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AIKIDO - THE WAY OF HARMONY

We know that Aikido was developed by Morihei Ueshiba, who was arguably one of the greatest martial artists who ever lived. Aikido is a revolutionary, non-aggressive martial art. Rather than trying to defeat an opponent, Aikido seeks the resolution of conflict.

Before developing Aikido, O'Sensei was already recognized in Japan as a great martial artist. O'Sensei sought to combine ethical principles with effective martial arts practice. He stated "In true budo, there are no enemies. True budo is a function of love... Aikido is the manifestation of love."

Often translated as "the Way of Harmony," or "The Art of Peace," Aikido teaches students to blend harmoniously with people. O'Sensei did not talk about harmony out of some theoretical, idealistic perspective. O'Sensei developed his theory of harmony from the pragmatic perspective of a martial artist. O'Sensei realized that harmony works best.

While he was alive, O'Sensei proved that harmony leads to success, and he did so in the most practical terms. Many different fighters from all walks of the world challenged O'Sensei, however, he was never defeated and he rarely injured anyone who challenged him.

Despite the fact that it promotes harmony and peace, Aikido has been incorporated into the training of Special Forces in militaries around the world. In the Marine Corps, the program, which was created in part by Aikido teacher Richard Strozzi Heckler, is known as the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program, and it is taught at MACE, or Martial Arts Center for Excellence.

Although Aikido has been accepted in the military, many people still wonder whether Aikido really works. When I first started doing Aikido, I, too wanted to know if it would work. When I was uke, I used a lot of force and held my partner as hard as I could, to see if the nage could really perform the technique. Of course, they were always successful. Still, like many others, I wondered if Aikido would be effective. I also wondered how Aikido was incorporated into the various programs that taught conflict resolution.

The more I practiced Aikido, however, I became less concerned about its effectiveness. Gradually, I became more relaxed, and with a lot of practice, I started to learn how to blend. As I improved, I realized that being relaxed and blending was far more effective than fighting with my partner. I also realized that like proficiency in Aikido, understanding what O'Sensei meant when he said "Aikido is the manifestation of love" only comes through training.