

Speech on Aikido
By Brenda Kammerer
April 18th, 2006

Looking for martial art that is not based on violence? I am going to tell you about a non-violent martial art; called Aikido. I will tell you about how Aikido is different from other martial arts, tell you about the founder of Aikido, and how much it helps oneself. Although some of us may see Aikido not so helpful in the real world as real fighting but to martial arts we think of violence, kicking, punching, bruises, broken bones and anything that would hurt the attacker. But Aikido doesn't believe in hurting the attacker but using the attacker's own force and energy against themselves. It gives them time to get away or to hold the person down till someone comes. For example Police officers are taught a type of Aikido.

What makes Aikido different? Most of the martial arts now a day primarily focus on self-defense and make it seem more like a combat. Whereas Aikido teaches very effective methods of self-defense, but the goal goes way beyond that to develop the awareness and the confidence to avoid and resolve conflicts peacefully. Aikido is used to blend and not force things on the attacker. It takes a lot of work because it also requires training in the body and mind to help you profound spiritual training. Compared to Aikido, other martial arts seem to be more violent because there seems to be more contact and forcing the opponent to the floor. Aikido is more of a peaceful environment; there is no competition. There is no need to compare his or her ranks to one another. They all train at the same pace. Aikidoist develops methods of self-defense that will not injure an attacker.

What is Aikido? Aikido is a way to expand the spirit and to balance the body, and to quiet the mind. Ueshiba Sensei founded Aikido in Japan. Ueshiba traveled and breadth of Japan studying under the greatest masters of many arts. Morihei Ueshiba was known as the history's greatest martial artist. He had devoted his life to uniting his considerable knowledge of martial arts with his philosophy of a non-violence and cultivation of peace. Ueshiba is known as O Sensei, "The Great Teacher." Ueshiba understood and believed that fighting with others, with ourselves, and with the environment will ruin the earth. He believed in the techniques of harmony and not those of contention; the art of peace is required and the art of war is not. Aikido is intended for all humankind.

The name of Aikido came from three Japanese characters ai, ki, and do. "AI" meaning harmonize, "KI" meaning spirit (not just the spirit of human but of the universe) and "DO" meaning the way. Therefore Aikido means the way of harmonizing with the universe. The forces of nature govern our lives, Aikido helps us recognize these forces and respond to them. The movement emphasizes a flowing flexibility and maintaining a stable balance much like a dance. Harmonizing is blending with our environment by changing difficulties into joy and conflict into peace. To help us promote life and understanding, not to defeat others. To help us bring forth our true nature, to develop the spiritual power which our innate heritage and to make human beings strong by tapping their natural energy. An Aikidoist learns various wristlocks and throws to control attackers because it is not the intention of hurting the attacker. The techniques are harmless enough to be able to practice at full speed without the fear of injuring someone. Aikido uses the opponent's own energy against his or her self. To be successful in Aikido your body and mind must be alert and free from tension. There's only one enemy and that's the enemy within oneself.

The true martial art skill is not the ability to defeat others, but to defeat the discord within oneself. Aikido is mostly for self-defense, although you may be disappointed in this martial arts system after training for a while because Aikido is not for everyone. The spiritual training and philosophy are integral part of Aikido and they both take a great amount of time. If you would like to fight like Steven Seagal you would have to devote to Aikido no less than ten years of hard training. The mastering of this art requires years of persistent training. "Aikido is to develop the innate qualities of our divine heritage." Says the founder Morihei Ueshiba.