



ABUNDANT PEACE AIKIDO & T'AI CHI

Connections

Teaching Awareness Disciplines to the Green Berets").

From the Aikido perspective, Leonard started learning Aikido rather late in life and ultimately went on to become a highly regarded Aikido instructor. That said, the Mastery book does talk about Aikido, but not all that much. Rather, it talks about learning and the challenges one encounters when embarking on any significant learning effort.

Leonard draws on a number of life-experiences to illustrate his points. One of the key points he discusses is the plateau or when things just don't seem to be improving. In discussing the plateau, Leonard illustrates several patterns that often lead to failure or disappointment (We've all been there in one way or another and I am confident anyone reading the book will be able to relate to most if not all of them).

The big message I took away from the book both times I read it was that plateaus are a natural part of learning. Rather than being discouraged by them, one needs to embrace the opportunity they offer; a chance to disengage from the quick-fix/results-oriented dynamic slow down, and re-focus on the joy of what it is that you are doing. In short, it is all about the journey, not the destination (not really a new message, but wonderfully illustrated). You will get to the destination soon enough if you stick with it.

Leonard implores us, that in a plateau, we will break-through eventually. However, the plateau is telling us clearly that there is something important to learn. Practicing harder and injuring yourself will not fix it, feeling resigned to having reached the limit of your capabilities will not fix it, and quitting will definitely not fix it. We don't just need to keep at it, but more importantly, we need to enjoy keeping at it.

(continued on page two!)

Great news; early morning aikido keiko continues on Thursdays only, from 6:00 to 7:30 AM. The mat fee is only \$10.00, so join us if you can!

Editorial



Wow... July already! June has disappeared without a trace, at least for me; work and personal challenges have kept me from the Dojo, which is something I have truly missed.

Sensei Brad has asked me to pass on his personal thanks and appreciation to all students, from both the Aikido and T'ai Chi programs, who covered classes in June. That help has ensured the smooth running of our School, and given him first the opportunity to take in an excellent seminar, and second to enjoy some well deserved time off with his family. This sense of mutual community and support is what makes Abundant Peace such a special place to train!

The comings and goings of summer will continue take each of us in a variety of directions; rest assured that, with the help of so many dedicated and committed students, our class schedules will remain unchanged over the summer months!

Stuart



Remember, the summer t'ai chi and meditation retreat will take place on the weekend of 10 and 11 July; we have limited spaces still available, so speak to Sifu Brad if you are interested in taking part of this weekend workshop.

July 2010

Corporal Francisco Gomez Memorial Library

The Corporal Francisco Gomez Memorial Library continues to grow, thanks to so many kind donations from members. New material arrives weekly, so check back frequently, with our Librarians, to learn about "what's new"! Remember, we will happily accept all help and donations!



Promotions

We congratulate those who were promoted in May:

Kids

Tristan A. 13th Kyu
Julia M. 13th Kyu

Adults

Terry M. 9th Kyu
Omar S. 8th Kyu
Nicole M. 7th Kyu
Mat J. 6th Kyu

Congratulations!

Attaining Mastery

I recently had a chance to re-read the late George Leonard's "Mastery: The keys to Success and Long Term Fulfillment". I first read it a number of years ago and it was one of two books that led me to realize that I wanted to practice Aikido. At any rate, I recently decided to read it again and found it just as relevant and packed with insight as when I first read it some 20 years ago (for the record, the other was Richard Heckler's "In Search of the Warrior Spirit:



Announcements

Saotome Sensei has announced the dates of his next Seminar at Aikido of Missoula; it is scheduled for the weekend of 24 to 26 September 2010. Make plans to travel with us and experience the amazing talent of our Most Senior Shihan!

Aikido Special Training will be held on Friday, 16 July, 6:30 to 9:30 PM. Our theme will be Aiki: harmonizing with incoming intention and movement. We will explore lines of force, movement and energy; the special focus will be on learning to not conflict or struggle with an incoming force, but rather to blend with and lead these forces to a peaceful resolution. As always, this is open to all skill levels; join us in the study of learning to let go of muscular strength, and rely instead on the principles of joining (musubi) timing, and intention.

Noodle Night. Our spring t'ai chi class celebrated the successful completion of their beginner program with their final "Noodle Night" on the evening of June 5th. This was a very successful dinner, as the group remained together, well after their meal was complete, just enjoying a discussion their shared experiences.

New at www.abundantpeace.com >> 1) **kumijo video**; 2) **belt tying made easy, on the kids aikido page**; and 3) **t'ai chi group practice video**.

Mastery, Continued!!

In the context of Aikido, this means simply getting on the mats, doing your best, and enjoying the process. Goals are certainly important, but they can also get in the way sometimes, especially if they become the primary focus.

In Malcolm Gladwell's "Outliers: the Story of Success", Gladwell discusses the notion of "the 10,000 hours rule". In short, it takes 10,000 hours of doing something to become an expert at it. I've also heard it said that doing something for 10 years is the mark of a master. Throughout Leonard's book, mastery is discussed in the context of something one does for the love of it, and over the long haul. Aikido is definitely a path of mastery. There are no quick fixes, and no shortcuts. It's a long haul to shodan and you have to enjoy the process to get there (and according to many accomplished Aikido practitioners, Aikido doesn't end at shodan. Rather, shodan is just another beginning ... again, process).

In the end, if you're just starting out and looking for perspective, if you're struggling, if you know someone who's struggling, ...read this book! It's short, sweet, and packed with goodness. You won't regret it, and what it teaches will serve you well to the end of your days.

-Marcel L.-

For New Members



You will notice that the mats are always swept before and after our classes. This is done for the practical purpose of removing dust, etc from the mats, but is also done as an act of symbolic purification.

This is an important task that must be shared by all students, and must never be viewed as menial or demeaning. Sweeping is never assigned; students must take it upon themselves to perform this function. If you would like to learn more about this practice, ask any of our senior students!

Find the Tiger Within

Now available; **"Finding the Tiger Within!"**, a CD on personal safety and protection. This CD is filled with strategies and principles on the mental and preventive aspects of self defense, as well as physical techniques when confronted. This is a no-nonsense presentation, and contains information that everyone can benefit from: the "life skill" of personal protection. It also makes a thoughtful Christmas gift for loved ones! These are available from Sensei Brad, for only \$20.00, so get your copy today!

For New Members

We welcome all of our new members to our school, and to our community; we hope your time here will enrich your lives, the way it has for so many of us.



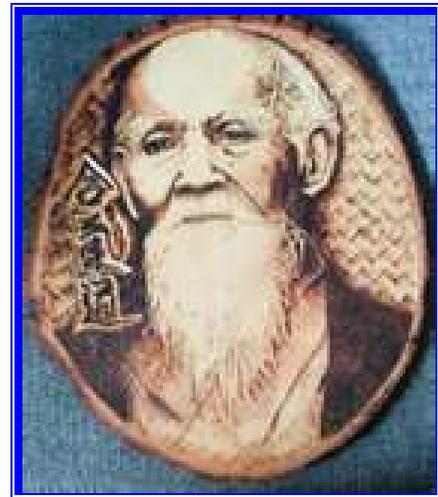
Your martial training experience will range from zero and up... no matter how much time you have spent training in the past, this is a new environment for you, and we want you to feel comfortable. If you have any questions, address them to any of our Senior Students...if they cannot answer, they will find out for you!

Kids Aikido Classes

Just a reminder that our kids aikido class normally held on Tuesdays & Fridays from 5:30 to 6:15 PM are cancelled for the summer months. Kids are welcome to attend the mixed class every Wednesday night!



O Sensei's Wisdom



"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 to realize your inner divinity and manifest your innate enlightenment."

-Morihei Ueshiba-

Dojo Etiquette

It is common for people to ask about the practice of bowing in aikido. In particular, many people are concerned that bowing may have some religious significance. It does not. Incorporating this particular aspect of Japanese culture into our aikido practice inculcates a familiarity with an important aspect of Japanese culture in aikido practitioners. Bowing may be an expression of respect. As such, it expresses open-mindedness and a willingness to learn from one's teachers and fellow students. Bowing to a partner may serve to remind you that your partner is a person -- not a practice dummy. Always train within the limits of your partner's abilities.

The initial bow, which signifies the beginning of formal practice, is much like a "ready, begin" uttered at the beginning of an examination. So long as class is in session, you should behave in accordance with certain standards of deportment. Aikido class should be somewhat like a world unto itself. While in this "world," your attention should be focused on the practice of aikido. Bowing out is like signaling a return to the "ordinary" world. When bowing either to the instructor at the beginning of practice or to one's partner at the beginning of a technique it is considered proper to say "Onegai Shimasu" (lit. "I request a favor") and when bowing either to the instructor at the end of class or to one's partner at the end of a technique it is considered proper to say "Domo arigato gozaimashita." ("thank you").

Taken from the Aikido Primer by Eric Sotnak