

## *Aikido of Phoenix Newsletter* *July 2010*

*Aikido of Phoenix's phone number has changed to 480-639-4628!*

### *FROM TERESA MASTISON SENSEI*

The American Heritage Dictionary defines complacent as "Contented to a fault; self-satisfied". Beware of becoming complacent in your training. This is an easy trap to fall into when you have been training a long time or if you're part of a small group. When you get to know each other well or know the technique it is easy to allow yourself to anticipate the actions of the technique or how your partner will move. This, unfortunately, skews the technique and it's effectiveness.

It's a difficult thing to do but constant refocusing is necessary to get the most out of training. Search out a new uke (partner) every time you're instructed to pair up with someone. Changing ukes forces you to adapt to the different shapes, sizes and energies of the other students. Since you are the only thing that remains constant when working with others, it only makes sense to focus on yourself. If you don't have many people to choose from then pay special attention to yourself and how you are moving through the technique.

This is an age old problem with training. We get so comfortable doing what we are used to that we can lose our focus as well as our effectiveness. Unfortunately, this can happen without our knowledge if we allow it. Help each other by watching your partner. Make a comment if you notice them anticipating a movement or not attacking with energy. Keep each other on your toes by being the kind of partner you would want to have.

It's easy to just go through the motions, but to really train takes a dedicated focus. If you find yourself becoming complacent, recommit to the fundamentals of Aikido - blend with and redirect the energy, lower your center, extend your energy. I find that when I focus on one of these basic principles the other issues tend to not be issues anymore.

I hope you all were able to enjoy the Fourth of July. I feel truly grateful and blessed to be a citizen of this great country. I want to thank all our military branches for defending and protecting us in the past, the present and in the future. You are patriots for your service and I appreciate you!

God bless America!

### *FROM LUCY MAILLOUX SENSEI*

I would like to welcome our new student who joined us this month, and an old friend who we welcome back to the mat. I have been fortunate enough that in my years of practicing Aikido I have had to take very limited breaks from my training. However, it is good to know that should I ever needed to take a break (and it would have to be something major!), I know I will always have the desire to come back. I look at Sempai who took four years off from his training and now that he has been back on the mat, it's as if he never had to take time off. This demonstrates to me that Aikido is more than just a hobby for us; it is a commitment, a way of life. When I started in this art, I never knew that 11 years later I would still be happily practicing Aikido, and now I look forward to being able to continue to learn and grow and pass along what I know. O'Sensei wanted Aikido to be a martial art that would bring peace and love and perhaps this also includes within our own selves. Finding your own peace and reaching a complete state of nothingness is a very hard task to accomplish but the reward of being able to do so, reflects itself on the mat. True emptiness does not mean that you disconnect from what is going on around you; it is actually the complete opposite. Finding that peace to me follows the principle of **Shinku** or true emptiness.

*"Stand in true emptiness and you will transcend life and death. This is the essence of Aikido."* - Morihei Ueshiba

How does one reach true emptiness? I feel it is a journey for each person to experience. Mastison Sensei would often tell me to stop overthinking on the mat, and no matter how often he told me, it took time before it happened. It was my journey and one that I am still experiencing today. Have I come to the point of being able to reach true emptiness? At time yes, but it is up to me to allow myself to do so.

Regardless of your reason for practicing Aikido, whether it is as a hobby, self-defense or as a way of life, make the most of your experience on the mat. Embrace what comes your way and strive to reach your true emptiness, it is a valuable skill.

As always, remember to train for success, learn to anticipate and overcome obstacles, and failure comes when you do not sincerely dedicate yourself to your commitments and accept that you will not succeed.

## FROM JOHN SCANLIN SENSEI

*“Contemplate the workings of this world, listen to the words of the wise, and take all that is good as your own. With this as your base, open your door to truth that is right before you. Study how water flows in the valley stream, smoothly and freely between the rocks. Also learn from sacred books and wise people. Everything, even mountain rivers, plants and trees should be your teacher.” - O’Sensei*

### INTERVIEW WITH A SEMPAI

Recently I had a chat with the outstanding downtown Chandler Sempai, Daniel Horn.

**Sensei:** First, please give some personal info about your family and career.

**Sempai:** Well, I am married to Cynthia - for 10 years now, will be 11 in October. We have 1 daughter, Rhiannon who is 11 years old (going on 25!)

**Sensei:** How about your professional career.

**Sempai:** I’m a software developer for Safeway - I also do some web development. I’ve been with Safeway about 20 years now. I started with Safeway as a summer job bagging groceries and it has developed into a full time career.

**Sensei:** You had a great deal of involvement in the new Aikido of Phoenix website I understand.

**Sempai:** Yes, I worked with Teresa Sensei and Fred Mastison Sensei on that. We did a revamp of the previous website and it came out very good.

**Sensei:** Yes, you did a great job on that.

**Sensei:** How did you first become involved with Aikido.

**Sempai:** It was through my daughter Rhiannon. We were looking for some classes for her to take. She was 5 years old, and we found Aikido class in the Chandler Parks and Rec catalog. I watched the classes as a parent, and enjoyed the philosophy and techniques taught by Teresa Sensei. After about 6 months I decided to jump on the mats. I’ve been with Aikido of Phoenix ever since, starting Feb 14, 2006.

**Sensei:** Do you have any experience with other Martial Arts?

**Sempai:** No, just Aikido.

**Sensei:** What do you like most about studying Aikido?

**Sempai:** To me, studying Aikido is about what you can take outside the dojo and apply to your daily life. The techniques are solid, the training is fantastic, but the lessons you learn to apply to your everyday life with work or family or whatever is the best part of Aikido.

**Sensei:** When did you become appointed Sempai for the Chandler dojo?

**Sempai:** At the end of September, 2009.

**Sensei:** How do you interpret the role of Sempai?

**Sempai:** To me the role of Sempai is to assist Sensei, to act as liaison between the students and Sensei, and to try to handle any issues the students may have. But I also see it as an opportunity to do whatever I can to help the students in learning Aikido and

keep continuing to learn. Whether it is to help the students learn etiquette, or make sure the students have extra time for practice, being an uke for a few more techniques, or whatever it takes. It is especially important to teach and promote proper dojo etiquette. Etiquette is a key factor in learning to do Aikido properly, knowing when to listen, when to ask questions, etc. That is extremely important.

**Sensei:** Absolutely. Would you like to become Sensei someday?

**Sempai:** I would, actually. I like very much helping Sensei with the classes, and helping with the kid’s classes. I have been a helper with the kid’s classes for 3 of the 4 years I have been with Aikido of Phoenix and have enjoyed it very much. I would like to continue with that and become a Sensei someday.

**Sensei:** What do you like to do when you are not practicing Aikido?

**Sempai:** I like to spend time with my family, just doing general family things. I also work with Force Options as a firearms instructor, and train as much as possible in the Force Options combatives program. I also like to fly model airplanes and helicopters as a hobby. I’ve been doing that for about 8 years now.

**Sensei:** Great. Nice talking with you. Keep up the good work.

Keep the spirit strong.

## KIDS’ CORNER

This is going to sound funny, but I want you to focus on yourself during the month of July. I don’t mean for you to be selfish, but rather pay attention to yourself and how you treat other people. O’Sensei sincerely believed that through Aikido we could help spread peace throughout the world. We can do this by treating other people with kindness and respect. Even in self-defense we do only what is necessary to escape, not inflict unnecessary harm. We blend with the energy that is around us and redirect it instead of clashing with it. We create a calm attitude within ourselves with deep breathing, always being aware and extending positive energy to everyone and everything around us. When we interact with other people we do so in a kind and respectful way. This will help us to always take the high road and do what is right. We only have control over ourselves. It makes no difference what others do, only that we control ourselves and act in an honorable way. We must remember that at all times. Make every action a good one, every word a kind one and every day full of good choices.

How we treat others shows us what kind of person we are. Be the best kind of person you can be. Make yourself proud! I am proud of you for studying Aikido. Keep up the hard work!

Teresa Mastison Sensei

## ***RANK PROMOTIONS***

**Hachikyu** (green belt) - Alexis LaVoy, Collin Malone, Teresa Tran

**Rokkyu** (yellow belt) - Dominic Tran

**Gokyu** (blue belt) - Karen Aguilar

## ***Aikido of Phoenix Has New Phone Number***

Effective immediately Aikido of Phoenix has a new phone number. Please replace 480-699-2334 with **480-639-4628**. The old number will be effective for only a short while longer, however the new number is effective immediately. We made this change to better manage our business and hope it doesn't cause too much inconvenience.

## ***NEW STUDENT INFORMATION***

If you have recently joined us I'd like to welcome you to Aikido of Phoenix. We hope you have an enjoyable time training and we encourage you to ask any of the instructors or fellow students if you should have questions at any time. We are glad to have you on the mat!

If you joined us during the month of June and you want to continue training it is easy to do. Each month that you train you will need to register with the city by filling out a registration form (online through the City's website or at the location) and paying the city fee. You also need to pay the instructor fee for each month that you train. You may do that through our website ([www.AikidoOfPhoenix.com](http://www.AikidoOfPhoenix.com)) or at the dojo. You can register for multiple months at a time to help save a little time and effort, but otherwise this process needs to happen each month that you participate in Aikido classes. If you need to take a break you do not need to register, but as soon as you get back on the mat the city requires you to be registered. If you have any registration questions, don't hesitate to ask another student, Sensei or myself. You can contact me through email on our website, at the dojo or give me a call at our new phone number (480-639-4628).

Teresa Mastison Sensei

Following is a list of materials available to all our students. You are not required to purchase any of them, but they may prove useful in your training.

Aikido of Phoenix Student Guide \$15

DVDs \$25 each

*Kids' Safety* (self-defense techniques for kids or anyone)

*Aikido for Kids* (Aikido basics, all kids' tests demonstrated)

*Aikido of Phoenix Student Guide* (supplement to book)

*Go Kihon Waza* (5 techniques for each attack)

*Kobudo - Weapons of Aikido* (jo and bokken forms)

If you are interested in any of these items please let Sensei know.



**FRIENDS  
OF  
AIKIDO OF PHOENIX**

In this section we would like to promote businesses that have been recommended by either ourselves or a student of Aikido of Phoenix. Please see Teresa Mastison Sensei if you would like to list your business in this section.

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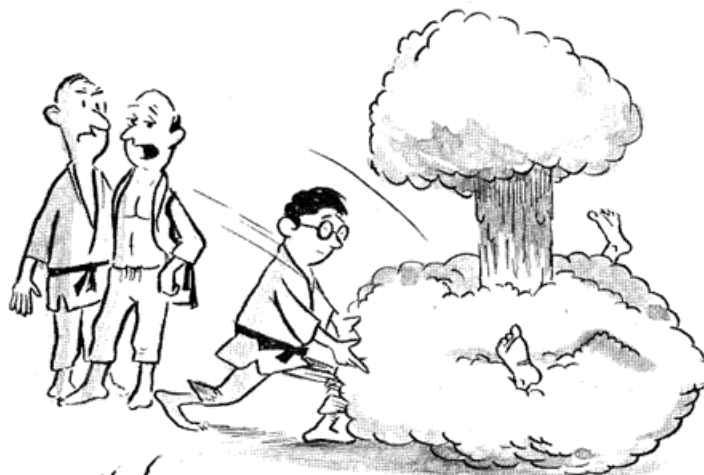
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*Ed Young*

"I see the kid has been working on his throws."