



Aikido of Phoenix

Teaching Aikido as a Complete Budo

Satori Dojo Newsletter

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www.AikidoOfPhoenix.Com

Sensei's Corner

Konichiwa Deshi!

I had a great conversation with an old student last weekend about training. We chatted about a time when he almost left Aikido. He felt he had reached a plateau and was not really gaining anything. It was becoming more and more difficult to make it to class. In the end, the romance was over. He did not quit however. He kept on training and something interesting happened. He came to realize that (as cliché as it is) the training is solely about the journey and not the destination.

Many people will come to this same crossroad. As we train there will probably be a time when the excitement and newness of Aikido will wear off. Many people will fall away at this point simply because they either do not see the big picture or they are not really committed to the study of Aikido.

There is an obvious excitement and exhilaration when you first begin Aikido. It is a new adventure in your life and has the potential to bring you so much. It is easy to come to class because you can't wait to see what is next. In time this will fade and you may find yourself developing excuses to miss class.

The most solid advice I can offer anyone who is at this point in their training (or anyone who may eventually get to this point) is to sincerely evaluate

why you train and what do you get from training. I often say that you can get anything you want in life from Aikido—if you choose to pursue it. Aikido like so many worthy challenges is not an easy path. It takes commitment and dedication to excel. Aikido offers things that you can get nowhere else on Earth. The only requirement is that you train. This is a demanding requirement no doubt—but one worthy of its cost.

When you are having an “I'm tired of falling on the mat” day I would suggest that you look deep inside and realize that each step you take forward with Aikido represents a development out of reach to those outside the dojo. It is a rare day that you do not leave class feeling much better than you did when you arrived. Class is as much a rejuvenation event as it is a training session.

Aikido is not for everyone. I have had literally thousands of people pass through our doors with only the heartiest of souls staying. This is the way of things plain and simple. My hope for all students is that they simply bear the burden of training. The ultimate rewards for your efforts are beyond what you may understand right now. What we do understand is that by training, we become more than we were the moment before. Good luck in your journey.

-In Oneness

Sensei

Aikido like so many worthy challenges is not an easy path.

The Kids' Corner

Lately I've talked a lot about the intensity of our training. I'd like to review what I think this means in hopes that you consider my thoughts so that it will help you get even more out of your Aikido training.

We have a lot of fun in class. We laugh, joke and get pretty silly at times. I think that it's important for us to have a good time. However, it's easy to get sidetracked with the giggles and miss out on important training time. It's really vital that we all try to strike a balance with serious, sincere training with lighthearted, good times on the mat.

I'm not bringing this up because there is a problem but rather to help us pay attention to the dif-

ferent intensity levels so that we can step up our training and get the most out of our time together.

When I talked about being a good uke before I mentioned being aware of your partner and really giving them a sincere, realistic attack—this is training with intensity. When you are the nage (person doing the technique) I've mentioned how you should be paying attention to your uke, being quick to move out of the way, blending with their energy—this is training with intensity. It all comes down to paying attention and being aware. It's what Aikido is all about. It really is quite simple. If you pay attention and are aware of what's going on around you then you increase your chances of getting out of the way and possibly avoid-

ing the problem all together.

Training with intensity usually involves very little talking, getting up quickly when you fall down and looking at your partner. It also takes a firm grab—not a death grip, an attack that comes with energy—but won't take someone's head off if missed, and a real attempt at being the "bad person". To have a real intense training session you and your partner need to be committed to these aspects.

Obviously, this isn't going to happen 100% of the time for each person on the mat, but if we all strive to be that focused a little

more than we will increase our level of training and will see massive improvement in our Aikido techniques.

I hope you each think of these things and try to apply the concepts of "intense training" to your experiences on the mat. You'll be glad you did!

Thanks for all the hard work you do put out in class. I appreciate the efforts I see and am proud of each and every one of you. Keep up the great work. See you on the mat!

Teresa Mastison Sensei

It's really vital that we all try to strike a balance between serious, sincere training and lighthearted, good times on



Semapi's Corner

Konichiwa,

I'm writing this having just returned from a seminar in Wyoming sponsored by Kevin Murdock Sensei and his dojo. The seminar was a very well organized taking place in a beautiful area of the country. Teaching at this years event were Mastison Sensei, Pat Musselman Sensei, and Kevin Murdock Sensei teaching. Gary Boaz Sensei and his sempai came from Kansas to attend training. The Chandler dojo had a good showing this year with 4 of us attending besides Sensei.

The theme for this year's event was Kokyu (Breath) which is what you needed with an altitude of 6500 feet till you became acclimatized. The training was very focused and intense; it was a chance for us to train with former classmates from Kansas and meet the students from the Wyoming and Fort Collins, Colorado dojo. The crowning event was the 700 shomen cuts lead by Sensei on the last day of training. We were afforded the opportunity to play tourist after the seminar ended.

Seminars are an excellent training event to attend, remember they don't always have to be an Aiki oriented event. This type of training helps in your growth as a "Budoka". It

forces you to work outside your comfort zones, which can be a good thing. Working outside of the comfort zone forces you to work with people you have never trained with before, training in a different dojo, training at a different intensity level. If you never venture outside your home dojo to train you are missing a great deal. The off mat activities offers as much of a learning environment as on the mat, the exchange of training ideas, philosophy, the implementation of principles, etc (IE: learning the use of acupressure points in a healing manner). They also offer the opportunity to share ideas and have good conversation with fellow "Budoka". Plus you get to observe how other dojo execute technique, there is always a slight twist no two dojo's rarely execute technique the same way. Attending a training event sponsored outside of your own dojo will keep you honest. You have to maintain your focus since the techniques being shown are used to explain principles and philosophies of the art. It also keeps you on your best behavior since you are a representative of the dojo. I hope all you take advantage of these opportunities in the future. See you on the mat soon!

In Oneness
Gene Potocki
Sempai

Promotions & Test Candidates

Promoted:

Hachikyu—Aidan Nixon, Morgan Minitti, Jacob Sullivan, Joey Sullivan, Maggie Sullivan, Priscilla Wright

Rokkyu—Dustin Klempel

Invited to Test:

Hachikyu—Justin Shagena, Rachel Pearlstein, Ariana Clavell, Diego Chaviarria, Jacquelyn Chaviarria, Alexander Huang, Zachary Huang, Annika McGinley, Christopher McGinley, Kalyssa Harris, Jack Littler, Kirielle Singarajah, Eva Nys, Dillon Nys, Lisa Besnier, Christian Thompson

Shichikyu—Jessica Lister, Brooke Lister, Isaiah Nixon, Thomas Skalsky, Quinn Zapata, Zarin Tuten, Jack Rynd, Joseph Valencia, Tristan Britt, Tracy Forth, Austin Kim, Alexandra Fornek, Ameenah Graham, Alex Shearer

1st Stepping Stone—Aimee Flores, Raquel Dumas, Wil Brown

2nd Stepping Stone—Skyler Hugo, Zach Hugo

Rokkyu—John Barkley, Nicole Dentz, Alisha LeGere, Brian Solmundson

Gokyu—Kevin Boesel, Joseph Luongo

Upcoming Events

March:

8th—Chandler—Kid Safe child Personal Protection class

Teresa Mastison Sensei

This class will focus on etching your child the necessary skills to help keep them safe in today's world. From how to deal with strangers and self defense techniques to how to dial 911, this class covers it all. Cost is \$20.00. See the Dojo Cho or Sensei for more information.

Just WHO is that?

Over the next few months we will explore more details and history of influential Aikidoka and other Budoka that have influenced our dojo. This month we look at Peter Ting Sensei.

Peter Ting Sensei was one of the reasons we moved to Arizona. Kobayashi Sensei asked us to consider moving to Arizona in order to assist Peter Ting Sensei in the development of his dojo. My first meeting with Peter would change my views about the martial arts and my role as an instructor forever. Peter was a warm and humble person. He was of Hawaiian / Chinese decent and incredibly well traveled for a man of his day. Prior to coming to Aikido, Peter spent over thirty years in Kung Fu where he became well known and achieved almost legendary status. He shared an incredible story where while in San Francisco he got an opportunity to “spar” with Bruce Lee. His Sifu asked him to steer clear of Lee in that he was simply going from dojo to dojo at the time looking for fights. Peter however could not turn it down and stepped up. The way he told this story makes me laugh as I write this—and I will do my best to pass it on as he did to me. He walked up to Lee and said “OK Lee Lee (he would often intentionally mispronounce names to irritate people). Let’s go”. They then squared off just a short distance from each other . At that moment Peter took a deep breath and spit right in Lees face. Stunned, Lee took a step back and Peter attacked. “ I whacked him several times really good!...and then he beat the crap out of me. But I smacked him really good!” Lee and Peter became fast friends after that. Peter was asked to join Lee in Hong Kong to help him in his movies but Peter was not interested in such things and recommended a friend.

Peter was a Buddhist monk who lived in a Zen monastery for a good portion of his life. His move to Western society included serving with the U.S. Army 82nd Airborne division during World War Two. He took part in both a jump into Sicily (Operation Husky) and into Salerno. He was a true hero in every since of the word.

Peter ran a small dojo in Tempe off of Priest near Broadway in an industrial park. It was not easy to find and without help, you would never find it. Peter was an old school Sensei who believed that “If you really want to train with me...you will find me”. Kobayashi Sensei would have me help Peter market his dojo and make him more available to the public. Peter would have none of that and I did not push. Teresa Sensei and myself at that point accepted that we had an opportunity to train with one of the world’s best martial artists and we should take that opportunity.

Classes with Peter were an adventure. We would receive an hour and a half of private lessons prior to regular class starting. We would then take part in another two hour regular class which was followed by a “Brief” follow up private lesson (yes...3 1/2 hour classes). We did this three to four days a week and our Aikido took on a life of its’ own. Peter openly shared his seventy years of martial arts training with us and helped us become who we are today. Peter helped me to find my place as a Sensei. He helped me see that it is no good to take yourself too seriously and to understand that we are never above anyone.

Peter passed away on February 20th, 2001 from cancer. He is missed everyday and I am thankful that our paths crossed as they did.



Aikidoka Out and About

Frontsight Firearms Academy Training—Nevada



Sensei, Darrell Wyatt, Fred Wahlstrom, and Jim Garner pose with the instructors of the course.

Aikido Seminar—Jackson, Wyoming



Group photo—we had people from Wyoming, Kansas, Arizona, Colorado and Idaho join us for the event.



Sempai training with Cindy from Colorado.



Darrell working nikyo with a young Karate student from Jackson.

Niko working nikyo with Mark from Wyoming.



John Scanlin works shihonage with a karate student from Jackson.