

## Expressing Yourself

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I think of Jujutsu as an art form in which we are able to express ourselves, much like artists that use other art forms as ways to express themselves. For example, an artistic painter uses various coloured paints, brushes and painting surfaces, such as a canvas, to get their message across.

As martial artists, we learn how to use our body, our hands and our muscles. We learn to move our bodies out of danger and we learn to protect ourselves in the event we have to go to the ground. We learn how to breathe and relax. As we learn a new technique or a new perspective on an important principal, we add colours to our palette. As we learn to move smoothly, to make our techniques flow, we are improving our 'brush stroke techniques', or ability to apply the technique. Thirdly, as you train with your uke you learn how to interact with someone and put everything together to create and apply a self-defense. You are now using all the tools you have to one end; you are painting your picture, creating your work of art.

As you learn about yourself and Hakko Denshin Ryu techniques, think about how you want to express yourself. Think of how your uke perceives you, think of how effective your distraction was, think of how effective your ni ho nage was. Think about what else you could do to make your technique better. What type of picture are you painting?

Time in the dojo is your time to practice, improve and refine techniques. You will not perform better in a 'real life' situation or on the street than you do in the class, so make your practice time count!