



AIKIDO OF PHOENIX

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## ***Aikido of Phoenix Newsletter***

### *FROM TERESA MASTISON SENSEI*

There are many ways to help yourself improve in Aikido. Keeping a notebook or journal is one way that I've found helpful over the years. Later in this newsletter, I talk in more detail about what a notebook or journal might look like, but for now I'd like to share what I put inside my journal. I'm the kind of person who needs to write things down in order to remember it, so a journal-type notebook makes sense for me. Yours can take whatever form you want it to.

As a student, I recorded what techniques we did in class and usually included my own pictures and phrases that would help me remember what was done. Stick figures work great for this. I'd also wrote down questions I had when I was reviewing my notes or practicing on my own, especially when preparing for a test. I wrote the answers next to the questions so I could review them when needed. My notebook was also the place I kept all Aikido related papers (test criteria, handouts from Sensei, etc.).

As an instructor, my journal became a lesson plan book and a notebook in which I record my plans, goals, ideas for teaching as well as ideas for the dojo. I record things I need to do, questions I have (I still record the answers next to the questions), notes on student progress or something the students need to work on. I also write notes from books I read or ideas I have on my own and want to share with students. Sometimes I just write about what's important to me concerning Aikido ideas just to get the ideas out of my head and down on paper. There are many ways to utilize a notebook or journal that will help you grow and understand Aikido.

If you want to get more out of your Aikido training, think about starting a notebook or journal. Make it work for you and use it often. I would be happy to help you at any time. Remember that this is **YOUR** journal/notebook, spelling doesn't count:) Whatever form or method you find that works for you, I wish you the best in your Aikido training on and off the mat.

Have a blessed Christmas and a wonderful holiday season. Thank you for all your hard work and training this year. You are the reason Aikido of Phoenix is such a special dojo. Enjoy your break and we'll see you in the new year!

### *FROM JOHN SCANLIN SENSEI*

"There are 2 types of ki: ordinary ki and true ki. Ordinary ki is coarse and heavy; True ki is light and versatile. In order to perform well, you have to liberate yourself from ordinary ki and permeate your organs with true ki. That is the basis of powerful technique." -O'Sensei

The understanding of the concept of ki is essential to the practice of Aikido. While a complete study of ki can take years, it is possible to learn a great deal by applying a few basic principles. Ki in its simplest form is energy. But, as we know, it is much more than this. Ki is the elemental, ever-present universal force that exists in all things (both living and non-living). In Eastern theory, ki is responsible for all activity in the universe, even down to the way we feel individually (our emotions, feelings, outlook on life, etc). The more positive ki we can utilize the happier, more at peace, more powerful, etc we will be. Most people have a great deal more ki than they use on a daily basis. It is important to capture and utilize as much of our unused ki as possible. Some of the ways we can "free-up" our hidden ki are:

-Proper breathing ("kokyu ryoku"-breath power). The breath is the body of ki, and proper breathing activates our ki. Exhale upon exertion, and inhale upon relaxation.

-Correct posture. Keep head up and stand erect, both in the dojo and outside the dojo. This increases our awareness of everything around us (just like our moms told us!)

-Remove negative thoughts. Get rid of the "fighting spirit". Let it go! Keep the mind open to allow ki to enter.

-Practice lots of Aikido!

Congratulations to Thor, Marty, Karen, and Jonathan on their rank promotions. Keep up the great work!

Merry Christmas everyone!

Keep the spirit strong!

### *FROM LUCY MAILLOUX SENSEI*

Happy holidays and happy New Year from Snedigar! The month of November was dedicated to kick defenses, which is always a very different dynamic. As with any defense, the focus was on blending with the kick and ki extension. We'll expand on this in December as we go back to open hand defense.



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We also looked at the atemi and when should it be executed or even if it should be executed during a technique. There are a lot of articles on this within the Aikido community, and many of them I found actually discouraged using an atemi. However, I disagree; I see an atemi as an extension of ki. An atemi should not disrupt the flow of the technique; instead, it should be part of the continuous motion of the technique. Looking at some of O' Sensei's videos, although it is a very subtle motion, it appears that he also uses an atemi in some of his technique. So should an atemi ever be used? Absolutely! When should it be used? When there is an opportunity to do so without sacrificing the technique. To stop a technique to get in an atemi defeats it's purpose.

With the start of the New Year I am challenging myself and encouraging the class to prepare for a fresh start in 2010. Focus on taking care of yourself by eating right (I know, very difficult to do during the holidays), drinking plenty of water and getting 45 - 60 minutes of cardio at least three days a week. Remember that stress is counterproductive and is a deterrent to reaching your goals. Eliminate it where you can, which brings me to the principle of **Shugyu**, or the day-to-day struggles we face in order to improve ourselves. Pushing yourself at all times to be the best you can be, and never allowing slack time or accepting a second rate performance from yourself. Realize that there is a big difference in training and working out, whether you are on or off the mat. Training requires much more dedication, commitment and sacrifice. I challenge you to give 110%!

Finally, from my family to yours, have a very happy New Years.

#### ***HOLIDAY SCHEDULES***

**Chandler Dojo** - The Chandler dojo will not have classes on Wed., Dec. 16 due to the Christmas party being held that evening. The Chandler dojo will be closed for the holidays Dec. 17 to Jan. 4, 2010. The last class will actually be the night of our Christmas Party. We'll have the party instead of class. Classes will resume their regular schedule on Tuesday, Jan. 5, 2010.

**Mesa Dojo** - The Mesa dojo will not have classes during the month of December due to the Center's holiday schedule. Classes will resume their regular schedule on Mon., Jan. 4, 2010.

**Snedigar Dojo** - The Snedigar dojo will break for the holidays the weeks of Dec. 21 and Dec. 28. Classes will resume Jan. 4, 2010.

#### ***AIKIDO OF PHOENIX CHRISTMAS PARTY AND AWARDS CEREMONY TO BE HELD WED., DEC. 16.***

On Wed., Dec. 16 Aikido of Phoenix will hold its annual Christmas party and awards ceremony. The evening will begin at 6:00 pm and will include an hors d'oeuvre bar, a group activity, the awards ceremony, a visit from Santa and time to visit. Hors d'oeuvres can be anything you want. We have people bringing desserts and others bringing appetizers, so really it's whatever you want to bring. Plates, cups, napkins, and utensils will be provided.

If you haven't signed up to come yet, please do so as soon as you can. You can email me too if you'd rather do it that way. I am in the final planning stages and need to have firm numbers for tables and chairs and to see if the one room will be enough.

It's always a good time and I hope to see you all there. The evening will wrap up around 8:00. We would appreciate anyone willing to stay just a little longer to help with the clean up. We need to put out the trash, take down the decorations and put up the tables and chairs. Thanks in advance for all your help.

In preparation for the party, we will not be having Aikido classes at the Chandler dojo on that evening, Dec. 16.

#### ***MESA DOJO NEWS***

Just a reminder that there will be NO CLASSES during the month of December for the Mesa dojo. Classes will resume Mon., Jan. 4, 2010 providing we have enough students registered before then. If you plan on taking Aikido classes in January you can register as early as December 15 either online or at the Center. We need a minimum of 4 students in a class before the Center will allow us to have class. Please consider taking care of registration before the end of the year. Thank you.

Don't forget about the Aikido of Phoenix Christmas party and Awards Ceremony on Wed., Dec. 16. I'll see you there!

As we will not be having classes in December, I wish you all Happy Holidays and a very Merry Christmas. Thank you for all your hard work and positive energy in class. You are all a joy to work with. I wish you each the best in 2010!

#### ***SNEDIGAR DOJO NEWS***

One more quick reminder that Snedigar now offers classes on **Saturday mornings**, 10:00 - 11:30am and **Monday evenings**, 7:00 - 8:30pm.

### **AIKIDO NOTEBOOKS**

Keeping a journal or notebook on anything you are studying or learning can greatly increase your retention as well as give you opportunities for insightful revelations. It can definitely help you in your understanding of Aikido. Depending on how detailed you go with your journal it can be an excellent source in which to turn when you want to review a technique or philosophy, list questions, record the books you've read and what you've learned from them, or prepare for a test. You can also collect test criteria, handouts from Sensei or other articles/papers relating to Aikido you want to keep.

An Aikido journal is an ideal way in which to record what you have learned, including techniques covered in class (this helped me with the names of the techniques because I had to learn how to spell them), definitions, explanations of philosophies, list of questions you have about techniques, philosophies, any dojo matters as well as thoughts and ideas of your own. By doing this you open your mind to more than Aikido techniques. And Aikido is so much more than techniques. The impact and influence it can have on anyone's life is tremendous, but only as far as you allow it to take you. Studying Aikido is different than doing Aikido. Anyone can do Aikido techniques, but students who want more than just techniques will need to do more than just practice on the mat.

I encourage anyone interested in starting an Aikido notebook to do so. I have folders available for anyone who wants one. It's a quick and easy way to get started. Once you figure out how you want to use your notebook, you can change it. I also have available the essay on etiquette that was in the last newsletter. You may want to include it in your notebook. It is a good synopsis of the goings-on of a dojo and is good to review once in awhile.

I have a notebook that I started in 1994 if anyone is interested in seeing an example. Each person will create a notebook that is right for them. Use it any way that makes sense to you, but USE IT! Your knowledge and understanding with what is being talked about in class will increase exponentially if you do.

Please don't hesitate to ask questions or share ideas about your notebook. I look forward to hearing how you are making it work for you.

Teresa Mastison Sensei

### **RANK PROMOTIONS**

**Hachikyu** (green belt) - Roger Jimenez, Amanda Wright, Zach Weber, Wyatt Armagost, Ashton Ching  
**Rokkyu** (yellow belt) - Karen Aguilar  
**Gokyu** (blue belt) - Aimee Flores, Jonathan Scanlin  
**Shodan** (1st black belt) - Marty Martinez  
**Nidan** (2nd black belt) - Thor Mailloux

### **SUGGESTED READINGS RELATED TO AIKIDO**

Following is a list of books related to Aikido that you might find interesting. You are welcome to check out a book through the Chandler dojo or pick a title and check it out of a public library. You might even get lucky and find some of them at a used bookstore like Bookman's. Reading about Aikido from different perspectives can provide valuable insights. Different people/authors talk about the same things in different ways and one of them might use just the right words that will help you understand. Enjoy your reading. If you come across a good book that you think others would enjoy, please share it with Sensei so we can add it to our listing.

Abundant Peace - John Stevens  
Aikido and the Dynamic Sphere - Adele Westbrook/Oscar Ratti  
Aikido Basics - Lynn Seiser  
Aikido for Self Discovery - Stan Wrobel  
Aikido in Three Easy Lessons - Richard Moon  
Aikido: The Heavenly Road - Kenji Shimizu  
Art of Peace - Morihei Ueshiba (O'Sensei), John Stevens  
Enlightenment Through Aikido - Kanshu Sunadomari  
The Essence of Aikido - Bill Sosa

This is a great list with which to start your "off the mat" studies. Good luck and have fun!

### **UPCOMING SEMINAR**

Arizona Aikido's Annual Winter Seminar  
with  
Kevin Choate Sensei, 6th Dan  
Chicago Aikikai

The Seminar will be held at Longview Elementary in Phoenix February 19 - 21, 2010.

That is all the information we have at this time. Please visit [www.azaikido.com](http://www.azaikido.com) for more information or to contact someone for details.