

NEWSLETTER

No.297 May 2020

AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

Dear students, parents, and carers,

We sincerely hope that this newsletter finds you all well and sound. It has been a month since the dojo was closed and we suppose that all of you are used to this new lifestyle under many restrictions. We all know that Queensland people are working together to keep our community safe to protect our priceless lives which has been showing a great result. Seeing that, we hope it will not be too long before we can start our usual social life again.

In meantime, anyone who wishes to keep training Aikido, then please visit our Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/AikidoYoshinkanAUS>, where you find online video classes.

We wish all of you to stay safe and live a reasonably satisfied life.

Best regards,

Michiharu Mori and Shuko Mori

Sharing the feeling of Black Belts

5th Dan

Thank you to Vladimir for taking uke during my grading, Cameron for our crazy fun training sessions and my fellow dedicated lunch time trainers; Van, Greg, Kaido, Vlad, Janna, Kerry etc...

Having gone through my records, it didn't seem so long ago that I graded for my 4th Dan promotion. Looking at the date however, it states 2014! I review the footage of both my "Jun 4th Dan" and final "Yudan" Grading and I think to myself.... yeah it's good and I look thinner but... I can already see many issues with my techniques 6 years ago. Sensei has mentioned to me in our conversations that "time" is very important in the development of one's aikido technique. It is very obvious in this example (and myself as a whole) that is the case.

I have been training at Yoshinkan Brisbane Dojo for almost 17 years now and I wouldn't have stayed the course if it weren't for Mori Sensei and Shuko San. This is testament to the efforts and sacrifices that they have made to ensure a world class Aikido Institution with a positive, disciplined and inclusive culture. Sensei is certainly a Brisbane treasure who deserves much more recognition in this region.

A lot has happened in six years; from the birth of my 2nd Daughter, Jessica, to the gradual transition from my career as a performing musician to a fulltime teacher, an annoying knee injury, general middle-aged spread and just a generally busy family life. All first world issues of course and no different to everyone else. My one constant however is Aikido. I always get really grumpy if I don't train! Towards the end of 2019, after finally achieving some resemblance of "Harmony and Balance" in my personal and professional life, I truly felt ready to commit and prepare for my 5th Dan Grading.

Coming into the first three months of 2020, I can actually say that I had a clear plan with a few key goals along the way in order to achieve a result that I would be satisfied with. I felt these goals were very

NEWSLETTER

reasonable and realistic in and around the other facets of my life. I was under no illusion of being a 43 year old martial arts machine! This grading to me was less about just getting the techniques right, but more so, consolidating everything I have learnt to date and demonstrating to the best of my ability my approach to Aikido.

Goal no. 1 - In January I was quite out of shape being the heaviest weight ever. I committed to a 3 month gym routine to develop my general fitness and lose some kg's. By March, I was only about 3kg lighter but my performances had improved markedly. I could actually keep up with Cameron for at least 20 minutes.

Goal no. 2 - Much to my family's protests, I needed to consistently train a few more times a week from my one day a week in 2019. I attended the most gradings in a long time as an Uke... Something that I really enjoy doing... Some of you may have noticed that it is a bit of a sport to me is to get up as Uke and return to Kamae before shite to hear Sensei call the next technique quickly. Pushing ever closer to the "Vomit Zone" but never past it.

Goal no. 3 - Always put 100% effort into every training session whether I was teaching a white belt to trying to keep up with Cameron (this was a FAIL ;))

Goal no. 4 - Perhaps more importantly, have the confidence to "back myself" in assisting others in their techniques, watching carefully and looking for that one thing that would help. Most of the time, it came back to our Kamae and centreline which would fix much of the issue. I thank Sensei for giving me the freedom to experiment with this in training and to also correct me if I was teaching a technique incorrectly. This was the most beneficially and gratifying aspect to my training.

Goal no.5 - Enjoy the time I have to train in these 3 months knowing that I essentially never formally grade again. (after 17 years a very strange concept) By my last week of grading training, I felt physically fit with a strong centre and an amazing sense of joy and relaxation in my techniques. As an example; I vividly remember smiling at Louis one night as I felt his body lock with one arm, looked at him, grinned again and quickly turned him to the ground... us both laughing at the nice technique afterwards. I have to say that these 3 months have been the most fun I have had training in a long while.

Suffice to say, that the grading itself went well and albeit a week early, I was still very satisfied with the performance and result. I now look forward to the next stage of my aikido development.

The arrival of COVID19 in Australia meant the inevitable interruption of all our plans. It is unfortunate that we did not quite make it to Melbourne to represent Brisbane Dojo, something that I had never done before and was really looking forward to. The looming restrictions also meant my grading shifting a week earlier (thank you). Lastly, the subsequent suspension of training at the Dojo for the next few months is driving all us Aikido tragics MAD! If you haven't already been on Facebook to see Sensei's nightly lessons, please do, and if it is difficult to join in, at least watch, think about and visualise his movements. There is a lot to learn here.

This has certainly been an unusual and unprecedented time we are experiencing. I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone the best of health. I wish a speedy and prosperous recovery for our Dojo at the end of this period. Thank you all for training with me and assisting me in my journey and I hope to be here for many years to serve and contribute to Yoshinkan Aikido, Mori Sensei, our Dojo and my fellow Aikidoka in the best way I can. OSU!

Matt Carpenter