

## The Principles of Aikido

- \* The philosophy and art of Aikido is to have control of the movement and energy of the partner (Uke). It is not based on the idea of combat. Self-defence is just one drop in the ocean of Aikido.
- \* Movement always exists. It is the movement inside of us, the movement of water – Yodoho.
- \* The connection starts at the moment when Uke starts to move and continues until the end of the technique/ contact.
- \* The “attack” we must not see as attack, so no defence exists. All is just movement with which you want to unify, so confrontation does not exist.
- \* Most of the energy of the “attack” has to be absorbed and immediately released, letting it flow into the earth or space. The remainder of the energy we use to make the Uke unstable.
- \* At the moment of contact the movement of the two centers become one movement. The center of this movement is in in Tori’s hara/ center.
- \* The contact with Uke has to be so sensitive and gentle that Uke almost cannot feel it. Tori should never grab Uke.
- \* Tori should use his arms one at a time with a fraction of delay. Using both arms simultaneously will give the Uke an opportunity to become stable.
- \* During the movement/ technique Tori never uses the force of muscles of his/ her arms. Don’t move your arms a lot. All movement is basically movement of your center. The arms just follow that in the most natural way.
- \* Tori’s arms always take the Ikyo Undo position – the natural standing position. Arms are slightly bent, not stiff and not bent towards body. This slightly bent position makes your arms like a sword. Your arm position should never be behind your body.
- \* The position of your hands will be determined by the position of hara/ center of your body.
- \* Scaring the Uke with Atemi or to use the locks to make pain makes the technique less efficient and is directly in opposition with the philosophy of Aiki.
- \* Tori uses locks to give him the possibility to transmit the movement of his hara of the Uke, like a connection via a stick when there is of a string. Uke should not move because he/ she feels pain, but because the movement of Tori directly moves Uke’s center.
- \* To be able to keep Uke constantly in imbalance, Tori needs to have check points during the technique. This gives the possibility for Tori to follow the direction that Uke is using to regain his stability. Tori needs to listen and feel what is happening to Uke.

- \* When there is a dialogue between Tori and Uke, the technique always moves in waves, instead of moving in one line. It is not a dialogue if Tori only acts in the movement of one line. Both Tori and Uke have the same wave movement.
- \* After the first contact, Uke becomes part of Tori's body. The Tori controls all space around himself looking at the direction that he would like to go. Common mistakes that Tori can make are: fixing his/ her eyes on the Uke or to concentrate on him/ her. Tori is just conscious of Uke in the same way as he/ she is aware of any other parts of his/ her own body.
- \* During any moment of the technique Uke is kept instable and has to make another step to attack Tori. Therefore Tori is safe.
- \* The body position needs to be natural at all times. Legs are always bent, the knees are never stiff. This gives Tori the flexibility and speed needed to absorb the energy of the movement.
- \* During the technique the feet are always in contact with the ground, like skating. Making steps will cause the center to rise, thus losing stability.
- \* Tori's head always needs to be higher than his/ her hips. While passing under Uke's arms, with techniques like Uchi Kaiten or Shihonage, Tori needs to move backwards; his back will be towards his partner.
- \* It is extremely important to work on the flexibility of the body to be able to be free to do every movement we imagine.
- \* The movement of Uke is determined by the movement of Tori.
- \* Uke tries to regain his/ her balance to become Tori without using confrontation or becoming passive. This is because he/ she stays in an open position for the possible attack of Tori.
- \* The decision which partner is Uke is determined by who is the first to give energy or make some movement.
- \* All Aikido movements can be explained through using the principles of sword techniques.
- \* The best exercise - to understand how to move in the Aikido techniques and to not use the force of the arms - is to use jo (stick) instead of your arms.
- \* We start to practice Aikido at the moment that we are able to feel the condition of our partner – the dialogue.

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