

The Power of Harmony

**In The Realm
of the Spirit**

**Quantum Aikido,
Creativity
and
The Unified field**

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Acknowledgments

To those who have gone before

**My teacher Robert Nadeau
and his teacher Morihei Ueshiba O Sensei
and his teacher the Aiki Kami**

**For all they have to given me
and those who follow**

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Preface: On Learning

The process of learning requires entering the unknown. Otherwise we gain only additive knowledge that doesn't disturb our present descriptions or change our existing order.

In the Realm of the Spirit looks at our relationship to life through the art of Aikido. By looking through different windows of a house, we can come to know more about the inhabitants. What I describe is a view through one of many windows. My view is just a view. This is how it looks to me at this moment. Aikido is a profound art. This simplified description represents a doorway to learning, not the art. I share my perceptions not because they are right but to honor the diversity, to stimulate dialogue about Aikido and its value in the world and to broaden the applications of the teachings of the Art of Peace. Whether you engage in the physical practice of Aikido on the exercise mat or use the principles in daily life, I offer this book as a window of insight.

My interest lies in learning, especially in learning how to create new learning in the moment. Through practice you can get strong in a given technique or set of techniques. What if a situation occurs and you do not have a technique designed to handle it? What is the state of being by which you can learn and create techniques you do not know? Learning begins with challenging our perceptions especially about who we are.

We can wait for life to evolve us or we can intentionally train ourselves to grow and develop, speeding up the process. The art for me as a teacher is to develop and transmit principles that will serve long after the physical training is over. I want to learn and teach what will have value when I leave the dojo. Positive spirit, acceptance and non-resistance are the doorways to transformation and positive change.

As you take part in the exploration of these ideas, I invite you to participate with a fluid quality of curiosity. I encourage you not to take anything on my authority. You have an inner voice, an inner teacher, and an inner sense of what is true for you. Whatever your inner voice says has truth for you regardless of what I say. Consider, do not simply accept, what I say or what anyone says. Trust your inner teacher. Aikido means choosing harmonious connection to the force of life. Listen to the whisperings. Pay attention to your wondering, your learning, your process, and buy a better relationship with the Universe.

I do not know what I am talking about. Or more precisely I should say I am talking about what I do not know. I speak as an explorer, a learner not a knower. A student

once said to me, "At first I couldn't figure out what you were doing. Then I realized, you're not teaching, you're learning out loud. That's when I knew I wanted to study with you."

When Joseph Campbell, author of The Hero's Journey, was asked by a student how to apply the lessons from the mythic quest to keep his life on track, Campbell responded, "Same answer I always give, follow your bliss." To paraphrase Rabbi Hillel, "If we do not maintain a focus on our bliss, who will?"

Few students reach black belt, which is really the beginning of training. Only a small percentage of people reach a stage where they become Aikido. As we explore this window into the art, I hope these ideas will help you in hearing and understanding the whisperings in your own life. I hope your experience with these words will support you in creating your life authentically. May your study enhance your life and work in creative and renewing ways. May your life be fulfilling.

"The correct analogy for the mind is not a vessel that needs filling but wood that needs igniting - no more - and then it motivates one towards originality and instills the desire for truth." Plutarch

About this book

The approach to Aikido this book describes focuses on what Aikido means in the realm of the spirit. Wandering in an overwhelming universe I am interested in accessing and applying the guidance and wisdom of the whole. I think of these ideas and perceptions as the whisperings, subtle messages, of the Aiki-kami, the divine spirit of Aikido.

When I first read the words of the founder of Aikido some things made sense immediately. Others took years to gradually unfold their meaning. Many still remain a mystery. I encourage you to approach the process of reading these words as an exploration. Hopefully reading them will be more than a mental experience. Applying the ideas to your state of being or exploring applications to situations in your life will turn these ideas into skills. Find ways to deepen the learning experience for yourself through active engagement. Only practice will do that. Experiment with your understanding. Explore the mystery.

I recommend that you remain an active participant as you read. Simple as it is the practice of breathing consciously will help you remain active in the experience of mind body connection. Every time you come across the word breath or breathe in the text you can use it to remind yourself to take a full deep breath and thereby a practice.

I also encourage you to write down your thoughts on what you're experiencing. Committing thoughts to writing deepens learning and causes us to clarify our thinking and comprehension. Thoughts attended to at this level take on a different valence and stimulate a broader interconnecting of ideas, what we call creativity.

Mark the things that do not make sense at first. Record the questions or insights that show up as you read. They are the sparks to an inner process of questioning. Once that happens you have begun your journey and your understanding will unfold.

Lastly, this is an edited transcription of talking and teaching. It is not writing per se. I wish we could spend time in person and have a two-way dialogue. That is how I work best. Reading my words in this form requires an openness and willingness to go beyond the limitations of language and my skills with the written word to draw value from the ideas. This is also true in part because I enjoy playing with language as well as with thought itself. I am exploring learning in areas where our language has not developed. I know that in many places my choice of words and syntax will be unusual and often not make sense, at least at first. Give the language time to take on new meaning. In a spirit of harmony you can open your mind to learning and the creative process. Empty the 'I do not understand'. Open to the meaning you assemble out of what's going on. Then allow that meaning to affect who you are. I thank you in advance for your generosity of spirit.

The Author

I have studied Aikido formally since 1971 with Robert Nadeau Sensei, who was a personal student of the founder of the art of Aikido: Morihei Ueshiba O Sensei. I have done as much work with Aikido off the mat as on. Since 1986 I have been a partner in an Aikido based consulting firm. In the corporate realm, we coach executives and their teams to develop dynamic presence, inspired leadership, collective intelligence. We work with groups to facilitate communication and mediate conflicts. Our work, based on the principles we have learned from Aikido has equally expanded our understanding and application of the art. I have also had the opportunity to apply the principles of Aikido in the international peace-building work we have done in Cyprus and Bosnia.

*Many do not know we are in this world to live
in harmony.*

*Those who know this
do not fight against each other.*

Those who do not know this, suffer.

Gautama Buddha

Introduction

There is a mythic story in which the North Wind and the Sun were arguing about which was the strongest. The North Wind said to the sun, “See that traveler. Let’s see who can get his coat off.” The harder the North Wind blew the tighter the traveler wrapped his coat. Until the North Wind blew himself out. The Sun then shined on the traveler warming him until he loosened his coat and eventually took it off.

Through blending with, rather than opposing the Ki (energy or force) of an attacker or situation, Aikido aligns a harmonious relationship with Ki. The study of harmony, both philosophical and kinesthetic, enhances one’s ability to interact effectively in the world and has applications in every aspect of daily life. Studying Ki leads to greater knowledge of self, inducing a transformation of being. In the ongoing discipline of harmonious participation with an unfolding universe, an individual’s natural gifts emerge.

Did you ever wonder why there is so much conflict in the world? Do you know if add conflict or resolution? Ever wonder why you are more effective some days than others? Aikido offers a laboratory to inquire into these questions. Aikido is a doorway that transforms life from a struggle into a dance. It is a compass that guides you on your bestowed mission.

Peaceful Reconciliation - From a Practice to a Life Path

The principles Aikido teaches redefine the quality of human relationship and the foundations of our society. O Sensei spoke about creating a beautiful world through reconciliation. He taught that our practice should make a difference in the world. It begins by winning over the discord in our own minds. From there it spreads affecting the consciousness of everyone who has contact with us and everyone who has contact with them.

Aikido provides an alternative to the continuum of fighting or giving up, a process of aligning harmony in the world. Aikido can be a practice in the martial realm of learning how to handle the energy of a physically violent situation. It can also be a doorway that changes the way we live together. Learning effective martial strategy can translate into effective strategy in all aspects of our lives. When we need a skill, it is too late to train. When we look back on our life, it is too late to do it differently. Training means what we do before we need it.

In business, as in life, success means distilling value. Strategy orders the sequence of tasks to create a world in harmony with our values. Only vision of what we

value drives us to action. Without value there is no driving force. When the goals we aim for align to our bestowed mission, when we are on purpose, our passion drives action. Energy and enthusiasm abound. Our vision of accomplishing our mission gives impetus to life. If our vision of what we want, of what could be, fades, our spirit diminishes and with it the driving force of our effectiveness. In a state of overwhelm we lose connection to our source of power.

“Poverty is having nothing you want to do”.

Did you ever get a flat tire when you are late? Sometimes bad experiences quickly grow out of proportion. Other times we pull over and change the tire without the histrionics. Substitute losing a job or partner for the flat tire. Is one response to pressure more familiar to you than the other? What causes the difference between responding like we’ve been singled out for punishment and the times we maintain a positive spirit? Our state of being can make the same situation a totally different experience.

Modern life with its complexity can seem overwhelming. In a state of overwhelm we are less effective. The less effective we are, the more overwhelming life’s pressures seem. Unless we have a process to correct it, overwhelm increases in a viscous cycle. It stresses the body, weakens the immune system, blocks thinking and stifles creativity. All of this affects and is affected by our mood, attitude, and state of being.

Mood has such a powerful effect on how we interact. Our mood is the filter that colors all of our experiences and affects the way we make meaning. We know this about other people because we wait for a better time to ‘have a talk with the boss’. Most of us knew there were better and worse times to ask our parents for something and our kids know it about us.

In a bad mood, when we are tense, hungry or tired, every little thing upsets us more. On a ‘bad’ day a ten-dollar parking ticket can sour your day. On a good day it doesn’t. In a good mood or a positive state we laugh off an insult or receive criticism well. The deeper our connection to our central ground of being, the less disturbed we are by fluctuations in the market.

The problem with our moods is we do not see them as moods from the inside. From the inside they feel like reality. Most of us are victim to how we feel as if it were universal truth. Mood can interfere in our perception of what we truly value. In a bad mood we fail to prioritize our lives according to clearly considered

criteria. We make decisions impulsively because we have lost contact with our inner compass. We do things that we regret.

Attention describes reality based on our state, mood and quality of thinking. The problem is not our mood. It is that we do not see it. So we do not do anything about it. Instead we operate out of sorts. Seeing our state as mutable allows us to affect it. We can change our state with the proper training. In order to do so we need to see the possibility of attuning our state and we need to develop the ability to affect our state in the realm of the spirit.

Depending on how we pay attention we can train to defend the self, reinforcing mechanical behavior or training can help us release and dissolve our conditioned habit patterns. By paying attention to our experience we operate in the present. Conditioned patterns lose their influence when we operate from presence. When we are free we respond authentically to who we are and how we feel. In that state creativity abounds.

Though our goals may be different we all experience feelings of satisfaction upon accomplishing our goals and the frustration of having them thwarted. Whether entering the marketplace with a new product or service or helping a child or associate grow to their full potential, effectiveness increases through working in harmony with the forces at play. War, resistance, working in opposition depletes our resources and limits our ability. When we operate in harmony with the unfolding situation (change), we are more effective at accomplishing what we want to accomplish. *Most importantly, in an open and harmonious relationship to the energies of the universe – creativity, action beyond the known emerges.* Harmony with the infinite affects how effectively we function. Through the power of harmony, blending with the totality, we can access and manifest our full potential.

We can reach unimaginable heights in the natural expression of our path. We can express capabilities beyond what we imagine. Morihei Ueshiba O Sensei, the founder of Aikido, gave us a practice to make the impossible possible. It is up to us to value it, study it, expand and apply the power of harmony and ‘create a beautiful world’.

Historical Origins

The word Aikido is made up of three Kanji (pictographs) or syllables describing several important concepts that make Aikido unique and particularly applicable to our world and our lives. Ai means harmony, love, confluence, coming together, unity; Ki means steam, universal energy, vital force, mind, spirit, adaptability,

common sense; and Do means way of knowledge, art or life path. The Kanji 'Ki' implies Aikido takes place in the domain of energy that activates and manifests the physical realm. And the Kanji 'do' describes a path implying ongoing growth and development. Aikido translates as 'the Way of Harmony with the spirit of the Universe'. It is the Path- (Do), of Harmony- (Ai), with (Ki), the Divine Spirit of Infinite Creativity, the energy of creation.

As the symbol Ai - harmony is common with the symbol Ai - love, I decided to name my unique budo Aikido . . . It is a great love omnipresent in all quarters and all times of the universe. There is no enemy of love. There is no discord in love. Aikido is the realization of love.

Morihei Ueshiba, O Sensei,

Aikido grew out of the warrior arts of the east. The Japanese term for the warrior's domain is Budo. The word Budo is made up of two Kanji. **Bu** the symbol for warrior includes the idea to stop war. War is seen as inimical to the growth and development of an individual or a society. In the realm of the spirit, stopping the war pivots on resolving inner conflicts. **Do** means a path, a way of life, a life inquiry. Budo translates as the Way of the Warrior and implies the protection of society's growth and development. Budo, ancient samurai tradition, was a culture of service to a larger good. In the modern world it translates as the way of leadership, one who takes responsibility for more than oneself, for society and the world at large.

Without 'Budo' a nation goes to ruin, because Budo is the life of loving protection and is the source of the activities of science.

Morihei Ueshiba, O Sensei

Aikido's roots trace back through the martial form of Daito-Ryu Aiki-jujitsu all the way back to the Yagyu School of Sword originating in Japan around the 15th Century. Although its origins can be traced back to ancient Japanese martial tradition, Aikido is a very modern art founded in the mid-twentieth century by Morihei Ueshiba O Sensei.

Morihei Ueshiba, the founder of Aikido is referred to as O Sensei. *Sensei*, in Japanese, means teacher and implies 'one who has gone before'. *O Sensei* means great teacher, or teacher of teachers. Born in 1883, O Sensei died in 1969.

Due to an early experience in life of seeing his father beaten by a group of thugs, Morihei Ueshiba became very interested in strength and developing martial skills. The stories of his devotion to the study and the intensity of his practice are

legendary. He studied many arts and became a master of sword and spear. O Sensei was an instructor in the School of Daitu-Ryu Aiki-jujitsu, as well as several other forms of open-handed combat.

Although he was never defeated in combat he was not satisfied with martial strength. He spent many years searching for a deeper meaning to the training. He took numerous journeys in search of greater wisdom and spiritual transcendence. At one point in his life he had an enlightenment experience. This was the birth of the unique path of Aikido.

***Suddenly the earth trembled. Golden vapor welled up from the ground and engulfed me. I felt transformed into a golden image, and my body seemed as light as a feather. All at once I understood the nature of creation: the Way of a Warrior is to manifest Divine Love, a spirit that embraces and nurtures all things. Tears of gratitude and joy streamed down my cheeks. I saw the entire earth as my home, and the sun, moon, and stars as my intimate friends. All attachment to material things vanished.**

Morihei Ueshiba, O Sensei

(Excerpted from the introduction to The Art of Peace by John Stevens)

Aikido differs from other martial arts in that it focuses on reconciliation not domination. The techniques focus on neutralizing the attack, not the attacker. O Sensei emphasized that the true spirit of a warrior is one of loving protection. Though our first responsibility is to protect one's self from harm, the essential attitude of loving protection is also extended to each person in the universe. Aikido's philosophy includes the protection of the attacker as part of the focus. We practice to transform the energy of an attack without destroying the person initiating it. Rather we look to support the growth and development of each individual and make the world a better place to live.

Aikido is not a set of moves though many see it that way. If you look at most of the writings that O Sensei left behind, there is very little about where the hands or feet go. He emphasized operating from the unified field of spirit rather than operating from the fragmented world of matter. He exhorts us to identify as the total universe, connecting the aspects of being, creating a unified field of awareness. Aikido means to harmonize with the flow of life energy, with all the forces at play in any given situation. The power lies in applying our knowledge of universal laws to the formation of our lives and our relationship to all that is.

Scientists have held that theoretically a unified field ties together the forces that create the universe. O Sensei demonstrated that the universe is one system. He taught about the laws of creation and how they affect our lives. The older form of

Aiki-jujitsu taught techniques formed out of non-resistance with the energy of an attacker's force. O Sensei was seeing another potential beyond simply not opposing an attacker's force, beyond going with it. Through the power of love he shifted his identity to include his attacker.

Aikido is often referred to as a martial art, implying a study in the domain of Mars, the God of War, a study of the arts of the warrior. O Sensei spoke of love more than victory and defeat. I often choose to describe Aikido as a Venusial art, a study in the domain of Venus, the Goddess of Love.

Aikido studies unifying experience through *musubi*, connection. *Musubi* means to tie together. The concept implies joining the individual with the universal, the manifest world and the divine, all of creation with the mystery. Unifying attention and experience means participating in the totality of creation. Aikido teaches us to relate as part of creation seeing the aspects in relationship to the whole. It heals the mistake of seeing one's self as separate and needing to control everything else. Aikido develops the ability to participate fully in a larger flow of energy without trying to control and diminish others.

In harmonious connection to the energy that sources life, our identity shifts. Shift how you see yourself in relation to the whole and the boundaries of who you are change as do your experience, thought and capabilities. O Sensei by changing his identity changed his experience and by doing so changed reality. He wasn't limited by what should have been impossible. Just before the founder died he described his accomplishments as kindergarten. We have hardly begun to see the possibilities he envisioned.

Do and Waza

Aikido explores the relationship of the individual and society with the energy that creates life and sustains the universe. When people speak of Aikido, they often speak of the physical techniques as if they were the art. My instructor said confusion existed because O Sensei used the term Aikido to describe both the mat practice of the physical techniques as well as the larger study of the workings of universal harmony.

“There's the bending and twisting and then there's the universal alchemy”
Nadeau Sensei

For the sake of discussion, I make a distinction between **Do** (pron. doe - long o) a path and **Waza** - techniques. The term **Aikido**, represents the path, the way of Aiki, the spiritual **principles** of harmony with the universe. To differentiate I use

the term Aiki-**waza** to describe the **techniques** used to neutralize an attack in the physical realm. Techniques apply specifically to a given situation.

Through one window we can define two aspects of any art: principles and techniques. The dictionary defines a principle as: a fundamental source from which something proceeds; a primary element, force or law that produces or determines particular results; the ultimate basis on which something depends; cause, in the widest sense. The dictionary defines technique as: the mechanical or formal part of an art. Principles describe universal laws and fundamental truths that govern action. Techniques teach the method and procedure of the execution of an art or craft.

On one end of the continuum are the basic martial movements and techniques. On the other the principles that create both the movements and the philosophy of the art. One who understands principles can create and adapt techniques. Without this knowledge one can only apply existing techniques one has learned. **Aikido** inevitably produces Aiki-**waza**. The principles of Aikido when practiced will inherently produce techniques and forms (Waza) that apply the power of Aikido's principles (Do) to any specific discipline.

I question whether Aiki-waza will produce Aikido. Indeed it may but even if it does, I believe it will take infinitely longer. If we understand that all movement occurs within the universal field of energy and practice *harmonious relationship* with the whole of the field, we can save a lot of time in achieving the power of Aikido, an inordinate amount of time.

Principles inform our description of and our interactions in and with the world. Seeing a clearer picture of the forces at play increases our ability to interact creatively with the whole of life. Creativity increases the options we have to choose from, increasing the likelihood we will choose one that completes who we are.

We use both principles and techniques in most aspects of our life. Here is a simple example from the martial arts around the principle of balance. Physically in the martial arts if we disturb our partner's balance, they lose power. If we regain or improve our balance, we enhance our power. When we are centered and balanced we can deliver more power to a throw or strike and are less vulnerable to being thrown. When we are off balance our moves are weaker and we are more vulnerable to a strike and more susceptible to being thrown.

In a martial situation, power derives from the ongoing ability to correct balance in the moment, under pressure and operate from a centered, grounded, balanced state.

Training this principle while responding to an attack develops the ability to return to the presence of center and ground when we need it most, under pressure. A technique applies this principle through a defined movement that disturbs an attacker's balance to throw or strike them where they are most vulnerable.

The principle of balance has application in daily life as well as martial arts. To apply the principle of balance to our checkbook we use the techniques of addition and subtraction. To apply the principle of balance to our physical condition we use the techniques of diet and exercise. In the discipline of exercise there are the principles of aerobics, resistance and stretching. A principle of aerobics is to increase circulation by maintaining a given heart rate for a set amount of time. Running and swimming are techniques of aerobics.

Translating the principle of balance into the realm of the spirit, when we are off balance we are more susceptible to being influenced to act against our inner guidance. Centered we tend to live true to our essence. In the realm of the spirit balance keeps us from getting so ethereal we can't function effectively, or so concrete we lose the ability to dream and be creative.

Depending on the way we look at a human being, we can distinguish differing aspects of being. If we arbitrarily define three domains -- body, mind and spirit -- there would be principles and techniques in each realm. Because the domains constitute one system, training one will affect the others. Here are some examples, though they also show how arbitrary the distinctions can be.

Principles in the physical domain might be fluidity, balance and position. The techniques in the physical domain are the strikes, blocks, wristlocks and projection throws utilized to handle a physical attacker. Principles in the realm of the mind might be focused and open attention. If you have any internal conflict about fighting, hurting others or being hurt, thinking those thoughts will inhibit effectiveness. So clear and coherent focus of intention is a mental principle. Mental technique might be the ability to prioritize the importance of targets by their degree of vulnerability. Principles of spirit might include love, positive attitude, openness to perception, willingness to learn. Techniques in the realm of the spirit might include sensing someone's intent to attack before there is any physical movement. Certainly meditation, visualization, prayer, chanting and fasting fit in as techniques of the spirit. Relaxation might be considered a technique in all the realms and exemplifies the connection between them.

From the window of the larger study of universal harmony, the physical techniques can be seen as coded messages about how the universe works. Through the study of the forms we can seek the principles behind them. From there we can trace a

path to that which creates the movements, the origin, the divine realms. Principles of interaction can be translated from the movements and applied to our lives. The distinguishing principle of Aikido as a martial art is non-resistance, harmony.

Physically Aikido emphasizes moving out of the way of an attack rather than blocking its force. In the mental realm this translates as not taking a statement personally or opposing it verbally. In the realm of the spirit it means allowing our energy to flow without resistance from our limited identity, not living in opposition to the unfolding of the universe.

If you generate your life from a spirit of harmony, flexibility and responsiveness naturally appear. Then you can adapt learned knowledge appropriately to each unique situation. You won't end up in opposition to the unfolding universe based on habits of outmoded thought and outdated understanding. Knowing what is important at each moment comes from being able to receive each moment anew.

If we have the ability to see the shortcomings in a software application combined with the ability to write one that is more aligned with our needs of the moment, we are then free to use established programs or create new ones which ever would serve our purposes better. Principles inspire creativity. Fixating on technique limits creativity. With the ability to see the incoherence in our thoughts, we can choose to create meaning that is more coherent.

There is much more to gain from learning the art than being able to repeat forms or throw a partner. If training focuses too much on the physical domain the mental and spiritual development will be peripheral. Learning techniques of spiritual development may be far more important in completing our bestowed mission than learning to fall physically or throw someone else. My work in the study hall (dojo) is about learning and exploring the principles so they can be applied in life outside the dojo, in the other conflicts I encounter.

These quotes exemplify the uniqueness of O Sensei's art and the focus of his teaching.

Aikido is the truth taught by the universe and must be applied to our lives on this earth.

The secret of Aikido is to harmonize ourselves with the movement of the universe and bring ourselves into accord with the universe itself.

True budo is to be one with the universe; that is, to be united with the center of the universe.

This is not mere theory you practice it. Then you will realize the great power of oneness with nature.

Winning means winning over the mind of discord in yourself. It is to accomplish your bestowed mission.

True budo is the loving protection of all beings with a spirit of reconciliation. Reconciliation means to allow the completion of everyone's mission.

Aikido is not a technique to fight with or defeat the enemy. It is the way to reconcile the world and make human beings one family.

Aikido keeps all beings in a constant state of growth and development and serves for the completion of the universe.

Morihei Ueshiba, O Sensei

Our attention is a precious commodity. We either focus our attention on what is important to us or it will be taken by what distracts us. Without discipline in the realm of the spirit, we spend our lives distracted by the pressure of a million incidentals. Too often we forget why we are doing things and lose the larger context of our lives. Awareness creates choice, power and possibility. Lack of awareness imprisons. Knowledge is power only if we apply it.

One of Many Windows

People see Aikido in different ways. They are looking at it through different windows. Through one window it is about defending yourself. Through another it is a series of techniques. Some people like martial arts, others like the feeling the movements produce. Some people like the history. Others like being a part of the community a dojo (school) creates. People study many different aspects based on their individual perceptions and interests. All of it is Aikido, but none of it is all of Aikido.

Every art and skill set has fundamentals on which the higher skills are built. In every art teachers define the fundamentals based on how they perceive the art. Some schools that teach the art of Aikido resist talking about the principles thinking there is only value in doing the movements. Many practitioners have never even seen the words of the founder. Consequently, they understand Aikido only as a collection of techniques, pins and throws believing that by repeating the forms one will learn the art. When we slip into studying it as a martial art only,

with little or no application of the philosophy. We think if the attacker goes down that demonstrates we are doing it right. O Sensei indicated otherwise.

Aikido is not a technique to fight with or defeat the enemy. It is the way to reconcile the world and make human beings one family.

To compete in techniques -- winning and losing -- is not true budo -- True budo knows no defeat. Never defeated means never fighting.”

The devil mind will go down in defeat and the spirit will rise up in victory. Then Aikido will bear fruit in this world.

Morihei Ueshiba, O Sensei

I consider techniques of awareness in the realm of spirit, fundamental to Aikido. Harmony, reconciliation, unification and peace are the watchwords of my practice. ‘In the realm of the spirit’ refers to the study of harmony with the indefinable energy of creation, as guidance for our lives.

Spiritual Training and the Spiraling of Creation

Spirit, coming from a Latin root meaning breath, is a term that probably has as many interpretations as interpreters. The Japanese word Kokyu is also translated as breath. I find it useful to describe either as the force that activates the breath. Spirit might be seen as the between, the invisible essence that connects all matter, energy and consciousness.

When I use the term spirit, I am not talking about ghosts. The meaning I intend is closer to when someone says, “ a very spirited horse”, or “she got into the spirit of the party.” Attitude is a related word but lacks the power of creation that spirit implies. Spirit implies a larger domain, a connection to the forces that source creation in its totality. Less mystical than spirit, the term energy may offer another window into the force of creation. Spiritual training as I use the term means training our spirit, developing our ability to live in-and-with a chosen spirit.

Spirit, inspiration and spiral all share the same root. When you breathe, air moves in a spiraling pattern, the way the wind moves, not in straight lines. Life spirals. It is happening in the way that water drains. Watch leaves in the wind. Watch nature unfold -- watch flowers open, pine cones, trees. All of them form in a spiraling motion-- spiraling energy uncoils into creation. It is a dance from the movement of galaxies right down to the microbiological level of DNA. If you’ve ever seen the

models of the DNA molecules, they are pictured in a spiraling design. In one theory of the universe, physicists describe the basic form of matter as what they call super-strings, winding coiling strings of one dimension. When energy moves there's a coiling, uncoiling spiral. All of the energy in the universe moves in spiraling, serpentine patterns, including the power of your spirit, heart, your mind and your being.

We can study the system of energy movement as well as the movements of the body and the movement of thought. Each aspect of a system will teach us about the whole. The practice of feeling and blending with the spiraling energy of the universe is visible and tangible in the physical realm. The principle carries into the mental and spiritual realm. Thought patterns spiral, when an old idea comes round in a new way. We describe someone as being on an emotional spiral.

The creation is an uncoiling spiraling movement. When we are both present and fluid, the spiraling happens and we evolve in relationship to it. If we are only partially present in mind and body, we only evolve in relation to part of the spiraling life energy. As I recognize my connection to the universal spiral, its power becomes accessible to me. I can then draw on that power, as the sailor draws on the power of the wind. Aikido, harmony with the spiraling energy empowers one's ability to accomplish their bestowed mission.

All the moves of Aikido derive from a spiral. We do not need to create a spiral. It is already happening: the DNA double-helix spiral was happening long before our parents were born, long before we ever thought about universal movement and will be happening long after. It is automatically connected with everything that's going on. Everything that's going on is going on because it, the spiraling, is going on.

Everything manifests of spirit which is always spiraling and uncoiling, enfolding and unfolding. Harmony with the flow of energy connects us with the domain of existence where spirit/spiraling is the primary dynamic. I do not have to try to make myself part of the universe -- everything is already part of the universe. The practice is tuning my awareness to recognize what is so.

If you identify in the domain of the spirit and the manifest realm at the same time, you can utilize the power available through the spirit. When we choose to experience the flowing energy in a spirit of Aiki, the energy sources our power. If you identify as the spiraling that exists, it is as if the spiraling energy does the work.

Aikido teaches contributing as part of the whole. Neither controlling nor opposing, operate in harmony with the laws of creation. Aligned with the natural laws underlying the manifest realm our experience of energy becomes learning, growth and development. Harmony allows us to focus on creating what we want.

Martial Study / Spiritual Practice

In the martial arts metaphor one's degree of effectiveness can decide life and death. If we were going to talk about influencing someone who's attacking us, then we'd like our influence to be effective. Effectiveness means maximum result with minimal expenditure of energy. Buckminster Fuller used the phrase, "Doing more and more with less and less."

Effectiveness is measured by the accomplishment of our goals. Using the martial metaphor, if I had to hit someone, I wouldn't want to have to do it twice. I'd want to stop them on the first strike. If I didn't want to do that, I wouldn't hit them. Similarly, if I want to throw someone, I am not going to put my energy against where they are strong. I want to throw them where the opening is and go with their flow. Translate that to the realms of business, science and relationship and the principle of harmony still rules. Effective means action in harmony with the laws of the universe.

We can use each situation we encounter, each day, each breath, and each nanosecond, to practice training attention. In the realm of the spirit, the value of Aikido doesn't come from my friends & I throwing each other on the floor or even developing the potential ability to handle an attacker. It comes when I apply the principles and teachings to create harmony in my interactions with the people and situations in every realm of my life. Our potential to influence any situation increases if we harmonize with our essence and when we operate in harmony with everything else. Aiki-Leadership defines the ability to develop and guide our lives, a company, a team, a family, and society through the power of harmony.

In the study of Aikido the physical attack is a metaphor for change. It represents any situation in which we are required to handle the pressure of change and our corresponding charge of energy. The attack represents the energy of creation, the power of life, the more of who and what we are. The pressure of the universe hits us in a lot of ways, somebody yelling at us, being stuck in traffic, making the rent, puberty, love or aging. How we handle pressure illustrates for us our relationship with higher, hidden, unknown aspects of our self. The quality of our relationship with life colors the meaning we form. The meaning we make defines our actions. Consciousness about our relationship with ourselves increases our ability to choose

our state of being. Connecting thinking, feeling and acting generates a unified field from which we naturally respond to the unfolding universe in a harmonious relationship.

Aikido, through the metaphor of attack and defense is a perfect form of training to see our patterns of response to stimulus. When we see ourselves reacting defensively, we can practice an open spirit of allowing energy to flow in the face of pressure. If we are at all resistant to the energy, it shows up as a tightening in the body-mind draining our energy and diminishing our ability. Resistance to the energy blocks creativity and produces negative thoughts resulting in a victim state of mind. We get stuck. We lose the ability to resolve a situation in a way we will find satisfactory. We need to address our state of being before we try to correct the situation.

Have you ever engaged in a discussion, especially one that ended in disagreement, and walked away unsatisfied, only to think of the perfect comment hours later or the next day? The gap in time between thought, feeling and action reflects a lack of integration within ourselves. Have you ever sensed an action you needed to take, something you felt called to do and yet didn't, only to recognize later the significance of the missed opportunity?

Life doesn't come with instructions. Though there are many treatises of wisdom available we still must divine our own course in life. When we act out of connection to the whole of creation, the universe completes itself. Translation: our life is fulfilling.

Is there anything you would like to do or see happen that you do not even try, because you fear it is not possible? How many of us have resisted change that in the long run turned out for the best? Ever lost a job or ended a relationship, gone through a tremendous emotional upheaval about it, and gotten a better job or found yourself in a better relationship? Open to the learning, we find ourselves in a new relationship to everything. Aikido develops the courage and wisdom to follow a path that is true to who we are. I am especially interested in the energies that take us on paths we would never imagine for ourselves.

The Dragon

You had contact with it once. The protean energy, universal Ki, the divine force, was your original 'imaginary' playmate. We all start out as unformed potential. Children originally show an infinite creativity. Gradually we were weaned from the realm of unformed potential and bound to our culture's accepted description of the world. Without realizing it, based on a description we absorb and repeat to ourselves, we lose touch with what is going on in our own experience. We act in a culturally prescribed manner and lose touch with our authenticity. We disconnect from the creative force. In the hurry of life we tend to forget there is a source let alone a process to reconnect.

The Hopi teach that children lose touch with the divine when the fontanel, the part of the cranium that is soft at birth, hardens. The Sufis teach that children have access to the 'Jinn plane', a spiritual realm, until about the age of seven. After that access closes up, perception becomes fixed, and we lose access to the divine realm. At that point it can only be reconnected through spiritual practice.

Our power diminishes if we disconnect from the creative source. The word religion derives from a Greek word meaning "to re-link". Religion should re-connect us with the source of creation. All spiritual practices, all the chants and the prayers, the art and the designs of the buildings were intended to help us reconnect to the divine source of creation.

Through the symbolic death of the separate mundane identity and rebirth into the spirit, religions seek to develop an identity connected to the whole. Repeating rituals should re-establish connection with the divine realm. Too often it can turn pro forma (form without substance) without our realizing it.

Religion though originally designed to re-link us to the planet and cosmos can turn into a dogmatic attitude. When we hold too tightly to our formed ideas we end up in a fight against the flow of life energy, against the inevitable change. Creative possibility dissolves into fixed beliefs about how the power of creation is described. We fragment into defending beliefs and descriptions. The forces of creation are ineffable, yet people fight over the fact that they describe their experience of the divine differently.

No one is intentionally closed minded. It happens unconsciously when we hold ourselves captive to our beliefs. To the degree that our processes are unconscious, energy pushes us in ways we do not understand. All the struggles in the world are projections of the inner struggles we face. We identify with one aspect of creation and fight against the rest. We absorb beliefs and generate descriptions and then, out of fear, we are forever condemned to defend them.

Once energy flows as meaning it creates a pathway in the matter of the brain. Energy channeled down familiar pathways habituates. Habituated patterns repeat themselves as patterns of meaning, thought, feelings and impulses. Habit seems effortless. We feel comfortable with what we know. It can be hypnotic and anesthetizing, whereas new experiences and ideas disturb our sleep. They can seem annoying like someone waking us up. We need intention to awaken and go beyond habitual thought and action. Learning occurs where we meet the edge of what we know. On the edge of the unknown the vastness can seem terrifying.

Statues of dragons guard the gates of many eastern temples. They symbolize the fear of entering the unknown essence of who we are. When we react out of fear we see energy and its manifestations as monsters. We try to control our reaction or shut down the energy itself. In a big rush of energy we feel a loss of control. It is a misunderstanding but we come to fear the energy itself. We repress our own energy because its power scares us. If fear stops us, we cannot enter the temple, the authenticity of our own being, the essence of our spirit, the mystery of who we are.

When we overcome the fear of the dragon we enter the temple. And overcome here doesn't mean repress, it means going beyond our fear. Courage is neither denying fear nor eradicating it. Mastery implies acting intelligently in the face of fear. Aikido implies unifying with the same energy that when resisted sources fear. The power of harmony transforms fear into usable energy. Through the power of Aikido the dragon becomes an ally.

The energy we expend as tension could be applied to more positive ends. Through training non-resistance we allow the intelligence of creation greater influence in our lives. If, rather than resisting or trying to control the energy, we focus on the quality of connection, we participate in the creativity of the universe. The aspects of life are not separate. They create and are created out of the whole. We are part of the unfolding. When the unknown appears and the divine shows through, then our practice becomes invaluable.

The Way of Harmony and The Thalamic Pause

How accurately do we perceive the reality we are living in? Our ability depends on the relationship of perception with energy. Perception precedes judgment. But judgment occurs so fast that we can't separate the two. We often confuse our reactions with our experience. We think our judgment is perception.

Alfred Korzypski used the term ‘ The Thalamic Pause’ to describe the movement from reaction to response. ‘The Thalamic Pause’ sometimes called ‘the semantic pause’ represents the time needed to allow thought to move from the reptilian brain to include and integrate the limbic and higher cortical function producing deeper meaning and clearer understanding.

We can apply ‘ The Thalamic Pause’ to Aikido movement and metaphorically to creating our life. Only training will change our habit pattern from re-acting, to centering first and then acting. It begins by noticing our reactivity and then training ourselves to respond, to operate from perception that includes thalamic, limbic and cerebral input. Thalamic Aikido, Quantum Aikido trains unifying, allowing the whole system of energy to respond. The skill frees up energy that allows creative whole brain response. (For more on the study of the thalamic pause and free energy see *The Thalamic Dialogues*, Zanshin press - available on the web site zanshinryu.com.)

Unifying mind, body and spirit makes it possible to access our creativity rather than operate from habitual responses. The ability to accurately receive the guidance of spirit and to act on it is critical for fulfillment in our lives. Aikido explores allowing the energy that flows through us to guide our learning and our life. Improperly grounded in our connection to universal spirit, we are always looking for external guidance on what’s right.

One can seek self-knowledge through numerous disciplines: yoga, philosophy, ontology, epistemology or meditation. In each discipline there would be a set of guidelines for the process. In martial practice we practice through the metaphor of attack and response. In Aikido each fall can serve as a symbolic mini-death that allows us to practice surrendering the limited identity and practice opening to the totality of being. The pressure we give each other can be used as feedback to help us align our presence in the moment.

Imagine the energy of the universe as coded intelligence and us as decoders. A sensing of the whole allows us to receive feedback from the universe and design an inter-relationship of greater harmony and coherence. Operating connected to our ground of being an internal compass directs our lives. Once we learn to recognize the rushing energy and develop our ability to listen to its guidance rather than react to its intensity, we rebirth anew.

As each of us becomes a conduit of the universal guidance functioning throughout the universe, we create a society that naturally and effortlessly leads people to the completion of their bestowed mission. The development of a free society is the amalgam of free individuals. Not simply words and ideas, freedom is a way of being that is the basis of thought and action. Freedom exists beyond the realm of mechanical behaviors.

Depending on how we pay attention training can reinforce defending our identity and mechanical behavior or it can dissolve the identity - help us release holding and habit patterns allowing us to respond spontaneously and authentically. Attention to the relationship between perception and the rush of energy enables us to unify the connection. Present and in harmony we can influence the unfolding in a creative way.

Harmony is a natural state in the universe. Solar systems and galaxies naturally operate in a harmony of forces. When mind, body and spirit harmonize generating a unified field, our capacity to function in the moment increases in direct proportion to the degree of unification. The unified field organizes a different quality of energy similar to what a laser does with light. A laser exemplifies the increasing power of light, as it becomes coherent. As our beings become coherent our ability, our power, increases. Aikido brings us into flowing confluence with the energies of our lives naturally accomplishing our bestowed mission.

In the face of the unknown people often hold on for dear life. Spiritual practice develops a positive reinforcing cycle of connecting to and experiencing the guidance of the universal intelligence. When personal and universal “become one,” power greater than exists in either realm begins to manifest. Capability and possibility increase beyond the limits of imagination. When individual consciousness comes into harmonious relationship with universal consciousness, life takes on a quality that seems miraculous to someone with a ‘mind of discord’. Put another way, the power of harmony can transform our relationship with ourselves, with the whole of creation and with the energy that sources creation

Aikido has value beyond fighting and martial arts. Since I never get into fights or even arguments, my interest is in Aikido that works in real life, outside the dojo, where most of the pressures do not come in the form of someone striking us. The Art of Peace and its teachings apply to any of life’s domains and will innovate techniques, whether in a martial art form, the way people commonly think of Aikido, or ‘off the mat’ in relationship, leadership, business, politics, science, design, strategy, decision-making, parenting and the arts.

O Sensei showed that more is possible than we imagine. When we harmonize with the forces of the universe as they flow into our lives, those forces empower us to “accomplish our bestowed mission.” O Sensei followed a martial path, so he used the martial arts as a platform for teaching the principles of Aikido he discovered. He wasn’t saying everyone should be a martial artist. That is what he did. He was showing us that we could break new ground in our lives with these principles. He taught the art to enable each of us to connect with and utilize the power of harmony with the universal energy in creating our lives.

In the harmony of creation, conflict resolves into confluence and the struggle we know as life becomes a dance. I describe this state as the unified field of consciousness. O Sensei called it Aikido, The Art of Peace. As Quantum Mechanics studies the relationship of energy and matter, Quantum Aikido explores the relationship of our individual consciousness and the energy that creates and sustains the universe harmonizing to produce effective action. Every moment here represents a gift. Every pressure we encounter can connect us with more of ourselves. We could all be more present. We could all improve our training to some degree.

The appearance of an enemy should be thought of as an opportunity to test the sincerity of one’s mental and physical training to see if one is actually responding according to the Divine Will.

Morihei Ueshiba, O Sensei

One System of Being

The dimensions that interweave to make us up can be viewed through various lenses. The Shinto religion spoke about the creation through the three realms of the manifest, the hidden and the divine. A western scientific description might define matter, energy and consciousness. In Aikido we use the terms body, mind – in which I include both thought and emotion -- and spirit the source and quality of our vitality. For the study of Aikido to be complete requires unifying all three domains.

The human system may seem too complex to train effectively, unless you know that all aspects are part of an interdependent inter-related whole. Everything is connected to everything. Though we distinguish the aspects for the purpose of study, they are not separate parts but interpenetrating forces that make up one system, a unified field. Altering one aspect alters the field in turn altering the manifestation. The state of mind affects the physical state. Spirit/ attitude affects thought. What you think about causes your energy to change. Thought and

emotional activity affect the hormonal system that in turn affects the emotional and mental state. They're all interdependent and interwoven in a unified system. The quality of our being replicates in every dimension and in every aspect of our lives.

Since as interpenetrating forces the aspects of being all affect each other, you can get leverage through any aspect of being. We can develop centering and grounding through the physical, mental or emotional domain of being, and each affects the others. If you simply straighten your posture your energy flows more freely. If you take a slow deep breath your attitude opens, your body relaxes and your thinking becomes more creative. If we slow our movement the brain waves and breath gradually slow in relationship. When we slow our breath the inter-related dimensions quiet and tune to each other. The calmer we are the more that quality pervades our interactions in ever widening circles of influence.

Aikido gives us ways to practice unifying the aspects of being. We can encompass the whole and operate from a unified field. Once a unified field becomes an established reality it can be accessed at rapidly increasing speeds. Though a potentially infinite art, the basics of Aikido are simple replicable practices like: Feel where you hold tension - Breathe slowly - Tighten a little and relax - Over and over again world without end.

The Evolution of Consciousness

The Greeks postulated the atom when science was in its infancy, a strange idea at the time. Once accepted it took science quite awhile to get past the idea that all matter is made up of atoms to the idea that atoms are made up of subatomic particles. It was a dramatically bigger shift to imagine subatomic particles are made up of energy. The idea began as a description of an exchange between energy and matter in units called quanta and the quantum theory was born. There is an interpenetrating flow between the two (energy and matter). The formula, $E=MC^2$, describing matter as energy changed the perceptions of science.

The ancient seers created descriptions of reality similar to modern physics. Long before modern physics the Buddhists taught, "form is emptiness and emptiness is form." Finally consciousness came to be seen as influencing reality in the now famous particle wave experiment where they found how they looked defined what they saw. Prior to that illumination consciousness was not seen as part of science. Science always tried to keep consciousness out of the experiment. They wanted impartial data. Quantum physics completely changed the paradigm to include consciousness in the interpenetrating world of energy and matter. O Sensei knew it. He changed what was true in the world by shifting his attention. He did

impossible things because he transcended the separation of individual identity and the universe.

The training in a larger sense is a shift of how we identify ourselves, how we see our relationship to the universe. We are in an ongoing process of development. How we identify defines the evolution of human awareness. Samuel Bois in his book The Art of Awareness defines five stages in his model of the evolution of human consciousness. In a simplified description: Stage one is magical thinking. Everything happens because the gods decree it. Stage two is a binary perception of right and wrong, good and evil. Stage three moves into multiplicity and diversity. Stage four moves toward operating with an awareness that the diversity is of the whole. And stage five represents operating as the whole. There is a commonality with our earlier metaphor. Awareness is the seed. Stage one is the sprout, stage two the root and stem, stage three the plant and its branches, stage four the flower, stage five the fruit and with it the seeds of the future.

These steps are common with the development of Aikido training. In the beginning of Aikido training, stage one, we do what we are told by the teacher. We do not know why exactly but we hope it will magically make us stronger, better able to defend and take care of ourselves, more spiritual and in harmony with the universe. In stage two we try and decide what is right and wrong in how we should practice the art. Stage three we realize there are many styles that have value. Stage four allows for the diversity recognizing that the styles emanate from a single source, the universe is one system. In stage five the universe is included within our identities. The whole operates as itself. In this state one can say, "I am the universe".

The Art of Peace begins with you. Work on yourself and your appointed task in the Art of Peace. Everyone has a spirit that can be refined, a body that can be trained in some manner, a suitable path to follow. You are here for no other purpose than to realize your inner divinity and manifest your innate enlightenment. Foster peace in your own life and then apply that to all that you encounter.

Morihei Ueshiba. O Sensei

Principles of Aikido

Σ The Principle of Energy

The Principle of Centering

The Principle of Grounding

The Principle of Entering

The Principle of Harmony

The Principle of Unification

The Principle of Resonance

Ki - The Flow of Life Energy

The Eastern view of health sees the being as a flow of energy that creates and sustains physical life. Ki is seen as the medium of all movement and thought. The studies of Tai Chi, Chi Gung, Acupuncture, Yoga and Aikido are all examples of the east's study of the subtle force of Ki and how it applies to our life on earth. The basis of Aikido is the study of harmony with this subtle energy

The force of life creates and sustains our bodies and minds. In the west it is referred to as Élan Vital - (vital force). In Japan it is called Ki, in China chi and in Sanskrit prana. The Japanese term 'Ki', the second Kanji (pictograph) or syllable in the word Ai-ki-do, comes from an ancient root meaning steam, implying potential power. The word power comes from the Latin verb 'poder' which means 'to be able'. Power implies ability, possibility, capability, the energy we draw on to create and adapt to change.

My instructor said he saw O Sensei throw attackers without touching them and pin them in position through the power of Ki, without any physical contact. I do not claim to understand the concept of Ki. I can only say I have studied it. To me it remains a mystery like life itself. I will leave you to your own exploration of its mysteries and share with you the little I have come to sense about the study.

Every stimulus we experience affects the energy flowing through the mind-body system. The startle reaction: the movement of physical energy – muscle tension, hormones, breathing -- mental emotional energy - the flood of thoughts and feelings -- are all the result of the subtle energy of Ki. We experience Ki as a rush, an increase, a charge.

We get a 'rush' every time we are required to negotiate change. The process is highly visible when we are surprised. We typically only notice the larger more intense rushes of energy but the process occurs with every stimulus, no matter the level of intensity. A small rush happens every time the phone rings. The size and intensity of the energy rush matches the requirements we perceive necessary to handle a given situation.

Ki translates as energy, spirit, mind, intelligence, adaptability and common sense. The word implies a view of our personal energy as a part of the Ki of the universe. The Japanese term - Ki musubi - means to tie an individual's Ki and the Ki of the universe into a unified field. The teachings about Ki from ancient texts teach principles that align with the discoveries of modern physics. Energy, matter and

consciousness are one, a unified field. The root of the word for healing is common with the root of the word for wholeness. Healing means to make whole. In Aikido terms if we are to be whole it implies unifying with the universe.

In the west we have emphasized the study of that which we can measure scientifically. Looking through that window the process of energy rushing through our system is seen as the result of adrenaline. Western science has been skeptical of subjectivity. In the east the study of the life force has been developed experientially with no such concern, seemingly almost the reverse.

Someone skilled in eastern medicine can diagnose your state of health by sensing your energy field. That system sees illness as a weakening of the flow of Ki. Acupuncture and Shiatsu massage are forms of healing that focus on stimulating the flow of Ki through the meridians, the channels that conduct Ki. In the west we are only beginning to acknowledge and study the force of energy as the source of life. The study of a mystical force that sustains life may still seem a bit intangible for one trained to see healing through the lens of traditional western allopathic medicine.

There is a change in process. In the west stress is now seen as affecting health. Resistance to our life force causes tension. Over time, tension becomes stress. Through that window unexpressed -repressed emotions increase stress. Stress drains the body's natural strength. It can weaken the immune system and eventually produce disease. Intention and training make it possible to release energy held in the form of tension and stress into the stream of healing.

Ki healing and western medicine are not in opposition but rather two windows, two different views of a unified field of possibilities. It is not an either/or. The interest in Acupuncture by western medicine is an example of blending two ways of looking at reality.

Krylian photography now makes visible the energy field that flows through and extends beyond the physical body. Given time and the enhancements of the investigating instruments, I believe science will greatly enhance its understanding of the existence of Ki. As we understand this seemingly mystical force healing will take on new dimensions. So will our lives, individually and together.

We get accustomed to a level of tension and assume it to be our natural state. How up tight do you get before you notice and relax? How far off balance do you get before you correct? Do you have a conscious practice to develop your ability to maintain a healthy, balanced, grounded state?

Connecting mind and body as a unified field diminishes resistance and releases tension. The studies and exploration of healing through spirit are in a process of shifting from a radical fairy tale to accepted medical practice. Though I suspect some doctors always knew it, only relatively recently has western medicine begun to officially recognize the effects of the mental and emotional state on healing and the immune system. Though hardly scientific medicine, Norman Cousins in Anatomy of an Illness, documents the effects of practices in the realm of the spirit. By increasing positive Ki flow with laughter, Cousins found healing not thought possible by the then accepted medical theory.

If the accepted knowledge and descriptions had captured his thinking he would have believed their prognosis. Similarly O Sensei could have stayed within the prescriptions of the martial arts he studied. Jesus and Galileo could have both kept their mouths shut. And Columbus could have stayed at home.

Are we willing to leave the civilized continent and explore the New World? There's a story about a guy looking for something at night under a street light. His neighbor sees him and comes out and says, "What are you looking for? And the guy says, "I am looking for my keys." And the neighbor says, "I'll help. Where did you lose them?" And he says, "I lost them by the house." The neighbor asks, "Why are you looking here?" And the guy answers, "Well, there's more light here."

What we know seems safe. It takes courage to look where it is dark, to listen to the inner messages that whisper in the twilight between the conscious and unconscious. It takes intention to go out of our comfort zones. To seek the unknown, 'beyond' our conscious awareness we must shift the tuning of our instrument to a new frequency. We must open our minds to the possibility. We must shift our state of being.

Our state can be developed consciously through practice of learning to attune the 'frequency' of our Ki. Very simply if you change the rate of breathing you change the brain wave frequency. A shift in brain wave frequency shifts perception affecting what is perceived as well as how it is perceived. Breathe slowly and deeply and you can feel a response in the muscle tone as well as the mental and emotional state. If you can track it long enough, a minute or two, you will see your focus change.

Without a spiritual practice our state happens to us, we 'lose it'. With the focus of attention we can chose our state. It takes energy to create and sustain new patterns

of thought and action. It takes attention to align with the Ki of the universe. When our connection with Ki is weak, so are we. When the flow is strong who knows what is possible. Simply breathe and feel the effects of your breathing consciously and your universal alignment changes. Try it you'll like it.

Energy Possibilities

We hear occasional stories where people do amazing things in emergency situations, where a grandmother lifts a Volkswagen or repels a wild animal to save her grandchild. A friend and I were driving along the Mendicino coast in northern California. We pulled off the highway into a town to stop at a cafe. The first one didn't have any room. The next one put up the "closed" sign just as we walked up to the door. I choose to see it almost like the universe directed us to the only open table in the third café. As we sat down we overheard a man sitting at the next table relating a story from his youth.

"You know, Mom wanted that piano for 3 years. And the night we got it shipped out from Chicago the house caught on fire. I pulled the piano out onto the front lawn, virtually carried it out on the front lawn by myself and ran and got the fire department. The next morning I couldn't lift one end of the piano."

What you can buy depends on how much money you can spend. We have access to powers and energies we do not understand. Sometimes unknown forces show up in our life. What you can do or even dream depends on the amount of energy available. What seems impossible at one level of awareness becomes common place at another. With enough juice, the impossible becomes possible.

Everything is manifest through and from unformed potential. Energy is possibility. We receive a rush of energy to enhance our ability. Energy properly channeled produces effectiveness. Beyond the level of energy we are used to using, we have reserves that are there for our safety and protection - so that we could run away from danger or handle a challenge. Our reserves are critical to our survival, as well as our success in satisfactorily negotiating our lives. When we tap those reserves in an emergency tremendous amounts of energy become available. As the energy increases so does what is possible.

They use electric buses in San Francisco because the hills are so steep. An internal combustion engine has a limited amount of horsepower. An electric bus can draw power as it needs through the lines. In a similar way a grandmother lifting a car off her grandchild draws on an inner reserve of power. The process was the same for the man who moved the piano.

Attention / consciousness is a rheostat. We are socialized to limit our energy, our perception and thereby our possibilities of action. Yet things occur that disturb the limitations of the world we have created. When we are threatened, there is a huge rush of energy. An emergency can override the limits we have kept on our energy flow. Then the governors /energy restrictions we absorb from society and create for ourselves release. This shift can happen in a crisis situation, from exhaustion, religious ritual or seemingly inexplicably. When, accidentally or on purpose, we connect to increased power, inexplicable things happen. What is possible changes.

Imagine someone wanting to effect major change in the world? They have maybe \$50 in their pocket and want to make a difference. They do not know about the fifty million dollars they have in a trust fund. Most of us work with our \$50 here and there, when we have infinite resources. We could go to court and get the trust opened up, but first we need to know that money exists. Then we need a process to access it. Aikido as a spiritual practice means finding out about and accessing our energy trust fund, our infinite spiritual resources.

In the face of any change or stimulus our energy increases. We feel the first impulse of energy as pressure on our system. Pressure can either cause us to break through our limits into greater connection with power or instead drive us into resistance. If we resist it, the rush of energy can disturb whatever degree of connection exists between mind and body. The energy rush can cause the 'I', the limited identity to surge interfering with the unfolding wholeness. Without training we commonly react by default and the energy overwhelms us. This creates tension within the being and debilitates effectiveness. Without proper alignment we end up at odds with life's energy. You may have heard the term, 'deer in the headlights.' People often freeze up under the pressure of the rush of energy. Training enables us to align with the energy when the power of creation appears in our lives. In harmonious relationship the energy becomes an ally, resisted it becomes an enemy.

“I feel what you call fear, only I call it 'a call to action'.”

Morihei Ueshiba, O Sensei

My teacher paraphrased O Sensei:

“Fear is the harbinger of power.”

Nadeau Sensei

Feeling frightened and vulnerable can be a source of power. Through practice our ability to handle energy increases. All that we label as fear is simply energy. When it is channeled in an appropriate way, it is power. If we could open and allow the flow of energy through our system, the emotions we call fear and anger become free energy. Unifying the field of energy, thought and action increases ability.

The difference between freezing up and acting effectively is the degree of harmony, of unification between the mind, body and spirit. Once the energy held in resistance releases into flow, it becomes power, enhancing possibility. If body, mind and spirit harmonize into a unified field of being the increased energy potential enables one to function beyond the norm. The power of harmony allows the movement of the universe to unfold without resistance. Then increased energy shows up as creativity in our lives.

When we are faced with a challenge it sends a question echoing into the universe. The answer shows up as energy that floods the system. When you ‘listen’ you sense the energy as guidance that has as its purpose enhancing our effectiveness.

The motion of universal Ki echoes through us. In the practice of Aikido, we do not want to live in opposition to what O Sensei called “the echo of the universal Ki,” the energy that is resonating between each of us and the universe. Aikido studies harmony with the movement of Ki, neither blocking nor avoiding. If we develop a non-resistant relationship to the laws of the universal, we evolve in relation to the whole of the creation. The intelligence of universal energy directs our movement, unless the limited mind interferes. When we resist, we try to exercise control from the knowledge we have. When we cease to be learners, creativity dies

Training creates a moment of choice. The universal intelligence manifests infinite creativity when we can open to the flow of the universe and move in accord with it. I do not see the question as, “can you control the world?” I would rather question how my thinking controls me. What holds me within the limits of my thinking?

Energy is intelligence flowing through the universe. In the energy that sustains creation are glimmers of an amazing intelligence, enough intelligence to keep the

planets spinning in their orbits, enough intelligence to circulate the blood of infinite creatures. The intelligence at play in your system -- keeps all the bio-electro-chemical interactions going on; 'it' is incredible intelligence.

Is there enough intelligence for life on this earth to survive? That's an open question. That depends on the relationship we generate with 'it'. 'It' is talking to us, informing us. Are we in an open mind, a student's mind, a Zen mind, a beginner's mind? Did we come to learn? Are we listening?

The Energy Field - Potential and Creation

The universe of galaxies is mostly empty space. That's how atoms are: way more emptiness and nothingness than matter. Solid matter is mostly space between sub atomic particles. When modern physicists explores sub atomic particles to find their components they run out of 'things.' Even matter is not really matter. Scientists describe it as something like a field of potential energy. As if linear words could describe the unfathomable process, creation seems to be flashing back and forth from energy into form, forming and dissolving billions of times a second. A field of energy in transformation is perceived at our speed of perception as the illusion of solid matter. There is nothing solid in the universe. Every thing is energy. Every thing is mutable.

Newtonian physics described a fixed universe. When the insights of quantum physics shattered the Newtonian paradigm, physicists had no way to describe what they were finding. All they could do was use metaphors to relate observation. All the metaphors were imperfect. They were dealing in a realm beyond comprehension. There were no metrics. And language had not yet developed to evolve them.

Classical science prefers impartial observation in large part due to the inability to measure subjective reality. Impartial observation implies that you were going to observe a universe in which you do not exist. Nothing in the universe exists independent of the universe. There is no way to remove one's self from it. By universal law you are a part of it. Quantum science attempts to include it and in doing so creates an entirely different and ever changing universe.

The quantum insight about the observer affecting the experiment indicates a shift from the previous Newtonian description of a cold mechanical universe to seeing an inter-relationship between matter, energy, consciousness and divinity. The presence of divine power was present in the Newtonian equation but as an outside

force. The key distinction between the quantum and Newtonian view was Newton believed in God as the watchmaker of the universal machine, separate from us and our involvement. His thought functioned within the paradigm of his era, with the sovereigns and rulers separate from and controlling the people they governed. The mis-take if you will, was he saw us as subjects of, rather than as participants in, the divine force of creation.

Both yin and yang are interpenetrating forces in a unified field that encompasses both. In an interdependent system, any change in any aspect changes the field. Changing the field changes the form it creates. We change the universal field with our actions, our thoughts, moods, attitudes and emotions. Newtonian Aikido describes fixed techniques and doesn't talk about awareness. In Quantum Aikido unifying awareness, the physical realm and Ki creates the unified field out of which infinite techniques appear. O Sensei called it 'Take Musu Aiki- which I translate as the Martial path of divine creation.

The Observer and the Observed

Is light a wave or a particle? In quantum physics energy flows as potential until observed. However you describe experience forms your reality. We may notice a particle or a wave, energy versus form, but that description is of the moment. The experimenter defines what data the experiment will measure. Who knows what data is excluded? Who knows what realities could be assembled if consciousness included that data?

What your attention fixes on informs reality, because of the focus of your attention. If we set up the experiment to prove a mindset, we set in motion a field of thought energy before the encounter has begun. Once we set up the experiment a given way, that is what the Universe proves. From the mindset that life is a struggle we habituate to tension and believe we need to effort for things to happen.

Energy flows in waves and pulses. The waves have a frequency and intensity, transacting with, affecting and being affected by the entire field. The field of awareness brings the universe into form by the angle or state of being from which we observe it. The universe oscillates between a dynamic state of emptiness, energy and static form. By observation the field of energy appears as matter. By description the unlimited potential collapses into specific form.

So, which is true, matter or energy? (Wave particle) Is life a struggle or is life a flow? Which belief are you validating? When you open to a larger universal flow,

possibility increases. If the reality my observation has assembled fails to serve properly, the possibility exists that I can dissolve it and allow the field to produce form and timing appropriate to the moment.

Trying to force my idea on any aspect of creation limits the infinite potential and violates the harmony of the universe. If I force my idea of what should be on the world I do violence to others or I feel powerless because I cannot. Violence collapses the potential of a beautiful world into the struggles that represent the majority of human history. 'Peaceful reconciliation means allowing each individual to complete their bestowed mission.' Violence prohibits the natural completion of the universe.

Everything manifests through and from unformed potential,
energy in its purest state.

How the observer sets up an experiment
affects the outcome
by describing what gets measured.

What are you setting up the experiment to prove
in the experiment,
that is the creation of your life?

The Cultivation of the Spirit of Attraction & The curvature of Time - Space

Everything is connected to everything. Everything is affecting everything. The moon attracts the earth much as the earth attracts the moon. The gravitational force of a planet pulls on the space around it. Theoretically to some degree gravity causes a curvature of time-space, and reality changes.

Watching someone skilled in the art of Aikido it seems too easy unless you understand the concept of leading Ki. Any intention creates an attraction to the

goal. An attacker's intention creates an attraction to the target. Once someone intends to attack you they have committed the energy of the attack to you. Moving the point of focus (the target – you in this case) leads the magnetic attraction of the attackers focused energy causing a curvature of time-space, creating a new direction and changing reality. The flow of energy creates the movement. We participate in it. It is a happening, a ride, as distinct from a doing.

Did you ever make an electromagnet by taking a nail, wrapping a wire around it and connecting it to a battery? The flow of electrons around an iron core creates a magnetic field. The field aligns the polarities of the molecules in the core unifying the power of the magnetic field. If you increase the flow of electrons the magnet becomes stronger. As the battery runs down the magnetic field weakens.

We are the same. We function in relation to how energized we are. We 'run' on energy. Have you ever had a portable tape recorder or a flashlight where the battery was running down, diminishing the level of light or sound? Does it remind you of how you feel when you are tired or debilitated? As bio-electro-magnetic coils, if more Ki flows through the system, the cultivation of the spirit of attraction becomes stronger increasing the curvature of time-space, and changing reality.

What is the link between magnetism and gravity? We are used to magnets that attract iron. Maybe there are forms of magnetism that will attract more than just iron. The gravity of the earth is like a magnet that attracts mass of any kind. Imagine people as emotional magnets that create a field of attraction similar to a magnet. Depending on our state of energy and emotional tone we exert a field that is attractive to some people, repulsive to others. Increase the flow of Ki and the effect of either attraction or repulsion increases.

O Sensei spoke of reciprocating echoes. If we treat people with kindness it generates reciprocating echoes of kindness. If we treat them with hostility it generates reciprocating echoes of hostility. Let's say you get into a state that generates a negative quality of thought and emotional energy. You attract or set in motion a corresponding field of mental or emotional energy. Whatever quality you generate, loving or controlling, neurotic or self-responsible, would attract a partner who was attracted to that kind of energy.

If you exuded a different kind of energy, -- positive, open spirit, happy, heartfelt, authentic -- you would attract a very different kind of energy. A different field of energy would attract different partners, jobs, situations, ideas and emotions. You would attract different friends and different reactions from the friends you do have.

In the Realm of the Spirit

Everything would be different. We lead our lives without understanding the subtle forces at play. We may not even know that they are there.

With or without our knowledge and consent the universe is one system. The universe is a unified field. Understanding universal principles enables us to interact in the universe with greater choice and freedom.

The spirit that you put forth divines what you attract into your life. Most of us generate a quality of magnetism without the awareness of how powerfully it affects our lives. Attraction is magnetic and can be unconscious which may be part of why we end up in situations we did not intend. When you start to play with the quality of spirit that you flow through the magnetic coil that is your life, it may seem a very subtle tonality. As you pay attention, it becomes tangible. With practice intent becomes an art.

We may not notice ourselves generating a magnetic field, but we do and it affects everything else in the universe. We are not trained to see how our observation and description, our system of thought, collapses the infinite potential into the limited mindsets and social systems we bind ourselves to live in, but it does.

As you give, so shall you receive. As you sow, so shall you reap.

We can't define exactly what life is, but it is happening. It happens differently depending on how we participate. Quantum Aikido can enable us to see our choices and open unlimited possibilities of choices yet unimagined. It is a technology that can help us create a world of beauty and harmony.

Principles of Aikido

The Principle of Energy

Σ The Principle of Centering

The Principle of Grounding

The Principle of Entering

The Principle of Harmony

The Principle of Unification

The Principle of Resonance

The Principle of Centering

Out Of It - The Waitress Story

Our energy field, our state of being is the amalgamation of myriad forces of energy, consciousness and the physical dimension. Centering describes the ongoing process of aligning them, unifying the field. When the aspects are aligned we are centered, effective, right on. When we are not centered, we are 'out of it'.

Once on vacation in Hawaii I had an experience with a waitress. I know you'll think I am exaggerating but this describes my experience. The place was crowded and it took the waitress a long time to get to us. When she came she forgot to bring us menus, then she came to take our order but forgot to bring her pad. Finally she took our order but when she delivered it she brought us the wrong order. After she brought us the correct order she brought us the wrong check. When she brought us our check, it was added up wrong. Luckily I was on vacation, in no hurry and in a good mood. When I finally caught her and helped her with her addition — she said, "oh God, I am really sorry, I've just been 'out of it' for the last couple of days."

And that was her story. She could only hope someday she would find herself 'in it' and 'it' would get better. Unable to either envision or access another possibility, she lacked the power to alter her state of being. She didn't even include the possibility in her vocabulary. For her the stars were out of phase. All she could do was hope it changed and wait till it did. Though her language shows an awareness of things being out of sorts, she was a victim of her condition because she could not see any way to participate in affecting her state. She was not trained to see her participation in the creation of her life. She lacked the knowledge of centering.

I have a similar story. Early on in my training I remember having a horrible night. I noticed on one of my worst throws that Bob, my instructor, was staring at me. The look on his face mirrored the quality of my training. I was quick. I had an excuse immediately. I said, "I am really 'out of it' tonight." He said equally quickly, "but 'it' is still there".

He was teaching me Aikido, a process to get with 'it' (meaning the flow of energy, the possibility of a centered state), to participate in creating the quality of my life consciously rather than find myself victim to circumstance.

The point of these stories is that we can make the shift to a centered state, if we are conscious enough to do it. If we can't imagine the possibility, it virtually doesn't

exist. A state of being on, having a good day, or being 'out of it' and having a bad day, is not a random occurrence that just happens. We are participating in the quality of our experience. The study of Aikido enables us to participate consciously.

Regardless of any effects the stars or our biorhythms might cause, we either practice centering which unifies the field of energy that is change or find ourselves frequently 'out of it' and habitually in resistance. Proper training develops the power of our attention, allowing us to notice the signs that we are off center and do something about it.

Of what use are horoscopes to one who studies yoga?

Sri Aurobindo

Signals

In the middle of an intense situation the rush of energy can be overwhelming. When I 'lose it,' I may not know at that instant if I am centered or operating 'out of it'. The problem with losing connection is we do not notice when we are unconscious. Out of touch with ourselves we fail to receive any feedback that might warn us. When we are asleep at the wheel, how do we realize that we are asleep at the wheel? Though there are warning signals when we are 'out of it', unless we are trained we fail to pay attention.

The little bumps in between lanes on the freeway are signals that tell us we are getting out of our lane. When we are awake we simply adjust and get back in our lane before we have an accident. It is not that big of a deal. If we fall asleep at the wheel we miss the warning signals and then a tree wakes us up (if we're lucky). That is too late. On the highway of life it is not shifting to a more centered state that is hard. It is awakening to when we are asleep at the wheel.

The oil light on the dashboard goes on when a car's engine needs oil. Again not a big issue, unless we ignore it. Then it can ruin the engine. There are always signals in our daily life but we are often distracted with more important things. Often we ignore the little bumps along the way and mistake our behavior for persistence and determination. We misunderstand the need to listen to the message of the signals.

They imply corrections. Like the light on the dashboard, we need to recognize and pay attention to any signals that say, “It is time to align the quality of our participation!”

In the realm of the spirit we train ourselves to function from a better state. Aikido is participating in creating the state of being through which we experience and form our lives. The signals are how we feel and interact. Feeling tight and stuck indicates the need to center. When you practice centering you relax and allow energy to flow.

When the rush of energy knocks us out of center, when the winds of change seem to blow us off course, we need to recognize what is happening. And we need a process for bringing our forces into alignment. The pressure of change and energy flow is ongoing. We need both awareness and a process to handle the constant disturbances that take us out of a centered state. When life's goals do not inspire us, we need to align our course in life with our bestowed mission.

The Startle Complex

Simply considering it, the path of harmony may seem an obvious choice. Yet, what we do in the face of life's pressure may be very different.

Imagine sitting in a peaceful place, in a nice room, with a warm gentle breeze blowing through. You are very quiet and letting go of stress and worries. Your eyes are closed and you feel the cares of the day falling away. You are in a good, quiet place, and your breath starts to soften and deepen. Picture how your body feels in that kind of a space, on that kind of a day.

Then as the wind blows through, all of a sudden, unseen, a door behind you slams fast and loud. Imagine if you will the experience in your body. What happens when you are really relaxed, and all of a sudden there is an unexpected loud sharp noise? Think of your condition at the instant you are startled. There is a rush of energy through your system. Notice in your imagined scenario the somatic response, the signals, the way your state of muscle tension and your posture reacts to the energy rush.

The way we react to energy is referred to in some systems as the “startle complex.” In any emergency a rush of energy courses through our system to enable us to respond. Biology calls it adrenaline, psychology, the fight flight response. The increase in energy startles us out of our comfort zone. When we get a charge of energy, we respond similarly to receiving an electric shock. When we are startled our energy and with it the center of our attention rush in the direction of our

attention, conscious or unconscious. We automatically go into protective mode. A frightened turtle exemplifies a startled reaction to an energy rush. In reaction to the startle complex we get 'up-tight'. In varying degrees we tighten our muscles and pulling to our 'shells'. In doing so we disconnect from the ground of our beings, which is the source of both our guidance and our power.

The system of thought, feeling and action interacts with (affects and is affected by) every stimulus, imagined as well as actual. The neural - chemical – hormonal system generates and releases energy for the work it will have to do, or imagines that it will. Thinking of highly charged situations our energy system begins to respond as if the situation were occurring. Hormones flood our neural-chemical systems simply from daydreaming. All of this affects the corpus, the physical body generating a reciprocating echo throughout the system -- corpus, soma and psyche.

The intensity of the rush responds in relation to how we perceive a situation. The system of perception identifies, accurately or otherwise, how important or threatening we deem an encounter. Our system evaluates what energy is required to handle a situation or produce a desired outcome and then accesses the energy needed for the job.

In the rush of life we lose our center. We lose connection with our experience and ability to see the moment. A similar physical response happens every time we get startled. Pressure from tension is always present, though at a low-grade intensity it is less obvious so we are not aware of it. When we have a close call on the freeway, at that level of intensity tension is highly noticeable. Our shoulders go up and forward, our neck pulls in and our muscles tighten. We hide and protect. The reptilian brain fires off a reaction before the frontal lobes, the higher brain, has a chance to process the energy input.

The startle reaction programmed in countless eons ago is still our first response whether it is appropriate or not. Unless we deal with the startle reaction, unless we attend to and are responsible for our state, we are controlled by our reaction to life's energy. We have made so many decisions, social, political, economic and spiritual out of a reactive state. We should be willing to reconsider them. Instead we defend our reactions as if they were precious. In fear of the unknown we hold to established feelings, thoughts and attitudes until the next emergency overwhelms us and forces change upon us. Almost everyone knows we should 'go with the flow' but when we are startled, we usually hold against it. When we are startled we 'lose our Ki'. Common sense goes out the window.

“We should have lots of common sense; we’ve used so little of it.”

The faster clay on a potter’s wheel goes, the more centered it needs to be. When the energy rush hits, pressure on our system speeds us up and throws us off center. Our minds go faster. We get frantic. We ‘lose’ it. As we handle more and more power, we require increasingly precise attention to center and ground. Without it we end up with ‘off the wall’ behavior.

Centering produces balance. Off center we are required to tense muscles to hold our bodies in an unbalanced posture. As tension increases we compensate by physically contorting our bodies, which adds to the process. In a boiled frog syndrome it happens gradually and we do not notice something else is possible. When we center physically the body comes into a balanced alignment. The skeletal structure supports the weight of the body. The muscle tension releases freeing energy for intentional use.

Tension building gradually over time makes it possible to tense up to quite a degree without being aware of it. Look at people’s posture and facial expressions under stress. We quite literally get bent out of shape. We get bent out of shape emotionally as well as physically. If we do not notice, we do not correct. We calcify in these attitudes and postures. The cumulative effects of low-grade tension cause stress over time. Burnout, cumulative exhaustion is the body’s attempt to regain a natural balance.

Aikido teaches us to harmonize with, rather than react to the energy we are experiencing. The process of centering heals our reactivity and re-establishes harmonious relationship with the moment. The first stage of training in Aikido emphasizes opening and allowing the energy to flow through. The practice of centering implies straightening and settling, relaxing and grounding ourselves. The practice begins with physical centering but echoes quickly affect the mental, emotional and spiritual realms.

We respond differently when we are off then when we are centered and in harmony with ourselves. When we are in resistance to and pushed around by our energy and emotions, we lose touch with our essential self. When mind and body disconnect communication turns into static. When we cannot access the sensory input that we need to assess a situation intelligently, we act without our full intellectual capacity. To be effective requires constantly centering, physically emotionally and in the realm of the spirit.

The quality of our participation changes the field of possibility. When we armor ourselves against the fear of the unknown, we defend ourselves against experience. We go 'off' on the rush of energy. If we resist our own experience, we are consequently out of touch with what is going on with our environment and ourselves. In that state, we cannot sense the environment fully, nor interact with it effectively. The possibility of creative response is lost.

In resistance to the energy and experience of life, we do not function well. We no longer make choices from our best operating place. We default to react defensively out of fear rather than with a confident and sincere interest. The whole system, the physical structure, the thinking, feeling and emotional intelligences, tighten. Energy is captured by and drains into feeding the tension of resistance.

We waste our energy fighting with ourselves. Eventually we project our inner conflict out into the world and fight with each other. When the pressure of the fight seems beyond our control we go into avoidance or overwhelm.

Aikido training teaches us to take the time necessary to open our perception to the flow of energy. Centering in relationship to the rush unifies mind, body and spirit. A unified field of being aligns all the forces of our beings enhancing effectiveness and giving us the opportunity to participate at a new level.

Centering

By looking at centering through the physical body we can apply the principles of what is learned to the realms of the mind, the emotions and in the realm of the spirit. Here is a quick introduction to the process of centering the physical body, its signals and practices.

Lean your torso to the right a few inches and stay there a moment. Then repeat leaning to the left. Now rock back and forth slowly and gently between the two directions. Gradually let your body come to rest in the center. Repeat the practice several times. Each time use smaller and smaller increments. Notice the difference in feeling when you are 'off' and when you 'center'.

As we locate in three dimensions (practice moving: left/ right – forward/ back – and up /down) we find a point of center in our physical bodies. With practice we develop a higher degree of sensitivity and increasingly refined states of center. We notice when we are off center sooner and we return faster. We refine the exercise from sensing inches to fractions of an inch. The time required to 'center' diminishes.

My students think I don't lose my center.

I lose my center as often as you do.

I just recognize it sooner and correct faster.

Morihei Ueshiba, O Sensei

Step one is connecting awareness with experience. Presence means 'feeling where you are', not holding on to where you were. If you hold onto the past, you war with the universe. "Be here now. Be in the moment." We do not function at peak, held back or leaning forward into pressure, thinking of the past or tensing in an effort to control the future.

It is easy to see the external pressures in our lives but the internal pressures the ones we create for ourselves can be virtually invisible to us. We are so immersed in our own mode of thought we do not see how it affects our perception. Though the stimulus may occur externally, our reaction is internal.

In the early stages of training, unifying mind, body and spirit may take a moment. Initially it takes time to *feel where you are* and align attention and awareness. Any correction often happens after the action. As we develop through practice the time needed becomes a few seconds, then a fraction of a second. With practice centering can happen almost instantaneously, Eventually correction occurs during the movement -- you feel you are off and you align. It is not the correcting that is hard. It is paying attention. Seeking a better state is natural and effortless. It is ongoing presence, attending to experience, feeling where we are at each moment that requires training.

The ability to center in the face of pressure is power / ability. When we are off balance we can be pushed around easily. This is as true emotionally as physically. When anyone is off center they are more vulnerable to outside influence. How often after being pressured into a decision have you wished you had acted more slowly? How often have you reacted in a situation only to wish you could make the choice over?

Sales people are taught to take advantage of ambivalence in a prospective buyer's thinking. They learn to press for the sale when the customer is vulnerable. In

teaching us to center in relationship to the energy rush, Bob admonished us, "Don't sign a contract in the middle of a rush." My yoga teacher said the same thing slightly differently. He used to say, "don't do anything under pressure."

Centered, what I describe as 'standing in our power' people or situations do not intimidate us the same way they do when we are not based in our power. There's more power in the universe than most of us are in touch with. There are unknown forces at play in our lives. Presence allows us to engage creatively with all forces at play in any moment. The outcomes in the world are an after-effect.

Standing in our own power creates a different field of possibilities. Awareness of center enables us to function without throwing ourselves away. In a state where my Ki is flowing, my relationships with everything will echo that quality. The process of meditation, settling, centering, grounding, squaring away, connecting to source, shifts the attention. Inter-action means our participation affects the development of the situation.

Being off center is not really the issue. We are thrown off center continually. The issue is failing to re-center which, unless we lose touch with ourselves, is easy to do. It only takes an instant to lose center but it also only takes an instant to re-connect to center. If we are conscious of the choice and the process, we can unify thinking and feeling. Then we operate from our totality instead of operating 'out of sorts'. We can straighten our posture and settle our energy and find a place where we feel creative possibility.

In violent physical self-defense situation, if it takes you a moment to get to, "What's going on here?" and "OK, I'll deal with it", in that couple of seconds, you're dead. Though we handle the unexpected better on some days than on others training speeds up the process of coming into harmony with what is happening. It takes time to adjust to change. Sometimes in life, things happen so fast that we do not have that opportunity. More often than not, we can take a second, line up to a better state of awareness, get into a better working state and function more effectively. Through practice the shift into presence goes from taking a moment, to an instant.

Presence develops by 'feeling where you are', continuing to focus attention on sensing energy and attending to experience. 'Feeling where you are' means continually entering into the moment. Awareness and sensing increase and with them perception. Acuity is sharper. The edges, the defined limits of our identities open and our boundaries become more permeable. Connection increases to what

once was the outside world. Perception deepens. Life becomes simpler and less confusing.

Sit quiet. Notice how actively our mind behaves. If we continue sitting quietly and paying attention we will notice relaxation happens in stages. We get more internally focused. Larger numbers of brain cells are processing internal information and the fewer are processing external input. We become more aware of our internal process, our breathing, our emotional state, our state of being. Life's rush can keep us too busy to notice these things.

Physical posture affects more than how I move. It affects who I am and how I feel. Posture, physical alignment is inter-dependant with mental, emotional and spiritual alignment. Posture and muscle tension, how you are sitting, affects who you are. Change any aspect in any dimension, physical, mental-emotional, spiritual and it affects the whole system. Sit in a different way and your relationship to the universe changes.

Centering is like breathing.

Once in the morning is not enough.

Centering, *Feeling Where We Are*, connects mind and body to source. Paying attention to state, we naturally know what to do to square away. Instead of forces struggling within a system, identity shifts toward a unified field of consciousness. The world looks different because we are different. The decisions we make are different. From a centered state in the realm of the spirit, not only am I more effective, I make choices more aligned to my bestowed mission.

What you do in the world expresses the essence of who you are through your action. The hand represents action in the world metaphorically. Center initiates power, the hands express it. Physically the further you can draw a partner's hand away from their center, the more susceptible they are to your influence, and vice versa. In the mental realm when someone's attention is distracted mental power is diminished making them more susceptible to someone else's influence. Through physically noticing when hand and center disconnect and intentionally realigning them we train to unify our being. When we translate this principle to the realm of the spirit, center represents being in integrity with our essence, with who we are and what we value. Then action emanates from the guidance of spirit.

We can get pretty far from ourselves. People live their whole lives in unfulfilling jobs and relationships. The alignment of our actions with the essence of who we

are, connecting intention and action as a unified system is a developed skill. You get better at it by doing it. If you lose the central core of who you are and what drives you, life becomes extrinsic, forced or boring.

As you line up with who you are, your natural power unfolds. Not only are the effects greater but the sense of effort gives way to excitement and enjoyment. When the forces of life align, a unified field produces the accomplishment of our bestowed mission. It is a happening not a doing.

Knowing you can make that shift and choosing to make that shift are a practitioner's main accountabilities. Harmonizing is the practice. The ability to shift your state of mind allows you to go from being locked in, to (a) presence - noticing the tension, to (b) harmonious relationship - dissolving the tension into free energy, to (c) creativity - something new emerging. But if you do not allow space for it, it can't happen.

Practice the principle of centering and life becomes your dojo. Once you're willing to enter the unknown, infinite creative possibilities appear. Life is your experiment. You make it up.

Principles of Aikido

The Principle of Energy

The Principle of Centering

Σ The Principle of Grounding

The Principle of Entering

The Principle of Harmony

The Principle of Unification

The Principle of Resonance

The Principle of Grounding

Thousands of years ago the Chinese philosophers described the polarity of two interpenetrating forces: upward rising and downward sinking. The upward rising is the force of action, the downward sinking a reconnecting to source.

Someone with good sense is often described as having their feet on the ground. Grounding means connecting to present reality. Grounding describes the process of connecting with the physical aspect of life on earth and the larger universal forces that sustain it. Grounding is reconnecting your Ki to the universal power, aligning a unified field.

Life takes place in an ocean of energy. We are part of an indivisible whole. The ocean's waves appear out of and return to the oceanic source. Waves above the ocean are visible. Unseen waves also move beneath the surface. Likewise aspects of our lives are visible. The waves on the surface of consciousness show up as identities and personalities. There are also unseen forces affecting our lives, beneath the discernment of the conscious mind.

Avoidance of the downward sinking force seems a human tendency. To say something was a downer is usually a negative remark. We get that sinking feeling that life isn't the way we thought it was. We are right. It is necessary to look beyond the separate waves to see the ocean. Similarly we must look beyond our separate identities to perceive the totality.

Grounding implies sensing our connection to our substance, under the surface level of what we can see. Our distinctions of awareness are not as clear in the realms of the subconscious and the unconscious. We do not really know what's going on there. In the realm of the spirit ground implies connection to the power conscious awareness is based on.

The space we are conscious of usually stops at about our feet. There is more power to draw on than the point of contact your body stands on. Like icebergs where only one seventh is visible above the water, the majority of our power is invisible to us beneath the conscious level. In our busy lives we generally pay little attention to realms beyond the conscious. Most of the time the conscious realm takes all of our attention.

Ungrounded the shock of an energy rush creates tension. We can ground the charge of energy through the focus of intention. When we center relaxation is a natural outcome. When we relax, connection to ground is a natural outcome.

Ground implies connection to the source of our movement. Connection to ground is power. As an example our power to move in the physical realm comes from the connection of our mass with the mass of the earth. Imagine two people on a polished marble floor, with one partner barefoot and the other in silk stockings. Which quality of connection would you rather operate from to defend yourself?

When the disturbance of the energy rush hits we commonly lose our ground. In a physical movement there is inertia. Excess momentum can throw us off balance. When we center our mass we connect to the ground in a balanced state. The implications of physical grounding transfers to the other realms. We need ground for effective action in every domain of being.

The ability to move effectively in the mental and emotional realms comes from grounding in each of those domains. Intense situations in the emotional realm generate a charge of mental, emotional and physical energy. Even after an action is finished we carry leftover energy in the form of momentum, hormones, memories and feelings. If I've got a charge about a specific issue, it affects the stance I take. It affects way I hold my body. I know if I'm unsettled and have a big charge left over at the end of an experience, I am not really grounded. Along the way I've lost connection to my ground of being.

We rarely perceive how much power the forces in these domains have in the creation of our lives. Exploring these realms can help us deepen our understanding, communication and collective learning. The exploration includes creating a vocabulary that will enhance our ability to learn together.

When we ground the charge we get from the rush, we can draw on energy beyond our present capability. The hakama, a dark pant-like skirt of samurai dress worn in Aikido dojos, represents the deeper aspects of awareness. The hakama reminds us to connect with that which is below our everyday consciousness and all that it implies. Reconnecting with the downward sinking force assembles our totality. Grounded the meaning we make and actions we take, flow from a state of connection to deeper aspects of our being as well as larger universal forces.

O Sensei was less than five feet tall. When O Sensei grounded sumo wrestlers couldn't lift him up. There's grounded and then there's grounded. He'd sit in a kneeling position and have five black belts pushing on his forehead trying to push him over. Often as not, he'd be lecturing as they pushed on him. They couldn't move him. There's grounded and then there's grounded.

It is inevitable as the rush increases so does the charge. The charge ungrounded, can startle us and disturb our circuits making us ineffective. In an emergency, a situation with a big rush we may take on more energy than we can handle. When the energy rush reaches a certain level of 'voltage' we get blown-out and cannot find our ground. As the charge increases unless we are skilled in grounding we get uptight, electrocuted so to speak, by our own energy. Resistance impedes the flow and diminishes power and with it capability. A disconnected state loses power and a constricted one is likely to misuse power.

Weakness engenders defensiveness, whereas confidence produces an open presence. Connected to a sense of power we no longer default to defensive behavior. A centered-grounded state of being handles power in an appropriate manner. The rush happens to us. Grounding requires conscious attention.

In the rush of excitement we need to practice consciously reconnecting with our ground. Without a way to practice, what reconnecting does occur for us happens in our sleep. The charge is always going on for us. Some rushes are large and therefore obvious. Other situations produce smaller rushes. The smaller ones may have a greater effect on us in the long run because we may not notice them. If we fail to notice the upset, we do not reconnect.

When the rush hits, grounding the charge enables us to stay an open channel, non-resistant to the flow of energy. At a slow enough pace we can train grounding the charge. When we ground the charge that the rush creates, it becomes accessible power instead of power that upsets us. Grounding increases our ability to allow energy to flow freely instead of channeling it into habituated patterns. Energy potentially gives birth to creativity. Creativity adapts naturally to the needs of the moment instead of operating out of habit trying to make what we already know work, even when it doesn't.

If I can continue to ground the charge, I can stay centered and be present for experience as it changes. I do not have to get stuck in old thoughts or feelings I can let go of patterned behavior. I can adapt to what's going on now. Grounding the charge allows me to be in the experience of the universe as it is and adapt to whatever is needed in the moment.

Grounding the charge of energy and releasing our holding patterns into a re-assessment of the moment increases presence and fluidity. Grounding the charge enables the full power of the energy in our system to serve our intention. When we are uptight, emotionally distraught, our thinking fragments. We lose common

sense. We do things we wish we hadn't. Presence opens the doorway to the essence of our power instead of being caught in the past.

How do you know that you are grounded? I feel my shoulders drop and my lower abdomen open and settle. My torso straightens. If I am standing I can feel my knees flex. It is a tangible, physical feeling for me. I can feel muscles relax and I relax emotionally.

How do you ground the charge? Start with the physical and see if you notice effects in the other realms.

EX: Take a slow deep breath. Exhale slowly and sense the weight of the body settling into the earth. As you center and relax use your imagination to sense your physical weight dispersing into the ground. Take a moment to picture it and another to feel what you experience.

Next level: Imagine/visualize your weight pouring through your connection to the ground and dispersing into the earth. Continue the visualization until you can picture your energy extending throughout the earth to the whole universe, the source of being, the power of creation. Repeat as needed.

Effectively grounding the charge increases our capability, creating a field of potential. When we ground the charge, we can use its potential. Unlimited possibility opens. Creativity is always available but in a state of resistance the options are invisible to us. To allow and utilize our full power, awareness must continually reconnect our totality. Grounding trains us to focus attention on reconnecting, rather than lose attention on the upset that occurs when we disconnect from the experience of the unified field.

Grounding Emotionally

I distinguish the concept of grounding emotions rather than trying to repress or eliminate them. Emotionality can be seen as out of control since emotions usually override rational thinking. In an emotional rush we do not know what might happen. If we give in to rage we give up our ground. Most of us resist the feeling of losing control. In a misunderstanding of a warrior's courage we move to get back in control any way we know how. If we default to bravado we deny our experience and act like we are in control.

How you think about life affects how you feel about it. How you feel, affects how you think. States of mind become states of being. To respond consciously we must

develop awareness of our reactions to the flow of energy through our systems. The emotions you experience are based on the meaning and value you give a situation. Every time you get angry, instead of blindly accepting the surface response, trace it back to what matters to you most. Training enables us to use that information and correct, aligning a unified field.

When I am driving and another driver does something disturbing, how many expletives do I have to yell before I let go of that form of thought and start a centering and grounding process? How long do I spend in my fear reaction or being upset because the world surprises me or is not doing what I want, before I align with the unfolding? In a grounded state we experience each moment directly. Challenges become opportunities for growth and development.

People habituate to emotional states as well as thought patterns. Some of us get angry easily. Others habituate to sadness or self-pity. We describe each other by familiar emotional tones. “So and so is sullen, shy, happy, hostile, impatient,” though we are all much more than we appear at any given moment.

If you pay attention you will notice you have common emotional responses that fire off mechanically. In resistance movement is impeded. Unless we open up, we repeat behaviors we learned, the way that we practiced them. We function within an old habit pattern again and again, whether it is working or not. Since every situation is different, that’s not good enough. Presence, centering and grounding allows us to respond to each experience anew.

Grounding starts with acceptance. As soon as it is okay for me to have a charge the energy in my system begins to equalize. Tension begins to drain through my feet and grounds into the earth. I accept the situation I am facing. It doesn’t mean I like it. It means the charge no longer electrocutes me. Grounding the charge and relaxing is not a diffusing of your power. Grounding doesn’t mean a loss of feeling; not caring or that whatever it is doesn’t matter. It means I am not fighting with the idea of dealing with a situation. All my energy is grounded and present, ready to deal with it from my most effective state.

“Are you feeling scared? Are you feeling anxious, threatened, confused?” These are the dragons that guard the temple. You have to go through them to enter the temple. You can’t get in any other way. If you’re feeling sad, and would like to feel better, the first step is to feel where you are. Feel sad. If you need to be by yourself to feel it, go ahead. It is more than okay to be who you are. Authentic presence is the practice. Presence with your feelings frees energy otherwise wasted

in resistance. As you open to feeling your immediate experience, energy flows. As you feel yourself and your emotions fully, your power increases.

Grief and sadness endure through time and show this process more visibly. You can be washed over by a wave of sadness. Then it recedes. Then the next wave hits and the feelings return. It can be re-stimulated by a reminder. Often these waves seem to hit for no apparent reason. Releasing the resistance allows the energy to flow. In a flow state tension dissolves into unlimited potential. Grief experienced openly, without resistance, in a centered state, completes itself. When it is complete you do not have to carry the weight of the grief you have denied. Grounding the past and opening up to the present allows us to live non-resistant to grief and happiness.

Even positive emotions can take us off our path. In the rush of attraction judgment can be impaired. In retrospect we wonder how does one find one's self in a relationship where their partner is abusive, unresponsive, controlling and so on. If we have not developed a unified state the forces driving our lives act incoherently. Grounded in ourselves, we do not throw ourselves away.

If you let go of the mental, emotional and physical tension, relax, center and allow the energy, it grounds. So will your frustration and so will your confusion. The emotional rush calms down without effort on our part. It may not happen the first instant you let go. Grounding goes on drop by drop. Like breathing, it is not a big deal, unless you do not do it.

Grounding means not unleashing feelings on people irresponsibly, not getting habitually upset about: luck, race, gender, etc. People unload the tension of held energy on each other. It becomes a cycle. The boss speaks to you in a bad mood. You have an ungrounded charge so you unload on someone else and then they

Did you ever have a conversation with somebody and for no reason you intend, end up in an argument with them? All of a sudden there you are entangled in a conflict that no one really wanted to start. Ever get into an argument with someone you love, over something you realized in retrospect you didn't care that much about?

My wife and I were having one of those escalating disagreements that can easily end up in an argument. All of a sudden she looked at me and said, "You know what? I am upset at this moment. Give me some time to settle down and get grounded." That was it. The argument was over. By taking a moment, grounding the charge, by paying attention in a new way, she had changed the field of energy,

the field of awareness. We then had a (unified field) conversation of our diverse views, not an argument.

I went through a divorce once. We were pretty good friends, so it was relatively amicable. As we were going through our breakup both of us had moments when we lost it emotionally. We were lucky, because on the days when she was upset, I was understanding and could ground the charge, and vice versa. We never clashed where both of us went at each other. We are still good friends and celebrate our holidays together with our children.

Grounding the energy enables maintaining connection to the totality in the midst of the rush. The inability to connect to ground, to sense being part of a larger universe, locks us in limiting our options. When we do not feel we have any possibilities, we either give up or go off on someone else or on ourselves. If we do not ground the charge we either act out or we act in.

We get wound so tight people kill other people over differences in beliefs. This kind of behavior, from frustration right up to physical violence, expresses a state of resistance to our own experience, not listening to the power and possibilities that exist in our life. That is where violence starts.

Instead of responding from an ungrounded place, practice grounding your power before responding. Think about it the next time you start to get upset, what reactions your feelings and behaviors will generate. Grounding the charge turns fear into power. Grounding releases fixed ideas allowing the energy of the moment to become unlimited potential. We no longer operate out of the same reactivity to fear.

Quantum Aikido through the power harmony turns the energy of resistance AND the energy resisted into creative possibility. Harmony with the universe means an ongoing practice of entering into presence. Unifying the field of awareness allows the universal Ki and its wisdom to flow into our lives. Because the charge is always in flux, the job is never done.

Depending on how we train grounding can be either a way of traveling or just an occasional stop in a foreign land. Center and ground are always there. The universal intelligence is always talking. The question is are we listening?

The Use of nothing

The thirty spokes of a carriage wheel uniting at the nave
are made useful by the hole in the center,
where nothing exists.

Vessels of molded earth are useful by reason of their hollowness.

Doors and windows are useful by being cut out.

A house is useful because of its emptiness.

Existence, therefore is like unto gain, but Non-Existence to use.

Lao Tse-The Book of the Tao

Life as eternal change inevitably disturbs our patterns. The disturbance can be upsetting. It doesn't have to be. The emotional rush is like coffee sloshing out of a cup as it is being moved around. Almost any action - causes the sloshing to increase. It is a Chinese finger puzzle. The more you try to get out of it the tighter it holds you. Fueling the emotional upset doesn't help. A cycle of negative emotion will shift sooner if there is no resistance. Acceptance diminishes the effect any disturbance has on you. Notice, be present and simply allow what is, to be. 'Not doing' allows us to live a full life. 'Nothing' may not sound that attractive, but when you feel terrible, nothing might seem pretty good.

How does one take muddy water and make it clear? By keeping still.

Lao Tse-The Book of the Tao

We need the ability to drop our holding patterns and clear our thought patterns. We need to get to a state of mind, where being and experience, identity and impulse, do not end up in a fight about the way the universe is. Zen describes a state of mu shin - no mind - clear awareness, freedom of the spirit. The Buddhists have a chant called, Neti Neti: not this not that. No time, no thought, no subject, no object . . . etc. By negating all that exists a state of pure awareness is sought from which to directly experience each unfolding moment.

Power lies in feeling the disturbance, being present, not-doing. Resisting disturbance adds energy to the disturbance. Nothing is what you can do to make it better. Not-doing doesn't mean stopping your energy flow. Stopping is something.

Nothing is the opposite. Not-doing means neither resisting nor augmenting the energy that flows through you. 'Nothing' means only the universe as it is.

When past descriptions do not work 'nothing' is the answer. Not-doing, doing nothing, is a time of chrysalis that allows the knowledge base to dissolve creating a state of inner quiet that receives guidance from the universal intelligence. We make ourselves available by having nothing in the way. If we can't ground the energy, we react to it and lose presence. If we can't get to nothing and sense beyond the known, we live in past descriptions. We are stuck.

Stuck in past thoughts and beliefs I live in a limited universe. Fear assembles a universe that is not creative. If I do not believe a better form or greater knowledge will appear I do not let go of what I know. Instead I defend my knowledge or beliefs against any challenging thoughts. Just when I should be opening up, listening to the whisperings, I tighten up defensively feeling a need to prove I am right. Unless I practice letting go to knowing nothing, creativity is blocked by the known. Only through practice will the skill of not-doing be available when needed.

Quantum Aikido trains a state without preconception about how creation should unfold. In a grounded present state I am connected to the flow of change. I respond naturally to whatever happens. My whole being moves in relationship to unfolding change. There's no resistance. There's no break in the unified field. Without any preset on how life should happen, it unfolds naturally.

The energy is dynamic. It is going somewhere. Grounding the past and connecting to a clear experience of the universe, we experience directly the energy of the moment. Grounding the charge implies clearing reactions to the past so we can enter each moment without prejudice. The practice of nothing develops the ability to let form generate spontaneously without thoughts getting in the way. In that state we can create strategy and technique appropriately and effectively. We can divine a path of wisdom.

Most of us do not think of ourselves as being prejudiced. "We speak the truth. It is the people who do not agree with us who are prejudiced." We believe that the way we see it, is the way it really is. When I meet someone, I judge them not from direct experience but filtered through my past, my holding patterns, my memories, something someone once told me.

A fixed belief system makes it very hard to let go of pre-dispositions and get to a state of openness where you're a pure scientist or a pure artist. Ground allows

letting go of prejudices. When I ground, awareness stops holding the musculature in a previously adopted physical posture. If I can ground my thinking, I can get to a place where there is nothing. If I am in the moment, I am empty of prejudice. I am experiencing the universe as it is. Letting go doesn't mean you've lost your memories and knowledge. It means they have lost control of you.

In the study of Quantum Aikido we learn to recognize and influence our relationship to the flow. There is no end to the study because in one form or another life continually disturbs and startles us. Simply paying attention initiates recovering from the startle complex.

Energy awareness activates the natural intelligence of the universal Ki. If you pay attention in a different way you assemble a different experience. In a moment of dramatic challenge instead of panic, escalating the tension by habit, recognize the intensity of the rush as energy. Allow it. Become it.

Aikido is the spirit of love. The art of peace is helping people get what they need; helping them on their path to growth and wholeness. It is not about interfering and controlling, demeaning or defeating people. That is the 'mind of discord'.

The spirit of reconciliation keeps all beings in a constant state of growth and development."

"One who understands the secret of Aikido has the universe within themselves and can say I am the universe.

Morihei Ueshiba, O Sensei

Self-Reflexivity

Our state echoes our relationship to the rush of life's energy and is the ground of all our interaction. Our state of being is the filter through which we perceive reality, the frame through which we create meaning. Our state is the foundation of how we give value to experience. State determines the window we use to see where we are, the vision to define where we want to go and the wisdom to divine the strategy to get there.

In the heat of an intense situation, if we lose the ability to see ourselves in action, we cannot self-correct. Usually we lose our ability to see ourselves about the time we lose our cool. They are, as it were, the same thing.

Managing our state begins by clearly experiencing where we are and how it is. Through that clarity, a sense of where we want to go or what we might like to create emerges. Then realms beyond the conscious divine how to get there. The intelligence of the unified mind-body system comprehends complexity and plots out behaviors, direction and action beyond what is possible for the conscious mind alone. Physical or mental resistance in the system impedes this natural process. When the relationship, of where we are and where we want to go unify and inform our thinking/feeling, naturally, seemingly effortlessly, action moves towards our bestowed mission.

Reflectivity implies we can see ourselves. Reflexivity means we can adapt to our experience. Flowers are reflexive. They not only sense where the sun is, they turn towards it. When we are hungry we eat. When we are cold we put on a jacket. Self-reflexivity means we can see ourselves participating in our environment and complete the feedback loop. Self-reflexivity means that instead of reacting unconsciously, we can see ourselves participating in the unfolding and mediate our action with intelligence.

Self-reflexivity implies an awareness of the messages we send out, not just the words, the unified field of communication, tone posture etc. If we are self-reflexive we can see ourselves in an argument behaving irrationally and change our course of action. We can see our action in relation to a larger context and improve our alignment to accomplish our intended outcome. Flare-ups of certainty block listening. Self-reflexivity empowers a leader to lead by example. It empowers anyone who wishes for the growth and development of those in their charge.

Self-reflexivity can be like the instrument panel and controls that allow a pilot to fly an airplane when visibility is less than optimal. Operation can only be conducted safely and effectively by continually checking the instruments and adjusting the controls. We should develop inner gauges that sense levels of defensiveness and conflict with others. Defensiveness, if we can see it should be a sign to check our instruments and adjust our controls. It means we have not moved off the line of force and instead are defending ourselves against it. When we find ourselves in conflict with the thinking of another it should activate our self-reflexivity.

How many times have you looked back at your actions and not been able to believe you did what you did? How many times have you gotten into an argument and said or done things you wish you could take back? Without self-reflexivity we keep arguing. Acting irrationally means we have lost the power of rational thought. The ability to see our actions as irrational is difficult from an irrational mind set. In the

middle of an intense rush of energy we lose self-awareness. With self-awareness we can ask, “Why are we doing this? Are we achieving desirable outcomes?”

"Our thought is incoherent, when it does not produce what we intend."

David Bohm

Even if it is slightly apart from the way it is no longer the way.

Morihei Ueshiba, O Sensei

The power of Aikido is seeing ourselves as active participants in what is unfolding. Self-reflexivity is the first step in Aikido. Using the continuous feedback of a partner, Aikido teaches us to pay attention. The practice of exchanging judgment for presence moves us to a state of influence, where we have the greatest leverage. When we are off base, if we align unifying mind and body, experience changes significantly. Seeing our reactive behavior allows us to correct. By slowing down, relaxing, centering and grounding, we notice more about ourselves and make changes that improve our operating state and our relationship to any situation.

Self-reflexivity implies the ability to see ourselves interacting, to take a moment and align our actions with our intentions. It allows choosing our action consciously rather than reacting from habituated patterns. The possibility exists of operating from a state of balance and alignment. But if we lack knowledge of the possibility, skills to apply it or we are upset enough not to see the choice, it might as well not exist.

If you do not know you're locked in you are bound and doomed to resist. Once you know you're locked in (feel where you are), that knowledge offers you a choice. Once you know that something else exists and you are willing to learn (harmonious relationship), you have the needed components to participate creatively. Mastery implies presence to consciously negotiate the transition from one state to another. The shift of mind from defensiveness to self-reflexivity opens the possibility of creativity, of trying something different, of learning to see in new ways.

If we lose self-reflexivity, we can't see the influence of our participation. It is difficult to self-correct in the midst action. Without self-reflexivity, we abdicate our power. Self-reflexivity enables us to see ourselves acting within and as part of the unfolding situation. Seeing ourselves interacting leads to responsibility for our state of being.

Self-reflexivity bestows the ability to answer the question of how we are, and how we are engaging. With that knowledge we can respond intelligently. Without it we do not continually correct our life course toward accomplishing our bestowed mission.

A Shift Of Identity - The Identity's Dilemma

We habituate to thinking of ourselves in familiar ways. We habituate to familiar ways of feeling. We develop a personality, a style, a character. The character we play - the way we come to describe our character - through repetition becomes our identity. Thought becomes habit. Habit becomes identity. Repeated over time identity calcifies.

An actor develops the skill of creating identities consciously. They see to some degree the actor behind the act. Most of us come to believe we are the role we play. Generally we do not know that we are identifying let alone how. We think that we are our profession, our nationality, our religion or politic. We forget our original identity and end up claiming a small part of our totality. By doing so we end up at odds with the rest of creation. We identify with a certain level of energy or a given identity, and the next thing we know, that identity is defending itself against the rest of the universe - i.e. everything it is not identified with.

When we fragment by race, religion, nationality and gender. Whatever identifications we have going on separate us out from the whole, and disconnect us from the power of the unified field. When we look at the separate parts we lose sight of the whole. We can't see the forest for the trees.

A closed attitude develops a closed identity. When the identity is open the channel is unimpeded. The energy flows naturally. Identification sets up our alignment with power. How we see ourselves changes how we see our relationship to everything else. The quality of life is our relationship with the energy of the universe. The movement of our lives, how we show up in the world, expresses that relationship.

When we identify as a certain type of person it defines how we will interact. For example if you think of yourself as a passive person and found yourself in a situation where you needed to take action, the required role wouldn't match your passive identity. Or if you develop a dominant personality you may find yourself having difficulty in a situation that requires you to listen. When change demands action beyond our comfort zone, either we transcend our identity or function out of harmony.

In a universe of constant change nothing stands still. When the universe changes, we cannot remain static and be in harmony. Fixed identity violates universal law. When we take on an identity its an act at first. Eventually it becomes fixed. If I am set about who I am, when change happens, I resist it. Resisting the energy of change disconnects us from the source of its power. Either we train the shift into presence or we reinforce a fixed identity. We either go down the path of increasing defensiveness or the path of authenticity, of increasing connection to the universe.

Openness, fluidity, willingness, inquiry stop wherever we draw the lines of identity. Identifying as a separate part creates the need to be defensive — to defend our identity. When we do not want to talk about certain areas — what are we defending? What are we afraid of?

Being is not an identity. Being is not a thing. Being is a dynamic relationship of the known with the unknown, of what we might call the self with what we might call the universal. How we identify ourselves defines what we support and what we are likely to oppose. As we open and relax we find less to resist. Life energy flows naturally.

Aikido is aligning with the energy of a situation and using the energy to create a positive resolution. Our influence flows through the quality of our participation. Power, possibility comes from universal Ki. In resistance we limit possibility.

We are more than we think we are. We have more power than we know we do, and if we do not allow it I fear we never will create the beautiful world O Sensei spoke of. It is so close relatively speaking, I can almost taste it. It could be so easy. Endless hard work or repeated attempts to control others is not what is required. It is a shift in process, in who we are. The transcendence of our limited identity unfolds the connection with our universal identity, our true identity.

In harmonious relationship, what you do externally comes out of who you are essentially. At O Sensei's level, when he was in state, there was no distinction between him and the source of the energy. There are stories about when he was very old, how they had to help him up the stairs. Yet on the mat, after a minute's training he'd look younger and be very powerful. O Sensei's process changed his identity. When he said, "I am the universe," he was able to connect it all. He wasn't limited by what should have been impossible.

Our identity, who we feel we are or have trained ourselves to believe we are, defines the channel the energy flows through. As an identity we identify with a

given level of energy flow. In response to any situation where energy flow increases, the conduit must match the size of the flow or the pressure builds up. In a rush when the amount of energy increases, if identity, the size of the channel stays the same, pressure on the system increases. When the pressure of a situation requires more energy than the conduit can enable, the identity is threatened. When the rush of energy increases, it demands a change in how we see ourselves, in our identity. An identity that resists change sees energy as the enemy causing increasing tension in the body/mind continuum.

As we handle a set amount of energy or play a certain size being, it becomes our norm our identity. In the face of an attack or unexpected change, that first pulse of the rush can startle us. If the role we usually play is say, a one-inch pipe and a situation requires we take on the role of a two-inch pipe, the larger identity feels strange to the identity we are comfortable with, the one we've come to call by our name. When we resist change we default to habituated patterns. We invoke defenses that prohibit our transformation. It is understandable in that we do not know if what is coming into form will help us survive as well as the identity we have formed. However, if we maintain the limits of our identities we will never know what is possible beyond the known. That is the identity's dilemma

In a rush the energy, the unknown, can knock us out of center. To resist being thrown off center we tighten down on our flow when we should open up. If we compound the resistance by resisting or denying the fear we freeze in the headlights. The resultant build up of pressure frequently becomes fear leading to anger.

The phrase, "be big about it," means allowing energy the size conduit it needs. It means seeing the bigger picture. As you shrink you limit your possibilities. Diminishing the self creates a negative vortex drawing in negative energy. When you get small you create a resonance where people tend to feel negative about you.

Shut down on the energy and you get fear without power. Out of fear, a sense of vulnerability, people close up seeking parameters they can control or understand. Open a bullet, pour the gunpowder out on the table and light it. It burns. If you contain it inside the casing and ignite it - it explodes. The explosion of anger is due to our attempts to contain the energy. Aikido means coming into a harmonious relationship where our identity's 'size', our ability to handle energy, matches the size of the flow. A student once said, "I came into Aikido to learn self-defense and in the training I found out there was no self to defend."

We fear the unknown because “what’s out there” is so vast. It presses in on how we know ourselves. We claim an identity to shield ourselves against the vastness. Without a harmonious relationship to power we do not deal with conflict well. In a weak state, disconnected from the source of power, anything with power scares us. We react by trying to make the world safe, passing laws, trying to limit the power of others. It is like sealing the end of a hose to keep bugs from crawling in. Bugs don't crawl into a hose that is running. When power flows freely, conflict is resolved without diminishing the power of the individuals involved.

When the creativity of Ki starts to flow, the limited identity inhibits it. There’s usually some internal guard standing at the door to creativity with inhibitions blocking the change. If we buy into fear, we hold to our identity instead of allowing the energy of the moment to redefine us. Fear can inhibit creativity, growth and development. In fact, it usually does.

As the rush of universal energy increases beyond my comfort zone if I describe it to myself as an attack, I react against rather than with the energy of life. Though not conscious of the valuing, I am more interested in keeping things out than letting things in, in holding to what I believe rather than being open to learning. The experience that most of us label fear is an increase of energy before the size of our conduit, our spirit, has expanded to allow the energy through.

If we see the energy as attacking our identity we resist the information it offers. Tightening down instead of opening to it stresses our system and diminishes our ability to utilize the energy and the information and guidance it offers us. When we block the flow of Ki, our magic is not available. When the energy gets weak so does the immune system. Emotionally we are vulnerable to negative comments.

Whereas if the energy flow is full and positive, our immune system is more resilient, criticism doesn’t affect us the same way and problems become challenges. A field of positive spirit protects us. When someone says something negative it is easier to think “well, okay” or “thanks for telling me” or “I didn’t know you felt like that,” and you are OK. You do not take it personally and it doesn’t diminish your spirit.

Learning to draw on the power of the universe defines a more intelligent response than resisting it. Because resistance is a habituated response, we need to train to allow the energy to flow freely. If we practice positive spirit, opening to the flowing energy in a positive way, the field of possibilities opens as well. You do not have the same problem of people taking advantage of you. A society of responsible individuals requires less external control mechanisms, freeing energy for creativity and productivity.

Newtonian Aikido (waza –technique)) occurs in the realm of the right mechanical leverage. Quantum Aikido (Do – the way) occurs in the domain of the unified field where identity transforms to recognize itself as source. If we shift how we think of ourselves, the meaning we form and with it our experience changes. Squaring away, unifying the aspects of being, causes a shift of identity and who we are changes. From a larger identity we do not make the same ego based distinctions anymore. We feel differently and see things differently. We make different decisions and create a different life and a different world. The totality of the unfolding universe divines a path for each of us leading to the ‘completion of our bestowed mission’ and ‘creating a beautiful world’.

In a state of presence, we know if we are squared away with ourselves. And if we are not, we know how to get there. Presence releases our holding patterns, the limits and boundaries of the little 'I' and opens our spirits. An identity closer to “I am the Universe,” appears.

By accepting the apparent dichotomies and attending to them in a spirit of peaceful reconciliation, the oneness of the system unfolds of itself. Harmony is a natural law. The practice of constantly entering the moment transforms awareness to identify as the whole. Identifying as the universe the mind finds nothing to resist. The energy of resistance dissolves into flow.

At every second the rush of life force, energy, Ki, flows into our lives. If we have not trained our awareness we may not even know it is there. If the rush of Ki is resisted we become tense, rigid, losing our fluidity and substance. We do not hear or relate very well. In this reaction we inhibit the energy that’s coming through and the system constricts trying to control the rush, sensing the energy only as pressure instead of what it is -- our life. Sometimes, we are comfortable with it, sometimes not. But whether we feel high as a kite one minute or down in the dumps the next - - the practice is the same. Consciously practice opening the system and letting the energy flow through. It is poor management to expend energy in resistance that you could use to create a desired outcome. Whether in an individual or a team, resistance is a waste of human potential.

You probably know someone who flies off the handle about every little thing. You know other people who are easy to get along with. They are cool with whatever happens. They handle it. We all live on that continuum. Some days we are an open channel other days we feel tight, wound up, on edge, explosive. When we connect with the power of the universal energy, when our alignment is good, we sense we are having a good day. The magic, the wonder of each of us, the miracle that

produced us, is flowing through us in each moment. If we open, we are that miracle. If we do not, instead of being the solution, we are the problem.

Everything you know about yourself represents parameters (the size of your identity). Every shift in intention and new formation of meaning represents a change in those parameters. Re-align to the changing parameters of the identity is an ongoing dynamic process.

How you know yourself sets up basic assumptions that affect what you will measure and therefore prove with your experiment. Change the parameters and the data the system is programmed to select changes. A different reality is assembled.

Energy becomes power when we open to the flow. The size of identity defines the quantity of energy available. How much of the universe the identity includes defines the threshold of how much we can channel the power that we are. The practice of 'feeling where we are' allows the parameters of the conduit to experience and align to the intensity of the flow. Presence causes the parameters of the identity to match the intensity of the energy it channels. This re-aligning is what I mean by squaring away.

The body can handle intense energy flowing through, if the channels are strong and clear. Through the practice of opening to and allowing the energy to flow, we clear and strengthen the channels so they handle increasing amounts of energy in a healthy positive way. And to the degree that we have developed presence, we are capable of handling pressure and power responsibly.

Releasing the holding patterns of the limited identity becomes a practice by simply breathing and feeling. When we feel, what we feel is energy flowing. The body feeling itself naturally transforms tension into flow. Releasing physically causes reciprocating echoes in the emotional realm. In the realm of the spirit, picture your energy field and imagine it expanding. Feel into the source of your energy, at least let yourself imagine what that might be like. What does your energy say to you? What does it tell you when you identify as the whole? Do you understand life differently?

There is a propensity in the mundane world to identify with the obvious and lose touch with the divine harmony. The shift of identity, fusing the individual with the universal, disturbs the description of the known self. The doorway to the unknown is the place where the limited mind opens up to something that it doesn't know. Once we realize that we extend beyond our skin that we are much more than physical, as the identity opens and becomes more inclusive infinite possibilities appear. You are connected to more power than you know. You are power. As your

practice develops and your skill increases, you may sense you are source, you are the universe.

Training enhances our ability. The study sets up an opportunity to practice noticing pressure and aligning our response. When we train well, we attain our most functional state. Through attention, by opening the size of the identity, the conduit increases allowing the flow of energy. We come into greater harmony with the whole of the universal system. When we open, creativity flows in abundance. Instead of resisting the life force we utilize it.

When the energy of the universe seems to attack us, feeling upset about it doesn't help us respond effectively. Opening to the flow of experience does. Training allows us to achieve our most effective state immediately without thinking, without having to talk to ourselves about whether we like what is happening or if it is fair. The power of harmony, though it sounds too simple, comes about from simply paying attention to what is.

Training means doing something repeatedly and intentionally. If you relax and then do it again noticing what you could do better or taking it to the next level of ability that is training. It doesn't require going to the gym or dojo. It requires consistency of repetition, continually using attention to process the feedback to improve any aspect of being. Training means taking responsibility for developing the courage and skill required to negotiate life.

If we train to choose the quality of our spirit, to identify with more of the universe, a doorway opens. Opening the doorway to a larger identity allows the energy and intelligence of the universe to show itself in our lives. Perception transmutes from fixed truth to infinite possibility. An open identity creates possibilities that a defensive one would never be willing to imagine. In an open state the energy of the universe flows. Only the resistance of our limited identity impedes it. As we open beyond the known, we have access to the essence of what we are, without having to know what that is. Even a small dose of the unexpected can change the tone of a conversation or a life.

The vastness that supersedes the known identity is what we seek. If we train to accept the vastness our parameters will change. In the realm of the spirit the individual identity resonates with the vibrations of the universal energy. When the individual identity and the universal Ki are in harmony the resonance between them creates a reciprocating echo. They function as a unified field taking us beyond what we thought was possible. Unknown forces show up in our lives. Magical things happen -- unexplainable from our limited, isolated identity. The

In the Realm of the Spirit

wisdom of the universe flows into our life. We become the courage and inspiration that accomplish our bestowed mission. Aikido bears fruit when our limited identity is resonant with all that exists and the power that creates it. That is, the way of peace, the power of harmony.

If I call you by the name you use it is likely you would respond. Would you if I called you, “universal awareness” or “universal energy”? You probably do not think of yourself that way. Yet which is the truer description of what you are?

We do not cease to be universal energy because we have a name. Or cease to have personal responsibilities because we are universal. It is not one or the other. Both are true and complete each other. When you unify both domains, you operate in a harmonious relationship between the personal and the universal. Perception assembles a unified field of the individual with the totality. You recognize that you are it, the universal, that we are all part of this universal field. Harmony is.

Principles of Aikido

The Principle of Energy

The Principle of Centering

The Principle of Grounding

Σ The Principle of Entering

The Principle of Harmony

The Principle of Unification

The Principle of Resonance

The Principle of Entering

Irimi- Entering The Unknown

We often flinch in response to an unexpected movement. In the face of an attack, we have a tendency to look away, close our eyes, pull our head back, and pull our energy out. The body naturally tightens in defensive reaction whenever we perceive a threat. Pulling our energy out is not an effective approach to influence a situation. We cannot lead and have positive influence on something we back away from. It would be like trying to control a car from the outside or back seat instead of the driver's seat.

The Japanese word irimi translates as entering. In the physical art of Aikido it implies entering in beside an attacker into a position of influence, entering into resolution. I use the phrase 'in & with' to describe, entering without opposing. Irimi describes a positive joining 'in & with', seeking the center, the eye of the hurricane with full spirit. In the realm of the spirit irimi means entering into the moment, into the power of an experience,

If we pull out of any experience our influence diminishes. The power of this principle is apparent to anyone who skis. When our speed increases beyond our ability we reflexively want to pull away from the source of the power, in this case gravity. Doing so pulls our weight back and out of the skis making it impossible to control our direction. The more we pull back the faster we go. The faster we go the more fear increases, the greater the desire to pull back. In the realm of the spirit the more unknown the outcome the harder it is to stay engaged.

In spite of our fear, the only way to influence the skis is to put our weight into the skis and the downhill motion, to enter into connection with that which we may fear. We must engage our weight and intention into the skis to turn, controlling the speed and direction. Irimi -- entering the situation -- creates the unity of the skier with the skis allowing them to function together as a system. Unifying the field allows action to produce a desired outcome.

In skiing the fear of the unknown increases with faster momentum. In business the rush increases in direct proportion to the dollar amount at risk. And in personal relationships the charge increases in proportion to the degree of caring. Fear or not, the only way to fulfill our life is to engage our spirit into unfolding experience.

We perceive any change as threatening until we understand it. If we lack the ability to blend creatively with the situation too often we react and unthinkingly

compound the conflict. In real life experiences we rarely know going in, how they will come out. Uncertainty engenders fear causing us to avoid entering situations and relationships whole-heartedly.

Resistance to change inhibits responsiveness. Holding out of a situation diminishes influence, requiring greater effort to accomplish one's goals. On one hand we do not want to lose our presence. On the other we do not want to be so concerned with staying centered that we never put anything out. To lead change, to be effective we must engage. Irimi enables taking responsibility for the outcome without opposing the moment.

People often think of non-resistance as surrendering. That is a misunderstanding of Aikido's philosophy. They may think of warrior spirit as fighting against a situation or controlling it, forcing a solution. That is default behavior. Engagement, entering in, does not mean being in opposition to a situation. Engaging means being participatory and responsible. If we are fully engaged in a harmonious relationship, and continue entering in, regardless of the appearance of success or lack thereof, positive spirit generates infinite creativity. Engaging may or may not mean generating action. It does imply the participation of attention and authenticity. Non-resistance is itself an attitude of learning, of entry into experience beyond the known.

The "leading edge of change" means participating in the unfolding of each instant as it happens. It is not about 'how it is' which is now already past but about 'what it is becoming'. Shooting skeet you would learn to 'lead' the target. For success in the marketplace and to guide a child's development, you've got to lead.

Presence leads to spontaneous action. If we lose the moment we default into thoughts and actions that are habituated, not strategic. In a non-resistant relationship energy is available as creative power. Learn to recognize when you withdraw your energy. That will happen. When it does learn to recognize your reaction of pulling out. Remind yourself to enter, to engage. The power of **irimi**, a willingness to enter, to view experience through the window that encompasses the universal whole, leads to freedom of the human spirit.

Death as a Spiritual Practice

The Buddha told a parable:

A man traveling across a field encountered a tiger. He fled, the tiger after him. Coming to a precipice, he caught hold of the root of a wild vine and swung himself down over the edge. The tiger sniffed at him from above. Trembling, the man

looked down to where, far below, another tiger was waiting to eat him. Only the vine sustained him.

Two mice, one white and one black, little by little started to gnaw away the vine. The man saw a luscious strawberry near him. Grasping the vine with one hand, he plucked the strawberry with the other. How sweet it tasted!

From; Zen Flesh Zen Bones, P Reps

The first tiger is birth, the second death. The vine represents life and the mice, day and night, eating it away. There is no escape. There is only how you experience your short time here.

Quantum Aikido practices for both of victory in physical combat and success in completing our bestowed mission, for both developing the spirit as well as training physical techniques. One can give emphasis to either or both depending on their interest and the guidance they receive. O Sensei transcended the division. He created an art that develops the ability to reconcile conflict through a unified state of presence.

Quantum Aikido practices with death as a metaphor for change. The practice prepares us for the ongoing flow of change we face in life. Attachment to life and aversion of death represents a fixation on existence, as we know it. Aversion to the ending of life is aversion to ending life, as we know it. It represents a fear of change symbolized by our own death but including change in most any form,

That's why some of us who seek spiritual development, study the sword. Obviously we do not expect to need the skills in a sword fight. When we practice with boken, (wooden swords) it represents a willingness to face life and death as a continuum. So when we practice non-resistance in facing death, what we are practicing is killing the limitations of our own ego, killing the limitations of our identity. We are practicing killing the attachment to an identified state of being. We train entering the present by willingly dying to each instant of past experience. We are practicing transcending the known.

Life is an unknown though we try to make it manageable. Going beyond the limitations of our identity, dying to the known, is the doorway to the unknown, the doorway to creativity and our totality. Spiritual training connects us to our essential energy, enhances our beings and develops our ability to be present for our experience of life. Aikido training develops a positive spirit. In a spirit of non-resistance, energy, the Ki of the universe serves our bestowed mission.

To people who do not understand the spiritual purpose of martial training and warrior spirit, talking about killing and death may seem a cold-blooded attitude. Death, however, is simply a fact of life. Martial training allows one to practice facing the prospect of death with presence and a positive mind. When we face a life or death situation we simply make our choice to the best of our ability, kill or be killed. When we choose to kill, it is neither cold-blooded nor hotheaded. It is just done, without any fanfare. There is neither celebration nor grieving. We train non-attachment to the past. It just happens, and there's nothing. The emptiness that warriors seek when facing their own death represents the courage to face any change.

All I have to do is keep standing this way.

Morihei Ueshiba, O Sensei

If you are put in a position where you must deal with either life or death, practice non-resistance. If you are required to die (change) do so without attachment. If you are required to kill (change a situation) do so without anger. Training a warrior's spirit moves one beyond attachment to life and aversion of death. A warrior's practice is peace within, action without. This moment is your opportunity, your cubic centimeter of chance. Kill the limitations of your thought and claim your totality. Train in this spirit to negotiate change and create a beautiful world.

Life poses us with difficult situations and unanswerable questions. The Buddha said, "The cause of suffering is attachment." Unless we train beyond attachment to life, when we are faced with the possibility of death, fear clouds our judgment and slows our actions.

Alignment with the unfolding whole increases personal power and diminishes fear and rigidity. When unexpected change occurs, the same reaction happens over and over again. After we've seen ourselves react enough times we can claim knowledge as power and begin to flow with change and eventually to lead it.

Each shift into increased presence supersedes the previous state. That is the power of looking death in the face without resistance, yet without giving up. If we let go of the past instant and enter the unfolding future, which is always unknown, the door opens to another state of being. These openings take us to places we could not have imagined.

Bu the symbol for the warrior's path implies training warrior's spirit. To be effective in action a warrior's first challenge is to stop the war within. Fear of change is the first enemy of learning. Practice non-resistance. Train an acceptance of life and death, the flow of change.

There's a film about how judo was born called The Judo Saga. The original version was called Judo Versus Karate. It is about Professor Kano the founder of Judo and the development of his senior student Sanshiro Sugata. Early on an unscrupulous teacher takes advantage of Sanshiro before he meets Dr. Kano. Later as Dr. Kano's student, he has to fight in a tournament with the instructor who had taken advantage of him. By this time, Sanshiro has trained beyond him, and in the match throws him into a wall and accidentally kills him.

For the next big demonstration of Dr. Kano's Judo, when everyone has gone to the demonstration, Sanshiro is sitting in his room frozen by his fear. The Zen monk who lives in the dojo finds him and asks him, "What are you doing here?" Sanshiro says, "I feel bad about having killed." The monk listening to him says, "You speak of illusion. It sounds like it is your caring that stops you, but really it is your fear. All that you are avoiding is your fear of death and with it your life. Once you face your own death, you will be able to advance beyond it. Unless you face death, it will stop you from your commitment to your teacher and your mission." Sanshiro goes and wins the match. After all it is a movie.

This warrior talk may seem a bit romantic, yet to be full in our lives we must face and train beyond our fears. If you can't die, you can't live. As long as we resist death - - and death represents any change - - we can never fully open to life which is constant change.

The Power of Not Knowing

Coach John Gagliardi, a football coach at St. John's University in Minnesota, with the best record in his division for years said, "We beat better teams because we didn't know we couldn't. There's a lot of value in not knowing what you can't do."

There was a ten-year-old from Canada, - twelve at the point I heard the story - he heard about child labor laws and abuses in Asia and got active. He started a group of other ten and twelve-year-olds and he ended up going to Asia and talking to the children there. The Prime Minister of Canada was visiting Asia at the same time. This boy tried to see the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister wouldn't see him. The newspapers had a heyday with it. The Prime Minister finally made an appointment with him. He was eventually invited to speak to the Congress of the

United States, -- twelve years old. He said, "The reason we can do this is because we do not know what our limits are."

We put limits on our spirit. How do we break out? J. Krishnamurti an eastern mystic said, "When an acorn goes from being a little acorn to a huge oak tree, do you think that's effortless or painless?" Do not back off or diminish yourself. Something tremendous could happen here, but not if you stay small.

"If not you, who? If not now, when?" Rabbi Hillel

However much resistance we experience entering the unknown, and we will likely experience some, the process is similar. Develop a spirit that values rather than avoids confusion and ambiguity as the doorway to learning and growth. In chrysalis a caterpillar turns into a butterfly. During the time a caterpillar goes through chrysalis it is neither caterpillar nor butterfly. If you opened the cocoon during the process and looked at it, you wouldn't see a caterpillar changing into a butterfly. In the first stage of transformation a caterpillar turns to goo. And goo whether it is comfortable or not, is the only way to become a butterfly. That's when transformation can manifest, in the disorientation. You have to go through that gooey stage first. It is spooky no doubt, in the unknown of that dark little cocoon, when your form starts to dissolve into goo. Enter the unknown and accept the ambiguity. Only in a non-resistant state of mind can learning happen.

A lot of people do not like times of goo in their lives. Most people would rather go back to being a caterpillar, to doing what they know how to do and what they feel comfortable doing. For most of us, that 'not knowing' is so scary that we jump back from learning to knowing without inquiry. Or we never let go in the first place. The vastness can seem terrifying. Not knowing feels weak so we avoid it. And in that avoidance we would rather have a technique we know even if we have to force it or an incoherent description we feel comfortable with than release to the free form emptiness of true creativity. Attachment limits possibility. If out of fear I hold to my belief system, knowledge stagnates from lack of new input. Giving in to fear allows our defensiveness to inhibit our divinity.

The problem contains the solution. The ability to stay present in the midst of ambiguity is power. If I have enough heart to let go of my defensiveness, my mind clears. There is a moment of 'nothing', and then the flow appears and forms the appropriate response or technique. That seeming nothingness, 'goo', ambiguity, confusion is something. It is critical to the process. The transition between form

and potential, the ability to live and grow in formlessness is where those beautiful monarch butterflies come from.

Formlessness implies the field of potential out of which forms appear. Irimi, a flow state, acknowledging and accepting not having control of our lives and willingly entering into it anyway, produces ability. A state of presence when you are out of control allows form and knowing to evolve. Learning to surf has nothing to do with controlling the wave.

Society to be sustainable needs to adapt to a changing universe. Intention alone allows us to let go of our concepts about how the universe works. If we cannot let go of being sure that the earth is flat, we will never even consider the possibility of sailing around the world. I am not saying that letting go of the known and exploring the cosmos is safe, but neither is living in fixed beliefs without inquiry.

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Kokyu - Harmonious Relationship- Authenticity

The Japanese word kokyu, translated as breath, describes a state where things function together harmoniously. The word kokyu is older than the word Aiki. Kokyu is one of those terms whose nuances do not translate into English. It translates literally as breath or breath power. I translate it as harmonious connection with the power that activates the breath. The word has a number of other uses. When two people are really good friends, get along well or work well together, they are said to have good kokyu. When two people sing together in good harmony they are said to have good kokyu. Kokyu describes when the breathing is in harmony with the force that activates the breath. It has also been translated as harmonious interpenetration of the spiritual and the physical. Kokyu is when two forces come into harmony, both are present yet unified so that where there were two, there is now one.

It is a fundamental and essential concept in the art of Aikido. The principle of kokyu, meaning blending and harmony, is more important than any of the forms that a student will learn in the dojo. There are many Aikido techniques called kokyu nage. The term is usually rendered literally as 'breath power throw'. I define kokyu nage as throwing someone using the power of harmony with their power, energy and momentum and without forcing against them. The practice of Aikido unifies first the mind and body of the practitioner (nage - the one who throws). Then the practitioner blending with the energy of the attacker (uke - the one who falls) unifies the energies of both partners. This is both a metaphor and practice for the power that comes from experiencing the diverse energies of yin and yang as one unified system. Recognizing the oneness of the universal system allows each aspect of the system its true expression.

Aikido does not call relative affairs good or bad but keeps all beings in a constant state of growth and development and serves for the completion of the universe

Morihei Ueshiba, O Sensei

Kokyu represents the ability to find a way of harmony that respects all views in a spirit of learning. When the physical and spiritual are unified as one field that is kokyu. When the divine, the hidden and the manifest move together as one system and there is no struggle between them, that is kokyu. It does not matter how an

action looks. When the conflict dissolves away, if there is blend and unified flow -- not one entity forcing the other, I call that kokyu. Kokyu, blending means an end to domination. No forcing does not mean no strength or no power. Rather the opposite, harmony increases power, potential and possibility

Functioning in harmony with totality of being without resisting parts of oneself is another view of the term kokyu. When who we are as a spiritual being manifests on the planet through who we are as a physical being and both function in harmony, our being is authentic. When all the aspects that make up an individual are included in their expression, I describe this state as "authenticity". Authenticity means connection with and expression of power, spirit, vital force. It doesn't mean you have to say everything you think. However, if you are in touch with what you are feeling, if you are authentic with yourself, you can move toward greater authenticity with others. When we practice kokyu in our life by living true to who we are, the power of our being comes to bear.

Am I defining myself in relationship to the essence of who I am or in relation to what I think is expected of me or in reaction to what has happened to me? Authenticity is a dynamic discovery of who we are becoming. Our becoming does not take place in a vacuum. We are influencing and influenced by myriad forces, the whole of creation really. Social considerations are part of our make-up as humans. We look to each other to triangulate, to give and receive feedback. If we are not grounded in our connection to spirit, we look for ground in the approval of others. Instead of authenticity, we seek what is acceptable. Becoming ceases to be a natural non-resistant unfolding.

Authenticity gives you power. As long as I refuse be present with what I feel, I disconnect from that part of myself, that aspect of my power. Avoiding/denying pain inhibits the birth of movement and limits our growth and development. Feeling the pain impels us to take our hand out of the fire. No matter how bad it seems, if you willingly deepen your presence, you will be guided by the whisperings of the kami, the divine.

A friend had a dream about meeting Mohammed Ali who took my friend home to meet his wife. She was truly wonderful and they had a great relationship. In the dream my friend said to him, "How did you ever find her?" And Ali said, "You know, I looked for a long time and couldn't find the right one or even close. Then I quit trying to find her and just concentrated on being who I am. When I focused on being true to myself, she just showed up in my life."

We are in a dynamic tension between two worlds. One is the world of inner guidance. The other is social norms and consideration of others. In the eyes of society, it is appropriate to behave in some ways and not others. We learn rules about how we should be. One of the dilemmas we encounter being authentic is society by definition supports considering other people, as it should. Used properly these guidelines are helpful but they were made to serve the collective functioning not the growth of the individual. And what is society but a field of individuals. Balancing the needs of both is the art of civilization.

When we stop our motion/emotion we stop our energy. We learn little about how to stand in our power in a way that respects others. Our spiritual essence and our personality, who we are and how we are -- represent aspects of one system. Power comes from harmonizing the forces not controlling one in favor of the other. Living from our essence while acting in concert with society is what I mean by personal power. We show up authentically in the universe, including but not limited to who we act in the social world. Being authentic doesn't mean you'll win the support of society. It means contributing in a positive spirit, self-reflexive and correcting.

In a question of science the authority of a thousand is not worth the humble reasoning of a single individual.

Galileo Galilei

The people who change the rules often get treated like Galileo. He was constrained by the society he lived in. They shut him down. That is what they did with Jesus. Would we say the partisans in the French underground were authentic? They were true to themselves even though the face they showed the authorities was duplicitous. Being authentic means drawing on the whole power and potential of who you are for completing your bestowed mission.

Winning means winning over the discord in yourself. It is to accomplish your bestowed mission

Morihei Ueshiba, O Sensei

Winning implies having the power to grow and learn. Winning means speaking in a language of harmony, in a way that helps others listen and makes learning and

growth possible. Worrying about all the things that can go wrong or didn't go right, over and over, that's the realm of discord. When we fight with ourselves or against the unfolding, our energy gets spent on the war. If we harmonize with ourselves all our energy can go to the job of completing our bestowed mission on earth. The concept of accomplishing our bestowed mission may seem monumental but is there anything better we have to do.

Kokyu makes it possible through the power of harmony for systems less powerful to affect systems that are more powerful. When you do not fight against force, your power doesn't depend on your size anymore. A martial artist, a business leader, a revolutionary or a parent, any agent of change, can be more effective through kokyu. Situations that cannot be overcome by force can be changed through the power of harmony.

Adaptability, Non - Resistance

The great Tao, the way of nature, is like a river. It is like a river because it flows without design.

Lao Tse

Non-resistance means adapting in relation to change as it occurs. Water is perfect in its non-resistance. It has a natural fluidity. Pour water into a cup, it takes the shape of the cup; put it into a bowl, it takes the shape of the bowl. Water takes the shape of any container but never loses its own nature. In the same way a master martial artist adapts to the movements of an attacker. Water has a non-resistant relationship with gravity so its movement is effortless. No matter the terrain, nobody has to teach water how to flow downhill. It doesn't come to a point where it stops and goes back. When a stream hits spots where there is a deep enough place the stream flows until it fills up the pools and then finds its way on. Unless it freezes, water never stops flowing.

Unless we freeze up, the flow of energy through our systems can have the same quality. Non-resistant relationship to the energy of our lives produces the fluid adaptability to the unfolding universe that water demonstrates. In a non-resistant relationship to Ki there's a natural aliveness, a fluid adaptability, wisdom and intelligence. Free energy adapts to any situation.

Ki flows to where it is needed in your life the way water flows downhill. Ki doesn't live in memories or anticipation though it may activate either. Aliveness/vitality lives only in the present and blends with the unfolding moment.

Gravity guides the direction of water. If my spirit is fluid the movement of energy offers guidance. Participating in the universe as a part of a unified whole, the total system includes and directs the energy of our lives.

Present in the moment, the guidance and direction of the universal energy enables us to accomplish what we are here to accomplish. Off somewhere else in time or space, we do not function well. Fixed in thought, stuck in memories of the past, we can't enter the present without melting, without transforming state. If we freeze up or resist, our reaction becomes the enemy. It impedes responding appropriately to the energy rush.

Resistance drains our vitality leaving life feeling empty, without direction. In that state we lose touch with who we are. We do not remember about any bestowed mission. If we are paying attention, when our relationship to the universe is off we can correct our alignment into a harmonious relationship. If we do not intentionally blend with the power of Ki, it works against us.

If you don't eat it up, it will eat you up."

Nadeau Sensei

We tense up reflexively, escalating resistance. Relaxation must be intended self-reflexively, repeatedly. Tension manifests out of resistance to the flow of energy. Tension means there is energy. Without energy there is neither tension nor resistance. Tension blocks feeling. Feeling guides our lives. Once you realize tension mirrors our relationship to energy, you can reframe a harmonious alignment.

We can try to avoid divine power or repress it, but it never stops flowing into our lives. Resisted the flow generates pressure. The same pressure produces creative guidance if we align a harmonious relationship.

If we oppose the flow of universal Ki we generate a relationship the opposite of harmony. We end up in opposition to the power that unfolds our lives. Try to control what's going on out of resistance and end up at war. Resisting resistance escalates forever. Aiki means to harmonize with the energy of the universe as it unfolds.

Through the focus of attention, the study of Aikido unifies mind, body and spirit. If we do, the energy offers its essence, an infinite potential and intelligence beyond

the known. A unified state of inner harmony unfolds in harmonious relationship with the world. Intentional relaxation melts resistance into its primal state – energy. A relaxed state remembers itself as a unified field of energy, matter and consciousness. Energy flows naturally into the stream of whatever downhill means in relationship to our lives, unless we resist it. Relaxed, Ki naturally flows to our desired outcome. Experiencing the moment, the field of awareness responds perceptively, harmoniously, intelligently, appropriately. Non-resistance to the vastness allows spirit to express itself. Aikido aligns the creation of our life with the creative force of the universe.

The formation of experience is affected by how we align to it, how we describe it to ourselves. We need to make a distinction between our situation and the quality of our engagement. If we are having a problem it may not be the situation, job or the partner that is wrong. Instead the problem could be the way that we are lined up to the situation. If we are willing to explore the possibility of harmonious relationship we learn to recognize with new perceptions and distinctions. We see our active contribution to each situation in a new light. By attending to how we contribute to each situation, we increase our ability to influence a given situation. The ability to influence the outcome of any situation is enhanced through working in harmony with what is.

The essence of Aikido is non-resistance. The customer is always right. If you ran an ice cream store, you wouldn't give a customer strawberry, if they ordered chocolate, at least not if you want to keep your store open. You'd give the customer what they wanted. We need the ability to do that in our relationships, internal and external. Harmony does not mean giving up what we want in deference to what someone else wants. Peaceful reconciliation means creating the solution to satisfy both. Harmony in music doesn't mean one note giving up its essence. When two different notes enhance the overtone series they enhance the richness of the sound and the life of the listener.

Fighting a sum zero game as if either winning or losing were the only options generates a defensive posture instead of a creative one. Aikido postulates a third option. We do not have to define our state of being or that of another as right or wrong. Instead we could grow a larger perspective and look for the learning inherent in a situation.

Instead of trying to force water to go uphill, allow others to live according to their values. If they are willing you can help them inquire into their values. In a spirit of harmony the possibility may open to help them grow. But to force your answers on someone else creates a world of domination and resistance. "Rely on harmony . . . and create a beautiful world."

Thunder and lightning
Spring tension releases
Rain soaks the earth
Life unfolds anew

Two Forces & The Unified Field

The forces of the universe show up in a polarity, yin - yang, light - dark, male - female, matter - spirit, thought - action, the known - the unknown, the artistic and analytic sides of your nature. Front and back exist as parts of one system. Potential develops from a whole system, left and right, front and back, top and bottom. Something connects them that we call center. The interpenetrating forces, upward rising and downward sinking are a system like breathing in and breathing out, thinking and feeling, talking and listening, the divine and the manifest realms. The two polarities create and are created out of the whole system.

In every action of energy two poles and a field are present. The North Pole and the South Pole are part of the electromagnetic field of the planet. We can differentiate the two forces that exist within the field, but the two cannot be separated. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts. You can't have a magnetic field with only one pole. As soon as you have a North Pole and a South Pole there's a field. And as soon as you have a field there's a North Pole and a South Pole. The unified field of interpenetrating forces produces and sustains creation. The combination of the two poles and the field is required for creation to unfold. The whole system happens together and all the aspects dynamically participate. You can't separate off any part and take it out of the universe.

Does the field produce the polarity? Or does the polarity produce the field? Since the universal process can only be approximately described in linear language, I'll talk about it this way. The field and the two forces continually create each other in dynamic relationship. This means the power of divinity, the power to influence creation occurs in every aspect of the field-polar relationship.

Start with any dynamic, and recognize that front and back, left and right are two sides of a coin, polarities in a unified field. When the aspects connect and balance, the field functions. This implies connecting mind / body, left-brain / right brain,

In the Realm of the Spirit

conscious and unconscious, masculine and feminine. When we grow out of our limited view into a larger more encompassing view we see the polarities in the system harmonize in a unified field, not one against the other.

Thesis, antithesis, synthesis: when a force and its counterpart unify a new domain of possibility is created. When right brain and left brain function as one system, intelligence appears. In a similar way that a child is created out of a male and female, one alone is not enough to create new life. The complete system allows the creative force to share its mystery and power. A unified field produces something that no individual force ever could.

Principles of Aikido

The Principle of Energy

The Principle of Centering

The Principle of Grounding

The Principle of Entering

The Principle of Harmony

Σ The Principle of Unification

The Principle of Resonance

The Principle of Unification

Blending-

Ironically enough, the sword, which we think of as cutting things apart, is a metaphor for the unity of life. A sword cuts because the two sides of the sword become one at the blade edge. The sword's edge, that one molecule that is at once both sides and/or neither, represents the domain where two aspects unify into one producing the sword's power. When mind and body separate, our essence — spirit — can't express. Disconnecting parts of one's self from each other and the rest of creation depletes our power. Aikido's power comes from unifying the unknown and the known realms. The two become one as the two sides of a sword become one, producing the cutting edge of knowledge.

Something as simple as screwing a light bulb into a socket demonstrates the principle of combining two forces. To screw in a light bulb we insert it into the socket and turn it. We've got to do both at once. If we either turn the light bulb but do not insert it into the socket or insert the light bulb but do not turn it, it doesn't engage. We have to blend both forces at the same time.

The focus of energy in the moment allows us to respond in an effective way whether we are raising children, doing business, creating art or working with people. As mind, body and spirit unify life's techniques have power. Everything flows. We accomplish our goals out of harmonious relationship as differentiated from struggle and forcing. Aikido means constantly finding balance in life, paying attention to unifying our awareness every minute.

Aikido transforms life from a struggle into a dance

In human interaction, there's my intention and the situation or my intention and the intention of my negotiating partner. These two aspects are part of a larger field. If we identify with one side of an issue or the other, we can't see the whole. This doesn't mean it is wrong to favor one side; we probably do, but perception can be arrested by our beliefs. In the heat of the rush we forget about the larger perspective of two forces generating a field. We align with the belief and behavior that is most conditioned as if it were the only correct possibility. This sets us up to fight for survival as if one aspect had to defend itself against the rest of a total system.

Our life in balance reflects the harmony of a unified field instead of parts struggling for dominance. As an example in daily life balance and harmony are important in a meeting, whenever I communicate with another person. If I talk too much or too little, important input likely gets lost. For communication talking must balance with listening. If the meeting takes on an adversarial tone more energy goes to defensiveness than creativity.

When I play in the band if I am too loud, you can't hear the other players and if I am too soft you can't hear me. If I fail to tune my instrument or play in the wrong key, what I contribute detracts from the sound rather than enriching it. When I am in tune, on key and in balance the sound blends into one system. The field of the music happens. You hear the music beyond the parts.

We can practice harmonizing both internally in relation to our own system of mind / body / spirit and externally with another person. Through presence and blending we amalgamate our being. Once in harmony with ourselves, we harmonize with our partner's energy naturally. As we harmonize with the energy flowing through our experience, we harmonize with the energy of the universe. In a blend of how it is and of how it could be, neither gets left out.

To function intelligently and effectively we need to understand a situation before we judge it, before we design action. To do so we need to slow down and make perception inclusive, the process I have come to call extraordinary listening. (See *The Power of Extraordinary Listening*, Zanshin Press) If we do so, we can act beyond our previous conditioning, prejudice and preconditioning. We can include how someone else sees and forms meaning. We can include their energy in the creation of the solution. By doing so we include their support in implementing the solution.

At moments all of us end up at odds with the energies flowing in our lives. Whenever we find ourselves rigidly on one side of a duality seeing no validity in the opposite view, we should re-assess how centered we are. Identified as a part we have lost our identity as the whole and can no longer balance the forces of our lives. If we identify as the energy field including both polarities, conflict dissolves into unity.

Balanced we can direct our power effortlessly to develop a state of connection. Blending does not mean giving up our creativity. Creativity comes from awareness beyond the known. When individual and universal identity are in perfect balance, when we approach life connected to everything, we enter a universal dimension of experience, creativity flows without cease. The coherence of our thought and

action increases. Rather than see one side of a conflict as the basis for judging the other, ground the charge. Encompassing the whole can be accomplished by giving value to all views. Including both polarities unifies the field of perception allowing us to truly listen. If we intend a harmonious relationship with more than what we know, we generate a very different experience of life and the world.

Listening to the whisperings means we can hear beyond what we can make sense of at first. Only conscious intention develops harmonious relationship with the forces of energy informing our lives. When a person is whole and total their ability to use energy effortlessly and effectively increases and with it the power of any action they take. The same quality of presence, of being here and feeling into the moment that creates effective martial maneuvers, guides us to effectiveness in all aspects of our lives. Harmony allows us to draw on and utilize the forces that create the manifest realm. Aikido allows us to experience life as a process, a flow, a dance.

There exists no measure of time fast or slow. It is not a question of speed. The technique is over before it is begun.

Morihei Ueshiba, O Sensei

Blending in Time

Blending is the essence of Aikido practice. In music, one can blend either in time with the rhythm or in tune with the pitch. In effective martial movement it is necessary to blend in time as well as in space. Power comes not only from strength, leverage or the relationship of your position. It can come from a small action at exactly the right time. When your energy and the energy of your partner are one system, blending in time unfolds without effort. When you blend in time as well as space the power is exponential.

In martial practice we identify three levels of timing in movement: before, during and after the attack. It is preferable to anticipate an attack and move before the attacker can begin to deliver their power. It is important to develop the heightened awareness that allows us to see things coming and respond before they hit. If the timing is right you can use the power of their wind up to unbalance and throw them. If you can catch a strike when the arm is going back in preparation, it takes little or no effort to stop it, as compared to when it is coming forward picking up momentum.

Once I was out running with a friend and two dogs were lying in their driveway half-asleep. As we got closer I could see their energy stirring. I could sense them feeling us coming and beginning to wake up. They were looking at each other with that, "Hey, here comes someone. Let's get up and bark at these people." Whatever thoughts dogs have when strangers approach these dogs were having those thoughts and they were going to do, whatever it is that dogs do.

I could feel the energy building in these dogs. We were running by and just as they started to pick their heads up, they hadn't lifted their bodies yet, I said very loud and dynamically - NO! - as I pointed my finger extending my energy at them. It was a definite command and they both just lay back down. "Better let this guy go by, I guess." We were gone before they could rethink it and it was over. The action was clear and strong but it was the timing that was perfect.

A friend reminded me of an encounter with a street person approaching me from behind. Just before he reached me I said barely turning, "I know you're there but do not have the time or interest to deal with you right now. Shocked he turned away and left us alone.

I also had several episodes in relation to irimi and timing, with two peace officers. In the first I was driving out on a back road and someone was behind me. I wasn't sure who was following me but guessed it might be a highway patrol officer. As Darth Vader said, "I have felt him."

I watched him follow me for a while through my rear view mirror. Then I thought I felt something coming. The energy intensified or at least that's how I would describe what I thought I felt. So I pulled over before there was any signal almost as if to let him pass. So he pulled over too but he was out of his rhythm at that point. He was on my timing not his. He dropped his pen walking over to the car and it was like, "Wait a minute - wasn't I supposed to pull you over? Did you just pull me over?" At that point he walked up. Never having seen the flashing red light, which as you know can stimulate quite a rush of energy, I was helpful and friendly and asked, "What can I do for you?" After a minute in a pleasant voice he told my son who was in the back and had been leaning forward, it would be better to better sit back and put his seatbelt on. And we said, "Thank you very much," and he left. It was a story of positive spirit and effective timing transforming a potential conflict (read ticket) into the spirit of loving protection.

I had another episode somewhat similar where I pulled over just a second before the police car's light went on. It did not have the collegiality of the first encounter but upset the officer's rhythm enough that he never got it together to give us a ticket. We did get a short lecture but took it in stride.

A healer of the lowest order cures illnesses that have become serious. So he is known throughout the land.

A healer of the middle order cures illnesses as they appear. So he is known throughout the province.

A healer of the highest order cures illnesses before they begin. So he is known only in his village.

Ancient Chinese Proverb

Language, Thought & The Unified Field Theory

There is a theory in modern physics that four universal forces participate as an interpenetrating unified field. The manifest realm appears through the unity of the energies. Creation does not come into being without any one of the forces. The mystery has been finding a context for the four forces that have been identified. Science can distinguish between them but cannot explain their inter-relationship.

I am neither a nuclear physicist nor do I play one on TV but here's my simplistic understanding. In the unified field theory four forces, the electro-magnetic force, gravity, the weak and strong forces combine to create the field of creation. The strong force holds nucleus together. Close to the center it is a powerful force but its power doesn't extend over space very well. The weak force keeps electrons in orbit. It extends over space but is subtle in influence. The electro - magnetic force radiates power. Gravity – generates the power of attraction within the sphere of influence of a given mass or sub-stance.

In Quantum Aikido I define them as: the strong force is the power of being centered. The weak force (I renamed the subtle force) is the centrifugal power created by moving off the line. The electro-magnetic force the extension of Ki and gravity relates to what O Sensei called the spirit of attraction.

We tend to think of ourselves as separate entities that exist in the universe. O Sensei said we are the universe. We are part of it, participants in it. We could not exist separate from the universe nor is there any way to take us out of it. Choosing to pay attention to the state of oneness and resonance with everything that is going on changes our state of being and what is possible.

When we center, balancing the connection between left and right, front and back, mind and body, we produce what I'll call the inner field. The outer pressures of the situation represent something else. Call it the outer field. The polarities have a center. In an Aikido practice I am part of the energy field as is my partner. When the fields interpenetrate in harmonious relationship in with one another, they create a unified field. Potential unfolds producing the manifest universe.

There is a Vedic teaching in the phrase, OM TAT SAT— Thou Art That. 'That', 'It'- the 'suchness', is the truth of who you are. Once you remember that what you call yourself is an interconnected aspect of the universe, then you do not have to buy into the separateness and succumb to the experience of isolation. Accept your wholeness. Accept your power. Share it positively into the unfolding. Harmonize with the energy of the universe.

We can't grasp the whole in thought or language. Our system of thought and the language it developed was designed to describe the effects of energy not its dynamics. When we explore the mystery the dynamics of creation exceed our language. If we are stuck in our meaning, words become the prisons of our thought. If we are to explore the universe we must think in new ways, growing new words as well as new meanings for the words we use. As creative artists new meanings enrich our pallet of colors.

We can use distinctions to create thought. The distinctions we make are arbitrary. If you could go back in time before a given building was built, the space was still there. The space is the space, no matter if it is inside or outside. The universal energy doesn't care if it is inside your energy field or not. Ki is still Ki, regardless that there is a distinction we can make. We set up arbitrary distinctions. They affect our description and thereby our experience of creation. In a unified state of awareness inside and outside are all one system.

Where does the magnetic field of the planet stop? Where does the magnetic field of your body stop? The magnetic field of the body is a part of a larger planetary energy field. Are they separate? Physics says a magnetic field diminishes in proportion to the inverse square ratio of the distance. It gets weaker but does it really stop?

A large portion of our system of thought formed in an adversarial paradigm of good versus evil. Looking through that lens, even granting it validity, creates inevitable conflict. Through a different lens confluence is possible. The opposites in a system needn't function at odds with each other. By universal law they

complete each other, functioning as a unified field. Unify the forces at play and together they manifest the system, a totality, a universe, creation itself.

For people not familiar with Aikido, one of the most difficult concepts to understand is the idea of blending with an attacker. Fighting for survival is a deeply ingrained notion. The attitude of fighting is based on identifying oneself as separate from and in opposition to external forces. Once in opposition we try to control the externals. Not fighting doesn't mean disengaging. The power of Aikido comes from non-resistance to experiencing the whole universe as one system.

If I put my fist into the palm of my other hand and hold the two tightly connected, no matter how hard I try and hit my palm, I can't. If the 'receiving' palm yields as soon as the 'attacking' fist contacts it, one can't hurt the other. If target moves in exact harmony with the attacking force it is impossible to land the pressure of impact. In order for that to happen there must be separation and resistance. It is only when I get separation that I can generate impact. And only when I hit resistance can I land power. When I go into resistance, that's when I break connection with the source of power. In a martial situation that's when the openings show up. The metaphor carries over into all the domains of life. Under attack, acceptance of the energy of the attack allows us to work with it. Without receiving the attack as a victim, I do not have to separate from it and resist it.

“The space between you and your partner is the space where violence happens.” Doran Sensei

It only takes a moment of inner stillness to deepen our state of being. Experiencing connection with the universal resolves the war within. Inner harmony produces outer harmony. When we change our state of being, we change our relationship to experience. By changing our internal experience we change the totality. If we change our participation the situation changes. We assemble a different world than we previously perceived. When we function as one system of energy with the force of change, possibilities open. When we change the way we see the world we change the world.

Off the Line - Engaged Listening, Non-Resistance Relationship

In Aikido a basic harmonious response is moving oneself off the line of an attack. Most people, if they had the awareness to see it coming and the power to move in

time, would move out of the way of any oncoming threat. We get out of the way of an oncoming car if we see it coming.

Getting off the line does not mean avoiding experience. We can't be absent and non-resistant. We may have an idea of harmony but if we are not present we cannot actualize it. Allowing the flow doesn't mean that we do not participate. We learned in the principle of entering that an unwillingness to engage diminishes effectiveness.

Going with the flow doesn't mean hanging out around the flow. Going with' the flow is not a passive 'giving up' to the flow. 'Going with' implies present, involved, engaged and contributing energy to the experience. Getting present with what is going on allows a non-resistant relationship. Go with the flow, do not hang out around the flow or wait to be taken.

Off the line translates into verbal skills as not taking someone's attitude personally. Imagine for instance you come into my office and complain about whatever it is -- you fill in the words -- and though I naturally have a defensive reaction I am able to get beyond it and listen. What if I do not fight with you at all, I do not counter your points and turn them around and say, "but . . ." What if instead I help ground the charge? Through the practice of Thalamic Aikido I can get beyond the first feeling or primitive reaction and am able to achieve a higher cortical processing of the information. (See *The Way of Harmony and the Thalamic Pause*, p. 28 above, see also *The Thalamic Discourses*, Zanshin Press)

If I receive everything you have to say and without blocking any of it, if everything you have to say has been heard and understood and accepted, you complete your bestowed mission in terms of our communication. It may take longer than I wish but if I listen well it usually ends with some variation of, "Thanks for listening," and you leave. No exclamation points. I do not throw you out. You're done, I am done and it is over. You leave my office because you're satisfied.

There is no leftover charge or baggage the next time we see each other. The opposite we have developed some degree of trust in our ability to work together. Our future relationship has a new ground of being. When I can listen without defensiveness and resistance, we come into harmony because you've had a chance to say whatever you have to say. People often aren't asking for a good idea or even a response, just a sense of someone's willingness to listen.

This isn't really rocket science. There are natural forces at play. People like to be allowed to speak. People want to be heard. People like to be seen. People like to be

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respected. So do not force against someone's energy, blend. Do your best to not fight with their intention and do not talk against what someone is saying, listen; at least until you understand their needs. Let your energy flow harmoniously. Then maybe you can add something. Then you may be able to lead the conversation or the world in a new direction. Harmonize your Ki with the path of your partner's Ki and allow the completion of the universe.

Principles of Aikido

The Principle of Energy

The Principle of Centering

The Principle of Grounding

The Principle of Entering

The Principle of Harmony

The Principle of Unification

Σ The Principle of Resonance

Reciprocating Echoes - The Principle of Resonance

Everything we do creates reciprocating echoes. Doesn't the way someone treats you affect the way you feel toward them and the way you treat them? As we radiate a given spirit we attract a similar spirit or stimulate a similar feeling in others. The relationship between you and any aspect of your life generates a field. Our energy fields affect each other and influence reality. Thought generates a reciprocating echo with the unfolding field that we call reality.

Everything is connected to everything. Ki connects sub-atomic particles and galaxies. Everything affects everything. Hit the 'D' string on one violin and if there's another tuned violin in the room, its 'D' string will resonate. Have you ever been in a room where someone is angry and it disturbs you? Have you ever been in a room where someone comes in giggling and silly or sad and depressed and your state of being is affected?

Strike another chord in thought or feeling and you affect your experience. The principle of resonance can help you create a change in yourself like someone giggling does.

The practice of non-resistance generates a resonance. The power of resonance as easily reinforces the dissonance of resistance. Consciously or unconsciously we are creating a resonance in the world and with each other. The more time we spend with an individual or group, the stronger the influence of resonance between us. Resonance increases 'in proportion to the square ratio' of the connection.

Every aspect of the ongoing interaction between thought, memory, attention and feeling exists as part of a larger system. We abstract aspects of the whole into descriptions that create the meaning we experience. Based on our meaning we design our actions. Our actions generate echoes in our lives and the lives of others.

Think of a time when you did something exceptionally well or when you were in a place you loved being. You have probably done the opposite and remembered unpleasant experiences and affected your state in that direction. The more vividly you recall the experience the more your state of being is affected by your thinking. Are you affecting life consciously or more affected by it? What do you imagine and create through your resonance? (See *Ten to the Tenth*, Zanshin Press)

The pressure in my life is trying to send me in a direction, but my resistance stops me from hearing and allowing guidance that flows into my life. Universal pressure moves us into becoming what we are, fulfilling our bestowed mission. Resistance

to the universal flow is what holds us stuck. Resistance turns the pressure that could guide our lives into stress.

More often than not, when I run into trouble, it is my resistance, my tension more than my partner's that causes me problems. If I protect myself, more than be myself, it is my tension that is stopping me from accomplishing my bestowed mission not my partner's. I am not saying that I am the only one that is uptight. Rather I am saying that when I run into tension, if I could let go of my resistance, the energy has somewhere to go. The Ki guides my direction. There is a natural outcome possible if I blend.

Harmony begins with your relationship with yourself and your own experience. Feeling what you experience produces harmony between the energy and the identity, the universal essence and the personal expression. Being centered and grounded, allowing our life energy to flow freely, blending with instead of opposing life's changes are basic life skills. The ability to: generate connection to center, ground our energy, lead rather than be at effect of our state of being, will inform the quality of life, individually and collectively.

Powerlessness produces fear. Fear breaks the sense of connection. The reverse is also true, feeling the connection melts fear. The confidence that comes from alignment with the energy of creation transforms a defensive reactive spirit into an open and creative one. In an open and creative state we can apply the power of harmony to mastery in our personal lives, business relationships and the larger forces of life and the universe.

Though the principles offer the possibility of creating a beautiful world, the knowledge alone will not accomplish anything. You must claim knowledge as power. The principles only have power through training, practice and application.

III. The Study & Practice of Aikido

The translation of practice as lessons for life outside the dojo

(The term Aikido represents the path, the way of Aiki, the spiritual principles of harmony with the universe. The term Aiki-waza describes the techniques used to neutralize an attack in the physical realm. From p.18)

In order to study Aikido and not just Aiki-waza we need to understand how something as vast and vague as “Harmony with the universe” translates into a harmonious relationship with the forces we deal with in daily life.

What does harmony with the universe mean in relation to the changing political, business and economic environment? As the computer was developed IBM resisted the change because they feared it would hurt their punch card business. They resisted in a similar fashion when PCs began to replace mainframes. In both cases they got their head handed to them until they got with the program. There are numerous stories, corporate and personal, where resistance to change was very expensive.

Through the power of harmony as the economy changes we can move with it instead of being rolled over by it and left behind. In politics, personal, national and international, we can lead change. We can look for possibilities of engagement and positive influence.

The forces of economics, politics, science, the personal desire for success and fulfillment drive the pressures we feel in our lives. We can work with pressure the way a sailor uses the pressure of the wind. Even if the winds of change blow a direction other than where we want to go, we can develop an alignment that utilizes the forces at play to accomplish our goal.

Here's the tack. Create a relationship of harmony first. Then seek influence.

An Aesop's Aiki Fable.

A man's wagon gets stuck in the mud. He sits there and cries. No one offers to help. Eventually, he gets up and tries to push it out. Three people who see him trying come over and help him push it out. The moral of the story is God helps those who help themselves. If you are just sitting stuck in the mud and crying, nothing happens. If you really do as much as you can then other forces - your larger self, God, providence - come to your assistance.

The Art of Peace is medicine for a sick world. There is evil and disorder in the world because people have forgotten that all things emanate from one source. Return to that source and leave behind all self-centered thoughts, petty desires and anger. Those who are possessed by nothing possess everything.

Morihei Ueshiba, O Sensei

**Rely on harmony
to activate your manifold powers
and create a beautiful world.**

Morihei Ueshiba, O Sensei

In the Realm of the Spirit

AI KI DO (In one easy Lesson)

Continually Realign Harmonious Participation

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We are a network of consultants specializing in executive coaching, leadership and team development, mastery training and mediation. Our training and process work are drawn from and explore the disciplines of Aikido and Dialogue. Our coaching and training has been delivered primarily in high-change environments. We have worked with fast-paced start-ups within the telecommunications industry, large utility firms, the banking industry, and a number of high-tech corporations. We also contribute in the arena of international peace building, having worked with the Institute for Multi-track Diplomacy, Harvard Negotiation Project, Conflict Management Group and the Fulbright Commission. For information about our classes, training seminars, corporate and other services, please contact:

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Another way of supporting our work would be to take our address and pass it along to everyone on your e-mail list along with your recommendation and description. Your contribution of making people aware of the listening work is appreciated and can be of great value.

Works in Progress

We have loaded works on to the site that are still in development. As such if you have comments or recommendations we appreciate the feedback. If you have a suggestion that might make any of it better please offer it.

We would very much appreciate your passing on our location to everyone who you think might find interest. We would also appreciate your linking to our site and directing people to this material. We would be happy to cross link with like-minded sites.

Construction zone

We are in the process of building the bookstore and hope to have all our works on line soon. We ask your patience and invite you to come back as we plan to have the majority of our materials available within the next few months.

Thank you again for visiting www.extraordinarylistening.com
Email us info@extraordinarylistening.com

The Power of Harmony Series <http://www.extraordinarylistening.com/books.html>

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Books that introduce the study

- [The Power of Extraordinary Listening](#): A quantum leap in communication & commonwealth
- [The Business of Listening](#): Conversations with CEO's who have used the Listening work
- [Life in 3 Easy Lessons](#): The power of Aikido in the business of living

Books that explore the study and its practices

- [Accounting For Your Life, The Whole Damn Thing](#): An introduction to extraordinary accounting, a tool for global problem-solving
- [Ten to the Tenth](#): A simple exercise that enhances the power to create your life
- [In The Realm of the Spirit](#): Quantum Aikido creativity and the unified field
- [Adventures In Aiki-land](#): Awareness in Action
- [The Thalamic Discourses](#): Harmony in Creativity, Energy and Human Brain Function
- [The Endless River](#): *Aiki-Dialogue in Three Easy Lessons*
- [Aikido & The Transformation in Eggbert](#): An aiki story for children
- [Healing With Ki](#): Does this stuff really work?