

## TEACHING PARAKARATE

I have always been drawn off the path that most people take and look for opportunities to do things that few people do. Which is one of the reasons that I became interested in forming Parakarate. I also believe that being a black belt means, being 'in service' to others.

Teaching people with disabilities is not for everyone. The idea a lot of people have is that people especially with an intellectual one are 'strange and unusual'. Schools and collages now regularly integrate, as much as possible children and adults with 'special needs and this in my own experience has led to the group being comfortable with people who seem on the surface to be different. Thank goodness, the days of warehousing people with disabilities are gone.

The first thing I would say about Parakarate is, it is a teachers greatest opportunity to improve our techniques and become a better instructors. In terms of being able to convey information effectively and clearly. With the addition of getting personal satisfaction from our job. The second thing is, according to an internet article among many others 'Accessibility is Smart Business- The Hidden Size and Purchasing Power of People with Disabilities', 26 per cent of the US population or 61 million people, have some kind of a disability. This means that there is \$220 billion in discretionary consumer spending power! This does not include the spending power of family and friends who would be happy to support businesses that show their awareness and make accommodation of this demographics.

So how do you get started? I would suggest if you don't know anyone with a disability, to volunteer for a time with a non-profit organization to see if it is something that is something you would like to do. It is also a good place to start making contacts, parents, clients and organizations that also work with people with a disability will become your advocates, to get the word out about you. I have done a lot of marketing research and by far the best way to market to the disability community is not on the internet, but old fashioned methods. Word of mouth, advertising in local newspapers, karate demonstrations etc. You might also want to think about contacting businesses( 'rehab organizations') who help people with disabilities, to set up a class in their building. Transportation is a big issue for people with disabilities particularly with those who have an intellectual disability.

So you have clients, then what? Now thanks to Mr Parker and his teaching method this is your number one asset. Kenpos' very adaptability make it idea for those who may be perceived as 'different'. As Mr Parker says in page 73 (Chapter 8) in Infinite insights into Kenpo " As already established, we are all physiologically different and whatever move might work for one may not necessarily work for another." and at the bottom of the same page "Similarly, many of us appear normal and /or alike, but structurally our muscles differ in size, length, strength etc. Therefore, there is a definite need to adapt the system to the individual". It is really worth your time , money to buy and absorb Mr Parker's books 'Infinite Insights into Kenpo' Volume 1 to 5. You will find your own knowledge of his teaching methods will increase and be of great help to you in your own training

I shall give you some ideas that I have found over my 24 years of teaching can help you get

started on your own path.

\* Using visual aids is a great help convey your information. People learn by hearing your instructions, reading your instructions and visually seeing what you are teaching. I use blue masking tape to show invisible lines on the floor, a belt makes a visual representation of your 'center line' on the body. Using numbers on poster board to explain to students 'the clock principle' and gives the a visual reference has been very effective.

\* Repetition is VERY important. It may take a longer amount of time for students to internalize what you are expecting so don't be discouraged.

\* Having an assistant with you is advisable. You can reach more students that way and you will not feel so tired after class.

\* As with teaching any new skill, breaking down each move into separate chunks to aid learning seems to work the best. As students get more confident you can speed things up depending on the students ability. Consider how we take being able to walk for granted, but how do you teach it to someone who has lost that ability through a head injury to walk again? Think about that for a while!

\* Belt requirements are strict. Just because students have a disability it does not give them an automatic pass. We want to produce great students instead of just students . I have introduced stripes for belts to show students and parents/guardians progress. And students need to learn to deal with failure which will be a great asset for them as human beings. Many with a disability are not given the opportunity to fail, so have no experience of it.

\* As with students with ADHD focus might be a bit of a challenge. Having students repeat what is required will let you know if the student understands you. Some of my most dedicated students have started their training 'messing around'!

\* Finally, students seem to need your 'permission' and encouragement to shout and fight back. They also need to start feeling confident about themselves and then believe me they will take off running!

So to conclude, your style of teaching with a little adaption can be the key. Use lots of visual aids and have a sense of humor. And you will be truly happy you helped someone grow and change ,so they can have the life they want to live. And lastly, expect lots of hugs after class!

If you want more information e mail me at [dmkenpokarate@yahoo.com](mailto:dmkenpokarate@yahoo.com)

Sifu Diana McRae  
Parakarate

