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**The Sum of All Parts**  
**by David M. Valadez**

Deshi: When I do the technique as a whole, I can do it. But when you break down things into these parts, the technique eludes me. Is it not better to just train through the technique as a whole?

Sensei: Better for what? Better for whom?

Deshi: Explain.

Sensei: Is not the "technique" a vessel through which we travel? Are we not a vessel through which the "technique" travels? Is the technique not something we discard in the end, as we discard our notions of self? Are techniques not simply viewpoints through which we can come to gain an understanding and an embodying of this thing or that thing which we deem of value? In other words, are not the parts that you do not get the technique itself? Are not those parts the things we deem of value?

Deshi: I suppose so. However, I seem to study these parts better when they are all connected - when my mind is not so tempted to think things through or to stop flowing.

Sensei: So studying techniques is better as a whole for you because the tendency for your mind to become fettered is not so prevalent, not so noticeable.

Deshi: I'm not so sure I am saying that.

Sensei: But are you saying something different? Are you getting the technique if you are not getting these parts, or does it just seem like you are getting the technique because your "not getting" of the parts is not so amplified by the grossness of waza training? If you can do the technique, with an unfettered body/mind, with correct form, you can do these parts. When you can do these parts, you will be able to truly do the technique. You will do more than merely "appear" to get the technique. Do not confuse what is true with what makes you appear as truthful. These things are often not the same thing. Trust in the parts, in the basic elements, and know then that the sum that is the technique will indeed be yours, as will many other countless sums.