

NEWSLETTER

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AIKIDO YOSHINKAN BRISBANE DOJO

Dear students, parents, and carers,

We sincerely hope that this newsletter finds you all well and sound. As the result of Queenslanders' great work, QLD government is easing the restrictions. Non-contact sports are starting in mid-June while contact sports like us are allowed to reopen the door on Friday the 10th July. Although we thought of opening the dojo in June and training avoiding all the contacts, it is quite difficult for a type of our activities and we have decided to wait until we open the dojo safely.

Please understand that we must apply COVID-Safe new rules at the dojo. Mainly about hygiene rules like hand sanitising on entry and washing hands before and after each class, the dojo mats will be cleaned with disinfectant solution each day and so on. The other thing is about social distancing, 4 square metres per person rule. The dojo area is 180 square metres and we can have 45 people on the mats at once. But the changing rooms are much smaller and limited numbers are allowed; three persons at a time in the male changing room and two persons at a time in the female changing room. So, if you do not wish to wait for the use of changing rooms, we recommend you change the clothes before you come to the dojo. Also, we will ask the visitors to keep the distance while you watch or wait, and therefore there will be numbers limitation in the lounge.

We will humbly ask for your kind cooperation and we thank you deeply for your supports for the dojo.

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

We wish all of you to stay well and safe.

Best regards,

Michiharu Mori and Shuko Mori

A little more knowledge for your Aikido

The height of good Aikido technique

The other day, we filmed a self-defence technique class focusing on Nikajo for uploading on Patreon. I told my wife that I was going to demonstrate a 'bad' Nikajo as it was for street fight techniques. As she had no idea what I meant I took my son's wrist standing nearby and put the bad Nikajo on. He screamed in pain. Yes, the 'bad' Nikajo can cause extreme pain. My 4th Dan son, who has been training Aikido nearly twenty years, should be somewhat used to joint locks. Still, the bad Nikajo was more than he could bear, and he was in agony. Looking at his face, my wife asked me why I was not keen to teach this in the usual class when this Nikajo worked that much so easily. I

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told her that it was because this was such a 'bad' Nikajo. Well, as I answered her while listening to my son's scream, I began to think how I really distinguished between good techniques and bad techniques.

The techniques that can take you down or throw you without you even knowing what happened are good techniques, I think, while bad techniques inflict massive pain and leave you feeling that you were pushed down by physical force. You feel good and pleasant when you receive good techniques and you feel unpleasant or even angry when bad techniques are applied. Moreover, bad techniques tend to be ineffective on those people who have thick and strong joints either naturally or through long-term training. On the other side, the effectiveness of good techniques is universal.

My image of a true master of Japanese budo is an old man who can easily beat up young practitioners with his sublime skills despite the young ones' superior physical speed and strength. My Master, Gozo Shioda, was the person who absolutely embodied this image. And when Master Gozo Shioda was asked what the utmost Aikido technique was, he replied, as most of you know, , "Becoming friends with the person who came to kill you." The answer sounds very unrealistic and more like a Zen question to me, a riddle for me to seek what he really meant.

One day, during a black belt only class, I remember Master said to us, his *uchi-deshi* (disciples), as he was happily enjoying himself demonstrating Aiki-waza on one of his *uchi-deshi*, "It is not a genuine technique if your uke is not begging you to put the technique on one more time. It's no good if your uke dislikes your technique or feels unpleasant. Your uke will keep coming back to feel your techniques more with great glee after being thrown hard. That is the right technique." Truly so, his uke looked to be enjoying the moment fully. This was the time when I understood what the utmost and sublime Aikido technique should be.

I learned from this experience that a good Aikido technique performed properly, based on principles and mechanism, makes one's uke feel thrilled in its beauty and practicality, and therefore the uke wants more. If I did not learn the "correct" Aikido from Master, I might have misunderstood that a good technique was to cause extreme pain and to force absolute power on one's uke. Thus, I place importance to teach techniques based on principles and to harmonise with uke's movements. I believe that a technique applied by force ignoring uke's movements but with one's self-centred intention, or you may call it 'ego', is the bad technique.

After all, we train Aikido which is the art of harmonising, no matter whether in a soft way or a hard way. "Welcome when it comes, let go when it leaves, harmonise it when confronted." This is the secret of Aikido. It is pretty simple and reasonable like learning a basic maths equation of adding and subtracting to me, yet the meaning of the principle can be deep and complex. The Aikido dojo is the place where we learn this ultimate harmony with one's heart through physical training.

Osu,

Michiharu Mori