

**The
Thalamic Discourses**

**Aikido
Energy & Creativity**

R. Moon

The Thalamic Discourses

Extraordinary Listening

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Preface

The Whisperings of the Kami

These thoughts birth through what I call the whisperings of the *Kami*. *Kami* means divine spirit. I have never formally studied neurology or any of its related disciplines. I know very little science so I explore through models, hints and whisperings. When I listen in a state of inner quiet, these are the echoes of the universe that I hear. This study explores an unfathomable mystery. That is where I find my joy.

As I ponder the path of learning, questions like those that follow helped frame my work on this study. This piece is transcribed from an Aikido retreat consisting of several classes. It has been edited to fit your screen.

Introduction

Questions Old and New

What makes learning and creativity possible?

What can we learn about the forces that source creation?

Where do ability, inner guidance and inspiration come from?

What produces spontaneous creation of knowledge, new arts and technique?

What do new mental connections have to do with creating new movements, new thinking and new abilities?

Can we create that which does not exist?

Or, are we limited to recombine the known in new ways and call it creativity?

What is the process by which a new movement or new thinking is created?

How do we create new patterns of thinking, feeling and meaning?

How do we empower the process of creating new synaptic connections?

Can we develop the skill to create new form in the moment?

If learning itself were the technique we practice?

What are the skills and knowledge that would allow us to re-create ourselves anew in harmonious relationship with each instant of unfolding?

If development of being was the goal, and technical skill a by-product how would this change the focus of learning and practice?

Development

Life runs on a continuum somewhere between the call of wonder, a conscious exploration into the vastness of the unknown and an unconscious habituated defense against the disturbance of eternal change. As those who do not learn the lessons of the past are doomed to repeat them, creative learning is of the highest value.

Creativity would increase if it were the focus of training. The ability to manifest creativity, spontaneous generation, divine creation, is a skill that can be developed. If we do it, if we practice it, we get better and faster at it.

The Thalamic Discourses explores: ‘Creating Pathways of Thought’ that generate innovative solutions to the problems and challenges in every aspect of daily life and spiritual development and contemplates a way of perceiving, describing and developing, thought and creativity.

The physical structure of the brain whispers about the structure and process of thought. Brain activity can help in picturing metaphorically the ineffable workings of thought. We can use the physical image of the brain as a tool to make helpful distinctions. The mysterious connection between the synaptic processes and the world we experience is far beyond our science. Still it is open to our exploration.

Studying to align the aspects of being, explores the relationship between body, mind, and spirit. The essence of all spiritual practice is, in one form or another, tuning into the unified field, instead of abdicating awareness to the fragments that distract it from the whole. Paying attention to the total interconnectedness throughout time-space is a matter of intent.

Training and practice enhance capability. Training means investing energy in effectiveness and ability. The first step in our long journey begins with listening to the whisperings of what calls you. It begins when you give yourself permission to envision what you truly want. It begins when you release who you were long enough to become who you are -- over and over again, world without end.

These principles can empower the creation of a world of peace and prosperity. It is my wish that these ideas help stimulate new thinking and open new ways of looking at the world. Children develop through play. Play with the ideas on the edge of the unknown. It is said in the arts, “The teachings are but a small part of the learning.”

Freedom in the creation of your life

We become this tendency that we have, to hold a fixed attitude. It is locked in our muscles, in our belief systems, in our thinking patterns. It is something so fundamental to our lives; we don't even know that it is there.

If you pay attention, at a new level of awareness, you will feel yourself in a new way. You will come to notice levels of tension you were not noticing before.

Tension captivates energy that could be used to create your life. Tense up enough and you can't even think or dream about what you want, let alone make it happen.

When you feel, when you attend to your experience, energy moves. When you feel, what you feel is energy moving. When you feel, tension releases. The release of that tension frees up energy; free energy that is now a resource to you in the creation of your life.

When, by degrees, you let go of your holding patterns, mental, physical and emotional, and open up to the totality of yourself, the universal flow, you find you are nothing but creativity, Ki, life force, the divine spirit of creation.

**“The people want heaven;
they don’t know they are heaven.”**

Morihei Ueshiba, O Sensei

Founder of Aikido

The Thalamic Discourses

Meaning, Learning and Default Mode

The most powerful influence in the creation of our lives lies in the process of making meaning! As a consultant in executive development, to a large telecommunications consortium, I was in a meeting with the executive team. The national president had given his opening speech. After he finished, as I asked the president how he felt it was going, a regional president left the room looking upset. The national president said that one regional president obviously hadn't liked it, judging by the look on his face.

At that point I went to check in with the individual in question. He had an upset stomach. His facial expression was totally unrelated to the president, the speech or the situation in the room. This additional data helped the national president realign the meaning he had made.

If we hadn't corrected the president's assumption, he would have lived in a movie that never happened, a movie that would have affected the relationship between the two people. And the regional president would have been unaware of the way he was misperceived. Magnify this by six billion and you have the potential for a predicament. Multiply this by six billion 24/7 and you have the situation we live in.

The meaning we make, how we give value to experience is the fundamental ground of our experience on earth. It is also the key point of influence in leading the forces of change. This study explores anticipating and leading change through the catalyzing force of consciousness, instead of ending up at the effect of forces without our conscious participation.

We could use the process of making meaning to our advantage instead of ending up victim to it. Unfortunately for most of us, we don't even know it is happening. We speak with little perception of how, when ideas and feelings are formed into words, it affects our experience.

Who we become grows out of how we make meaning from experience, what we tell ourselves about what happened and what it means. Two people of similar intelligence grow up in difficult surroundings. One turns into a criminal, one into a world leader. What our experience means to our lives depends on how we look at it, how we talk to ourselves about it. I do not mean to imply what happens to us does not matter. Our patterns, which develop early in our formation, are tremendously influenced by what we are taught and what happens to us as we develop. I am suggesting that the determining factor in our development is less what happens to us than how we describe it, what we learn from experience. Our ability to affect the meaning of life depends on the development of the knowledge and skills that make it possible. If we develop the awareness of meaning, its formation and its influence, the ultimate power of the mystery of creating meaning rests with us.

The formation of meaning is happening now as these words strike your awareness. You think you understand these words or not. Then you evaluate them. You filter your input by deciding whether these words are worth reading and trying to understand or not. This process of creating meaning, which begins by filtering all incoming data, is fundamentally a process of assigning value. Consciously, more often unconsciously, how we value information drives every decision we make. Our decisions create our life path.

We base the actions of our lives on how we interpret our perceptions, on the meaning we make, on assumption. Our assumptions become operating metaphors. We operate from opinions and beliefs as if they were fact. Our descriptions and assumptions operate in a closed feedback loop rejecting input that does not support our beliefs. We fight wars rather than examine differences in our beliefs. When people differ about a belief they can learn from each other or argue about who is right. It depends on what we believe the difference means, how we make meaning of the difference.

Meaning is how we process data. The speed of a computer processor limits the functions it can perform. Similarly our internal processor limits our ability to process data. Just like we select a limited number of books and movies from a larger pool. We must because there is too much to read or see it all. Our senses and perceptions feed data to our central awareness. We receive more data than we can process so we filter out more or less of it. Our ability to process data, being much smaller than the quantity of data that exists, perceives a select sub-set of the total. What gets in and what does not,

based on assumptions of value, defines the substance of our experience of reality. That is before we begin our selective listening and impose our descriptions.

When water flows down a soft hillside it carves gullies into the hillside. From then on whenever water flows down that hillside it tends to flow down the same gullies. The Mississippi River is a huge gully where water flow follows an established path. The energy of thought also follows established patterns.

Once a set of synaptic connections is established from then on, unless interrupted, energy flow will follow the same pathways. Interpretations formed down habituated neural pathways order data in familiar patterns. We assemble the selected data into meaning through how we interpret our perceptions, mostly out of habituated patterns of thought. Our lives then tend to proceed in narrow pathways we have carved for ourselves, individually and collectively. Drawing on Newton's law of inertia, once we see things a certain way we tend to continue to see things that way until affected by another force. The outside force required to cause synaptic connections to change is usually trauma or dire necessity. The internal force that creates new thinking is wonder. Wonder drives the process of learning and creativity

Learning begins as a thought, idea or picture. The first time we learn a movement it is an approximation. As learning progresses energy flow through the brain creates a set of synaptic connections allowing the performance of a particular action. After a few times it begins to happen as a flow, and eventually a pathway is established. Through practice, learning becomes a bodily felt sense, actualized somatic knowledge. Eventually learning becomes power, the ability to create our lives.

People seek power, through various paths. In the martial arts power is sought through techniques that produce advantage in combat. To perform a specific technique we send energy information to the nerves and muscles. Once a synaptic pathway is established, all the energy originally needed to create the pathway, is now free to activate the pathway. If we train moves repetitively those synaptic pathways will deepen. The pathways get clearer and energy flows down a trained pathway faster with greater power and precision. The repetition of techniques produces a level of speed, precision and strength. Our ability to execute the movement increases. This is the basis of most martial art and physical skill training.

Using an established pathway increases speed and power. There is also an inherent weakness. The establishment of a pathway limits adaptability. If we encounter a situation for which we are not prepared, will the training help or hinder? When the energy of thought gets channeled into set pathways, we operate by default in a habitual mode. If the grooves become ruts, if repetition impinges creativity, our practice of technique can act as a limiting factor. In addition, the power we develop through repetition may make it harder to give up what we know and clear the mind for creative learning.

Learning and fulfillment are interconnected. The process of learning begins with, ‘I don’t know’, with being in a state of wonder, inquiry, of finding out. ‘Not knowing’ opens the possibility for the art of living showing up differently today than it did yesterday. The process of seeking what draws you and attracts your attention is a practice of living in a state of learner rather than knower.

In one approach to learning we see someone do a form and we repeat it. We repeat it, over and over again. We start to get comfortable with it. And then our Ki flows down the same path, just like water down the grooves in the hillside or the Mississippi River. We get to know ourselves in a certain way . Then practically no matter what happens, whenever it happens, the stream of thought just goes down between the same banks.

In another kind of learning something is created that no one has ever seen. We call that kind of learning creativity. Creating new connections is a distinct experience from repeating what is known. Creating new connections opens an ocean of possibility.

The power of repetition needs to be balanced with the development of creativity. Unless we pay attention we cannot escape default mode because it happens by habit, unconsciously. Without a conscious focus of both intention and attention, we lose creativity to the gravity of convenience. We no longer really make meaning. We repeat it.

Something Else Is Happening!

A few years ago, the Mississippi partially dried up. They couldn’t run barges on it because there wasn’t enough water. Then something happened and the weather changed. All of a sudden there was so much water that the Mississippi River didn’t know what it was for a while there. They could not

run the barges because without knowing where the banks were, they couldn't be sure where the central channel was deep enough to run the barges safely.

We have the same cycles of ebb and flow in our energy, our Ki. Ki is a Japanese word for universal energy that implies unlimited, untapped potential. Though energy always exists, at times we have greater access to it. At other times it may blow us out. When we are tense our energy drains into feeding the tension. If we can, free up enough energy during the droughts in our own being, then our energy can flow freely. When it floods so to speak, we could learn to use the energy creatively instead of just going 'crazy' for a while, over-running our banks, and then returning to our known patterns as if nothing had happened.

When there is too much energy we can learn to center and ground the torrents of energy without spilling over into a destructive mode. Whether there is too much or not enough, even when there is just the right amount, the practice is the same. By simply slowing and deepening the breath, the muscular as well as emotional and mental patterns relax, freeing more energy with which we can create new connections outside of the established pathways of previous thought.

When you read the preceding sentence did you take a slow deep breath and pay attention to what you experienced? Did the knowledge become learning and practice? Did you explore movement towards whole being awareness? Or will the words remain as intellectual information that you will likely forget in a few moments?

This exercise of breathing and feeling, though seemingly so simple as to be overlooked or underestimated, opens a doorway to infinity. Breathing and feeling, though basic to life, become a practice when done consciously.

Understanding the ability to create new pathways of thinking enables us to use our energy to improve our lives. Can we create new pathways that themselves create new pathways?

Re-Evaluating Meaning

In the opening story the national president misinterpreted the regional president's actions. He made meaning based on assumptions of what the regional president's facial expression meant. How often do we misinterpret someone's actions? How often are ours misunderstood? How many arguments have we had, how many wars have we fought, in reaction to things

that never happened? And in those wars we have sowed the seeds of future assumptions that will affect the interpretations of future misunderstandings for endless generations to come. How much of the conflict and contention between individuals, cultures and nations is really a misunderstanding that could be corrected with open inquiry, honest dialogue and extraordinary listening?

We assume we make sense but can we evaluate how effective we are, how much sense do we make, when we communicate our thoughts and feelings to others? We have all seen people who seemed out of touch with reality. At some point in time someone has probably thought that about each of us. Did you ever have someone talk to you and have no idea what they meant? Their words sounded more like non-sense than meaning. Or did you ever try and explain something to someone who was having that experience with you, while you made perfect sense to yourself?

The process of making meaning is personal and as such the meaning each of us makes is unique. We assume our perception to be what is real. We don't know it is reflected sensory data, colored by meaning and judgment. Since it is reflected back by our culture we take it as fact. We use others for confirmation of what we believe. If A believes as I do that B is lazy that confirms my belief, making it valid. We develop a consensual reality.

When everyone around us supports our perception, how likely is it that we will look at how we have assembled the meaning we are living from? If we were taught the world is flat and everyone around us says it is, why should we question it? If everyone around us fights for resources or the opportunity to speak why should we think anything else would work? If everyone around us lives in contention and we are the only one suggesting another option, who looks crazy?

I worked with a group to develop a dialogue for peace in Cypress. When we met with those who wanted peace and had the courage to work for it, the nationalistic hard liners on both sides threatened the lives of those who worked with us. In their system of thought, dialoguing for peace looked like collaborating with the enemy.

Though driven by meaning and assumptions formulated out of fear, hatred and greed they assumed their perception was the only accurate description. To them it was not a description; it was not meaning; it was reality. Anyone who did not agree deserved to die. There was no thought of, help me

understand why you see it that way. There was only the belief that my assumption, my reactive unconscious process of forming meaning, is the absolute truth. We act on our assumed meaning as if it were the only truth rather than something we created. When that belief gets strong enough I will kill or die for it.

Making meaning is our most creative exercise. Unfortunately, without an awareness of this process, we form our creative energy out of fear and reactivity instead of harmoniously opening a broader spectrum of possibility. Out of an unconscious defensive reaction, we shut down input that could enhance perception. Controlled by our reactivity we live in a description that could be improved.

We think our life is what happens. We assume the way we see it is the way it is. We see neither thought as a system nor the process of making meaning. We don't realize what we see as reality is an echo of energy moving through the grooves in our systems of thought.

Understanding how critically the thought process affects the creation of our lives could change the way we live, as individuals and collectively. Fears and insecurities bind us to our beliefs, locking out inquiry and learning. Open inquiry allows new data to challenge our set thinking. Simply applying this awareness creates a different world. Just considering the possibility of greater creativity shifts the state of attention and increases the possibility of creative thinking.

We operate physically at a habituated level of tension. We do it without noticing it. A similar unconscious fixation occurs in the mental and emotional spheres. Emotion seems like something that happens TO us. By experiencing emotion we turn the tables. We become creative participants in the experience. If we attend to the emotional sphere, the emotional process becomes clearer.

Consciously attending to our experience leads to self-knowledge and the self-reflexivity that develops awareness into attention. Then the energy of thought and emotion informs us instead of driving us blindly. All facets of our energy system contribute to the symphony of awareness.

Tension releases through paying attention to it. When we relax physically we open our identity. The size of the energy channel increases to match the needs of the flow. In an open spirit energy flows without resistance. Without resistance all energy flows to your bestowed mission.

Relax your mind Relax your mind
It will make you feel so fine sometimes
Sometimes you just got to relax your mind
Leadbelly

Think about the term ‘make sense’. Every decision, every strategy and every action we take is based on our analysis of what we perceive. If, either perception or analysis is faulty or both, how much sense are we making? We can learn to pause and suspend our first meaning before we go too far down a road we did not mean to take.

The Thalamic Pause

Albert Korzybski, an innovative linguist and semanticist, developed a concept he called the Thalamic Pause, he also called it the Semantic Pause. It is a practice of suspending the acceptance of our first interpretation of meaning. Slowing down the process of making meaning, allows information to be evaluated through a larger neural network. His description grew out of a listening between the thalamic, limbic and cortical centers of perception. Instead of jumping to conclusions based on default thinking, the Thalamic Pause allows us to consider things from a broader and deeper intelligence.

Some time ago I was meeting with a group to practice the discipline of Dialogue. A member of the group who had studied with a student of Korzypski introduced us to the concept of the Thalamic Pause. Based on his description and explanation of the process we designed an exercise to practice the Thalamic Pause in our dialogue session.

As an experiment, after something was said we took an extra moment before the next person spoke. When someone finished speaking, we would pause for a few seconds to let the information connect to a larger web of meaning before we responded. The pause was short, yet the change in the quality of the dialogue was palpable.

I found myself imagining what was happening in physical brain process during the change that I was experiencing in meaning. When we experience thought: What is going on? I started getting an image of meaning and words as the product of energy, activating and connecting neurons. I wondered what causes synapse to connect in the first place? What made a synapse connect to some neurons and not others?

At first I imagined a picture of the information and the synaptic activity it stimulated in the brain, connecting only with the neurons available on the surface of the cortex. Next I began to imagine synaptic connection moving from the surface to tissue deeper within the brain. I started imagining very different qualities of perception producing infinite possibilities of thinking generating unlimited new meaning.

(This is only a metaphoric image using the brain as a model for the mind. a way to simplistically describe an incredibly complex process. It has no scientific basis even though it may relate somewhat to the neural processes. It is only an attempt to depict, so we can talk about, the way creativity manifests. It is not, nor is it meant to be a description of actual brain function. It is a game board for an exploration.)

As our process and meaning deepened, I began to wonder what might be possible. Changing the way we make meaning could change the field of global experience. What else is possible with our system of thinking if it were used differently? As I continued imagining the process of synaptic connections, I sensed the meaning we arrived at had a lot to do with how energy flowed through the brain. In this image the flow of thought is dynamically affected by the quantity and quality of energy available.

Did you ever leave a conversation feeling ‘OK’, only to realize later that you were upset about how it went? Did you ever agree to do something for someone and later wished you hadn’t? Often, in response to data, as the information reaches the brain’s first level of response, we will have one reaction. Later, when that data has been re-e-valuated we may feel

differently regarding the situation. Though the external information is the same, we may start to sense other levels of meaning.

Did you ever say something in anger to someone and later wished you hadn't? Why are we told to count to ten when we get angry? A response to data occurs. We turn it into information and give it meaning very quickly. If we take a moment, more data can be included. The additional data might create very different meaning. The meaning we give a situation defines our attitude towards it. Our attitude defines our spirit of engagement in the world.

Imagine standing waiting for a store to open. Suddenly someone shoves past you. Notice your reaction. Just before you lose your temper you notice someone behind you has fallen down. Then, overhearing bits of conversation, you realize they had a heart attack and the person who shoved you was running to get to a phone to call an ambulance. Notice your reactive meaning change as information increases.

Did you ever have a vague feeling about something you couldn't put your finger on? Did you ever need a minute to think about something? How does the neural energy of the senses and synaptic activity of the brain become the concepts, thoughts, ideas and beliefs that shape our experience of living? Can we suspend what we are doing long enough, to see if what we are doing is, what we want to be doing?

The map is not the territory.

The map does not represent the whole territory.

The map points to the mapper and their interaction with the territory.

Korzybski

Brain Function and Consciousness

The thalamus is part of the reptilian brain, the most primitive aspect of the brain. It is located above the medulla. The thalamus, sometimes called the original brain, is the switchboard of experience. All visual and auditory sensation, all movement of neural energy is processed through that part of the brain first.

The reptilian brain responds without thought, in the higher sense of the word, to any perceived stimulus. It makes its picture and reacts instinctively, creating its meaning and moving to action. It acts in a binary, eat or be eaten, survival mode, without corroborating its strategy with the higher centers of feeling and thinking.

Our neurological systems form data into information and meaning. The combined pictures, meaning and directives of neurons, thalamic, limbic and cortical systems collide in the thalamus for action. We order the value of the different input, like transparent overlays, and produce the world we see and experience.

Based on the data each of the brains systems was designed to perceive, each assembles different data and produces a different representation of reality. Each communicates very different, frequently conflicting, pictures to the conscious awareness. Our intellectual function tries to create a single picture that makes sense out of voluminous data. Often we can't, so we approximate, or edit.

Depending on how we use our brains, only certain aspects are ‘awake’ processing data at any given time. Any area of the brain unused for a given period shuts down similar to sleep mode on a computer. Since some areas or functions may not be awake or may be processing data very differently, even feeding the same data into the same brain at different times, our pictures can be quite different.

Some mixture of the various impressions shows up on the screen of consciousness. Through some mysterious process our valuing affects the picture our minds attempt to create. The aspects of consciousness, thinking, feeling, and instinct, out of which action emerges, either contend with each other causing stress, or ‘listen’ to each other to create a coherent field.

As the order of overlaid transparencies affects the picture one sees, one facet of the brain, having a higher value in the meaning we assemble, may dominate input, about a given situation. At another moment, another facet may prevail depending on how we have learned to give value to perceived data. The distillation of this process is the meaning we make. The way we give value to the information from the various systems of brain and nerves develops surprisingly different pictures. Depending on how we value data we assemble quite different realities. Though there are similarities in the representations we make, each of us perceives the world in our own way. Our ability to interpolate perception, to make our own movies, can be quite creative for better or worse.

Whether one system's picture dominates or a coherent picture emerges depends on how conscious we are of the process of making meaning. Since the reptilian response is so fast and loud, there can be a prolonged gap of time before the limbic and cortical systems, how we feel and what we think, weigh in on a situation. The thalamic pause allows the information contributed by the higher functions of thought to be integrated into a coherent frame. Often we are already in action; how we feel and what we think never even get listened to. In the individual as in our society, when our systems conflict with each other, commonly only the loudest voice gets heard. The whisperings, though their wisdom may be infinitely greater, get drowned out.

Without a listening practice or thalamic pause, we reactively act on the first meaning we assemble. With practice we can develop the ability to respond at any point along the continuum as the energy moves through the process of thought, from the first reaction at the thalamic level to a carefully thought out response that includes and processes our total intelligence. The thalamic pause is a listening for the whisperings of wisdom within the sound and fury of reactivity.

The simplest level of practicing the thalamic pause begins with suspending our reaction to the first instinctual rush of meaning. Repeatedly notice your first reaction to information. Take a slow deep breath and relax allowing time for thought to progress from the primary thalamic reaction to a larger network of meaning that includes feeling and thinking. How long it takes to integrate the whole system depends on our state and how we train our awareness.

However we respond develops a set of synaptic connections that influences how we will process future input. The thalamic pause allows attention to

connect our neural network at a holistic level. Paying the time and attention to simply ‘breathing’ and ‘feeling where we are’, generates a unified field of awareness that includes the whole brain and eventually the whole being. With practice, moving from reactivity to whole brain awareness develops a pathway. Eventually it is designed into the program. We get faster by slowing down.

The different states of brain wave are quite distinct and scientifically measurable. Alpha state (7-14 cycles per second) receives more input and a broader band width. Beta state (14–28 c.p.s.), which is faster puts out more but misses subtler data points and assembles a sketchier picture. The rate changes during the thalamic pause.

The dialogue between the three systems of thought (thinking, feeling, and instinct) that occurs during the thalamic pause develops an increasingly coherent understanding of one’s environment. Unified connection of abstract thought, feeling awareness and the primal thalamic awareness, allows the total system to generate action. Without this pause for dialogue between the systems of thought, fragments vie for dominance. Action is less conscious, less coherent and less intelligent.

Reactive means we act without thinking or feeling. The Thalamic Pause allows time to re-evaluate thought in conjunction with feeling. When thought is integrated we receive guidance and execute action from a unified field of being. Action from this state is harmonious. Effectiveness increases as resistance from conflicting messages diminishes through their interpenetration i.e. listening to each other. Proper training should develop an open listening, to the changing matrix of meaning.

Openness grows out of practicing acceptance of the whole. Acceptance comes from the security, authenticity and power we feel in connection with our essence. Connecting our deepest essential forces with the mundane processes of life is what makes spiritual practice valuable.

Often we are ‘in our heads’ and though we can give opinions about a topic we talk in the abstract without sensing our own state. We act without a clear picture of what we want. If you try and identify the specifics of what you want you will see how imprecise we frequently are. Most people can identify the basics at an abstract level but when you ask them to differentiate it out to the next level they get lost.

People are quick to say they want a good relationship or a good job but rarely can define exactly what that would look like. Given some time to ‘thalamize’ it gets clearer. The thalamic pause implies consciously allowing the time necessary for meaning to differentiate beyond the first level response.

As energy flows toward higher cortical activity as well as into deeper levels of feeling, intuition and sub-conscious knowledge, thinking extends beyond the instinctive, reactive and first conscious level. Deeper levels of feeling awareness and higher cortical process unify, gradually clarifying what was vague. Seeking clarity, aiming our purpose, takes longer; yet it is much more effective than shooting wildly or blindly.

When the aspects of the system of thought function in harmony, coherent thinking comes into play. A reciprocating echo with a greater wisdom appears as creativity, reflecting an unknown intelligence.

Understanding how consciousness functions, affects the process of making meaning and the relationship between energy, awareness and action. When the fragments of awareness vie for dominance we react in panic or default to habit. When all of the input amalgamates into a coherent picture of reality a unified field of intelligence creatively selects the best option.

Aikido, Dialogue and The Thalamic Pause

Ai - Ki - Do is a modern martial art based on the principles of energy flow and the power of harmony. Aikido translates as the way of harmony with the spirit of the universe. Ai means harmony. Do means a path or way of being. Ki is loosely translated as energy.

A Japanese term that has no exact English counterpart, Ki, originates from the character for steam and implies untapped potential. The concept can translate as vitality, universal energy, aliveness, vital force, mind, intention, as well as spirit, adaptability and common sense. The west uses the term life energy, vital force, in Latin, elan vital, the yogis call it prana, shamanic schools might call it personal power.

Aikido is a visible manifestation of universal principles. The study shows us our relationship to life. Think of it as kinesthetic dialogue and dialogue as verbal Aikido. It can show us how we are doing what we are doing.

The translation of what produces power in a martial situation can teach us principles and skills for effective action in the other realms of our lives. To

apply the Aikido metaphor to the larger sphere of life, business, relationships, science and the other arts, translate attack-technique as pressure-response or problem-solution.

The intensity of a situation determines the intensity of the rush of energy we experience. As the rush of energy increases, so does the potential for disturbance. Disturbed or upset, we make decisions out of harmony with the totality. Aikido training helps overcome the tendency to be pushed out of center by the rush. Proper training teaches us to correct the disturbance by centering and grounding. Robert Nadeau, my Aikido instructor, used the phrase, “Easy.” This was a reminder to relax the mind/body reaction to the rush of energy that occurs in response to any pressure situation.

“Easy with the rush” was my instructor’s version of the Thalamic Pause. In other words, we learned to recognize the rush and its disturbance and take a moment, re-center and re-ground. We would practice being total before applying a technique. The practice carries over into trying to make a decision, or take any action.

In Aikido class we practice repeatedly to relax and open, to settle down releasing our weight and with it our tension, into the earth. Presence describes a state of being where we are centered, grounded and our energy flows freely and naturally. A state of flowing presence naturally responds in a centered and grounded manner. With practice establishing and re-establishing presence happens faster. Effective as well as ineffective action can be a source of learning and applied to our interaction as a participant in the unfolding universe.

Usually, in the physical practice of the art on the training mat, the outcome is a throw or pin that immobilizes the attacker. In business the purpose is to be of service to customers and clients at a profit. In parenting the purpose is to raise a happy self-sufficient child. The outer form may appear different but the fundamental principles apply universally.

Aikido teaches reconciliation. In the case of the thalamic pause it implies reconciliation of the aspects of our system of thought. Thought mediates feeling and intuition, often dominating the feeling awareness. The brain is also wired so that feeling can cloud and override thinking. When you feel confused the tension of confusion implies a voice within you that still does not feel heard in the conversation. In a unified field of awareness, feeling and

thought enrich each other, rather than thought discrediting feelings or visa-versa.

Stories of Struggles

I remember one conflict between the two top executives in an international construction firm that threatened the company's ability to complete their contract commitments. These were two very gifted and very driven individuals. They were applying all their energies toward success but had very different pictures of what success was and how it should be achieved. Neither person could make sense of the other person's actions. Each questioned the other's sanity because they saw things so differently and judged the other by their own meaning of what was happening. As a result their power was being used against each other.

We sat together for a couple of hours. We opened an inquiry to highlight the differences in their approaches so they could understand how the other was making sense to themselves. By learning to see the meaning each person was operating from, the misunderstandings dissolved. Developing clarity about the differences in their descriptions brought them to a level of confluence that they had imagined impossible. Both people developed the ability to judge each other with an entirely different generosity. The energy that had been channeled into fear, anger and frustration turned into the excitement of creative possibility. The study and understanding of how meaning forms, had effects beyond their immediate relationship. It affected also how they managed their teams and clients.

In another case a friend called me in desperation wanting to find somewhere else for their child to live. The pressures of change in the relationship between a parent and a growing child can cause severe emotional strain. As the child grows, the relationship must grow. Children usually grow at a faster rate than adults increasing the pressure.

In this situation the pressures had built to intolerable proportions. Both parent and child were using anger to express their frustration. Though anger communicates the intensity of the energy driving the feelings, it does not produce the clarity needed to use that energy effectively. The way of harmony implies the same energy used differently.

By simply questioning their points of view and listening to each other, parent and child saw a bigger picture. The increased view changed the way they

made meaning out of each other's actions. By creating a larger pool of meaning, they began to depersonalize each other's actions. Understanding each other's process of organizing data into meaning creates connection. Connection affects the way we see each other. As trust grew we were able to surface their unspoken needs.

Working in harmony toward enhanced understanding, they began recognizing and resolving the tension, instead of reactively expressing their frustration as anger. They became aware of and included what was important to each other in the equation they were solving. They began exploring what might be possible. Though several years have passed they continue using the skills effectively allowing the transition into adulthood to be a 'surfable wave'.

The relationships formed in the family are the basis of the relationships we form with the larger society. All of society is affected when the relationship that develops a child goes the other way.

Thalamic Awareness and the Order of Change

Whether in, business, diplomacy, relationship, science the arts, or a physical confrontation, when you encounter a situation where your knowledge meets its limits, when what you know won't solve your problem, how do you respond?

- A. Get Mad
- B. Get Even
- C. Feel Sorry for myself
- D. Start looking outside the box



E. Seek Divine Creation - Look for the power to bring forth something that does not exist

Did you ever see a fly trying to break free through a closed window, when the window next to it is open? If I fail to consciously train creativity, I unconsciously train going down a known track of meaning and behavior. If my only mental exercise is defending what I think, under pressure my energy and attention go into forcing what I know instead of exploring unknown possibilities. If all I have trained physically is repeating movements, under pressure I default to repeating movements I know. Once I am in reaction to pressure, I lock in harder on the path I know. I force more -- and feel or *Thalamize* less.

Tension uses up energy diminishing the possible network of connections. It is a viscous cycle. As the range of options I can sense constricts, I am less likely to look for unseen options or question my basic assumptions, intention and strategy. If I am tense, I use a small portion of my brain's available computing and creative power.

It is more important how consciously you develop yourself than how hard you work at it. What if, I'm doing one thing and some thing else would be more appropriate or effective? What we know can limit our creativity. We end up captive to thought as a system. As prisoners of our thinking, like a fly that keeps beating against a closed window, we don't even consider if an open window exists. So we never look for one.

Someone described insanity as doing the same thing over and over again and expecting the results to be different. Waslavic coined the term, order of change to define a scale of levels. In a simplistic explanation: First order of change is doing more or less of the same thing. When you say something to somebody and they don't seem to hear/understand you, you say it louder. Second order of change might be that you try and find different words to say it. The next order may be you try a picture, a tone or gesture that communicates the idea better than words alone. The next level may be finding a different message, or saying it in a new context, perhaps you even try and find a different language.

The thalamic pause represents the time needed to process the data and create new meaning at a higher (read more effective) order of change. When we approach the challenge of communication from a state of whole brain awareness, we will come up with new forms of communication.

How we communicate with ourselves sets how we communicate with others. Someone's interpretations of my actions, affects how they feel about and treat me. Which, in a reciprocating echo affects how I feel about and treat them. The relational repercussions can be severe. When we react instead of listen, they often are.

Once we are in a negative cycle, we slip into patterns of attribution. Instead of seeing a system at play, we tend to simplistically attribute the good and bad in our lives as created internally or externally. In a mode of external attribution, we attribute cause to something external. In a mode of internal or self-attribution, I tend to see myself as the cause. If it is a bad day and I can't ground the emotional charge of energy, depending on my mode of attribution I unload these feelings on someone else or myself. If my attribution mode is internal I get mad at myself. If my attribution mode is external I get madder at the person or situation.

All of this creates a vicious cycle. But none of this solves the problem. None of this creates or develops a new direction. The momentum stays locked in a set track, first order of change, **more** of the same. The fly, so intent to get out, can't find a way even though a solution may be very close. Thalamically, there is another way out!

Aikido/ creativity represents a third option, a new direction. The practice of Aikido implies more than just finding my partner's energy path and the easiest way to throw them. The pressure engendered helps me verify and deepen my connection with the self. Opening to learning means getting to know more of myself, more of the universe.

"The appearance of an "enemy" should be thought of as an opportunity . . . to see if one is actually responding to the divine will."

Morihei Ueshiba, O Sensei

KI - Free Energy, Change and Adaptability

Imagine ending up at odds with a difficult situation, unable to resolve it. If generating new synaptic connections is the physical aspect of creating new thought, imagine the role of Ki, **free energy** in the process of creativity. Consider the possibilities **free energy** creates for producing creative solutions to the problems, pressures and challenges we face in daily life!

Without **free energy**, we default to operating out of established patterns, out of habit instead of creatively. Free energy allows connection to a larger pool of meaning. As the quantity of possible connections increases so does creativity. When I have enough **free energy** a deeper knowing, a deeper understanding unfolds. Élan means energy and describes someone with grace and wisdom.

If Ki implies adaptability, lack of Ki implies an inability to adapt to handle change. Without Ki I lack the power of creativity. If what I am doing is not working without creativity I try and make the world match my synaptic pathways instead of aligning to what is. I either force a solution in a way I think the situation should resolve or give up. In that state these seem the only choices because with out adaptability I can't come up with new alternatives.

When we are surprised, startled or challenged, adrenaline is released. Typically the energy generates reaction along the fight/flight continuum. In the brain this trains in as a synaptic pathway. Muscles tighten to a ready state. If we stay on alert too long or the rush is too intense, the process begins inhibiting Ki flow. Though an increase in energy may intensify my first response and enable it to be applied forcefully, if my training only reinforces using established pathways I am limited to first order of change.

The more feeling is resisted, the less it is differentiated. Without feeling we cannot distinguish how attention should be spent and whether or not given information has value. When in our reactivity, we rigidly tighten our muscles or when our thinking narrows, we get stuck in our reactive thoughts and behaviors. Energy can become bound up in thought, emotions and a corresponding physical tension. Possibilities diminish.

There is a relationship between our physical holding patterns and the degree of openness in our thinking. In a reciprocating echo, any tension in the mind shows up as a holding pattern in the mirror of the body. Our tension is so unconscious we don't think of ourselves as doing it. Unless circumstances

force us to, we usually don't even notice it. We can get so involved in what we are doing we are no longer attending to how we are doing it or if it is even the appropriate thing to be doing in a changing environment.

As the body resonates with the mind, a unified body-mind resonates with the universe. As the body relaxes, energy explores new neural connections, new thought patterns. As we release our thinking to explore new directions, the body replicates a similar release and exploration of new feeling. Improve your relationship to gravity and you experience the center of an energy connection between the heavens and the earth.

Ever strain to remember something only to have it surface when you give up trying? If we consciously relax, energy flows. Increased energy enhances our ability. The body moves with greater ease and the mind becomes freer. We free up energy by releasing the tension we are holding. As one relaxes, energy returns to a state of untapped potential. As the mind relaxes it is increasingly able to create synaptic connections.

Energy, in the somatic sense, allows us to be present with the flow of change. Presence makes it possible to respond intelligently. Focusing attention on experience allows us to create multiple options from which to select the best solutions.

EX. Take a deep breath. Holding the breath a moment, slightly tighten all your muscles for about ten seconds. Do this very gently. Never strain or force. Always listen to your body about how much is enough. Exhale releasing the muscle tension as you release the breath. Feel the relaxation as long as you can pay attention. Can you follow it through several breaths? Repeat as needed.

An effortless flow, not forcing, doesn't mean an absence of power. There is infinite power in harmony. As a matter of fact, it is irresistible power. When I am not fixed on how life works or what is supposed to happen, energy used in holding the line becomes available for drawing a new one or something entirely different.

EX. As you breathe slowly and deeply. Let yourself pay attention to things you don't normally notice. Give yourself enough time to feel the quality of attention shift.

The aggregate of information we can process and most importantly how we process it changes our picture of the world. The quantity and quality of

energy affects what is perceived, how it is perceived and how we make meaning of perception.

Establishing Connections: Creativity and Ki,

Energy is used up by our state of tension. Scientific studies of tension and energy usage show the human brain in a state of average tension uses a measured 12 microvolts. A relaxed state uses only 1-2 mcv. This means when relaxed we use less of our reserves and have more Ki or **free energy** with which to create desired outcomes.

We have a limited amount of energy and so a limited amount of attention. If we use up the energy needed to operate the mind-body system holding our muscles and minds in a state of tension, we have little left with which to accomplish our bestowed mission. When we release the tension and holding patterns we free up the ‘bound energy’. **Free energy** means energy available to be used for creation. (See Freedom in the creation of your life p. 10)

Ever been so upset you were at a loss for words? When surprised we can get tense enough that we cannot speak let alone act. Some people call this freezing up, the ‘deer in the headlights syndrome’. When mind and body are out of harmony (dis-ease), it can show up as both physical tension and mental blocks that reinforce each other. In an intense disagreement I can have trouble remembering words that I know very well.

I am usually quick with a response but I remember once some years ago that someone accused me of something that was totally off base. The shock upset me to the point where I didn’t know what to say. I was totally uptight. I couldn’t even think of a response. I had a lot of energy. But I couldn’t use the energy. It wasn’t available. It wasn’t free.

Energy held in tension or channeled down habituated patterns is not free. Someone who is tense enough in their muscles or rigid enough in their thinking cannot adapt, even though the habituated response or pattern of thought may no longer be appropriate to handle changes in the environment.

Without **free energy** we default down a known path, even if it doesn't work very well. We might have a cajillion volts, but if we are using them all up, being uptight, or paying off the debt, thinking what we think, knowing what we know, etc., we might not have enough **free energy** with which to establish a new connection.

Creativity, connecting ideas, forming new thought, depends on the creation of new synaptic connections, new neural pathways! Free energy can connect synapses that have never been connected before. With new connections we could create new patterns of thought, thereby creating new solutions. We could create techniques never done before, or design entirely new solutions beyond present imagination.

Imagination is more important than knowledge

Albert Einstein

It is easier to reconnect synapse that have been connected before than to establish a new connection, It is easier to think as we do than think in new ways. To suspend the known, to consciously choose not to follow default instincts is an act of intent.

Energy: The Cost of Creativity / The Voltage Model

If you have two electrical poles and a copper wire running between them, the smallest charge in one pole will jump to the other one easily. To connect synapse that have a connection, where there is already a 'wire' or a pathway, one-volt might make that connection.

An electrical spark can jump between poles without an established connection. The quantity of energy required however is infinitely greater. To learn how to do something new, or to create a new pathway connecting synapse where no pathway exists takes infinitely greater energy.

In our model, say the voltage necessary to connect one synapse with another is one volt. To create a connection between two that do not have a pathway, it would take x volts, say a hundred. In other words, to create a new pathway requires a build up of a much higher charge of energy before the spark will jump.

If we want to create new pathways, we must have free energy to work with. If the voltage available to connect one synapse with another is one volt, by default, that limited amount of energy could only take a path that is already established. Meaning in a situation where only one volt of **free energy** is

available, only a known answer can be accessed. Even if that technique doesn't work, even if something different is needed, without more **free energy** new possibilities cannot be enabled or created.

If we only have one volt of **free energy** we are going to be stuck in what we know. We won't have enough **free energy** be able to make new synaptic connections or to create new techniques and solutions. Without **free energy** we default down a known path, even if that path doesn't go exactly where we want.

Let us change metaphors from voltage to dollars. Say it takes five bucks for some gas to run our car for the next little while or say five hundred if we include the insurance. It's going to cost several thousand to buy a used car and at least fifteen or twenty k to buy a new car. But it could take fifty million to design and build something as yet un-invented. Connecting thoughts into new ideas requires energy. Creating thoughts that do not exist takes considerably more.

If we only have five bucks worth of energy we will end up running the old pattern. For several thousand we can try something we know but don't use often. For 20 k we can learn a new idea or technique from someone who knows it. How much time and energy would it take to create a new idea or technique? What is the difference between being taught a set solution versus designing or innovating a new one for the exact situation that needs solving?

You get good at what you practice. We develop creativity just like we develop any skill, through study and practice. The practice must be designed to develop a unified field of awareness. If you learn, memorize and perfect a set move your ability to perform that move increases. If you study how to create moves then that ability increases. It takes intention, training and practice to make Whole Being Awareness a functional ability rather than a distant possibility or a random occurrence.

How Good Is Your Credit

We have all heard the phrase, 'pay attention'. If the issue is important it is good advice. The question is can we afford it.

Say we have a certain amount in the bank from which we receive interest or a fixed income and every so many days we get a paycheck to spend. Once we have spent it, we have to wait for the next check to buy something new. I

know there are credit cards and the body has reserves but suspend that for the moment.

With limited funds, we may buy a suit/skirt and not be able to afford a shirt/blouse. We would have to wait till the next paycheck. And then, after a certain amount of time, we have enough for more. Or we buy a cheaper suit, and pay for it, and now we've got enough to get a new pair of shoes, maybe we still don't have enough to buy a hat. Limited energy means limited possibility.

What is the relationship of '**free energy**' or Ki to presence? Have you ever used a flash attachment for photography that needs to charge up for a minute after you use it, before you can fire it off again? Mind, body and spirit in a unified state build up a charge of available energy. Say for every so many cells in our bodies, we generate one micro volt per minute. Imagine when we are in touch with "feeling," we are in a state where mind and body are unified. We have access to the total voltage each cell produces.

If we are only unified with, or feeling, a quarter of ourselves, we will only have access to a quarter of our potential Ki. If we feel more of who we are, if we learn and practice focusing attention on the whole of our experience, we access more energy. Feeling means connecting attention to the changing energy. The first principle in the process of connecting is to *Feel Where You Are* (see *Life in Three Easy Lessons*, Zanshin Press)

Attention to pausing, centering, relaxing and shifting, suspends making meaning during a build up of energy and allows the synaptic energy to jump to the next level of possibility. We can develop an energy level where, instead of by default having to buy a product that's already been made, we could design a new one. We are now able to come up with new creations, entirely new possibilities.

New thoughts are dependent on the energy of attention we have to spend. Enough free energy enables us to "buy", develop or design possibilities that were previously impossible to create. It is worth paying attention to how we spend our attention and re-evaluating the system by which we evaluate its use. The best use of energy is a relative concept.

Unification is the practice, seeing the whole as well as the parts. When we unify mind, body and spirit, energy, awareness and power intensify. The practice of unification is begun by the simple first steps of consciously 'breathing and feeling'.

The resources available to accomplish a desired outcome, affects both the design of the outcome and the choices of deployment. The charge of free energy we can access determines whether we repeat the known or can enter a new realm. We only perceive or conceptualize the level of thought we can sustain with the **free energy** available at the moment. With more energy something else is happening. Something more becomes possible.

Learning depends on the ability to create new connections which allow us to design and implement new ideas. If we do it, if we practice it, we get better and faster at it.

Energy is the price of admission to creativity and Aiki-land.

(from Adventures in Aiki-land, Zanshin Press)

Deeper Connections

To connect a wider network of connections, a deeper level of knowledge and possibilities, takes more Ki, more free energy. Let's postulate in order to make new connections on the surface of the cortex may take a hundred volts; to travel deeper into the cortex may take a thousand. In addition to connecting new synaptic connections on the surface of the cortex as well as deeper into the cortical mass, possibilities exist of connecting larger numbers of synaptic networks. Instead of 2 synapse, we could start to connect 20 or 30, groups of groups. Trillions!

If you want to connect synapse in three dimensions rather than two, it will take all the more energy, maybe in addition to the voltage we have to up the amperage. It may even be something else entirely that allows us to connect in these deeper and more comprehensive ways. Then perhaps we might start to be able to connect things that previously could not be connected or even imagined. This in turn increases the realm of possibilities.

The computer industry is studying superconductors to enable faster central processing units. Increased conductivity means we need less **free energy** to create and adapt wider possibilities of change. Increased connections increase ability. The amount of Ki makes new synaptic connections, new ways of perceiving and thinking and creating possible. Greater connectivity and conductivity make creativity possible at higher speeds.

So something is going on in the relationship between our brain activity, thought and inner dialogue that generates our state of being as individuals

and collectively creates our culture. The system of body, mind and spirit produces meaning, actions and the creation of the world we live in. If we participate in the process we can guide and influence it, if not we are victim to it.

This process in theory connects us to a deeper level of thought and understanding. Can you imagine that simply breathing and feeling increases the energy available making deeper understanding possible? Could a moment of time relaxing dissolve the human conflict based on misunderstanding? It sounds too easy doesn't it?

The Dance of Shiva

The Hindus describe three forces. The three forms of the godhead; Krishna, the god of creation, Vishnu, the god of preservation and Shiva, the god of destruction or transformation, represent these three forces. The dance of Shiva destroyed the old forms to make way for the new. Rebirth implies death of the old. Something lets go, something changes, something 'dies', to allow the birth of the new.

If we want to create new pathways, we must let go of holding to what we know in order to have free energy to work with. Otherwise, we will default into old habit patterns. We must leave the old world to journey to the new. We explore the unknown or live in the past.

"Unless you are born again you shall not enter the Kingdom of heaven."

Jesus

"If you do not blend with the emptiness of the pure void you will never know the path of Aiki"

O Sensei

How do you create a new solution or resolution? Do you create it or do you connect it? Are we listening to stations that transmit knowledge across minds or from a divine source? Do you tune into the process of creation? Whatever our concept of divine creation it is incomplete. Something else is happening.

Creation - origin, beginning, birth, conception, source, font, rise, generation, ancestry; the power to bring forth something that does not exist into form from that which does exist.

Divine - to conceive of, devise, contrive by special inspiration or extraordinary aptitude for investigation or discovery.

Divine Creation - the state of divinity out of which creativity and learning appear, spontaneously, in harmonious relationship with unfolding experience, the ability to produce approaches to challenges and technical solutions never seen before,

Free energy, increased fluidity and attention are outcomes of the thalamic pause. A similar outcome can be sought through meditation or biofeedback. In the energy study of Aikido we call the process centering, grounding and flowing.

Without a process for us to make conscious use of energy, we will channel it into our existing system of thought. Odds are we will dissipate it, or electrocute, burn out or go nuts. The process that frees the energy is the process that grounds the energy. Re-lax, re-allow, connection to ground is our natural state.

Simply adding more energy to the system, by itself, is not the answer. If you were comfortable with, say, a hundred dollars and all of a sudden somebody hands you a hundred million, something needs to happen for you to use that amount intelligently. Think what would happen if you gave a hundred million to an unsupervised child. Most children could not consider whether what they wanted was based in intelligent thought or wait till they understood the implications of acting on their thoughts. Albeit to a lesser degree, neither do we.

We get comfortable with a given flow of energy. When the flow increases how do we handle the disturbance? How do we develop a state of being that handles changing quantities and qualities of energy? What is the internal shift that needs to take place to have the energy for the questions that call us?

When holding patterns are released, the energy previously held in those patterns can be used in other ways. As **free energy** increases, it opens up possibilities that were not possible within the limits of energy previously available. On the Aikido mat, free energy means the possibility of techniques that have never been seen or variations on a technique that are uniquely adapted. Ki may be used to increase the power of an action already trained or to enhance a known strategy. The same **free energy** can be used to create new thought and movement and produce creative solutions to the problems and pressures in every aspect of daily life.

The Hare and The Tortoise

The quality of connection between mind and body, how you feel, increases or decreases the possibility of new neural inter connections. When the tension in the system uses up all the free energy the possibility of creativity evaporates. Creativity dies or we could say it is killed.

If we relax and free up energy, new synaptic connections are possible, opening new possibilities of thought. Increase Ki, and you increase freedom in thought, feeling and spirit; you increase possibility. Creativity becomes a natural effortless process.

When you are with a good friend in one of those conversations that keeps you up all night, you know how easy it is to come up with ideas and thoughts. You don't even think of it as being creative, which is probably why it is. Conversely when the pressure is on, it is like you couldn't buy an insight.

At some level of energy demand, at some level of increased speed and pressure, we default down known paths. Due to insufficient Ki, we repeat patterns we have learned and operate at a level of muscle tension that we have habituated. Training can teach us to slow down and pay attention. There is some equation of time, energy and skill that allows thinking to take place across broad inclusive networks of connections. The amount of time would vary depending on our energy level and how skilled we are in the process.

As we pay attention to sensing anything a muscle, a feeling or an idea; awareness becomes more differentiated, possibilities increase. The most tangible and accessible energy is muscle tension. For this reason we usually begin practicing freeing up energy by releasing holding patterns in the physical dimension. Releasing muscle tension allows the charge of **free energy** to build up within and around us. When the charge is high enough the spark can jump to new possibilities. Relaxation deeper into the tissue opens up possibilities of deeper synaptic connections, creating deeper realms of thinking.

Shifting state can happen through simple exercises. Releasing fixed thought patterns is similar in nature to physical release though subtler in its application. As we get deeper and subtler we can practice in the subtler dimensions.

Slowing down, softening the muscle tissue, opening the mind-state creates an inquiry of the spirit that connects us with energies /forces/powers/spirits we vaguely sensed yet never really knew for sure if they existed.

The process of Thalamic deepening allows energy to flow. Fluidity allows us receptivity to the guidance from the energy of the universe. Energy contains the intelligence organizing this system of matter and organic life.

As we evolve we explore opening the door to new ways of sensing. Closing the eyes changes how we pay attention. We can use a kaleidoscope of experiments to cultivate our sensing, tune our awareness and develop our intelligence. If the experiment works, whether it is simply closing the eyes to notice the difference in awareness or an all day meditation, I am not who I was when I started. It may be very subtle yet my perception of who I am, and what the universe is, all that has changed, along with the connection I feel to the creation.

EXPLORATIONS IN AWARENESS

EXPLORATION ONE: Slowing and deepening the breath is the easiest to do. After only a few breaths you should begin to feel at least some subtle shift in muscle tension.

EXPLORATION TWO: Simple relaxation of specific muscle groups is next in the degree of skill needed. Scan the muscles of the spine, neck, head and shoulders, torso, down the arms and the legs. Begin by releasing tension in each area one at a time. The next level practices releasing the musculature of the whole body at once. Notice how the practice affects your mental and emotional states.

EXPLORATION THREE: Relaxing the whole system is powerful and requires an even greater level of focus. The system is more interconnected than we can even imagine. Relaxing any aspect has a beneficial effect on the others

EXPLORATION FOUR: Recall a place or time when you were in the state you seek. Remember it vividly. Bring back all the sensory data possible. Notice how your state of tension and sense of physical, mental and emotional freedom changes.

EXPLORATION FIVE: Create the visualization of state from imagination. Imagine in as much detail and with as much precision as possible the qualities of the state you want.

Timing

Speed and power increase with practice. Presence also increases with practice. In the beginning it takes a few minutes till we get to a state of center, depth, mind-body unification. Eventually it takes a couple of seconds, then fractions of a second.

Usually in the beginning of training we need to stop and pause. Once we learn to operate from whole brain awareness, from a dimension of mind body unity, connection happens seemingly instantly.

We usually slow down to learn new moves when someone teaches us. If we see time as a resource and we follow our metaphor about the cost of design, we have to slow down even further to create new ones, allowing creativity to unfold naturally.

Slower may not be the right word to describe this. It probably is more connected to energy or awareness. A good jazz player can improvise at incredible speed but they have trained creativity rather than repetition of the known. Though some players might develop speed from practicing scales, some of the greats never practiced scales at all. They developed purely by improvisational playing.

Ki connects the multiple aspects of awareness into one system. Ki connects the whole of creation. O Sensei participated in that totality. O Sensei, was so good at it, it would happen in a fraction of a second during action, or perhaps outside of time altogether.

**My students think I don't lose my center but
that is not so. I simply recognize it sooner
and correct faster.**

**It's not a question of speed the attack is over
before it has begun.**

**There is no time or space before Ueshiba of
Aikido only the universe as it is. There exists
no measure of time fast or slow. I am one
with the universe and nothing else.**

Morihei Ueshiba, O Sensei

The Formula

Integrating the system of body, mind and spirit is a function of harmony. Harmony allows the aspects to connect in a spirit of dialogue. Like in music where every instrument contributes to the sound, in dialogue every thought compliments the larger awareness.

Enhancing our functioning would make possible that which was previously impossible. If we could unify all the aspects of thinking together, the functioning whole will likely have possibilities we cannot yet imagine.

Pausing and paying attention to how we feel diminishes resistance and like a super-conductor, increases creative potential. Presence, centering, deepening the unification of the mind-body connection, connects attention with thinking and feeling. Through harmoniously aligning the aspects of the system of thought, energy is freed for creativity. If I could "afford it", with enough free energy, maybe I could create a synaptic network of the whole into one integrated creative system rather than a 'democratic one' where the aspect with the most votes or volume wins out. How many of the voices of brain function never get heard properly?

Remember back to an inner conflict, where two values conflicted. Perhaps a part of you thought you should act one way but some other part of you still felt like acting another way. When two or more forces meet, we handle it either through fragmentation or unification. Unification implies a 'listening' between the parts, to the whispering that the universe exists as an interdependent whole.

Including all the aspects of ourselves creates a healthy intelligence and thought we can stand behind. This is true for the society as well as the individual. Including all the aspects of our team or community means, allowing all the voices to be heard and ideas included in the assessment for action.

Creativity happens somewhere in the shadows of knowledge, on the edge of the unknown, where things can be sensed more than seen. Creativity ignites through a flicker of interest. The breath of life fans the spark into flame. Breathe deeply and slowly for a few moments and see if your sense of creativity changes.

If we practice connecting the unified field of awareness, the speed and power of the process of creativity increase. New thought can become free, fast and fluid at levels unimaginable to the untrained.

Translative and Transformative

Ken Wilber makes a distinction between translative and transformative. Translative learning is learning what I don't know that someone else knows, transmitted learning, transmission from one to another. Commonly, we learn through observation, instruction and practice assembling our own meaning/understanding even as somebody shows us theirs. We translate information adding to our body of knowledge but without changing the system of thought. Transformative learning is seen as creativity, spontaneous generation. It might be described as learning what nobody knows, the realm of divine creation. It not only adds to what we know, it changes who we are.

The goal in Aikido is creativity, divine inspiration. It is not about remembering a particular movement or set of movements. Studying the movements can take us to the source that created them. Robotically repeating them will not. Through thalamic practice we can study the energy conditions that created the synaptic connections that reproduce the movements. Aikido offers us much more than just repeating learned connections. It is coming into harmony with the movement of the universe.

**The secret of Aikido is to harmonize ourselves
with the movement of the universe and bring
ourselves into accord with the universe itself.**

Morihei Ueshiba, O Sensei

Strengthening synaptic pathways, enhancing skill in a particular knowledge set like a punch or an Aikido technique, a manufacturing process, a parenting or sales technique can be good. But when we need or want creativity, what is required to develop the skill of creating new synaptic connections? How do we see that which never was?

I appreciate the roads and freeways. They allow and enhance a certain kind of travel and quality of life. Still, life is out of balance, if at least once in a

while, we don't get out of our cars and take a walk in nature. More importantly we need to open beyond our set thought patterns and listen to the whisperings of the unknown and unknowable.

Without contact with nature, without allowing the whisperings of the forces that source our existence, life loses its divine flow. Without the divine everything we think is translative. We lose the possibility of creating previously unimagined music, art and solutions to the challenges of life. We are doomed to repeat history in recombined forms

Thalamic Practice

The practice means taking the time to sense as yet unknown connections. Simply slowing the breath and feeling the body frees energy and increases connections between the primordial thalamic and the highest cortical functions that have evolved. The formation of new knowledge and ideas begins in the abstract and sensitive realm of the imagination. The simple practice of stillness, breathing and feeling your self as everything you are, develops awareness of awareness itself. The development of attention happens through waking up.

When we pause for a moment and breathe and feel, something else happens. Once we learn the process of 'listening to the whisperings', the energy of an experience expands from the thalamic reaction throughout the whole system of perception. A deeper level of presence unfolds, generating the possibility of increased neural connections. Unlimited creative possibilities begin to appear out of the mist.

Practice attending to state, develops the ability to shift to a creative state. When we are free to create rather than bound to repeat, we open greater possibility to create new responses appropriate to the moment. Awareness of our state allows us to respond with less time lost to resistance, denial, avoidance and default behavior. Though this technique takes time when it is being learned, through practice it can become fast enough to change what is possible in the creation of your life.

We begin the practice by following our interest and learning about the process. The next step slows down acting on the first impulse (suspension). In step three we practice consciously relaxing, relaxing both the physical and mental/emotional holding patterns. It is an act of intent, of bringing the conscious awareness to bear on the unconscious process of making meaning.

The freeing up of energy happens as an inevitable outcome. Energy provides the possibility of greater attention. We begin noticing things previously unnoticed. After a while, new details critical to our being, include themselves in our awareness, causing us to re-evaluate information. A new order of meaning unfolds. This is not a final truth but the next stage in an ever-evolving journey.

We don't have to understand the science that precisely to make positive use of the simple experience of 'getting it together'. For the practice of putting attention in the right gear, all that is required is slowing (usually using the breath as a regulator and relaxing while paying attention to our state of being). The transmission is automatic to a deeper state. We don't need to know where the Thalamus is, let alone understand how it functions.

At first shifting to an 'awakening state' is a concept. Even if the concept seems vague at first, 'breathe and feel'. The practice produces a change of state that is tangible as we learn to recognize it. With practice it becomes an increasingly intentional experience. We can learn to feel the shift in state. We can then guide, and with some mastery choose, the state we act from. With practice we can intend a shift to a deeper presence as simply as we walk through a doorway into a different room.

Unified Awareness

In using the whole brain as a metaphor for total being, we talk about connecting the deepest somatic awareness, with the highest levels of cortical process. When they interpenetrate in a balanced state we experience a whole and total, unified field of being.

Non-resistance, integration of mind, body and spirit is the essence of Aikido. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts. The whole brain in a unified state, has a coherence that does not exist when the aspects of intelligence are disparate, vying for dominance or in sleep mode. A unified field supersedes any possibility that exists when the aspects of being are in discord.

The left-brain and right-brain are not in opposition. They compliment each other. When reason and intuition are brought together, a dimension of intelligence awakens. Wisdom appears that transcends the abilities of either. Once awake, the unified field of awareness produces representations of reality that have sophistication beyond the descriptions that any of the regions of the brain, or the aspects of awareness can produce individually.

(1) Awareness without action is academic. Action without awareness is limited. (2) At a given level of 'Ki' we function digitally – either or. We can either think or we can feel. We either attribute internally or externally. (3) By relaxing and freeing up energy, we can choose to use our energy in creative ways. We can attend to a multiplicity of things. Things are no longer right or wrong. They are infinitely complex. (4) Then the development of self-awareness produces the ability to see that it is not always the same person looking at infinite complexity; and the possibilities of worlds that could be assembled out number the stars.

(5) The fifth stage is operating out of the awareness of the unified field, the inter-connected, inter-penetrating, inter-dependent whole that manifests the myriad world. When we access a level of energy that allows unified functioning from our deepest feelings to our highest thoughts, we see the interaction of the internal and the external as a system. Moving individual parts around usually produces unintended consequences. Seeing the whole system allows us to seek effective dynamic influence.

Imagine lighting up the whole system of thought and interconnecting all the parts together, opening infinite previously unimagined possibilities. These in turn make possible enhanced creativity in the realms of the sciences, the arts and the development of culture.

Thalamic Aikido, Thalamic Technique

When we evaluate our lives, there are usually aspects we wish we could improve. We quickly evaluate, correctly or not, whether we believe the energy required to create the change is available. Then we assess whether the change is worth the investment. If we do not value it enough to focus the energy needed to create the change, we learn to live with the problem. We just complain about it or ignore it.

Changes are inevitable with growth. We cannot grow without changing yet any stimulus generates reactivity. When we experience stimulus it triggers infinite bio-chemical processes, producing the physical and emotional reactions modern medicine labels as stress. In an emergency on the freeway the body goes into alert mode. The focus of attention narrows. Only systems deemed necessary for emergency response are activated. Unneeded processing shuts down allowing all energy to be used in response to stimulus until deemed safe. This response, incredibly effective in emergencies on the

freeway, is inappropriate for the complex challenges of daily life, the office, the test hall, and the family.

Picture your reaction to someone attacking you. Metaphorically an attack represents any energy for change. You can fight - defend or resist, you can flee - avoid or deny, or you can flow - learn and grow. The more familiar the stimulus the quicker the reactivity turns to recognition and strategy for action. Until we assemble that recognition, our systems are programmed to respond in readiness that seems born of defensiveness. This in turn becomes the ground of being out of which we form meaning. The meaning we make once in a defensive mode, as distinct from the meaning we would make from a state of inquiry would create very different worlds.

Noticing the first instinctual response aids in understanding the situation as possibility. Our first understanding of what is happening fires off when only the thalamus has had time to process the data. In that case the understanding of the situation and the strategy of the response will be built on a fairly limited number of possibilities.

If we have the time and training, we can include the limbic and cortical functions which though slower and quieter infinitely increase the number of possible connections. The higher brain functions also assign value to information, re-ordering it, creating complex hierarchies and possibilities. Increased connections make it possible to develop many more alternate strategies and select the one that will be the most appropriate. Either we train to develop a conscious response or we end up victim to the energy of reactivity.

Were we to witness our actions we would notice a reactive response to pressure. With attention to our process we could develop a functional one. Intelligent evaluation of information is a sophisticated process requiring tremendous attention. It also produces tremendous rewards. Imagine applying the concept of the Thalamic Pause to a business problem or a relationship with someone you care about. The long-term effects are much larger than the health of the individual. They include the health of the family team, business unit and society as a whole.

What if all the energy of a difficult situation were applied to a desired outcome, instead of going unconsciously into reactivity? What if there were a way to solve the problem, re-directing all the energy locked up in ignorance?

and resistance to create a positive resolution? Imagine all the energy we spend on defense and defensiveness going into the creation of wealth. Imagine what the peace negotiations would look like that begin within ourselves.

Collective Intelligence

Whole brain awareness is internally to an individual what collective intelligence is to a group. The strength of any design team is the ability of the individuals to access and combine varying aspects of thought, their ability to share information, to communicate. Cohesion across a group will echo the coherence of the individuals that make it up.

When an individual is fixed in their thinking it blocks open communication. It glares in most business teams when they work around a difficult individual, process or corporate policy. They frequently cannot create a compelling vision of anything better. The network of possibilities diminishes and the players endure it because they imagine or perceive the price of change comes too high. They lack the free energy needed to create. They hardly have enough time or energy to take a moment to dream.

We are cultured in what Samuel Bois called stage two thinking. There is right; everything else is wrong. Either you believe pretty exactly what I believe or you are doomed to eternal damnation.

Our system of law is based on a stage two adversarial model. There are pluses and minuses to an adversarial culture. The role of the court may intend seeking truth but the roles of the adversaries do not. Adversaries seek devaluing the vision of another as a strategy for prevailing. They are about controlling the description used to define a situation.

The adversarial model informs our educational system and the way we learn. Our educational system develops win-lose thinking. Grading on a curve sets up thinking in a zero sum game. This adversarial culture is unconsciously at play when people come together to collaborate. Business and education would function more coherently if they could access whole brain awareness in their individual process and dialogic collaboration to their challenges.

Whole being awareness has an even higher value in the family. A dominating and intimidating individual functioning out of their fear may seek to control an environment. Acting out of unhealthy needs generates a replication of their neurosis. What does it take to develop the level of energy awareness for

something like that to transform on a societal level? Dream a society absent resistance or the need for domination. Imagine the quality of a society based on love. I imagine that is what all the great religious leaders were exhorting us to do.

Scientists study creation one way, religious students another. Can you imagine a world where science doesn't try to overshadow religion or visa versa? Imagine a world where one religion does not try to dominate or belittle another. What if everyone could listen to each other in an open dialogue? Imagine how that conversation might go on within yourself.

Imagine a world where thought doesn't dominate feeling or visa versa. Masculine doesn't dominate feminine or visa versa. What if we chose to learn from each other instead of reactively feeling that anything different was threatening? What if everyone contributed their vision, creating a harmonious reality without energy lost to resistance and war?

What we think leads our actions. It was once accepted in our society that parents beat their children. It was expected – spare the rod and spoil the child. It is less acceptable now only because ‘thinking makes it so’. Our attitudes and dynamics are cultured into us long before we can think. With enough energy free we could change how we think and see. We could create beyond anything we can imagine.

"Where the mind goes the body follows."

**With out 'Budo'* a nation goes to ruin, because
Budo is the life of loving protection and is the
source of the activities of science"**

Morihei Ueshiba, O Sensei

* **budo** -(lit. the way of the warrior, also the study to stop conflict)

O Sensei performed feats that were miracles by ordinary standards. He said that they were just kindergarten. What is beyond connecting to what I know, what I think, what I feel and what I sense? What about enhancing awareness of and connection to that which forms creation itself? Who knows what might be possible?

Synaptic Possibilities

I am looking for a doorway that we can use in everyday existence, not a meditation room, not exotic drugs, not critical emergencies like the baby under the car. What would it be like if we lived every day sensing into peak connection with the mystery of creation? What I seek is a way to make our everyday life a meditation on the divine, so that, the non-existent is manifested and the impossible becomes possible.

What might we imagine free of our present conceptual limits? What might be possible for a person whose mind, body and spirit were functioning in harmonious synchronistic support? Imagine the shift from telegraph to wireless communication, from verbal to intuitive communication. What are we receiving and from where? As we pick up starlight distant in time, could we pick up ideas created in the future or the past, in brains other than ours?

Imagine going from whole brain awareness to connecting with other fields of intelligence in an integrated system. Does the brain have an ability to network with other brains? Imagine greater numbers of synaptic connections within one brain might imply multiple (wireless) connections between many brains. Can you infer anything of the somatic shift of being that comes from that quality of tuning, that induction of state?

Paying attention shifts us from a level of habitual thought to consciousness, from internal fragmentation to whole brain intelligence. Imagine possibilities of networking the collective unconscious. Imagine the interconnections of infinite realms of universal awareness. Whether or not we can achieve any of these states, it is more fun to play with the possibility of what we might be able to develop, than live without dreams.

The Doorway to the Mystery

Feeling the moment

go to a place in yourself don't know

don't know the outcome

something happens

a sense of energy

really it is just a feeling

give feeling more attention

receive more energy

in the uncoiling and enfolding energy

is the guidance of the

universal intelligence

Suddenly the funniest stuff

starts to happen in your life.

Thalamic Dialogue

Thalamalama Dingdong: One student's Description

"There was a physical pause, and then some kind of energy drop in or down, in that pause. The Thalamic pause was not only stopping, but centering the focus of awareness into the thalamus. Going into the interior of the brain with one's attention and increasing that internal focus and centering throughout. Allowing things to come up. The pause wasn't just a moment. Once you went into the pause, it kept going. I would move more slowly to begin that process and my partner seemed to want to move, seemed to want to fall down, seemed to want to do a lot of things without any impetus on my part, other than going into this centering."

STUDENT: In line with a couple of the earlier comments, it's not just a matter of quantity, it would seem to be useful to emphasize that there is a change of quality. It's just not a matter of one volt or a hundred volts, or fifty cents and a dollar. It's more an element of there's a caterpillar to a butterfly that in some way it's a different quality that's going on, and it's just not like a caterpillar that had fifty legs, now it has seventy-five legs.

MOON: Right! It is not first order change we are talking about developing. No matter how much neural energy you put into a lizard, are they going to come up with calculus? It is not adding to the identity, it is transformation, chrysalis. How you identify yourself must transform.

**"One who understands the secret of
Aikido has the universe within
themself and can say I am the
universe"**

Morihei Ueshiba, O Sensei

STUDENT: Or in that game when you talk in economic terms, it's not that if you're being paid ten dollars an hour and you work forty hours a week, it's like sixty hours a week. Or eighty. It's not like that. But if you found a product that other people were selling and you were making royalties. It's a completely different thing.

MOON: That is the right idea. At the first level of the idea, we're talking in the simplest terms of more energy. It could be not only more, but it could go from electric to nuclear. It could go from chemical to, "we don't know what we don't know". The reality is we don't know what reality is.

Nuclear energy has existed since the birth of creation, probably before. Two hundred years ago it wasn't common knowledge that nuclear energy existed. Two hundred years from now, what are they going to know that we don't know now? Thalamic awareness could be the beginning of a shift of awareness in the human race, part of a global or cosmic experiment in evolution.

STUDENT: It seems like something that we're going for is an increased awareness. That the partner could use something to help amplify that. My experience has been that my partner is a mystery. And I finally discovered that, but I'm wondering if there is some way in the learning process to add feedback.

MOON: Though in Aikido the attacker is a living feedback system reflecting the moves of their partner, often the attacker doesn't know what they're doing. A lot of times they can be like a mirror at the fun house, curious but not accurate..

It's nice to have the study at a tangible level. Start at a level you can perceive. Then take it subtler and go deeper and deeper with it. If you listen to what the whisperings say about your partner, on the mat, in a conversation, or in a business deal, guidance abounds. The feedback is usually there but we are so caught up in our desires or the intention we've decided on unilaterally, we

miss the signals. It is not so much adding feedback which is already there. The practice is thalamizing, paying attention to the whisperings of intuition.

The potential exists to dissipate the guidance or feedback through thinking about it. The question is are you dissipating energy, or are you freeing energy, enhancing awareness through the process.

STUDENT: It seems to me that if I were to take the five senses, my five senses, and put them in a circle and made a space in the center, you seem to be talking about, the sixth sense that touches everything involved, beyond and including the spheres.

MOON: That's good. How about rather than being a circle inside of those five, it could be a circle that's bigger than and including those five. But, we're just making this up now. Don't be limited by any of these concepts. We're just talking . . . playing with it, and I hope you are willing to play, to think freely and easily, assembling thoughts like a child might assemble blocks, not the right way but playfully exploring possibilities. Allow this to be in a very creative stage right now. Which means I don't know any right answers here. I have a sense of being in Kindergarten, and I hope you will take it and add to it and be playfully creative with whatever stimulus this offers you.

STUDENT: I have a hard time with the hundred volts of neural energy, I think maybe I'm resisting the response, that it sounds disruptive. It's just that I don't expect that to be my process.

MOON: First these are just words, ways of talking, ways to explore ideas. So easy a bit, O.K.? Can you describe what yours feels like?

STUDENT: Well, I find that when I have to find a new way of moving, or a new way of doing something there is definitely a turning on, but the one hundred volt thing makes me feel frantic. When I think of one hundred volts, I just (gasps), you know like...

MOON: Feel that you would be electrocuted by it.

STUDENT: Yeah that's it.

MOON: That happens. There are people who win the lottery, and all of a sudden they've got this **free energy**. It could make them free and creative, and instead studies show a majority of them go nuts and some commit suicide. It's a possibility that might happen if we free up energy without the ability to ground the charge. (see Grounding the Charge in, *In the Realm of the Spirit*, Zanshin Press)

This is important. Something needs to happen to be present in a state that can handle increased energy. Which is why we spend so much attention on our state through practices like, **fluidity, substance and listening or center, ground and flow** so we can function without having our own vitality or the universal Ki electrocute us. Fluidity is critical. If you have your substance (you're connected to what you're standing on, your ground of being) you can contain, ground and use energy. If you don't have your substance, it dissipates or upsets you. Pretty soon, you're just thinking about it. It's an idea, and it loses the power of embodiment or mind body unity. Or it 'drives you crazy'.

If you don't eat it up, it will eat you up.

Nadeau Sensei

STUDENT: I was just thinking when I access that state, the calmness that comes in with all the energy. I'm in the situation where my mind flows and everything is going on and my intuition was really superior. And I was calm. Sure I had the volts but....

MOON: Both have happened. I think we are all aware of stories where people do fantastic things under pressure, the grandmother lifting the car off a grandchild. In a pressure situation, the energy system responds equal to the pressure - big situation, big rush of energy. All of a sudden, people do things they've never done before. There are also stories of people put under pressure who can't handle the charge of energy, who go nuts and lose it.

STUDENT: What I'm feeling in all this is that to make brand new movements that you have never done before, it's like asking a little Kid to do this. Doesn't it require a certain amount of developing the synaptic connections in order to be able to use them? Like a jazz musician who practices the scales over and over again, can bring a totally new sound with the use of those sounds he has already learned.

MOON: Yes and . . . What assumption underlies that belief? Practicing and getting better we understand. We've done that. Someone who practices improvising inside a known scale will develop that skill. Now can we imagine something else going on? What if they practiced improvising from feeling and never practiced a scale? I would also like to open up the possibility that maybe one could make a movement fluidly and effectively that no one has never made before. Without having trained and developed that particular movement, a movement could be done at a new or seemingly magical level. A melody could come forth in an unknown scale. Now, I don't know if this is true or not. But do you hold it as a possibility? Whatever if you think is true. Can you suspend your assumptions long enough to think outside the box?

Symmetry breaking and pattern formation are the terms NLP uses for this process and there is material that describes it in neurological terms.

STUDENT: In dance, I like dance training and frequently have had spontaneous movement.

MOON: Yes, and! What about people who have never trained, but get out and dance and do movements in ways that start to come through and there's a natural flow to it?

There is another art I study called Capoeira. It's a Brazilian martial art, which is very dance-like. In it there are a lot of moves that are new to me. I work too hard at trying to learn these moves. Every now and then I will hit a state where I just abandon everything I know. Maybe I do everything wrong yet occasionally I don't hold myself back because I don't know what I'm doing. Moves happen that I don't know. Originally that's how I developed the approach to Aikido that I emphasize. Not by repeating set moves, but by deepening the process of not knowing.

When I started training, there was only one Aikido Dojo in the area. Now there are probably a hundred. Our class wasn't even a Dojo. It was in a church like where we train in Fairfax. There were only two classes a week. That was it. So to get in more training a friend and I used to go out onto the lawn and we'd do some Aikido together. Luckily we didn't know what we were doing so we just had to make it up. Something else was happening.

In one approach you train movements. In another you train possibilities and the ability to connect those possibilities in new ways. And, in addition to that, let's open another possibility that maybe something else beyond that could happen.

STUDENT: When I started getting into this process, I thought that we were getting too much information. Eventually the overload adapted into something else.

MOON: Right something else. It feels like it does not make sense at first blush. In the study of living systems it is after the breakdown of being overloaded with new information that a living system transforms or opens to change. We are pointing to the same thing here. We resist processing info because of info overload. One of our best defenses to info overload is to think we know, so we don't have to receive or consider new information. What we know, blocks us from the unknown. We filter experience so it supports our beliefs. These factors affect our experience of reality. Can we change our

Read Only to Random Access meaning make our minds adaptable to new information, to change?

I trained in a more traditional style. I had a student at one point, as I was starting to get into this freer style. I watched him out on the mat training, free of all the presets that I have with Aikido, and there was a moment that I thought, "I'm sorry that I ever trained the set forms." It then became my warrior's challenge to turn that training into information and free energy that opened to the kami.

I'm not saying that the way we're living here is wrong; it may not last very long, but I'm not saying it's wrong. But I do think the way that we live and the amount of tension that we operate under could allow for something else. Something else could happen. Is the information that is showing up after your thalamic deepening better or not? Does the pause give you a new vision of possibilities?

STUDENT: The pause that refreshes.

STUDENT: It seemed pretty consistent to me that my persona wanted to do something with them, the whisperings wanted me to do something with me. And when I did something, when I followed the whisperings and did something with me, the struggle seemed to melt away. But when I was coming from what I wanted to do with them it was obviously something different.

STUDENT: In that space, something is emerging. I don't know what it is at first or what it will do and it's frightening. It's just....this fear.....

MOON: Amen brother. (Laughter) I appreciate what you're saying, and I'm right there with you. I acknowledge fear of the unknown, not to have rules and guidelines. I'm terrified of change, the only thing that scares me more is going on without inquiry.

The Thalamic Discourses

At this time, when I go back to those rules, they feel like past history. They were crutches, but my leg's healed now and I choose not to live that way anymore. I'm terrified and on the other hand, if we keep on like we're going, we're liable to end up where we're headed. Looking at the planet and the situations in the world, I'm terrified too. Still, the risks of creativity look like the better of the two terrifying options

"Suddenly the earth trembled. Golden vapor welled up from the ground and engulfed me. I felt transformed into a golden image, and my body seemed as light as a feather. All at once I understood the nature of creation: the Way of a Warrior is to manifest Divine Love, a spirit that embraces and nurtures all things. Tears of gratitude and joy streamed down my cheeks. I saw the entire earth as my home, and the sun, moon, and stars as my intimate friends. All attachment to material things vanished." *

*Morihei Ueshiba, 1883-1969 Excerpted from the Introduction for The Art of Peace by John Stevens.

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