, a *karateka* (practitioner of karate) progresses through different *kata* as a structured route to the black belt. Once attaining black belt, we continue to improve these *kata* whilst learning new more advanced *kata* containing further techniques and their combinations.

Kumite is basically fighting; the application of attacks to specific parts of the body, mainly nerve plexus' and key sensitive spots, and blocks. During *kumite* we learn control, stealth, tenacity, surprise and control. I mention control twice because when you are facing someone with the tools to inflict serious damage, the understanding of body position and distance is paramount, not only to survival but to success.

Kata and *kumite* both depend on learning the basics; how to punch, how to kick, how to move the body by transfer of weight, how to transfer power, how to remain strong whilst being relaxed and how to use different muscle sets in harmony to achieve maximum power.

The basics depend on a potentially 'mystical' and often misunderstood word, *Kime*. *Kime* is probably best described as *being when both the body and brain are executing sharp, crisp, penetrating, and hard techniques that utilizes the entire person. Kime is when technique is 'grounded', when it 'comes up through the floor', where the body's entire musculature is used in a sudden explosive moment, and when the mind is linked to the technique.* (Mark Groenewold).

It doesn't take a lot to start drawing parallels between business practice and these different components. Here are a few to start with:

1. *Basics* – Have we got our basics right; knowledge, process, relationships, targets, aims etc?
2. *Kata* – Do we construct our basics into structures that help us progress, using them to shape what we do and how we move, build our skills, check and refine what we're doing?
3. *Kumite* – Do we apply our basics and structures in such a way that we are able to out-manuever our competitors, know where to target our efforts, defend our resources, develop and hone what we have so that it is even more effective?
4. *Kime* – Have we learnt how to use what we have to its maximum potential? Are there things that we can combine in a new way to produce even greater results, greater service, greater enjoyment and fulfillment, greater satisfaction, greater growth ... etc?
5. *Control* – Have we assessed our position and that of our competitors? Do we see how they are moving? Can we implement strategies that won't cause undue injury? Are we willing to take the risk to win?

When myself and my children gained our black belts we were told, "*Now is the time that you start to learn.*" I think that is a good reminder to each and every one of us that no matter how long we have been in business, or working in a particular field or doing a particular job, we can always improve IF we are willing to learn from what we have done and what we are doing and apply it to the future. Tools for doing this? God gave us brains, common sense and the ability to relate to others (relationships). I would argue that these are the best tools we have to start on the road. Perhaps when we appreciate our interdependence rather than striving for continual independence we will learn some of these 'mysteries' of life and business. You may not practice karate, but you can apply the principles.

