

Seishin Shotokan
精神
Karate

Is Your Karate School a McDojo?

The term Mc Dojo has come to be quite popular nowadays in the various martial arts business and trade journals and is obviously a derogatory term used to describe certain types of martial arts schools. What are these types of schools and why is this term relevant to you as someone looking to get started in the martial arts? This article will first explain what a Mc Dojo is and will then give you some advice on how to avoid joining one.

As the martial arts have grown in popularity since the initial Bruce Lee craze that then lead to Jackie Chan, Steven Seagal, Jean-Claude VanDamme, The Karate Kid, and more recently the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles and the Power Rangers, martial artists across the country have begun to understand the potential of the martial arts as a money-making opportunity and a viable business. Not too many years ago, the idea that somebody could make money teaching karate was simply ludicrous but nowadays there are a growing number of so-called successful schools making upwards of seven figures in gross annual revenues. Some of these schools are reputable and offer quality programs with quality martial artists as the Chief Instructors/Owners, others are not. How do you tell which is which?

You have probably figured out by now that a Mc Dojo is not considered to be a reputable school. A Mc Dojo quite frankly represents the worst example of a martial arts school. It is one that has lost touch with what the true values of the martial arts are, such as honesty and integrity, and is intent on one thing – getting the most money out of each and every person who walks in the door. Part of the problem, however, lies with the consumer because for the most part, the consumer does not know what to look for or what a good school is and what a good instructor looks like. My goal with this article and all of my other resources is to help you know what to look for before you make a mistake that you will regret.

Here are the four warning signs that your school is a Mc Dojo!

Hard-Sell Tactics

From the moment you walk into the door you are met by hard-sell tactics that are focused primarily on you opening up your check book or surrendering your visa card before anything about the martial arts or programs have been discussed.

Multiplicity

Multiple colored belts, multiple stripes, multiple uniforms with multiple patches, multiple high kicks, multiple high-fives, multiple black belts with multiple degrees, multiple reasons to join and multiple upgrade programs for the same curriculum. Need I say more? I think you get the picture!

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Contracts

Yes, you guessed it. You have to sign up for a year minimum, then three years, then five years or longer. After all karate is about commitment, right? It's about never giving up and always doing your best. You know what, they're right on this one. Karate is about commitment, it is about never giving up and always doing your best. However life is such that things happen beyond your control and despite the fact that you wanted to get your black belt and had every intention of sticking with it, you lost your job, you got a promotion in another city or state, there was a death in your family or a sick relative who needed taking care of. A reputable martial arts school will give you a way out either through an agreement that provides an escape clause for any of the reasons I have listed or simply because they have integrity and understand and sympathize with your predicament. A Mc Dojo will have already cashed you out and spent the money with no chance of a refund, or they will simply send you to collections. Which school would you like to deal with?

False promises

Are you being told that you will be able to defend yourself against a crazed knife-wielding attacker within just three months in their program? There are courses that can teach this, your average martial arts school doesn't offer this, especially if your instructor is a 17 year-old spiky-haired dude with an earring. Are you being told that it is possible to get your black belt in just over a year? Or even in two years? This is a joke and if you believe this then you probably deserve to be taken for a ride! Are you asked to purchase expensive full body gear and padding just to engage in a game of touch-tag? Basic sparring does not necessitate full combat gear in the name of "safety," it necessitates a good instructor, clear rules and appropriate guidance and supervision. Nothing more and nothing less.

This subject of Mc Dojos is incredibly important for all prospective students of the martial arts. Please don't take it lightly. You must educate yourself and do your research.

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