

Timing It Right

The art of timing in battle is recognizing when it is the right time to attack and taking advantage of it *immediately*. The *correct time* is when there is a *suki* (gap) in your opponent's posture. Whenever you see or create it, drive in and strike your opponent before he has a chance to recover or close his *suki*. This is the skill of *Katsujin No Ken*, or taking advantage of your opponent's moves.

While your opponent's *suki* may appear at any time, there are four (4) times when it is most likely to become evident:

- 1) The best time to attack your opponent's *suki* is when he is *not ready* (this is the biggest gap): you attack first, *zantotsu*, *Sen No Sen*. "Not ready" means he is too relaxed because *he thought* you were relaxed. There is strength in relaxation only if it is combined with *alertness in the mind* and *readiness for action* in the body. "Not ready" also means not attacking because of the **four mental blocks**: afraid to take risks (waiting), thinking too much (confused mind), self doubt (lack of self confidence), and hesitating (a bad habit). Your opponent is also "not ready" when you control the match by taking the lead and pressing or closing the distance, not giving him room to "breathe" or move, overpowering mentally and physically, keeping all your senses on him, attacking his mind (spirit) and eventually breaking his spirit. By constantly attacking his spirit, your opponent is always on the defensive with no chance (no thought) of attacking you. Sometimes he is ready, but only ready to run away.
2. The second best time to attack is when you *sense* his *intention* to attack as in "Kan Ken", the two eyesights to read the mind and the body to have the advantage. He is in a stage of *mental attack*, not in a fixed position as in a *mental block*. This type of attacking your opponent also includes when he has *just started his physical attack* and is not yet in full strength as in "Go No Sen". You must have the confidence of knowing that you will score - striking truly versus scoring a hit.
- 3) Another time to attack is when your opponent is in mid-attack. This, however, is not the best time because he is in full strength and the result will be *aiuchi*. It is a good time for you, if you are faster and stronger. You can move back and shift your body (*tai sabaki*) and then strike.
- 4) The fourth time to attack is when your opponent overextends his attack as you step back. He is beyond his strongest stage and is off balance, frozen and open. You should then immediately counter attack by turning your defense into an offensive maneuver.

Timing in life is just as important as it is in battle because you can lose fortunes or loved ones due to bad timing. Important business decisions in banking, real estate or the stock market must be made at the **right time**, according to the business cycle between inflation and recession. A lifetime of building a fortune can be lost overnight due to greed and selfishness (a big gap or “*bachi*”). You must know when to buy and sell at the right time.

In your personal life, meeting the right person *for you* at *the right time* of your life is good timing. Sometimes you can be in control and make certain desired events happen because of good timing. You must use your head, heart and gut feeling to make *the right decisions* at the **right time**.