

The first exercise instructed to do upon my start at Zenyo was “The Pretzel”. I quickly realized this was a mental exercise more so than a physical challenge. You cross and uncross your legs perhaps dozens of times a day without thinking about it. When asked to cross and uncross your ankles on your back while simply grabbing your feet, suddenly this task became more difficult. It started an understanding of my movement of which I was previously unaware. Soon, the lights clicked on and I organically discovered the proper way to traverse these new constraints. On a smaller scale of the new theory being introduced, that movement was understood as complex but not complicated. Not an expression I would have used that day.

Learning and discovering new things was exciting. Soon I started training and rolling and experiencing a new “environment” of movement, not only with my own body but another persons body and the interactions between them. Learning the strength of a Kimura grip, the effectiveness of a tripod sweep, and the mechanics behind a triangle or rear naked choke made me want to learn and copy every move I saw of my favorite jiu jitsu players. I brushed up on my Japanese judo terminology, and was looking forward to whatever the days lesson was. I remembered every step I was shown. More powerful on your side, okay got it. Frame hip, frame ribs, elbows tight, shrimp, outside foot recovery, surely I will recover my guard. WRONG. With a white belt, who is probably smaller than me, I could probably follow those steps and accomplish something. That was not the case rolling with Mike, Nate, or hell, even Loy who I might have damn near 100 pounds on. They adapted to whatever I was doing and used the movement to advance their position. That showed me there was something more to it than just the steps, I just couldn’t figure out what it was.

I caught wiffs of the new method in the air at times during my first 2 years at Zenyo. Someone may have been rolling and focusing too hard on one step and missing their time to accomplish what they were set out to do. Instead of instructing them on where to find their grips, or place their feet, Professor John would exclaim “There you go! Just f\*cking stand up bro!”. Or while trying a torreado pass, “Stop dancing, just throw his legs out of the way and pass the guard!” From a technical aspect, may not be the most constructive advice, but from an objective standpoint it made the task at hand very obvious.

Training with Quad, who has 0 jiu jitsu experience as a fan or martial artists, was very fun and eye opening for me. The drills we were doing may have seemed silly to Quad, but it was making me laugh how long it took me to grasp some of the concepts he is having poured on his brain right now. I could tell he was thinking “How the heck is this helping me learn jiu jitsu?” And I was thinking “man, once he figures this out and uses his long limbs I’m in trouble!” The “dots” drill. placing your hand anywhere on the body both single armed and then with both. The “arcs” drill where you make dots and sweep your foot to as many places as you can, with either foot. He didn’t know the application of those movements but with my limited training I have seen every movement that we performed be used effectively in judo, wrestling and jiu jitsu. It truly felt like a dance, a term I have heard Professor John use more than once.

Everybody’s movement is a little different. Some people are more flexible, some are quick and athletic, others are more deliberate and pressing. That movement may be fluid and work well on its own, but when another person is introduced, it needs to adapt and use movements when the other persons energy allows. My body knows how to perform all the movements necessary to accomplish the tasks, but FEELING when to use those movements is a key and new focus of my training.

The New Method is good for my brain, and my confidence. It simplifies all the sequences or techniques I thought I needed to be successful on the mats, and boils it down to sometimes “just doing it”. There isn’t necessarily a wrong answer. Is your task to pass the guard? Then do that. Is your task to wrap up your opponents arm? Then do it! However you have to! I don’t have to process steps and what if’s. I could know all the terminology and mechanics of how

something SHOULD work, but I am now learning to use the necessary parts to execute what WILL work. Yes, the minutia of jiu jitsu is complex, but the objectives are not complicated.