T’ai Chi: The Grand Ultimate: Lesson 2

**Basic Principles of T’ai Chi**

**To go up, do down; to go right, go left first.**

This is one of the most interesting of the t’ai chi principles; it seems completely counter-intuitive until you experience it.

This concept is all about preparation. You wouldn’t paint a room without first taping off the areas you didn’t want painted, laying down a drop cloth, and gathering your brushes and, of course, the paint.

The t’ai chi movement are the same. In today’s movements, ward off left & ward off right, we go one way in preparation for the direction of the final movement. We are using that “wrong way first” method to prepare to calmly go our final direction.

Ward Off Left

* + From the previous position (see The Beginning), sink the body into the left foot
  + Turn right, while pulling the elbow like you are dragging your hand across the surface of a large ball, while supporting that ball from beneath with your left hand
  + At the same time, turn your right foot on its heel
  + Shift the weight to the right foot
  + Step with the left foot to the front (same direction as we started the form)
  + Shift the weight the left foot, and stroke down with the right hand, while raising the left hand to mid-chest

Ward Off Right

* + Turn slightly to the left, while scooping with the right hand, sinking the weight to the left foot
  + Turn the hips right, rotating the foot on the ball of the foot.
  + Step one footprint to the right with the right foot.
  + Shift the weight
  + As you square up the body, the right hand rises to mid-chest.